

Cultural /Prehistory (C)

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating

The river, or area within the river corridor, contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unique or rare characteristics or exceptional human interest value(s). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; and/or may have been used by cultural groups for rare sacred purposes. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the NPS.

Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Snake River Canyon corridor contains hundreds of sites that indicate evidence of use or occupation by Native Americans. Some of these sites have unique or rare characteristics, and some exhibit exceptional human interest values. Many of the cultural resource sites have regional and national importance for interpreting prehistory and some are important because they represent where a culture or cultural period was first identified or described. A number of sites have indications that they were used by more than one cultural group concurrently. It is also believed by researchers that some sites contain traditional cultural properties (TCPs) and exist in the corridor for sacred or ceremonial purposes.

The lower elevation and protective walls of the Snake River Canyon provide a milder winter climate for both humans and animals than the surrounding Boise and Owyhee Mountains. Spring and fall salmon runs once provided a ready food supply for inhabitants. As such, the Snake River Canyon has been used by different cultures, dating as far back as 9,000 years, including the Shoshone, Bannock, and Paiute Cultures in prehistory and Euro American cultures after 1811.

The river corridor contains many prehistoric site types including lithic scatters, caves, habitation sites, rockshelters, burials, and rock art sites left by Native Americans.

Wees Bar is a large boulder field in the Swan Falls Segment that contains hundreds of petroglyphs etched into the basalt boulders that were deposited by the Bonneville Flood. This petroglyph field is one of the largest concentrations in the Pacific Northwest. Like most petroglyph sites, the Wees Bar site is considered rare as a site type and exceptional for its size and number of glyphs. Early Euro American miners and homesteaders also inscribed names, initials, and dates on some boulders within the canyon and at nearby Halverson Bar.



The Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1978 to protect over 200 known prehistoric sites in the area. The Archaeological District covers approximately 26,300 acres of public land extending upstream along the Snake River Canyon from Guffey Bridge to Grand View, which covers the Swan Falls, Jackass Butte, and a small part of the Grand View segments of the Snake River.

Schellbach Cave, a small cave in the Archaeological District excavated by Louis Schellbach in 1929, is recognized as the first archaeological expedition in Idaho. Well preserved artifacts excavated by Schellbach emphasized the importance of prehistoric fishing technology and the use of fish by early Canyon peoples.

The Snake River Corridor was probably simultaneously occupied by Shoshone and Northern Paiute Tribes. It is unclear just how much interaction or sharing of natural resources occurred. It is likely, however, that there were trade relations and intermarriages between the Tribes that helped foster cooperation and mutual sharing of resources. The cooperative relations probably changed as groups expanded or contracted based on resources, and personal strengths or personalities of their leaders. There was also an overlap of Euro-Americans and Native Americans using the Snake River Canyon from exploration in 1811 through the fur trade era, through the immigrant and homestead eras until the Indians were placed on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and the Duck Valley Indian reservation by 1880.

The canyon was explored by the Astoria Party in 1812 after their canoes were capsized near Milner. Starting in 1842, thousands of immigrants traveled the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail that parallels the south side of the Snake River along the Indian Cove segment and then turns south of the Canyon below Grand View. Oregon Trail traffic diminished with the arrival of train tracks in the region during the 1870s and 1880s.

Camp Buford, which existed for less than a year, was established in 1866 as a US Cavalry Post to protect the emigrants along the Oregon Trail. The area began as a river crossing point and an emigrant camp spot at the confluence of the Snake and Bruneau Rivers. It is near this spot that Governor Caleb Lyon signed the Bruneau Indian Treaty of April 12, 1866, which Congress failed to ratify. These sites, located near the BLM's Cove Recreation Site, were later inundated by C.J. Strike Reservoir.

Fur trappers, Oregon Trail emigrants, gold miners, ranchers and homesteaders left traces from the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. The site types include cattle and sheep herding camps, homesteads, town sites, miners' cabins, mine tailings and debris, stone monuments, ditches, depressions, and graves. Other historic period sites include transportation road networks, trails, ferry crossings, irrigation ditches, and historic trash dumps or scatters. At Wees Bar, the stone walls of a house built in 1902 still stand along with ruins of a dugout and other mining related artifacts and features.



Priest Ranch, which was the site of a ferry crossing, still exhibits leveled fields, apricot trees, ruins of an irrigation system of ditches, and a water wheel. The town site of Guffey was started on the north bank of the Snake River, but was moved to the south bank one mile downstream from present day Celebration Park after the Guffey Railroad Bridge was finished in 1897. The bridge is now owned by Canyon County and accommodates foot and equestrian traffic.

Swan Falls Dam, which was built in 1901, became the first dam on the Snake River and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1993, the dam was remodeled and continues to generate electricity for Idaho Power Company.

The town of Grand View was established in 1889 as part of an irrigation and settlement project. The Grand View ferry operated until 1921 when a bridge was constructed.

Finding

The Snake River Canyon corridor through the four river segments contains abundant and significant evidence of prehistoric and historic cultures and values. However, these same values are replicated along other stretches of the Snake River outside of the NCA, and as such, are not considered unique or outstandingly remarkable from a regional perspective.

Other Similar Values

No other similar values have been identified for these four segments of the Snake River.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values Summary

The interdisciplinary team determined that the following river-related resources meet the criteria as outstandingly remarkable values: Wildlife and Recreation (all segments).

IV. Eligibility Determinations

It is the determination of the ID Team that all four river segments of the Snake River currently exist in a free-flowing condition and contain at least one outstandingly remarkable value and therefore meet the requirements for eligibility as a Wild and Scenic River (Table 2).



Table 2. Eligibility determination summary for free flowing segments of the Snake River

River Segment	Free Flowing Criteria Met	Outstandingly Remarkable Values	Eligible	Eligible Miles
Indian Cove	Yes	W, R	Yes	9
Grand View	Yes	W, R	Yes	17.5
Jackass Butte	Yes	W, R	Yes	9
Swan Falls	Yes	W, R	Yes	13

V. Classification Analysis

Potential Classifications

The W&SR Act and Interagency Guidelines provide the following direction for establishing preliminary classifications for eligible rivers. All eligible river segments must be tentatively classified and management measures instituted as necessary to ensure appropriate protection of the values supporting the eligibility and classification determinations. Actual classification is a Congressional determination.

Classification Categories

Section 2 (b) of the WSRA specifies three classification categories for eligible rivers. Classification is based on the type and degree of human developments associated with the adjacent lands as they exist at the time of the evaluation.

Wild rivers (W): Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic rivers (S): Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Scenic does not necessarily mean the river corridor has to have scenery as an outstandingly remarkable value; however, it means the river segment may contain more development than a wild segment and less development than a recreational segment.



Recreational rivers (R): Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Parallel roads or railroads, existence of small dams or diversions can be allowed in this classification. A recreational river area classification does not imply that the river will be managed or prioritized for recreational use or development.

Preliminary Classifications

Classification establishes a guideline for management until either a suitability determination or designation decision is reached. It is a determination based on existing characteristics of a river area resulting from human-caused change or level of development. Classification does not affect land use decisions related to private property.

The four Snake River segments are described below with the preliminary classification and are summarized in Table 3.

Indian Cove Segment (9 miles)

State Highway 78 parallels the initial stretch of the Indian Cove segment. This segment is a mixture of private and public lands. The private lands contain residential houses, out buildings, irrigated agricultural fields, and pasture lands. The segment is easily accessed at many locations and is paralleled, for a short portion, by a gravel road that accesses an irrigation pump station. A three mile canyon stretch is primarily a natural setting with road access at the canyon rim at several locations. The parallel Highway and other roads, the level of access, and level of human development along this segment warrants a tentative classification of "recreational."

Grand View Segment (17.5 miles)

The Grand View segment begins where Strike Dam Road crosses the Snake River just downstream from C.J. Strike Dam. Several gravel and paved roads parallel the Snake River in places between the Strike Dam Bridge and the town of Grand View where the river is crossed by State Highway 67. A majority of the land in this portion is privately owned with private residences, barns, and assorted out-buildings on the property. Much of the land is irrigated farmlands with evidence of human development. Downstream from the Highway 67 bridge paved and gravel roads either parallel the river or access the river for the rest of the segment. The south side of the river is all private land with human evidence being prominent. This segment meets the criteria for a recreational classification.



Jackass Butte Segment (9 miles)

The Jackass Butte Segment begins with gravel roads paralleling both sides of the river leading to private property. The primary views along this segment are of a natural setting. Although the private lands have residences and other developments associated with them, they do not dominate the scenery. Beyond this point the shoreline is mostly undeveloped with vehicle access at several locations. Additional private lands and developments exist along this segment further downstream. Although the level of shoreline development in this segment is less than the upstream Grand View segment, the segment does not meet the scenic classification description of "shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped . . .", therefore, this segment would meet the criteria for a tentative classification of "recreational."

Swan Falls Segment (13 miles)

Beginning just below Swan Falls Dam, this segment has a maintained gravel road paralleling the north shoreline and a dirt road along the south. These roads follow the river for about five miles. This stretch of the river has many undeveloped campsites with fire-rings and several vault toilets are located at strategic places for recreational users. The four miles below the end of the road are managed for non-motorized experiences and the evidence of human development dates to the early 1900s. At approximately ten miles the river is again accessed by a gravel road at Celebration Park and crossed by an abandoned railroad bridge. Celebration Park is a developed county park with many facilities including a small campground, interpretive center, picnic area, and a concrete boat ramp with floating docks. Below the railroad bridge the land is primarily privately owned with residential houses and other buildings. This river segment is crossed by electric power lines at two locations. Although the views in this segment are primarily of natural settings, the level of access by roads, and other human developments warrant a tentative classification of "recreational."

Classification Summary

All four eligible river segments of the Snake River were determined to have tentative classifications as recreational river (Table 3).



River Segment	Tentative Classification	Segment Miles
Indian Cove	Recreational	9
Grand View	Recreational	17.5
Jackass Butte	Recreational	9
Swan Falls	Recreational	13

VI. Suitability Assessment

The third component of a W&SR study is the suitability assessment. It is designed to identify the possible impacts of designation, weighs various elements such as public access, long-term protection of resources, and traditional resource uses, and asks the basic question of would this be a worthy addition to the National Wild & Scenic River System. Additionally, the willingness of county, state and local landowners to participate in river corridor management is considered.

Criteria for Determining Suitability

In considering suitability, the criteria specified in Section 4(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (listed below) provide the basis for assessment.

- Characteristics that do or do not make the river corridor a worthy addition to the WSR system
- Current status of land ownership and uses in the area
- Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed or curtailed if the river were designated
- Public, state, local or other interests in designation or non-designation of the river
- Estimated costs of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands, and of administering the river if designated
- Ability of the agency to manage the river and protect identified values



- Historical or existing rights that would be adversely affected by designation
- Other issues and concerns identified in the land-use planning process

Indian Cove Segment

River Values/Characteristics

The Indian Cove segment is visually very characteristic of many sections of the Snake River throughout southern Idaho. The north side of the river is flanked by basalt cliffs rising 300-400 feet above the river. The south shore is open, flat terrain that has been settled or otherwise modified. At the downstream end of this segment a butte on the south creates a three mile long canyon that is slightly less than ½ mile wide (rim-to-rim). Many different species of raptors use the cliffs for nesting and forage over the surrounding desert and farmlands. Public access to the river is limited by private land on the south and is somewhat limited on the north by topography (i.e. steep cliffs).

Opportunities for viewing raptors and other wildlife within the river corridor are limited by legal public access. Raptor viewing is primarily from the main county and state roads which provide few safe opportunities to pull to the shoulder. The Indian Cove segment is at the upstream end of the NCA where the raptor habitat begins to lose its uniqueness as raptor nesting habitat.

Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 39 percent private land and 61 percent BLM land (public). Private lands are associated with the community of Indian Cove primarily on the south side of the river. The public land lies mainly on the more rugged north side of the river.

Public land use along this segment includes primarily recreational activities such as boat fishing, and waterfowl hunting. The canyon cliffs limit the amount of general dispersed recreation that occurs on the public land in the area. Several irrigation pump stations, (two located on public land), transport river water to adjacent and distant agricultural fields. The private lands are primarily residential farms and associated irrigated agriculture or livestock pastures.



Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources enhanced or foreclosed

This river segment ends at the backwaters of CJ Strike Reservoir and the river gradient is very low. These factors make the potential for new hydroelectric facilities not very feasible. However, the private lands have potential for new pump systems for local irrigation. Designation would preclude any new hydroelectric facilities within this segment and would also preclude any new diversions or structures which would impact private landowners. Potential surface disturbing activities would not be constrained by designation. Designation would not significantly enhance any land or water resources along this segment.

Interest in Designation

Local and regional environmental and conservation organizations have expressed positive interest in including all eligible segments of the Snake River in the National W&S River System. Local communities have not expressed interest in federal designation for the river.

Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration

Initial costs associated with designation would include mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process, layout, design, and publication of educational information about the new designations including brochures, website updates, and maps. Future costs would depend on the level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, patrol and enforcement, and biological or visitor use monitoring. Additional land acquisition cost would occur if any private landowners were willing to sell. Currently no parcels have been identified for acquisition.

Ability to Manage/Protect River Values

Current BLM management of the area as an NCA protects a majority of the shoreline miles, especially those cliff areas with raptor nest sites. Current limitations on recreation management for wildlife/raptor viewing are from topography and legal public access to the river and would not change with designation. Future potential threats to identified river related values are minimal.

Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights

No adverse effects on historic or valid existing rights are expected as a result of designation of this segment as a recreational river.

