



File Code: 1900

Date: September 24, 2018

Dear Interested Public,

In 2009, nine rivers on the Mt. Hood National Forest were designated by Congress as additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (123 Stat. 991, P.L. 111-11) because of their unique cultural and natural characteristics. In total, 81 miles of rivers were designated and include the Collawash River, Eagle Creek, East Fork Hood River, Fifteenmile Creek, Fish Creek, Middle Fork Hood River, South Fork Clackamas River, South Fork Roaring River, and Zigzag River. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires a Comprehensive River Management Plan for designated rivers, which outlines management direction to protect the special values of these rivers for present and future generations. Currently, we are gathering information about each river and would like public input on the first step of developing a Comprehensive River Management Plan.

Overview of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Rivers designated by the Wild and Scenic River Act possess outstandingly remarkable values that may include one or more of the following: scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values. In order to be assessed as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant when compared to other rivers in the region or nation. It must also be river-related or river-dependent.

During the winter and spring of 2018, an interdisciplinary team reviewed the conditions of the nine designated rivers and made an initial determination of river values. The following summarizes the outstandingly remarkable values identified through the evaluation process to date. More information about how these values were determined and background on the resource conditions can be found in the River Values Report. This report, along with maps of the river segments, can be found on the project's webpageⁱ.

Collawash River

Fisheries and botany are outstandingly remarkable values of this river. The river is home to a full suite of native species; Endangered Species Act-listed fish and their critical habitat are present as well. In addition, quality habitat for cold water corydalis, a rare aquatic plant, exists within the river. Geology/hydrology is another outstandingly remarkable value for the portion of this river, which includes a deep, large earthflow that is very active and easily viewed as you visit the river corridor.

Eagle Creek

Recreation and botany are the outstandingly remarkable values for Eagle Creek. Local equestrian communities have a special interest in the area and it is very popular with these communities. Equestrian trail use along the river is a unique characteristic, especially as an easy trail. Equestrian trails of this caliber are limited within the region of comparison; as such, people are willing to travel long distances for this experience. In addition, quality habitat for cold water



corydalis within the Eagle Creek corridor make it an outstandingly remarkable from a botanical standpoint.

East Fork Hood River

Wildlife and botany are the outstandingly remarkable values for this river. The wild and scenic river corridor provides a critical travel (migration) corridor for deer and elk between winter and calving seasons. The corridor also provides habitat for the harlequin duck; this population is one of the largest on the forest due to its proximity to the Columbia River. Lastly, the corridor provides a high diversity of wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species, due to the habitat quality within the wild and scenic river corridor. Also, botany is an outstandingly remarkable value because of the rare and uncommon plants that occupy the corridor, particularly the violet suksdorfia.

Fifteenmile Creek

Wildlife, historical resources, recreation, and fisheries are outstandingly remarkable values along Fifteenmile Creek. The wild and scenic river corridor provides a wide diversity of wildlife habitat types; much of this diversity is rare within the region of comparison. Its diversity is due to the elevation changes within the corridor and creek itself. This river also includes transportation routes that could be spurs of the Historic Barlow Road. Parts of this river corridor also overlap with the Fifteenmile National Recreation Area, which was designated to provide for the protection, preservation, and enhancement of recreational, ecological, scenic, cultural, watershed, and fish and wildlife values. Fifteenmile Creek is popular with mountain bikers. Lastly, the headwaters are some of the best fisheries habitat within the subwatershed. Mid-Columbia steelhead within these segments is a very important population; it is one of the only truly wild fish populations.

Fish Creek

Fisheries is the outstandingly remarkable value for Fish Creek. Fish Creek supports a diversity of fisheries populations, including wild and native species and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Fisheries habitat within the wild and scenic corridor is moving towards exceptional habitat based on the large-scale restoration project that occurred following the 1996 flood events.

Middle Fork Hood River

Geology/hydrology, scenery, and fisheries are outstandingly remarkable values. The river is bound on the east by the Parkdale lava flow, an excellent example of an a'a type of flow which is typified by rough, jagged and cindery surfaces. The Parkdale lava flow is nationally significant and represents a unique opportunity for scientific study. The scenery is highly memorable and photographic due to the lava flow and unique vegetative patterns that result. Fisheries is also an outstandingly remarkable value due to a core population of bull trout, an Endangered Species Act-listed species. The heart of spawning and rearing habitat for this bull trout population is Laurence Lake, which is just above the wild and scenic designation for the Middle Fork Hood River. The wild and scenic river serves as a critical link for this population to reach Laurence Lake.

South Fork Clackamas River

Scenery and historical resources are the outstandingly remarkable values. The river flows through a narrow canyon with large rock outcrops and cliffs, a 100-foot waterfall in the lower part of the segment and old-growth trees along the river add to the visual diversity. This waterfall is highly memorable and often photographed. It is a destination for recreationalists throughout the region of comparison and beyond. The South Fork Water Board pipeline and associated features are unique within the region of comparison. These features served Oregon City and West Linn from 1915 through 1985 when they were decommissioned.

South Fork Roaring River

Botany is the outstandingly remarkable value for this river. The high quality habitat for cold water corydalis within the corridor make it an outstandingly remarkable from a botanical standpoint.

Zigzag River

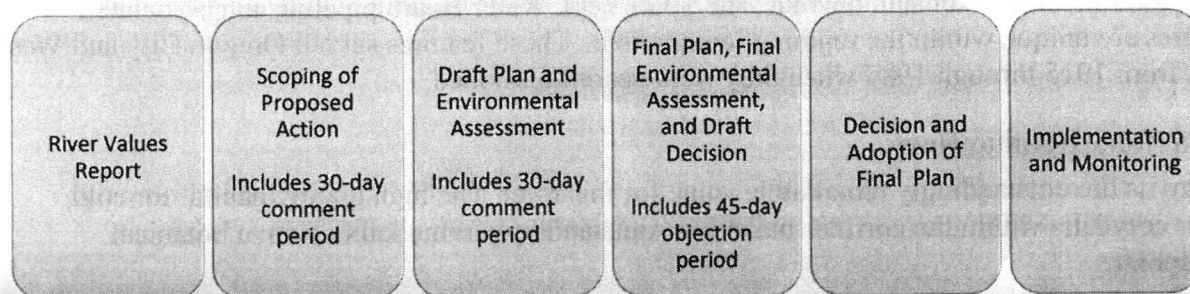
Scenery, recreation, and macroinvertebrates are outstandingly remarkable values. Both the Timberline Trail and Pacific Crest Trail are located within the corridor, and the river adds to the recreational experiences for hikers. These trails provide unique long-distance and circle-the-mountain experiences that are nationally recognized. Vistas of Mt. Hood within the corridor are unique and desirable, and contribute to the experiences on these trails. Macroinvertebrate is also an outstandingly remarkable value. There are only nine populations of the Scott's apatanian caddisfly (*Allomyia scotti*) known in the entire world, all of which are found on the Mt. Hood National Forest. The habitat for this species is present within the Zigzag River.

Wild and Scenic River Planning Process

The River Values Report is the first step in the planning process and the first of several opportunities to provide your feedback. This report describes the values for which each river was added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which include free flow, water quality and outstandingly remarkable values—collectively referred to as river values. The report also describes resource conditions and river values at the time that Congress designated these rivers as a wild and scenic river and present conditions.

It is important to identify the outstandingly remarkable values because the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires the administering agency to “protect and enhance” the river’s free-flowing condition, water quality and its outstandingly remarkable values. Protecting and enhancing the free-flow condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values become the basis for managing the wild and scenic river corridor. In addition, these river values will be the cornerstone of a Comprehensive River Management Plan, which will be completed over the next three to five years.

An overview of the steps to develop the Comprehensive River Management Plan, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, are below. As illustrated, it is critical to characterize the river values and identify the outstandingly remarkable values at this early stage, and we would like your help.



Additional information about the wild and scenic river act are available at: <https://www.rivers.gov/> and <https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/wild-scenic-rivers>. Lastly, the question and answer search engine provide by the Interagency Council on Wild and Scenic Rivers can be found here: <https://www.rivers.gov/information.php>.

Opportunity for Public Comment

For this first stage of the planning process, we are requesting public input on the river values of these nine designated rivers. The River Values Report can be found on the project webpage. If you would like a hard copy of the report mailed to you, please contact Jennie O'Connor Card (contact information below).

In addition, interactive maps and photo tours of each river corridor can be found on the story mapⁱⁱ developed as part of this planning process, which can also be accessed from the project webpage.

At this stage, we are particularly interested in your input on the following questions.

- Are there additional river-related natural, cultural, and recreational resources that are rare, unique or exemplary within these river corridors?
- What observations or concerns do you have about the current conditions within these river corridors that may be impacting these river values?

The Forest Service would appreciate your comments by November 2, 2018. Please submit your comments in one of the following ways.

- Electronic comments may be submitted to: comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood@fs.fed.us in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc).

- Send written comments to: Michelle Lombardo, Environmental Coordinator, 16400 Champion Way, Sandy, Oregon 97055.
- You may also hand-deliver your comments to the above address during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm or 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays.

Comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

There will be additional opportunities to comment, as illustrated above. The scoping period period on the proposed action is planned for summer 2019. There will also be comment and objection periods as the project proceeds. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know.

Information about the project is available online at <http://fs.usda.gov/goto/mthood/projects>. If you have any questions concerning this report or planning process, please Jennifer Wade, Public Services Staff Officer at jenniferwade@fs.fed.us or 503-668-1792; or, Jennie O'Connor Card, team leader at jennieoconnorcard@fs.fed.us or 406-522-2537.

Sincerely,

RICHARD PERIMAN
Forest Supervisor



ⁱ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54674>

ⁱⁱ <https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=96424036111e4b7da16c5eb6307a3d29>