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National Wild and Scenic Rivers and State Scenic Waterways in Oregon

by Andy Kerr[1]

Abstract

Oregon has more units (but not miles) in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) than any other state. There are 69 units of the NWSRS in Oregon, totaling 2,424 stream miles, representing 31 percent of the individual units and 18 percent of the miles in the national system. The area of water and land protected in these Oregon units of the NWSRS is ~731,000 acres. The Oregon Scenic Waterways System (OSWS) is complementary to the NWSRS and includes 1,154 miles in 22 units. 79 percent of OSWS miles are also in the NWSRS. Still, fewer than 1 percent of Oregon streams are included in the NWSRS. An estimated additional 10,000 miles (less than 3 percent of the total mileage) of Oregon streams are eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS and OSWS.

Introduction

In the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, Congress stated with unusual eloquence:

> *It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Congress declares that the established national policy of dams and other construction at appropriate sections of the rivers of the United States needs to be complemented by a policy that would preserve other selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition to protect the water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation purposes.*[2]

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[2] The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. § 1271.

The original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), establishing the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS), included eight stream segments totaling 774 miles, among them the Lower Rogue River in Oregon. Since then, the WSRA has been amended repeatedly by Congress so that as of August 2018 the NWSRS included 209 units totaling 12,753.5miles.[3] Congress added more Oregon segments to the system in 1975, 1984, 1988, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2009 and 2013.

Oregon's National Wild and Scenic Rivers

The 58 units of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in Oregon, totaling 1,908 stream miles, are shown in Table 1. These represent 28 percent of the individual units and 15 percent of the stream miles in the national system. The area of land and water protected in these Oregon units of the NWSRS is 594,624 acres.

Figure 1. *Koosah Falls on the McKenzie River. The segment between Clear Lake and Carmen Reservoir is included in both the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the Oregon Scenic Waterways System.* George Wuerthner.

[3] River Mileage Classifications for Components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, December 2016, https://www.rivers.gov/documents/rivers-table.pdf.

Table 1. Units of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in Oregon									
Stream Segment [1]	**Federal Unit(s) [2]**	**Year**	**Miles** [3]				**Upper Terminus** [4]	**Lower Terminus [4]**	**Eco-reg-ion(s) [5]**
			Wild	**Scenic**	**Rec.**	**Total**			
Big Marsh Creek	Des NF	1988			15.0	15.0	NE1/4, S15, T26S, R6E, WM	Confluence with Crescent Creek	ECSF
Chetco River [6]	RR-S NF	1988	*25.5*	*8.0*	*11.0*	44.5	Headwaters	Rogue River–Siskiyou NF boundary	KM
Clacka-mas River	MH NF	1988		20.0	27.0	47.0	Big Springs	Big Cliff Reservoir	C
Collawash River	MH NF	2009		11.0	6.8	17.8	Headwaters of East Fork Collawash River	Confluence with Clackamas River	C
Crescent Creek	Des NF	1988			10.0	10.0	SW1/4, S11, T24S, R6E, WM	W boundary S13 T2S R7E WM	ECSF
Crooked River	Pri BLM	1988			15.0	15.0	Crooked River National Grasslands boundary	Confluence with Dry Creek	CP
Crooked River, North Fork	Och NF, Pri BLM	1988	*11.9*	8.5	13.8	34.2	Source at Williams Prairie	One mile upstream from confluence with Deschutes River	BM
Deschutes River	Des NF, Pri BLM	1988	0.0	30.0	140.4	170.4			ECSF, CP
• Upper					40.4	40.4	Wickiup Dam	Northern boundary of Sunriver at SW1/4 S20 T19S R11E WM	
• Upper Middle				11.0		11.0	Northern boundary of Sunriver at SW1/4 S20 T19S R11E WM	Lava Island Camp	
• Lower Middle				19.0		19.0	Oden Falls	Reservoir Billy Chinook	
• Lower Upper					100.0	100.0	Pelton Reregulating Dam	confluence with Columbia River	
Donner und Blitzen River	Bur BLM	1988, 2000	*87.5*			87.5			NBR
• Main-stem		1988	*16.8*			16.8	Confluence with South Fork Bitrzen and Little Bitzen	Malheur National Wildlife Refuge boundary	
• Little Blitzen		1988	*12.5*			12.5	Headwaters	Confluence with South Fork Blitzen	
• South Fork Blitzen		1988	*16.5*			16.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Little Blitzen (statute in error ans says "confluence with	

								South Fork Blitzen."	
• Big Indian Creek		1988	*10.0*			10.0	Headwaters	Confluence with South Fork Blitzen	
• Little Indian Creek		1988	*3.7*			3.7	Headwaters	Confluence with Big Indian Creek	
• Fish Creek		1988	*13.3*			13.3	Headwaters	Confluence with the Donner und Blitzen	
• Mud Creek		2000	*5.1*			5.1	Confluence with an unnamed spring in the SW1/4 SE1/4 of S32 T33S R33E WM	Confluence with the Donner und Blitzen	
• Ankle Creek		2000	*8.1*			8.1	Headwaters	Confluence with the Donner und Blitzen	
• South Fork Ankle Creek		2000	*1.6*			1.6	Confluence with an unnamed tributary in the SE1/4 SE1/4 of S17 T34S R33E WM	Confluence with Ankle Creek	
Eagle Creek	MH NF	2009	*8.3*			8.3	Headwaters	Mount Hood NF boundary	C
Eagle Creek	W-W NF	1988	*4.0*	6.0	17.0	27.0	Headwaters below Eagle Lake	Wallowa-Whitman NF boundary at Skull Creek	BM
East Fork Hood River	MH NF	2009			13.5	13.5	Oregon Highway 35	Mount Hood Forest boundary	C
Elk Creek [7]	Med BLM	2019			*7.3*	7.3	Confluence with Flat Creek	southern edge of the Army Corps of Engineers boundary in T33S R1E S30 WM, near river mile 1.7	C
Elk River	RR-S NF	1988, 2009, 2019	*39.1*	*8.4*	*26.6*	74.1			CR
• Main-stem		1988			*17.0*	17.0	Confluence of North Fork and South Fork	Confluence of main stem with Anvil Creek	
• North Fork		1988, 2009	*5.5*	*0.6*		6.1	Source in S21 T33S R12W WM	Confluence with South Fork	
• South Fork		2009	*4.2*	*0.9*		5.1	Source in SE1/4 S32 T3S R12W WM	Confluence with North Fork Elk River	
• Rock Creek		2019	*1.7*			1.7	Headwaters	west boundary of T32S R14W S30 WM	

• Bald Mountain Creek		2019			*8.0*	8.0	Headwaters, including Salal Spring	Confluence with Elk River	
• South Fork Bald Mountain Creek		2019		*3.5*		3.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Bald Mountain Creek	
• Platinum Creek		2019	*0.9*	*0.1*		1.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• Panther Creek		2019	*4.9*	*0.1*		5.0	Headwaters including Mountain Well	Confluence with Elk River	
• East Fork Panther Creek		2019	*3.0*			3.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Panther Creek	
• West Fork Panther Creek		2019	*3.0*			3.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Panther Creek	
• Lost Creek		2019	*0.9*	*0.1*		1.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• Milbury Creek		2019	*1.4*	*0.1*		1.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• Black-berry Creek		2019	*4.9*	*0.1*		5.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• East Fork Blackberry Creek		2019	*2.0*			2.0	Headwaters in T33S, R13W S26 WM	Confluence with Blackbery Creek	
• Mc-Curdy Creek		2019	*0.9*	*0.1*		1.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• Bear Creek		2019			*1.5*	1.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Bald Mountain Creek	
• Butler Creek		2019	*3.9*	*0.1*		4.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
• East Fork Butler Creek		2019		*2.7*		2.7	Headwaters on Mount Butler	Confluence with Butler Creek	
• Purple Mountain Creek		2019	*1.9*		*0.1*	2.0	Headwaters	Confluence with Elk River	
Elkhorn Creek [7]	Wil NF	1996	*5.8*	0.6		6.4	Willamette NF southern boundary	Where the segment leaves BLM land	C
Fifteen-mile Creek [7]	MH NF, Pri BLM	2009	*10.5*	0.6		11.1	Senacal Spring	Western edge S20 T2S R12E WM	C, ECSF
Fish Creek	MH NF	2009			13.5	13.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Clackamas River	C
Franklin Creek	Siu NF	2019	*4.5*			4.5	Headwaters	Private land boundary in S8	CR

Grande Ronde River	W-W & Uma NFs & Val BLM	1988	*26.4*		17.4	43.8	Confluence with Wallowa River	Washington border	BM
Illinois River	RR-AS NF	1984	*28.7*	17.9	3.8	50.4	Rogue River–Siskiyou NF boundary	Confluence with Rogue River	KM
Imnaha River	W-W NF	1988	*15.0*	4.0	58.0	77.0	Headwaters of South Fork Imnaha River	Confluence with Snake River	BM
Jenny Creek	Med BLM	2019		*17.6*		17.6	BLM boundary located at the north boundary of the SW1/4 SE1/4 T38S R4E S34 WM	Oregon state border	C. ECSF. KM
John Day River	Pri BLM	1988			147.5	147.5	Service Creek	Tumwater Falls	BM. CP
John Day River, North Fork	W-W & Uma NFs	1988	*27.8*	10.5	15.8	54.1	Headwaters in North Fork John Day Wilderness	Confluence with Camas Creek	BM
John Day River, South Fork	Mal NF	1988			47.0	47.0	Malheur NF boundary	Confluence with Smoky Creek	BM
Joseph Creek	W-W NF	1988	*8.6*			8.6	Joseph Creek Ranch 1.0 mile downstream from Cougar Creek	Wallowa-Whitman NF Boundary	BM
Klamath River [8]	Lak BLM	1994		11.0		11.0	J.C. Boyle Powerhouse	California border	ECSF
Little Deschutes River	Des NF	1988			12.0	12.0	Source in NW1/4 S15 T26S R6E WM	N boundary 12 T26S R7E WM	ECSF
Lobster Creek	NWOR BLM	2019			*5.0*	5.0	T15S R8W S35 WM	northern edge of the Bureau of Land Management boundary in T15S R8W S15 WM	CR
Lostine River	W-W NF	1988	*5.0*		11.0	16.0	Headwaters in Eagle Cap Wilderness	Wallowa-Whitman NF boundary	BM
Malheur River	Mal NF	1988		7.0	6.7	13.7	Confluence with Bosonberg Creek	Malheur NF boundary	BM
Malheur River, North Fork	Mal NF	1988		25.5		25.5	Headwaters	Malheur NF boundary	BM
McKenzie River	Wil NF	1988			12.7	12.7	Clear Lake	Confluence with Scott Creek, not including Carmen and Trail Bridge reservoirs and dams	C

Metolius River	Des NF	1988		17.1	11.5	28.6	Deschutes NF boundary below Springs of the Metolius	Reservoir Billy Chinook	ECSF
Middle Fork Hood River	MH NF	2009		3.7		3.7	Confluence of Clear and Coe Branches	North section line of S11, T1S, R9E, WM	C
Minam River	W-W NF	1988	*39.0*			39.0	Headwaters at south end of Minam Lake	Eagle Cap Wilderness boundary, 0.5 miles down-stream from Cougar Creek	BM
Molalla River	NWOR BLM	2019			*21.3*	21.3			C
• Main-stem					*15.1*	15.1	Southern boundary T7S R4E S19 WM	BLM boundary in T6S R3E S7 WM	
• Table Rock Fork					*6.2*	6.2	Easternmost Bureau of Land Management boundary line in the NE1⁄4 S4, T7S R4E WM	Confluence with Molalla River	
Nestucca River	NWOR BLM, Siu NF	2019			*15.5*	15.5	Confluence with Ginger Creek	western edge of T4S R7W S7 WM	CR
North Fork of the Middle Fork Willa-mette River	Wil NF	1988	*8.8*	6.5	27.0	42.3	Source at Waldo Lake	Willamette NF boundary at Westfir	C
North Fork Silver Creek	Med BLM	2019			*6.0*	6.0	Headwaters	western edge of the Bureau of Land Management boundary in T35SR9W S17 WM	KM
North Powder River	W-W NF	1988		6.0		6.0	Headwaters in Elkhorn Mountains	Wallowa-Whitman NF boundary	BM
North Umpqua River	Uma NF, Ros BLM	1988			33.8	33.8	Soda Springs Power-house	Confluence with Rock Creek	C
Owyhee River	Val BLM	1984	*120.0*			120.0	(a) Idaho border; (b) confluence with Crooked Creek	(a) China Gulch; (b) Owyhee Reservoir	SRP
Owyhee River, North Fork	Val BLM	1988	*9.6*			9.6	Idaho border	Confluence with Owyhee River	SRP
Powder River	Val BLM	1988		11.7		11.7	Thief Valley Dam	Highway 203 Bridge	BM

Quartz-ville Creek	Wil NF	1988			12.0	12.0	Willamette NF boundary	Green Peter Reservoir	C
Roaring River	MH NF	1988	*13.5*		0.2	13.7	Headwaters	Confluence with Clackamas River	C
Rogue River (lower)	RR-SNF, Med BLM	1968, 2019	*119.8*	*31.8*	*48.8*	200.4	Confluence with Applegate River	Lobster Creek Bridge	KM
• Main-stem	RR-SNF, Med BLM	1968	*33.6*	*7.5*	*43.4*	84.5			
• Kelsey Creek	Med BLM	2019	*6.8*			6.8	Wild Rogue Wilderness boundary in T32S R9W S25 WM	Confluence with Rogue River	
• East Fork Kelsey Creek		2019	*4.6*	*0.2*		4.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Kelsey Creek	
• Whisky Creek		2019	*1.2*		*1.6*	2.8	Confluence of East and West Forks of Whiskey Creek	Confluence with Rogue River	
• East Fork Whisky Creek		2019	*2.6*	*0.9*	*0.3*	3.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Whisky Creek	
• West Fork Whisky Creek		2019	*4.8*			4.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Whisky Creek	
• Big Windy Creek		2019	*5.8*	*1.5*		7.3	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• East Fork Big Windy Creek		2019	*3.7*	*0.2*		3.9	Headwaters	Confluence with Big Windy Creek	
• Little Windy Creek		2019	*1.9*	*1.2*		3.1	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Howard Creek (and Anna Creek)		2019	*6.9*	*3.5*	*3.5*	13.9	Headwaters (and headwaters of Anna Creek)	Confluence with Rogue River (and confluence with Howard Creek)	
• Mule Creek		2019	*7.8*	*3.5*		11.3	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Missouri Creek		2019	*1.6*	*3.1*		4.7	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Jenny Creek		2019	*1.8*	*3.1*		4.9	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Rum Creek		2019	*2.2*	*2.2*		4.4	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• East Fork Rum Creek		2019	*1.3*	*0.8*		2.1	Headwaters	Confluence with Rum Creek	

• Wildcat Creek		2019	*1.7*			1.7	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Mont-gomery Creek		2019	*1.8*			1.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Hewitt Creek		2019	*1.2*	*1.4*		2.6	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Bunker Creek		2019	*6.6*			6.6	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Dulog Creek		2019	*1.0*	*0.8*		1.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Quail Creek		2019	*1.7*			1.7	Wild Rogue Wilderness boundary in T33S R10W S1 WM	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Meadow Creek		2019	*4.1*			4.1	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Russian Creek		2019	*2.5*			2.5	Wild Rogue Wilderness boundary in T33S R8W S20 WM	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Alder Creek		2019	*1.2*			1.2	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Booze Creek		2019	*1.5*			1.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Broco Creek		2019	*1.8*			1.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Copsey Creek		2019	*1.5*			1.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Corral Creek		2019	*0.5*			0.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Cowley Creek		2019	*0.9*			0.9	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Ditch Creek		2019	*1.8*			1.8	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Francis Creek		2019	*0.9*			0.9	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Long Gulch		2019	*1.1*	*1.4*		2.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Shady Creek		2019	*0.7*			0.7	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
• Slide Creek		2019	*0.7*	*0.5*		1.2	Headwaters	Confluence with Rogue River	
Rogue River, Upper	RR-S NF	1988	*6.1*	34.2		40.3	Northern boundary Crater Lake National Park	Rogue River–Siskiyou NF boundary at Prospect	C
Salmon River	MH NF, NWOR BLM	1988	*15.0*	4.8	13.7	33.5	Headwaters	Confluence with Sandy River	C
Sandy River (Lower)	NWOR BLM	1988		3.8	8.7	12.5	Dodge Park	Dabney State Park	WV
Sandy River (Upper)	MH NF	1988	*4.5*		7.9	12.4	Headwaters	Mount Hood NF boundary	C

Smith River, North Fork	RR-S NF	1988	*8.5*	4.5		13.0	Headwaters	California border	KM
Snake River [9]	W-W NF	1975	*32.5*	34.4		66.9	Hells Canyon Dam	An eastward extension of the north boundary of S1 T5N R47E WM	BM
South Fork Clacka-mas River	MH NF	2009	*4.2*			4.2	Confluence with East Fork of the South Fork Clackamas	Confluence with Clackamas River	C
South Fork Roaring River	MH NF	2009	*4.6*			4.6	Headwaters	Confluence with Roaring River	C
Sprague River, North Fork	F-W NF	1988		15.0		15.0	Head of river in NW1/4 S11 T35S R15E WM	SW/14 S15 T35S R16E WM	ECSF
Spring Creek	Med BLM	2019		*1.1*		1.1	Source at Shoat Springs	Confluence with Jenny Creek	ECSF
Styx, River	OC NM&P	2014		0.4		0.4	Where Cave Creek Submerges	Where Cave Creek Emerges	KM
Sycan River	F-W NF	1988		50.4	8.6	59.0	NE1/4 S5 T34S R17E WM	Coyote Bucket at the Fremont-Winema NF boundary	ECSF
Walker Creek	NWOR BLM	2019			*2.9*	2.9	Headwaters	confluence with Nestucca River	CR
Wallowa River [8]	Val BLM	1996			10.0	10.0	Confluence with Minam River	Confluence with Grande Ronde River	BM
Wasson Creek	Siu NF	2019	*10.1*			10.1	eastern boundary of T21S R9W S17 WM	eastern boundary of the NW1/4 T2S R10W S22 WM	CR
Wenaha River	Uma NF	1988	*18.7*	2.7	0.2	21.6	Confluence of North and South Forks	Confluence with Grande Ronde River	BM
West Little Owyhee River	Val BLM	1988	*57.6*			57.6	Headwaters	Confluence with Owyhee River	SRP
White River	MH NF, Pri BLM	1988		24.3	22.5	46.8	White River Glacier	Confluence with Deschutes River, save river miles 1.6 to 2.2, which is not included.	C. CP
Whychus Creek [10]	Des NF	1988	*6.6*	*8.8*		15.4	Source, including the Soap Fork Squaw Creek, the North Fork, the South Fork, the East and West Forks of	800 feet upstream from Plainview Ditch intake	ECSF

							Park Creek, and Park Creek Fork.		
Wildhorse and Kiger Creeks	Bur BLM	2000	*18.2*			18.2			NBR
• Little Wildhorse Creek			*2.6*			2.6	Headwaters	Confluence with Kiger Creek	
• Wild-horse Creek			*7.0*			7.0	Headwaters	0.36 stream miles into S34 T34S R33E WM	
• Kiger Creek			*4.3*			4.3	Headwaters (and headwaters of Anna Creek)	Steens Mountain Wilderness Area boundary	
Zig Zag River	MH NF	2009	*4.3*			4.3	Headwaters	Mount Hood NF boundary	C
GRAND TOTAL (stream miles)			*810.2*	447.8	904.4	2,162.4	**Actual Total Length and Protected Acreage of Federal Lands within WSR Corridors:** 2,424 miles. The 2,162.4 miles at left is the sum of approximate mileages specified in legislative language. GIS also tells us that there are 731,000 acres within the OR WSR protective corridors. [11]		
Total Mineral Withdrawal (stream miles)			*810.2*	*75.7*	*149.1*	*1,035.0*			
Wild and Scenic Rivers withdrawn from mining (%)			100%	17%	16%	48%			

[1] Black type signifies units of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Blue type signifies stream segments within a unit.

[2] Abbreviations: **B**ureau of **L**and **M**anagement Districts (**Bur**ns, **C**oos **B**ay, **N**orth**w**est **Or**egon, **Med**ford, **Pri**neville, **Ros**eburg, **Val**e); Forest Service **N**ational **F**orest (**Des**chutes, **F**remont-**W**inema, **Mal**heur, **M**ount **H**ood, **Och**oco, **R**ogue **R**iver-**S**iskiyou, **Siu**slaw, **Uma**tilla, **Ump**qua, **W**allowa-**W**hitman, **Wil**lamette); National Park System Unit: (**O**regon **C**aves **N**ational **M**onument **& P**reserve)

[3] Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, only streams classified as "wild" are withdrawn from the federal mining laws. In 2019, in the Oregon Wildlands Act, all system additions and unit additions in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System were withdrawn from the federal mining laws, notwithstanding the original Act. Italicized mileage under each classification indicates mineral withdrawal.

[4] Some terminus locations are indicated using the section-township-range system, where NE1/4, NW1/4, S15 denotes the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 15, T26S means township 26 south, and R6E means Range 6 East. All of Oregon is defined by the Willamette Meridian (WM).

[5] Environmental Protection Agency Level III Ecoregions: **B**lue **M**ountains, **C**ascades. **C**oast Range, **C**olumbia **P**lateau, **E**ast **C**ascades **S**lopes and **F**oothills, **K**lamath **M**ountains, **N**orthern **B**asin and **R**ange, **S**nake **R**iver **P**lain, **W**illamette **V**alley.

[6] In 2019, Congress reclassified four miles from recreational and scenic respectively to scenic and wild respectively.

[7] Congress provided for "double-wide" lateral boundaries. Rather than the protective corridor being no more than 320 acres/liner mile, the limit is 640 acres/liner mile, or an average 1-mile-wide buffer versus a 0.5-mile-wide buffer.

[8] State scenic waterway designated in 1988 and included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by the secretary of the interior at the request of the governor of Oregon pursuant to Section 2(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. § 1273(a)).

[9] Approximately one-half of protective corridor is in Idaho.

[10] Originally named the Squaw Creek WSR in 1988, in 2019, the unit has been renamed to conform to the new name for the creek.

[11 Source, Erik Fernandez, Oregon Wild, 28 March 2019.

Oregon Scenic Waterways and Their Overlap with National Wild and Scenic Rivers

In 1970, the people of Oregon voted to establish the Oregon Scenic Waterways System (OSWS):

> *The people of Oregon find that many of the free-flowing rivers of Oregon and Waldo Lake and lands adjacent to such lake and rivers possess outstanding scenic, fish, wildlife, geological, botanical, historic, archaeologic, and outdoor recreation values of present and future benefit to the public. The people of Oregon also find that the policy of permitting construction of dams and other impoundment facilities at appropriate sections of the rivers of Oregon and Waldo Lake needs to be complemented by a policy that would preserve Waldo Lake and selected rivers or sections thereof in a free-flowing condition and would protect and preserve the natural setting and water quality of the lake and such rivers and fulfill other conservation purposes. It is therefore the policy of Oregon to preserve for the benefit of the public Waldo Lake and selected parts of the state's free-flowing rivers. For these purposes there is established an Oregon Scenic Waterways System.*[4]

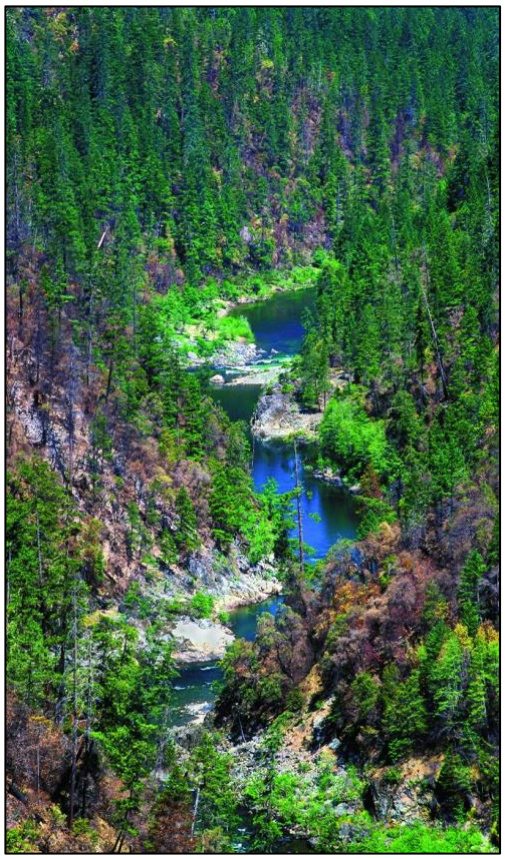

Figure 2. *Most, but not all, of the Illinois Wild and Scenic River is also an Oregon scenic waterway*. Ken Crocker

Since then the Oregon Legislative Assembly has occasionally included additional waterways in the system, but the largest increase occurred by another vote of the people in 1988. The OSWS is complementary to the NWSRS and in some ways provides potentially stronger conservation protection.[5] Only units of the NWSRS are fully protected against any kind of dam, but the OSWS offers regulatory means for conservation not available within the national system.

Table 2 lists Oregon scenic waterways and also notes stream segments of overlap with units of the NWSRS. Such overlap is significant but not total.

• 71 percent of Oregon scenic waterways (by mileage) are also national wild and scenic rivers.

• 42 percent of Oregon's national wild and scenic rivers are also Oregon scenic waterways.

[4] Oregon Revised Statutes 390.815. Reference to Waldo Lake added by Oregon Legislative Assembly in 1983.
[5] Oregon Revised Statutes 390.805 to 390.925

Table 2. *Oregon Scenic Waterways and Their Overlap and Underlap with National Wild and Scenic Rivers*				
River/ Waterway/ Segment	**Upper Terminus**	**Lower Terminus**	**Miles**	
			Oregon Scenic Water-way	**National Wild & Scenic River**
Chetco			***14***	***53***
Uppermost	Headwaters	Steel Bridge		42
Upper	Steel Bridge	Eagle Creek	2	2
Upper Middle	Eagle Creek	South Fork Confluence	3	3
Lower Middle	South Fork Confluence	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Boundary	6	6
Lower	Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Boundary	Southern boundary of Alfred A. Loeb State Park	3	
Clackamas River			***75***	***52***
Uppermost Mainstem	Big Springs	Olallie Lakes Scenic Area		1
Upper Mainstem	Olallie Lakes Scenic Area	Big Cliff (North Fork) Reservoir	47	47
Lower Mainstem	River Mill Dam	Carver	12	
North Fork	Source	North Fork Reservoir	12	
South Fork	Confluence with an unnamed tributary near the western boundary of S7, T5S, R5E, Willamette Meridian (WM) / confluence with East Fork of the South Fork Clackamas River	Confluence with Clackamas River	4	4
Deschutes River			***199***	***182***
Uppermost	Little Lava Lake	Crane Prairie Reservoir	8	
	Gauging station below Wickiup Dam	General Patch Bridge	28	28
Sunriver	General Patch Bridge	Harper Bridge		12
Upper Above Bend	Harper Bridge	Lava Island Camp	12	12
Lower Above Bend	Lava Island Camp	COID diversion structure/northern boundary of Sunriver at the SW1/4 S20, T19S, R11E, WM	5	5
Upper Below Bend	Robert Sawyer State Park	Tumalo State Park	6	
Lower Below Bend	Deschutes Market Road	Cline Falls hydroelectric facility	10	
Middle	Cline Falls hydroelectric facility	Oden Falls	5	
Middle	Oden Falls	Reservoir Billy Chinook	25	25
Lower	Pelton Reregulating Dam	Confluence with Columbia River	100	100
Elk River			***29***	***29***
Mainstem	Confluence of North and South Forks	Confluence with Anvil Creek/Elk River Fish Hatchery	17	17
North Fork	Source	Confluence with South Fork	6	6

South Fork	Source	Confluence with North Fork	6	6
Illinois River			**46**	**50**
Eight Dollar Mountain Stretch	Siskiyou National Forest boundary	Confluence with Deer Creek		4
Canyon Stretch	Confluence with Deer Creek	Confluence with Rogue River	46	46
John Day River			***317***	***251***
Above Service Creek	Parrish Creek	Service Creek	12	
Below Servicer Creek	Service Creek	Tumwater Falls	148	148
Upper North Fork	Headwaters in North Fork John Day Wilderness Area at S13, T8S, R36E, WM	North Fork John Day Wilderness boundary		36
Middle North Fork	North Fork John Day Wilderness boundary RM	Confluence with Camas Creek RM	20	20
Lower North Fork	Confluence with Camas Creek	Northern boundary of the south one-half of S20, T8S, R28, WM	37	
Middle Fork	Confluence with Crawford Creek	Confluence with North Fork John Day River	71	
Upper South Fork	Malheur National Forest boundary	Post-Paulina Road Crossing RM 35		19
Middle South Fork	Post-Paulina Road Crossing	Confluence with Smokey Creek	28	28
Lower South Fork	Confluence with Smokey Creek	Northern boundary of Murderers Creek Wildlife Area	1	
Klamath River			***11***	***11***
Mainstem	J. C. Boyle Powerhouse	California border	11	11
McKenzie River			***27***	***41***
Sahalie andKoosah Falls	Clear Lake	Carmon Reservoir	2	2
Above Tamolitch Falls	Carmon Dam	Tamolitch Falls	2	2
Below Tamolitch Falls	Tamolitch Falls	Trail Bridge Reservoir		2
Below Trail Bridge Dam	Trail Bridge Dam	Confluence with Scott Creek	7	7
Belkhap Springs	Confluence with Scott Creek	Paradise Campground	3	3
South Fork, Upper	Headwaters	Three Sisters Wilderness boundary		12
South Fork, Lower	Three Sisters Wilderness boundary	Cougar Reservoir	13	13
Metolius			***12***	***38***
Upper	Metolius Springs/Deschutes National Forest boundary below Metolius Springs	Candle Creek	12	12
Metolius Breaks	Candle Creek	Reservoir Billy Chinook		26
Minam River			***46***	***37***
Upper	Minam Lake	Eagle Cap Wilderness boundary 0.5 miles downstream of Cougar Creek	37	37

:**Lower**	Eagle Cap Wilderness boundary 0.5 miles downstream of Cougar Creek	Confluence with Wallowa River RM 0	9	
Molalla			***17.1***	***21.3***
Middle Mainstem	Confluence of Table Rock Fork	BLM boundary	15.1	15.1
Lower Mainstem	Lower BLM boundary	Glen Avon Bridge	2	
Table Rock Fork	Upper BLM boundary	Confluence with Molalla River		6.2
Nestucca River			***26.5***	***15.5***
Meadow Lake	McGuire Dam	Confluence with Ginger Creek	3.5	
Upper Mainstem	Confluence with Ginger Creek	western edge of T4S, R7W S7 WM	15.5	15.5
Lower Mainstem	western edge of T4S, R7W S7 WM	Blaine	7.5	
North Fork Middle Fork Willamette River			***42***	***42***
Mainstem	Waldo Lake	1 mile above RR bridge near Westfir/Willamette National Forest boundary	42	42
Owyhee River			***69***	***108***
Upper	Idaho border	Three Forks	33	33
Middle	Three Forks	China Gulch		34
Lower	Crooked Creek	Birch Creek	36	36
Lowest	Birch Creek	Owyhee Reservoir		5
Rogue River			***124***	***124***
Upper	Crater Lake National Park	Rogue River National Forest boundary	41	41
Lower	Confluence with Applegate River	Confluence with Lobster Creek/Lobster Creek Bridge	83	83
Sandy River			***12***	***24***
Upper	Headwaters	Mount Hood Wilderness boundary		12
Lower	Confluence with Bull Run River / Dodge Park	Stark Street Bridge / Dabney State Park	12	12
Santiam River, Little North Fork			***7***	***0***
Mainstem	Confluence of Battle Ax and Opal Creeks	Willamette National Forest boundary	7	
North Umpqua River			***41***	***34***
Upper	Mt. Thielsen Wilderness	Lemolo Reservoir	7	
Lower	Soda Springs Powerhouse	Confluence with Rock Creek	34	34
Walker Creek			***23***	***20***
Mainstem	Source	Confluence with Nestucca River	3	3
Wallowa River			***10***	***10***
Mainstem	Confluence with Minam River	Confluence with Grande Ronde River	10	10
Waldo Lake*			***6***	***0***

	South Waldo Shelter	Waldo Lake Mouth	6	
Oregon scenic waterways (miles)			1153.6	
National wild and scenic rivers (miles)				1,143
National wild and scenic rivers that are not Oregon scenic waterways (miles)**				211.2
Oregon scenic waterways that are not national wild and scenic rivers (miles)			219	
Complementary overlap of Oregon scenic waterways and national wild and scenic rivers (miles)			914.6	914.6
***** Mileage estimated; a better metric is that the surface area of the lake is 6,672 acres in area.				
** Includes only those national wild and scenic rivers on streams that also have Oregon scenic waterways)				

In a country where nature has been so lavish and where we have been so spendthrift of indigenous beauty, to set aside a few rivers in their natural state should be considered an obligation.

—Senator Frank Church (D-ID), 1968

Potential Oregon Additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

In 2000, the Larch Company commissioned the compilation of a list of Oregon stream segments not yet in the NWSRS that qualified for inclusion in the NWSRS based on a review of the Land and Resource Management Plan for each federal administrative unit (national forest, BLM district, and so on). We found that 2,324 miles of free-flowing stream segments had—according to the land management agency—at least one "outstandingly remarkable" value, which is the minimum requirement specified in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for a stream segment to be included in the NWSRS. (Similar criteria exist for Oregon scenic waterways.) We also found the agency inventories to be quite incomplete and sometimes sloppily done for what they did inventory.[6]

Choosing to save a river is more often an act of passion than of careful calculation. You make the choice because the river has touched your life in an intimate and irreversible way, because you are unwilling to accept its loss.

—David Bolling, *How to Save a River: Handbook for Citizen Action*

[6] For more on what qualifies for inclusion as a unit of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, see Andy Kerr, "Persuading Congress to Establish a Wilderness and/or Wild & Scenic River: A Checklist," Larch Occasional Paper #1 (Ashland, OR: The Larch Company, 2011), available at www.andykerr.net/downloads.

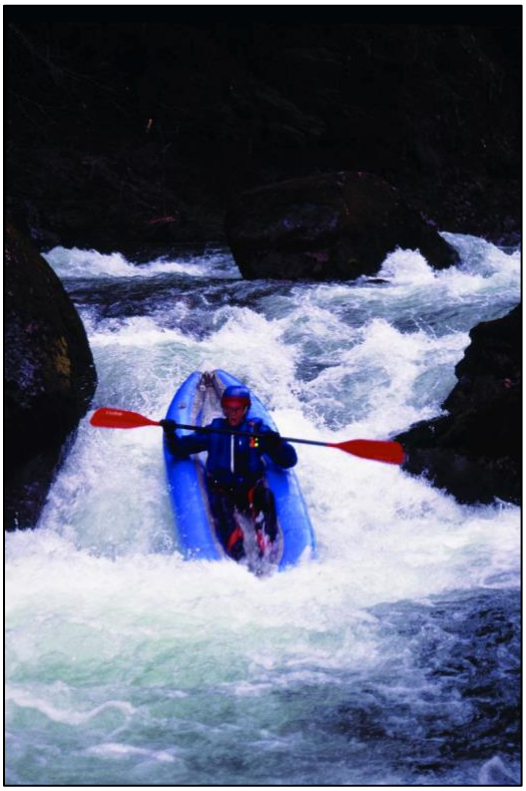

Figure 3. *Brice Creek on the Umpqua National Forest qualifies for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System even though the stream has not been recognized by the Forest Service for its outstandingly remarkable whitewater boating.* David Stone, Wildland Photography

The Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) "maintained" by the National Park Service lists stream segments eligible in their view for inclusion in the NWSRS. Their Oregon inventory, at least, is quite out of date, poorly constructed, and poorly maintained. However, the fact that the inventory is deficient shouldn't count against free-flowing streams with outstandingly remarkable values. The inventory has some overlap with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management inventories and some stream segments have become units of the NWSRS since being listed in the NRI inventory. [7] Still, approximately 2,500 miles of streams in Oregon listed in the NRI qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The NRI list of Oregon stream segments doesn't overlap much with the list of candidate stream segments culled from the agency inventories. This is because: (1) the former was not constrained by having to be primarily on federal public land, while the latter generally was; and (2) the agency inventories include many more streams higher in the watersheds. As a result, the estimated total of Oregon stream segments that qualify for inclusion in the NWSRS based on the NRI list and the agency inventories is almost 5,000 miles.

But there are other qualifying stream segments as well. As one examines maps of Oregon, a significant number of free-flowing streams with at least one outstandingly remarkable value come readily to mind. These are stream segments that (1) are not yet included in the NWSRS, (2) are not on the NRI list of Oregon stream segments, and (3) are not in the Forest Service and BLM inventories. I conservatively estimate that when these are added to the candidate list, a total of about 10,000 miles (about 3 percent of the total mileage) of Oregon streams qualify for inclusion in the NWSRS.

It is up to the conservation community to insist that the federal land management agencies do what is required of them by the WSRA. Here is what the act says:

> ***Continuing consideration by Federal agencies to potential national, wild, scenic and recreational river areas***
>
> *(1) In all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources, consideration shall be given by all Federal agencies involved to potential national wild, scenic and recreational river areas, and all river basin*

[7] National Park Service, Nationwide Rivers Inventory, Oregon Segments, www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/nri/states/or.html.

and project plan reports submitted to the Congress shall consider and discuss any such potentials. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall make specific studies and investigations to determine which additional wild, scenic and recreational river areas within the United States shall be evaluated in planning reports by all Federal agencies as potential alternative uses of the water and related land resources involved.[8]

Conclusion

An estimated 292,000 miles of streams flow in Oregon.[9] Most do not qualify for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and/or the Oregon Scenic Waterways System as they have been dammed, dewatered, ditched, denuded, and/or otherwise degraded, if not destroyed. Today, 0.7 percent of Oregon streams are in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A lot more eligible streams could be.

Figure 4. *The Nestucca Oregon Scenic Waterway is not also a national Wild and Scenic River*. Yet. Erik Fernandez, Oregon Wild.

[8] 16 U.S.C. § 1276(d).

[9] USDI Geological Survey. National Hydrography Dataset. www.nhd.usgs.gov.

Acknowledgments

A handy source of river-related quotations, some of which I used herein, can be found at www.rivers.gov/quotations.html. For the development of this paper I am indebted to Erik Fernandez of Oregon Wild.

Who hears the rippling of rivers will not utterly despair of anything.

—Henry David Thoreau

Additional Resources

• Interagency (mainly National Park Service) website on the NWSRS (www.rivers.gov)

• American Rivers (www.americanrivers.org), the nation's premier conservation advocate for the NWSRS

• Oregon Wild (www.oregonwild.org), working to include numerous Oregon streams in the NWSRS.

• Oregon Scenic Waterways Program (https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/RULES/pages/waterways.aspx)

• National Park Service's Nationwide Rivers Inventory, Oregon Segments (www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/nri/states/or.html)

• Kerr, Andy. LOP #1: "Persuading Congress to Establish a Wilderness and/or Wild & Scenic River: A Checklist." Ashland, OR: The Larch Company, 2007. Available at www.andykerr.net/downloads.

• Kerr, Andy, and Mark Salvo. LOP #7: "Overlapping Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River Designations Provide Maximal Conservation Protection for Federal Public Lands." Ashland, OR: The Larch Company, 2008. Available at www.andykerr.net/downloads.

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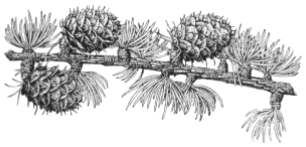

A deciduous conifer, the western larch has a contrary nature.

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