

WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED WILD & SCENIC RIVERS STUDY

A Partnership Effort on Behalf
of the
Wood - Pawcatuck Watershed





Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Committee

Members:

- **Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**
- **The Nature Conservancy**
- **Save The Bay**
- **RI Dept. of Environmental Management**
- **CT Dept. of Energy & Environment Protection**
- **Representatives from Watershed towns**

A Great Egret with a long yellow beak and white feathers is perched on a mossy log in a river. The background is filled with bare, brown branches of trees, suggesting a winter or late autumn setting. The water is dark and still.


**What is a
Wild and Scenic River?**

From the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act...

(1968)

....certain selected rivers of the Nation which possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved and protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.....

10-15-1999



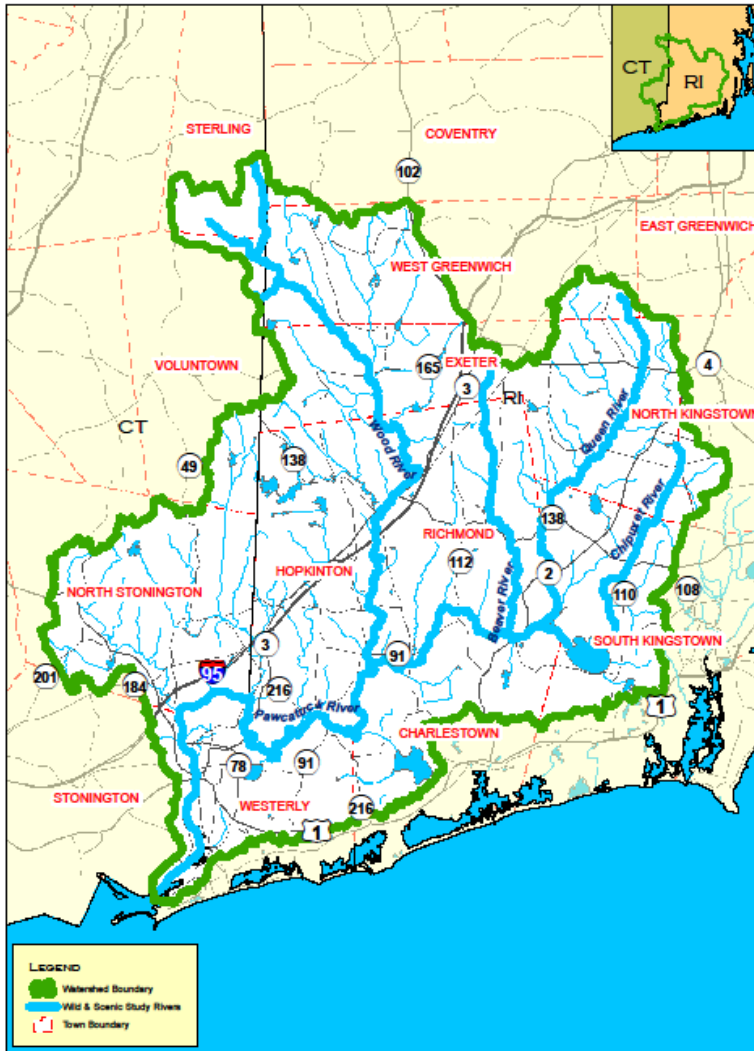
National Wild & Scenic Rivers System

- **209 Wild & Scenic Rivers**
(less than 0.5%)
- **Eight in New England**
- **None in Rhode Island**

Early Process

- **Congressmen Langevin(RI) and Courtney (CT) submitted a bill, *the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Protection Act*, to the House that directs the National Parks Service (NPS) conduct a study that will determine if the named Rivers meet the Wild and Scenic criteria. The bill passed in February 2013.**
- **Bill introduced into the Senate by Senator Reed and co-sponsored by Senators Whitehouse, Lieberman, and Blumenthal passed in December 2014.**
- **In anticipation of the bill passing NPS completed the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Reconnaissance Survey to identify Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV) in the Pawcatuck Watershed.**

WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED



RIVERS FOR
WILD & SCENIC
DESIGNATION STUDY

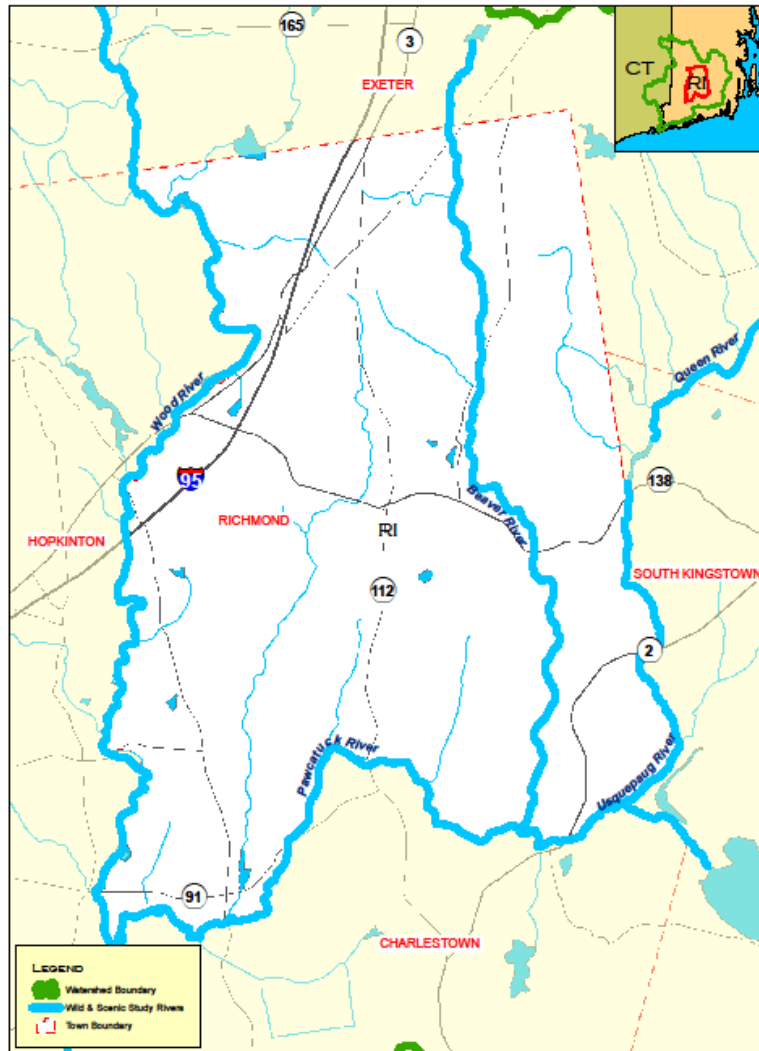


DATA: RIGIS, USGS
MAP BY: WPWA
AUGUST, 2015

Rivers Under Study

- Beaver River
- Chipuxet River
- Queen River
- Pawcatuck River
- Wood River

WOOD-PAWCATUCK WATERSHED
TOWN OF RICHMOND



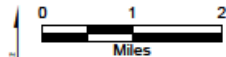
Rivers in Richmond:

➤ Queen River

➤ Beaver River

➤ Wood River

➤ Pawcatuck River



RIVERS FOR
WILD & SCENIC
DESIGNATION STUDY



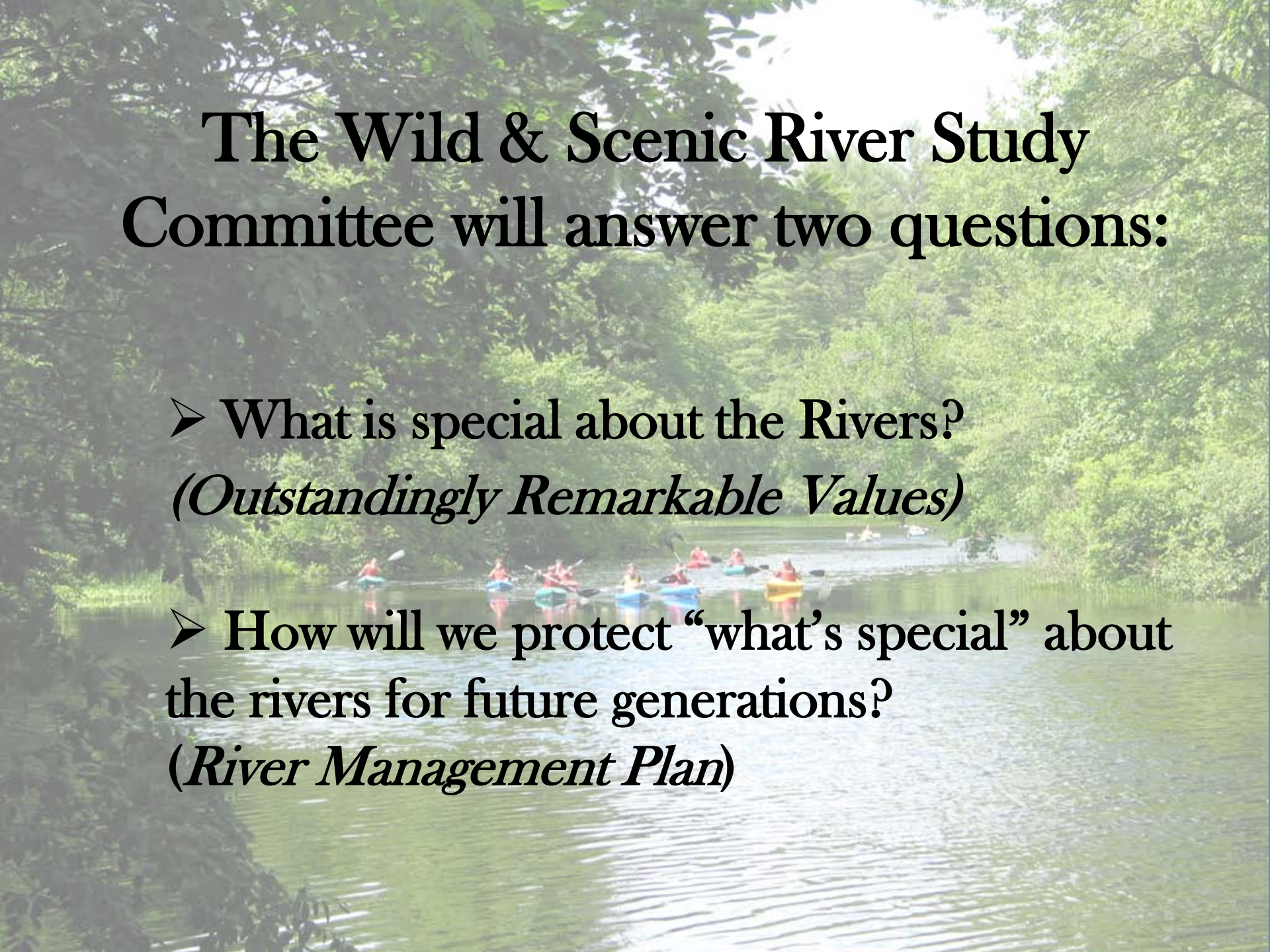
DATA: RIGIS, USGS
MAP BY WFWA
AUGUST, 2015

What W&S Designation Does:

- Preservation of ORV becomes critical factor for all river-related projects that require federal permits.
- Creates coalition of agencies, non-profits, towns & National Park Service to implement a locally developed river management plan.
- Provides access to federal funding for implementing the plan and supporting the coalition.
- Prohibits new dams or hydroelectric development.

What W&S Designation Does Not Do:

- Will not stop development. Designation only affects federally permitted or funded projects that would impact the river's outstanding values.
- Will not rezone private land or change property rights. Land use controls on private land are solely a matter of state and local jurisdiction.
- Does not require landowners to provide access to their land.



The Wild & Scenic River Study Committee will answer two questions:

➤ What is special about the Rivers?
(Outstandingly Remarkable Values)

➤ How will we protect “what’s special” about
the rivers for future generations?
(River Management Plan)

What does the Study involve?

- Gathering background data.
- Creating GIS maps for analyzing data.
- Identify Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORV).
- Developing management plan for each river.
- Conducting ongoing meetings with towns, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and other stakeholders.
- Creating education & outreach material.

Benefits to the Town



- Helps protect locally important cultural and natural resources, including water quality.
- Draws attention to designated rivers and their resources.
- Can be an important selling point for the promotion of economic development, tourism, or recreational use.
- Provides funds to manage the natural resources of designated rivers.

Benefits to the Town

- Rivers compete more favorably for federal and other grants relating to water resource projects.
- May increase property values near the river.
- May open up other avenues of funding for open space acquisitions near rivers.
- Provides towns with options for stricter regulations regarding development near rivers.

Other Benefits

- Management plans will be heavily influenced by local and regional needs.
- Wild & Scenic status is permanent.
- Provides managers with the tools or mechanisms to maintain free-flowing condition of rivers.
- Develops an interagency/regional approach to managing the watershed.
- Protects the rivers for future generations.

Potential side effects

- Will add an extra layer of review to all federally funded projects and permits.
- May increase the time taken to get permit approvals.
- May increase use of the rivers to the point of adverse impact.
- May increase restrictions via zoning adopted by local governments to protect river values.

Note - local governments do not have to adopt new regulations, but if they want to this gives them extra security and back up to enforce them.

Next step

- **NPS appropriated funds to conduct three year study.**
- **WPWA is coordinating the study.**
- **A Study Committee is being formed to include each town and other stakeholders.**
- **Study will verify ORVs of each river and develop management plan for each river.**
- **NPS will make recommendations based on study.**

Designation

- **If NPS recommends designate of the rivers:**
 - **Study Committee will ask RI & CT Delegates to submit another bill to congress**
 - **Congress will amend the Wild and Scenic bill to include the Beaver, Chipuxet, Queen, Pawcatuck and Wood Rivers**

A scenic view from a canoe on a lake. The foreground shows the dark hull of the canoe. The water is calm and reflects the sky and clouds. The middle ground is filled with tall green reeds and numerous bright yellow wildflowers. The background is a dense forest of green trees under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Questions?