

SUPPORT EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Background:

Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 1968, facing aggressive efforts at dam-building and other river development, our nation committed to a river protection strategy unique in the world: preserve our last, free-flowing rivers. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states:

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.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) is the nation's strongest river protection law, preserving free-flowing rivers and their unique values for future generations. Our National Wild and Scenic River System currently contains over 165 rivers in 38 states, stretching more than 11,000 miles. Unfortunately, Wild and Scenic Rivers management suffers from neglect and a lack of resources. Funding has remained stagnant, with the result that protected resource and recreational values are at risk, public visibility of Wild and Scenic Rivers has diminished, and eligibility and suitability studies for designation of new rivers are incomplete or are not undertaken.

Resolution:

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urges the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide the resources to:

- fully staff and train all personnel involved with Wild and Scenic Rivers management;
- implement consistent management practices throughout the

national system;

- enhance awareness of the national Wild and Scenic Rivers system through increased communication with the public who uses these rivers;
- and complete Wild and Scenic eligibility and suitability studies and make the results publicly available as an integral part of all agency planning processes.

To meet the goals above, the Federation supports increased federal funding to provide for adequate management and enforcement of individual Wild and Scenic Rivers and the national system.