

Draft 2/27/03

**Outstandingly Remarkable Values W&S Ranking Criteria
2003 Green Mountain National Forest**

Scenic Values

Scenic value assessment for eligibility will utilize concepts described in the U.S. Forest Service Scenery Management System (SMS). Rivers that rank as Class A – Distinctive under SMS will qualify for an Outstanding designation in this study. Rivers that rank as Class B – Typical will qualify as Substantial and Class C – Indistinctive will rate as Locally Common. Criteria will assess areas where adjacent landform; rock form; vegetation; water features, cultural features; and distant scenery in combination or individually provide A, B or C scenery.

(A) Outstanding – The river and adjacent lands offer scenic values of national or regional significance (distinctive nationally). These are areas where landform or rock form or vegetation patterns or water characteristics or cultural features or offsite views provide unusual, unique or outstanding scenic quality either in combination or individually. These areas may include the presence of “Special Places”. The Scenery Mgt System describes them as “Those specific locations and expanses in outdoor settings that have attractions and features that are identified as unique, different, distinctive, and extraordinary to people.” Special places may include land forms with unusual or outstanding topographic features such as ledges, gorges, rock outcrops or large in stream boulders. Water forms may exhibit unusual changing flow characteristics, falls, cascades, meanders or pools. Middleground or background views (may be of mountains or cultural landscapes i.e. farms, fields, orchards) may be dominant and enhance total scene being viewed. They may possess a moderate to high number of special place areas or an individual special place may be of such magnitude to rank as Outstanding.

(B) Substantial - The river and adjacent lands offer scenic values of local significance. These are areas where landform or rock form or vegetation patterns or water characteristics or cultural features or offsite views provide less than outstanding but more than incidental scenic quality either in combination or individually. They may possess what would be considered a typical number of special places (none of which rank as outstanding) for the local area and be of a magnitude that ranks as Substantial.

(C) Locally Common – The river and adjacent lands offer scenic values that are locally common. These are areas where: landform or rock form or vegetation patterns or water characteristics or cultural features or offsite views provide ordinary or common scenic quality either in combination or individually. Rivers exhibit common meander and flow characteristics. Rock forms may be small features. Middleground and/or background views may not exist or have little influence on the total scene being viewed. An occasional special place may be found, but in general the river and adjacent lands are nondistinctive.

Recreational Values

The following criteria address the components of span of attraction, water sports and fishing. The river must meet one of the “or” statements to be considered meeting the standards of that criteria.

(A) Outstanding- Visitors are willing to travel from outside the geographic region (ecoregion) to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Information on the river is routinely included in national publications. Or: The river provides unusual opportunities for canoeing and boating, containing a variety of rapids and sufficient access points to provide a variety of trip lengths. Or: Fishing success rate, size of take and game species composition is unusual for the geographic region.

(B) Substantial- Visitors are willing to travel from other locations in the geographic region to recreate along the river and it’s corridor. Information on the river is routinely included in regional publications. Or: The river provides some opportunities for canoeing and boating, containing some rapids, but limitations on access points will reduce flexibility in trip planning. Or: Fishing success rate and size of catch may be above average for local area, but are common throughout the geographic region.

(C) Locally Common Visitors do not often travel long distances to visit the river for recreational purposes. Most visitors are from the local area. Or: The river provides limited, if any, opportunities for canoeing and boating. River access may be limited and low water flows in the summer limit opportunities for other water sports. Or: Fishing success rate and size of catch are common for the area.

Geologic

(A) Outstanding- River and corridor contains one or more examples of a geologic feature that is rare, unusual, or unique (one-of a kind) to the region (defined as the Green Mountains, Taconic, and Champlain Basin in Vermont). Examples of such features are: high falls, long & steep cascades, caves, large or frequent outcrops or boulders, potholes, odd-shaped or highly folded rock formations, a gorge, classic examples of glacio-fluvial deposits, or talus slopes.

(B) Substantial- River and corridor contains geologic features that are significant (uncommon) in the local area (defined as the southern Green Mountains), but typical of geologic features found throughout the region.

(C) Locally Common- River contains geologic features and formations that are locally common to the region, with no significant geologic features.

Fish and Aquatic Values

(A) Outstanding– The river contains fish populations or aquatic communities that occur only because of the character of the river. The river also provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish and aquatic organisms of national importance or may provide unique or a critical link in habitat conditions.

(B) Substantial– The river contains fish populations or aquatic communities of State or regional importance. The river also provides high quality habitat for fish and aquatic organisms however, these types of areas are common throughout the state.

(C) Locally Common- The river contains fish populations that are not unique, rare, or critical. The river also provides habitats that are common throughout the Forest or local physiographic area.

Wildlife Values

(A) Outstanding- The area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for federally endangered, threatened, or proposed species.

(B) Substantial- The area within the river corridor provides high-quality habitat for Regional Forester's sensitive species for the GMNF, or for state listed species.

(C) Locally Common- The area within the river corridor provides wildlife habitat that is common to the section, and this indicates that wildlife and wildlife habitats are not significant, rare, or critical.

Heritage Resource (Prehistory and Historic Values)

Heritage Resources include archaeological sites, historic structures, Native American traditional use sites, and cultural landscapes.

(A) Outstanding- Heritage Resources within the Corridor are regionally unique or rare (or include a superlative example of a "type"); well-preserved; and offer exceptional research or interpretive values of national significance. These Heritage Resources are on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places.

(B) Substantial- Heritage Resources within the Corridor are representative of the region, generally well preserved, and offer research and interpretive values of state and local significance. Many are eligible for the NRHP.

(C) Locally Common- The known Heritage Resources within the Corridor are few, predictable, unremarkable and/or disturbed. They offer moderate or minimal research and interpretive value above the local level.

Botanical and Ecological

(A) Outstanding- The vegetation along the river corridor is continuous with little evidence of human-caused fragmentation or human disturbance. Riparian or associated geologic or geomorphic features which harbor unique plants or rare natural communities may be present, and there are no exotic and/or invading weed species present. The area within the river corridor could provide habitat for federally protected plant species or a number of plant species considered rare or uncommon within the ecoregion.

Specifics:

Half mile river corridor has at least one TES plant species, or at least 3 plant species ranked S1-S3, OR

River corridor includes at least one rare natural community (ranked S1-S2), OR

The river corridor has at least 6 miles of continuous natural vegetation, primarily along the banks, for streams less than 20 mi², OR

The river corridor has at least 4 miles of continuous natural vegetation, primarily along the banks, for streams greater than 20 mi².

(B) Substantial- The vegetation along the river corridor is largely continuous; there may be some limited fragmentation caused by human activity, and some uncontrolled invasion by exotic and/or invading weedy species; however, the invasions are localized enough to be controllable. Riparian or associated features may harbor high quality examples of uncommon or locally significant natural communities. Plants considered rare in the ecoregion may be present.

Specifics:

Half mile river corridor has at least 1-2 plant species ranked S1-S3, OR

River corridor includes at least one natural community (ranked S3-S5) in high quality condition (A, B, or A/B quality), OR

The river corridor has 2-6 miles of continuous natural vegetation, primarily along the banks, for streams less than 20 mi², OR

The river corridor has 1-4 miles of continuous natural vegetation, primarily along the banks, for streams greater than 20 mi².

(C) Locally Common- The natural communities along the river corridor are generally common to the area; the area may be greatly disturbed or highly fragmented. Highly disturbed natural communities or human-created plant communities (such as active agricultural fields or conifer plantations) may be present, and there may also be some uncontrollable invasions of exotic weedy species

Note: natural vegetation is defined as forested uplands and wetlands, and open wetlands and naturally-caused barrens (e.g. talus, landslides, cliffs), that is at least 25 years old and not fragmented by a paved road or highway.

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