

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION**

If a stream meets the minimum criteria necessary for field study, it is fully evaluated and ranked according to relative uniqueness or quality. Each river or river segment is evaluated or rated on eleven different factors from which a cumulative score is derived.

1. Stream Corridor Vegetation

0 Points – Natural vegetation within view from the river is more than 75% disturbed by grazing, cropland, timbering, etc.

10 Points – Natural vegetation is 50-75% disturbed

20 Points – Natural vegetation is 25-50% disturbed

30 Points – Natural vegetation is 15-25% disturbed

40 Points – Natural vegetation is less than 15% disturbed

Describe and estimate as closely as possible the amount of each type of disturbance.

\_\_\_\_\_ % of shoreline timbered with less than 100'

\_\_\_\_\_ % of visual corridor timbered with more than 100" buffer

\_\_\_\_\_ % of visual corridor in pasture

\_\_\_\_\_ % of visual corridor in cropland

2. Streambed and/or stream flow modifications

10 Points – Between 1 and 5% of the segment being evaluated is impounded or channelized

20 Points – No impoundment or channelization present

3. Human development of visual corridor

Evaluation should be conducted when foliage is in full leaf.

A. City or Town Related

0 Points – More than 10% of visual corridor is devoted to residential, industrial or commercial uses (not including agricultural or recreational developments).

5 Points – Between 5 and 10% of visual corridor is devoted to residential, industrial, or commercial uses (not including agricultural or recreational development).

15 Points – No urban development

B. Rural Development

0 Points – An average of two or more houses, cabins, barns, industrial buildings or clusters\* per mile of river evaluated.

5 Points – An average of 1.1 to 1.9 houses, cabins, barns, industrial buildings or clusters\* per mile of river evaluated.

10 Points – An average of .5 to 1 house, cabins, barns, industrial buildings or clusters\* per mile of river evaluated.

15 Points – From 0 to .5 houses, cabins, barns, industrial buildings or clusters\* per mile of river evaluated.

\*A cluster is defined as up to five dwellings or other structures located immediately adjacent to one another.

4. Historic Features

0 Points – No known historical significances.

10 Points – Historic sites or structures of state significance within 1,000 feet of river.

20 Points – Historic sites or structures of national significance within 1,000 feet of river.

NOTE: Ten bonus points available for each site or structure of state or national significance that is visible from the river. Maximum 30 points.

5. Landscape

A. Diversity

0 Points – Little diversity – few changes in scenery.

10 Points – Moderate diversity – fair number of natural features visible.

15 Points – High diversity of corridor features (e.g. cliffs, mountains, gorges, vegetative canopies, winding course).

B. Views

0 Points – Low range of views – foreground only.

5 Points – Medium range of views – foreground and middle ground

10 Points – High range of views – background of several miles.

15 Points – Exceptional grandeur – frequent, with wide range of views.

6. Qualify of Fishery

0 Points – Game fish population low to nonexistent, abundance of trash fish.

10 Points – Game fish populations moderate. Good fishing opportunities.

20 Points – Game fish populations excellent. Prime fishing opportunities.

30 Points – Nationally significant fishery.

7. Additional Natural Features Additional Natural Features

Ten bonus points for each occurrence, within 1,000 feet of the river, of a natural feature which is of statewide or greater significance. Maximum of 40 points

8. Water Quality

10 Points – Periodic visible pollution or chronically muddy or turbid

20 Points – Visible pollution rare: turbid or muddy during less than one-third of the six warm season months (May through October)

30 Points – No visible pollution; turbid or muddy only after heavy rains, after which the water clears rapidly.

9. Parallel Roads

10 Points – Up to five miles of parallel road per 10 miles of stream.

20 Points – Up to a total of one mile of state or county road per 10 miles or river.

30 Points – Up to a total of three-fourths of a mile of parallel county road within 300 feet.

NOTE: Paralleling roads, including railroads, are evaluated by their effect on the aesthetics of a stream, as viewed by the stream users. Roads may be excepted if traffic is inaudible and invisible from the river. Highly objectionable roads more than 1,000 feet from a stream may reduce ratings in individual cases.

10. Crossings

15 Points – An Average of .3 to.4 crossings per mile of river

20 Points – An average of .1 to.3 crossing per mile of river

30 Points – Less than .1 crossing per mile of river

NOTE: Covered bridges, foot bridges and fords may be excepted as crossings, if, in the judgment of the raters, they do not seriously impair the visual quality of the stream area. Bridges at beginning and end of study segment are not counted in the total number of crossings.

11. Special Features Affecting the Aesthetics

The purpose of this category is to list those stream and corridor features which singly or in combination make a resource physically attractive. Check as many as appropriate and place comments explaining your rating at the end of the section.

- Unique or interesting in-stream rock formations
- Culturally significant sites (e.g. mills, covered bridges, navigation structures, etc.)
- Islands
- Rapids
- Waterfalls or cascades
- Primitive areas (e.g. swamps, mature forests, etc.)
- Bluffs, cliff, rock outcrops
- Special geological features
- Remoteness or isolation
- Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. OVERALL AESTHETIC APPEAL

**10 Points - Low**

**20 Points - Medium**

**30 Points - High**

**40 Points - Exceptional**

13. Recreation (Proposed)

The purpose of this category is to recognize the valued recreational opportunities along the corridor.

- Canoe/ Kayak
- Motor boats
- Swimming
- Tubing/ body surfing

5 Points – 1 – 2 Recognitions

10 Points – 3 or more Recognitions

14. Conservation / Recognitions (Proposed)

The purpose of this category is to recognize local efforts to protect river corridors for future generations.

- Conservation Easements
- Blueways and public trails
- TMDL Program
- Land use protection tax sites ( Agriculture, Forest, Open Space, Horticulture)
- Historical / Rural Designation

10 Points – 1 – 2 Recognitions

20 Points – 3 or more Recognitions

NOTE: Ten bonus points when 25% or more of the corridor is protected by permanent easements or conservation designation.

**TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE – 370 ( proposed 410) Points**

**TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_**