



## 5.11 Wild and Scenic Rivers

### 5.11.1 Introduction

The rivers of the United States are a valuable resource, which provide a variety of scenic, recreational, geological, wildlife, historic, and cultural values. Many of these rivers are protected under federal and state laws. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which includes the nation's premier rivers, and the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) both act to protect rivers at a national level. Lists such as the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Waters Designated for Special Protection and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Natural and Scenic River Segments act to protect Indiana's rivers at the state level.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created in 1968 by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that it "be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." (16 USC 1271-1287) The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System list is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS).

In addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the National Park Service has compiled and maintains the NRI. The NRI is a register of rivers that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The intent of the NRI is to provide information to assist in making balanced decisions regarding use of the nation's river resources.

Rivers considered to have special importance, and merit special protection, by the State of Indiana must also be taken into account. These rivers are listed in either the IDEM's Waters Designated for Special Protection, or the IDNR's Natural and Scenic River Segments.

Since the completion of the DEIS, the following change has been made to this section:

- Impact calculations have been updated to reflect the selection of variations, route shifts and other changes, as described in Section 5.1.3.

### 5.11.2 Methodology

The National Park Service National Wild and Scenic Rivers System internet web site (<http://www.nps.gov/rivers/>) was reviewed in order to determine if National Wild and Scenic Rivers were present within the I-69 Study Area.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data layer, "Designated Rivers in Southwestern Indiana," was used to determine if proposed alternatives crossed rivers listed on the NRI, the IDEM Waters Designated for Special Protection, and the IDNR Natural and Scenic River Segments. For a more detailed explanation on how the GIS was used to determine potential impacts, refer to Section 4.1, *GIS Approach*, and Section 5.1, *Methodology*, in this document.

### 5.11.3 Analysis

FHWA, as a federal agency, seeks to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on rivers identified in the NRI as part of the normal planning and environmental review processes of a project. All federal agencies are required to consult with the NPS prior to taking actions that could effectively foreclose wild, scenic, or recreational status for rivers on the



inventory. An Early Coordination letter was sent to the NPS. The NPS provided no response to the Early Coordination letter. Coordination with the NPS on June 25, 2002 indicated that they would review the DEIS and provide comments, if necessary. Comments on the DEIS were provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) on behalf of all DOI agencies, including NPS. In its comment letter, DOI recommended that the FEIS be revised to state that the East Fork of the White River is listed on the NRI. This change has been made in this section. Coordination with the NPS will continue in the Tier 2 NEPA studies.

There are no rivers listed in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the I-69 Study Area. Therefore, the proposed I-69 project will not adversely affect these resources.

However, some segments of the East and West Forks of the White River are listed in the NRI, and are crossed by the proposed alternatives. Figure 5.11-1 and Figure 5.11-2 show these two rivers. An approximately 55-mile long segment of the East Fork is included on the NRI because of its



Figure 5.11-1: West Fork of the White River (SR 67 Crossing)



Figure 5.11-2: East Fork of the White River (SR 57 Crossing)

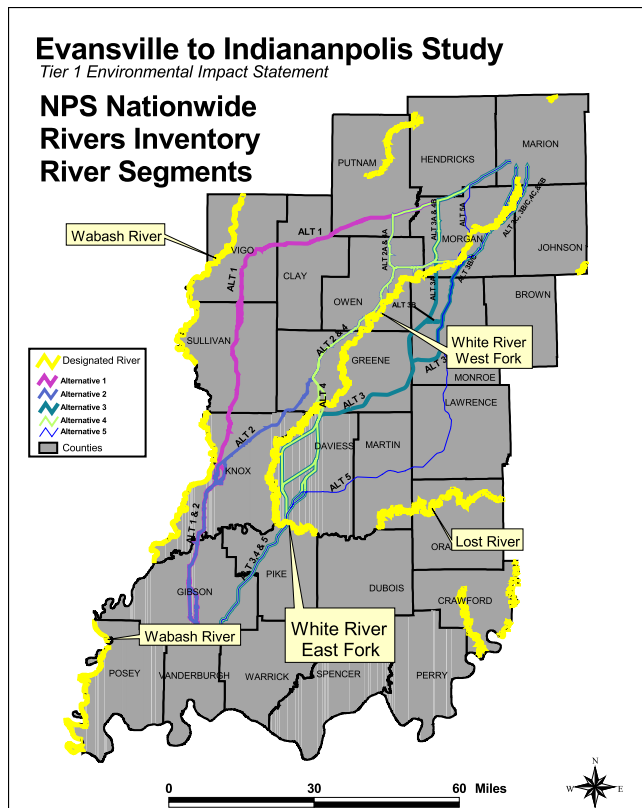


Figure 5.11-3: National Park Service Nationwide Rivers Inventory River Segments and Proposed I-69 Alternatives

scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, and historic values. An approximately 216-mile stretch of the West Fork has been included on the NRI because of its fish, wildlife, historic, and other values. Figure 5.11-3 shows the NRI river segments within the Study Area, pointing out those crossed by the proposed alternatives. Alternative 2C crosses the West Fork of the White River. Alternative 3A crosses both the East Fork and the West Fork of the White River, for a total of two crossings of NRI listed rivers. Alternatives 3B and Preferred Alternative 3C cross the East Fork of the White River. Alternatives 4A and 4B cross the East Fork and the West Fork of the White River, for a total of two crossings.



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Alternative 4C crosses the East Fork once, and the West Fork twice for a total of three crossings. Alternative 5A crosses the East Fork and the West Fork of the White River for a total of two crossings. Alternative 5B crosses the East Fork. The No Build Alternative will have no impacts on Wild and Scenic River resources.

There are no rivers listed on the IDEM Waters Designated for Special Protection list or the IDNR Natural and Scenic River Segments crossed by the five proposed alternatives. Therefore, the proposed I-69 project will not adversely affect these resources.

#### **5.11.4 Mitigation**

No Wild and Scenic Rivers are present in the proposed I-69 Study Area. However, several of the proposed alternatives cross rivers listed on the NPS NRI, including portions of the East and West Forks of the White River.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be employed during construction, and design features to reduce pollutant introduction and reduce visual impacts will be evaluated.

#### **5.11.5 Summary**

There are no National Wild and Scenic Rivers present within the I-69 Study Area. Therefore, the proposed project will have no adverse impacts to those resources. No IDEM Waters Designated for Special Protection or IDNR Natural and Scenic River Segments are crossed by the five alternatives; therefore, the proposed project will have no adverse impacts to those resources. Segments of the East and West Forks of the White River are listed in the NRI, and are crossed by a number of alternatives. Preferred Alternative 3C crosses the East Fork of the White River. An approximately 55-mile long segment of the East Fork is included on the NRI because of its scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, and historic values. Further coordination with the NPS will be done in Tier 2 studies to determine if the proposed project will adversely affect this resource and what avoidance or mitigation measures should be taken. The No Build Alternative will have no impact on Wild and Scenic river resources.



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