



Wild & Scenic Rivers Act Overview



Beginnings of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act



John and Frank Craighead



Lady Bird Johnson and Stuart Udall



Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

(16 U.S.C. 1271-1287)



- Public Law 90-542 (October 2, 1968) and amendments thereto
- Established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System



- Complement the national policy of dam construction by preserving other selected rivers in their free flowing condition
- Designated 8 rivers; Identified 27 rivers to be studied for potential inclusion in the National System

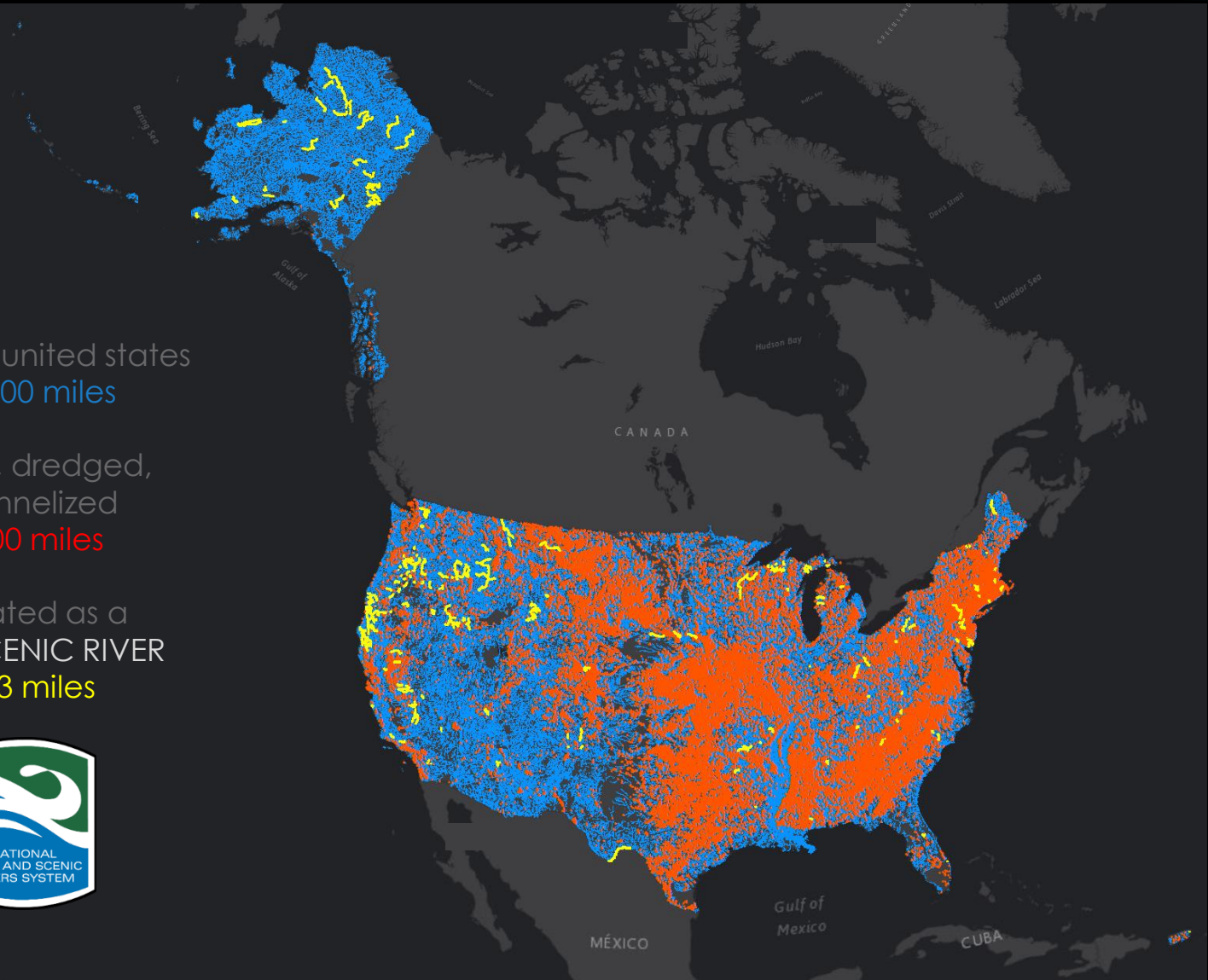


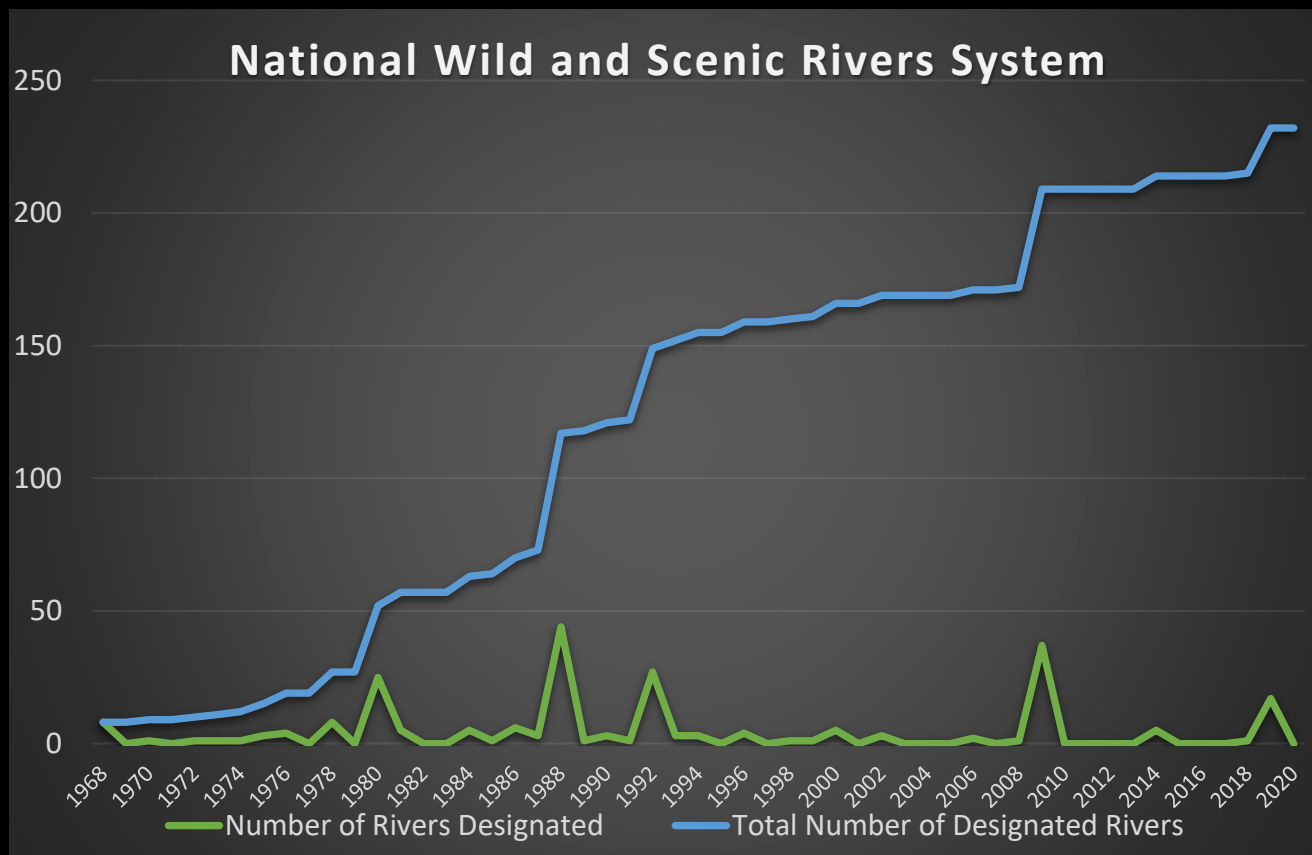


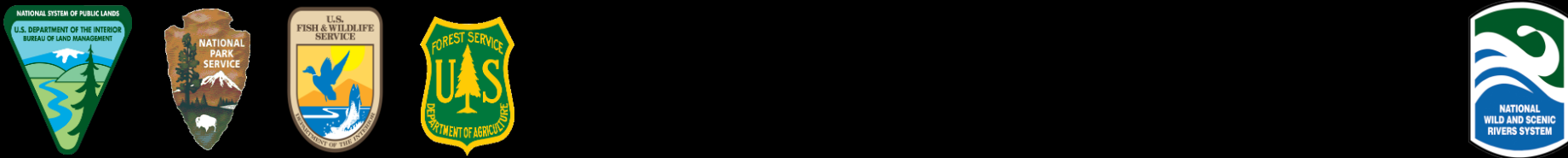
rivers of the united states
3,500,000 miles

dammed, dredged,
or channelized
860,000 miles

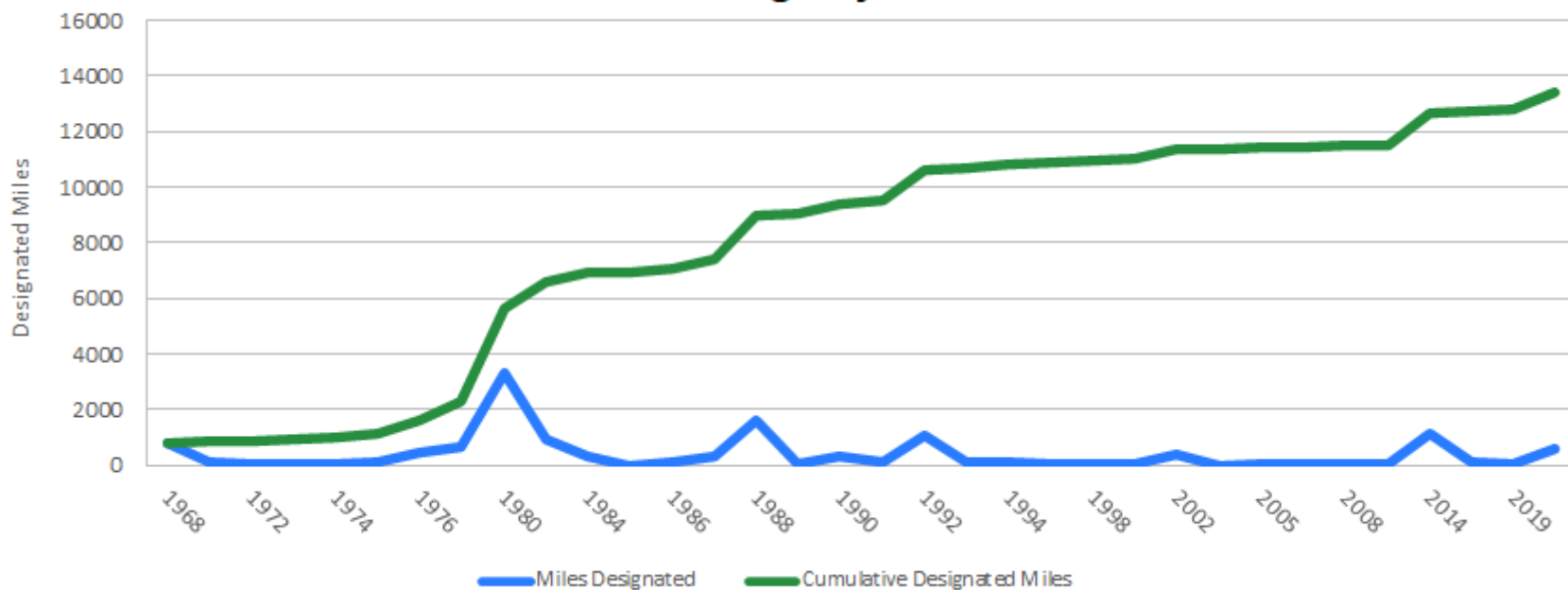
designated as a
WILD & SCENIC RIVER
13,413 miles





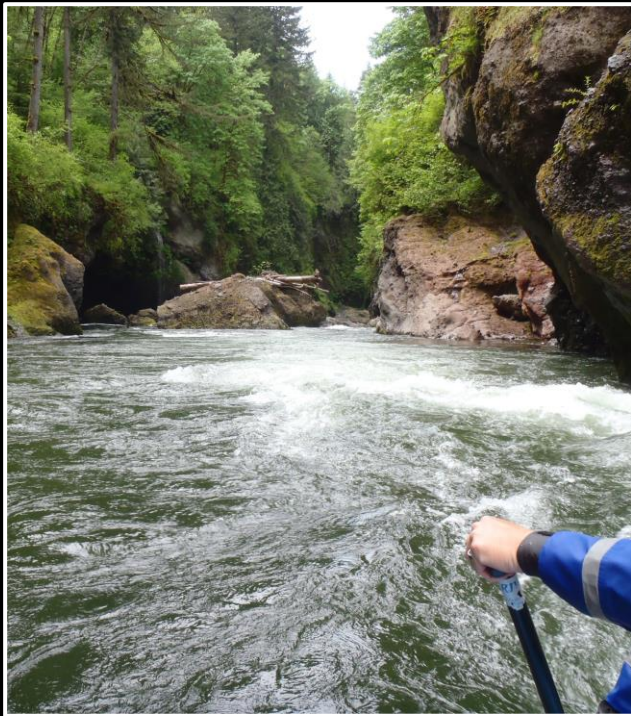


WSR Mileage by Year





Wild and Scenic Rivers Act - Sec. 1



“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”



Policy & Purpose



- Complement the national policy of dam construction by preserving other selected rivers:
 - Free flowing condition
 - Water quality
- Established a National Wild & Scenic Rivers System





River Values (Section 1 & 10)



“Protect and Enhance”:

- ❖ Free-Flowing Condition
- ❖ Water Quality
- ❖ Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)





River Values



Free-Flowing

“...existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway...”

- [WSRA, Section 16\(b\)](#)



River Values



Water Quality

...a policy that would preserve other selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition to protect the water quality...

- WSRA, Section 1(b)





River Values



Outstandingly Remarkable Values

- ❖ Scenic
- ❖ Recreational
- ❖ Geologic
- ❖ Fish and Wildlife
- ❖ Historic
- ❖ Cultural
- ❖ Other Similar Values





Designation (Section 2)



- ❖ by Congress, or
- ❖ by the Secretary of the Interior
 - If the river is already protected under state law and upon application of the governor(s) of a state(s)



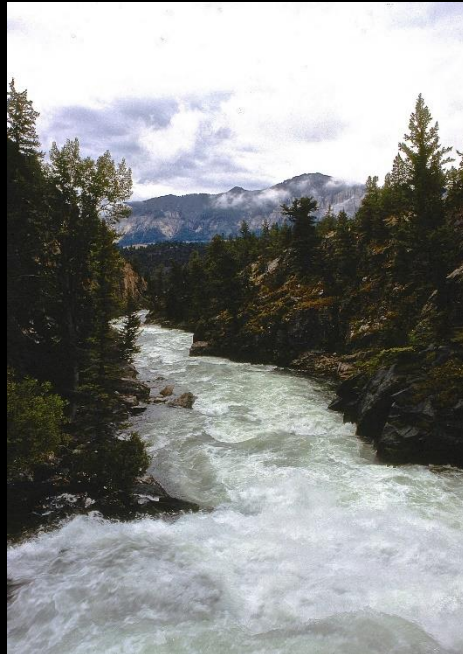


Classification (Section 2)



- 1) Wild
- 2) Scenic
- 3) Recreational

❖ Different levels of development and access





Agency Requirements (Section 3)



❖ Establish a river corridor boundary

- Average of not more than 320 acres per mile on both sides of the river (640 acres in AK and other WSRs, as identified in designating law)



❖ Prepare a comprehensive river management plan





Comprehensive River Management Plans



- ❖ Provide for protection of river values
- ❖ Address:
 - Resource protection
 - Development of lands and facilities
 - User capacities
 - Other management practices necessary or desirable to protect or enhance river values
- ❖ Be coordinated with resource management planning for affected adjacent federal lands
- ❖ Include consultation with Tribes, State and local governments, and the interested public
- ❖ Be prepared within 3 full fiscal years of designation



Study Rivers & Study Processes (Sections 4 & 5)



- ❖ Identified by Congress or Agencies
- ❖ Public Processes to Determine
 - Eligibility
 - Preliminary Classification
 - Suitability
- ❖ Study Reports & Recommendations
- ❖ Interim Boundaries & Protections





Protecting Free-Flowing Condition (Section 7)



- ❖ New dam construction prohibited
- ❖ Standards to evaluate other project activities proposed to take place below the ordinary high water mark



Federal Land (Sections 6, 8, 12)



- ❖ Limits on the amount of land federal agencies can acquire or dispose of/sell in the river corridor
- ❖ All federal agencies with control over actions in corridor and adjacent lands must protect river values





Mining (Section 9)



- ❖ Mining and leasing activities are subject to valid existing rights
- ❖ River sections classified as “wild” are withdrawn from mining and mineral leasing in corridor
 - “Scenic” and “recreational” can be administratively withdrawn
- ❖ Congressionally Authorized Study Rivers - withdrawn from mining for specified periods (usually three years)
 - Not withdrawn from mineral leasing laws





“Nondegradation & Enhancement” Policy (Section 10)



- ❖ Federal river administering agencies are directed to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated
- ❖ When wilderness and WSR designation overlaps, the more restrictive legal provisions apply

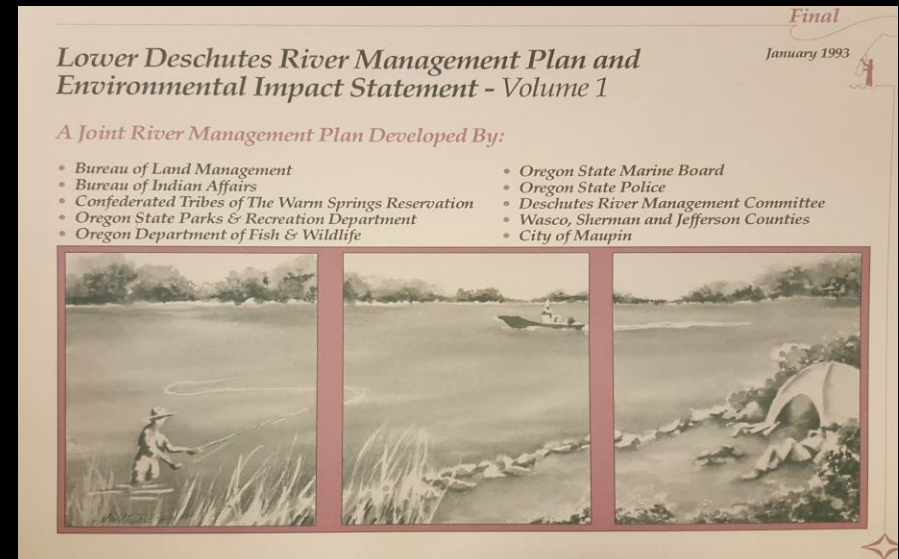




Cooperation & Partnerships (Sections 10 & 11)



- ❖ State and local participation in protecting designated rivers is encouraged
- ❖ Federal agencies are authorized to
 - enter into cooperative agreements
 - Provide technical and financial assistance





Water (Sections 12 and 13)



- ❖ Water Quality - Directs federal agencies to cooperate with EPA and appropriate state water pollution agencies
- ❖ Water Quantity - the amount of water necessary to protect river values is reserved
 - subject to state proceedings
 - federal reserved water rights

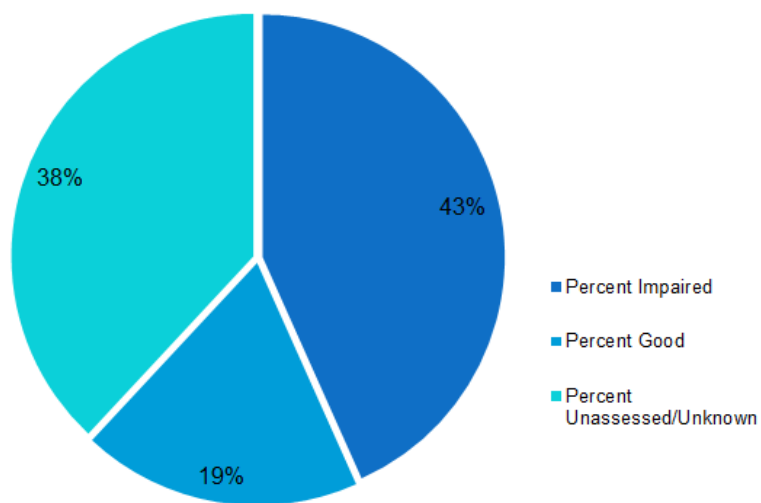




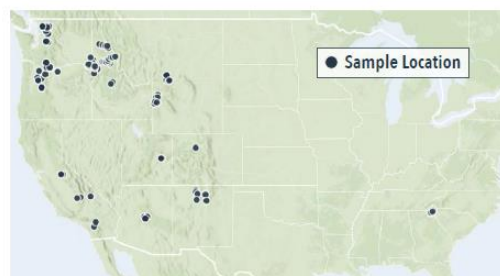
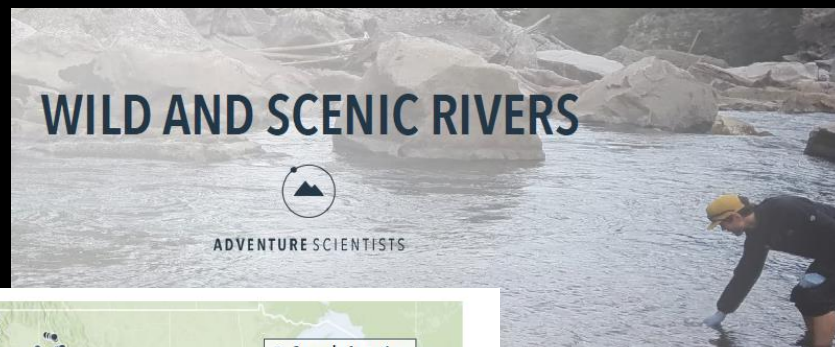
Wild & Scenic River Water Quality



**Water Quality Status
Wild & Scenic River Miles**



rivers.gov/documents/state-water-quality-assessments.pdf



In the project's first year, despite COVID-19, volunteers collected 228 samples across 49 rivers—one-quarter of the system.

PARTNERS



40
STATE AGENCIES



adventurescientists.org/rivers

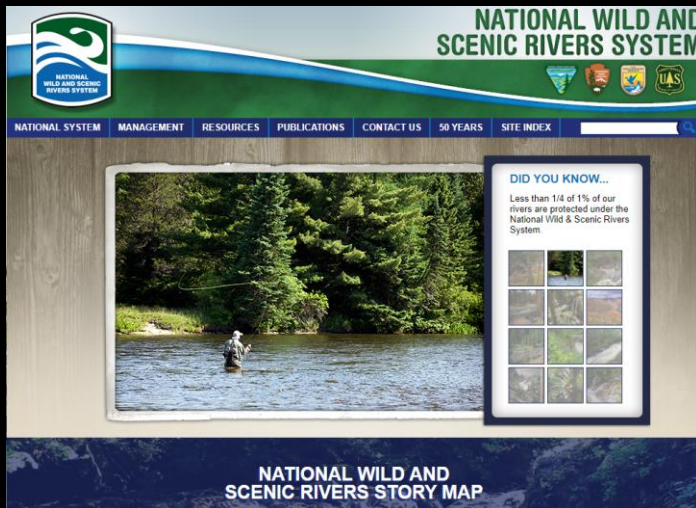


Interagency Wild & Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council



Chartered in 1995

Goal: To coordinate and strive for consistent interpretation of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act; maintain it as the national and international standard for river conservation



rivers.gov

Training Partner



river-management.org/river-training-center



Thank you!
Questions?



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