



## **Issue #8**

# **Canadian Heritage Rivers System**

**Information current as of:** March 2006

### **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. The Hayes River is being designated under the program, and in 2005, the Government of Manitoba and Rivers West initiated steps towards nominating the Red River as a Heritage River.

### **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:***

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- Background Study
- 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 in the process of being designated under the CHRS program. It is one of the most natural, scenic and unaltered waterways in Manitoba, existing much as it did at the time of first European contact over three centuries ago. Long before Europeans arrived, the Hayes River was an important route for Manitoba First Nations. Then it was the main route from York Factory on Hudson Bay to the interior of western Canada for fur traders, settlers, and explorers from 1670 until 1870.

The **Red River** nomination process began in 2005. It is one of the most historically important rivers in Canada and has outstanding natural and recreational values. The Red has been a primary resource and transportation corridor for thousands of years for First Nation and Aboriginal peoples, and over the past three centuries for European exploration, fur trade and settlement.

### **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](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](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](http://www.chrs.ca/Publications_e.htm#frame2)

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