



# Wild and Scenic River Review

## Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System provides federal protection for certain free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Arctic Refuge has three Wild Rivers – the Ivishak, Wind, and Sheenjek rivers.



Both the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy require us to consider the Wild and Scenic potential of rivers within the Refuge when conducting comprehensive conservation planning.

### Review Process

A Wild and Scenic River Review has three phases: inventory, study, and recommendation.

#### 1. Inventory Rivers

Within the inventory phase, there are three steps:

##### a) Decide What Rivers to Evaluate

- There are approximately 160 named rivers, and hundreds of unnamed rivers, on the Refuge
- We decided to evaluate 20 waters with documented visitor use (see map)

##### b) Determine What Rivers are Eligible

To be eligible for wild and scenic river designation, a river is required to be both:

- free flowing, and
- possess at least one of six criteria called “outstanding remarkable values” (ORVs)

##### Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs):

**Scenic:** landform, vegetation, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features

**Recreational:** recreational opportunities are unique, rare, or attract visitors from beyond the region

**Geologic:** the corridor contains a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is unique or rare

**Historic/Cultural:** the river corridor contains national or regional importance for interpreting history or prehistory

**Fish:** the river is an important producer of resident or anadromous fish or provides exceptionally high quality habitat

**Wildlife:** the river is an important producer of native wildlife species or provides exceptionally high quality habitat

##### c) Classify Each River

##### River Classifications:

**Wild:** essentially primitive, not impounded, inaccessible except by trail, waters unpolluted

**Scenic:** largely primitive and undeveloped, not impounded, accessible in places by roads

**Recreational:** some development, may have some impoundment or diversion, readily accessible by road

#### 2. Study Rivers

Each eligible river, including lands within ½ mile of each bank, is studied to determine if it is suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The suitability study addresses questions such as:

- Is designation the best method of protection?
- What is the land ownership in the area?
- Is there public and political support for designation?

*Please comment on the draft river studies in Appendix I of the draft revised CCP.*

#### 3. Recommendation

Based on the suitability study, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decides whether to recommend all, some, or none of the Refuge’s rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The recommendation is included in the Record of Decision for the CCP. If the Service recommends designation, the river study report is given to the Department of Interior; then to the President, and finally to Congress. Only Congress can decide whether to designate rivers as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational.

Recommended rivers are managed to maintain their ORVs until Congress decides whether or not to include them in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. If Congress designates a river, it is managed to maintain its ORVs. If Congress decides not to designate a river, it is managed according to management guidelines in the CCP.

