

PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS:

LOCALLY-BASED
PROTECTION OF NATIONALLY
SIGNIFICANT RIVERS



How do you protect an outstanding free-flowing river that flows through private lands or a mix of both public and private lands?

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act remains one of the strongest tools available to protect *any* river in this country that is free flowing and has outstanding qualities such as history, fish and wildlife, recreation, and culture. When rivers flow through public lands (such as National Parks and National Forests) the appropriate federal lands agency is responsible for identifying potential wild and scenic rivers and developing management plans. But when rivers flow through private lands, or a mix of public and private lands, wild and scenic river designation and management is the collective responsibility of local, state, and federal governments, landowners, business owners, and community members.

Over the past 32 years, 156 of our nation's greatest rivers have been protected through wild and scenic river designation. Most of these rivers flow through public lands, but a growing number flow through private land or mixed lands and are protected through carefully crafted local-state-federal partnerships. This new "**partnership model**" has been highly effective in bringing visibility to river resources and river communities, and building community participation in river management.



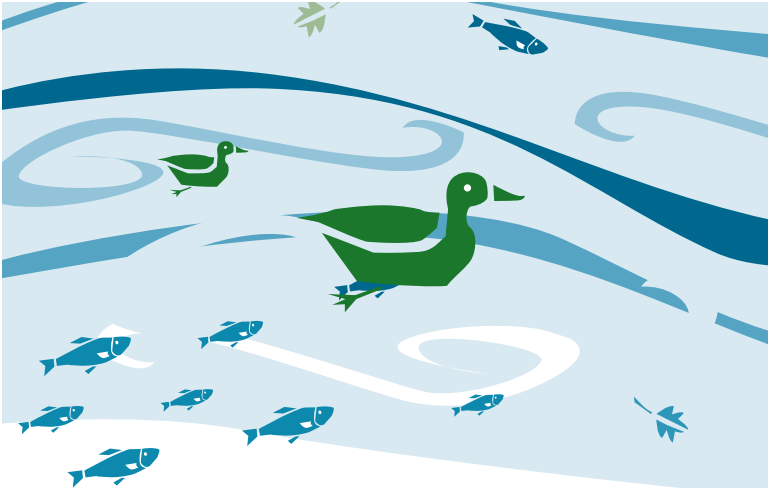
WHY SHOULD A RIVER FLOWING THROUGH PRIVATE LAND OR MIXED LANDS BE PROTECTED AS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER USING THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL?

Designation of partnership wild and scenic rivers:

- j Authorizes and funds creation of a comprehensive river management plan developed through a committee that may include landowners, business owners, local, state, and federal agencies, recreation and conservation groups, and others.
- j Authorizes and funds a management plan coordinating council to oversee implementation of the plan once it is adopted.
- j Authorizes and funds activities that protect and enhance a river's outstanding values, and prompts state and local governments to share costs for these activities.
- j Blocks new federally licensed dams and other harmful federally funded water resources projects.
- j Protects water quality.

WHAT DOES A PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN DO?

A partnership wild and scenic river management plan is created through a public process that unites all public agencies and private landowners responsible for stewardship of the river and the adjacent lands. The management plan is a broad vision for how the river should be protected, and how its values can be enhanced through local, state, and federal coordination.



The management plans must address:

Water Quality: The plan describes how the river's water quality will be maintained or improved to meet federal criteria or federally approved state standards in accordance with the Clean Water Act.

Recreation and Public Facilities: The plan describes how the public can access and use the river. The plan may include the creation or enhancement of existing public facilities along the river such as informational kiosks or signs, camping areas, and public access points that serve to guide public enjoyment. In cases where overuse may pose a threat to the river, a plan may create a permitting process or limit further recreation development.

Responsible Authorities: The plan describes how local, state, federal, tribal and private entities will share responsibilities for managing and protecting the wild and scenic river, and how existing authorities and statutes protect the values for which the river was designated.

Future Management Direction: If existing authorities and statutes are not sufficient to protect the river, the plan recommends changes in local or state laws, such as zoning laws, or creating open space acquisition plans.

HOW TO DESIGNATE A PARTNERSHIP

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

1. Cultivate Local Support to Study the River for Designation:

The most important factor in a successful partnership wild and scenic river campaign is broad local support. Generally a local leader must first educate the community on the benefits of studying the river for possible designation, then seek the written support of a broad group of county or town officials, landowners, businesses, recreation groups, citizens, and others in the river community.

2. Cultivate Congressional Support for the Study: Broad local

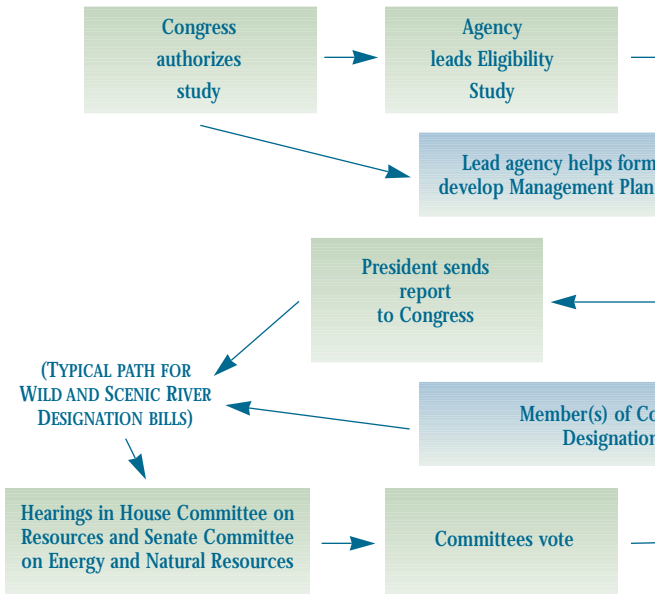
support is critical to convincing a Senator or Representative to introduce study legislation to authorize and fund a wild and scenic river study, and later to introduce designation legislation. American Rivers can work with local representatives to ensure study legislation is passed.

3. Study the River:

Once study legislation is passed, the lead federal agency will work with state and local governments and others over a period of about two to three years to complete the study. For a river to be designated as a wild and scenic river, the study team must find that the river is both eligible and suitable for wild and scenic river designation:

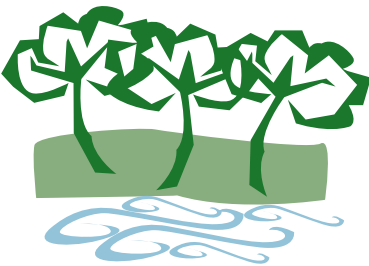
ELIGIBILITY: Free-flowing rivers (or segments of rivers) with at least one “outstandingly remarkable value” are eligible for wild and scenic river designation. A river meets the free-flowing requirement if it is largely free of dams, diversions, or stream channelization. To determine whether the river meets the outstandingly remarkable val-

PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC



*The study report must also comply with the

ues requirement, the study team examines fish and wildlife species to assess rare, uncommon, or highly representative attributes. The study team similarly evaluates recreational use, scenery, geology, and cultural features,

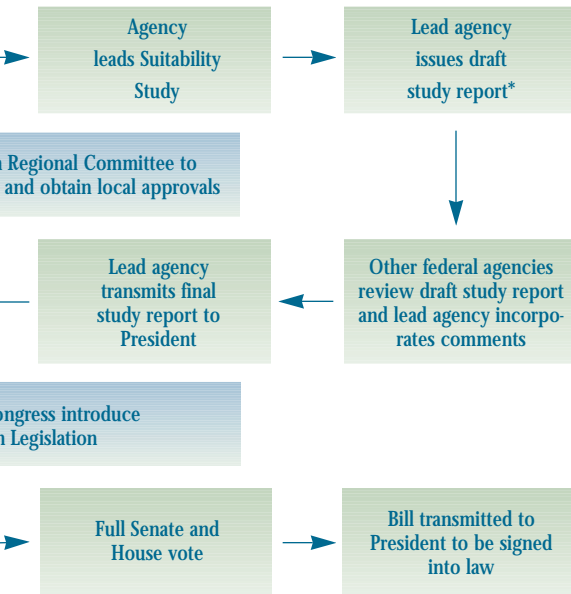


including archeological sites. Eligibility studies include a survey of existing literature and consultations with agencies, organizations, and individuals

who may have some professional or expert knowledge of the outstanding features of the river.

SUITABILITY: Once eligibility is determined, the study team must then consider the best way to protect the river and evaluate the costs and benefits of designation. This is the

C RIVER DESIGNATION PROCESS



the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

suitability determination, and may include consideration of the following factors:

- j Uses of land that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed, if an area is included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- j Values which would be lost if the river is not added to the System.
- j Public, state, and local governmental interest in designation of the river.
- j Costs of the designation to the federal government and the degree to which administration of the river and the costs involved may be shared by state and local agencies.
- j Other issues and concerns identified during the eligibility study process.

4. Develop Management Plans as Part of the Study Process:

In recent designations using the partnership model, particularly in the Northeast, the National Park Service has worked with local and state authorities, landowners and business owners, and others as part of a management plan committee to design a management plan for the river *during* the study process, rather than after designation, as is traditional. In this model, whether or not the river is ultimately designated, the management plan can be adopted as a statement of common values and goals for the river. A coordinating council can be appointed to guide management activities once the plan is adopted.

5. Get Your Congressional Representative and/or Senator to Introduce Designation Legislation: When the study is complete, the lead study federal agency presents its findings to Congress. If the river is found to be eligible and suitable, the agency will generally recommend designation. It is then up to local and national advocates (such as American Rivers) working to work with one or more members of Congress to introduce with one or more members of designation legislation. Advocates must continue to ensure the legislation stays high on the priority list of the Congressional sponsor, and moves smoothly through the resource committees. Bills with strong local and bipartisan support have a strong chance of passing.

6. Tap Federal Resources: Wild and scenic river bills include language that authorizes Congress to spend federal money on the river. A critical step in the designation process is to ensure the amount authorized is secured through the federal appropriations process. This money goes towards federal agency coordination of implementing the wild and

A PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC
RIVER SUCCESS STORY:

THE FARMINGTON WILD AND SCENIC
RIVER IN CONNECTICUT

Henry James called the Farmington River an “ample, admirable, in every way distinguished” stream. Today, residents along the river and visitors that boat and fish its waters are likely to agree with James’ assessment. The Farmington River’s natural beauty and recreational opportunities are remarkable considering the area’s rapid development. Atlantic salmon are making a return returning to the river, and it is the only place in Connecticut where bald eagles still nest two of Connecticut’s three known bald eagle nests are located within the watershed. Fortunately, the Farmington River has a chance at maintaining its character — in 1994 Congress decided to designate it as the nation’s 150th Wild and Scenic River.

The effort to designate the Farmington River began in the early 1980’s. Riverfront communities joined together to stop a Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) proposal to divert water from the river’s West Branch, which would have reduced flows below Goodwin Dam and diminished the river’s natural character and affected its fisheries and recreation. MDC member towns defeated the proposal, but concerns for the future of the river remained. The Farmington River Watershed Association and the towns along the river approached NPS to do a study of the river and management options. Building on the growing local interest in a partnership approach for comprehensive management of the Farmington River, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson introduced wild and scenic river study legislation.

A wide variety of community efforts during the study process solidified local support for the designation and put in place the



mechanisms needed to ensure a partnership management approach would work for the river. The study team, led by NPS and made up of state and local representatives, held town meetings and distributed questionnaires to landowners and residents confirming their support for the designation. Several towns along the river adopted River Overlay Protection Districts to ensure construction along the river corridor did not degrade river values. Workshops on voluntary land conservation measures were held, and the state of Connecticut, the MDC, and the NPS funded an instream flow study to demonstrate the availability of sufficient flows to protect natural values and drinking water supply. The Connecticut State Legislature passed legislation in support of the designation. Throughout the study, the Farmington River Watershed Alliance Association, Farmington River Anglers Association, and the Farmington River Club persistently advocated for the designation.

In August 1994, Congress added 14 miles of the Farmington River's West Branch to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Management responsibilities are largely the same as before designation, but an advisory body – the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) – was created to meet on a regular basis for the purpose of coordinating management activities. The Committee is made up of representatives of the five river fronting towns (Hartland, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford and Canton), state of Connecticut, the MDC, the Farmington River Watershed Association, and NPS. With NPS funding and support, the FRCC has been able to carry out many locally based projects such as bank stabilization, a study of an archeological site along the river, and a community watershed initiative. For more information on these projects and others, please visit the Farmington Wild and Scenic River web page at www.nps.gov/rivers/farmington.

For more information on the Farmington River and the other partnership wild and scenic rivers listed below, please visit American Rivers Online (www.americanrivers.org) at:

Maurice River, NJ

Great Egg Harbor River, NJ

Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers, MA

Lamprey River, NH

Westfield River, MA

INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ON THE PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS APPROACH

American Rivers offers workshops and one-on-one assistance to groups interested in protecting their river through wild and scenic river designation. At American Rivers *Online*, we offer a complete toolkit of how-to's, reference materials, and other information on wild and scenic rivers and the designation process. Here are some of the helpful materials available at www.americanrivers.org:

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Handbook
Interagency Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification,
and Management

Success Stories and Case Studies

The American Rivers' Guide to Wild and Scenic
River Designation

Model Documents (*best examples of legislation, local ordinances, and other documents applicable to any partnership wild and scenic river effort*):

Wild and Scenic River Study Legislation

Wild and Scenic River Designation Legislation

Local River Management Land Use Guidelines

Urban and Rural Zoning Ordinances

Citizen Survey on River Protection

Intergovernmental Compact

Stewardship Council Framework

Partnership Wild and Scenic River Budget

AMERICAN RIVERS

is a national conservation organization dedicated to protecting and restoring America's river systems and to fostering a river stewardship ethic. The organization was founded in 1973 to expand the number of rivers protected by the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

BRINGING RIVERS TO LIFE



American Rivers

FOUNDED 1973

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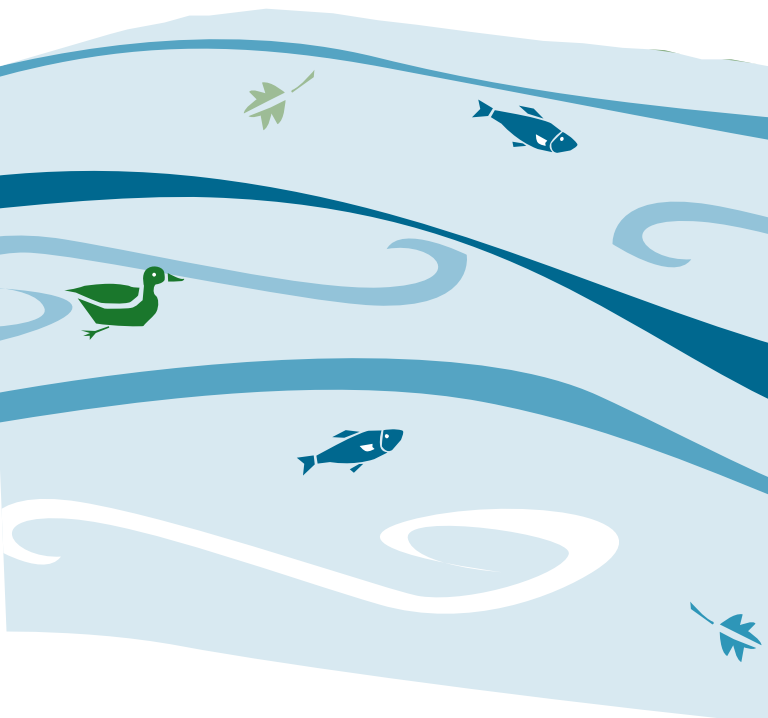
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scenic river management plan, and projects such as improving visitor facilities, outreach and education, and river restoration. Local leaders should work with the staff of the designation legislation's Congressional sponsor, and American Rivers, to secure this critical funding. For more information on the appropriations process, please visit American Rivers Online at www.americanrivers.org.