
Appendix N
Rio Puerco Field Office Final Eligibility/Suitability Report
for Wild and Scenic Rivers

INTERNAL DRAFT

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1 **Appendix N. Rio Puerco Field Office Final**
2 **Eligibility/Suitability Report for Wild and**
3 **Scenic Rivers**

4 Bluewater Creek



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7 **Final Wild and Scenic River Eligibility/Suitability Report**
8 **for Rio Puerco Field Office**
9 **2012**



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11 **N.1 ELIGIBILITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

12 **N.1.1 Introduction**

13 The United States Department of the Interior (USDI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rio Puerco Field
14 Office (RPFO) has completed the eligibility phase of a wild and scenic rivers (WSR) study as part of its
15 Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision process. This study looked only at BLM-administered public
16 surface lands along streams and rivers. Private, state, and other federally administered lands were not part
17 of this study. All streams containing BLM shoreline were reviewed to determine if they were free-flowing
18 and contained sufficient values to be studied. Once the initial segments were identified, standard criteria
19 were applied to determine the eligibility of each segment. This report describes the methodology and
20 process used to identify river segments, assess their eligibility, and for eligible segments, assign a preliminary
21 classification.

22 In January 2012, the BLM RPFO completed the eligibility phase of a Wild and Scenic River evaluation as part
23 of the resource management plan revision process. The eligibility study resulted in the identification of one
24 eligible river segment in the RPFO, Bluewater Creek. One segment the Las Huertas Creek was identified in
25 the study, but it was determined not eligible because of the lack of outstanding remarkable values. As a
26 result, this river segment was dropped from consideration by the BLM and not studied for suitability in this
27 report. No additional segments were evaluated or identified from other eligibility studies.

28 **N.1.2 Key Findings**

29 Out of the two segments identified and evaluated, one segment was identified for intensive study. Bluewater
30 Creek was determined eligible for suitability study because it is free-flowing and possesses one or more
31 outstandingly remarkable values.

32 **N.1.3 Next Step**

33 This report presents the final eligibility and suitability determinations.

34 **N.2 INTRODUCTION**

35 The BLM Rio Puerco Field Office RPFO has completed the eligibility phase of a wild and scenic rivers (WSR)
36 study as part of their Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision process. The BLM examined river and
37 stream segments within the RPFO planning area. Only those segments that either pass through or are
38 bordered by BLM-administered public lands were evaluated. Private, state and other federally administered
39 lands were not part of this study.

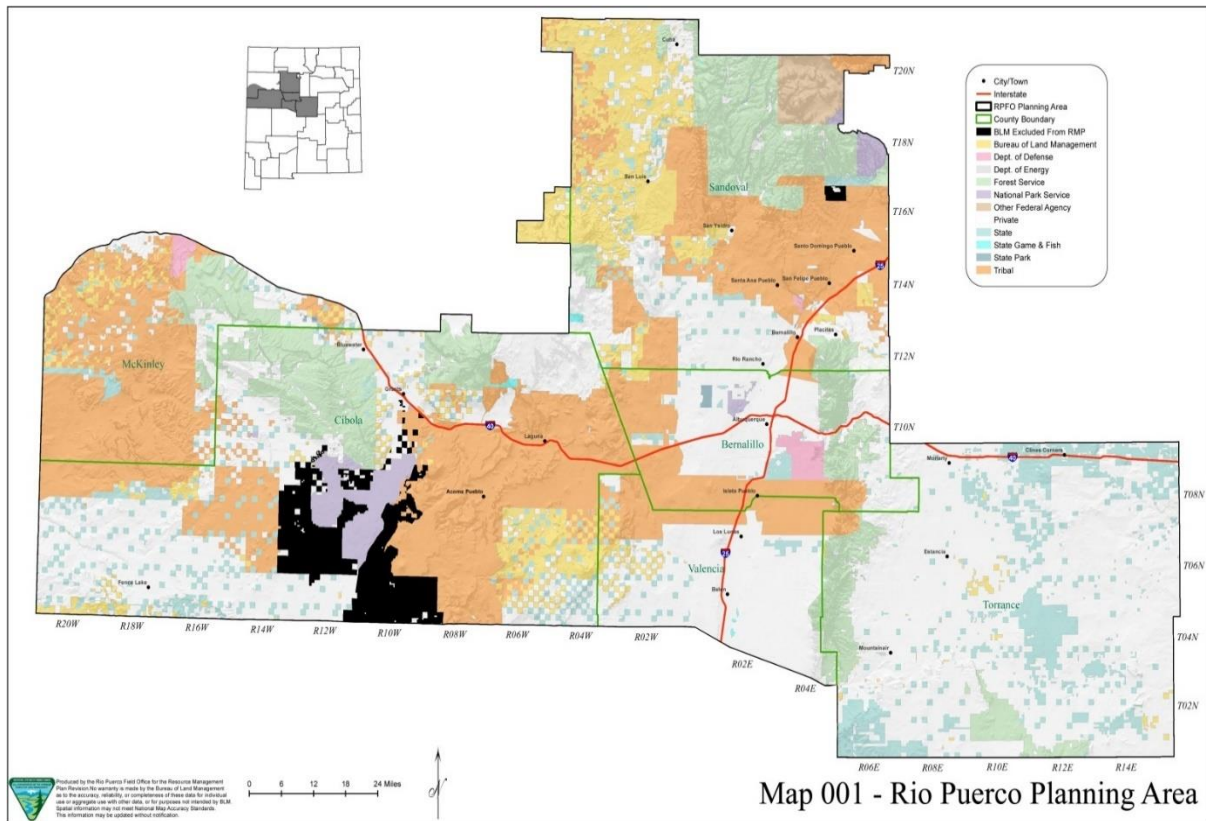
40 All streams containing BLM shoreline were reviewed to determine if they were free-flowing and contained
41 sufficient values to be studied. Once the initial segments were identified, standard criteria were applied to
42 determine the eligibility of each segment. This report describes the methodology and process used to identify
43 river segments, assess their eligibility and, for eligible segments, assign a preliminary classification.

44 **N.2.1 Project Area**

45 The project area for this study included all BLM public lands in central New Mexico administered by the
46 RPFO (**Figure N-1**). The RPFO has not previously conducted a comprehensive eligibility study, so all lands
47 within the RPFO planning boundary were included.

48

Figure N-1: Rio Puerco Planning Area



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50 N.2.2 Why Conduct an Eligibility Study and Why Now?

51 Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic River Act (WSR Act) on October 2, 1968 to provide a national policy
 52 for preserving and protecting selected rivers and river segments in their free- flowing condition for the
 53 benefit of present and future generations. Section 5(d)(1) of the WSR Act) (Public Law 90-542; 16 US Code
 54 12711287) directs federal agencies to consider potential wild and scenic rivers in their planning processes.
 55 To fulfill this requirement, the BLM inventories and evaluates rivers when it develops or revises an RMP for
 56 public lands in a specified area.

57 A WSR study process is composed of two main components: the eligibility phase and the suitability phase.
 58 The eligibility phase is conducted during the data gathering stage of the RMP and the suitability phase is done
 59 during the formulation of the draft and proposed RMP.

60 In 2008, the RPFQ issued a notice of intent to revise its RMP for the BLM-administered public lands within
 61 the RPFQ under an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This WSR eligibility study is being conducted as
 62 part of the RMP revision.

63 N.2.3 Steps in the Wild and Scenic Study Process

64 Eligibility Phase

65 River and Stream Identification

66 The eligibility phase was initially conducted in accordance with BLM Manual 835 I, Wild and Scenic Rivers—
 67 Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management (BLM 1992) and The Wild and
 68 Scenic River Study Process technical report (Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1999).
 69 Prior to signing the Record of Decision for the Rio Puerco RMP revisions, the BLM Manual 6400 replaced

70 BLM manual 8351. A consistency review was completed and any new guidance in accordance with BLM
71 Manual 6400 not part of the original eligibility and suitability reports was adopted. An overview of the WSR
72 eligibility process is shown in **Figure N-2**.

73 The purpose of the eligibility phase is to identify eligible river and stream segments and assign tentative
74 classifications to the streams found to be eligible. The agency is directed to consider a wide variety of
75 internal and external sources to identify river segments which have potential for inclusion in the National
76 Wild and Scenic River System. Once river segments are identified, the BLM applies standard criteria to
77 determine eligibility. To be eligible, a river segment must be free-flowing and possess at least one river-
78 related value considered outstandingly remarkable. Free-flowing is defined by the WSR Act as “existing or
79 flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other
80 modification of the waterway.” The existence of small dams, diversion works or other minor structures at
81 the time the river segment is being considered shall not automatically disqualify it for consideration. The
82 specific criteria for outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) are listed in **Attachment A**.

83 A river study area extends the length of the identified river segment and includes the river area, its immediate
84 environment, and includes an average of no more than 320 acres per mile from the ordinary high-water
85 mark on both sides of the river. The planning team outlines a preliminary or proposed boundary that
86 protects the outstandingly remarkable values.

87 *Assign Tentative Classification*

88 If the eligibility phase determines segments to be eligible, the BLM assigns a tentative classification. The WSR
89 Act established three classifications for river segments: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational. **Attachment B**
90 displays the tentative classification criteria used by all four WSR administering agencies. Classes are based
91 on the type and degree of human development and access associated with the river and adjacent lands at
92 the time of the eligibility determination. The classification assigned during the eligibility phase is tentative.
93 Final classification is a congressional legislative determination, along with designation of a river segment as
94 part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS).

95 *Protective Management*

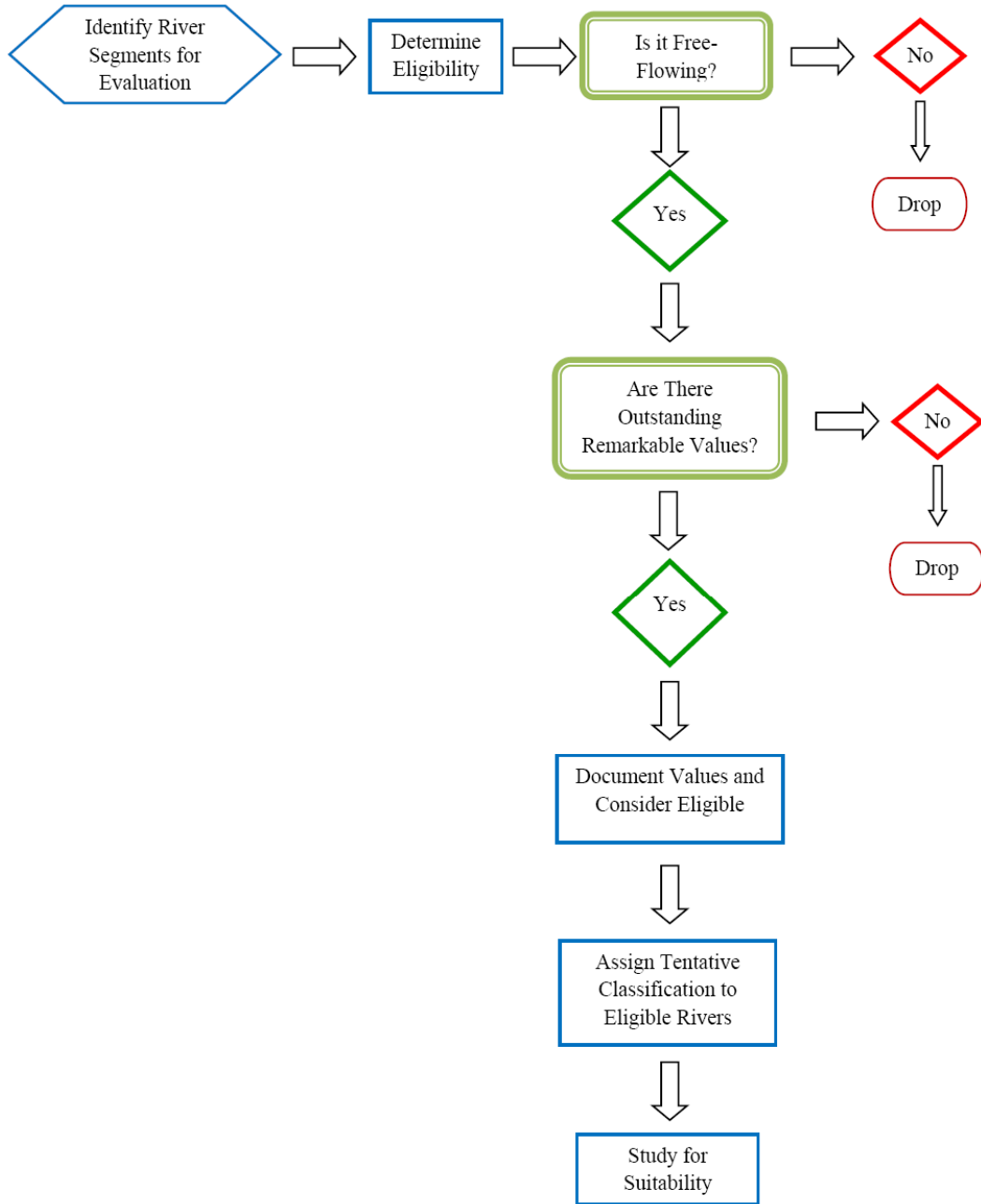
96 River segments determined to be eligible are afforded interim protective management until a suitability study
97 is completed. **Attachment C** describes the interim protection standards for eligible segments. As stated
98 in BLM Manual 6400, with respect to eligibility criteria and protective management, the BLM’s policy is to
99 protect any ORVs identified in the eligibility determination process to assure a decision on suitability can be
100 made (BLM 2012). The BLM has broad discretionary authority to not impact river values or make decisions
101 that might lead to a determination of eligibility. It is the BLM’s policy to manage and protect the free-flowing
102 character, tentative classification, and identified ORVs of eligible rivers according to the decisions in the
103 associated RMP. This protection occurs at the point of eligibility determination, so as not to adversely
104 constrain the suitability assessment or subsequent recommendation to Congress.

105 **Suitability Phase**

106 The purpose of the suitability phase is to determine whether eligible river segments are suitable or not for
107 inclusion in the NWSRS per the criteria of the WSR Act. The suitability evaluation does not result in actual
108 designation. The BLM cannot administratively designate a stream via a planning decision or other agency
109 decision into the NWSRS, and no segment studied is or will be automatically designated as part of the
110 NWSRS. A suitability determination will result in a recommendation to congress. Only Congress can
111 designate a wild and scenic river. Water-protection strategies and measures to meet the purposes of the
112 WSR Act will be the responsibility of Congress in any legislation proposed. Rivers found not suitable are
113 dropped from further consideration and managed according to the objectives outlined in the RMP.

114

Figure N-2: Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Process Flow Chart



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117 **N.3 IDENTIFICATION METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS**

118 This section describes the methodology implemented to identify river and stream segments to be evaluated
119 for eligibility. The methods used to identify river and stream segments are those described in BLM Manual
120 8351, Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management
121 (BLM 1992).

122 **N.3.1 Methods and Criteria Used to Identify River and Stream Segments**

123 All rivers that may have potential for WSR designation were identified and evaluated. Care was taken to
124 avoid overlooking any river segment located on BLM-administered lands. To accomplish this, the BLM relied
125 on several sources, including geographic information systems data, RPFO resource specialists, informational
126 sources, other agencies, and public input. The result was a comprehensive list of river and stream segments
127 to be considered. Below is a description of the methods used to gather information from the aforementioned
128 sources.

129 **Geographic Information System**

130 The geographic information system (GIS) used for this study integrated BLM and United States Geological
131 Survey (USGS) data to compile and analyze stream information. Stream data was intersected with land
132 ownership to generate a list of streams that contain shoreline administered by BLM. The BLM and USGS
133 stream databases were compared to assure the study considered all segments within the planning area. The
134 GIS was also used measure segment distances and prepare report maps.

135 **BLM Resource Specialist Team**

136 The BLM resource specialist team consisted of four resource specialists from the field office. The team
137 reviewed the initial geographic information systems table with the purpose of identifying all the segments
138 that potentially contained ORVs (described in Section 3). These segments were then further evaluated for
139 eligibility.

140 **Informational Sources**

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

- 143 • Nationwide Rivers Inventory (National Park Service 2006);
- 144 • Outstanding Rivers List (American Rivers 1991);
- 145 • Published guidebooks, regional guides, and inventories; and
- 146 • River segments identified in other management plans.

147 **Other Agencies**

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

- 151 • New Mexico Land Office;
- 152 • Forest Management Plans and Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Assessments from the Gila National
153 Forest Plans.

154 The planning area adjoins both the Gila National Forest and Cibola National Forest. The 1986 Gila National
155 Forest and the Cibola plans do not identify any WSR.

156 **Public Input**

157 A Notice of Intent to prepare the RMPs for the RPFO was released on Federal Register on February 29,
158 2008. This notice served as the beginning of BLM's formal scoping process.

159 The notice was followed by a news release announcing scoping. In addition, over 1,000 scoping packages
160 were mailed to potential stakeholders, agencies, organizations and tribes. A website for the RPFO was
161 launched that provides the public access to planning documents, calendars, information on the planning
162 process, as well as a photo gallery of the planning area. The website will continue to be updated throughout
163 the planning process. Another news release was issued and postcards were distributed to the mailing list in
164 April 2008 announcing the dates, locations, and times of eight public scoping open house meetings across
165 the planning area. All of these outreach tools conveyed information about the planning process, preliminary
166 planning issues, special designations, and an overview of the planning area.

167 The BLM hosted scoping open houses providing the public with opportunities to become involved, learn
168 about the planning process, meet the RMP team members, and submit comments and input on the plans.
169 The open houses were held across the planning area in seven communities in the following locations:

- 170 April 2 Albuquerque Marriott 7 -9 pm
- 171 April 3 Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts 7-9 pm
- 172 April 7 Cuba Senior Center 7-9 pm
- 173 April 8 Bernalillo High School Gymnasium 7-9 pm
- 174 April 9 Moriarty Civic Center 7-9
- 175 April 10 Loma Colorado Library 7-9
- 176 April 16 Grants Convention Center 7-9
- 177 April 17 UNM-Gallup Campus 7-9

178 About 150 participants attended the open houses and visited with resource specialists, reviewed maps, or
179 asked questions about the planning process or specific concerns. A total of 986 written submissions and e-
180 mails were received by August 2008.

181 No comments were received regarding WSR.

182 The Draft Wild and Scenic Eligibility Report was reviewed by cooperating agencies. The New Mexico
183 Department of Game and Fish concurred with the BLM's findings regarding fish values.

184 **N.3.2 Identification Results**

185 The identification of river and stream segments evaluated for potential eligibility included 2 individual river
186 segments within the RPFO planning area. **Table N-1**, Rio Puerco Field Office River and Stream Segments
187 Analyzed For WSR Eligibility, presents the results from the identification effort. Rivers and streams not listed
188 in **Table N-1** were determined not to contain any ORVs.

189 **N.4 ELIGIBILITY**

190 **N.4.1 Initial Screening and Identification**

191 Initial screening and identification efforts resulted in a list of two river segments that were carried forward
192 for further consideration in the eligibility study process.

- 193 • Las Huertas Creek
- 194 • Blue Water Creek

195 **N.4.2 Further Evaluation**

196 The segments above were plotted on BLM 1:100,000 Surface Management Maps and measured. Based on
197 the eight ORV categories, a list of potential values was developed for each segment. For each value of each
198 segment, information was developed, then compared with similar values outside the general region and
199 evaluated against the ORV criteria (**Attachment A**). The BLM resource specialists conducted this review
200

201

Table N-1: Rio Puerco Field Office River and Stream Segments Analyzed For WSR Eligibility

River, Creek, or Stream Segment Name	Total Segment Length Including Non-BLM Lands (miles)	Portion of Segment Occurring Only On BLM Lands (miles)	Free Flowing Determination?	Outstandingly Remarkable Values									Eligible?	Provide Description/Rationale for Determination: 1) The justification for each determination of Outstandingly Remarkable Value, or... 2) Why the segment does not meet eligibility criteria with regard to any initially considered (but rejected) Outstandingly Remarkable Values.
				Scenic	Recreation	Geologic	Fish	Wildlife	Historic	Cultural	Other			
Bluewater Creek	2.0	2.0	Yes	X		X		X	X	X		Yes	<p>1 – Scenic: Bluewater Creek’s landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in a notable visual attraction within the geographic region. The rating area is a Scenic Quality “A” as defined in the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook. 2 – Recreation: Blue Water Creek is not eligible because it does not provide a critically important regional recreation opportunity. It is not a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting. The Creek is secondary to Bluewater Lake as a recreational opportunity because of the density of the vegetation and steep terrain; 3-Fish -a. Populations. Bluewater Creek is not a national or regional producer of resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. There is a presence of wild or unique stocks, but not populations of state, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.</p> <p>b. Habitat. There is no significant habitat for state, federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species; Wildlife: Although the Bluewater Creek area is one of RPFO Southwest willow flycatcher sites, and the area of particular significance to the RPFO, it does not qualify as a "nationally or regionally significant population or habitat". Areas that might meet the criteria for T&E species might include Critical Habitat designated by the USFWS which does not exist in the RPFO.</p>	
Las Huertas Creek	15.0	1.0	Yes									No	<p>Scenic: Vegetation provides a variety of shapes and sizes, with some grasses, but primarily sage brush. Colors remain earth tones, whites, and yellows dominating the landscape. Views are limited to the immediate area by the drainage. Scenic values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek</p> <p>Recreational Values: The recreational opportunities are not unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors have not typically travelled long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Recreational values do not qualify as an ORV for the Las Huertas Creek.</p> <p>Geological Values: The Las Huertas Creek does not contain an example of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. Geologic values do not qualify as an ORV for the Las Huertas Creek.</p> <p>Fish Values: The Las Huertas Creek is fed by a series of lesser drainages originating from the drainage throughout the area. The creek is characterized by a series of deep, elongated pools interconnected by shallow, narrow runs with a perennial surface flow in normal precipitation years not capable of supporting fish. Fish values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.</p> <p>Wildlife Values: The ecosystem around the creek has very little vegetation that can support wildlife. Wildlife values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.</p> <p>Cultural / Historical Values: No cultural values have been inventoried or specifically identified near or on the creek. Historically, when the creek ran, it served as a primary source of irrigation water to the Spanish settlers and most likely the Pueblo Indians prior to that. Cultural and Historical values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.</p> <p>Segments that are free flowing and have at least one outstandingly remarkable value are considered eligible. Las Huertas Creek is free flowing but does not have at least one outstandingly remarkable value; therefore, the creek is not considered eligible for further evaluation as to its suitability for inclusion.</p>	

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204 for each of their areas of expertise using their knowledge, available inventory information, and publications.
205 A team review for all segments was conducted on three separate occasions to assure the information was
206 accurate and met the criteria of the study. One of the two segments evaluated was determined eligible
207 because it contained one or more ORVs.

208 **Bluewater Creek**

209 *Scenic Values*

210 Scenic quality ratings were conducted at two locations throughout Bluewater Creek. These locations
211 received a rating of A. At the first location, Bluewater Creek has distinct pools as a result of beaver dams
212 that retain the water in portions of the creek but allow it to flow around the beaver dams. Since the water
213 is highest in these areas, the shrub and grass vegetation provides for a serene and pleasant aesthetic value.

214 At the second location, Bluewater Creek presents majestic high canyon walls that essentially provide for an
215 enclosed natural area of lush vegetation against high stone canyon walls. Such views with water are not
216 common in the geographic region of New Mexico. Scenic values qualify as an ORV for the Bluewater
217 Creek.

218 *Recreational Values*

219 Bluewater Creek is used for fishing and wildlife observation. However, that use is local in nature. The
220 recreational opportunities are not unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors have
221 not typically traveled long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Recreational
222 values do not qualify as an ORV for the Bluewater Creek.

223 *Geological Values*

224 Bluewater Creek is located in an area of sandstone mesas within the Zuni Mountains and is a steep-walled
225 canyon (approximately 500 feet). Rocks ranging in age from Proterozoic through Recent are exposed in and
226 around Bluewater Creek. Triassic and Permian strata are exposed within the canyon. The oldest rocks
227 exposed are assigned to the Permian Glorieta Sandstone that was deposited about 245-268 million years
228 ago. The Glorieta Sandstone consists of massive, white to buff to yellow quartz sandstones that are erosion
229 resistant and form the high cliffs and hill slopes. Geologic values qualify as an ORV.

230 *Fish Values*

231 Several species are known to occupy the Bluewater Creek. Fish species would include brown trout (*Salmo*
232 *trutta*), catfish (*Siluriformes*), and various species of chubs and shiners. The quantity and types of fish in the
233 creek would not qualify fish as an ORV for Bluewater Creek.

234 *Wildlife Values*

235 Bluewater Creek and Canyon and the adjacent area offer abundant habitat for many species of wildlife.
236 Adequate water contributes to wildlife concentrations. The canyon walls provide potential habitat for the
237 peregrine falcon along with several other birds that have been seen and noted in the canyon. These are
238 golden eagle, prairie falcon, great horned owl, screech owl, common flicker, ladder-backed woodpecker,
239 scrub jay, piñon jay, raven, rufous-sided lowhee, black-chinned hummingbird, flycatchers, swallows, black-
240 throated swift, wrens, warblers, and juncos.

241 Mammals, which can be found in the canyon area, include striped skunk, coyote, bear, gray fox, bobcat,
242 mountain lion, cottontail rabbit, mule deer, chipmunks, raccoon, beaver, and various bats and mice. Various
243 reptiles and amphibians are also found in the canyon. Wildlife values qualify as an ORV for the Bluewater
244 Creek.

245 *Cultural Values/Historical Values*

246 The river segment contains one identified “moki” ruin, located on BLM land. The moki is the only one BLM
247 has located in the Albuquerque District. Mokis were usually used to store corn, beans, grains, etc., and are
248 usually found either on cliffs as an isolated occurrence or in a pueblo ruin. The full extent and nature of all
249 cultural resources in the canyon has not completely been inventoried, but there may be more sites of the
250 same importance present. Cultural and historical values qualify as an ORV for Bluewater Creek.

251 *Other Similar Values*

252 No similar values were identified for the Bluewater Creek.

253 **Las Huertas Creek**

254 *Scenic Values*

255 Scenic quality ratings were conducted at two locations at the Las Huertas Creek resulting in ratings of C
256 and B, respectively. At the first location, vegetation is interspersed with river gravel and sand throughout
257 the stretch of the creek. At the second location, Las Huertas Creek winds through the bottom of a 30-foot
258 drainage. Vegetation provides a variety of shapes and sizes, with some grasses, but primarily sage brush.
259 Colors remain earth tones, whites, and yellows dominating the landscape. Views are limited to the
260 immediate area by the drainage. Scenic values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.

261 *Recreational Values*

262 The Las Huertas Creek is primarily used for hiking; however, most of the use is local. The recreational
263 opportunities are not unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors have not typically
264 travelled long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Recreational values do not
265 qualify as an ORV for the Las Huertas Creek.

266 *Geological Values*

267 The Las Huertas Creek was formed by the same process that formed the Bluewater Creek; however, this
268 process is rarely active. Now, the Las Huertas Creek occurs in a typical drainage pattern as it flows into the
269 Rio Grande. The Las Huertas Creek does not contain an example of a geologic feature, process, or
270 phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. Geologic values do not qualify as an
271 ORV for the Las Huertas Creek.

272 *Fish Values*

273 The Las Huertas Creek is fed by a series of lesser drainages originating from the drainage throughout the
274 area. The creek is characterized by a series of deep, elongated pools interconnected by shallow, narrow
275 runs with a perennial surface flow in normal precipitation years not capable of supporting fish. Fish values
276 do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.

277 *Wildlife Values*

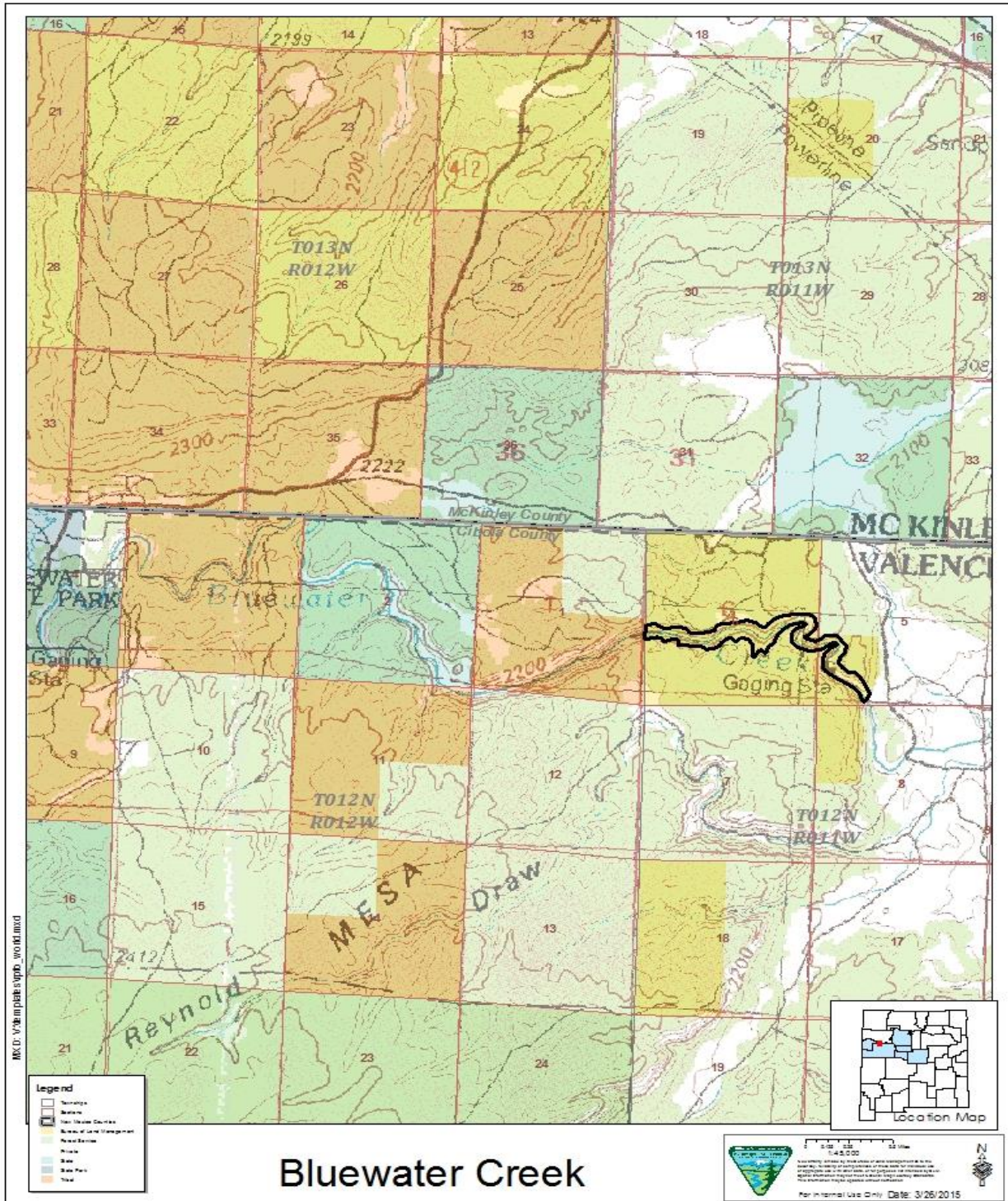
278 At the time of the site visits to Las Huertas Creek, no wildlife other than feral horses were observed. The
279 ecosystem around the creek has very little vegetation that can support wildlife. Wildlife values do not qualify
280 as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.

281 *Cultural Values / Historical Values*

282 Las Huertas Creek cultural values are primarily tied to the history around the creek. No cultural values have
283 been inventoried or specifically identified near or on the creek. Historically, when the creek ran, it served
284 as a primary source of irrigation water to the Spanish settlers and most likely the Pueblo Indians prior to
285 that. Cultural and Historical values do not qualify as an ORV for Las Huertas Creek.

286

Figure N-3: Bluewater Creek Map



287

288 *Other Similar Values*

289 No similar values were identified for the Las Huertas Creek.

290 **N.4.3 Eligibility Findings**

291 The resource specialists identified Bluewater Creek as a river segment (from the list shown in Section 3.1
292 above) that contain one or more ORVs and are determined eligible for study:

293 **River Segment Location and General Description:** The Bluewater Creek segment is located in an
294 area of sandstone mesas, and is a steep-walled canyon. This canyon contains the only trout stream located
295 in the San Augustine Area. This perennial stream represents a unique opportunity to preserve an important
296 riparian and scenic river ecosystem in a remote and unspoiled setting (Cover pictures). The area is located
297 11 miles north and 11 miles west of Grants, New Mexico, T. 12 N., R. 11 W., Section 6.

298 **Reasons for Tentative Classification:** This segment has been tentatively classified as wild. It is free of
299 impoundments, although in the upper portion of the segment there is a small natural barrier that was
300 reinforced to serve as a fish barrier. The shoreline is undeveloped and primitive in nature. There are no
301 livestock fences that cross the segment and OHV use does not occur. There is only one access road that
302 that leads to the creek a walking distance (approximately two hundred yards) near the lower end of the
303 segment.

304 **N.5 SUITABILITY PHASE**

305 This section describes the method implemented to evaluate eligible segments for suitability. The criteria
306 used to evaluate eligible river and stream segments are those described in BLM Manual 6400, *Wild and Scenic
307 Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, Planning, and Management* (BLM 2012), and
308 the technical paper from the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999).

309 **N.5.1 Suitability Criteria Used to Evaluate River and Stream**

310 **Segments**

311 The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be
312 appropriate additions to the NWSRS by considering resource values, level of public support, and competing
313 uses of the river corridor. Suitability considerations include the environment and economic consequences
314 of designation and the manageability of a river if Congress were to designate it.

315 A suitability study is designed to answer these questions:

- 316 1. Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or
317 more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?
- 318 2. Would the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through
319 designation? Is it the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions,
320 the benefits and impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated, and alternative protection methods
321 considered.
- 322 3. Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any non-federal entities that may be
323 partially responsible for implementing protective management?

324 With the above guidance from the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999) in mind,
325 the following 13 suitability criteria factors, identified in BLM Manual 6400 (BLM 2012), were applied to each
326 eligible river segment in the suitability study:

- 327 1. Characteristics that do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the NWSRS.
- 328 2. Status of land ownership, minerals (surface and subsurface), use in the area, including the amount
329 of private land involved, and associated or incompatible uses. Jurisdictional consideration

(administrative role and/or presence) must be taken into account to the extent that management would be affected. In situations where there is limited public lands (shoreline and adjacent lands) administered by the BLM within an identified river study area, it may be difficult to ensure those identified ORVs could be properly maintained and afforded adequate management protection over time. Accordingly, for those situations where the BLM is unable to protect or maintain any identified ORVs, or through other mechanisms (existing or potential), river segments may be determined suitable only if the entity with land use planning responsibility supports the finding and commits to assisting the BLM in protecting the identified river values.

An alternative method to consider these segments is for state, local governments, or private citizens to initiate efforts for designation under Section 2(a)(iii), or a joint study under Section 5(c) of the WSR Act. In certain cases, there might be existing or future opportunities for the BLM to acquire river shoreline or where landowners are willing to donate, exchange, transfer, assign, sell, or sign an easement. Wherever appropriate, the BLM would encourage the state, responsible federal agency, or other entities to evaluate segments where the BLM lacks sufficient jurisdictional control, and the BLM would provide technical assistance concerning the WSR studies, as well as information concerning public lands within the study corridor. The BLM would continue to protect and, wherever possible, enhance any ORVs identified in the RMP process that are associated with lands under the BLM's jurisdiction.

3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related waters that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the NWSRS, and the values that could be foreclosed or diminished if the area is not protected as part of the NWSRS.
4. Federal agency that will administer the areas should it be added to the National System.
5. To the extent to which the agency proposes that administration of the river, including the costs thereof, is shared by state and local agencies.
6. The estimated cost to the United States of acquiring necessary lands or interest in land within the corridor, as well as the cost of administering the areas should it be added to the National System.
7. A determination of the extent that other Federal agencies, the state, or its political subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.
8. An evaluation of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's outstandingly remarkable values and preventing incompatible development.
9. The state/local government's capacity to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands. This factor requires an evaluation of the river protection mechanisms available through the authority of state and local governments. Such mechanisms may include, for example, statewide programs related to population growth management, vegetation management, water quantity or quality, or protection of river-related values such as open space and historic areas.
10. The existing support or opposition of designation. Assessment of this factor will define the political context. The interest in designation or nondesignation by federal agencies; state, local, and tribal governments; national and local publics; and the state's congressional delegation should be considered.
11. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, and policies in meeting regional objectives. Designation may help or impede the goals of tribal governments or other federal, state, or local agencies. For example, designation of a river may contribute to state or regional protection objectives for fish and wildlife resources. Similarly, adding a river that includes a scarce recreation activity or setting to the National System may help meet statewide recreation goals. However, designation might limit irrigation and/or flood control measures in a manner inconsistent with regional socioeconomic goals.

- 377 12. The contribution to river system or basin integrity. This factor reflects the benefits of a “systems”
378 approach (e.g., expanding the designated portion of a river in the National System or developing a
379 legislative proposal for an entire river system—headwaters to mouth—or watershed). Numerous
380 benefits may result from managing an entire river or watershed, including the ability to design a
381 holistic protection strategy in partnership with other agencies and the public.
- 382 13. The potential for water resources development. Identify any proposed water resource projects that
383 may be foregone, as designation may limit development of water resources projects as diverse as
384 irrigation and flood control measures, hydropower facilities, dredging, diversion, bridge
385 construction, and channelization.

386 **N.5.2 Data Sources and Methodology**

387 The BLM relied on several sources, including geographic information systems (GIS) data, RPFO resource
388 specialists, informational sources, and other agencies. The result was a compilation of data applicable to
389 the suitability criteria. These data were then used to determine the suitability determination.

390 ***Geographic Information Systems***

391 GIS data compiled by the U.S. Geological Survey were used to generate a table of all the perennial stream
392 segments that contain BLM-administered land adjacent to at least one bank of a stream. In addition to U.S.
393 Geological Survey data, the BLM also used its corporate GIS data.

394 ***BLM Resource Interdisciplinary Team***

395 The BLM interdisciplinary team consisted of four resource specialists from the RPFO. The interdisciplinary
396 team provided information pertaining to the suitability criteria factors and also reviewed data from additional
397 sources, such as agency and public input, for accuracy. Once all available data were compiled, the team
398 evaluated each segment and made a suitability determination.

399 ***Information Sources***

400 The BLM used a number of informational sources and publications to evaluate segments for suitability. These
401 sources included:

- 402 • BLM Manual 6400;
- 403 • U.S. Geological Survey minerals maps;
- 404 • U.S. Geological Survey stream gage data;
- 405 • Land status maps;
- 406 • Agreements with other agencies;
- 407 • Other agency management plans;
- 408 • Water stakeholders;
- 409 • Land use planning and zoning documents for local and county governments;
- 410 • Descriptions of current and proposed water projects provided by water management agencies;
- 411 • Published books;
- 412 • Scientific journal articles
- 413 • River guides;
- 414 • Tabulations of water rights; and
- 415 • Input from cooperating agencies.

416 ***Other Agencies***

417 Additional information was gathered from other federal and state agencies from scoping letters, stakeholder
418 outreach, and existing documents. The following other agencies were contacted in order to assess suitability:

Issue	Management Prescription/Action
Mining and mineral leasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects free flow, water quality, and ORVs through other agency authorities.
Actions of other agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect actions of other agencies through voluntary partnership.
Protect ORVs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

445 Source: Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council 1998.

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

448 ²Section 11(b)1 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture or the head of any other federal agency to
449 provide for “limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, and management of
450 river resources.” This authority “applies within or outside a federally administered area and applies to rivers which are
451 components of the [NWRSRS] and to other rivers.” The recipients of federal assistance include states or their political
452 subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals. Some examples of assistance under this section include riparian
453 restoration, riparian fencing to protect water quality and riparian vegetation, and vegetative screening to enhance scenery and
454 the recreation experience.

455 **N.6 SUITABILITY CRITERIA-BASED DATA AND DETERMINATIONS**

456 **N.6.1 Introduction**

457 The suitability determinations below present the data collected for each eligible segment in a narrative format
458 and include the resulting BLM determination of suitability. Data collection was guided by the 13 specific
459 criteria described in Section O.5.1.

460 Impacts that would occur from designating or not designating the suitable river segments would be analyzed
461 in the EIS associated with the RMP. The BLM considered public review and comment on suitability
462 determinations included in the Draft RMP before making a final suitability determination. Maps have been
463 included only for those segments preliminarily determined to be suitable.

464 **N.6.2 Rio Puerco Field Office Suitability Data and Determinations**

465 The BLM assesses the 11 suitability factors in relation to each of the two river segments determined to be
466 eligible. The following river and stream segments were evaluated for suitability.

467 **Segment Name: Bluewater Creek**

468 **Description:** Bluewater Creek on BLM- managed lands in T 12N, R 11W, Sections 5 & 6.

469 **Total Segment Length:** 2.0 miles

470 **Total Segment Area:** 940 acres

471 **Length on BLM Land:** 2.0 miles

472 **Area on BLM Land:** 91 acres

473 **Preliminary Classification:** Wild

474 **ORVs:** Scenic, Fish, Wildlife, Geology, Cultural

475 *Suitability Criteria*

476 A suitability study is designed to answer these questions:

477 1. Should the river’s free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or more
478 other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?

479 The rivers free-flowing character, water quality and ORVs should be protected. Geographically and
480 regionally, Bluewater Creek is unique. Bluewater Creek is the only perennial unobstructed stream on public
481 land within the Rio Puerco Field Office, and the only stream in the north Zuni Mountains. The beginning of
482 Bluewater Canyon is below the dam of Bluewater Reservoir, which receives recreation use year-round, with

483 this use heaviest during the spring/summer seasons. The free-flowing character of Bluewater Creek
484 contributes to heavy wildlife concentrations. The riparian zone/perennial stream of Bluewater Creek has the
485 potential to become a Class A trout stream. The only practical vehicular access to Bluewater Creek is at
486 the mouth of the canyon making management of the river under the WSR Act feasible.

487 2. Would the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is
488 it the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions, the benefits and
489 impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated, and alternative protection methods considered.

490 The protection of Bluewater Creek's free-flowing condition through designation ensures the enjoyment and
491 benefit of the outstanding remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, wildlife and cultural values that this
492 regionally significant river segment provides for present and future generations. A designation provides for
493 the appropriate mechanism for administering the river segment with primary emphasis given to protecting
494 such values. Due to its protective high canyon walls, free flowing nature, and limited access, further benefits
495 of a designation would allow for scientific studies of cultural, wildlife, interpretive, and habitat resources in a
496 geographic area not known for riparian habitat and perennial flowing streams. Because of its protective
497 geology and limited access other resource uses such as mining, wood harvesting, OHVs, or grazing resources
498 would not be impacted.

499 Alternatively, Bluewater Creek is also being considered for protection as an Area of Critical Environmental
500 Concern (ACEC). However, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (the Act) provides for the appropriate level of
501 resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and other management practices
502 necessary or desirable to achieve the purposes of the Act for such regionally significant free flowing river
503 segments.

504 3. Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any non-federal entities that may be
505 partially responsible for implementing protective management?

506 Two other non-federal entities have ownership of other parts of Bluewater Creek: the New Mexico State
507 Park Service and the Baca Prewet Navajo Chapter. Neither currently allow any type of conflicting resource
508 uses within Bluewater Creek. The tribal government has shown interest in exchanging the Bluewater Creek
509 segment under their ownership with the BLM for lands more suitable to development.

510 **I. Characteristics that do or do not make the river a worthy addition to the NWSRS:**

511 One of the most unique characteristics is the rarity of water within the RPFO ecosystem. Geographically,
512 much of the area in the ecosystem is high desert terrain and riparian habitat is rare. The riparian area along
513 the river provides habitat for wildlife and fish species and contributes to the scenic qualities along this river
514 segment. The topography of the area is a steep sandstone walled canyon varying from 200 to 500 feet in
515 vertical elevation. The canyon is situated from west to east dropping 500 feet in approximately five miles of
516 the entire river stretch. The steep rocky canyon walls offer a pleasant contrast to the vegetation that grows
517 along them.

518 The river segment is fully enclosed and composed of lush riparian habitat. The habitat contains large
519 cottonwoods, dense vegetation and contains perennial water not present within 30 miles of Bluewater
520 Creek. This leads to a heavy concentration of birds and mammals.

521 Adequate water contributes to wildlife concentrations. The canyon walls provide potential habitat for the
522 peregrine falcon. Among other species that may be seen in Bluewater Creek are: golden eagle, prairie falcon,
523 great horned owl, ladder-backed woodpecker, piñon jay, black-chinned hummingbirds, striped skunk, coyote,
524 bear, bobcat, mule deer, beaver, trout, and tiger muskie.

525 **2. The status of land ownership, minerals (surface and subsurface) development in the area,**
526 **including the amount of private land involved, and associated or incompatible uses:**

527 For the surface estate, the BLM manages approximately 10 percent within the proposed Bluewater Creek
528 corridor.

529 The State of New Mexico manages their portion of the creek as part of the Bluewater Lake State Park. The
530 tribal entity manages their ownership of the creek under very low impact use. A small portion of Bluewater
531 Creek is privately owned, approximately one mile.

532 The subsurface water rights underneath Bluewater Creek corridor are not owned by the federal
533 government. The same percentages of ownership for surface as mentioned above apply to subsurface
534 ownership. No mineral right leases are known to exist.

535 Incompatible uses such as oil/gas wells, pipelines, range improvements, transmission lines, fences, roads,
536 mineral material sales, vegetative product sales, OHV use, and rights-of-ways are also not known to exist
537 along Bluewater Creek.

538 **3. Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and related water that would be**
539 **enhanced, foreclosed, or diminished if the area were not designated:**

540 Current land uses are compatible with protection of the ORVs in this segment. While BLM did have a grazing
541 permit within the segment, grazing is generally not practiced in the canyon.

542 The segment provides an opportunity for users and visitor to see rural New Mexico from a different cultural
543 and geographically perspective. Designation of the segment could enhance opportunities for interpretive
544 signs and trails.

545 Presently, there are no state instream flow water rights in this reach that help ensure flow to protect the
546 ORVs. Rather, flows are provided by required deliveries to downstream senior water rights and upstream
547 New Mexico State Park needs. The BLM concludes that continuing downstream water use by irrigators and
548 State Park upstream needs could require increased analysis, monitoring, and proactive management to insure
549 the flows necessary to support the ORVs in this segment. In this arid environment, adequate flows for ORVs
550 would remain available only with careful design for future water projects and close coordination of operation
551 of existing water uses. The BLM concludes that a junior, instream flow water right associated with a wild
552 and scenic designation would likely help ensure that future water development is designed in a fashion that
553 would provide for support for ORVs.

554 **4. The Federal agency that will administer the area should it be added to the National**
555 **System.**

556 If Bluewater Creek segment were added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the BLM would be
557 most suited to manage the resources within this boundary, unless Congress designated another agency. The
558 BLM's land management authorities can adequately protect the federal lands in the river corridor, but the
559 BLM does not have the authority to protect ORVs on private, state and Tribal lands, nor does it have
560 authority to protect the stream flows necessary to support the ORVs. Designation would provide a
561 comprehensive framework for working with the mentioned entities to protect against land uses that are
562 incompatible with the ORVs, and designation would also provide a federal reserved water right that would
563 assist with flow protection.

564 The river segment is proposed as an ACEC. Management practices associated with this administrative
565 designation serve to protect most of the ORVs. The ACEC designation withdraws the area from mineral
566 entry, a designation as a WSR could make the withdrawal legislative.

567 The primary objective of managing cultural resources is the protection of the resource from damage or
568 destruction. To the extent consistent with protection, the BLM also manages cultural resources for scientific
569 research, public education, and enjoyment. Where interpretation of these sites for public benefit and
570 knowledge is developed, it is required that this use be compatible with the protection of cultural resources.
571 As part of the RMP, the field offices are allocating known cultural resources to various uses and establishing
572 priorities for management emphasis and protection of cultural resources. Management of the river to protect
573 identified ORVs would include direct and indirect protection of cultural resources in the river corridor.

574 **5. The extent to which the agency proposes that administration of the river including the**
575 **costs thereof, is shared by state and local agencies.**

576 For the proposed segment, state and local agencies would likely not be able to administer the segment.

577 **6. The estimated cost of the United States of acquiring necessary lands or interests in land**
578 **within the corridor, as well as the cost of administering the area should it be added to the**
579 **National System.**

580 Because the land within the segment is BLM, Tribal Trust land, and State Park land, the BLM would not
581 pursue land acquisition within the corridor. However, the Tribal entity that owns part of the segment has
582 potential interest in exchanges BLM parcel above the canyon for their segment. No cost analysis or estimate
583 was prepared as a part of this study. However, the cost of administering this area pursuant to the WSR is
584 likely to be similar to the cost of administering the area as an ACEC under current the current management
585 RMP prescriptions.

586 **7. A determination of the extent that other Federal Agencies, the State, or its political**
587 **subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river should it**
588 **be proposed for inclusion into the National System.**

589 Coordinating with the New Mexico State Parks division and Navajo Nation would assure compliance with
590 State and Tribal regulations for access, use and management of any potentially designated river segments. In
591 addition, cooperative efforts would continue with this state agency as participants in suitability study of
592 eligible rivers and the development of river management plans for designated WSRs.

593 **8. An evaluation of local zoning and other land use controls in protecting the river's**
594 **outstandingly remarkable values and preventing incompatible development.**

595 The lands above are not zone for development. The Canyon itself is not designated by either the State of
596 New Mexico or the associated Tribal Governments for any type of development. The creek is confined and
597 protected by high canyon walls and is not located within the jurisdictional boundaries of local zoning laws.

598 **9. The State/local government's capacity to manage and protect the outstandingly**
599 **remarkable values on non-Federal lands.**

600 There are some plans, programs, and policies affecting this segment. The State of New Mexico manages
601 lands under its control for resource development and use, particularly oil and gas development. The New
602 Mexico State Parks Division has a specific plan in place for their segment that adheres to the Park
603 Management regulations 5 NMAC19.3.

604 The Grants County and Tribal government have no specific policies for this area. Because State and County
605 plans, programs, or policies are to provide for economic development and growth designation is potentially
606 compatible with current and future upstream and downstream water projects, provided that those projects
607 are managed to provide sufficient flow to protect the ORVs and are consistent with Section 7 of the WSR
608 Act.

609 **10. The existing support or opposition of designation. Assessment of this factor will define the**
610 **political context. The interest in designation or non-designation by Federal agencies; state,**
611 **local, and tribal governments; national and local publics; and the state's congressional**
612 **delegation should be considered.**

613 During scoping for the RPFO RMP revision, the Bluewater Creek was not externally nominated for
614 consideration as a VSR. The BLM identified the Bluewater Creek for analysis in the eligibility report in a
615 review of GIS layers of lands within the RPFO planning area. In addition, no comments were received during
616 the RPFO Draft RMP comment period regarding the Bluewater Creek.

617 It is anticipated that public interest in designating this segment would be supportive. Members of the public
618 who enjoy Bluewater Creek and the ORVs exhibited on this stretch would be interested in designating the
619 segment as a means of ensuring that the land remains in BLM ownership. Other governments and tribal
620 entities may be opposed to designation based on concern over water rights or land ownership, though the
621 designation would not affect those. Tribal entities have shown interest in a land exchange with BLM for the
622 tribal portion of Bluewater Creek and through which the tribe would acquire more economically valuable
623 lands elsewhere.

624 **11. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, and policies in meeting**
625 **regional objectives.**

626 Besides BLM, the state of New Mexico, and the Navajo Nation have ownership of most of the entire creek
627 segment. The New Mexico State Parks Division has incorporated their segment section into the Bluewater
628 Lake State Park and provides for various recreation experiences to their visitors to include camping, fishing,
629 hiking and horseback riding. The New Mexico State Parks regulations provide for protecting and enhancing
630 the state's natural resources. The Navajo Nation does not have any specific plans for development or use
631 for their segment portion.

632 **12. The contribution to river system or basin integrity.**

633 There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within Bluewater Creek watershed. Bluewater Creek
634 contains the only perennial stream in the San Augustine Area. The Bluewater Creek segment managed by
635 the BLM provides a critical habitat link between riparian and aquatic habits within the entire stretch of
636 Bluewater Creek.

637 **13. The potential for water resources development.**

638 No plans for significant water development in the segment were identified during this study.

639 *Determination*

640 The BLM would be able to manage land uses to successfully protect ORVs and the free-flowing nature of
641 the segment. The BLM believes it could work with local governments and private landowners to assure an
642 overall watershed management strategy to protect this unique resource. Designation would also provide a
643 limited measure of instream flow protection by creating a federal reserved water right. A junior federal
644 water right would not protect against existing operations and future changes in flows that are implemented
645 with existing water rights. However, the BLM would be able to claim a federal right for protecting all the
646 ORVs. The BLM believes that designation of the segment could be compatible with developing and operating
647 new water projects upstream and downstream, which ensure flows necessary to maintain the quality of the
648 ORVs. The BLM concluded that this segment contains unique values that merit enduring legislative
649 protection. The current management and protections along this segment are limited to discretionary actions
650 and may be changed at any time. The determination for this segment is suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS
651 with a wild classification.

652 **N.7 LIST OF PREPARERS**

653 An interdisciplinary team of BLM and Ecosystem Management, Inc. resource specialists prepared this
 654 eligibility report.

655 **Table N-3: Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility and Suitability Report Preparers, BLM Rio**
 656 **Puerco Field Office**

Name	Role/Responsibility
Angel Martinez	Project Manager
Jamie Garcia	Recreation, Visual Resources, WSR
Dawn Chavez	GIS
Cynthia Herhann	Archaeology, Heritage Resources
Adam Lujan	Rangeland Management
Jennifer Merino	Recreation Planning
Andrea Chavez	Wildlife, Riparian
Danny Randal	Recreation Planning

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657 **N.8 REFERENCES**

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Attachments

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ATTACHMENT A

677 **Outstandingly Remarkable Criteria**

678 The following are guidelines for the ORVs for which river segments can be eligible, as well as the comparative
679 region that are considered in this report. Only one ORV is needed for eligibility. These guidelines are based
680 on the guidelines described in BLM Manual 8351, Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for
681 Identification, Evaluation, and Management (BLM 1992).

682 **Scenic Values**

683 **Criteria**

684 The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or
685 exemplary visual features and/or attractions. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory handbook (H8410-1) (BLM
686 2006) may be used in addressing visual quality and in evaluating the extent of development upon scenic
687 values. The rating must be a scenic quality “A” as defined in the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook.
688 When analyzing scenic values, additional factors – such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural
689 modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed – may be considered. Scenery and visual
690 attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.

691 **Region of Comparison**

692 The region of comparison is the southern Colorado Plateau.

693 **Recreational Values**

694 **Criteria**

695 Recreational opportunities are or have the potential to be popular enough to attract visitors from
696 throughout or beyond the region of comparison or are unique or rare within the region. Visitors are willing
697 to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreation. River-related opportunities include, but
698 are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, and float boating.

- 699
- 700 • Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and may attract or have the potential to attract
701 visitors from outside the region of comparison; and
 - 702 • The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional usage or
703 competitive events.

703 **Region of Comparison**

704 The region of comparison is people’s willingness to travel long distances to access and recreate on a
705 particular segment (e.g., tourism markets internationally, nationwide, and within the southern Colorado
706 Plateau).

707 **Geological Values**

708 **Criteria**

709 The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains one or more examples of a geologic feature,
710 process, or phenomenon that are unique or rare within the region of comparison. The features may be in
711 an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example, or represent a unique or rare
712 combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, or other geologic structures).

713 **Region of Comparison**

714 The region of comparison are areas of state or regional geologic importance within New Mexico.

715 **Fish Values**

716 **Criteria**

717 Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat or a combination of the
718 following river-related conditions:

- 719
- Populations. The river is nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous,
720 or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks
721 or populations of state- or U.S.-listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.
 - Habitat. The river provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the
722 region. Of particular significance is habitat for state- or U.S.-listed or candidate threatened and
723 endangered species.
724

725 **Region of Comparison**

726 The region of comparison is based on each species and the state threatened, endangered, and sensitive
727 species lists.

728 **Wildlife Values**

729 **Criteria**

730 Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat or on a
731 combination of the following conditions:

- 732
- Populations. The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important
733 populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species depending on the river environment. Of
734 particular significance may be species considered unique or populations of state- or U.S.-listed or
735 candidate threatened and endangered species.
 - Habitat. The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for
736 wildlife of national or regional significance or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat
737 conditions for state- or U.S.-listed or candidate threatened and endangered species. Contiguous
738 habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.
739

740 **Region of Comparison**

741 The region of comparison is based on each species and the state threatened, endangered, and sensitive
742 species lists.

743 **Historic Values**

744 **Criteria**

745 The river or area within the river corridor contains a site or sites or feature or features associated with a
746 significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or unusual in the region.
747 A historic site or feature in most cases is 50 years old or older. Sites or features listed on or eligible for
748 inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) may be of particular significance.

749 **Region of Comparison**

750 A multi-level region of comparison includes Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and Montana and
751 the west-central Rocky Mountains.

752 **Cultural Values**

753 **Criteria**

754 The river or area within the river corridor contains a site or sites where there is evidence of occupation or
755 use by Native Americans. Sites must be rare or must have unusual characteristics or exceptional human
756 interest values. Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory, be rare, represent

757 an area where culture or a cultural period was first identified and described, have been used concurrently
758 by two or more cultural groups, or have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes.

759 **Region of Comparison**

760 The region of comparison includes regional within the New Mexico BLM, Colorado Plateau, sites that would
761 be eligible for the NRHP.

762 **Other Similar Values**

763 **Criteria**

764 While no specific evaluation guidelines have been developed for the other similar values category, additional
765 values deemed relevant to the eligibility of the river segment should be considered in a manner consistent
766 with the foregoing guidance, including, but not limited to, hydrologic, ecologic/biologic diversity,
767 paleontological, botanic, and scientific study opportunities.

768 **Region of Comparison**

- 769 • Hydrologic –Southern Rockies; Arizona/New Mexico Plateau
- 770 • Ecologic/Biologic Diversity- Arizona/New Mexico Plateau; Arizona/New Mexico Mountains
- 771 • Paleontological- Arizona/New Mexico Plateau; Southwestern Tablelands
- 772 • Botanic-Arizona/New Mexico Plateau; Arizona/New Mexico Mountains
- 773 • Scientific Study Opportunities-Arizona/ New Mexico Plateau

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ATTACHMENT B

775 **Criteria for Tentative Classification**

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

776
777

Source: Federal Register. NWSRS; Final Revised Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification, and Management of River Areas. Section 1(3), Vol. 47, No. 173, page 39461. September 7, 1982.

778

ATTACHMENT C

779 **Interim Protection for Candidate Wild and Scenic Rivers**

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 5(d)(1) ¹	
Issue/Action	Eligible ²
Study Boundary	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): 3 classes: Wild, Scenic, Recreational, defined by statute. Criteria for classification described in interagency guidelines. Manage at preliminary classification
Study report review procedures	
Private land	Affect private land uses through voluntary partnership with state/local governments and landowners.
*administration	No regulatory authority.
*acquisition	No ability to acquire interest in land under the WSR 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 ORVs	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.

780 ¹ Agency-identified study rivers, as directed by Section 5(d)(1) of the WSR Act.

781 ² A number of sources are available for identifying rivers under Section 5(d)(1). Under a presidential directive issued in 1979,
782 each federal agency, as part of its normal planning and environmental review processes, is required to avoid or mitigate adverse
783 effects on rivers in the National Rivers Inventory

784

ATTACHMENT D

785 **Public Comments of Wild and Scenic Rivers**

786 Public scoping was conducted upon initiation of the RPFO RMP revision in 2010. The following are public
787 comments on WSR in the planning area:

- 788
- One commenter felt that riparian lands have the highest value and should be obtained whenever possible. The commenter believed BLM acquisition of much of the Bluewater Creek would serve to protect vital riparian habitat.
- 789
- All springs need to be fenced to prohibit cattle from accessing them.
- 791
- Cattle need to be removed permanently from the riparian areas in the RPFO.
- 792
- The Las Huertas Creek should be considered as a Wild and Scenic River
- 793