



CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

The South Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River (SaskRivers) were nominated as a Canadian Heritage River by Saskatchewan and Canada in May, 2012. The SaskRivers were nominated primarily based on their cultural heritage values, although these are closely linked with its natural heritage and recreation values. The cultural heritage values are deemed to be nationally significant and influential, and include rare historical and archaeological sites representative of Canada's history.



This fact sheet provides a brief overview of the cultural heritage values that were outlined in the nomination document. You're encouraged to read the full chapter available on the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin webpage at: [www.saskriverbasin.ca](http://www.saskriverbasin.ca) click on Heritage Rivers.

If you are aware of any additional cultural heritage values not covered in the nomination document and that warrant special recognition please contact us at: [saskrivers@myaccess.ca](mailto:saskrivers@myaccess.ca)

John Vandall and Ken Lozinsky, Consultants

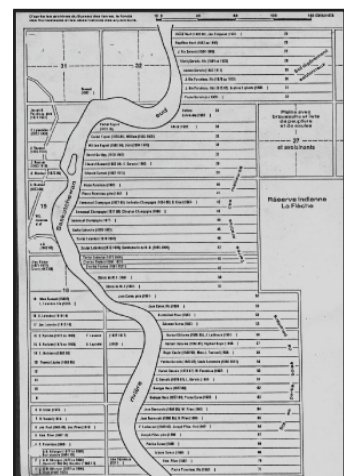
SaskRivers Cultural Heritage - The Past



Mapping medicine wheel at Wanuskewin. Saskatoon Local History Room. LH-5054

The cultural heritage values are integrally linked with First Nations and Metis life on the prairie, the fur trade era, the early settlement of Saskatchewan and development of the river: The following are only 10 of the many outstanding cultural heritage values found along the river:

1. **Archaeological sites** of spiritual and ceremonial significance to the nomadic inhabitants of the northern plains for over 8,000 years. These sites include medicine wheels, buffalo jumps and stone effigies.
2. **Major trade and travel routes** for First Nations and Metis peoples, the transportation of furs to English traders and western exploration using canoes and later York boats and steamboats.
3. Site of at least 18 fur trading posts including Fort a La Corne, established in 1753 and Cumberland House, established in 1774 by Samuel Hearn and now the oldest permanent settlement in Saskatchewan.
4. Other **early explorers** of the SaskRivers included: Henry Kelsey (1691); Peter Pond (1775); David Thompson (1786); Alexander Mackenzie (1793); Peter Fidler (1800); and Henry Youle Hind (1858) who first proposed a dam on the South Saskatchewan River near the existing site of Gardiner Dam.
5. Location of first **permanent settlements** marking the transition of First Nations and Métis people from a hunting/gathering culture to farming. The Métis settlements included St. Laurent, Batoche, Fish Creek, Halcro and Adam's Crossing.
6. Diverse **settlement histories** associated with seasonal Aboriginal sites; Metis



Métis river lots at Batoche from 1880 to 1899 "The First Shot Rang Out", Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre

river lots, ranching (e.g The Matador Land and Cattle Company Limited), homesteading, the Temperance Colonization Society where Saskatoon is now located and 5 First Nations Reserves.

7. Focal point for the **Northwest Resistance of 1885**. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces took place at Tourond's Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche.

8. **Steamboat transportation** of early settlers, equipment, and dignitaries before the arrival of railways. The most common route for the steamboats was from Lake Winnipeg to the Forks (just west of Prince Albert) and on to Edmonton. The SS Northcote was used as a gunboat during the conflict at Batoche.

9. **The South Saskatchewan River Project**, completed in 1967, created a 225 km long reservoir, Lake Diefenbaker, which provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, flood control, industrial development and recreation.

10. A tradition of trapping, hunting and fishing along the SaskRivers and the Saskatchewan River Delta, the largest active inland delta in North America.

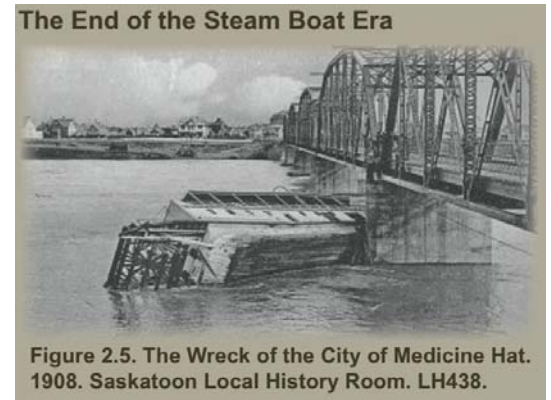


Figure 2.5. The Wreck of the City of Medicine Hat, 1908. Saskatoon Local History Room. LH438.

The Wreck of the City of Medicine Hat, 1908  
Saskatoon Local History Room. LH 438

## SaskRivers Cultural Heritage – Today



Sagebrush studios and Art Gallery, SW Sask.  
Photo by J. Vandall

The SaskRivers cultural heritage is intimately linked to life in Saskatchewan now as in the past. Currently the rivers and associated lakes including Diefenbaker, Codette and Tobin Lakes provide:

- a clean and reliable water supply for over 50% of Saskatchewan's population including Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw and irrigation for nearly 10,000 ha.
- diverse landscapes and features and a rich history that serves as an inspiration to not only tourists but also to both amateur and professional painters, photographers, poets and musicians.
- Sites of paleontological interest where fossil remains are exposed along the steep walls of the river valley, including a large skeleton of a mosasaur, a marine reptile, found near Herbert Ferry.
- The site of numerous events including fishing derbies, a theatre

festival, and "Back to Batoche Days".

- The site of historic sites and interpretive centres of provincial and national prominence including Saskatchewan Landing, Meewasin, Wanuskewin, Batoche, and Cumberland House – the oldest community in Saskatchewan
- Hunting and fishing opportunities for Aboriginal use, local sportsmen and outfitted visitors, including a major waterfowl migration area at Galloway Bay.
- The opportunity to experience 9 of Saskatchewan's fleet of ferries and, in winter, an ice road in southern Saskatchewan at Riverhurst and east of Cumberland House into Manitoba
- The opportunity for outstanding water-based recreation – canoeing, boating, sailing and fishing, and associated hiking, hunting and camping at numerous urban, regional and provincial parks, recreation sites and resort villages.



Lemsford Ferry, SW Sask.  
Photo by J. Vandall

# Cultural Heritage Values of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

