



An Introduction to the “Referenced California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act with National Wild & Scenic Rivers in California Included in the Chronology”

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If you are curious about the provisions and history of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and wild & scenic rivers in California, you are likely to find some answers in a substantial “memo” that carries the unwieldy title “The California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and California’s State and National Wild & Scenic Rivers (Referenced).”

Penning by CalWild’s Steve Evans and Friends of the River’s Ron Stork, the memo is the creation of two of the most experienced environmental-group practitioners of wild & scenic river designations, law, and management that you are likely to find in California.

Whether you are a legislative or congressional staffer or member of the legislature; a California National Resources Agency or California department head or staff; a friend of a waterway with curiosity about the state or national wild & scenic river systems; a wild & scenic river manager, agency staff, or consultant working on a wild & scenic river study or management plan; a researcher, teacher, or student who is curious about these bedrock river protection systems and legal frameworks; or a journalist looking for a handy reference, this memo could be your first port of call in understanding the basics and even some of the hidden corners of these two important river protection statutes and the systems that they create.

First circulated in 2005 as a 5½-page memo to explain the California Wild & Scenic Act for use by environmental groups and members and staff of the California legislature, the memo at this writing has been expanded and enriched in its coverage to 103 pages and growing — now with references in endnotes for those who want to explore background information and the source material of the memo.

True to its roots, the memo first lists the rivers in the California wild & scenic rivers system and describes its purpose. It then takes you through a 16-page tour of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act—with some important detours through its checkered amendment history, special management of joint state and national wild & scenic rivers, and the California statute’s important differences with the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

The following 46-page chronology section highlights the basic or even detailed milestones that frame the story arc of California rivers that have found protection under the California and National Wild & Scenic River Acts. Arranged by year, the chronology section covers the lowlights and the highlights of the history of the special rivers that have been touched by these statutes.

The memo concludes with 40 pages of endnotes. There you can consistently find references, some additional explanation, and occasionally some interesting stories around the referenced paragraph, sentence, or portion of a sentence in the memo main text.

The memo is expected to be enriched and grow larger as the years march on and more information and stories of the past told. Also, there is hope that some of the referenced files now contained in Friends of the River files will be put online. So if you want the latest memo, check out the wild & scenic river portion of our website, which at this writing can be found here: <https://www.friendsoftheriver.org/our-work/wild-and-scenic/>

Of course, if you have information and stories that can contribute to the purposes of this memo, I encourage you to contact Friends of the River or CalWild staff working on wild & scenic rivers. It's an honor to be a contributor—and if you contribute, you could also be able to join that growing list of distinguished contributors to the memo. And yes, we credit those who help. See endnote #1.

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