



Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River
2024 Tributary Study Project Outline
2/24/2023

OVERVIEW

The Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Management Committee began this project in March 2022, with the overarching goal being to mobilize more organizations and residents behind the mission and values of the W&S program, and potentially designate more segments and tributaries of the Delaware River as Wild and Scenic. Insights that prompted this thinking included the rise since 2000 of more associations that focus on watersheds, creeks, conservation, preservation and ecological protection along the Delaware River; many of these entities have applied for our mini-grant program illustrating a positive movement to enhance the quality of our water systems.

The original Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River was designated in 1999; at that time, an NPS study document and Management Plan were drafted. In most Wild and Scenic studies, there is a study committee that develops a Management Plan. Given the existing Lower Delaware Steering Committee and Council, and existing Management Plan, this process is being treated as building on those.

PURPOSE & GOALS

The goal is to designate more creeks, streams and segments of the River as Wild & Scenic, and administer them under the umbrella of the existing Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River Council, Management and Action Plan. This process includes: a) gaining local endorsement of the communities around these streams and segments, b) documenting the water quality and outstanding resource values of those segments, c) drafting an addendum to the current Management Plan that adds those resources, and d) to move this package through NPS to Congress for designation.

The first phase of this project is to engage as many resident managed associations and municipalities as possible to endorse their local creeks for designation. In the long run, more active organizations supporting the waterways will serve the W&S goals while enhancing the reach of smaller, community based and resident empowered associations. Even if we are not successful in gaining an endorsement, the ongoing dialogue will make the river communities more aware of the Wild and Scenic River programs.

TEAM

Robert McEwan, Cindy Kunas, Sarah Bursky, Tara Mazzanotte, Judy Henkel, Marion Kyde, Jackie Middleton, Richard Todd and other volunteers as they appear. Join us!

TASKS:

A: Initial outreach to communities, and endorsement of interest in designation for stream, tributary or main stem segment of River.

- Communities should become familiar with the Management Plan (and outdated Action Plan) in the process and can be invited to start participating in the Council and start receiving communications
- Any particularly motivated individuals can/should be invited to help Robert and Tara with this overall process!

B: When there is enough clarity on included segments, study volunteers draft a Management Plan addendum that identifies ORV's and local protection mechanisms. The NPS fellow will help with the drafting of this document.

C: Letters of support should be gathered throughout the process, endorsing the Management Plan and the inclusion of their stream(s) into the existing designation. Letters or resolutions must be done by the governing body of the municipality, though additional letters from committees or nonprofits are welcome additions. This process is iterative; a second round of votes or resolutions may make sense later in the process after the Plan draft addendum is finished, or initial letters may be sufficient.

D: Depending on the Management Plan addendum developed, there may or may not be need for documentation by NPS in the form of a Study document, as is usually the case.

E: Concurrent to the process: Steering committee consider update to strategic action plan dated 2007-2011 in the form of a new "Strategic Plan 2023- 2028". Process can adopt from original but should be its own document.

MATERIALS AND PROGRESS TO-DATE:

- List of 28 segments and tributaries/creeks for study is complete.
- Presentation and FAQ's are available.
- Resolution template available, based on past NPS templates
- Endorsement letter templates are available, however they need tailoring to each organization that will endorse
- Outreach has begun to local associations, non-profits, conservations associations , etc.
- Individual creek Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORV) are being collected as a creek is endorsed by at least one sponsor

TIMELINE

Due to the need to approach so many organizations and municipalities it is anticipated this will take, at a minimum, until June 2024 to complete resolutions and endorsements. We have to remember that this project is an opportunity for the organizations; it is not a must. Organizations can always participate in the Council without pursuing designation.

"In nature, nothing exists alone". Rachel Carson, Silent Spring