



# **WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY REPORT**



**THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
UPPER SNAKE FIELD OFFICE**

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# **Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report**

**For**

**Upper Snake Field Office**

**March 2009**

Prepared By:  
United States Department of the Interior  
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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Legislative intent and BLM Authority.**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) was established in 1968 to provide protection and preservation of “free-flowing” rivers and/or river segments and the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) associated with that river. The WSRA established a protection and classification system called the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS). Rivers may be included in the NWSRS based upon one of three classifications of wild, scenic, or recreational. River designation is enacted by Congress or by the Secretary of Interior. Secretarial designations of rivers require that the river be included in a state river protection system and the state governor has to make the application to the Secretary (WSRA, 1968).

Rivers are identified for study by Congress under Section 5(a) or by the managing agency under Section 5 (d)(1). Section 5 (d)(1) of the WSRA directs all federal agencies to consider “potential wild and scenic” rivers within their respective jurisdictions in planning processes, particularly when planning for the use or development of water or related land resources (WSRA, 1968).

## **1.2. Location**

The lands considered in this study were those under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Upper Snake Field Office (USFO). The jurisdictional area of this office includes BLM managed public lands in eastern Idaho including Bonneville, Bingham, Blaine, Butte, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, Power, and Teton counties, as well as Teton County in Wyoming. There are approximately 1.8 million acres of BLM managed lands under the jurisdiction of the USFO, with 465 miles of rivers and streams flowing across the same lands which were of concern in this study.

## **1.3. Overview of Wild and Scenic Rivers evaluation Process**

A wild and scenic river study is composed of two parts: an eligibility/classification phase and a suitability phase. The USFO has completed the eligibility/classification phase of this study and will complete the suitability phase in the Resource Management Plan revision. The eligibility phase was completed in accordance with BLM manual 8351 Wild and Scenic Rivers: Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation and Management (USDI-BLM, 1993) and with The Wild and Scenic River Study Process Technical Report (IWSRCC, 1999).

### **1.3.1. Eligibility**

In order for a river to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, the river must be “free flowing” and possess one or more “outstanding remarkable” scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values. Section 16(b) of the WSR Act defines free-flowing as “existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway.” However, the



existence of small dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time the river segment is being considered shall not automatically disqualify it for consideration as a potential addition to the NWSRS.

Congress did not intend to require rivers to be “naturally flowing,” in other words, flowing without any upstream manipulation except by nature. The presence of impoundments above and/or below the segment (including those that may regulate the flow regime through the segment), existing minor dams, and diversion structures within the study reach will not by themselves render a river ineligible. There are many segments in the NWSRS that are downstream from major dams or are between dams (IWSRCC, 2006).

The river does not have to be “floatable or boatable” to be eligible, nor are there any minimum flow requirements. For the purposes of eligibility determination, the volume of flow is sufficient as long as it is enough to maintain the ORVs identified within the respective segment. Additionally, there are no regulatory requirements specifying a minimum length for river segments being considered for potential eligibility (IWSRCC, 2006).

An ORV must be river-related and is defined as a unique, rare or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale. ORVs should be located in or on the shore of the river (within 1/2 mile on either side of the river). ORVs must contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem and also owe their existence to the presence of the river. The determination of whether a river area contains “outstandingly remarkable” values is a professional judgment and is documented in this report (IWSRCC, 1999).

The following is a discussion of criteria that are specific for each ORV (IWSRCC, 2006):

### **Scenic**

The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook (H-8410-1) may be used in addressing visual quality and in evaluating the extent of development upon scenic values (USDI-BLM, 2006). The rating must be a scenic quality “A” as defined in the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.

### **Recreational**

Recreational opportunities are or have the potential to be popular enough to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the region of comparison or are unique or rare within the region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreation. River-related opportunities include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, and float boating.

- Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and may attract or have the potential to attract visitors from outside the region of comparison; and
- The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional usage or competitive events.

### **Geological**

The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains one or more examples of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that are unique or rare within the region of comparison. The features may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example, or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosion, volcanic, glacial, or other geologic structures).

### **Fish**

Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat or a combination of the following river-related conditions:

- *Populations.* The river is nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous, or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks or populations of state or federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.
- *Habitat.* The river provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for state or federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.

### **Wildlife**

Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat or on a combination of the following conditions:

- *Populations.* The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species depending on the river environment. Of particular significance may be species considered unique or populations of state- or US-listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.
- *Habitat.* The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for state- or US-listed or candidate threatened and endangered species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.

### **Historic**

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site or sites or feature or features associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or unusual in the region. A historic site or feature in most cases is 50 years old or older. Sites or features listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) may be of particular significance.

## **Cultural**

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site or sites where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must be rare or must have unusual characteristics or exceptional human interest values. Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory, be rare, represent an area where culture or a cultural period was first identified and described, have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups, or have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.

## **Other Similar Values**

While no specific evaluation guidelines have been developed for the other similar values category, additional values deemed relevant to the eligibility of the river segment should be considered in a manner consistent with the foregoing guidance, including, but not limited to, hydrologic, ecologic/biologic diversity, paleontological, botanic, and scientific study opportunities.

### **1.3.2. Tentative Classifications**

Once a river segment is deemed to meet the criteria for eligibility, it is then given a tentative classification of wild, scenic, or recreational (See Attachment 1). These categories are defined in the WSRA, Section 2(b):

“ (1) *Wild River Areas* — Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

(2) *Scenic River Areas* — Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

(3) *Recreational River Areas* — Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible, by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.”

In the case of recreational river areas, the classification is not meant to imply that rivers classified in that category will be prioritized and/or managed strictly for recreational development or use.

### **1.3.3. Suitability**

Determination of a river's suitability is the final step in determining whether to recommend a river as part of the NWSRS. Suitability is based on an analysis of the river areas' current values, current ownership and use, and anticipated future land and water uses.

Environmental, economic, and social impacts that will be associated with the designation of a river segment as wild and scenic are also considered in the determination of suitability. The suitability process is designed to answer the following questions:

Should the rivers' free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?

Will the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is it the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions, the benefits and impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated and alternative protection methods considered.

Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities that may be partially responsible for implementing protective management?

"The suitability of a river for designation as a Wild and Scenic River involves considerable judgment on the part of the study team. While guidelines are available, the suitability determination is influenced by the unique characteristics and conditions associated with each particular river. Controversial issues may influence the suitability recommendation for a river; however, there are typically a number of facets to any issue, and eliminating a river from consideration due only to controversy usually does not resolve the issue. The needs and desires of private landowners, small communities, and river users is an important component of the recommendation" (IWSRCC, 1999).

The decision whether or not to recommend designation of a study river is made through the decision document of the Land Use Plan. If found warranted, the nomination is forwarded to congress. The river may then become part of the NWSRS if Congress designates the river as such.

## **2. Methodology and Results**

This section describes the methodology implemented to identify river and stream segments to be evaluated for eligibility. The methods used to identify river and stream segments are those described in BLM Manual 8351 (USDI-BLM, 1993).

### **2.1. Methods and Criteria used to Identify River and Stream Segments.**

The initial river identification for inclusion in the NWSRS was based on current riparian inventory and monitoring data (BLM Riparian and Wetland Database). Approximately 922 stream segments, totaling 465 miles, were analyzed in initial evaluation efforts by BLM staff following the eligibility criteria. Care was taken to avoid overlooking any river segment located on BLM administered lands. Next, the rivers and streams that potentially met eligibility criteria (42 river and stream segments) were brought forward and analyzed by the BLM interdisciplinary team. To assist in this task, the BLM relied on several sources, including geographic information systems (GIS) data, BLM resource specialists' knowledge, informational sources, other agencies, and public input. Scoping letters and existing documents from other federal and state agencies (Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Reclamation) were used.



BLM resource specialists were able to query specific details they were seeking in relation to the river segments. GIS and riparian information assisted in narrowing the comprehensive river list to a much smaller list of seven rivers. The BLM resource specialists collected on-the-ground information by visiting each of these seven rivers. Field trips for the Teton River and its tributaries were conducted on June 2 and June 23, 2005. Willow Creek, Grays Lake Outlet, and their tributaries were visited on May 25, 2005. After reviewing the results from each site visit, the BLM staff identified five rivers to be considered as eligible in the NWSRS.

## **2.2. Results**

Within the USFO planning area there are five rivers that meet eligibility criteria. All of these rivers are free-flowing and possess one or more ORVs. Candidate rivers include the Teton River (split into four segments), Badger Creek, Bitch Creek, Canyon Creek, and the South Fork of the Snake River (split into three segments) (See Attachments 2 and 3).

# **3. Eligibility Determinations and Outstandingly Remarkable Values Descriptions**

## **3.1. Teton River**

There are four segments of the Teton River that were determined to meet eligibility criteria (See Attachment 4). These include:

- Segment 1: Felt Power Plant to Bitch Creek
- Segment 2: Bitch Creek to Spring Hollow
- Segment 3: Spring Hollow to Canyon Creek
- Segment 4: Canyon Creek to Teton Dam site

All four of the segments include “outstandingly remarkable” fish, wildlife, and cultural values. The following descriptions of these values apply to all four segments.

The Teton River is one of the most important remaining strongholds for native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho (IDF&G, 2007). This fish species is a Type 2 (Rangewide/Globally Imperiled) Species (ICDC, 1994). A Type 2 includes species that are experiencing significant declines throughout their range with a high likelihood of being listed under the Endangered Species Act in the foreseeable future due to their rarity and/or significant endangerment factors. It is a state listed sensitive species and the high level of water quality in the Teton River aids in the survival of this reproducing population of fish (IDF&G, 2007).

The Teton River Corridor provides essential winter range for big game species such as mule deer. Idaho Department of Fish and Game aerial flight records (1996-2006) reveal concentration of mule deer along these canyon rims. The canyon walls and rims are the

winter destination of mule deer migrating annually from higher elevation summer ranges to the north and east (IDF&G, 1996-2006).

The riffle and pool dynamics of the Teton River keep water open and provide quiescent pools for loafing of trumpeter swans during critical winter seasons. The aquatic vegetation in the open pools also provides forage for the swans. The Idaho Conservation Data Center database indicates that trumpeter swans are present in varying numbers along the Teton River during the winter. Mid-winter surveys conducted from 1987 through 2000 showed between nine and 114 swans using the Teton River Corridor (USDI-BOR 2006). The Teton River may also be an important spring and fall migration stopover point for American pelicans (BLM Type 3, IDF&G Protected nongame) whose diet consists mainly of fish, and some salamanders and crayfish (IDF&G 2005).

Rocky outcrops and open water along the river provide perching habitat and easy access to prey during winter months for both bald (BLM Type 2, IDF&G Threatened) and golden eagles. During the summer this same habitat supports additional raptors (American kestrels, prairie and peregrine falcons [BLM Type 3, IDFG Threatened] red-tailed hawks) as well as many neo-tropical migratory songbirds during the breeding and nesting season.

Historic sites in the river corridor include ranches, roads, railroads, dams and dam sites. These historic sites remain unevaluated and have not been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the Teton Dam Site is associated with a unique, calamitous event in Idaho's history. It would merit an NRHP listing, possibly before it reaches the 50 year milestone.

Cultural resource inventories have identified and recorded nine prehistoric Native American sites in the Teton River Canyon. The presence of these sites and related cultural materials indicate diverse cultural activities and widespread use of the river and canyon over several thousand years. Archaeologists discovered stone tools associated with bison bone at one open camp (Ozbun, Goodwin, Miller, & Fagan, 2003).

The Shoshone-Bannock People lived in the Teton River Canyon and vicinity when the first American and European fur trappers and explorers reached the Snake River Plain in the early 1800s (Murphy & Murphy, 1969 and 1986). The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have identified specific types of natural resources within the river corridor used for traditional and sacred purposes (USDI-BOR, 2006). The presence of these resources and sacred or traditionally important places qualifies the Teton River Canyon under the Cultural ORV.

### **3.1.1. Segment 1: Felt Power Plant to Bitch Creek**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Scenic, recreation, fish, wildlife, cultural  
*Classification:* Scenic

This segment is 1.80 miles in length, with approximately 1.17 miles bordered by BLM land on one or both sides of the river. The Felt Power plant is located at the beginning of this segment. This is a small (6450 kW) private hydroelectric plant which sits partially on land owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. This segment continues downstream to the

confluence of the Teton River with Bitch Creek. Hydrology and river flow does not appear to be affected by this hydroelectric plant.

With the exception of the Felt Power Plant road, the steep slopes of the river corridor are natural, scenic, and are richly covered with diverse vegetation; which appear to be virtually untouched by human activities. The riparian areas remain largely undisturbed and are dominated by Douglas fir, shrubs, and other native vegetation. Below the dam for a mile and a half exists part of a Class IV to V expert whitewater run. These rapids actually begin 8 miles above the dam and can be accessed from Highway 33. These rapids are of regional significance due to the unique nature of the activity available.

### **3.1.2. Segment 2: Bitch Creek to Spring Hollow**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Scenic, recreation, fish, wildlife, cultural, and historic

*Classification:* Scenic

This segment, approximately five miles in length (3.53 of which is bordered by BLM land on either or both sides), extends from the confluence of the Teton River with Bitch Creek downstream to Spring Hollow. Access to this stretch of river is limited, with the exception of a boat slide located near the Bitch Creek confluence. This segment is identical to the scenic characteristic of segment one. Although there are good recreational opportunities in this reach, the lack of or difficulty in accessing the river prevents high recreation use levels. A portion of the visitors that do use the river for recreational purposes such as fishing, travel long distances to fish these waters. There is also unique Class IV whitewater runs in this segment. The downstream end was once intended to be part of a reservoir. Some of this segment was part of the inundation zone of the Teton Reservoir, which leaves some evidence such as landslides and a line of purposely cleared trees below the intended full level.

The historic Teton Dam breach of 1976 was the one and only failed dam by the Bureau of Reclamation in its long history of dam building. Since then, there has not been a dam built by this agency (USDI-BOR, 2006).

### **3.1.3. Segment 3: Spring Hollow to Canyon Creek**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Fish, wildlife, cultural, and historic

*Classification:* Scenic

This segment of stream is approximately 7.2 miles long, with 2.71 miles of it being bordered on one or both sides by BLM land. This segment starts at the Spring Hollow boat ramp, which was originally meant for the reservoir. The ramp provides one of the few access points into the canyon. This segment extends to the confluence of the Teton River with Canyon Creek. There are good recreation opportunities for boating, fishing, and interpretation. The landscape in this section shows impacts from the failed Teton reservoir. Like segment two, there are historic values due to the Teton Dam and its changes to the river hydrology. However the disturbances have largely been revegetated and do not dominate the visual landscape. Most visitors find this a primitive and scenic float.

#### **3.1.4. Segment 4: Canyon Creek to Dam site**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Recreation, fish, wildlife, cultural, and historic

*Classification:* Recreational

This segment is approximately 6.26 miles long, with 0.28 miles of it bordered on one or both sides by BLM land. The segment begins at the confluence of the Teton River with Canyon Creek, noticeable where a large side canyon joins the Teton River, and extends downstream to the site of the failed Teton Dam. The landscape in this segment also shows impacts from the failed Teton reservoir such as mass wasting, hillside slumping, and breach disturbance. Additionally, there has been little riparian shrub recovery.

This segment contains the site of the actual dam, which breached on June 5, 1976. The dam gave-way during its initial filling, killing 11 people and causing approximately 2 billion dollars in property damage. This served as an important turning point in the United States views and practices of damming rivers for irrigation purposes (USDI-BOR, 2006). This site attracts visitors from around the country to view the significant and unique history of this site. In addition to the “outstanding remarkable” interpretive values, there are excellent opportunities for recreational boating (motorized and non-motorized) and fishing.

#### **3.2. Badger Creek**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Scenic, fish, wildlife, cultural

*Classification:* Scenic (See Attachment 5)

The BLM manages 1.12 miles of stream which extends from the confluence with the Teton River to the proposed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) boundary. This is an area of outstanding scenic values with limited access. There is much variability with respect to geologic features, ecosystems, and slope aspects. Furthermore the steep slopes are natural, scenic, and richly covered with diverse vegetation appearing to be virtually untouched by human activities (with the exception of the Felt Power Plant road). Additionally, there are rock ledges, sharp meanders in the river bends, and riparian areas rich in Douglas fir, shrubs, and other native vegetation.

There are native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in this stream system. Like the Teton River, Badger Creek possesses a high water quality level and helps support this state listed sensitive fish species. Badger Creek provides an important linkage corridor for big game migration from the Teton Range to the east into the winter habitat of the Teton River.

#### **3.3. Bitch Creek**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Scenic, recreation, fish, wildlife, cultural

*Classification:* Scenic (See Attachment 5)

From the confluence with the Teton River, upstream 11.69 miles to the U.S Forest Service (Forest Service) boundary, the BLM manages 2.7 miles of stream. Approximately 1.81



miles of the 2.7 BLM-managed stream miles are located at or near the confluence with the Teton River, the remaining 0.89 miles of BLM-managed land is adjacent to Forest Service land. The Forest Service has already identified Bitch Creek as being an eligible “wild” river in their Forest Plan (USDA-FS, 1998).

This segment of stream offers unique regional recreational opportunities for kayaking and extreme sports. Although safety is a major concern and access is difficult, these opportunities do exist.

Native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout populate this stream and are identified as a state sensitive species. Bitch Creeks provides an important linkage corridor for big game migration from the Teton Range to the east into the winter habitat of the Teton River.

#### **3.4. Canyon Creek**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Scenic, fish, wildlife, cultural, historic  
*Classification:* Scenic (See Attachment 5)

BLM manages 3.62 miles of Canyon Creek, the majority being at or near the confluence with the Teton River. Approximately 0.37 miles is located up stream, sandwiched between private lands with limited access.

This is a small steep stream with very limited access. Debris and portages make this a difficult kayaking run, limiting recreation activities. There are steep scenic canyon walls with vigorous willow, dogwood, aspen, chokecherry, and juniper present in the riparian areas. Livestock grazing is very limited.

There are native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in this pristine stream system habitat. Excellent water quality levels help support this sensitive fish species. Canyon Creek provides linkage habitat from the Big Hole Mountains to the south into the Teton River corridor.

#### **3.5. South Fork of the Snake River**

Three segments of the South Fork of the Snake River (South Fork) were determined to meet eligibility criteria (See Attachment 6). These include approximately 61 miles of the South Fork and are divided up as follows:

- Segment 1: Palisades Reservoir to Conant Valley Power line.
- Segment 2: Conant Valley Power line to Riley Diversion
- Segment 3: Riley Diversion to Henry’s Fork Confluence.

All three of the segments include “outstandingly remarkable” recreation, fish, wildlife, botanical, cultural and ecological values. The following descriptions of these values apply to all three segments.

The South Fork attracts recreation visitors not only from the local region, but throughout the entire United States and from around the world. The South Fork is known world-wide for its outstanding fishing/fly-fishing opportunities. It is common for visitors to use both motorized and non-motorized boats to fish, but there are also many who fish from shore. The South Fork provides a blue-ribbon trout fishery that is unique to the entire State of Idaho.

The South Fork is home to one of the strongest and largest spawning population of native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in the State of Idaho. This fish species is a Type 2 (Rangewide/Globally Imperiled) Species. A Type 2 includes species that are experiencing significant declines throughout their range with a high likelihood of being listed under the Endangered Species Act in the foreseeable future due to their rarity and/or significant endangerment factors. The high quality habitat of the tributaries in the South Fork watershed provide excellent spawning habitat. The abnormally high summer flows allow the trout deep pools and plenty of water to take refuge during the warmest time of the year. The cool temperatures of eastern Idaho also help provide a thermal sanctuary for trout species (IDFG, 2007).

The cottonwood forest along the South Fork is the largest continuous cottonwood gallery in the western United States (Merigliano, 1996). The South Fork is also home to river habitat where the threatened Ute Ladies' Tresses orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) thrives. This unique habitat is home to more than half of Idaho's bald eagles and one-third of the bald eagles in the regional Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem nest on the South Fork (GYBEWG, 1996). The South Fork is designated as a National Important Bird Area (IBA) where approximately 126 bird species are found, with 21 of those species being birds of prey. Of those 126 bird species, two-thirds of them are Neotropical migrants. The South Fork is also located within the boundaries of the BLM Snake River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), which was designated to recognize and conserve the unique cottonwood ecosystem, scenic values, bald eagle habitat, and other wildlife species and their habitats.

Historic sites in the river corridor include inscription rocks, ranches, cabins, roads, irrigation diversions, ferry landings and the homestead of a famous Idaho writer. These sites are unevaluated and have not been nominated to the NRHP. However, there are sufficient numbers and types of historic sites to qualify the South Fork under the Historic ORV.

The Shoshone-Bannock people lived along the South Fork when the first American and European fur trappers and explorers reached the Snake River Plain. They were living along the South Fork when the first American and European fur trappers and explorers reached the Snake River Plain (Murphy & Murphy, 1969 and 1986). Cultural resource inventories have identified and recorded prehistoric Native American rockshelters, pictographs, house pits and other sites throughout the South Fork study area (Lohse, 1993; Butler, 1986). The presence of these sites indicates over 8,000 years of Native American use of the river and surrounding areas.

Bison skulls and other bones are sometimes found in banks and sand bars of the South Fork. These remains are evidence that bison herds once followed the river from the Snake River Plain to the valleys located on either side of the Teton Range (Hill, 2008).

**3.5.1. Segment 1: Palisades Reservoir to Conant Valley Power line**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Recreation, fish, wildlife, ecological

*Classification:* Recreational

This segment consists of the South Fork from Palisades Dam (a large dual purpose hydroelectric and irrigation project near the Idaho Wyoming Border) downstream approximately 15 miles to Conant Valley where a power line crosses the South Fork of the Snake River (see map). There have also been some limited channel modifications.

**3.5.2. Segment 2: Conant Valley Powerline to Riley Diversion**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Recreation, fish, wildlife, ecological, scenery

*Classification:* Scenic

This segment consists of the South Fork from the Conant Valley Powerline crossing downstream approximately 23 miles to Riley Diversion, a canal diversion located near Heise, ID. This section is relatively free of development except some sparsely located agricultural activities and residential developments.

In addition to the ORVs mentioned at the beginning of this section (3.5. South Fork of the Snake River), scenery is also a significant ORV. The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, and color are exemplary visual features. The river scenery is back-dropped with mountain ranges within a few miles on either side, with steep canyons that open into large flood plains. The riparian sections along the banks and on the river islands are densely vegetated, offering habitat for a variety of plant and animal life. Signs of development, furthermore, are relatively few and far between. For the most part, this segment of river remains in a primitive and very scenic state. The scenic values associated with this segment are nothing less than “outstandingly remarkable.”

**3.5.3. Segment 3: Riley Diversion to Henry’s Fork Confluence.**

*Outstandingly Remarkable Values:* Recreation, fish, wildlife, ecological

*Classification:* Recreational

This segment consists of the South Fork from the Riley Diversion near Heise, ID downstream approximately 23 miles to the confluence of the South Fork and Henry’s (North) Fork of the Snake River. This section is somewhat developed agriculturally with livestock grazing along the river as well as sparse residential development.

## 4. Protective Management

River segments determined to be eligible are afforded interim protective management until a suitability study is completed. It is the BLM's policy to manage and protect the free-flowing character, tentative classification, and identified ORVs of eligible rivers (USDI-BLM, 1993). This protection occurs at the point of eligibility determination, so as not to adversely constrain the suitability assessment or subsequent recommendation to Congress. The BLM may protect river values using both the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act. Eligible river segments determined to be non-suitable through a land use plan decision are subject to the direction and management decisions contained in the land use plan.

## 5. Next Steps

The BLM will be completing the suitability phase for all streams found to be eligible, during the RMP revision process. Each eligible river segment will be evaluated for suitability or nonsuitability to assess whether or not it is a potential candidate for inclusion in the National System. The Draft RMP will incorporate each of the eligible rivers into one or more alternatives. The BLM will then seek public review and comment on the Draft RMP. The Draft EIS will provide an assessment of potential impacts from recommending each river as either suitable or unsuitable. The proposed RMP and final EIS will include final suitability determinations on the eligible rivers. Congressional legislative action is required for actual designation and final classification of suitable river segments.

1. The current status of land ownership and use in the area
2. The reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed or curtailed if the area were included in the National System.
3. The extent to which the agency proposes that administration of the river, including the costs thereof, be shared by state and local agencies.
4. Request the public, user organizations, and adjoining land manager to provide information related to:
  - a. Characteristics that may affect the boundaries of the river
  - b. Resource values as well as current and future land and waters uses that the BLM should consider in making a decision about the suitability or non-suitability of candidates to the NWSRS.
  - c. Alternatives and actions other than WSR designation that would protect identified ORVs.
5. A determination of the degree to which the state or its political subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river, should it be included in the NWSRS.
6. Support or opposition to river designation. Local support is essential to the protection of river resources. Coordination with local governments and organizations is necessary to develop support for designation or alternative strategies to protect resources of critical importance to the local, regional and national public.
7. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional goals.



8. An evaluation of the adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's ORVs by preventing incompatible development.
9. Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?
10. Will the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is it the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions, the benefits and impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated, and alternative protection methods considered.
11. Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities who may be partially responsible for implementing protective management?

## 6. List of Preparers and Participants

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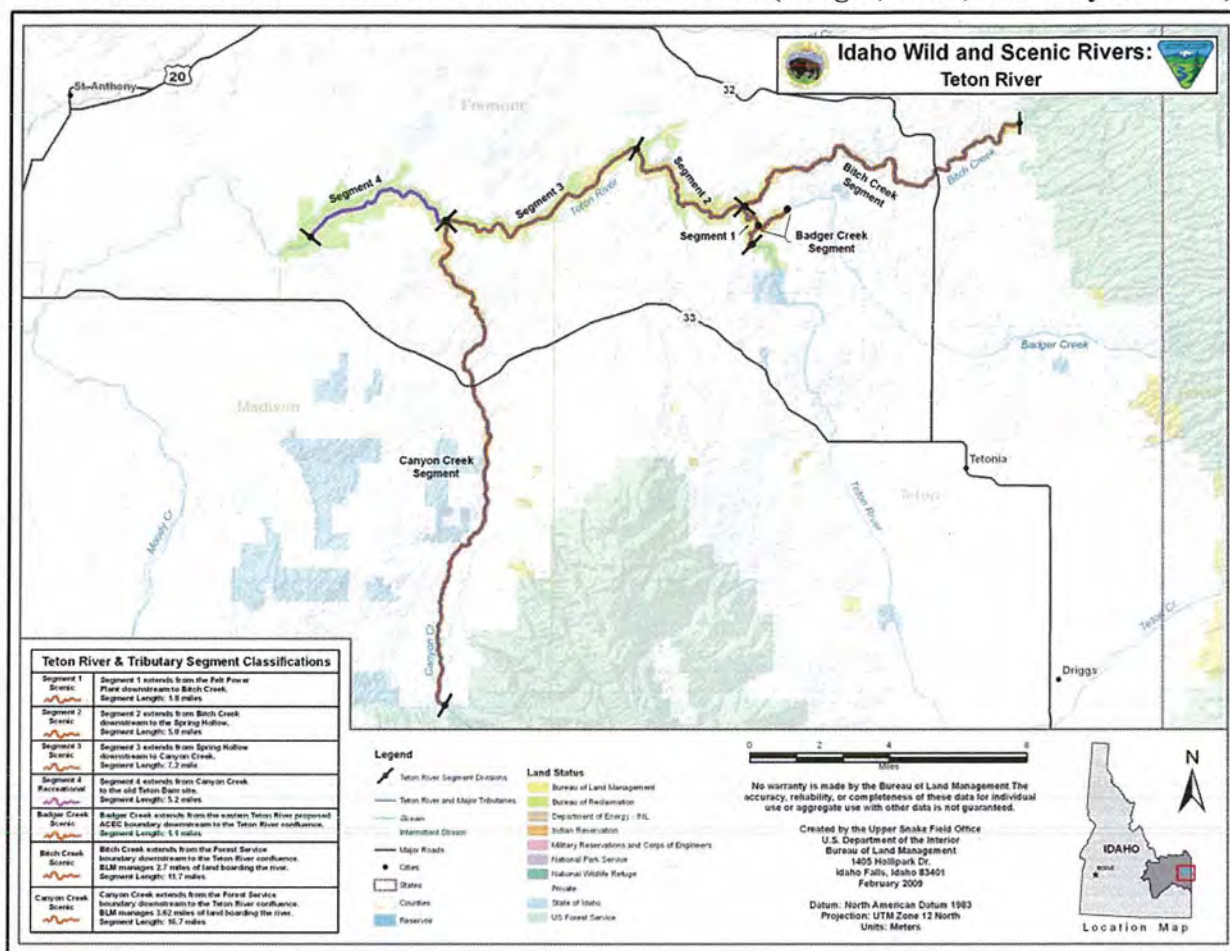
## 8. Attachments

### Attachment 1: Classification Criteria for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Areas

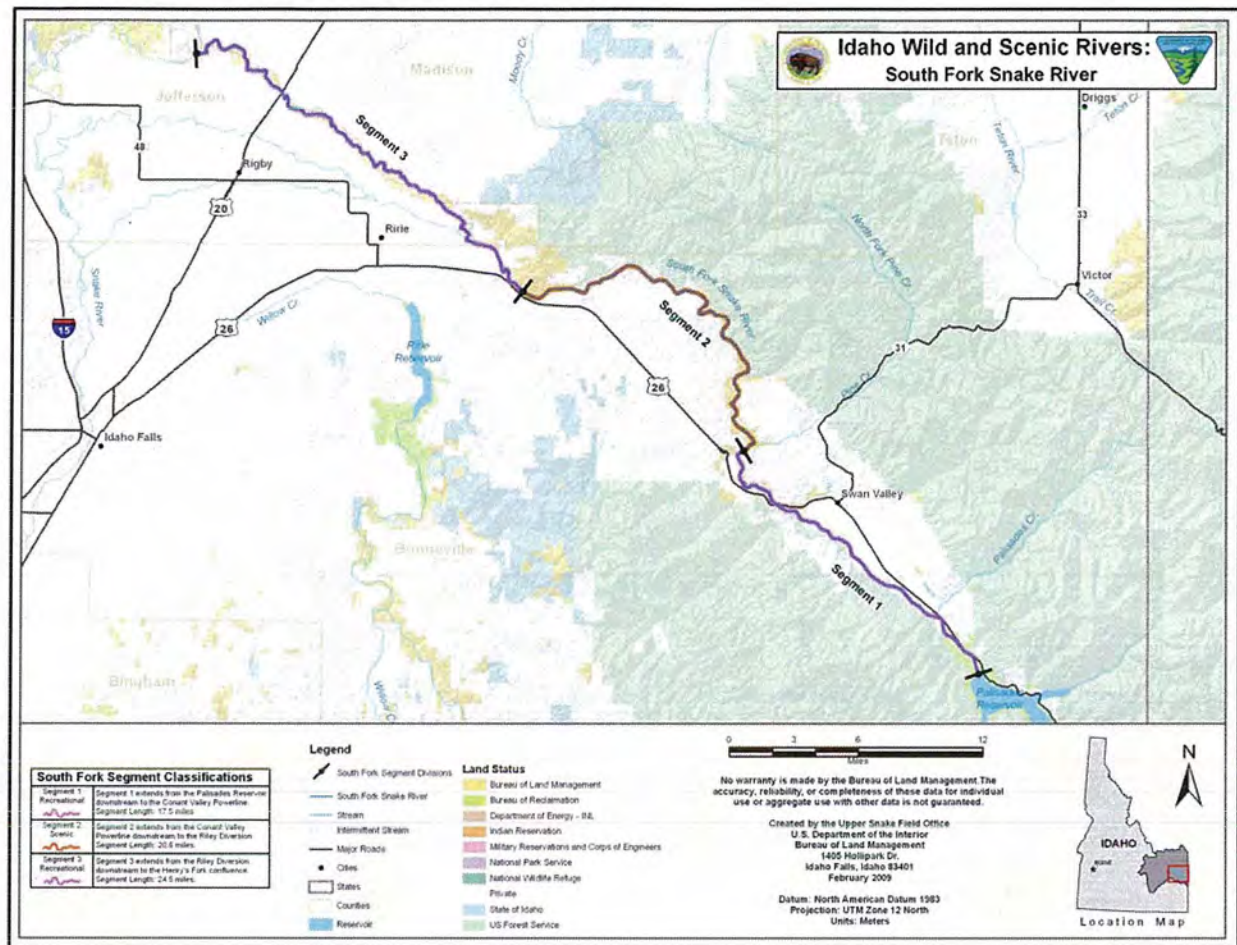
<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Wild</i>	<i>Scenic</i>	<i>Recreational</i>
<b>Water Resources Development</b>	Free of impoundment.	Free of impoundment.	Some existing impoundment or diversion. The existence of low dams, diversions, or other modifications of the waterway is acceptable, provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance.
<b>Shoreline Development</b>	Essentially primitive. Little or no evidence of human activity. The presence of a few inconspicuous structures, particularly those of historic or cultural value, is acceptable. A limited amount of domestic livestock grazing or hay production is acceptable. Little or no evidence of past timber harvest. No ongoing timber harvest.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. No substantial evidence of human activity. The presence of small communities or dispersed dwellings or farm structures is acceptable. The presence of grazing, hay production, or row crops is acceptable. Evidence of past or ongoing timber harvest is acceptable, provided the forest appears natural from the riverbank.	Some development. Substantial evidence of human activity. The presence of extensive residential development and a few commercial structures is acceptable. Lands may have been developed for the full range of agricultural and forestry uses. May show evidence of past and ongoing timber harvest.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Generally inaccessible except by trail. No roads, railroads or other provision for vehicular travel within the river area. A few existing roads leading to the boundary of the river area is acceptable.	Accessible in places by road. Roads may occasionally reach or bridge the river. The existence of short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads or railroads is acceptable.	Readily accessible by road or railroad. The existence of parallel roads or railroads on one or both banks as well as bridge crossings and other river access points is acceptable.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Meets or exceeds federal criteria or federally approved state standards for aesthetics, for propagation of fish and wildlife normally adapted to the habitat of the river, and for primary contact recreation (swimming), except where exceeded by natural conditions.	No criteria prescribed by the Act. The federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 have made it a national goal that all waters of the United States be made fishable and swimmable. Therefore, rivers will not be precluded from scenic or recreational classification because of poor water quality at the time of their study, provided a water quality improvement plan exists or is being developed in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.	



## Attachment 2: Teton River and Teton River Tributaries (Badger, Bitch, and Canyon Creek)



### Attachment 3: South Fork of the Snake River



#### Attachment 4: Teton River Classification

<i>Classification Criteria</i>	<i>River Segments</i>			
	<b>Felt Power Plant to Bitch Creek</b>	<b>Bitch Creek to Spring Hollow</b>	<b>Spring Hollow to Canyon Creek</b>	<b>Canyon Creek to Failed Teton Dam Site</b>
<b>Water Resources Development</b>	Free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments but there are remnants of a small dam. There are also small channel modifications (diversions).	Free of impoundments.
<b>Shoreline Development</b>	Largely primitive and undeveloped. Some farming activities are dispersed private dwellings are noticeable on the canyon rim.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. Some farming activities are dispersed private dwellings are noticeable on the canyon rim.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. Some farming activities are dispersed private dwellings are noticeable on the canyon rim.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. Some farming activities are dispersed private dwellings are noticeable on the canyon rim.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Extremely limited, public access at Felt Power Plant Road only.	Extremely limited, public access at Spring Hollow Road only.	No public access.	Extremely limited, public access locations at the failed Teton Dam Site only.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.
<b>Segment Length</b>	1.8 Miles	5 Miles	7.2 Miles	6.26 Miles
<b>Classification</b>	Scenic	Scenic	Scenic	Recreational

**Attachment 5: Badger, Bitch, and Canyon Creek Classification (Teton River Tributaries)**

	<i>Badger Creek</i>	<i>Bitch Creek</i>	<i>Canyon Creek</i>
<b><i>Classification Criteria</i></b>			
<b>Water Resources Development</b>	Free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments.
<b>Shoreline Development</b>	Largely primitive and undeveloped.	Largely primitive and undeveloped.	Largely primitive and undeveloped.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Extremely limited.	Extremely limited.	Extremely limited.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.
<b>Segment Length</b>	1.12 Miles	2.7 Miles	3.62 Miles
<b>Classification</b>	Scenic	Scenic	Scenic



# Attachment 6: South Fork of the Snake River Classification

<i>Classification Criteria</i>	<i>River Segments</i>		
	<b>Palisades Reservoir to Conant Valley Power Line</b>	<b>Conant Valley Power Line to Riley Diversion</b>	<b>Riley Diversion to Henry's Fork Confluence</b>
<b>Water Resources Development</b>	Bank rip-rap and floodplain modifications; free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments; small bank rip-rap sections present.	Diversions, irrigation canals, rip-rap, channel modifications (diversions) and floodplain modifications (levees).
<b>Shoreline Development</b>	Residential, commercial and agricultural development present. Presence of domestic livestock grazing.	Largely primitive. Some farm and dispersed private dwellings. Presence of domestic livestock grazing.	Some dispersed private dwellings and agricultural development. Presence of domestic livestock grazing.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Readily accessible by road. Roads parallel river in many places.	Accessible in places by road. Generally inconspicuous "South Fork Road" parallels river from Anderson Diversion to Burns Creek.	Accessible in places by road, particularly along levees and where highways bridge river.
<b>Water Quality</b>	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.	Water quality is sufficient to support high quality fisheries and is suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities.
<b>Segment Length</b>	15 Miles	23 Miles	23 Miles
<b>Classification</b>	Recreational	Scenic	Recreational

