



The primary protective provisions of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act include:

Policy Statement – Establishes policy that selected rivers and their immediate environments that possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. Also declares that the policy of dam construction on some rivers be complemented by a policy that protects other rivers.

Dam Prohibition – No federal agency shall assist by loan, grant, license or otherwise any dam or water resources project that would have a direct and adverse effect on river values. Designation shall not preclude developments below, above, or on tributaries of designated segments, that do not invade or unreasonably diminish the scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife values of the river. (16 USC Sec. 1278)

River Corridor & Classification – Components of the system are classified as wild, scenic or recreational rivers, based on the level of existing development when designated. (16 USC Sec. 1273b). Within one year after designation by Congress, the federal agency is required to establish a river corridor encompassing an average of not more than 320 acres of land per mile and determine the appropriate wild, scenic, or recreational classification for each segment. (16 USC Sec. 1274a).

Management Plan – Within three years of designation by Congress, the federal agency is required to prepare, in consultation with the state, local governments and the public, a comprehensive management plan to provide for the protection of river values. The plan shall address resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and other management practices necessary or desirable to achieve the purposes of the Act. (16 USC Sec. 1274d1)

Outstanding Values Protection – Rivers in the system are administered to protect and enhance the free-flowing character and outstanding values that caused the river to be included in the system, with primary emphasis on protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archeological, and scientific features (16 USC Sec. 1281a).

Management Policies – Federal agencies are required to implement management policies and plans to protect designated rivers, regarding timber harvesting, road construction, and other activities that may be contrary to the purposes of the Act. Federal managing agencies are also required to coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency and with appropriate state water pollution control agencies to eliminate or diminish water pollution (16 USC Sec. 1283).

The primary protective provisions of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act include:

Policy Statement – Certain rivers which possess extraordinary scenic, recreational, fishery, or wildlife values shall be preserved in their free-flowing state, together with their immediate environments, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the state. Such use of these rivers is the highest and most beneficial use of water as provided by the California Constitution (PRC 5093.52).

Dam Prohibition – No dam, reservoir, diversion, or other water impoundment facility may be constructed on any river and segment in the system; nor may a water diversion facility be constructed on the river and segment unless the facility is needed to supply domestic water to the residents of the county or counties through which the river and segment flows, and only if the Natural Resources Secretary determines that the facility will not adversely affect the free-flowing condition and natural character of the river and segment (PRC 5983.55).

No State Support For Dams – No department or agency of the state may assist or cooperate, whether by loan, grant, license, or otherwise, with any department or agency of the federal, state, or local government, in the planning or construction of a dam, reservoir, diversion, or other water impoundment facility that could have an adverse effect on the free-flowing condition and natural character of the river and segments included in the system (PRC 5093.56).

Protection of Free-Flowing State and Extraordinary Values – All departments and agencies of the state shall exercise their powers granted under any other provision of law in a manner that protects the free-flowing state of each component of the system and the extraordinary values for which each component was included in the system. All local government agencies shall exercise their powers granted under any other provision of law in a manner consistent with the policy and provisions of this chapter (5093.61)

River Definition and Classification – “Rivers” are defined as the water, bed, and shoreline, up to the first line of permanently established riparian vegetation (PRC 5093.52c). Rivers shall be classified by statute as wild, scenic, or recreational (PRC 5093.546).