

# SOUTH SANTIAM WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

## As proposed in the River Democracy Act of 2021

Santiam Basin | Linn County | Proposed Miles: 46.0 | Willamette National Forest



The South Santiam and some of its major tributaries - Moose, Falls, Boulder, Elk, Sheep, Sevenmile, and Latiwi Creeks - offer fantastic recreational opportunities, important fisheries, intact forest habitat, and the scenic backdrop to one of western Oregon's major highways. Protections for this wild landscape will benefit many public values.

### What makes the South Santiam River and its tributaries special?

**WILDNESS:** The streams in this proposal offer some of the most outstanding natural ecosystems left in the South Santiam watershed, flowing from large unroaded areas, intact old growth forests, and meadows in the old Cascades geology.

**RECREATION:** The upper South Santiam offers outstanding recreation, easily accessible from the Willamette Valley - from whitewater paddling, wildflower viewing, hiking, fishing, and seeking out waterfalls. It forms the backdrop for the old South Santiam Wagon Road (now converted to a trail in many places) and modern "Over the Rivers - Through the Woods Scenic Byway". Numerous campgrounds are found in the river corridor or on tributaries proposed here. The corridor also draws wildlife watchers to places like Walker Ranch, and birders on the Mt. Jefferson Loop of the Cascades Birding Trail.

**SCENERY:** The South Santiam follows Hwy. 20, designated as the Over the River and Through the Woods National Scenic Byway for much of its length. This scenic route is heavily used as a practical, and beautiful, thoroughway, as well as access to recreation in the Menagerie and Middle Santiam Wilderness areas and other popular recreation just off the main road.

**FISH:** The South Santiam and proposed tributaries are home to an outstanding fishery, including Pacific lamprey, kokanee salmon, spring Chinook salmon, and coastal cutthroat trout. The mainstem, Moose Creek, and Falls Creek (among others not in this proposal) are home to winter steelhead, with Moose Creek being the most important producer of this population above Foster Dam. Numerous stream and fish habitat restoration projects have been done in the basin to help these native fish thrive.

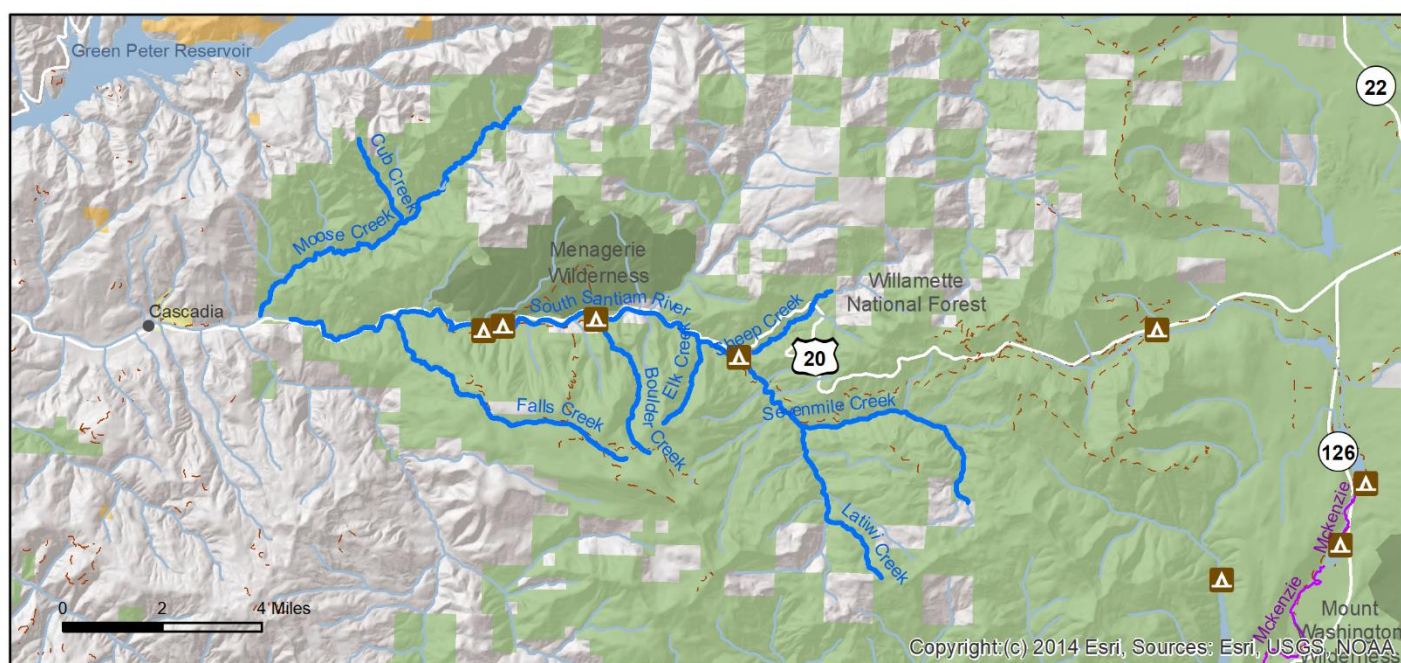
**WILDLIFE:** The diverse habitats - from mountain meadows to old growth forests to healthy riparian zones - found in this proposal offer important habitat for elk and deer, pine marten, northern spotted owl, cougar, bear, and many others.

Many of the proposed streams have large areas of unlogged and unroaded native forest, making this habitat even more important to protect.

**HISTORY/CULTURE:** Both indigenous people and settlers used the South Santiam corridor for travel and left their mark in places like natural caves, camas meadows, and along the historic Santiam Wagon Road.

**GEOLOGY:** The South Santiam corridor provides easy access and viewing of the unique Old Cascades geology, with examples of ancient lava flows, stream-cut courses and past glacial action.

## Proposed South Santiam Wild and Scenic River Segments



Segment Name	Length	Proposed Classification
Mainstem, upper	1.3 Miles	Wild
Mainstem, lower	11.9 miles	Recreational
Sevenmile Creek	4.9 Miles	Scenic
Latiwi Creek	3.9 Miles	Scenic
Sheep Creek	2.6 Miles	Recreational
Cub Creek	2.0 Miles	Wild
Boulder Creek	3.5 Miles	Wild
Moose Creek	8.2 Miles	Scenic
Elk Creek	2.0 Miles	Wild
Falls Creek, Upper	3.1 Miles	Wild
Falls Creek, Lower	2.6 Miles	Recreational
Total	46.0 miles	

The mainstem and Sevenmile Creek are deemed eligible as Wild & Scenic Rivers by the USFS. American Whitewater, Friends of the Douglas-fir National Monument, Oregon Wild and other partners in the Oregon Wild & Scenic Rivers Coalition support this proposal. The nearby town of Sweet Home calls itself “The Gateway to the Santiam Playground”: new designations in the watershed would be beneficial to this billing. Unfortunately, ongoing logging in the watershed - on both public and private land - threaten some of the proposed streams’ outstanding values through continued fragmentation.