



Issue #8 Canadian Heritage Rivers System

Information current as of: October 2005

Summary and Current Status:

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) was established in 1984 with the goal of conserving the best examples of Canada's river heritage, to provide national recognition to these rivers, and to encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate them. It is a cooperative program of all the governments of Canada. There are 39 Heritage Rivers across Canada, with more being added through an ongoing process. Two Manitoba Rivers are designated Heritage Rivers – the Bloodvein and the Seal Rivers – and the Hayes River is in the process of being designated under the program.

Elements:

The goal of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) is to establish a system that reflects the diversity of Canada's river environments. The program is driven by voluntary participation, partnership, cooperation, and community involvement; CHRS has no legislative authority. Although 'designation' as a Heritage River is designed to confer protection of Canada's river heritage, ensure our country's leading rivers are managed in a sustainable manner, and engender responsible river stewardship, timber harvesting, mining, and other industrial activities continue in heritage river corridors as long as they do not affect heritage features.

The CHRS program is administered by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, Parks Canada – a 15-member national board made up of private citizens and senior officials from government departments responsible for the protection of the Canadian environment.

Becoming a Heritage River:

Criteria:

- River must have outstanding natural, cultural and/or recreational values
- High level of public support
- Must demonstrate that sufficient measures in place to ensure values are maintained

Requirements:

- Background Study

Manitoba Water Issues

Manitoba Wildlands – October 2005

- Nomination Document
- Review by CHRS Board formally and recommendations to Minister of Canadian Heritage and appropriate provincial minister
- Management plan/heritage strategy (prepared by responsible/nominating government)
- Board accepts the management plan and 'designation' is approved by Ministers
- Annual status reports regarding the condition of the river required
- "State of the River" report submitted to the Board every 10 years

Manitoba Heritage Rivers

From the Manitoba/Ontario boundary, the rugged, white-water **Bloodvein River** flows through Atikaki Provincial Wilderness Park, over 200.0 km/124.3 mi. to Lake Winnipeg. Wilderness travelers gravitate to the Bloodvein and Atikaki Provincial Wilderness Park. Two hundred and sixty kilometres (161.6 mi.) upstream from Hudson Bay, "marine" harbour seals play and feed in Shethanei Lake, where the **Seal River** begins. Three thousand beluga whales summer in the river's estuary. Polar bear, wolverine, golden and bald eagles live along the banks.

The **Hayes River** is one of the most natural, scenic and unaltered waterways in Manitoba. It exists much as it did at the time of first European contact over three centuries ago.

Key Publication(s) & Links:

- Canadian Heritage Rivers System
<http://www.chrs.ca>
- Manitoba Conservation – Heritage Rivers
http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks/regions/heritage_rivers.html
- *Canadian Heritage Rivers System Annual Report 2003-2004*
http://www.chrs.ca/Publications_e.htm#annual
- *A Framework for the Natural Values of Canadian Heritage Rivers*
http://www.chrs.ca/Publications_e.htm#frame2

For further information, contact:

Don Gibson, National Manager
Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS)
c/o Parks Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M5.
(819) 994-2913 Fax: (819) 953-4704.
E-mail: donald.gibson@pc.gc.ca

Gord Jones, Director of Parks and Natural Areas
Manitoba Conservation
200 Saulteaux Crescent, PO Box 50 Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3
(204) 945-4362 Fax: (204) 945-0012
E-mail: gojones@gov.mb.ca