



**US Department of Agriculture
US Forest Service
Region 4, Intermountain Region
Ashley National Forest**

Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Study and Report

**SUMMARY RESPONSES TO SCOPING COMMENTS
AND ERRATA TO DRAFT ELIGIBILITY REPORT**

October 2022



Photo Credit: US Forest Service



Prepared by Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc.

This page intentionally left blank.

Errata

During the scoping period for the Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the Forest Service received comments on the 2019 Draft Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study. Comments received are summarized on the following pages. Comments resulted in one change to the report, as indicated below. The final report incorporates these edits.

Page 1-2, paragraph 2 (second full paragraph): The first sentence is revised to read, “As of June 2022 (the last designation), the NWSRS protects 13,395.7 miles of 226 rivers in 40 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; this is a little more than one-quarter of one percent of the nation’s rivers (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 2022).”

Page References-1, citation for Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 2015: This reference is struck. The following citation is added: “Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council. 2022. River Mileage Classifications for Components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Updated July 2022.

Summary Responses to Comments

Comment Summary 1: The Ashley National Forest did not release its wild and scenic rivers study process document, which violates public participation requirements in the 2012 planning rule.

Response 1: The Forest Service endeavors to engage the public to the maximum extent it can, and has provided opportunities for engagement during the inventory, evaluation, and analysis of rivers considered for wild and scenic river eligibility and suitability. The wild and scenic study process¹ for the Ashley National Forest is described and can be linked to from the plan revision website. The draft eligibility report was released in May 2019. The final eligibility report was released in October 2022. The final report corrects the errata listed on page I of this document. The reports can be accessed on the Wild and Scenic Rivers webpage.²

Comment Summary 2: The Ashley National Forest should reexamine all rivers on the forest, regardless of previous inventory. The Ashley National Forest should consider new outstandingly remarkable values for rivers previously studied.

Response 2: As noted in FSH 1909.12.82.4, a forest need not reexamine a river if it has been studied in the past and a determination was made of its eligibility, unless changed circumstances warrant additional review of eligibility. Neither the commenters nor the Forest have identified changed circumstances that have affected the outstandingly remarkable values.

Comment Summary 3: The eligibility report errors in stating that there have been no WSR designations since December 2014.

Response 3: This is addressed in the errata, see page I of this document, and is corrected in the final eligibility report. As of this writing, the latest addition to the National System occurred on June 3, 2022, by Secretarial designation pursuant to Section 5(d) of the WSR Act. Prior to that, a number of additions were made in the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (PL 116-9) and East Rosebud Creek was designated in 2018 (PL 115-229).

Comment Summary 4: The Ashley National Forest should include more detailed maps in its eligibility report.

Response 4: Data used to identify named rivers on the 7.5-minute quadrangle map are in the USGS National Hydrography Dataset³. Commenters can use this data to identify the rivers that the Forest Service evaluated for eligibility.

Comment Summary 5: The Ashley National Forest should consider additional data sources for evaluating outstandingly remarkable values, including from the Utah Natural Heritage Program and the National Whitewater Inventory, as well as in-stream flows.

¹ Access at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd701359.pdf

² Access at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/ashley/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd546973>

³ Access at: <https://www.usgs.gov/national-hydrography/national-hydrography-dataset>

Response 5: The Ashley National Forest utilized the Intermountain Region (Region 4) eligibility process.⁴ The identified process included considering river segment information for the potential outstandingly remarkable values, including heritage and cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and recreation resources.

Comment Summary 6: The Ashley National Forest should adhere to the definitions of free-flowing as described in the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council guidelines and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and not exclude intermittent streams.

Response 6: As required by the 2012 Planning Rule, the Ashley National Forest reviewed all named rivers on the 7.5-minute quadrangle map that had not been previously inventoried for their eligibility.

Comment Summary 7: The Ashley National Forest should consider appropriate corridor widths to encapsulate outstandingly remarkable values.

Response 7: The Ashley National Forest considered river-related outstandingly remarkable values and determined that the 0.25-mile buffer encompassed those potentially river-related outstandingly remarkable values for the streams not previously inventoried.

Comment Summary 8: Commenters provided additional information for the Forest to consider related to the eligible segments.

Response 8: The wildlife outstandingly remarkable values suggested by the commenter are not rare, unique, or exemplary with respect to the region of comparison.

⁴ Access at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r4/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSEPRD658409>

This page intentionally left blank.