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Ohio Revised Code

Section 1517.14 [Former R.C. 1547.81, amended and renumbered by S.B. 156, 135th General Assembly, effective 10/24/2024] Creating wild, scenic, or recreational rivers.

Effective: October 24, 2024
Legislation: Senate Bill 156 - 135th General Assembly

(A) The director of natural resources may create wild, scenic, and recreational rivers. The chief of the division of natural areas and preserves shall supervise, operate, protect, and maintain wild, scenic, and recreational rivers so created. In creating wild, scenic, and recreational rivers, the director shall classify each such watercourse as either a wild river, a scenic river, or a recreational river. The chief may prepare and maintain a plan for the establishment, development, use, and administration of those rivers as a part of the comprehensive state plans for water management and outdoor recreation. The chief, with the approval of the director, may cooperate with federal agencies administering any federal program concerning wild, scenic, or recreational river systems.

(B) The director may propose to create a wild, scenic, or recreational river that consists of a part or parts of any watercourse in this state that in the director's judgment possesses water conservation, scenic, fish, wildlife, historic, or outdoor recreation values that should be preserved.

(C)(1) The director shall publish the intention to declare a watercourse a wild, scenic, or recreational river at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in each county, any part through which the watercourse flows. The director also shall send written notice of the intention to the legislative authority of each county, township, and municipal corporation and to each conservancy district established under Chapter 6101. of the Revised Code, any part through which the watercourse flows, and to the director of transportation, the director of development, the director of administrative services, and the director of environmental protection. The notices shall include a copy of a map and description of the watercourse to be designated.

(2) The director of natural resources shall post the intention to declare a watercourse a wild, scenic, or recreational river on the division of natural areas and preserves' web site on the date of the initial publication under division (C)(1) of this section.

(3) Any person having an interest in the proposed declaration may file written comments to the proposal within sixty days of the last date of publication or dispatch of written notice as required under division (C)(1) of this section. The director shall post on the division's web site the last date by which written comments may be filed.

(4) After sixty days from the last date of publication or dispatch of written notice as required under division (C)(1) of this section, the director may enter a declaration in the director's journal that the watercourse is a wild river, scenic river, or recreational river. When so entered, the watercourse is a wild, scenic, or recreational river, as applicable. The director, after sixty days' notice as prescribed in this section, may terminate the status of a watercourse as a wild river, scenic river, or recreational river by an entry in the director's journal.

(D) Declaration of a watercourse as a wild, scenic, or recreational river does not do either of the following:

(1) Affect private property rights or authorize the director, chief of the division of natural areas and preserves, or any governmental agency or political subdivision to restrict the use of private land adjacent to the river or to enter upon private land;

(2) Expand or abridge the regulatory authority of any governmental agency or political subdivision over the river.

(E) The director may acquire real property or any estate, right, or interest therein in order to provide for the protection and public recreational use of a wild, scenic, or recreational river. The director may enter into a lease or other agreement with a political subdivision to administer all or part of any publicly owned land that is administered by the division and that is within the watershed of a wild, scenic, or recreational river.

(F) A wild, scenic, or recreational river that was declared as such by the director of natural resources under Chapter 1547. of the Revised Code prior to the effective date of this amendment retains its declaration as a wild, scenic, or recreational river for purposes of sections 1517.14 to 1517.19 of the Revised Code on and after that date.