

Why are Wild and Scenic Rivers designated?

Congress created the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

There are three categories of rivers in the WSR System:

- **Wild** rivers are free of dams, generally inaccessible except by trail, and represent vestiges of primitive America.
- **Scenic** rivers are free of dams with shorelines or watersheds, still largely primitive, and shorelines are largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads.
- **Recreational** rivers are readily accessible by road or railroad and may have been dammed in the past.

Congress further states that the river, with its immediate environments, must possess outstanding scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values.

What Wild and Scenic Rivers are in Utah?

Through the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11), Congress designated approximately 165.5 miles of the Virgin River and its tributaries across Federal land, within and adjacent to Zion National Park as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Eleven river segments totaling 19 miles of the Virgin River drainage are managed by BLM and all are classified as "wild". Each of the segments flows into or out of Zion National Park and a majority are within wilderness areas that were also designated in the 2009 legislation.

Virgin - Wild and Scenic River, Utah

Description: Approximately 165.5 miles of segments of the Virgin River and tributaries of the Virgin River are protected as a wild and scenic river. Segments include: Taylor Creek; North Fork of Taylor Creek; Middle Fork of Taylor Creek; Timber Creek; LaVerkin Creek; Willis Creek; Beartrap Canyon; Hop Valley Creek; Current Creek; Cane Creek; Smith Creek; North Creek Right and Left Forks; Wildcat Canyon/ Blue Creek; Little Creek; Russell Gulch; Grapevine Wash; Pine Springs Wash; Wolf Springs Wash; Kolob Creek; Oak Creek; Goose Creek; Deep Creek; North Fork of the Virgin River; Imlay Canyon; Orderville Canyon; Mystery Canyon; Echo Canyon; Behunin Canyon; Heaps Canyon; Birch Creek; Oak Creek; Clear Creek; Pine Creek; East Fork of the Virgin River; and Shunes Creek.