

Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic Designation and Management Committee

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What is a National Wild and Scenic River?

A National Wild and Scenic River is one designated by Congress or the Secretary of the Interior, which with its environment, is to be preserved in its free-flowing state for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The values for which the river was designated are to be preserved and enhanced.

Who manages these rivers?

Each river in the system is administered within its designated boundaries by a state or federal agency, generally in close coordination with local governments, institutions and organizations.

What is a Partnership Wild and Scenic River?

A “Partnership River” is one in which little, if any, of the adjacent land is federally or state owned, but instead is mostly in private or local municipal hands. These rivers, more typical of the Northeast, are managed by a collaboration or partnership of adjacent communities, state governments and the National Park Service. The Lower Delaware is a Partnership River, managed under a broad and carefully constructed partner-approved management plan. Its geography includes some 65 miles of the New Jersey and Pennsylvania sides of the river from just south of the White / Harmony Township border in New Jersey to Washington Crossing Historic Park in Pennsylvania.

What is the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Management Committee?

Every endorsing community and non-profit is automatically a member of the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic Management Committee and has the right and responsibility to send a representative to the meetings. The membership extends to all interested parties.

The Committee elects chair persons and votes on matters that come before the group. It is responsible for updating the management plan as needed. The day-to-day decisions and administration of the management plan are made by a 2-person executive committee. The executive committee of the Lower Delaware consists of an elected New Jersey member and an elected PA member. A representative of the National Park Service’s National Wild & Scenic Rivers Program serves as liaison to the executive and management committees.

What are the goals of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Plan?

1. Maintain water quality in the main stem and designated tributaries.
2. Preserve the river corridor's wide variety of outstanding natural resources.
3. Preserve the historic resource and landscapes of the corridor.
4. Encourage low impact recreational use of the river that is compatible with public safety, protection for private property, and preservation of the natural and cultural resources.
5. Identify and adopt principles for minimizing adverse impacts of development on the river corridor.
6. Preserve open space in the corridor as a means of preserving the health of the river ecosystem.

The full text of the Management Plan and its goals and objectives can be found at www.delrivgreenway.org and www.lowerdelawarewildandscenic.org.

What are the benefits to being part of a designated Wild and Scenic River?

1. Partners qualify for potential federal funding for actions and projects that help attain the goals of the Management Plan.
2. Communities have the opportunity to join with other municipalities and NGOs to accomplish costly projects they could not do alone.
3. Communities are provided with special federal protection of the river under Sections 7(a) and 10(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Water development projects that require federal funding, permitting or assistance will not be permitted if they would have a "direct and adverse" impact on the resources for which the designation was obtained.
4. Communities are provided with sound scientific data and technical support to help with local decisions concerning resource protection.
5. Outreach and educational opportunities are available to management committees and municipalities of designated rivers.

Does the designation affect private property rights?

Designation neither prohibits development, nor any other current uses – recreation, agriculture, residential growth or business. Designation does not affect existing water rights, private property rights or the existing jurisdiction of states and municipalities. A landowner can do anything allowed by state or local ordinance on his/her land.

Designation prohibits federal support for actions and in-stream activities that would harm the river's free-flowing condition, water quality, or outstanding resource values. It does not establish a national park or rezone private lands.