



**US Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District**

Resource Management Plan and
Environmental Impact Statement



WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2013

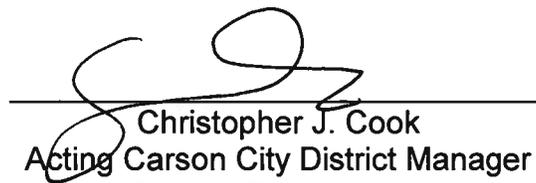
Carson City District Resource Management Plan Revision Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report

February 2013

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Full Phrase

BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
CCD	Carson City District Office
EIS	environmental impact statement
Forest Service	United States Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
National System	National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
ORV	outstandingly remarkable value
RMP	resource management plan
US	United States
WSR	wild and scenic river
WSR Act	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City District Office (CCD) has completed a wild and scenic river (WSR) evaluation as part of its resource management plan (RMP) process. During the identification phase, the BLM examined river and stream segments within the CCD boundaries to identify those segments that either pass through or are bordered by BLM-administered lands. Once identified, standard criteria were applied to determine the eligibility of each segment. This report describes the identification process followed, eligibility and preliminary classification criteria used, and the determinations made during the eligibility phase of the WSR evaluation for the CCD.

I.1 PROJECT AREA

The planning area encompasses approximately 9 million acres of federal, state, and private lands in eleven counties—Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and Washoe Counties in Nevada and Alpine, Lassen, and Plumas Counties in California. Within the planning area, there are many diverse communities with unique economic bases, values, and resources. Equally as diverse are the planning area’s physiographic attributes, which include the pine-forested eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the western reaches of the Great Basin high desert (basin) and range topography, and vast expanses of sagebrush and desert shrub rangelands. Management direction outlined in the RMP will apply to the 4.8 million acres of public lands within the planning area boundary administered by the BLM.

I.2 WHY CONDUCT A WSR STUDY AND WHY NOW?

Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (WSR Act) (Public Law 90-542; 16 US Code 1271-1287) directs federal agencies to consider potential WSRs in their land and water planning processes (“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”). To fulfill this requirement, whenever the BLM

undertakes a land use planning effort (for example, an RMP), it analyzes river and stream segments that might be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System).

The CCD is preparing an RMP and associated environmental impact statement (EIS) to guide management of BLM-administered lands (surface lands and federal minerals) within the CCD. The RMP/EIS will be prepared as a dynamic and flexible plan to allow management to reflect the changing needs of the planning area and will replace the 2001 Carson City Field Office Consolidated RMP (BLM 2001), as amended.

This WSR study is being conducted now because the BLM is required by the WSR Act to assess river and stream segments under its management jurisdiction as part of its RMP process. The formal public comment period as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (Public Law 91-190) began on February 24, 2012, with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, and ended on April 29, 2012.

I.3 WHAT IS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER?

Congress enacted the WSR Act on October 2, 1968, to address the need for a national system of river protection. As an outgrowth of a national conservation agenda in the 1950s and 1960s, the WSR Act was in response to the dams, diversions, and water resource development projects that occurred on America's rivers between the 1930s and 1960s. The WSR Act stipulated that selected rivers should be preserved in a free-flowing condition and be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Since 1968, the WSR Act has been amended many times, primarily to designate additional rivers and to authorize the study of other rivers for possible inclusion.

The WSR Act seeks to protect and enhance a river's natural and cultural values and to provide for public use consistent with its free-flowing character, its water quality, and its outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs). Designation affords certain legal protection from development. For instance, new dams cannot be constructed, and federally assisted water resource development projects that might negatively affect the designated river values are not permitted. Where private lands are involved, the federal managing agency works with local governments and owners to develop protective measures.

As of September 2012, the National System protects 12,602 miles of 203 rivers in 38 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; this is a little more than one-quarter of one percent of the nation's rivers (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 2012). These nationally recognized rivers make up a valuable network of natural and cultural resources, scenic beauty, and recreational opportunities.

I.4 STEPS IN THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY PROCESS

A WSR study process is composed of two main components: the eligibility phase and the suitability phase. The eligibility phase was conducted in accordance with BLM Manual 6400, Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, Planning, and Management (BLM 2012a) and with The Wild and Scenic River Study Process technical report (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999). An overview of the WSR study process is shown in **Figure I-1**, Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Process. Excerpts from BLM Manual 6400 are presented below to explain the process.

A river study area extends the length of the identified river segment and includes the river area, its immediate environment, and shall include (or total) an average of no more than 320 acres per mile from the ordinary high-water mark on both sides of the river. The planning team should outline a preliminary or proposed boundary, usually 0.25-mile on either side of the river.

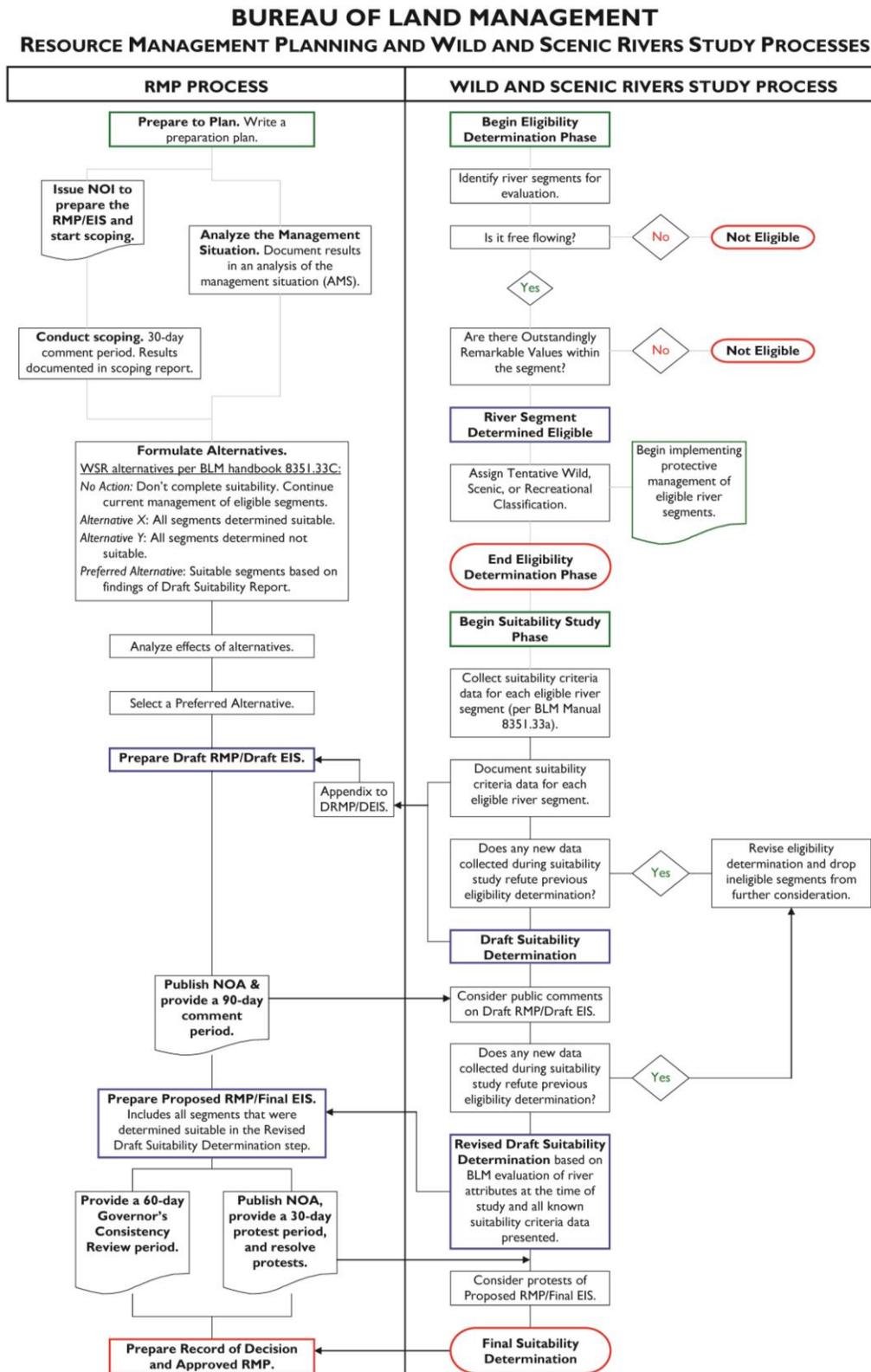
I.4.1 Eligibility Evaluation

Each identified river segment shall be evaluated to determine whether or not it is eligible for inclusion as a component of the National System. Determinations of eligibility shall be documented by the authorized officer (BLM Field Manager or District Manager) prior to the formulation of alternatives but no later than the release of the draft RMP or RMP amendment.

The WSR Act states that, in order to be found eligible, a river segment must be “free flowing” and contain at least one river-related value considered to be “outstandingly remarkable.”

If the eligibility phase determines segments to be eligible, the BLM shall assign a tentative classification and management measures needed to ensure appropriate protection of the values supporting the eligibility and classification determinations. There are three classes for rivers designated under the WSR Act: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational. Classes are based on the type and degree of human development and access associated with the river and adjacent lands at the time of the eligibility determination. The classification does not reflect the types of values present along a river segment. The classification assigned during the eligibility phase is tentative. Final classification is a congressional legislative determination, along with designation of a river segment as part of the National System.

**Figure I-1
Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Process**



I.4.2 Suitability Phase

The purpose of the suitability phase is to determine whether eligible river segments are suitable or not for inclusion in the National System per the criteria of the WSR Act. Suitability considerations include the environment and economic consequences of designation and the manageability of a river if Congress were to designate it. The suitability evaluation does not result in actual designation but only a suitability determination for designation. The BLM cannot administratively designate a stream via a planning decision or other agency decision into the National System, and no segment studied is or will be automatically designated as part of the National System. Only Congress can designate a WSR. In some instances, the Secretary of Interior may designate a WSR when the governor of a state, under certain conditions, petitions for a river to be designated. Members of Congress will ultimately choose the legislative language if any suitable segments are presented to them. Water-protection strategies and measures to meet the purposes of the WSR Act will be the responsibility of Congress in any legislation proposed. Rivers found not suitable would be dropped from further consideration and managed according to the objectives outlined in the RMP. Suitability determinations are draft until the record of decision for the RMP is signed.

I.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Of the segments identified and evaluated, three segments along the East Fork of the Carson River were determined eligible for inclusion in the National System. **Table I-1**, Segments Determined Eligible for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, summarizes the ORVs and tentative classification of the segments, which will be carried forward for suitability analysis in the Draft RMP/EIS. All segments are within the Sierra Front Field Office.

Table I-1
Segments Determined Eligible for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

River Segment	Length on BLM Land (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Value(s)	Tentative Classification
East Fork Carson River Segment 1	1.51	Recreation, Scenic, Fish	Wild
East Fork Carson River Segment 2	1.03	Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic	Recreational
East Fork Carson River Segment 3	1.97	Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic	Scenic

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SECTION 2

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology implemented to identify river and stream segments to be evaluated for eligibility. The methods used to identify river and stream segments are those described in BLM Manual 6400 (BLM 2012a).

2.1 METHODS USED TO IDENTIFY RIVER AND STREAM SEGMENTS

All rivers that may have potential for WSR designation were identified and evaluated. Care was taken to avoid overlooking any river segment located on BLM-administered lands. To accomplish this, the BLM relied on several sources, including geographic information systems data, CCD resource specialists, informational sources, other agencies, and public input. The result was a list of 36 individual streams, or stream segments, to be considered for eligibility. **Table 2-1**, Planning Area Streams Analyzed, presents the results from the identification effort.

2.1.1 Geographic Information Systems

Geographic information systems data compiled by the US Geological Survey were used to generate a table of all the perennial stream segments that contain BLM-administered land adjacent to at least one bank of the stream. **Figure 2-1**, Streams Reviewed for Wild and Scenic River Eligibility, shows the perennial streams as well as other areas identified for assessment.

2.1.2 BLM Resource Interdisciplinary Team

The BLM interdisciplinary team consisted of 10 resource specialists from both the Sierra Front and Stillwater Field Offices. The interdisciplinary team reviewed the initial geographic information systems table with the purpose of identifying all the segments that potentially contained ORVs. These segments were then further evaluated for eligibility. In addition to considering perennial segments, the interdisciplinary team also added any non-perennial segments potentially containing ORVs for further consideration.

**Table 2-1
Planning Area Streams Analyzed**

River or Creek Name ¹	Portion of Segment Occurring on BLM Lands (miles)	Free Flowing Determination	Outstandingly Remarkable Values ²								Notes	
			Scenic	Recreational	Geological	Fish	Wildlife	Historic	Cultural	Other		
Baldwin Creek	2.91	No									No perennial flow; seasonal flow limited to storm events.	
Bench Creek	2.21	Yes									Impoundment; perennial stream.	
Big Den Creek	1.85	No	C			X					Fed by spring; flow diminishes in the basin. Riparian area unique.	
Carson River	1.16	Yes	C	C							Railroad travels through canyon.	
Cherry Creek	1.69	No	C			C					Fishable streams.	
Coal Creek	1.26	No									Limited surface water.	
Cottonwood Creek	1.54	No									Intermittent flow.	
Dry Valley Creek	0.51	No							C		Mostly private lands; ephemeral flows.	
East Fork Carson River Segment 1	1.51	Yes	X	X		X						
East Fork Carson River Segment 2	1.03	Yes	X	X	X	X						
East Fork Carson River Segment 3	1.97	Yes	X	X	X	X						
East Walker River	3.57	Yes		C		C				C	C	Mostly private lands. Large riparian corridor unique to the district. Other ORV vegetation.
Edwards Creek	4.33	No				X						Perennial, flows to valley floor. Willows choke flows.
Fort Defiance Creek	2.58	No										Limited surface water; ephemeral flows.
Galena Creek	0.61	No										Not on BLM lands.
Horse Creek	Unknown	No	C	C		C						Limited perennial flows.
Heenan Creek	0.10	Yes	C									Adjacent to reservoir on BLM lands.
Indian Creek	0.92	Yes	C									Originates from small earthen dam; creek heavily controlled.
Little Den Creek	1.59	No										Seasonally intermittent flow.

**Table 2-1
Planning Area Streams Analyzed**

River or Creek Name ¹	Portion of Segment Occurring on BLM Lands (miles)	Free Flowing Determination	Outstandingly Remarkable Values ²								Notes
			Scenic	Recreational	Geological	Fish	Wildlife	Historic	Cultural	Other	
Long Valley Creek	1.50	No									Nearly all on private lands. Questionable flow.
Luther Creek	0.97	Yes									Adjacent residential and agricultural use. Strong water flow.
Markleeville Creek	0.19	Yes									Lands identified for disposal.
Millberry Creek	0.36	No	C	C							Lands identified for disposal.
North Fork Dry Valley Creek	0.09	No									Only ephemeral flows.
Pine Nut Creek	1.19	No									Private lands mostly Indian allotments; some residential.
Pleasant Valley Creek	0.06	No									Lands identified for disposal.
South Fork Topia Creek	1.24	No									Only ephemeral flows.
Steamboat Creek	0.07	No									Determined not on BLM lands.
Topia Creek	3.22	No									Intermittently wet; freezes over in winter.
Truckee River	1.37	Yes		C							Likely not on BLM lands.
Unnamed Creeks NW Stillwater FO	Unknown	No									
Walker River	4.38	Yes									Lake bottom; land status is somewhat unknown.
War Creek	2.74	No	C			C					Limited perennial flows.
West Fork Carson River	0.32	Yes	C	C							Public access difficult because of adjacent private lands.
West Walker River	1.11	Yes	C	C		C					Forest Service land on south side of corridor.
Willow Creek	2.03	No	C			X				C	Fed by spring; flow diminishes in the basin. Riparian area unique.

¹ Shading = Segment determined eligible

² X = Value determined to meet ORV criteria; C = Considered value determined not to meet ORV criteria

Streams Reviewed for Wild and Scenic River Eligibility



The BLM used a number of sources to identify potential river and stream segments including: perennial streams, rivers on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory list, river segments identified in Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, river segments officially identified by state or local government agencies as being in the public interest for river protection, segments identified during public scoping for the RMP process, and BLM floatable rivers.

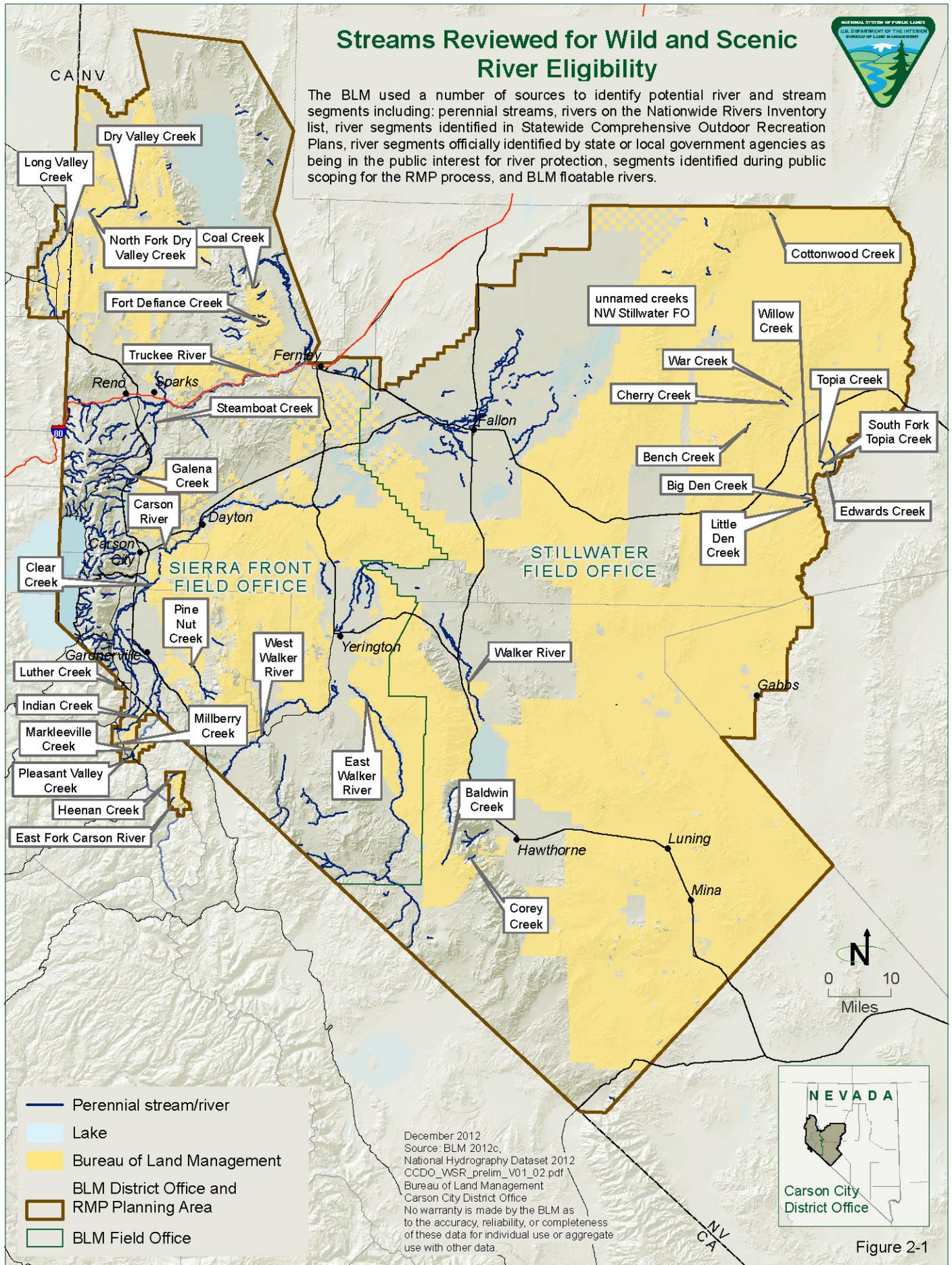


Figure 2-1

2.1.3 Informational Sources

The BLM used a number of informational sources and publications to identify potential river and stream segments. These sources included:

- Geographic Information Systems data for perennial streams
- Nationwide Rivers Inventory List
- Outstanding Rivers List compiled by American Rivers, Inc.
- Published guidebooks, regional guides, and inventories (e.g., American Whitewater Affiliation List)
- River segments identified in Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans
- River segments officially identified by state or local government agencies as being in the public interest for river protection
- River segments identified in public scoping during the RMP process
- BLM floatable rivers

2.1.4 Other Agencies

Additional information was gathered from other federal and state agencies from scoping letters, existing documents, and applicable rivers lists on the Internet. The following other sources were used to identify potentially eligible rivers:

- The BLM, Winnemucca District Office did not find any eligible or suitable streams contiguous to the planning area (BLM 2010).
- The BLM, Battle Mountain District Office is in the process of completing an RMP revision and associated EIS. As part of the process they have completed an eligibility study and a draft suitability report will be published with the Draft RMP/EIS. None of the streams determined eligible for inclusion in the National System are contiguous to the planning area.
- The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has performed a wild and scenic river eligibility study and has determined the following segments contiguous with the planning area to be eligible for inclusion in the National System; a suitability study has not yet been completed (US Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service [Forest Service] 2007):
 - East Fork of the Carson River from the headwaters downstream to the diversion dam in Nevada near the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery
 - West Walker River from the headwaters to the town of Walker

- East Walker River from the headwaters downstream to the BLM/Forest Service border in Nevada

2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Each identified river segment in the field offices' planning areas must be evaluated to determine whether or not it is eligible for inclusion in the National System. To be eligible, a river segment must be "free-flowing" and must possess at least one "outstandingly remarkable" value. These criteria are described below.

2.2.1 Free-Flowing Criteria

The CCD applied the definition of "free-flowing" described in the WSR Act and BLM guidance in order to make a free-flowing determination for each of the segments containing at least one ORV. Free-flowing is defined by Section 16(b) of the WSR Act as "existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway." The existence of small dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time the river segment is being considered shall not automatically disqualify it for consideration as a potential addition to the National System. Congress did not intend to require rivers to be "naturally flowing," in other words, flowing without any upstream manipulation except by nature. The presence of impoundments above and/or below the segment (including those that may regulate the flow regime through the segment), existing minor dams, and diversion structures within the study reach will not by themselves render a river ineligible. There are many segments in the National System that are downstream from major dams or are between dams.

Additionally, a river need not be "boatable or floatable" in order to be eligible. For purposes of eligibility determination, the volume of flow is sufficient if it is enough to maintain the ORVs identified within the segment. Rivers with intermittent flows exist within the National System, and rivers representative of desert ecosystems having outstanding ecological or other values should be considered.

The BLM guidance contained in BLM Manual 6400 (BLM 2012a) states:

...As a general rule, the segment should contain regular and predictable flows (even though intermittent, seasonal, or interrupted). This flow should derive from naturally occurring circumstances (e.g., aquifer discharge, seasonal melting from snow or ice, normal precipitation, or instream flow from spillways or upstream facilities). Caution is advised in applying the free-flow criterion to water courses that only flow during flash floods or unpredictable events. The segment should not be ephemeral (flow lasting only a few days per year in direct response to precipitation). Evaluation of flows should focus on normal water years, with consideration of drought or wet years during the inventory.

2.2.2 Outstandingly Remarkable Values Criteria and Region of Comparison

The determination of whether a river area contains “outstandingly remarkable” values is a professional judgment and is documented in this report. To be considered as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale (region of comparison). Values are scenic, recreational, geological, fish related, wildlife related, historic, cultural, botanical, hydrological, paleontological, scientific, or other values. While the spectrum of resources that may be considered is broad, all values should be directly river related. That is, they should have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Be located in the river or on its immediate shorelands (within 0.25-mile on either side of the river)
- Contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem
- Owe their location or existence to the presence of the river

The following table, **Table 2-2**, Outstandingly Remarkable Values and Region of Comparison, displays guidelines for the ORVs for which river segments can be eligible, as well as the comparative region, that are considered in this report. Only one ORV is needed for eligibility. These criteria are based on the guidelines described in BLM Manual 6400 (BLM 2012a).

Table 2-2
Outstandingly Remarkable Values Criteria and Region of Comparison

Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Criteria	Region of Comparison
Scenic	The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors must result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region. The Visual Resource Inventory may be used in assessing the visual quality; the rating area must be scenic quality “A” as defined by the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook, H-8410-1. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river segment length and not common to other rivers in the geographic region.	The region of comparison is generally the Basin and Range Physiographic Province, which is characterized by linear, north and south trending valleys, and normal fault-block mountain ranges. None of the rivers have an outlet to the sea, and they form large lakes and playas (BLM 2012b). The western boundary of the district abuts the Sierra Nevada mountains, with a few minor portions of the district within the Sierra- Cascade Physiographic Province.
Recreational	Recreational opportunities, including interpretive opportunities, are or have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors	The region of comparison is people’s willingness to travel long distances to access and

**Table 2-2
Outstandingly Remarkable Values Criteria and Region of Comparison**

Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Criteria	Region of Comparison
	to the geographic region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Recreation-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating. The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional commercial usage or competitive events. In addition, the river may be eligible if it is determined to provide a critically important regional recreation opportunity, or be a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.	recreate on a particular segment (e.g., tourism markets internationally, nationwide, and within the state of Nevada).
Geologic	The river or the area within the river corridor contains example(s) of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, and other geologic structures).	The region of comparison is areas of state or regional geologic importance.
Fish	Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river related conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Populations. The river is nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks, or populations of State or federally listed threatened and endangered species. b. Habitat. The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for State or federally listed threatened and endangered species. 	The region of comparison is based on each species
Wildlife	Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Populations. The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species 	The entire range of that species, especially threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

**Table 2-2
Outstandingly Remarkable Values Criteria and Region of Comparison**

Outstandingly Remarkable Value	Criteria	Region of Comparison
	<p>dependent on the river environment. Of particular significance may be species considered to be unique or populations of State or federally listed threatened and endangered species.</p> <p>b. Habitat. The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for State or federally listed threatened and endangered species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.</p>	
Cultural	The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must be rare, have unusual characteristics, or exceptional human-interest value(s). sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare; may represent an area where culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; or may have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.	National scale using NRHP criteria.
Historic	The river or area within the corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, or unusual in the region. Sites or features listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places, may be of particular significance.	National scale using NRHP criteria.
Other Similar Values	While no specific evaluation guidelines have been developed for the "other similar values" category, additional values deemed relevant to the eligibility of the river segment should be considered in a manner consistent with the foregoing guidance. Other similar values may include but not limited to, hydrologic, ecological/biological diversity, paleontological, botanic, and scientific study opportunities.	Varies depending on the factor considered.

2.2.3 Preliminary Classification Criteria

If a river segment is considered eligible, it is assigned a tentative classification. The criteria for classification used in this evaluation are defined in Section 2(b) of the WSR Act and are described in **Table 2-3**, Preliminary Classification Criteria.

Table 2-3
Preliminary Classification Criteria

River Classification Attribute	Wild	Scenic	Recreational
Water Resources Developments (impoundments, diversions, etc.)	Free of impoundment	Free of impoundment	Some existing impoundment or diversion.
	N/A	N/A	The existence of low dams, diversions, or other modifications of the waterway is acceptable, provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance.
Shoreline Development	Essentially primitive. Little or no evidence of human activity.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. No substantial evidence of human activity.	Some development. Substantial evidence of human activity.
	The presence of a few inconspicuous structures, particularly those of historic or cultural value, is acceptable.	The presence of small communities or dispersed dwellings or farm structures is acceptable.	The presence of extensive residential development and a few commercial structures is acceptable.
	A limited amount of domestic livestock grazing or hay production is acceptable.	The presence of grazing, hay production, or row crops is acceptable.	Lands may have been developed for the full range of agricultural and forestry uses.
	Little or no evidence of past timber harvest. No ongoing timber harvest.	Evidence of past or ongoing timber harvest is acceptable, provided the forest appears natural from the riverbank.	May show evidence of past and ongoing timber harvest.
Accessibility	Generally inaccessible except by trail.	Accessible in places by road.	Readily accessible by road or railroad.
	No roads, railroads, or other provision for vehicular travel within the river area. A few existing roads leading to the boundary of the river area are acceptable.	Roads may occasionally reach or bridge the river. The existence of short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads or railroads is acceptable.	The existence of parallel roads or railroads on one or both banks as well as bridge crossings and other river access points is acceptable.

**Table 2-3
Preliminary Classification Criteria**

River Classification Attribute	Wild	Scenic	Recreational
Water Quality	Meets or exceeds federal criteria or federally approved state standards for aesthetics, for propagation of fish and wildlife normally adapted to the habitat of the river, and for primary contact recreation (swimming), except where exceeded by natural conditions.	No criteria prescribed by the WSR Act. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 have made it a national goal that all waters of the US are made fishable and swimmable. Therefore, rivers will not be precluded from scenic or recreational classification because of poor water quality at the time of their study, provided a water quality improvement plan exists or is being developed in compliance with applicable federal and state laws.	

Source: BLM 2012a

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SECTION 3

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The segments listed in this section have been determined to meet the eligibility criteria described in **Section 2.2**, Eligibility Criteria. In accordance with Section 3.1 of BLM Manual 6400 (BLM 2012a), the BLM does not have the authority to evaluate the presence, absence, or quality of values that occur on private lands. However, the boundary of that river may include private lands. As such, the eligibility determinations in this report are only for those portions of rivers or streams that occur on BLM-administered lands. Eligibility determinations have not been made on portions of rivers or streams occurring on state or private lands.

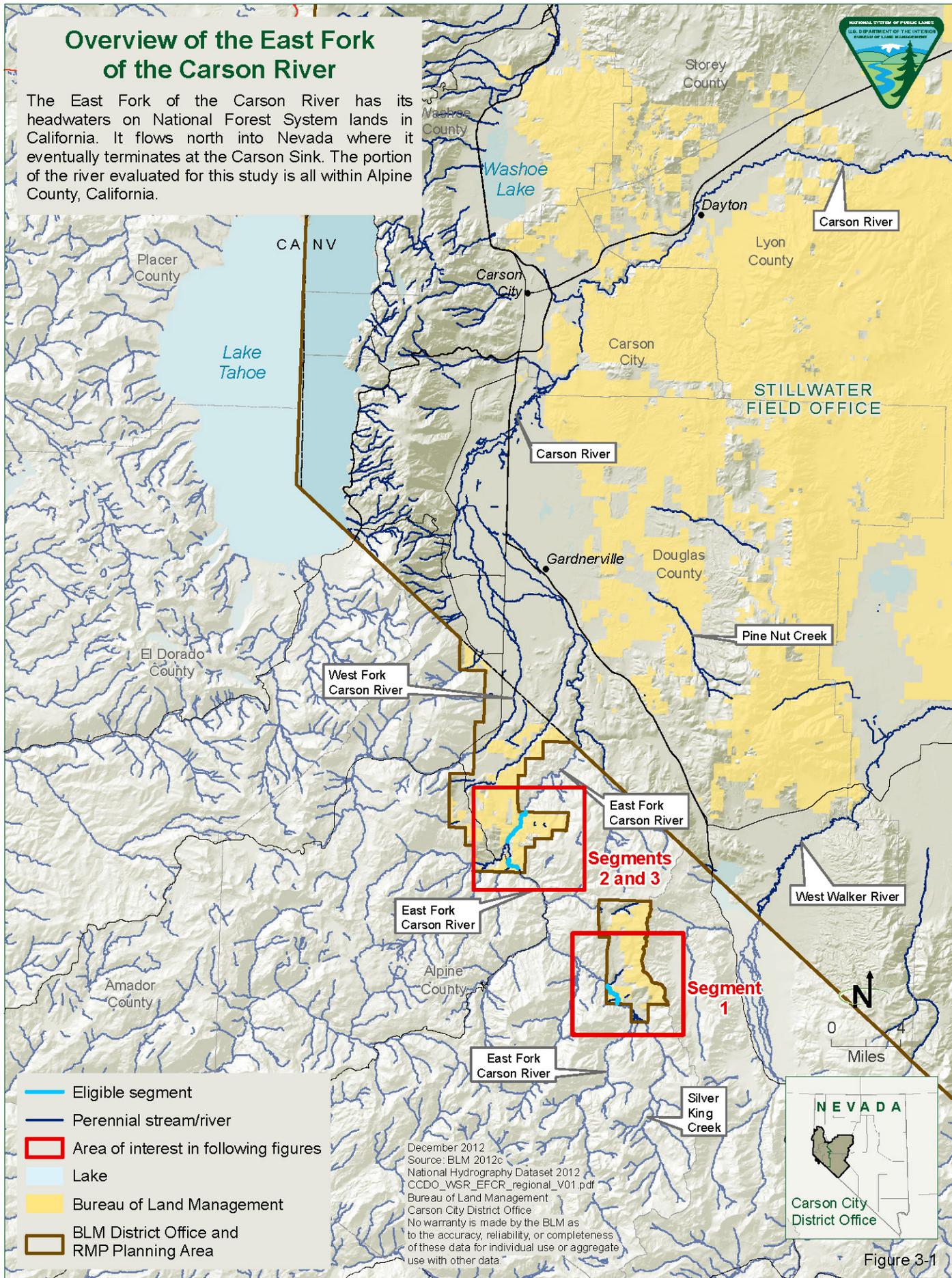
Of the segments identified and evaluated, three segments along the East Fork of the Carson River were determined eligible for study in the CCD, as summarized in **Table 3-1**, Segments Determined Eligible for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. All segments are within the Sierra Front Field Office. **Figure 3-1**, Overview of the East Fork of the Carson River, provides an overview of the western portion of the planning area and shows the locations of eligible segments. Refer to **Section 2.1**, Methods Used to Identify River and Stream Segments, for a summary of segments determined not to meet the eligibility criteria.

Table 3-1
Segments Determined Eligible for Inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

River Segment	Length on BLM Land (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Value(s)	Tentative Classification
East Fork Carson River Segment 1	1.51	Recreation, Scenic, Fish	Wild
East Fork Carson River Segment 2	1.03	Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic	Recreational
East Fork Carson River Segment 3	1.97	Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic	Scenic

Overview of the East Fork of the Carson River

The East Fork of the Carson River has its headwaters on National Forest System lands in California. It flows north into Nevada where it eventually terminates at the Carson Sink. The portion of the river evaluated for this study is all within Alpine County, California.



- Eligible segment
- Perennial stream/river
- Area of interest in following figures
- Lake
- Bureau of Land Management
- BLM District Office and RMP Planning Area

December 2012
 Source: BLM 2012c
 National Hydrography Dataset 2012
 CCDO_WSR_EFCR_regional_V01.pdf
 Bureau of Land Management
 Carson City District Office
 No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.



Figure 3-1

3.2 EAST FORK CARSON RIVER SEGMENT I

Location:	Township 9 North, Range 21 East, Section 34 NE ¼, Section 35 W ½		
	See Figure 3-2 , East Fork Carson River, Segment I		
Total Segment Length:	1.51 miles	Total Segment Area:	583 acres
Length on BLM Land :	1.51 miles	Area on BLM Land:	421 acres
Tentative Classification:	Wild		
ORVs:	Recreation, Scenic, Fish		

3.2.1 Description of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Recreational

The segment supports outstanding sport fishing for trout as it is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters. The segment also supports rafting, kayaking, and canoeing.

Scenic

Pristine scenery as the river descends east slope of the Sierra through granite canyon and coniferous forests to sagebrush covered foothills and desert canyons. An interdisciplinary field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a scenic quality classification of "A."

Fish

This reach is part of the historic range for Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*), a federally threatened fish species, and the species are still found there today. The segment is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters. Wild Trout Waters are designated to provide anglers an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by the angling process. The segment supports both wild and hatchery-stocked populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout, coastal rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*).

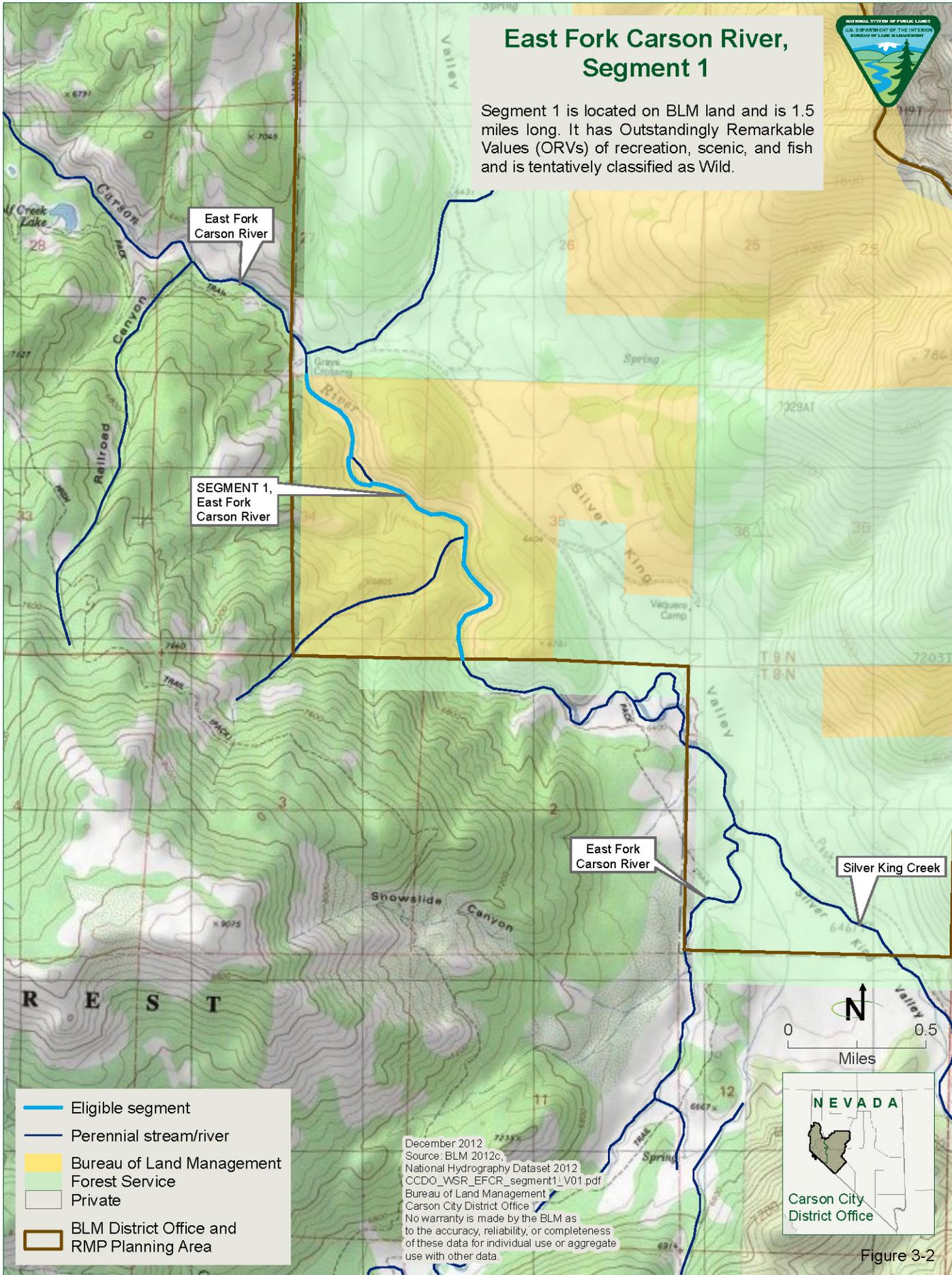
3.2.2 Tentative Classification

The tentative classification for this segment is **wild**. It is primitive and undeveloped with no substantial evidence of human activity and is free of impoundment.

East Fork Carson River, Segment 1



Segment 1 is located on BLM land and is 1.5 miles long. It has Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) of recreation, scenic, and fish and is tentatively classified as Wild.



East Fork Carson River

SEGMENT 1, East Fork Carson River

East Fork Carson River

Silver King Creek

- Eligible segment
- Perennial stream/river
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Private
- BLM District Office and RMP Planning Area

December 2012
 Source: BLM 2012c,
 National Hydrography Dataset 2012
 CCDO_WSR_EFCR_segment1_V01.pdf
 Bureau of Land Management
 Carson City District Office
 No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.



Figure 3-2

3.3 EAST FORK CARSON RIVER SEGMENT 2

Location: Township 10 North, Range 20 East, Section 26 NW ¼, Section 27 NE ¼, Section 22 S ½ (from the BLM/Forest Service boundary upstream of Hangman's Bridge at Pebble Beach downstream to the BLM/Forest Service boundary) See **Figure 3-3**, East fork Carson River, Segments 2 and 3

Total Segment Length: 1.03 miles **Total Segment Area:** 435 acres

Length on BLM Land : 1.03 miles **Area on BLM Land:** 358 acres

Tentative Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic

3.3.1 Description of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Recreational

Premium whitewater, used extensively by commercial and private rafters; provides unique opportunity for overnight float trips east of Sierras. The area attracts flyfishermen from around the state. It is a popular wild trout fishery for rainbow trout and is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters.

Scenic

The segment traverses a variety of ecosystems, the river descends east slope of Sierras through granite canyons with pine forests and alpine meadows to emerge into the sagebrush covered foothills and desert canyons of Nevada. An interdisciplinary field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a scenic quality classification of "A."

Fish

Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federally threatened fish species, are found in this reach. The segment is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters. Wild Trout Waters are designated to provide anglers an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by the angling process. The segment supports both wild and hatchery-stocked populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout, coastal rainbow trout, and brown trout.

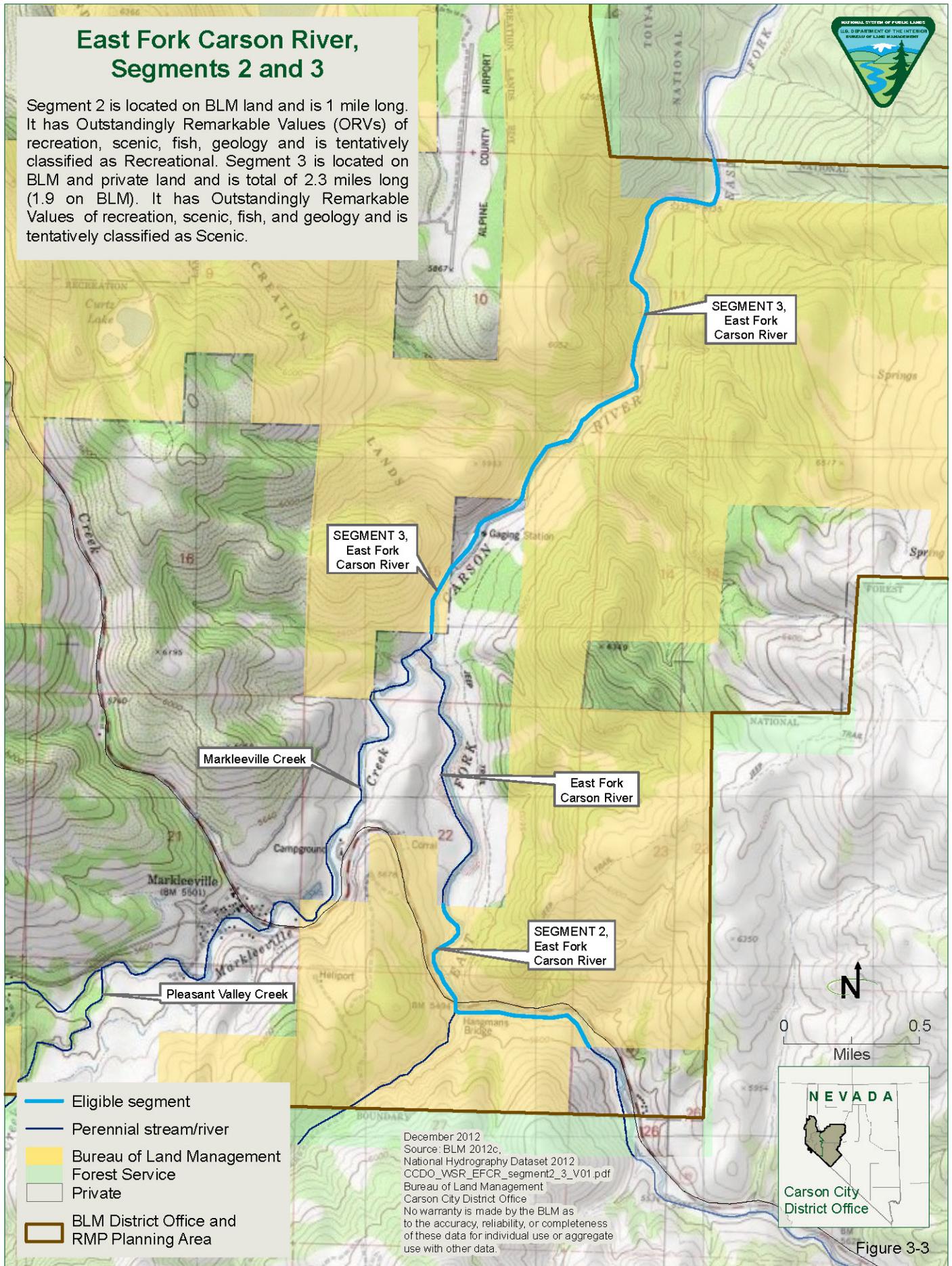
Geologic

The gorge of the East Fork Carson River was formed by an 18-mile long glacier at the base of 11,500-foot Sonora Peak that scoured the canyon, leaving behind riverine terraces with round boulders as it melted. Caves, formed by volcanic lava tubes, that sheltered Native Americans and later stockmen and campers, are located on the west side of the East Fork Carson River at Hangman's

East Fork Carson River, Segments 2 and 3



Segment 2 is located on BLM land and is 1 mile long. It has Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) of recreation, scenic, fish, geology and is tentatively classified as Recreational. Segment 3 is located on BLM and private land and is total of 2.3 miles long (1.9 on BLM). It has Outstandingly Remarkable Values of recreation, scenic, fish, and geology and is tentatively classified as Scenic.



- Eligible segment
- Perennial stream/river
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Private
- BLM District Office and RMP Planning Area

December 2012
 Source: BLM 2012c,
 National Hydrography Dataset 2012
 CCDO_WSR_EFCR_segment2_3_V01.pdf
 Bureau of Land Management
 Carson City District Office
 No warranty is made by the BLM as
 to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness
 of these data for individual use or aggregate
 use with other data.

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Miles

NEVADA

Carson City District Office

Figure 3-3

Bridge. A major flood in 1997 scoured the canyon, eroding the road and leaving stream boulders high and dry.

3.3.2 Tentative Classification

The tentative classification for this segment is **recreational** due to a parallel highway crossing the river at Hangman's Bridge, restrooms, a resort at the beginning of the segment, primitive campgrounds, boat put-in, and rip-rap along the highway.

3.4 EAST FORK CARSON RIVER SEGMENT 3

Location: Township 10 North, Range 20 East, Section 15 SW ¼ and NE ¼, Section 11 W ½
See **Figure 3-3**, East fork Carson River, Segments 2 and 3

Total Segment Length: 2.36 miles **Total Segment Area:** 856 acres

Length on BLM Land : 1.97 miles **Area on BLM Land:** 648 acres

Tentative Classification: Scenic

ORVs: Recreation, Scenic, Fish, Geologic

3.4.1 Description of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Recreational

Premium whitewater, used extensively by commercial and private rafters; provides unique opportunity for overnight float trips east of Sierras. The area attracts flyfishermen from around the state. It is a popular wild trout fishery for rainbow trout and is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters.

Scenic

The river traverses a variety of ecosystems, the river descends east slope of Sierras through granite canyons with pine forests and alpine meadows to emerge into the sagebrush covered foothills and desert canyons of Nevada. An interdisciplinary field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a scenic quality classification of "A."

Fish

Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federally threatened fish species, are found in this reach. The segment is within a portion of the East Fork of the Carson River designated by California Fish and Game Commission as Wild Trout Waters. Wild Trout Waters are designated to provide anglers an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by the angling process. The segment supports both wild and hatchery-stocked populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout, coastal rainbow trout, and brown trout.

Geologic

The gorge of the East Fork Carson River was formed by an 18-mile long glacier at the base of 11,500-foot Sonora Peak that scoured the canyon, leaving behind riverine terraces with round boulders as it melted. Caves, formed by volcanic lava tubes, that sheltered Native Americans and later stockmen and campers, are located on the west side of the East Fork Carson River at Hangman's Bridge. A major flood in 1997 scoured the canyon, eroding the road and leaving stream boulders high and dry.

3.4.2 Tentative Classification

The tentative classification for this segment is **scenic** due to the presence of farm structures, grazing, dispersed dwellings, and limited OHV access.

SECTION 4

INTERIM MANAGEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

4.1 INTERIM MANAGEMENT

River segments determined to be eligible are afforded interim protective management until a suitability study is completed. The BLM's policy is to protect any ORVs identified in the eligibility determination process to assure a decision on suitability can be made; or in the case of suitable rivers, until Congress designates the river or releases it for further uses (BLM 2012a). The BLM has broad discretion authority to not impact river values or make decisions that might lead to a determination of eligibility. It is the BLM's policy to manage and protect the free-flowing character, tentative classification, and identified ORVs of eligible rivers according to the decisions in the associated RMP. This protection occurs at the point of eligibility determination, so as not to adversely constrain the suitability assessment or subsequent recommendation to Congress.

The BLM may protect river values using both the NEPA and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Wild and scenic river issues involving NEPA supplementation are the same as for other resource values. When the BLM considers a proposal that could constitute a major federal action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment, the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations require NEPA compliance before the BLM can act on the proposal (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1506.1). Eligible river segments determined to be unsuitable through a land use plan decision are subject to the direction and management decisions contained in the RMP.

Table 4-1, Interim Protection for Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers, describes the interim protection standards for eligible and suitable segments.

**Table 4-1
Interim Protection for Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers**

Issue	Management Prescription/Action
Study Boundary	Minimum of 0.25-mile from ordinary high-water mark Boundary may include adjacent areas needed to protect identified values
Preliminary Classification (Section 2(b) of WSR Act)	3 classes: wild, scenic, recreational (defined by statute) Criteria for classification described in Interagency Guidelines Manage at recommended classification
Study Report Review Procedures	Notice of study report/Draft EIS published in <i>Federal Register</i> Comments/response from federal, state, and local agencies, and the public included in the study report/Final EIS transmitted to the President and Congress
Private Land: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Acquisition 	Affect private land uses through voluntary partnership with state/local governments and landowners No regulatory authority Typically an evaluation of the adequacy of local zoning and land use controls is a component of suitability determination ¹ No ability to acquire interest in land under the Act's authority prior to designation
Water Resources Project	River's free-flowing condition protected to the extent of other agency authorities; not protected under the WSR Act
Land Disposition	Agency discretion to retain lands within river corridor in federal ownership
Mining and Mineral Leasing	Protect free flow, water quality, and ORVs through other agency authorities
Actions of Other Agencies	Affect actions of other agencies through voluntary partnership.
Protect Outstandingly Remarkable Values	No regulatory authority conferred by the WSR Act; agency protects through other authorities Section 11(b)1: Limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, and management of river resources ²

¹For an agency-identified study river that includes private lands there is often the need to evaluate existing state and local land use controls and, if necessary, assess the willingness of state and local government to protect river values.

²Section 11(b)1 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and secretary of Agriculture, or the head of any other federal agency, to provide for "limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, and management of river resources." This authority "applies within or outside a federally administered area and applies to rivers which are components of the National and to other rivers." The recipients of federal assistance include states or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals. Some examples of assistance under this section include, but are not limited to, riparian restoration, riparian fencing to protect water quality and riparian vegetation, or vegetative screening to enhance scenery/recreation experience.

Source: Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999

4.2 NEXT STEPS

The BLM will be completing the suitability phase for the eligible stream segments as part of the RMP revision process. Each eligible river segment will be evaluated for suitability or nonsuitability to assess whether or not it is a potential candidate for inclusion in the National System.

The Draft RMP will incorporate each of the eligible stream segments into one or more alternatives and the Draft EIS will provide an assessment of potential impacts from determining each segment as either suitable or not suitable for inclusion in the National System. The BLM will then seek public review and comment on the Draft RMP. The proposed RMP and final EIS will include final suitability determinations on the eligible rivers. Congressional legislative action is required for actual designation and final classification of suitable river segments.

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SECTION 5

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SECTION 6

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