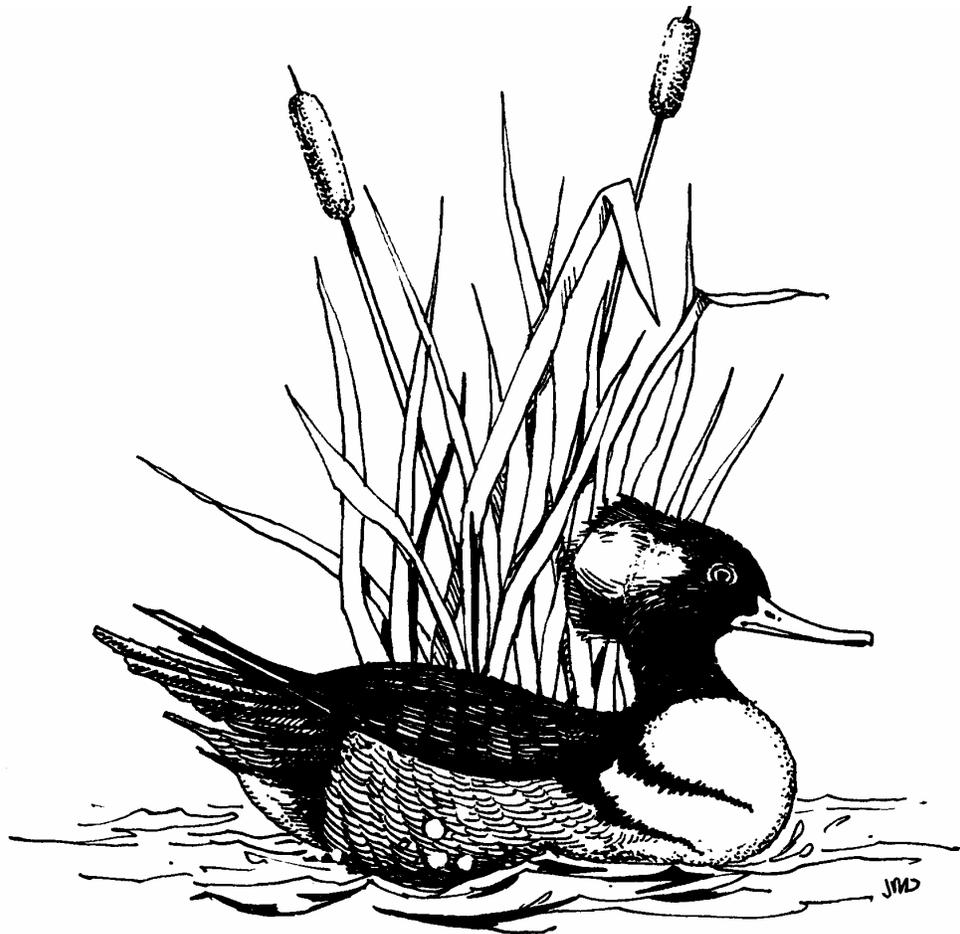


1984 Eligibility Report



Appendix C – 1984 Eligibility Report for a Section of the South Platte River from Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report for Badger Creek, the Cimarron River, and a Section of the south Platte River in Volume II, Appendix F, Final Environmental Impact Statement *Land and Resource Management Plan for the Pike and San Isabel National Forests; Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands* Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
APPENDIX C – 1984 ELIGIBILITY REPORT FOR A SECTION OF THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER FROM WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY REPORT FOR BADGER CREEK, THE CIMARRON RIVER, AND A SECTION OF THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER IN VOLUME II, APPENDIX F, FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT <i>LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PIKE AND SAN ISABEL NATIONAL FORESTS; COMANCHE AND CIMARRON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS</i>	C-1
South Platte River Eleven-Mile Dam to Cheesman Reservoir Eligibility Report	C-1
Location	C-1
River Study Area Boundaries.....	C-1
General Setting	C-2
Land Ownership and Use	C-2
Transportation	C-2
Physical, Biologic, Geologic Features	C-2
Social Economic Features.....	C-3
Eligibility Evaluation South Platte River.....	C-3
Wild River Areas.....	C-4
Scenic River Areas.....	C-4
Recreational River Areas	C-5
Conclusion.....	C-5
Management Pending Suitability Analysis	C-5

APPENDIX C

**1984 ELIGIBILITY REPORT FOR A SECTION OF THE
SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
from
WILD AND SCENIC RIVER ELIGIBILITY REPORT FOR
BADGER CREEK, THE CIMARRON RIVER AND A SECTION OF
THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
in
VOLUME II, APPENDIX F
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE
PIKE AND SAN ISABEL NATIONAL FORESTS; COMANCHE AND
CIMARRON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS**

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
ELEVEN-MILE DAM TO CHEESMAN RESERVOIR ELIGIBILITY REPORT

Location. The section of river included in this study for eligibility extends from Eleven-Mile Canyon Dam downstream to the head of Cheesman Reservoir. The corridor includes National Forest and private lands along approximately 23 miles of stream. The upper portion of the stream is located on the Pike National Forest in Park County (with a small portion in Teller County, Colorado). From the Douglas County – Teller County line to Cheesman Reservoir, the river forms a boundary between Douglas and Jefferson Counties, Colorado.

River Study Area Boundaries. The total area being considered extends from Eleven-Mile Canyon Dam downstream to the head of the pool at Cheesman Lake. The width of the corridor is generally one-quarter mile on each side of the stream which includes the major portion of the South Platte River Canyon.

This section of the South Platte contains areas with three different characteristics.

- A. The Eleven-Mile Canyon Area extends from the Eleven-Mile Canyon Dam downstream to the private land in the vicinity of Lake George, a distance of 8 miles.
- B. The section of river flowing through predominately private lands in the Lake George area and extends downstream to the mouth of Beaver Creek, a distance of 6 miles.
- C. The section of the stream from Beaver Creek downstream to the head of Cheesman Reservoir travels a distance of 9 miles.

These segments will be referred to in this report as Segments A, B, and C as shown on Map #2 . Where descriptive material is pertinent to a specific segment rather than to the entire study corridor, the segment references will be used to distinguish between descriptions.

General Setting. The study corridor of the South Platte drainage occurs as a river canyon approximately 700 feet in depth and about 1/2 mile wide. The topography is generally steep on the lower slopes of the canyon becoming more gently sloping on the upper slopes. There are no major national interest events that occurred in the canyon although the upper Eleven-Mile Canyon portion (Segment A) was the location of the Colorado Midland Railroad from Colorado Springs to Leadville and on to the Western Slope of Colorado.

The upper portion, Segment A, has developed campgrounds and picnic grounds receiving heavy developed and dispersed recreation use. The central portion of the canyon, Segment B, is mostly subdivided private land used as both yearlong and seasonal recreational property. About 1-1/2 miles of undeveloped stream occurs on National Forest land. The lower portion of the canyon, Segment C, is generally undeveloped.

Cheesman and Eleven-Mile Reservoirs are large domestic water storage facilities serving the Denver metropolitan area. Water flows through the study area are controlled to meet those domestic water needs. There are no other water developments in the corridor significant to the study area.

Land Ownership and Use. Segment A is National Forest land except for one tract owned by the Boy Scouts of America. The central portion, Segment B, is generally all private land. Segment C is National Forest land except for a short distance immediately above the Cheesman Reservoir which is land owned by the Denver Water Board. Segment A is used primarily for dispersed and developed recreation; Segment B is mountain subdivision development and is heavily urbanized. Segment C is used for dispersed recreation, primarily fishing and ORV use. When water flow is restricted to its minimal volumes, rafting, floating or similar activities are not generally possible. Even when flows are adequate, this recreation activity is very light.

Transportation. The river in Segment A is paralleled by a single lane, graveled, all-weather road on the old Midland Railroad grade. The river in Segment B is paralleled, crossed, and otherwise heavily influenced by subdivision development roads. U.S. Highway 24 crosses the river at Lake George. The river in Segment C contains only foot and off-road vehicle (ORV) trails to and across the river.

Physical, Biologic, Geologic Features. The entire area has been formed from Precambrian granite formations. These rocky outcrops are predominant in the more defined canyon in Segments A and C. The terrain consists of a rocky canyon with interspersed forest cover and scattered meadows. The lower slopes of the canyon generally are very steep while the upper slopes are more gently sloping to the crest of the surrounding ridges. The terrain along the river in Segment B consists of a wide flat canyon bottom which is mostly private and some sub-development has occurred. Vegetation throughout the area is generally ponderosa pine and Douglas fir on the slopes, with willows and interspersed grassy meadows in the canyon bottom.

The water flows are regulated by releases from Eleven-Mile Canyon Reservoir and range from 60 to 80 cubic feet per second to 300 to 350 cubic feet per second. However, during high water periods, flows may reach several thousand cubic feet per second. The flood plain on the National Forest portion of this area, Segments A and C, generally consist of a narrow canyon bottom with steep sidewalls.

The entire section of the river provides a good trout fishery and is stocked by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Wildlife includes species normally associated with this type of environment such as deer and possibly a few mountain lion. The river otter (classified as endangered by the State of Colorado) has been stocked and more stocking is planned in the future.

Social Economic Features. The major recreation attractions are scenery and use of the water. The upper canyon area, Segment A, is very heavily used for both dispersed and developed recreation, with water-based activities predominant. The lower canyon area, Segment C, is used primarily for fishing. The lower terminus of the river is within five miles of the Lost Creek Wilderness. However, the river does not provide direct wilderness access. The primary scenic and visual resource is the flowing river through the canyon area with associated rapids, smooth stretches, riffles, etc. The visual resource of the central portion of the canyon, Segment B, has been heavily modified by subdivision development. There are no identified cultural resources in the corridor other than the Colorado Midland Railroad Grade. However, it is expected that additional cultural resources would be identified by a complete inventory.

The economic uses of natural resources in the area are limited to some past timber harvesting activity. The primary economic use is the domestic water supply by the Denver Water Board.

ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER

The guidelines for evaluating Wild, Scenic and Recreational River Areas proposed for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System under Section 2, Public Law 90-542 provide five criteria which rivers must meet to be considered for inclusion under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These criteria and the applicability of the South Platte River are as follow:

1. Rivers must be in a free flowing natural condition: The South Platte River from Eleven-Mile Canyon Dam downstream to the head of Cheesman Reservoir is generally free flowing although the amount of flow is controlled by releases from Eleven-Mile Canyon Reservoir.
2. The river must be long enough to provide a meaningful experience: The area of the river under study is approximately 23 miles long and marginally meets this criterion.
3. There should be a sufficient volume of water during normal years to permit, during the recreation season, full enjoyment of water related outdoor recreation activities associated with comparable rivers: There is a sufficient volume of water as illustrated by the attraction and use of the water for a limited range of outdoor recreation activities at the present time.
4. The river and its environment should be outstandingly remarkable and generally pleasing to the eye: It is questionable if the environment of this section of river is truly

outstandingly remarkable in comparison to the rivers identified in the original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. However, this river and the canyon are unique in that these resources are scarce along the Front Range of Colorado. Therefore, it appears that, considering the Front Range situation, the river generally meets these criteria.

5. The river should be of high quality water: The South Platte River is the source of domestic water for the City of Denver, is high quality water, and will be maintained in this condition.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act also provides criteria for the classification of Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Areas as described by the Act. These criteria and the applicability of the three segments of the South Platte River are described as follows:

a) Wild River Areas

- 1) Free of Impoundments: The entire South Platte River Study Area meets this criterion.
- 2) Generally inaccessible except by trail: Segments A and B do not meet this criterion due to numerous roads along and crossing the river. Segment C generally meets the criteria, although there are ORV routes to and across the river. However, these uses could be regulated where they are in conflict with the purposes of the Act.
- 3) Watersheds or shoreline essentially primitive: Segments A and B do not meet this criterion due to the level of development. Segment C appears to essentially meet the criteria.
- 4) Waters unpolluted: The entire South Platte River in the study area meets this criteria.

b) Scenic River Areas

- 1) Free of Impoundments: The entire South Platte River Study Area meets this criterion.
- 2) Are accessible in places by road: This is defined to mean that roads may occasionally bridge the river area but that long stretches of conspicuous and well traveled roads do not closely parallel the riverbank. The river in Segments A and B do not meet this criterion because they are paralleled and crossed by roads. Segment C meets this criterion.
- 3) Have shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped: Segments A and B do not meet these criteria due to the level of recreation and subdivision development. Segment C meets these criteria.

c) Recreational River Areas

- 1) Are readily accessible by road or railroad: Segments A and B meet this criterion with numerous roads.
- 2) May have some development along their shoreline: This means that the lands may be developed for a full range of agricultural uses and could include small communities as well as dispersed or clustered residential developments. Segments A and B meet this criterion.
- 3) Undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past: The entire South Platte River Study Area meets this criterion.

Based upon the above evaluation, it appears that Segment C of the South Platte River Study Area meets the criteria for eligibility as a Wild River. It appears that Segments A and B meet the criteria for eligibility as a Recreational River, but do not meet the criteria for a Scenic or Wild River.

A river may have more than one classification for different segments but each classified segment must be long enough to provide a meaningful experience. The length of the segments meeting eligibility requirements for wild and recreational classification (9 and 15 miles, respectively) may be marginal in terms of length to provide meaningful experiences.

Conclusion

Based upon the above eligibility evaluation, this section of the South Platte River is found to be eligible for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic River System.

A suitability analysis, followed by a legislative proposal if the segment is determined suitable, will be made on this section of the South Platte River after the Forest Plan has been completed.

Management Pending Suitability Analysis

A Forest-wide prescription to protect the river's characteristics so as not to impair its eligibility will be established in the Management Direction section of the Forest Plan. These standards and guidelines will apply to the corridor boundary, generally one-quarter mile from each bank of the river segment.

