AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

AgendaTitle:
Request for Support; Crystal River Wild & Scenic Designation

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:
Request for Support; Crystal River Wild & Scenic Designation.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Submitted by: Katherine Haase **Submitter's Email Address:** khaase@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\MBIRNIE Discharge Date: 1/17/2014

○ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ◉ Worksession Time Allotted: 30 min

Agenda Date: 2/25/2014 Follow Up Agenda Date:

Revised April 2013

Bobbie Lucero

From: Lisa MacDonald <lisa.macdonald@pitkincounty.com>
Sent: Monday, December 09, 2013 1:13 PM
To: Katherine Haase
Subject: Meeting Time for work session request

Hi Katherine
I spoke with you a month or so ago about scheduling some work session time with the commissioners for a local citizen's group that has been exploring the designation of the Crystal River as a wild and scenic river.

There are several phases to the designation and the first phase, eligibility, was completed years ago by the forest service. This group is looking into the suitability phase and hope to follow it through to congressional designation.
They have been meeting with local citizens, groups, water rights holders etc.. to get a sense from the community whether there is a desire to move forward with the designation and they have come away with a definite support.

They are now looking to meet with Pitkin and Gunnison to obtain support from the governmental entities.

Please let me know some possible dates and times and I can forward those onto the group.

Thanks for your help with this.
Lisa

--

Lisa MacDonald

Pitkin County Attorney's Office

Healthy Rivers and Streams Board

(970) 920-5191

Pitkin County has moved to Google. Please note my new email address.

This e-mail message may be privileged, confidential and protected from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, any distribution or copying is prohibited. If you believe you received this e-mail message in error, please e-mail the sender at lisa.macdonald@pitkincounty.com - Thank you.

Agenda Item Summary
Work Session
February 25, 2014

TO: Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dorothea Farris, Bill Jochems, Chuck Ogilby, Chuck Downey

SUBJECT: Designation of Crystal River as Wild and Scenic

We will provide a power-point presentation to the Board on the progress of the Crystal River Wild and Scenic designation.

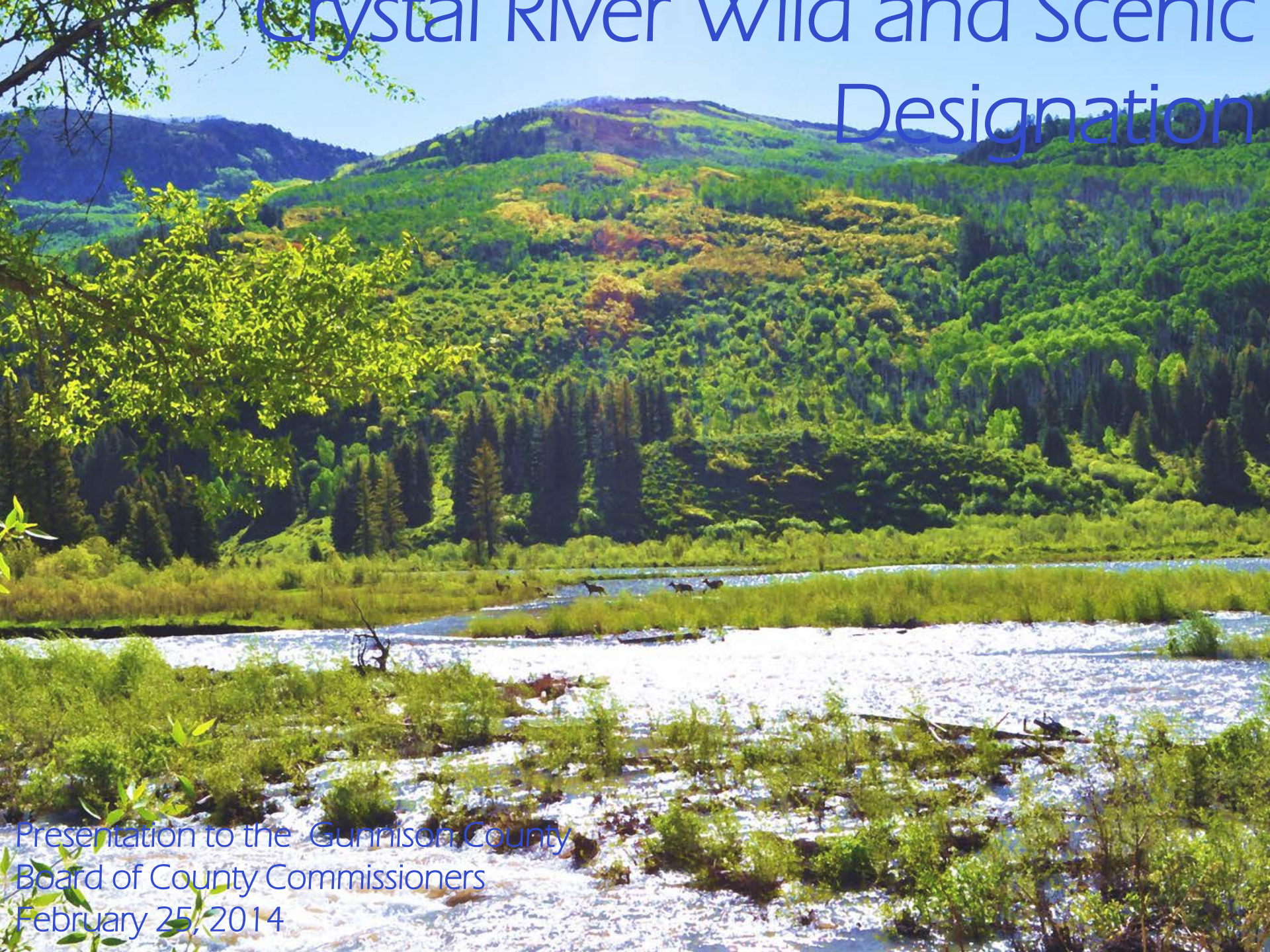
Background Information: In order for a river to earn a National Wild and Scenic designation, it must go through the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act) Study Process. This process includes 3 steps, eligibility, suitability and congressional action. The eligibility step has been completed and identified 49 miles of the river as eligible for designation.

In the fall of 2012, educational forums were held to explore and gauge interest in the next step (suitability) of the designation phase. Beginning in 2013, local groups and interested members of the public held meetings on the suitability process and how to move forward.

A smaller group of three locals with historic knowledge and ties to the valley was tasked with contacting local ranchers, water rights holders and other entities to evaluate enthusiasm for the designation. After successful meetings, it is the opinion of the smaller group that there is great community support for the designation from Marble, Redstone and Carbondale. The group will meet with the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners in March for similar support.

Requested Board Action: Motion of support and provide a letter of support for the designation of the Crystal River as Wild and Scenic from the suitability phase through to congressional designation.

Crystal River Wild and Scenic Designation



Presentation to the Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners
February 25, 2014

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Wild and Scenic Designation for the Crystal River

WHY

To protect in perpetuity the water quality and quantity of the Crystal River and its major tributaries in their free flowing condition while maintaining its ranching heritage, sustaining the river's diverse fish and wildlife, its remarkable cultural, historical, and scenic values, and protecting its diverse recreational uses; while, at the same time, insuring that the valley's water resources are not diverted for use out of the Crystal River basin, all for the benefit of present and future generations.

NON-NEGOTIABLE TENETS TO THE LEGISLATION:

- The legislation is subordinate to Colorado water law for all residents or land owners of the valley who currently divert, wish to change, add to, alter, or experiment with their water rights.
- The legislation is subordinate to Pitkin, Garfield, and Gunnison County land use planning and will not impose any Federal restrictions over and above those imposed by the local counties or municipalities.
- The legislation will not attempt to halt or hinder any county, municipality, or said county's special use district's current or future planning efforts.

BENEFITS:

- The legislation will provide notoriety and political clout in attempts in the future to industrialize or pollute the waters of the Crystal River or any of its tributaries.
- The legislation will enhance opportunities for prioritization for federal or state funding for river restoration and agricultural irrigation enhancement projects.
- The legislation will protect the status quo of the present water users from threats of out of basin diversions.
- The legislation will recognize the unique river related values of the Crystal River Valley.

River Eligibility

CRYSTAL RIVER

Eligible segments and potential classifications

The river segments found eligible include both the north and south forks of the Crystal and then downstream to the Sweet Jessup headgate (about one mile from the forest boundary) approximately 39 miles, encompassing approximately 7,500 acres of NFS land and 4,500 acres of private land.

General Description:

- **Segment 1 – Wild**

  From the headwaters of the North Fork downstream to the Maroon Bells Snowmass Wilderness boundary, about 7 miles encompassing about 2,000 acres of NFS land

- **Segment 2 – Scenic**

  From the wilderness boundary on the North Fork to the junction with the South Fork, about 2 miles, encompassing approximately 64 acres of NFS land and 160 acres of private land

- **Segment 3 – Scenic**

  From the headwaters of the South Fork downstream to Beaver Lake, approx. 10 miles encompassing about 2000 acres of NFS land and 1,000 acres of private land

- **Segment 4 – Recreational**

  From Beaver Lake downstream to the Sweet Jessup headgate (about 1 mile from the forest boundary), approx. 20 miles, encompassing about 1,300 acres of NFS and 3,300 acres of private land

Rugged peaks rising from 7, 500 feet to more than 14,000 feet define the river corridor. The mix of aspen with Engelmann spruce and Douglas-fir forest along the steep mountain slopes create a scenic backdrop for the river corridor. Rock outcrop sand cliffs rim most of the skyline. Spectacular fall colors illuminate the corridor during much of September and October. The outstanding scenic resources attract tourists and artists both nationally and internationally.

The West Elk Scenic Byway winds through the river corridor and over McClure Pass.

Seven miles of the Crystal River lie within the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness and provide outstanding primitive recreation opportunities for sightseeing, photography, and hunting. The primitive roads in the upper Crystal drainage provide challenging four- wheel-drive opportunities and access to spectacular scenery. Other recreation opportunities throughout the corridor include camping, picnicking, fishing, driving for pleasure, horseback riding, bicycling, and ice climbing. A hot spring also attracts recreationists.

Big game species include bighorn sheep, deer and elk, and black bear. Smaller species include beaver, snowshoe hare, cottontails, porcupines, raccoons, red squirrels, yellow- bellied marmots, pine marten, and Colorado pocket gopher. Bird species include gray jay olive-sided flycatcher, blue grouse, Lincoln sparrow, saw-whet owl, sharp-shinned haw green-tailed towhee, white-tailed swift, MacGillivray's warbler, and Virginia's warbler. The river valley provides winter habitat for bald eagles.

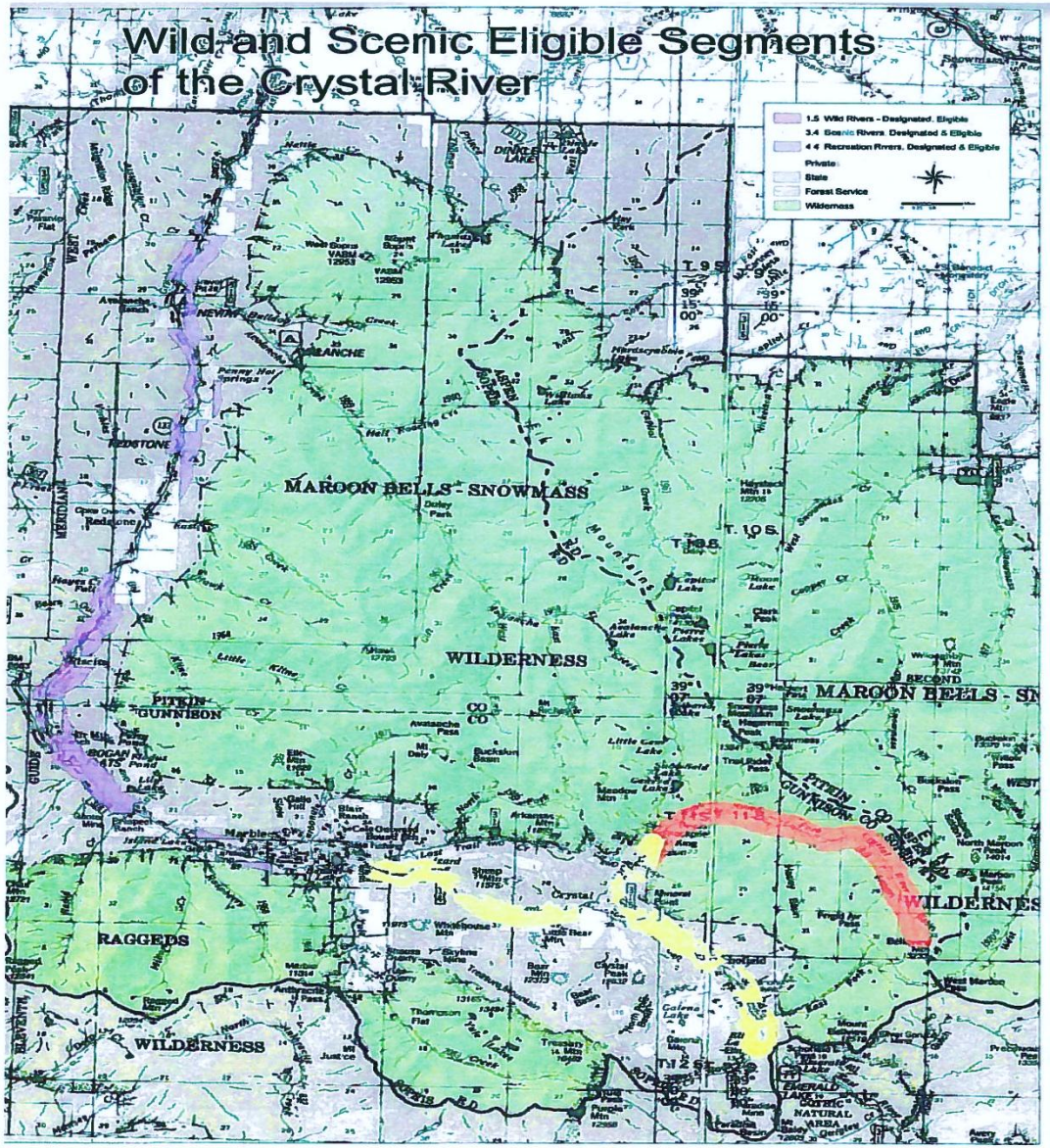
Fish native to the area include the rare Colorado River cutthroat trout, speckled dace, mottled sculpin, bluehead sucker, round-tail chub, mountain whitefish, and the flannel mouth sucker. Rainbow, brown, and brook trout have all been introduced for anglers.

Forest lands are intermingled with private lands adjacent to the river from the wilderness boundary to the end of the recreational river boundary. Existing developments on private land do not detract from the picturesque qualities of the river corridor.

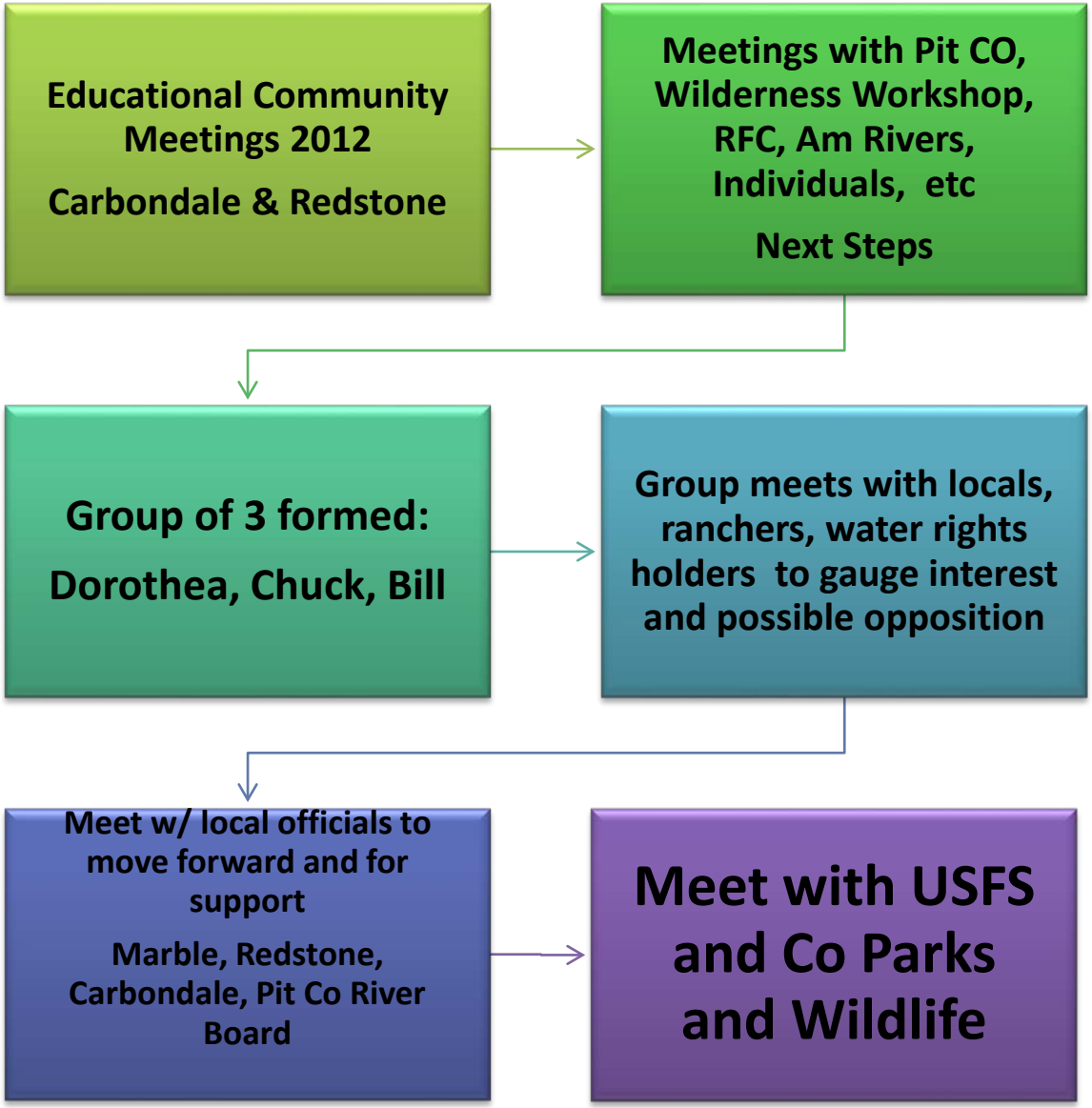
Significant cultural resources include Redstone Castle, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; and the Strauss and Yule Creek marble quarries. The Yule quarry is the source of the marble used in the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. Other historic attractions include the towns of Redstone, Crystal, and Marble and the Crystal Mill.

The outstandingly remarkable values that will be recognized in managing the Crystal River are scenery, historic, and recreational values.

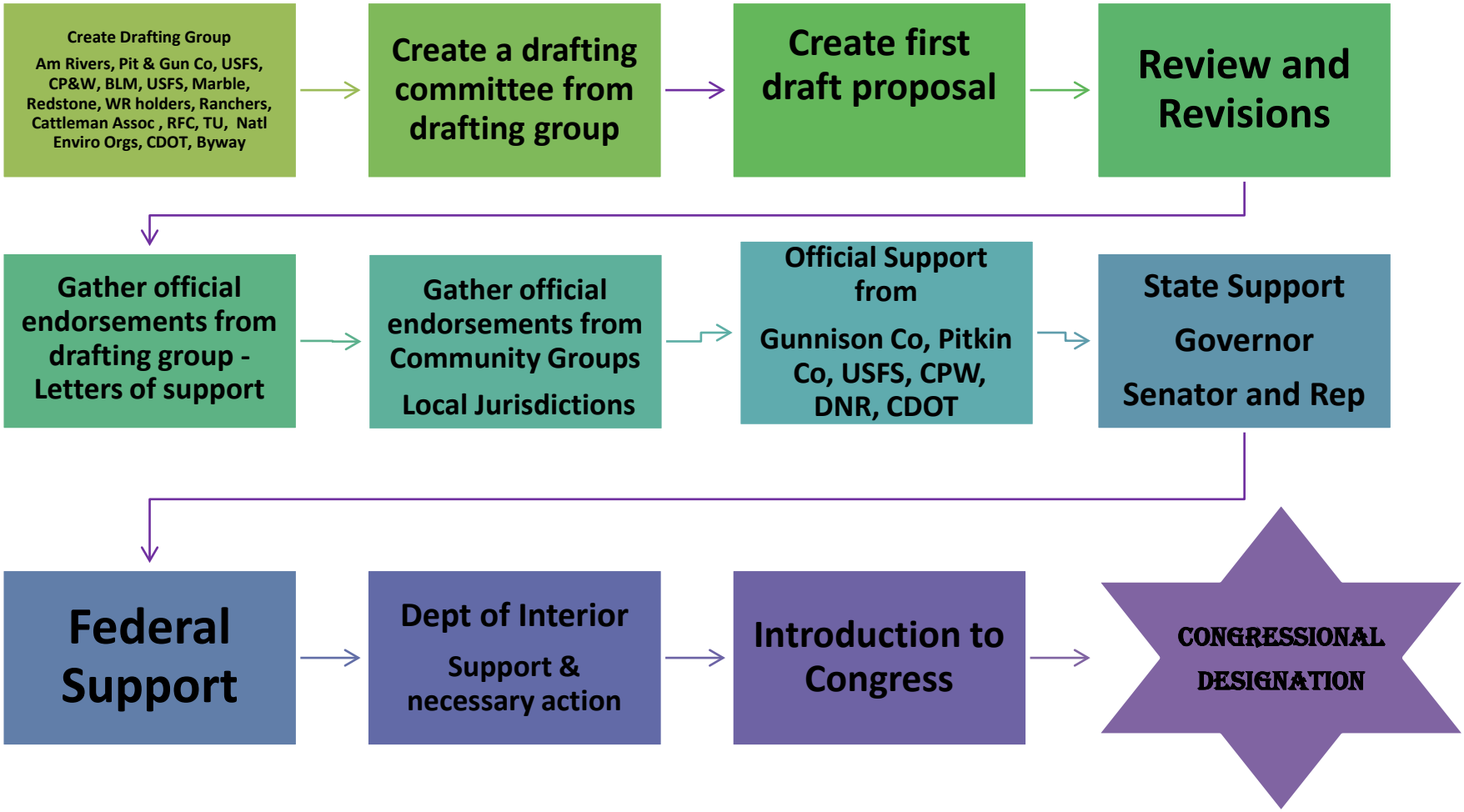
Wild and Scenic Eligible Segments of the Crystal River



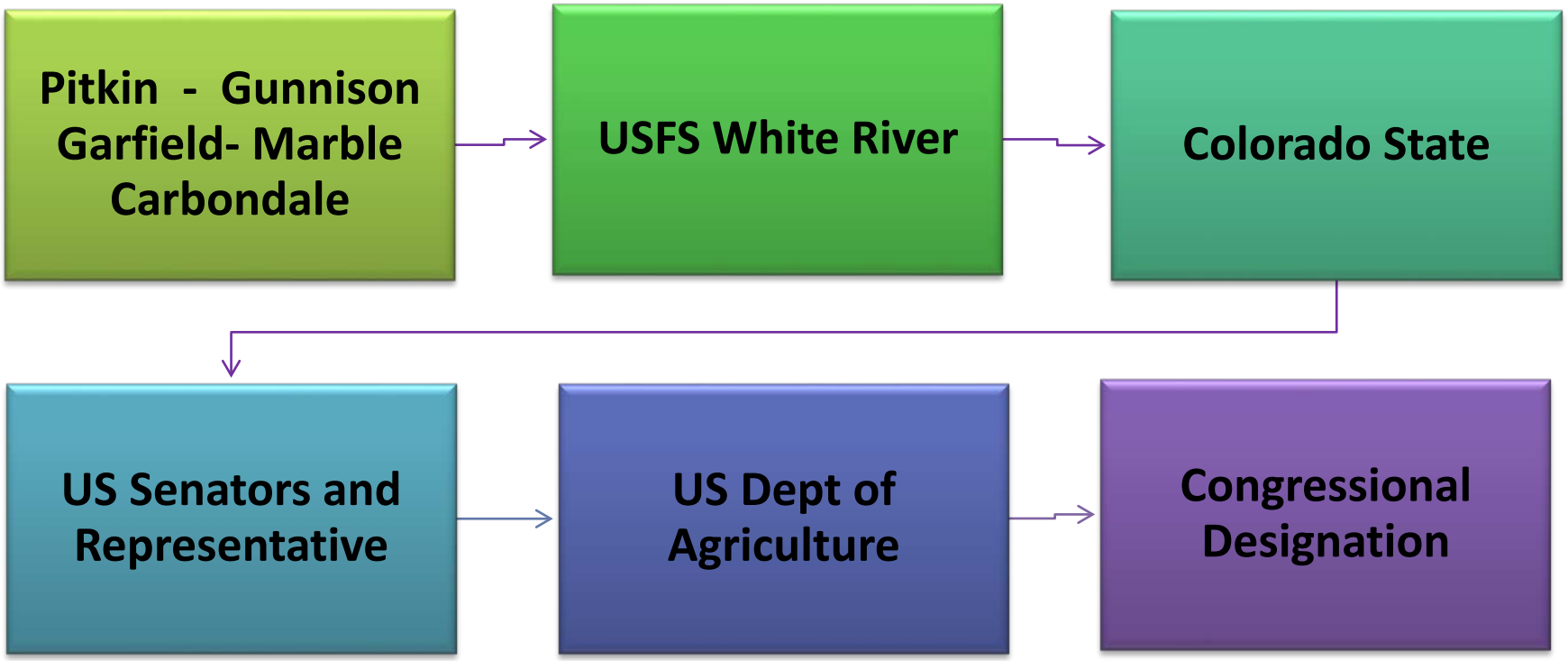
W&S Efforts to date (2012-2014)



2014 Next Steps



Jurisdictional Support



The end result
a Wild and Scenic River

Protecting our wild places

"We haven't the foggiest notion how to preserve what we term "wilderness," and we had better study it in the field and learn how to do so.....

We need a new environmental movement, with new goals and new organizations. We need more people working in the field, in the actual environment, and fewer people behind computer screens. We need more scientists and many fewer lawyers.

We cannot hope to manage a complex system such as the environment through litigation. We can only change its state temporarily -usually by preventing something -with eventual results that we cannot predict and ultimately cannot control

Nothing is more inherently political than our shared physical environment, and nothing is more ill served by allegiance to a single political party. Precisely because the environment is shared it cannot be managed by one faction according to its own economic or aesthetic preferences. Sooner or later, the opposing faction will take power, and previous policies will be reversed. Stable management of the environment requires recognition that all preferences have their place: snowmobilers and fly fishermen, dirt bikers and hikers, developers and preservationists. These preferences are at *odds,* and their incompatibility cannot be avoided. But resolving incompatible goals is a true function of politics."

From State of Fear by Michael Crichton