



NASHUA RIVER  
**WILD & SCENIC**  
STUDY COMMITTEE

Nashua • Squannacook • Nissitissit Rivers

## Benefits to the our rivers

*[www.WildandScenicNashuaRivers.org](http://www.WildandScenicNashuaRivers.org)*



### What is a Wild and Scenic River Study?

- A congressionally authorized study to determine whether particular river segments are eligible and suitable for designation as national Wild & Scenic Rivers.
- The Study is based on the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act passed by Congress in 1968 to protect our nation's best rivers.

### What Does a Study for the Rivers Entail? (segments of the Nashua, Squannacook & Nissitissit Rivers)

- Conducted by a Study Committee of local stakeholders, state and regional experts with staff and funding support from the National Park Service.
- The study has focused on the rivers' biodiversity, recreational & scenic, and historic & cultural resource values.
- The Study Committee is developing a draft river stewardship plan which is a locally-determined vision of the river corridor including strategies to ensure protection and celebration of the rivers' outstanding resources.

### What Would Wild and Scenic Designation Achieve?

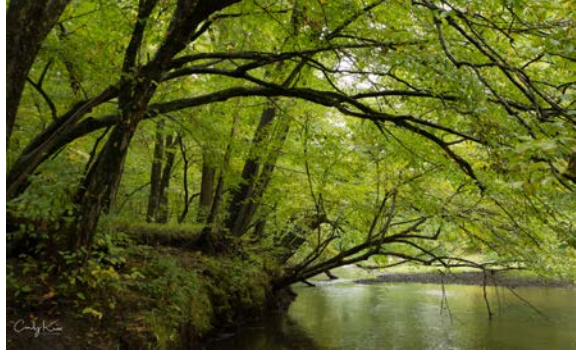
- The rivers would be recognized among the nation's best. Designation would be granted if the Study demonstrates both nationally outstanding resources and a local commitment to protect them.
- Designation ensures any federally-funded or -permitted project would not adversely impact the water resource. It would help protect water quality.
- Designation would qualify the rivers for federal funds on an annual basis to support local projects and activities that protect and enhance the rivers' outstanding values.
- A locally-based coordinating committee would be established to oversee implementation of the river stewardship plan with representatives from each participating town.

### Why is the Wild and Scenic River Study Itself so Valuable?

- The Study provides an opportunity for towns to work together at a region-wide, watershed-scale.
- It is a vehicle for providing communities with the incentive, structure, expertise, and funding needed to collectively identify the issues and goals they have for their shared resource, and to set forth the means for achieving those goals through a Stewardship Plan.
- The process is entirely voluntary, non-regulatory and in the hands of the local communities.

### What is so Special About the Rivers?

- Three Outstandingly Remarkable Resource Values (ORRVs): 1) Biodiversity, 2) Recreational & Scenic, and 3) Historic & Cultural. See website (url above) for in-depth ORRV discussion.
- Focus of three contiguous "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" (ACEC): 1) Squannacook, 2) Petapawag and 3) Central Nashua River Valley.



### **Why is a Stewardship Plan Needed?**

- Streambank erosion is placing increased sediment loads into the river, affecting habitat and water quality.
- Data shows declining water quality due to stormwater runoff containing sediments, nutrients and pathogens. Much is already being done to address these issues, and designation could lend support to these efforts.
- Many unique resources including recreational opportunities, scenic landscapes, historical features are not well understood or well protected and could be lost over time.
- Threats to cold-water fisheries including native brook trout habitat; warm-water fisheries with prize bass.

### **What are the Basic Steps of the Study and Designation Process?**

- Identify the "Outstandingly Remarkable Resource Values" (ORRVs) of the rivers.
- Determine the eligibility of the river segments. Free-flowing rivers (or segments of rivers) with at least one "ORRV" are *eligible* for designation.
- Identify the issues and threats to the river segment (and watershed).
- Gather community input and establish goals, objectives and strategies for the rivers (and watershed).
- Evaluate all existing means of resource protection and recommend possible improvements such as Best Management Practices.
- Address the question of *suitability* - is there enough local support for protection and designation to warrant becoming a wild and scenic river?
- Draft a Stewardship Plan and share widely.
- Votes at Boards of Selectmen and at Town Meetings on whether to request designation or not.
- Introduce a bill into Congress, if both eligible and suitable, for a Wild and Scenic River designation.

### **What the Study and Designation DO NOT DO:**

- The Study and designation do not lead to establishment of a federal park nor any local federal land ownership.
- The Study and designation do not put land under federal control, require public access to private land, or require any changes in the local process of land-use decision-making that the towns themselves don't elect to do.
- The Study and designation do not change any existing local land use. Towns may want to strengthen locally-implemented protection, but it is entirely up to the local communities if they wish to do so. The federal government cannot zone private lands; zoning is a power of state and local governments. Existing regular uses of private lands will not be affected. The draft Stewardship Plan identifies types of activities that are considered compatible or incompatible with protecting the river's values. Any and all work with local landowners to improve the river's water quality or habitat is done voluntarily and cooperatively.

### **How to Get Involved?**

- Public involvement is the most important ingredient in the study process. Through the Study Committee and its sub-committees, local river-related issues can be identified, and ways to address those can be established.
- The Study Committee holds monthly meetings -- as well as hosts many public forums -- and actively seeks input into the process to gain the widest possible expression of community views.
- Assistance is needed to educate the community on the purposes and scope of the Study.

Call Al Futterman at the NRWA for more information: 978-448-0299 or email

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