

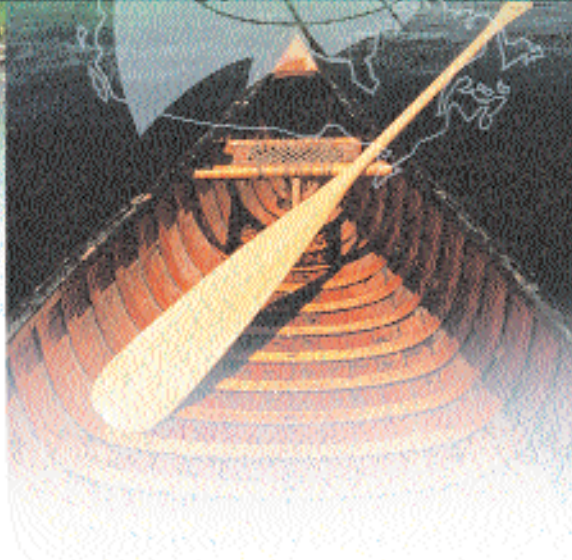
Y...river...heritage...future

A GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

The CHRS is Canada's national river conservation program. It promotes, protects and enhances Canada's river heritage, and ensures that Canada's leading rivers are managed in a sustainable manner. Responsible river stewardship is the ethic it engenders. Cooperation and public support are the strengths it builds upon.

The CHRS is a public trust. Local citizens champion the program. Actions taken are grass roots driven. Governments – federal, provincial and territorial – lend support and guidance, and provide approvals as required. Communities, Aboriginal Peoples, landowners and other stakeholders have their rights and concerns respected. These cornerstones make the CHRS an open and effective forum for collaboration and partnership on river conservation.

Canada honours and respects its leading rivers by distinguishing them as Canadian Heritage Rivers – places of great pride and importance to Canadians. Having outstanding natural and/or cultural values, and offering quality recreational opportunities, these rivers showcase the benefits and enjoyment of healthy river environments, now and in the future. Rivers in the CHRS must have their heritage values and integrity protected. Every river named to the CHRS strengthens our identity as Canadians, and enables us to better understand, appreciate and celebrate our rich river heritage.



The Canadian Heritage Rivers System serves as a catalyst for governments, communities and local people to take action to protect their river, to make it a part of their community and their lives.

Don MacAulay
Chairperson,
Canadian Heritage Rivers Board,
2000-2001

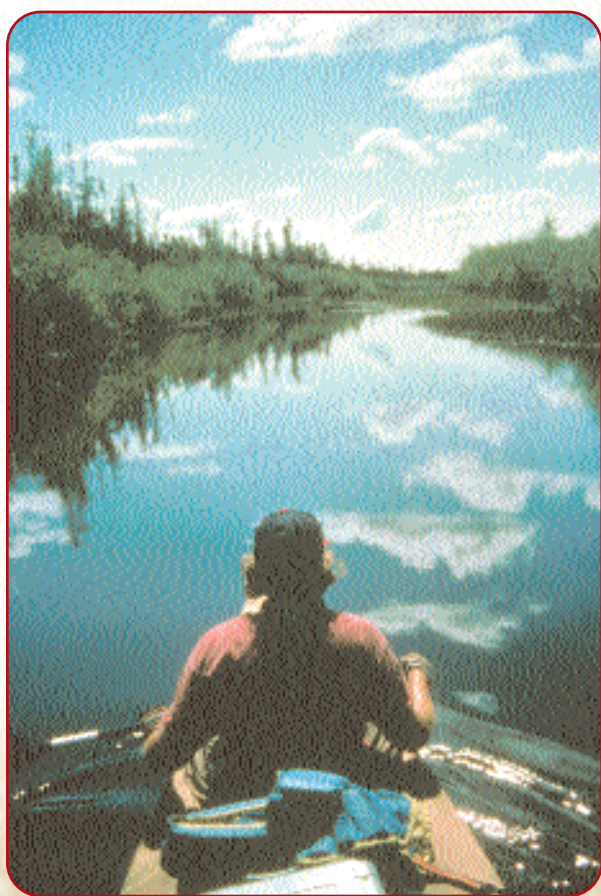


The CHRS is administered by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, comprised of members appointed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Board is governed by a Charter, affirming the Board's role in overseeing the development and operation of the program. A ten-year strategic plan, reviewed annually by the Board, sets over-arching goals and objectives, defining a blueprint for the future. A Technical Planning Committee reports to the Board on planning-related matters.

Importantly, the CHRS has no legislative authority. Voluntary participation, partnership, cooperation and community involvement are what drive it. It is within this spirit of trust and goodwill that governments pledge to work in partnership with the public and one another to build a System that truly reflects the diversity and beauty of Canada's rivers. Governments retain their traditional jurisdictional powers and management responsibilities throughout this process.

Canada's network of rivers is vast and diverse. Canadian Heritage Rivers are its gems, beacons of our natural and cultural heritage. Guidelines exist to ensure that candidate rivers meet the selection and integrity criteria that define Canada's leading rivers. It is not easy to become a Canadian Heritage River. The process is rigorous and lengthy. A river must be proven to possess the requisite natural values, historical importance and recreational potential. Strong public support must also be demonstrated.

This brochure will help you to evaluate potential Canadian Heritage Rivers and will explain the process of elevating a river to CHRS status. Many benefits may come from CHRS recognition, as described in the brochure "What are the Benefits of Canadian Heritage River Designation?" Working as part of a team to designate a river to the CHRS can be a very rewarding and satisfying experience for yourself, your community and your river.



CANADIAN HERITAGE
RIVERS SYSTEM

www.chrs.ca



Canada

THE HERITAGE RIVER PROCESS

Becoming a Canadian Heritage River is a two-step process – nomination and designation. Each step demands extensive public involvement and local community support. Designation also involves monitoring the state of the river on an ongoing and active basis.

NOMINATION

Getting Started

An inquiry or an expression of interest, at the local level, to commemorate and protect a river for its heritage values is how the process usually starts. Local elected officials, community associations, landowners, watershed managers, tourism and economic development officers, educators, members of historical societies, Aboriginal Peoples, environmental groups and local business operators are all frequent proponents of the process. For rivers on crown lands, the initiative would originate and be led by the appropriate managing jurisdiction at the federal, provincial or territorial level.

The CHRS comprises the best of Canada's river heritage. Before investing time and energy in the rigorous task of including a river in the System, you should first determine whether the river meets CHRS objectives and guidelines. The river may be a perfect fit, or you may find that a different type of recognition is more appropriate to your needs. Should there be questions or unresolved issues, it may be important for you and the managing jurisdiction to collaborate on the preparation of a prescreening report for review by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board.

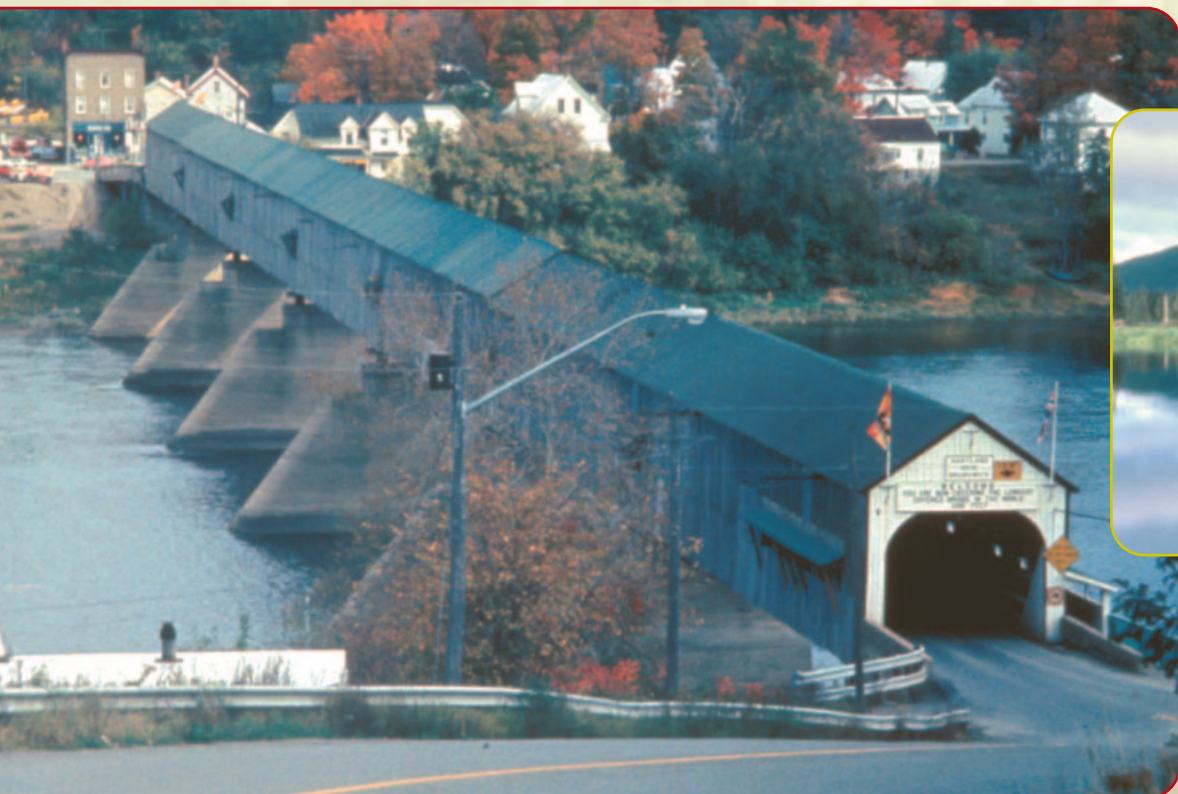
Here's what to do:

- ✿ Find out more about the CHRS and the nomination and designation process. Consult the CHRS web site at www.chrs.ca. Review the latest CHRS Annual Report. Contact your local Board member and planner and the CHRS Secretariat (names and addresses are on the CHRS web site and in the "Discover Adventure" brochure). Ask for information on the principles, procedures and guidelines of the CHRS, particularly the selection and integrity guidelines. Obtain a copy of the national frameworks (natural and cultural) for the CHRS. Inquire whether a system plan has been prepared for rivers in your province or territory. It may also be helpful to talk to other local people who have been involved in a CHRS initiative.
- ✿ If a system study exists of rivers in your province or territory, you should compare your river to those assessed as having potential to become Canadian Heritage Rivers. See how your river is ranked and rated.
- ✿ Assess your river against the CHRS selection and integrity guidelines for natural, cultural and recreational values. See how your river measures up.
- ✿ If your river is not a viable candidate for CHRS status, investigate whether alternative recognition programs are offered in your province or territory.
- ✿ Ensure the support of your Board member before proceeding further. Your Board member plays an important role throughout the nomination and designation process, contributing resources, confirming acceptance of products, and seeking funding from the Board.
- ✿ Gauge public support and ownership for the concept of your river joining the CHRS. Identify potential champions, stakeholders, facilitators, special concerns and interests.
- ✿ If doubts or concerns exist as to whether your river would qualify, a prescreening report may be required. Your Board member and planner can assist you in preparing this document for review by the Board.

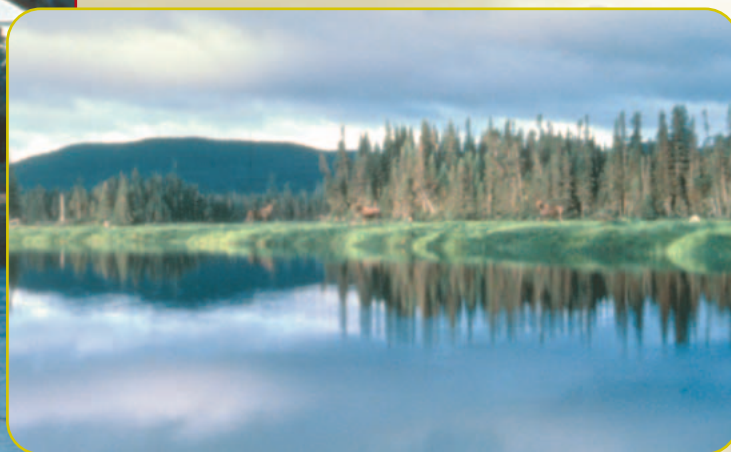
"...a river is the memory of the land through which it flows...Given the threats of our time, the Fraser...is a priceless and very precarious asset. I think from those to whom much has been given, there is much expected."

Iona Campagnolo

Former Chair, Fraser Basin council, Fraser River, BC.



Saint John River, New Brunswick.



Main River, Newfoundland.

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Collecting Information

Once it has been determined that your river merits further consideration for CHRS status, a background study should be prepared detailing and assessing, in a comprehensive way, the river's natural, cultural/historical, recreational and economic values, and its suitability for management as a Canadian Heritage River. Particular attention should be paid to assessing the river's integrity values. This work may take some time to complete. Fortunately, financial support is available through the Board. Remember also that you must demonstrate that there is strong community support for the initiative. Without community support, there cannot be a heritage river. It's that simple.

Here's what to do:

- ❖ Consult with your Board member on how to conduct the research. At times, a consultant is hired. More often, however, local experts are sought to volunteer their time and expertise. A committee structure should be set up, comprising a steering committee and local working groups, organized according to your information needs. Participants should possess good research and writing skills and have excellent knowledge/experience about the river and its CHRS values.
- ❖ Use the CHRS selection and integrity guidelines as the focus for assessing your river and its river-related values. Use the national frameworks as a guide to organizing your information.
- ❖ Continue to build and strengthen support for your CHRS initiative. Keep in touch with your Board member and planner.
- ❖ Submit to your Board member a finished copy of the background study assessing your river's natural, cultural/historical, recreational and integrity values. This research is vital to a nomination. Public use of the information is encouraged. Note that background studies are not subject to Board review.

NOMINATING YOUR RIVER



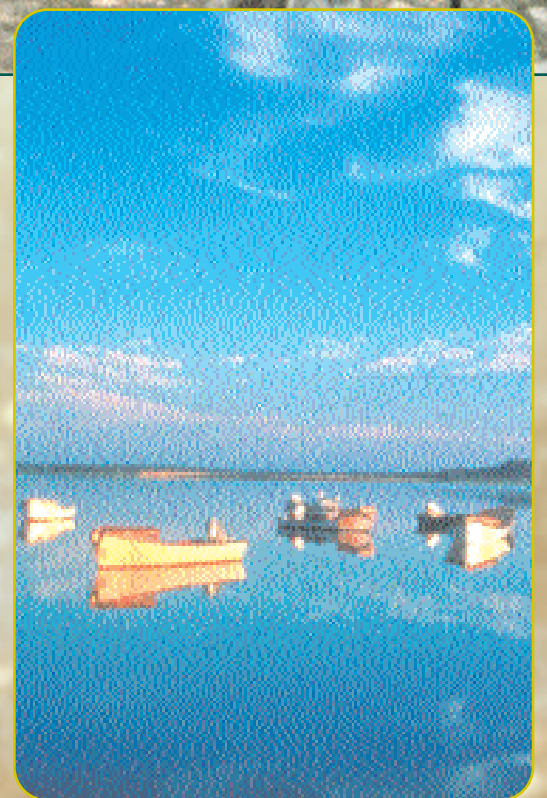
Assuming that the background research affirms your river's candidacy to the CHRS, and local support for the initiative remains strong, you are now ready to nominate your river.

A standard nomination document must be prepared. Clear substantiation is required of the river's merits as a Canadian Heritage River. The river must be shown to be of outstanding Canadian value, as defined by the CHRS selection and integrity guidelines. All of the river's CHRS values must be able to be maintained. The river must also make a meaningful contribution to the CHRS, from a national perspective. Local support for the initiative must also be demonstrated. Financial assistance is available through the Board for the preparation of a nomination document.

All nomination documents are presented to the Board for review and discussion. Upon the Board's acceptance of the document, the Board Chair will recommend, to the appropriate provincial or territorial Minister and the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, that the nomination be approved. The approval of both Ministers is required before a nomination can be formalized.



Grand River, plaque unveiling ceremony – 1994.



Hillsborough River, Prince Edward Island.

*“What we’re trying to do is find a balance...
where we maintain ...biodiversity – all the things that live
in the rivers and the riversheds – and make way for us, people,
in those riversheds and I think that’s the challenge...to come
together as a community and find a way to achieve that balance...
something that we can pass on to our great-great grandchildren.”*

Finn Donnelly
Fraser River, BC.



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Here's what to do:

- ✦ Familiarize yourself with the nomination document format and procedures. Request that the CHRS Secretariat send you copies of previous nomination documents for your review.
- ✦ Continue to build and strengthen local support for the nomination.
- ✦ Consult with your Board member on the approach to be taken to develop the nomination document. You may wish to retain your existing committee/local work group structure. Consistency may ensure completion of the work in a professional and timely manner, and the further garnering of public support. Good writing, presentation and consultation skills come in handy at this time.
- ✦ Prepare the nomination document. Be clear and concise. Satisfy all CHRS requirements (i.e. nomination procedures). Detail the integrity guidelines. Provide a clear statement of the area to be nominated and the basis for nomination. Be sure to address the river's role in the CHRS. All necessary summaries, descriptions and assessments to justify the nomination should be provided, along with supporting documentation, including letters of support. Use the national frameworks as a guide to describing the river's key natural and cultural values. Remember to submit an Annual Report Checklist to monitor the condition of the river's values and any threats posed them.



Rideau Waterway, Ontario.

- ✦ Allow proper time for the nomination document to be reviewed by the Technical Planning Committee. Incorporate the committee's comments, as appropriate.
- ✦ Prepare for presentation of the nomination document to the Board. A community leader(s) often joins the Board member in making this presentation.
- ✦ Secure a positive Board recommendation and final Ministerial approvals.

*There's no question
about it. Anybody who has
an opportunity to have a
Heritage River designated
in their community...
jump at it.*

Donald Saunders
Economic Development Officer,
St. Stephen/St. Croix




Alsek River, Yukon.

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DESIGNATION

Designating Your River

esignation is the formal proclamation of a river to the CHRS based on an approved management plan (often referred to as a heritage strategy). Before a designation request can go to the Board, host government approval must be given to a management plan that sets forth a shared vision of the river and agreed upon strategic direction. More specifically, the plan is required to present the policies and practices to be followed to ensure that the river's development, management and use are consistent with CHRS objectives and guidelines. The plan's implementation schedule must demonstrate a commitment by the host government and concerned stakeholders to conserve the river's heritage and recreational values. The approved plan is normally lodged with the Board within 1-3 years after the river's nomination. Upon the Board's acceptance of the designation request, the Board Chair will recommend, to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, that the designation be approved. A successful designation request sets the stage for a future plaque unveiling ceremony.






In the past, most CHRS management plans were government-prepared. While public input was sought, government control over the process was strong. Today, plans are increasingly community-developed. The federal, provincial and territorial governments are playing more of a facilitation role, providing guidance, encouragement, technical support and financial assistance. However, for a CHRS management plan to be validated, the host government must still give it its final approval. Financial assistance is available through the Board for the preparation of a management plan.

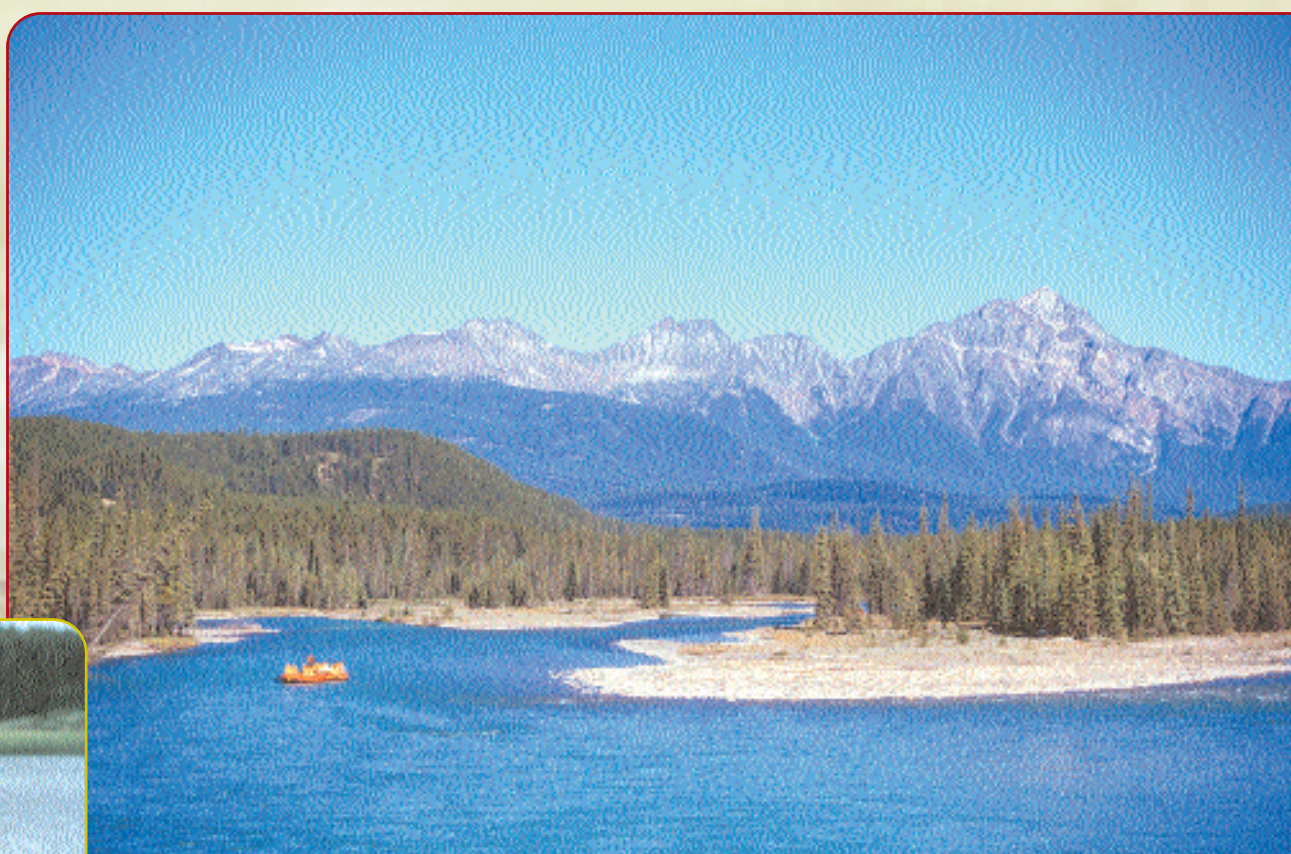
Here's what to do:

-  Familiarize yourself with CHRS management plans and designation procedures. Request that the CHRS Secretariat send you copies of previous management plans for your review.
-  Continue to build and strengthen local support for the designation.
-  Consult with your Board member on the approach to be taken to prepare the management plan. Emphasize community involvement and consultation. Adopt a committee/local work group structure as was done for the nomination document.
-  Have all interested parties participate in the development of a preliminary concept(s) for management of the river, proposing strategies in support of a shared vision. Keep the process in the public forum. Achieve a workable level of consensus.
-  Prepare the management plan. Keep its focus strategic. Satisfy all CHRS requirements (i.e. designation document guidelines). Define the boundaries of the river management area. Set out the policies, objectives, strategic directions and actions to be followed. Be sure to reference water quality objectives. Include an implementation schedule with priorities and phasing. Use the national frameworks as a guide to organizing information on the river's natural and cultural heritage. Verify that the Annual Report Checklist is up-to-date. Append expressions of support for the plan from Aboriginal and/or community leaders, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

"It's run by the community and the people that are actually using and working on the river and it's not something that's driven from above and... I think it works well that way."

Tom Weber
Business owner,
Clearwater river, Alberta

-  Before submission to the Board, all management plans are reviewed by the CHRS Technical Planning Committee, made up of river planners for each jurisdiction. Allow proper time for the management plan to be reviewed by the Technical Planning Committee. Incorporate the committee's comments, as appropriate.
-  Achieve provincial/territorial approval of the management plan.
-  Have the management plan lodged with the Board. If requested, assist your Board member in presenting the plan to the Board.
-  Achieve a positive Board recommendation and final approval of the designation.
-  Participate in the CHRS plaque unveiling ceremony for the river. **Enjoy!**



Athabasca River, Alberta.

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MONITORING YOUR RIVER

The strength of the CHRS relies on monitoring. Canadian Heritage Rivers are regularly monitored to ensure they are being protected according to their management plan. Rivers in the System should also have their original nomination values maintained. This is a further role for monitoring. Checkups are performed annually and every ten years. It is important to be aware of any changes to a river's heritage and integrity values on a yearly basis. Related activities, issues and management actions that could affect these values should also be known. Every ten years, following designation, a comprehensive and detailed report is prepared for Board review and discussion, assessing present and past initiatives and changes, and reporting on the status of plan implementation. Responsibility for monitoring rests with the managing jurisdiction(s) and the Board. Financial assistance is available through the Board for the preparation of 10-Year Monitoring Reports.



Humber River, Ontario (Toronto and Region Conservation)

*“...the heritage Rivers program would be beneficial
to other native communities... because it gives them a voice...
I'd like to think that when I'm gone somebody will say
that I participated and did something good for the river....*

Paul General
Six Nations, Grand River, Ontario

Here's what to do:

- ✿ Familiarize yourself with CHRS procedures for monitoring designated rivers. For information, request sample copies of Annual Report Checklists and 10-Year Monitoring Reports from the CHRS Secretariat.
- ✿ Each year, ensure through your Board member that the jurisdiction responsible for managing your river is performing ongoing field checks and evaluations of your river's nomination features, and is overseeing implementation of the management plan. A framework-based Annual Report Checklist must be filled out, reporting the results of these investigations. Water quality reporting is particularly important. You may wish to offer your assistance in this task.
- ✿ Every ten years, ensure through your Board member that the jurisdiction responsible for managing your river is ready and able to prepare a 10-Year Monitoring Report detailing the state of your river, and the status of its management plan. This review often takes the form of an independent assessment. You may wish to offer your assistance in this task.
- ✿ Your Board member must submit the 10-Year Monitoring Report to the Technical Planning Committee for review. Comments should be incorporated, as appropriate.
- ✿ Have your Board member present the 10-Year Monitoring Report to the Board for review, discussion and possible action. In the case of a river whose values may have deteriorated, the Board may call for appropriate remedial actions.

For More Information

This brochure has been prepared to guide you through the rigorous process of having a river nominated and designated to the CHRS. Individuals or organizations seeking the designation of a river in their community should be sure to consult the following information sources available by contacting the CHRS Secretariat (819) 997-4930.

- Canadian Heritage Rivers System: Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines;
- A Cultural Framework for Canadian Heritage Rivers;
- A Framework for the Natural Values of Canadian Heritage Rivers;
- Community Reflections on Canada's Heritage Rivers (23 min. video);
- What are the Benefits of Canadian Heritage River Designation?; and
- Discover-Adventure on a Canadian Heritage River.