

**Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan:  
Reference Document  
RMS/USFS Partnership  
V. 7/12/18 (Final)**

*Snake River Headwaters Wild and Scenic River (WSR)*

Context

*Amendatory Act:*

- Public Law and Date – P.L. 111-11, March 30, 2009 (Craig Thomas Snake Headwaters Legacy Act of 2008)
- Length – 314.9 miles (on the Bridger-Teton National Forest)
- Classifications – Wild (184.0 miles), Scenic (97.1 miles), Recreational (33.8 miles)
- Special Provisions
  - Require management plans to include, for each river segment, “a section that contains an analysis and description of the availability and compatibility of future development with the wild and scenic character of the river segment (with particular emphasis on each river segment that contains one or more parcels of private land).”
  - Direct the respective Secretary to apply to the State of Wyoming for a federal reserved water right for WSR purposes for each river segment.
  - Prohibit any acquisition of lands or interest in lands without consent of the owner.
  - Clarify intent not to affect any interstate water compacts at date of enactment, water rights in the States of Idaho and Wyoming, water rights held by the United States, and the management and operation of Jackson Lake or Jackson Lake Dam.

*Other Designated Segments:*

- Adjoining segments administered by the National Park Service (Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway), and by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (National Elk Refuge)

*Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for Bridger-Teton National Forest segments:*

- Date – January 2014
- NEPA Documentation – EA and FONSI (December 2013)
- Others Signatory to CRMP – None; however, extensive coordination was conducted with the National Park Service (NPS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure the resulting CRMPs are complementary. This coordination included concurrent development of boundaries, identification of river values, public involvement and environmental analyses (DN 1).

## CRMP Requirements

### *1) Description of existing resource conditions, including a detailed description of river values*

- Describes regional setting (CRMP 2-2 to 2-3). Provides additional detail of existing resource conditions by segment in the *Land Uses and Facilities Chapter* (CRMP 3-3 to 3-24); more specifically, in the “Existing Infrastructure and Activities on National Forest System Lands” and “Historic Activities, including Fire History” subsections.
- River Values:
  - Describes general hydrographic conditions and in-channel modifications (e.g., boat ramps, stream stabilization, bridges), and presents the geomorphic classification system subsequently applied to each segment (CRMP 2-4 to 2-6). The basic hydrology and basin characteristics, including geomorphic classification and free-flowing character, are provided for each segment (CRMP 2-17 to 2-87).
  - Explains that derivation of water quality information is from available data sources, with considerable variation in detail by segment (CRMP 2-7). Descriptions range from a paragraph based on best professional judgment (e.g. Blackrock Creek, CRMP 2-22) to several pages of detailed discussion of relevant water quality parameters (e.g., Crystal Creek, CRMP 2-37 to 2-40).
  - Shares process for development of segment-specific identification of outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) (CRMP 2-7 to 2-10). Specifically, Forest resource specialists, in collaboration with specialists from the NPS, USFWS and Wyoming Game and Fish Department, utilized the criteria for determining the significance of river-related values developed by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council to develop broad ORV statements for the entire designated component (CRMP 2-10 to 2-16). These criteria were then applied to determine which ORVs occur in each of the 18 designated segments on the Bridger-Teton National Forest (NF), the results of which are summarized in a table (CRMP 2-8 to 2-9). A robust description of each segment’s river values (including the river’s basic hydrology and basin characteristics, free-flowing character, water quality and general landscape character) begins with Bailey Creek (CRMP 2-17), concluding with Wolf Creek (CRMP 2-88).

### *2) Desired conditions and goals*

- Incorporates, through forest plan amendment, a new goal and objective, management emphasis, desired future conditions and resource standards and guidelines (CRMP 4-3 to 4-17).
- Principal need for change identified as direction to provide greater clarity for “hydrological and biological integrity” (DN 3).

### 3) *Development of lands and facilities*

- Presents in *Land Uses and Facilities Chapter* baseline information for each river segment, organized into six (6) subsections (CRMP 3-2 to 3-23):
  - Water Rights
  - Type and Amount of Permitted Uses, Rights of Way, and Easements
  - Land Ownership and Activities on Private Land
  - Historic Activities, including Fire History
  - Availability and Compatibility of Future Development with the WSR Character of the River Segment (note: as directed by the special provisions of the amendatory act)
- Provides guidance for several land-related activities: “Highway Staging, Storage and Borrow Areas” (CRMP 4-33), and “Operational Practices for Oil and Gas Leases within Designated Scenic and Recreational River Corridors” (CRMP 4-38 to 4-39).
- Suggests future land and facilities development actions in the *Opportunities, Concerns & Future Actions Chapter*. These actions are identified to inform the “development of a new yearly work plan” (CRMP 5-2). They include assessing the need for future mineral withdrawal of scenic and recreationally classified river segments (CRMP 5-4), development of river corridor plans (CRMP 5-6), and segment-specific potential opportunities (CRMP 5-8 to 5-15).

### 4) *User capacities*

- Addresses kinds and amounts of visitor use beginning with an overview (CRMP 3-25 to 3-27), followed by a discussion of each designated river segment (CRMP 3-28 to 3-48); specifically:
  - River values that could be affected by visitor use
  - Current visitor use
  - Applicable (monitoring) thresholds
  - An estimate of visitor capacity and rationale
- Provides an estimate of capacity for all river segments on a per-day basis with a “focus on the specific aspect or aspects of visitor use likely to first impact river values” (CRMP 3-27).
- Incorporates previous commercial and noncommercial visitor-use decisions in the Snake River Recreation Plan based on analysis in the CRMP and finding that these past decisions have “generally been effective at maintaining desired conditions and identified river values” (CRMP 3-28 to 3-33). See also DN (13).

#### 5) *Water quality and instream flows*

- Provides existing water quality information by segment (refer to CRMP requirement 1 for additional background).
- Suggests several future/ongoing actions re water quality, including:
  - Petitioning the Wyoming State Water Quality Division to classify all designated segments on the Bridger-Teton National Forest as Class I waters, consistent with designated segments within the National Parks, wilderness and the entire length of Granite Creek (CRMP 5-3).
  - Seeking partners to collect sediment transport data, and to conduct water quality monitoring (CRMP 5-3).
  - Continuing to monitor temperature on several of the designated rivers (CRMP 5-3 to 5-4).
- Presents an overview of the designated component's flow regime, describing most of the snowmelt-dominated segments as having an unaltered hydrograph (CRMP 2-4 to 2-5).
- Describes the flow-dependency of ORVs in *Regional River Setting & River Values Chapter* (CRMP 1-9, overview; CRMP 2-17 to 2-88, segment descriptions).
- Explains the intent and process to be followed to secure a federal reserved water right for instream flows necessary to achieve WSR Act purposes (CRMP 3-24). Also notes that flow data will continue to be collected to provide a basis for establishing this future right (CRMP 5-2 to 5-3).

#### 6) *Partnership opportunities*

- Recognizes numerous existing and suggested future partnership opportunities with other federal, state and local governments.
- Refer to the *Opportunities, Concerns & Actions Chapter* for discussion of component-wide existing and suggested partnership initiatives (CRMP 5-2 to 5-5), and to the discussion in other CRMP requirements' sections.
- States that an "advisory and stewardship group will be formed" to help capitalize on the many local, regional and national nongovernmental organizations "instrumental in creating this designation." This group will be asked to continue collaborative efforts including, but not limited to, monitoring, education and interpretation (CRMP 6-6). Refer also to intent to establish a "stewardship team" to help implement the activities and projects identified by segment in the *Opportunities, Concerns & Actions Chapter* (CRMP 5-7 to 5-15).

#### 7) *Regulatory authority of other agencies*

- Describes the authority and roles of other federal, state and local governments, Native American Tribes, private landowners and nongovernmental organizations in protecting river values in the *Partnerships and Stewardship Chapter* (CRMP 6-2 to 6-7).
- Directs the CRMP to be reviewed annually with other river managing agencies (CRMP 4-29).
- Explains the authority/roles of other federal, state and local governments for review and permitting of water resources projects (CRMP 7-6 to 7-7).

#### 8) *Monitoring strategy*

- Creates a new monitoring program to provide the basis for long-term trend analysis with indicators selected “as the minimum necessary to ascertain the earliest likely changes across the system that could lead to negative impacts.” The thresholds established by this program define the “point at which managers need to assess and potentially implement other strategies to protect the resources of the designation” (CRMP 4-18).
- Identifies other future additions to the monitoring plan, dependent on opportunity and funding; specifically (CRMP 4-18):
  - Establishing new reference reaches for riparian and stream channel conditions.
  - Creating permanent photo points on each segment for quick feedback at a relatively minor expense.
- Establishes, for two locations, a five-year time frame for monitoring the ecological indicators of streambank stability, cumulative bankfull width distribution and woody species age class. Commits to establishing a baseline for the ecological indicator of greenline composition (foliar cover, percent by species), and then monitoring this measure every 10 years (CRMP 4-19 to 4-20).
- Specifies four indicators for recreation (watercraft passing a select location per day or season, occupancy of dispersed campsites in defined areas, number of days vehicle capacity exceeds facility design, number of campsite or stock holding areas exceeding standards) to be measured at multiple locations (CRMP 4-20).
- Identifies potential management actions to consider should any thresholds in the new monitoring strategy be reached during the life of the CRMP (CRMP 4-24 to 4-31).

#### 9) *Other management direction (agency guidance)<sup>1</sup>*

- Decision provides standards and guidelines “to ensure that the proposed desired conditions and management emphasis for designated rivers are achieved” (CRMP 4-7).
- Replaces all existing standards and guidelines for designated WSRs outside wilderness and wilderness study areas. Specific standards or guidelines presented by resource for this area include (CRMP 4-7 to 4-10):
  - Ecological and Wildlife Resources
    - Wildlife and vegetative habitat
    - Forest health
    - Fencing and safe road crossings
    - Biodiversity
    - Migration corridors
  - Aquatic Resources
    - Fisheries habitat
    - Aquatic habitat

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<sup>1</sup> Only river-specific direction created during development of the CRMP is described in this section. This includes new, modified or deleted direction. Existing (and unchanged) forest- and area-wide direction also applicable in the river corridor is not included in this reference document.

- Specific standards or guidelines for designated WSRs outside wilderness and wilderness study areas (continued):
  - Roads and Facilities
    - Road maintenance
    - Road density
    - Administrative structures and facilities
    - Stream crossings
    - Road improvement and new road building
  - Scenery
    - Scenery management
    - Scenery perspective
- Retains existing direction for wilderness and wilderness study areas, and adds three new standards or guidelines. Specific standards or guidelines presented by resource for this area include (CRMP 4-11):
  - Ecological and Wildlife Resources
    - Biodiversity
    - Forest health projects
  - Recreation Resources
    - Recreation permits
- Also provides standards for the following resource areas that vary by desired future subcategory (CRMP 4-11 to 4-16):
  - Water resources projects
  - Forest health projects
  - Dispersed camping
  - Recreation facilities
  - River-related recreation permits
  - Visual quality
  - Non-recreation developments
  - Bank stabilization
  - Road and trail fords
  - Common variety minerals
  - Leasable minerals
  - Locatable minerals