

# APPENDIX F: WILD AND SCENIC RIVER REVIEW



*Fall scene on the refuge: USFWS*

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## **Introduction**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, (Public Law 90-543 as amended: 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) (Act) establishes a method for evaluating and providing Federal protection for certain free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. One outcome of that Act is a national system of designated wild, scenic or recreational rivers included in the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS).

Section 5(d) (1) of the Act states in part: In all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources, consideration shall be given by all Federal agencies involved to potential national wild, scenic and recreational river areas, and all river basin and project plan reports submitted to the Congress shall consider and discuss any such potential. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall make specific studies and investigations to determine which additional wild, scenic and recreational river areas within the United States shall be evaluated in planning reports by all Federal agencies as potential alternative uses of the water and related land resources involved.

## **Wild and Scenic River Review for Rappahannock River Valley NWR**

The purpose of this wild and scenic river review is to inventory and study the rivers, river segments and their immediate environments within the refuge planning area to determine if they merit inclusion in the NWSRS.

As part of the Section 5(d) (1) review process, we are required to include all river segments that are within the planning area and listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI). The NRI is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS) and lists more than 3,400 free-flowing river segments in the United States that are believed to possess one or more “outstandingly remarkable” natural or cultural values judged to be of more than local or regional significance.

A 57-mile reach of the Rappahannock River from Snow Creek in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, to Tappahannock in Essex County, Virginia was listed in the NRI in 1982. According to the NRI, this 57-mile reach contains the following outstandingly remarkable values: historic, geologic, recreation, hydrologic, and botanic. Specifically mentioned in the NRI for this segment are these values (<http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca/nri/states/va.html>):

“Hydrologic- An extended segment of a sparsely developed, high order tidal river.

Botanic- Unique 100 foot cliffs at Fones Cliffs, Owl Hollow, Moons Monument Wharf.

Historic- National Historic District at Port Royal and Tappahannock.”

A total of 146 miles of the Rappahannock River flows within the refuge’s approved acquisition boundary. The refuge currently includes six separate units that front the Rappahannock River within this boundary. Five of those units lie within the 57-mile reach listed in the NRI. The sixth, the Island Farm tract, borders 2.2 miles of the Rappahannock River and is outside, but directly adjacent to, the down river 1982 NRI boundary. The six units total a combined 5.89 miles (table F.1), or four percent of the riverfront miles within the refuge’s acquisition boundary.

## **Summary and Conclusion of Wild and Scenic Rivers Review**

Our Refuge CCP Core Planning Team agrees with the 1982 NRI assessment that this stretch of river contains outstanding remarkable values and has potential for special designation. However, the team decided to defer further detailed study of that portion of the Rappahannock River within the refuge’s approved acquisition boundary for possible inclusion into the NWSRS until the Service acquires significantly more riverfront property. This decision is based on the fact the Service only

has ownership and jurisdiction of a small percentage of riverfront (4 percent), this ownership is not contiguous, nor does it individually (e.g. by tract) or collectively comprise a meaningful river management unit. While we recognize that there are units in the NWSRS as small as 2-miles, and that size alone is not the criteria for eliminating it from consideration, it is also true that none of the existing refuge units in table F.1 below are especially unique or distinguishable either from a resource value or a physical, geomorphologic standpoint from the rest of the river stretch within the approved acquisition boundary.

**Table F.1. Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge Riverfront Ownership**

<b>Refuge Tract</b>	<b>Total River Frontage**</b>
Styer / Bishop Tracts	0.24 miles
Port Royal Unit	0.32 miles
Toby's Point Tract	2.15 miles
Mothershead Tract	0.24 miles
Wilna Tract	0.72 miles
Island Farm	2.22 miles
<b>**Total</b>	<b>5.89 miles</b>