



# The National Blueways System

*Where Land and Water Stewardship and Recreation Meet*



*Connecticut River - Photo: USFWS*

Healthy rivers and watersheds are among America's most loved national treasures. These resources are vital to local economies, to enjoyment of the natural world, and to the quality of the environment on which we all depend. Rivers connect communities, rural and urban, human and natural. Across the nation, towns, county and state governments, civic organizations, businesses, landowners, and volunteers are working together to protect and restore healthy rivers and lands capable of providing quality outdoor recreation and other benefits within a working landscape.

The National Blueways System is where water and land stewardship come together, creating synergy and a framework for partnerships. The National Blueways System uses a landscape-scale approach to river conservation and outdoor recreation that unites activities from the headwaters to the mouth and across the watershed.



*Secretary Salazar signing the National Blueways Secretarial Order - Photo: USFWS*

- The National Blueways System recognizes and rewards the work of stakeholder partnerships and provides federal support to increase collaboration among diverse partners.
- The National Blueways System, established on May 24, 2012 by Secretarial Order 3321, will provide a blueprint for communities to plan and manage for the health, resiliency, and connectivity of their rivers and watersheds. It supports communication, cooperation and collaboration among different stakeholders, who strive for an integrated approach to managing land and water resources.

- Healthy rivers and watersheds provide outdoor recreation, clean water, flood and drought protection, and other valuable economic, social and ecological services. The National Blueways System seeks to sustain and enhance these services providing long-term value for the American people.

*A National Blueway is a nationally significant river and its watershed recognized for having a diverse stakeholder partnership committed to integrative and adaptive management in land and water management that sustains working lands, natural resources, and outdoor recreation.*