



Photo: Egg Harbor Wild and Scenic River | Mike McCormick, South Jersey Trails

18

Number of
Partnership Wild and
Scenic Rivers

1,089

River miles
permanently
protected as
Partnership Wild and
Scenic Rivers

542

Number of miles of
new Partnership Wild
and Scenic River
within 6
Congressional bills

PROTECTING RIVERS WITH PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS PARTNERSHIP WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Most rivers in America, and especially those on the east coast, flow through non-federal lands. This limits the ability of federal agencies to apply the same types of land and water protections that are common in western states.

The Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program (PWSRs), administered by the National Park Service, is a unique form of public/private water security.

How are PWSRs administered?

The National Park Service administers PWSRs along with local governments, councils, watershed groups and non-governmental organizations, generally using cooperative agreements. Non-federal local river managers use federal funding to protect these rivers through a collaborative approach that implements federally adopted Comprehensive River Management Plans.

How do PWSRs leverage private dollars and resources?

There are annual budget lines and annual appropriations for all the current 18 PWSRs in the National Park Service budget, and the FY2026 PWSRs programmatic appropriation was \$5.648 million. \$5.648 million divided by 18 rivers equals \$313,778 per river. A percentage of this funding is used to pay federal river managers, and a percentage is passed through to local river managers through cooperative agreements.

PWSRs are a financial bargain because many of the required management costs are paid by towns, counties, states, or local partners. This includes road construction and maintenance, snow removal, boat ramps and recreational access sites, firefighting, emergency services, and search and rescue. In addition to leveraging substantial non-federal dollars, PWSRs also leverage substantial volunteer contributions.



York Partnership Wild and Scenic River, Maine, designated in 2022 | Jerry Monkman

What role do members of Congress play in PWSRs?

In addition to designating new PWSRs, members of Congress ensure that adequate funding is appropriated every year to protect these special rivers. Since there are no guarantees for the annual appropriations, supportive members of Congress circulate and sign Dear Colleague Letters to the respective Appropriations Committees requesting adequate funding for the program each year.

How can I sign onto the Dear Colleague Letter?

We're asking more members of Congress to sign on to the annual PWSRs Dear Colleague Letters to keep this program going strong.

To sign on to the FY2027 Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Dear Colleague Letter, please contact Caroline Sagristano Caroline.Sagristano@mail.house.gov in Representative Courtney's office and Marshal Berkhardt Marshal_Berkhardt@kim.senate.gov in Senator Kim's office.



Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Partnership Wild and Scenic River, Massachusetts, designated in 1999