

Designating a Wild and Scenic River

There are two possible processes for designating a wild and scenic river:

Congressional designation ([details](#))

1. Congress authorizes a study to determine if the river is eligible for designation. The study is usually conducted by the National Park Service or whichever agency manages the land around the river
2. The agency reports the findings of the study back to Congress
3. Congress can choose to pass legislation designating the river
 - a. Several times, Congress has chosen not to designate rivers that were recommended by the agency reports

Secretary of the Interior designates, at the request of a state governor ([details](#))

1. The river needs to be designated wild and scenic (or the equivalent) at the state level
 - a. This means there has to be a state river protection system, which isn't always the case
 - b. From the federal river program: [New York](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) have state river programs
 - c. Virginia has a [Scenic Rivers Program](#)
2. The river needs to meet eligibility criteria for a national Wild and Scenic river (free-flowing, possesses "outstandingly remarkable value")
3. The river must be administered at the state level, with no cost to the federal government
4. There must be effective mechanisms in place to ensure the river and its natural resources are protected long-term
5. The state's governor needs to request designation

Potential rivers for designation:

- Savage River
- Upper Gunpowder
- [Rappahannock](#) ([currently designated in Va.](#))