

# Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan Implementation

## A River Level Perspective



January 2020

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Supported by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council,  
through a partnership between the River Management Society & USDA Forest Service



**River Management Society**

## Acknowledgements

This report is a product of the thoughtful participation of river managers Dave Cernicek, Linda Merigliano, Brian Goldberg, Kristen Thrall, and Julie Galonska. They provided informative advice based on their years of experience and responsibility for implementing Comprehensive River Management Plans (CRMPs) or, in the case of St. Croix National Riverway, a General Management and Cooperative Management Plan.

The author thanks the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (IWSRCC) and Steve Chesterton for the initiation of this project and input they have offered through its refinement. Support was provided through a partnership with the River Management Society with oversight and editing guided by Risa Shimoda.

Special thanks go to Jackie Diedrich for her help in developing the interview questions, suggesting the report structure and editing with helpful thoroughness. Finally, we appreciate and thank St. Croix National Riverway Visual Information Specialist, Jean Van Tatenhove and Huron-Manistee National Forests Public Affairs Officer, Nate Peeters for additional images.

Our interviewees are USDA Forest Service and the National Park Service river professionals. They have aligned their personal interests in river and natural resource enjoyment with careers dedicated to developing, improving, and managing national wild and scenic rivers. We appreciate the time they have offered to share their perspectives and provide helpful guidance to those developing or revising wild and scenic river CRMPs.



*Front Page: Paddlers on the Au Sable Wild and Scenic River USFS*

*Current: Forest Staff on the Snake Wild and Scenic River DAVE CERNICEK*

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Introduction .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Executive Summary.....	5
The Interviewees.....	6
1. River Values and Desired Conditions .....	7
What Worked: Providing a Spectrum of Recreation Opportunity for the WSR Experience .....	7
Could Be Improved: Upholding Outdated Plans, Need to Update CRMP .....	7
Lessons Learned: Protecting Institutional Expertise, Planning for Change and Considering Cultural Values .....	8
2. Facilities, Development, and Maintenance .....	10
What Worked: Engaging with Private Landowners on Non-Federal Land, Managing Scenic Easements .....	10
Could Be Improved: Funding Mechanisms for Large Infrastructure Projects.....	11
Lessons Learned: Anticipating Effects of Climate Change and the Community's Desire for Access.....	11
3. User Capacities and Other Monitoring .....	13
What Worked .....	13
Could Be Improved .....	14
Lessons Learned .....	16
4. Water Quality Protection and Enhancement.....	18
Lessons Learned .....	19
5. Partnerships .....	20
Federal .....	20
State: Streambed Ownership, Memoranda of Agreements, State Law Enforcement .....	21
County .....	22
Private .....	23
Public and Non-Profit Partners: Youth on the River, Public Communication Strategies, Teaming Up ....	23
Conclusions .....	26
Appendix A.....	27



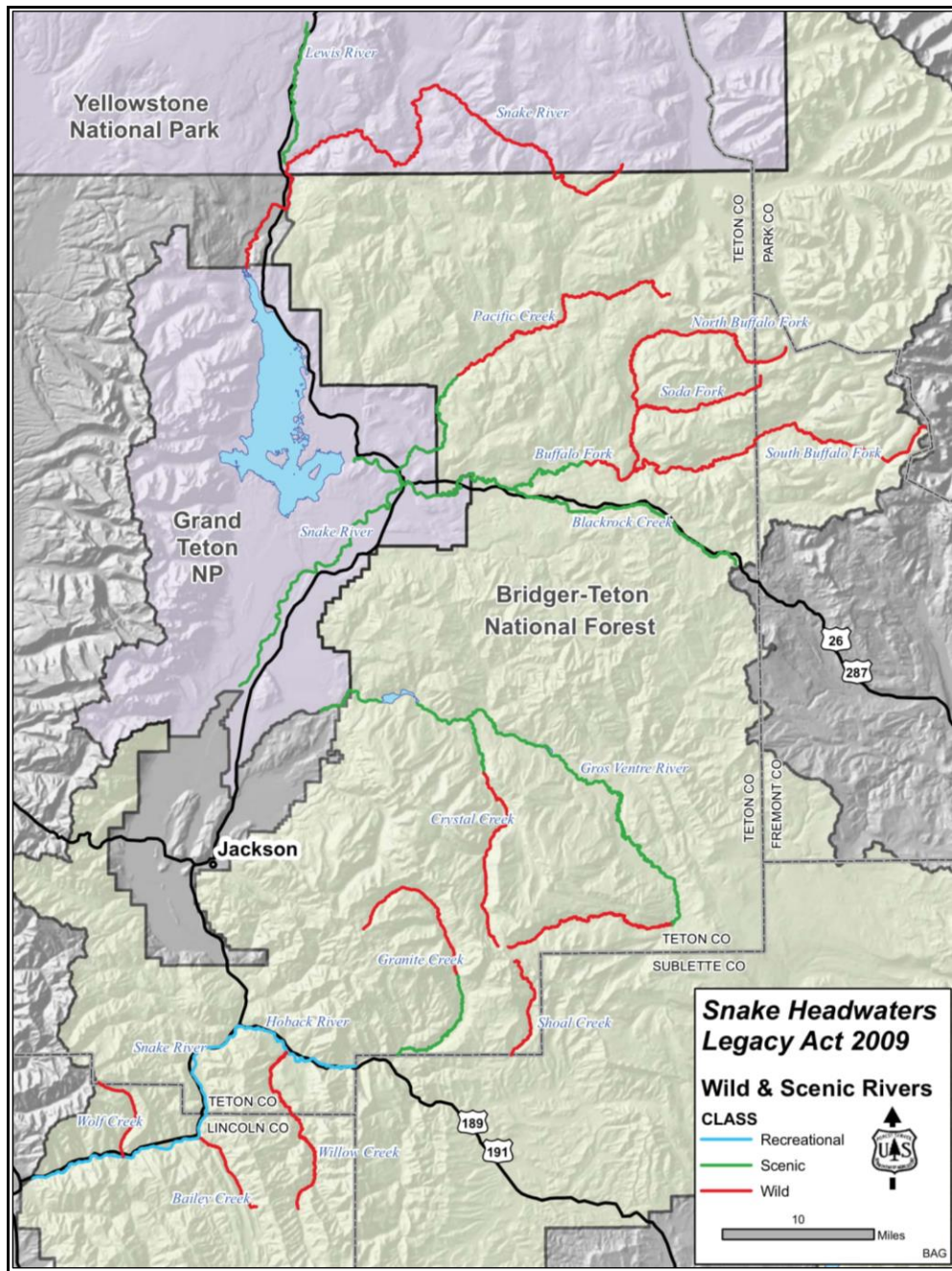


Figure 1 Map of Snake Headwaters Legacy Act River Wild and Scenic River designations DAVE CERNICEK

## Executive Summary

The River Management Society (RMS), on behalf of the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (Council) interviewed wild and scenic river (WSR) managers who share responsibility to implement the Comprehensive River Management Plan developed for their wild and scenic rivers.

The intent of this interview effort and report was to assist the development of CRMPs based on insights from Wild and Scenic River managers currently developing, revising, or implementing comprehensive management plans, and for members of the public desiring to interact in WSR planning and management. We sought to learn how well their plans were helping them manage for the protection and enhancement of their respective rivers' free-flowing condition, water quality and "outstandingly remarkable values," (ORVs).

The interviews were conducted in 2018, within a framework of questions created by the Council, based on their summary of CRMP requirements. These requirements, presented in Appendix A, are described in more detail in the Council's technical report *Newly Designated Wild and Scenic River: Interim Management and Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan (2010)*. The author combined the CRMP requirements into five sections for ease of presenting the interview findings.

We appreciate the time these professionals have taken to share their perspectives and provide helpful guidance to others developing or revising CRMPs for the WSRs they administer.

## The Interviewees

Original CRMP authors and current WSR managers were asked to discuss successes and challenges they face in implementing the required elements of a CRMP. These managers shared what they have learned, including suggestions for planners to consider early in the planning process.

Responses from these WSR managers provide many examples of forward thinking and thorough preparation facilitated by the plans' authors, including strategies to manage and monitor river values.

For each element, summaries are provided to identify common themes and share the ideas these managers are applying to further the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), adapting practices and programs to unique natural and social environments on the WSRs they manage.

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### **Bridger-Teton National Forest – Snake River Headwaters CRMP (BTNF)**

- **Dave Cernicek** – WSR Manager/Coordinator, CRMP author
- **Linda Merigliano** – Recreation, Wilderness, Trails Program Manager, CRMP author
- **Brian Goldberg** – Geospatial Lead Manager, CRMP author

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### **Huron-Manistee National Forests – Manistee, Pine, Père Marquette, and Au Sable Wild and Scenic Rivers (HMNF)**

- **Kristen Thrall** – Recreation Program Manager, current manager

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### **St. Croix National Riverway – St. Croix and Namekagon Wild and Scenic Rivers (SCNR)**

- **Julie Galonska** – Park Superintendent
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# 1. River Values and Desired Conditions

Success implementing CRMPs generally relates to the amount of detail planners can provide regarding existing resource conditions.

The actionability of plans, procedures and protocols needed to maintain or enhance values for which the river is designated should be managed with a specific focus on protecting WSRs' free-flowing condition, water quality, and ORVs (collectively referred to as "river values"). Interviewees suggested that CRMPs could benefit from additional emphasis on adapting to future recreation and use changes.

## What Worked: Providing a Spectrum of Recreation Opportunity for the WSR Experience

WSR Staff understand their role in preserving the quality of ORVs which visitors interact with.

Staff recommend visitors recreate on different stretches of water or off-peak hours to disperse use and enhance the primitive experience.

- CRMPs sometimes require mandatory Large Group Permits on high-conflict stretches where visitors are educated about their role in protecting ORVs prior to their trip

## Could Be Improved: Upholding Outdated Plans, Need to Update CRMP

Among the challenges of writing CRMPs is employing foresight without being over-prescriptive.

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*"We're having more requests for group campsites and we just don't have any on that stretch of the River. When the Plan was written, people didn't group camp nearly as much as they do now."*

By under-forecasting the demand, campers from large groups travel between designated campsites, create social trails and cause erosion.

Limits to budget, time, tools and staffing constrain managers who must uphold outdated Plan guidelines without a way to update the CRMP or otherwise respond flexibly to recognized recreation changes.

### NEW RECREATION CHALLENGES ON WSR'S

Original authors of the CRMP in the 1980's could not have predicted that in 2018, a Wild and Scenic River on the Huron-Manistee National Forest would be host to a contest to attempt the ***largest river flotilla*** in the **Guinness Book of World Records!**



Figure 2 Camping along the Snake WSR OARS Rafting



## Lessons Learned: Protecting Institutional Expertise, Planning for Change and Considering Cultural Values

**Protect Institutional Expertise.** As high-value career river managers retire, there is a growing need for transition and training programs to pass on and preserve their institutional WSR expertise. Managers can prepare their legacies providing the next generation with direction given sufficient time and management support.

**Planning for Change.** Successful CRMPs such as on BTNF brought together in the planning stages river managers, GIS specialists, geomorphologists and hydrologists who provided helpful foresight on how ORVs would be best served in the WSR corridors.

While some rivers in the Mountain West might find themselves in rocky canyon bottoms unlikely to change, waterways in the Southeast with different soils, malleable flood plains, and increasingly extreme seasonal flooding patterns require the WSR Corridor boundary delineation to accommodate these differences.

BRIAN (BTNF):

*What are the implications of a dynamic system moving or shifting? The stream is still protected regardless, the corridor should accommodate those geomorphological shifts.*

The Snake River Headwaters CRMP extended the corridor boundary beyond the quarter-mile in certain areas to include ridgetops of special scenic value, or to a wilderness boundary which overall helped support the intent of the WSRA.

Balancing human safety with habitat related ORVs required BTNF to have a woody debris removal policy,

DAVE (BTNF):

*"If we have a strainer or other flotsam get caught up on one of our two high-use rivers (2 of the 12 designated) that blocks more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the channel, is unavoidable, and a threat to human life and safety, we will remove it. Outside of that, it remains fish habitat."*

**Consider Cultural Values.** When drafting the CRMP, historic and Tribal relationships to WSRs benefit from early consideration to avoid future conflicts and benefit from the Tribes' interests in stewarding the river.

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*"The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is trying to revive the Sturgeon. They have a very cool rearing station, where they raise baby sturgeon in Manistee River water, and then have a release every year. That they have just found a returned sturgeon is an amazing success story."*

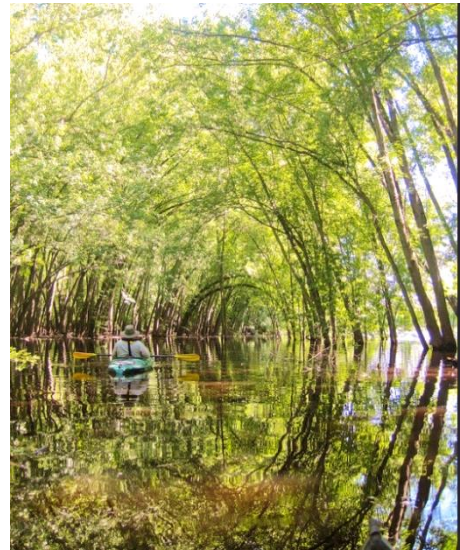


Figure 3 Paddling the St. Croix floodplain at high water NPS



Kristen points out that when implementing the Lake Sturgeon Rehabilitation Program with Section 7 permitting, river managers ran into conflict:

*“ORVs included fisheries, fish habitat, recreation, and not cultural. An aspect of the rearing station was that guides were upset that the station might block passage of both steelhead, a species that is non-native but super important to their business, and watercraft.”*

While this project was developed by a Tribe using a traditional cultural method of the region to restore a Native Michigan fish species population, anglers worried about the impact to fisheries and the recreational value of the river.

## 2. Facilities, Development, and Maintenance

Critical to providing oversight and guidance for federal and non-federal facilities and lands within the WSR Corridor is river managers' process to become aware of funding mechanisms, anticipation of how communities will want to interact with their WSR, and the steps needed to anticipate and respond to the impacts of climate change.

### What Worked: Engaging with Private Landowners on Non-Federal Land, Managing Scenic Easements

Wild and Scenic River corridors may include both public and private lands. The success of public/private landowner cooperation is critical to the success of WSR management on a mixed ownership river.

The St. Croix Riverway, one of the original eight WSR designated in 1968 is situated on land that is a mix of public, tribal and private ownership with NPS scenic easements on many private tracts.

JULIE (SCNR):

*We have more scenic easements at the Riverway than any other unit, 20% of the total in the entire National Park System, so that keeps us busy! Staffing for our entire Lands division is one person.*

The St. Croix Riverway has found methods to keep up with scenic easement monitoring by partnering with the St. Croix River Association. This organization enlists college students and recent graduates as seasonal staff and interns to photograph and note visual changes to non-federal properties along the River.

St. Croix River managers also employ pre-emptive actions:

*Our scenic easement landowners should not forget that they have a scenic easement: every June, we send out 800 letters to remind them. If the property has changed hands, the letter goes to the same easement property address, so the new owner gets that letter! This is just one example of how we've worked with the St. Croix River Association and the landowners to develop resources that can educate the public. Another such effort is offering continuing education classes about scenic easements to realtors who work along the St. Croix Riverway. When they learn exactly what WSRs and scenic easements are and how they work, they can pass this on with confidence to their buyers and sellers to address misconceptions or misinformation found elsewhere.*

Engaging with private lands stakeholders in the local community helps protect the WSR characteristics.



Figure 4 Students spend summers working on the St. Croix Riverway NPS

## Could Be Improved: Funding Mechanisms for Large Infrastructure Projects

Facilities and infrastructure are under threat from maintenance backlog, climate change, and insufficient funding – jeopardizing both the protected river values and the local commercial industry.

DAVE (BTNF):

*We're working to fix the 1/4-mile trail that goes from the ramp to the parking lot that 120,000+ people a year must walk up to get picked up at trip's end. If we have another wet winter, our existing trail might just fall off the ledge and be gone, which would be devastating.*

River managers should anticipate potential funding sources for large-scale projects when drafting the CRMP. Options may include friends' groups, permit and commercial fees, donations, grants, and Congressional advocacy for project funding by groups like the National Forest Foundation and the Grand Teton Association.



Figure 5 At-risk access trail DAVE CERNICEK

## Lessons Learned: Anticipating Effects of Climate Change and the Community's Desire for Access

**Anticipating the Effects of Climate Change.** This is one of the most under-anticipated aspects of the Snake River Headwaters CRMP.

Since this CRMP was written, there have been both changes in snowpack and an acceleration of the snowmelt rate. Resulting large-water runoff events deposit more debris in the river and threaten to wash out expensive boat ramps.

LINDA (BTNF):

*"We've had some really big water years the past few years. As a result, people are losing property, banks are eroding, and structures are being undermined or lost. Bank stabilization projects on private lands are also becoming common occurrences."*

As large runoff events cause private landowners and commercial lodges such as those along the Snake River to feel vulnerable to losing property and access infrastructure, managers see them installing illegal reinforcements.

Anticipating and including these effects of climate change in the CRMP can help river managers protect federal and non-federal infrastructure

**A Community's Desire for Access.** While drafting the CRMP, it is also important to anticipate how communities will want to interact with their WSR well into the future. The plan should include flexibility for new and improved or enhanced access points and river trails on non-federal lands. These should be compliant with the CRMP and support likely changes in user recreation types and use levels.

JULIE (SCNR):

*One community decided it would be great if they had a dock for kayaks and canoes to pull up to – and they just put one in, thinking “What’s wrong with doing this? There’s no issue, we don’t have to talk to anyone right?” They just wanted to try to create an improvement for their community, and it didn’t occur to them that putting in a dock might involve a Federal process.*

Public awareness and education can teach that there is a necessary process for building structures in and alongside wild and scenic rivers.



*Figure 6 Inclined boat launch infrastructure on the Pere-Marquette WSR USFS*



### 3. User Capacities and Other Monitoring

The river manager interviewees agreed that monitoring user capacity and river values requires a combination of adaptive management direction in the CRMP, sufficient staffing, and utilization of new technology.

#### What Worked

**Networks of expertise.** Reaching out to regional and national networks of river managers pays off. They are valuable resources from whom others can learn about different monitoring techniques.

JULIE (SCNR)

*You can find great solutions for your river by reaching out to those in your or other organizations with expertise. They will be happy to help you train up your staff, so we are all more knowledgeable about what we need to do to comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.*

RIVER MANAGEMENT  
SOCIETY

DAVE (BTNF)

*Regardless of river challenge or crisis, someone on a river somewhere has already dealt with situations like yours and you can find their solutions that have already been designed and bench tested to adapt to your situation. The River Management Society email listserv is an incredible resource.*

(The River Management Society is the nation's organization of river management professionals: a listserv and archive of questions and responses are included as membership benefits at <https://www.river-management.org/listserv> Contact [rms@river-management.org](mailto:rms@river-management.org) for more information.)

RMS membership provides access to a cutting edge, experience-laden group of river professionals. Members share trainings, symposiums, resources and a ListServe for answering questions especially related to Wild and Scenic Rivers.

**Reliance on adaptive management.** Adaptive management approaches can be particularly valuable for managers faced with the inherent change and uncertainty associated with implementing the user capacity requirement of the WSRA.

Plan standards that incorporate adaptive approaches build flexibility into the management framework. When an adaptive element to monitoring indicators, thresholds, and triggers is built into the plan, managers have the tools they need to address changing public need or new kinds of recreation uses in the river corridor as the plan ages. Adaptive standards can also be used to help build support for future management actions such as increasing the level of field staff or to support an updated analysis of evolving recreation uses.

- BTNF utilizes the *Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics* Hot Spots Program to bring attention to a growing overuse problem at a hot spring in the corridor, which helped shore up at-risk wild and scenic resources.

- When bank fishing started to grow in popularity at a significant rate, BTNF staff identified the need to perform an Environmental Analysis (EA) before issuing new guided bank fishing outfitter permits. Environmental analysis can be expensive, and time consuming, so staff from the BTNF asked the outfitters to fund the EA of their potential bank fishing operations. The successful outfitter applicants most dedicated to wild and scenic river education and stewardship were awarded the special use permits.

## Could Be Improved

### **Staffing gaps and funding shortfalls have prevented the planning and implementation of user capacity studies.**

Without the data from such studies, it has been difficult to update CRMPs to accommodate changes in recreation use.

Interviewees identified that more details are needed to guide monitoring implementation than currently exist in their CRMPs.

LINDA (BTNF):

*The Plan does not include the monitoring protocol and details to conduct monitoring consistently and reliably. What are the selected locations? What is the sampling scheme? Who takes and compiles the data? When is the monitoring period?*

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*River managers need to really emphasize and push for the collection of use data, so others in the system understand, how important it is, throughout the life of your River Plan. You can't make a decision to tell people they can't be there if you don't have good data to support their contribution to unacceptable impact of values you are charged to manage, protect or improve.*

Completing user capacity studies on WSRs require innovative methods to study what is essentially a large linear park feature with multiple access points and wide array of recreation uses.

DAVE (BTNF):

*We have so many streams in far off corners of the Forest, just getting into the rivers in the wilderness requires a huge effort. A lot of our ability to understand and monitor use for capacity planning purposes has fallen by the wayside due to a lack of resources and funding: we simply don't have enough people to do what we should.*



Figure 7 St. Croix Riverway monitoring USFS



Figure 8 Monitoring for the Snake River Headwaters CRMP DAVE CERNICEK

Some plans include outdated user capacity values that don't reflect the current-day use levels and activities consistent with desired conditions on the river.

Some river managers have had success working with local universities to study user capacities. Special care must be taken to ensure the study is vetted through the government process to ensure that the data can provide a defensible basis for management decisions.

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*We have numbers someone came up with in the 1970s and 1980s and have had to revisit them. We've learned we have to be flexible: as people and watercraft preferences change, use patterns also change.*

New recreation trends bring new issues along with them. With the popularity of tubing, users are found frequently accessing the riverbanks to get off or take out at undeveloped areas which may result in increasing bank erosion. River managers will continue to need new monitoring resources to accommodate use to the degree that it is reasonable, identify risks to resources, and prescribe management actions.

**Climate Change:** A common question among river managers was, "What are we monitoring and adapting to prepare for and respond to our changing climate?"

Climate change effects may include a greater frequency of large winter runoff events and flooding in season, that then increase the frequency of landslides and accelerate erosive action along rivers. CRMPs should include language that will allow adaptive responses to these increasingly common threats to WSRs.

DAVE (BTNF):

*The water in some of our streams is becoming much warmer, definitely an effect of climate change. In fact, we've measured temperature in tributaries above 70 degrees by the end of the summer. If it's deemed too stressful for fish to be preyed upon by humans, this trend very well may trigger the need to close a river to fishing. We are seeing massive late summer algae blooms never before recorded.*

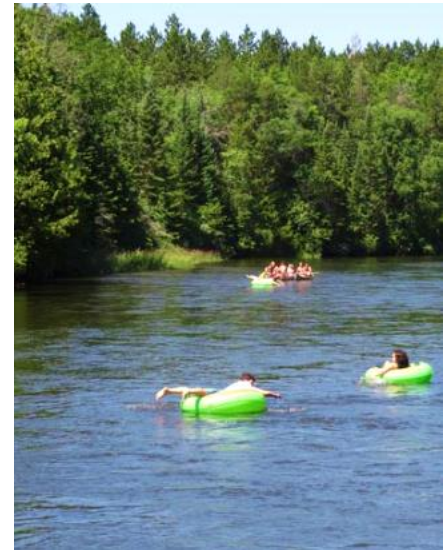


Figure 9 Tubing on the Au Sable National Scenic River USFS

## Lessons Learned

**Embrace new technology.** New means to measure and evaluate river attributes can help the efficiency, accuracy and organization of monitoring projects. For example, the use of tablet computers and digital field monitoring forms can dramatically increase the efficiency of field data collection, analysis, and allows for displaying conditions in real-time. The BTNF monitors invasive species occurrence by working with Wyoming Fish and Game to staff boat check stations for invasives detection.



*Figure 10 Campsite monitoring with GPS units on the WSR Rogue River ANDREW MCDONAGH*

On the SCNR, managers are working with the University of Minnesota to test underwater technologies that may prevent the upstream spread of invasive carp into the wild and scenic river reaches.

**Identify funding sources.** The likelihood that the monitoring plan will be implemented increases when both the specific monitoring projects and potential sources of funding to support the plan are described.

This information also helps new river managers pick up where their predecessors left off if funding relies on their ability to pursue it through legislated appropriations or grants.

**Invest time in the monitoring plan.** The monitoring strategy described in the CRMP can guide how river managers will determine the extent to which visitors are achieving their desired recreational experience.

The CRMP describes the monitoring projects, can suggest the implementation of new technology, and should describe anticipated growth of use in the river corridor. The monitoring plan should help managers discern the difference between existing and future desired conditions.

When a desired condition emphasizes a solitude experience or the amount of visitor interaction, managers must understand how different user groups perceive the effects of crowding differently.



KRISTEN (HMNF):

*I've done interviews and talked to people who come off the river on one of those days when it is packed - they say there's no crowding and they've had a great time. People show up from Chicago with full luggage like they're going on a flight! Part of me says, what are you doing, where's your backpack?" The other part of me says, "Welcome! I'm glad you're here!" We're trying to be inclusive.*

*The State of Michigan did a survey on people visiting - and people are scared when they visit! So, there's a fear factor we need to understand. I'm thinking Flint, where I grew up, Flint, Detroit - no - people are scared to be by themselves in the woods! For some people travelling in huge packs and flotillas gives them a sense of safety and comfort. Who am I to say this isn't a wilderness experience?*



Figure 11 Groups prepping for the Pere-Marquette WSR USFS

The plan should clearly describe the conditions that trigger development of a detailed, supplemental recreation management plan for a stretch of river or an emerging type of use. However, having the capacity to monitor these changes and develop a detailed plan will almost always require sufficient staffing and funding.

LINDA (BTNF):

*The Granite Creek Corridor is a very popular river corridor with a lot going on with the developed hot springs and a lot of dispersed camping right on the streambank in the summer, and it is a popular spot for snowmobilers and dog-sledders in the winter. These are opportunities to make improvements, but we haven't had a lot of capacity.*

River managers should understand the role different perceptions of crowding can have on visitor experiences. The plan should include a clear set of unbiased indicators to measure visitor satisfaction and resource degradation. This is especially important as an increasingly diverse population with different perspectives and viewpoints about social conditions visit and enjoy the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers.



Figure 12 Granite Creek Hot Springs USFS

As recreational use patterns continue to change and evolve, managers should ask themselves, "Are these activities consistent with the desired conditions of the recreational setting and protecting and enhancing river values?"

## 4. Water Quality Protection and Enhancement

Effective water quality monitoring is best achieved through collaborative approaches at the local, regional and national levels. Such efforts can muster the resources necessary to establish and sustain the collection of river and tributary data necessary for CRMP water quality management efforts.

### What Worked

#### **Attention to indicator species, strong collaboration.**

Water quality has been successfully monitored in such places as on the tributaries for the Snake River Headwaters CRMP, with attention paid to aquatic species that maintain river health.

River manager interviewees recommended incorporating as much water related implementation direction and supporting data as possible into the CRMP and its monitoring plan. Data collected by other cooperating agencies can be extremely valuable to help managers meet the objectives of the management plan.



Figure 13 Zebra Mussels on display from the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center NPS

JULIE (SCNR):

*Water quality is probably what we monitor most effectively. For our 'right-of-way' water quality monitoring program, we sample monthly at ten different locations, collect that data and analyze it. We also do a pretty good job monitoring aquatic resources because of our native mussel population.*

If these native species are threatened or replaced by invasives, a key component of the river's natural water purification system may be at risk.

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*The health of the fisheries can tell us the health of the water quality too. As the hydropower lead, I work closely with the interagency team that includes the Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Natural Resources, and hydro coalitions. It's a good group of people that work together. They collect and can analyze water quality data at a higher level than anything we could do on the National Forest.*

JULIE (SCNR):

*We rely on working with the States to manage fish. An annual fish meeting brings together Wisconsin, Minnesota, the National Park Service and other folks to talk about the fish population and regulation.*



Figure 14 Wyoming State Fish and Game invasives partnership with WYDOT

## Lessons Learned

**CRMPs can also help maintain state-level protections.** The Snake River Headwaters CRMP has been used as a decision-making reference standard for establishing water quality standards.

The CRMP was successfully used to protect these federally designated headwaters.

DAVE (BTNF):

*When the State has threatened to change the quality benchmark for all streams, we intervened with wild and scenic designation and our CRMP to illustrate that we hold these rivers to a higher standard. In doing so, we were able to get all streams and tributaries taken out of the State Plan, working with them directly to ground-truth information about streams whose quality standard would have been lowered.*

**Collaboration enriches the basis for standards.**

LINDA (BTNF):

*A team of dedicated folks includes our staff who secures data on our rivers, the hydrologist at the regional office, outside experts and the State to determine the minimum flow necessary to protect ORVs.*

Additional studies that examine the effects of bank destabilization and erosion from recreation use, and the interaction of climate change and water quality may prove valuable for wild and scenic river managers.

LINDA (BTNF):

*“Some of the other things we have to look at anecdotally; we are struggling, for instance, to figure out how to evaluate and manage other changes like erosion.”*



Figure 15 Paper monitoring on the Huron-Manistee USFS



## 5. Partnerships

Managers interviewed agreed that an evaluation of the costs and benefits of collaborative partnerships in the CRMP can enhance project coordination, funding, and monitoring, all of which supports their capacity to enhance and protect river values.

### Federal

Networking opportunities for river managers allow the sharing of successful strategies. National and Regional meetups are valuable, assuming funding is available.

JULIE (SCNR):

*“The NPS Superintendents of the seven river parks in the Midwest Region gathered here at the St. Croix for a two-and-a half-day meeting where we talked about river issues. We were able to get to know each other better and learn who we can call on various issues.”*

**Federal specialist groups:** Professionals such as historic preservationists, and invasives specialist teams, can partner with WSR managers to provide expertise not available locally.

JULIE (SCNR):

*We have a fantastic collection of remnants of navigational structures the Army Corps of Engineers built in the late 1800’s. We brought in staff from the National Park Service’s Submerged Resources Center a few years ago who spent six weeks here documenting and exploring structures up and down these rivers of people who came before us. Their work has made it possible for us and our guests to remember we’re connected to a bigger picture.*



Figure 16 NPS Submerged Resources Center inventorying on the St. Croix NPS

**Fire management:** When wildfires threaten WSRs, resulting damage to the WSR corridor can be expanded during fire-suppression efforts. CRMPs can be an important communications and training tool for outlining applicable WSR regulations and management approaches to personnel on a fire incident.

DAVE (BTNF):

*Addressing one of our fires may involve a thousand people and area rehabilitation needs to be done well: you can’t just walk off and leave it. When we need to intervene, we ask contractors to use best management practices (BMPs), cleaning their vehicles coming on and off the fire of weed seeds and aquatic invasives.*

**Tribal partnerships:** Describing cultural values and Tribal partnerships in the CRMP creates an opportunity to honor traditional treaty rights and identify Tribal connect to WSR stewardship. Tribal wild rice harvesting is a way the St. Croix Riverway has grown this cultural partnership.



JULIE (SCNR):

*We have American Indian Tribes that have traditional treaty rights that they need to exercise at the Riverway. We're looking at the potential of specific projects with some tribal groups that are in the discussion phase right now. We have sloughs on the river that are good places for wild rice to grow, and wild rice is very important to the Ojibwe People. That's an area we think we can have some alignment – a place we can do some reseeding of wild rice and another area that could be harvested would be a benefit to the tribes.*

## State: Streambed Ownership, Memoranda of Agreements, State Law Enforcement

WSR corridors may include multiple States' lands requiring the federal WSR administering agency to coordinate with States when drafting the CRMP to denote who is responsible for which resources through the corridor.

JULIE (SCNR):

*A big thing to think through is, "Who owns the streambed and water surface?" In Minnesota, the State owns the river bottom while in Wisconsin it belongs to the riparian owner: it can get confusing quickly.*

Another State partnership issue is having different background check criteria for State and Federal Agencies who both have their own fishing guide permit allocations. Huron-Manistee National Forest river managers worked to gain access to the State Department of Natural Resources violations database.

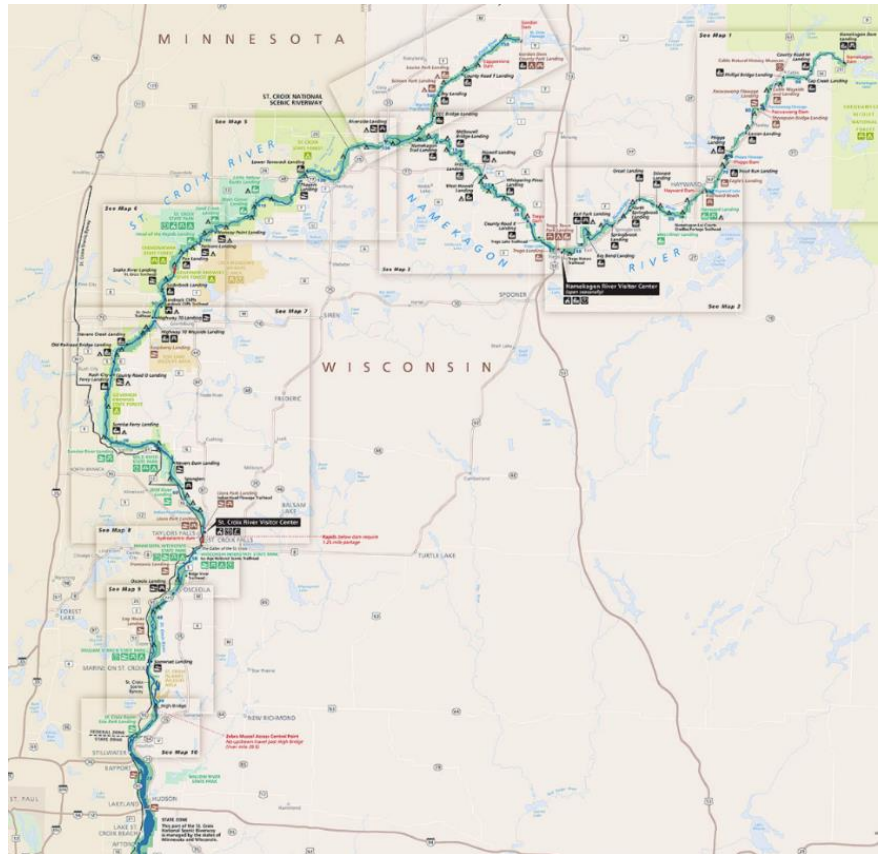


Figure 17 The St. Croix River forms a natural boundary requiring coordination between Minnesota and Wisconsin NPS

Partnerships and processes could be improved by including in the CRMP as much detail as possible regarding the coordination with and respective responsibilities of State Agencies such as the Department of Transportation working with WSRs.

DAVE (BTNF):

*“If the Department of Transportation is going to propose a project, they need to include the NEPA, and their plans should include how they’re going to restore the damage created after installing new projects such as a culvert.”*

LINDA (BTNF):

*Let’s come up with a much clearer process internally. We can provide training for the Wyoming Department of Transportation and other key agencies to make sure everybody understands our process. We need to rely on each other to provide timely responses, knowing who does what, and understanding how all these people who work for different supervisors, can coordinate efforts successfully.*

Partnership successes can come from relationships at the individual level in State Departments, who are educated to protect WSR values.

DAVE (BTNF):

*Darin Martens is our Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) liaison with the highway department and his background has a lot of river running experience. His background is as a landscape architect so he’s worked with WYDOT, especially on visual resource management. WYDOT has done some things that they’ve never done at any other point, and it’s out of that unique consideration of scenic resources.*

## County

**Value local relationships.** Local county governments through which wild and scenic rivers flow are critical partners in WSR management. WSR trainings for county planners outlined in the CRMP can help to inform local government planners on regulations that should be considered for projects around WSR corridors.

DAVE (BTNF):

*“It’s not wild and scenic until you tell people it’s wild and scenic and what that means. If you don’t go down to the County planning office and tell them where they fit into the equation, they may not know how to interact with you or it.”*

Additional federal regulations can feel less burdensome if river managers develop positive relationships with groups such as County Search and Rescue.

DAVE (BTNF):

*“While thousands of people take commercial trips, whose business is transacted in Teton County, the activity is all in Lincoln County, whose business owners are unhappy about not receiving that direct financial benefit.”*

County Search and Rescue programs are directly impacted by activities on Wild and Scenic Rivers, and managers should be aware of how to properly distribute available funds and resources to County programs that are critical to supporting WSR operations.

## Private

WSR protections can be honored and enhanced by advocating and building partnerships in the private sector. This is growing in importance as increasing numbers of people visit and seek to live on private lands near rivers. The following reflections illustrate the results of agency staff investment in relationships and transparent, education-oriented planning.

DAVE (BTNF):

*After years of awareness-building and collaboration, architects and developers reach out to me if they are doing something and don't want to have conflict later. It's really nice to have educated them and developed positive relationships: we can talk before there is an issue and avoid a standoff.*

**Agency-provided land use planning resources.** Utilizing public-facing GIS portals such as a NEPA Planning web-map developed by Brian Goldberg on BTNF helps show the private sector what additional review is needed in specific areas for grazing, oil, gas, and timber projects.

JULIE (SCNR):

*"We don't have scenic easements on every piece of private property, so we often work with County and local zoning to help make sure those scenic views are protected."*

Some WSRs such as the St. Croix are located close to growing metro areas with pressure for more river front residences, infrastructure crossing such as bridges and pipelines which can have visual impacts.

River managers work with private partners to uphold WSR protections by finding creative solutions. When a rural broadband project involved installing a fiber optic cable along the river, Julie worked with them to attach the cable to an existing bridge rather than digging up the bank.



Figure 18 St. Croix Riverway bridge infrastructure NPS

## Public and Non-Profit Partners: Youth on the River, Public Communication Strategies, Teaming Up

**Partnerships are critical to CRMP implementation.** Each of the WSR managers interviewed mentioned local friends' groups that have become essential to funding and implementing aspects of the CRMP. Partners can do this by raising funds for infrastructure projects and hiring seasonal interns to work on projects identified in or based on the CRMP.

JULIE (SCNR):

*“The more partners we can get together, the better. Our local watershed councils and local universities help us implement ORV Monitoring.”*

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*At the Huron-Manistee National Forest, these relationships were built by discovering potential stakeholder groups early-on: everybody was at the table during its development. We need to stretch our Forest Service minds to be truly inclusive.*

The National Park Service on the St. Croix has partnered with local elementary schools to introduce youth to their Wild and Scenic St. Croix River. Interested children bring their families and friends back to the rivers, and Agency staff teach the public community how to enjoy the benefits of the River year-round, notably outside of peak seasons.

JULIE (SCNR):

*Not every kid has a parent or grandparent, or someone else in their life who’s going to bring them to the river. By reaching out to teachers who bring their classes to the river for a field trip, we’ve covered those kids.*

WSR managers are engaging with the public to exchange management ideas and issues. Open houses, public meetings, and talking with those who use the WSR resource the most can help glean information from river users, and aid in management decisions, directly. Taking the time to sit across from partners on the Rivers help managers gain feedback and more accurately address how the CRMP is working.

KRISTEN (HMNF):

*One of the things I am thinking about, is hosting an open house format meeting in various communities. My invitation and message will be: ‘I’m here and I don’t have an agenda. I’m not here to tell you about our latest project - I’m just here to meet you, understand your concerns and questions and try to build those relationships.’*



Figure 19 St. Croix NPS staff meeting the community NPS



Figure 20 St. Croix Staff educate elementary school children NPS



KRISTEN (HMNF):

*Interested people are our stewards. They're the ones out there doing cleanups and putting people on the river. By taking the time to listen and making it a priority to work with the people involved, they'll get other people involved. We can host a meeting at a Forest Service building and invite people, but if they're inviting their people to their community center, the network can become larger and stronger.*



Figure 21 Public education on the St. Croix Riverway NPS

## Conclusions

WSR managers interviewed for this report provided helpful insight as implementers of their CRMPs. Key takeaways from their shared perspectives include:

**Provide conditional direction for future management.** Suggest adaptive management tenets to the greatest extent possible, supported by adequate analysis and disclosure under NEPA. Such an approach allows managers to more quickly respond to changes in recreation and other uses to protect river values.

**Include sufficient detail in the CRMP to allow for effectiveness monitoring.** Discuss and repeat discussion of and attention to existing and anticipated future institutional capacity. Provide such detail in the CRMP to increase the opportunity for funding, use of new technologies and partnerships.

**Identify opportunities to partner.** Suggest individuals and organizations already engaged or with an interest in protecting river values in the watershed. Seek support of other river managers through RMS and other professional organizations, tribal governments, other federal and state agencies, local governments and organizations to accomplish objectives of the CRMP.

**Address the effects of climate change.** Project needs to address bank stability and infrastructure, including strategies to provide technical assistance to landowners. Determine effective methods to evaluate and, to the extent possible, manage the effects of climate change on river values.

Their thoughtful reflections and sharing of “river realities” may assist those involved with developing CRMPs on WSRs throughout the United States in the future.

## Appendix A

Ten topical questions were asked to each of the interviewees directly related to the sections of the CRMPs. Interviewees covered each topic in various detail depths, and their topical responses were included in this report.

### Section 1:

#### Description of existing resource conditions, included a detailed description of river values

- Has the description of river values (**free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values**) in your plan provided adequate detail from which to ensure these values are protected and/or enhanced?
- Please share **specific actions** undertaken to meet the **non-degradation** and **enhancement** policy for the identified river values.

#### Desired conditions and goals

- In general, does your plan include **sufficient direction** to guide management actions or **evaluate proposed** actions of others?
- Is there any area in which **additional** management direction might be desirable?
- Please share specific actions undertaken to address management issues and opportunities related to achieving desired conditions and goals.

### Section 2:

#### Development of Lands and Facilities – acquisition, maintenance, nonfederal land guidance effectiveness

- What **direction** is provided in your plan for **development of lands and facilities**?
- Does your plan include an **acquisition** strategy? If so, have lands or interests in lands been **purchased** from willing sellers?
- Describe how the CRMP addresses **maintenance** of existing **infrastructure** and proposed **impacts** from future projects. Has that guidance been **implemented**?
- Regarding **non-federal lands**:
- What type of guidance is provided for **development** of nonfederal land in your WSR corridor?
- How **effective** has this guidance been in protecting river values and working with **nonfederal landowners** within and adjacent to the WSR corridor?

### Section 3:

#### User Capacities and Monitoring Strategy

- In general, how does your CRMP address **user capacities**?
- Does your CRMP identify **indicators, thresholds, and triggers** associated with user capacities and desired conditions for river values?
- Has the direction been effective in providing the desired recreation experience and protecting other values?
- Has the **monitoring** strategy associated with user capacities been **implemented** and has it revealed any new information to inform an adaptive management approach? Please share any specific actions undertaken to address user capacities.
- How effective has your **monitoring strategy** been in identifying **potential risks** -to meeting the non-degradation and enhancement policy under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?
- Please share specific actions undertaken to protect values based on monitoring information.

**Section 4:**

**Water Quality Protection and Enhancement**

- What actions were taken to protect and enhance water quality?
- What were the parameters and collection of data?

**Section 5:**

**Partnership Opportunities and Feedback**

- Does your plan identify opportunities to **partner** with others to achieve desired conditions?
- Please share specific partnered projects undertaken to implement your CRMP.
- Have you solicited and received any feedback from partners or members of the public about your CRMP since its completion?