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Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Planning and Recreation Resources

Since the inception of the Scenic River System program in 1970, 33 river segments totaling 860 miles of river have been added to the System.

WHAT SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION DOES

- Designation encourages protection and preservation of the river.
- Designation declares the protection of a river's scenic values to be a beneficial purpose of water resource policy.
- Designation allows for a local administering committee that can be appointed by the Director of Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).
- Designation requires the Board of Conservation and Recreation (BCR), whose members are appointed by the Governor, to advise the Director of DCR on the federal, state or local plans that impact the designated river segment and to give local citizens a voice in river-related issues.
- After designation, the General Assembly must approve construction of any dam that would result in an impediment to the natural flow of the river.
- For properties along designated scenic rivers, a special tax assessment may be given to reduce the tax liability, as valued by the State Land Evaluation Advisory Council, if adopted by the locality.
- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recognizes Virginia's designated Scenic River System. This acknowledgement of the program ensures that the qualities of the designated river are considered during licensing or relicensing of federal projects on or crossing designated rivers.
- Designation allows for lands along designated corridors to receive grant funds.

WHAT SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION DOES NOT DO

- Designation does not give the state control over land use.
- Designation carries with it **no** land use controls.
- Designation does not give the public any right to use privately owned land.
- Virginia does not commercially promote its scenic rivers.

In a nutshell, Scenic River designation constitutes official recognition of the natural, scenic, historic and recreational values of some of Virginia's most valuable riverine resources and provides them with a measure of protection not afforded other rivers. In addition, it gives riparian landowners and other local citizens a stronger voice in any government action or decisions that have the potential to impact 'their' river.

Planning and Recreation Resources
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