



Fact Sheet: Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires the protection of ORVs in a designated wild and scenic river for the benefit of present and future generations. ORVs are generally identified in the enabling legislation or in a Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) and may include scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values. An ORV must be a river-related value that is rare, unique, or exemplary feature at a regional or national scale. The WSR Act requires that parks protect and enhance ORVs in designated segments.



Silvery Minnow. Photo courtesy of the NPS.

Resource Specific ORV Criteria

- **Scenery:** Elements of landform, vegetation, water, color and related factors resulting in an exemplary visual feature and/or attraction.
- **Recreation:** Recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, hiking and wildlife photography are, or have the potential to be, popular enough to attract visitors from throughout the region of comparison or the United States.
- **Geology:** The river or the area within the river corridor contains one or more examples of a geologic process such as channel braiding, a geothermal spring or phenomenon that is unique or rare within the region.
- **Fish:** Fisheries may be judged unique by evaluating aquatic habitat and/or population parameters such as natural reproduction, species diversity and the presence of species of special concern (e.g. listed threatened and endangered species).
- **Wildlife:** Rare or unique terrestrial or aquatic species that are river-related including bald eagles, whooping cranes, river otters or mussels.
- **Prehistory:** The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans.
- **History:** The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or one-of-a-kind in the region.
- **Other values:** River-related values including hydrology, paleontology, ecology, or botanical resources.

Guidelines for defining ORVs

- ORVs must be river-related. This means the value must:
 - Be located in the river or on its immediate shorelands (generally within ¼ mile on either side of the river);
 - Contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem; and/or
 - Owe its location or existence to the presence of the river.
- ORVs must be rare, unique or exemplary in a regional or national context.
- The value would be a conspicuous example from among a number of similar values that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary.
- A region of comparison should be defined for each ORV.
- ORVs should be defined for individually designated river segments and be tangible.
- ORVs should be accurate, specific, and descriptive.
- ORVs should be defensible.

Many park plans lack the detail to effectively protect and enhance ORVs. The NPS Wild and Scenic River Steering Committee has developed a framework with the Denver Service Center to help parks better define ORVs to meet wild and scenic river responsibilities. For more information contact National WSR Co-Leads Bill Hansen at (970) 225-3532 or Joan Harn at (202) 354-6929. For additional guidance developed by the Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council go to <http://www.rivers.gov/publications/study-process.pdf>.