



<http://www.cumauriceriver.org>

Wild and Scenic Designation

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, signed into law 40 years ago, protects rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values.

Congress directed the National Park Service to study the nation's rivers. Fewer than 2% were eligible for further study and fewer still received designation.

In 1993, the 25th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, seven years of local efforts culminated in the Maurice River and three of its tributaries: the Menantico, Manumuskin, and Muskee Creeks being designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers by the US Congress.

Significant natural resources include endangered species like the short-nosed sturgeon, peregrine falcon and the bald eagle. In fact, half of New Jersey's threatened and endangered species can be found in the watershed. Southern NJ has played a key role in the restoration of the eagle population.

The many migratory species that use the rivers, the vast stands of wild rice, and a globally endangered vetch all contributed to the Wild and Scenic qualities. The entire watershed is critical to the survival of fish and shellfish, shorebirds and waterfowl, as well as songbirds and raptors that migrate the Atlantic Flyway.

Of specific cultural significance are historic maritime resources, especially those relating to the oyster industry. The Maurice was not only port to 500 oyster schooners in the late 1880s and early 1900's, but was also home to large coastal sailboats that circumvented the globe.

The Wild and Scenic designation is intended to preserve this unique environmental nature as well as to make them accessible for today and tomorrow.