



# Wild and Scenic Rivers: *Water Quality*

## *Why Clean Water?*

Every living thing relies on clean water. Water quality is an important indicator of ecosystem health. Historically rivers have been the lifelines of civilizations, defining our settlements, providing sustenance, and enabling life.

**1 out of 10 people in the U.S.A.**



**can trace their  
drinking water source back to a  
wild and scenic river.**

## *The Role of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act*

*Congress created a policy  
to "preserve...selected  
rivers or sections thereof  
in their free-flowing  
condition to protect the  
water quality of such  
rivers and to fulfill other  
vital national  
conservation purposes"  
WSR Act, Section 1(b)*



Both water quality and quantity along with special river values for wild and scenic rivers are to be protected and improved according to law.

Photo by CRAIG BLACKLOCK



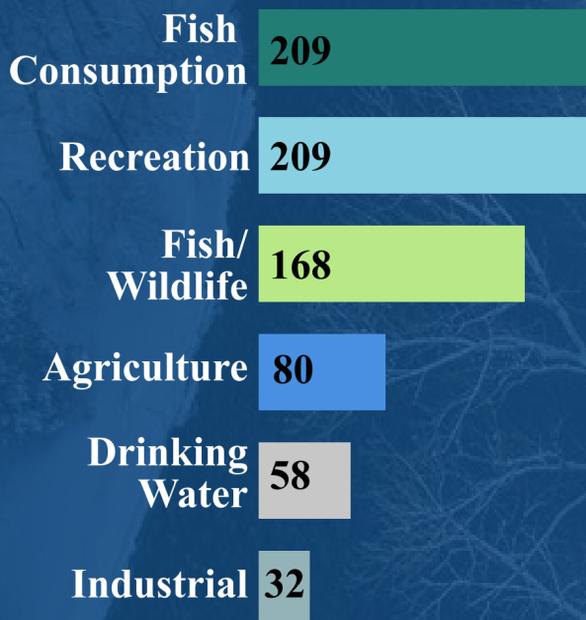
# Get Involved

## Designated Uses

Designated uses dictate the water quality standards for that particular waterway. These uses are determined based on how clean the water body should be to fully support the use.

All 209 wild and scenic rivers have both fishable and swimmable uses.

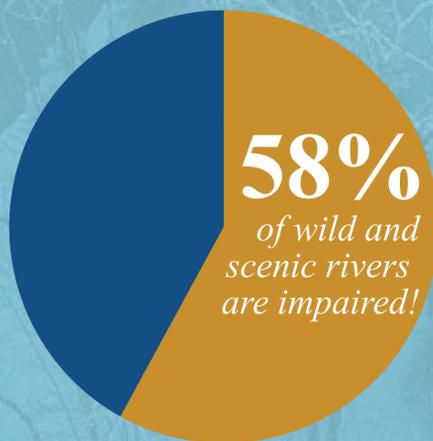
Here is the breakdown of the number of wild and scenic rivers with a respective designated use:



## An Interconnected System

What happens upstream matters. Rivers are not isolated resources. Population growth, development, and pollution can affect your river and drinking water. Even though you may not feel close to a wild and scenic river, you are very much connected to the system.

### Rivers at Risk



An impairment is when a water body does not meet the water quality standard for its designated use. Here is the breakdown of the number of rivers with a respective impairment:



## 6 Actions You Can Take



**Dispose of grease properly**  
to avoid clogging drains

**Use native plants**  
to support ecosystem functions



**Pick up your pet's poop**  
to keep bacteria out of the water

**Wash your car on the grass**

to prevent soap runoff into streams



**Compost your grass clippings and leaves**

to reduce excess nutrients

**Apply fertilizers and pesticides wisely**

to reduce storm water pollution



Photo by CRAIG BLACKLOCK