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How process leads to action: Adventure Scientists' inventory of Wild and Scenic Rivers

Abstract: Effective river management and protection require high-quality data that can inform decision makers of the current state and conditions of essential ecosystems. Adventure Scientists is a nonprofit that partners with governments, universities, and other nonprofits to design, build, and manage projects to fill critical data gaps. We support efforts to unlock solutions to environmental challenges, like those facing many rivers, by collecting the field data necessary to answer key questions that enable sound decision-making. By recruiting, training, and managing volunteers from the outdoor community, Adventure Scientists gathers otherwise difficult-to-access data from any environment, at any scale. In 2020 we launched a national inter-agency inventory of our Wild and Scenic Rivers to enable improved management. This river system provides drinking water to 1 in 10 Americans, yet 82% of these rivers have unknown, or poor water quality. In this presentation, I will share how our process enabled volunteers to collect hundreds of samples across 49 rivers in the first year, and how this data, and the corresponding partnerships, will improve management decisions for this precious resource.