

Questions & Answers on the Interagency Council

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Q. How will the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (Council) operate?

A. Copies of the “Concept Paper,” which details how the Council will operate, are available by writing to the Office of Public Affairs at each of the agencies. The mailing addresses are the same for the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240. The address for the National Park Service is: Post Office Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127. The U.S. Forest Service is: Post Office Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090.

The Council is not a decision-making body; rather it will recommend to the managing agencies actions which may be taken. After four years, the Council’s purpose and accomplishments will be reviewed, and a determination will be made on its continued existence.

Q. Will the Council create more rules and regulations?

A. No. The Council will discuss and make recommendations only to its member agencies. Its purpose is to reduce redundancy and increase consistency in the interpretation and application of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Act). The establishment of the Council is consistent with the National Performance Review objective of creating a government that works better and costs less. The Council will provide a forum where river managers across federal agencies will discuss and resolve common problems. The forum will also permit other interested federal and state agencies and non-governmental organizations to bring forward issues for discussion and resolution. Announcement of any changes or new regulations in the existing *Department of Interior and Agriculture Interagency Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification and Management of River Areas* (Interagency Guidelines) would require a separate, formal administrative process.

Q. Will the Council designate rivers, or recommend new rivers for designation?

A. No. Rather than being involved in the designation of rivers, the Council will improve management approaches on rivers already in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System) and ensure that the suitability and eligibility criteria used by the agencies in their designation studies are consistent and appropriate. Studies of rivers for potential designation will continue to be initiated through legislation, or in accordance with individual agency mandates.

Q. Is there only federal representation on the Council?

A. No, there is a state representative who represents rivers administered under section 2(a)(ii) of the Act. Since the Council's purpose is to improve consistency and create efficiencies in the day-to-day administration of wild and scenic river (WSR) studies and designated river segments, the membership is primarily drawn from federal agency staff responsible for these duties. Other federal agencies with regulatory authority for programs affecting WSRs will be consulted to better coordinate their activities. The Council will make every effort to ensure that all those interested in, or affected by, WSR policy are able to participate in setting Council priorities and finding appropriate solutions.

Q. How do I raise an issue for the Council to consider or resolve?

A. The Council will seek input and advice from national, state and local river protection partners and the general public on a routine basis. Public participation will be facilitated through ad hoc meetings with regional federal agency staff, informal open houses at each quarterly meeting, and the provision of periodic updates.

Q. How will the Council's recommendations be implemented?

A. The agencies represented on the Council will decide whether to implement any recommended policy clarifications through their routine administration of river studies and designated rivers.

Q. Will operating the Council take additional money and staff time?

A. No. Council members are already involved in the study and administration of WSRs as part of their routine duties, and their expenses will be absorbed by existing agency budgets. Because the Council intends to resolve a number of longstanding inefficiencies in the interpretation and application of the Act, it is expected that involvement on the Council will actually enhance its members' effectiveness.

Q. Who should I contact if I have questions?

A. You may contact any member of the Council (names and addresses are included in this publication).

Q. How can I stay up-to-date on the Council's activities?

A. The Council will solicit information from the public on issues suitable for Council attention. In addition, the Council expects to issue status reports and periodic updates outlining its proposed work schedule and accomplishments. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list for these updates, please contact any Council member.