

San Diego River Gorge

Proposed Wild & Scenic River

The upper San Diego River flows through a rugged and undeveloped gorge near the rapidly urbanizing mountain communities of Ramona and Julian in San Diego County. Here the river flows through public lands managed as part of the Cleveland National Forest. Conservationists and recreation interests have proposed protection of the upper river gorge as a National Wild & Scenic River.

The San Diego River gorge's distinctive scenery is enhanced by steep slopes rising 1,500 feet above the stream, which tumbles over spectacular seasonal waterfalls. Hikers and local residents frequent the canyon rim to take in the wild vista, but visitors who wish to explore this wild area up close will be challenged by the rocky and trail-less gorge.

An area of high ecological significance, the river's diverse riparian and coastal sage habitat is home to numerous endangered and sensitive wildlife species, including the endangered arroyo toad, Coast Range newt, and California gnatcatcher.

As a National Wild & Scenic River, the canyon's rugged scenery, primitive recreation opportunities, and critical wildlife habitat will be protected. In addition, designation will protect the river's water quality, which supplies drinking water to San Diego's urban population.



Segment Description/Classification:

From the private land/National Forest boundary in section 27, T12S, R3E, to the confluence with Ritchie Creek upstream of the Helix Water District property boundary – 8.5 miles – Wild.

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