

DESIGNATING THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN AND SASKATCHEWAN RIVERS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

What is the CHRS?

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) is Canada's national river conservation program. It was established in 1984 by federal, provincial and territorial governments to:

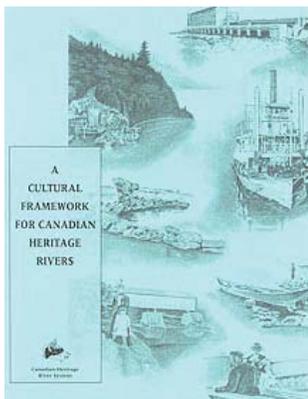
- conserve rivers with outstanding natural and cultural heritage, and recreational values;
- give them national recognition; and
- encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate them.

CHRS serves as a catalyst for governments, communities and local people to take action to protect their river and to ensure it remains an important part of their community and their lives. To date, 37 rivers have been designated.



It is important to realize that a heritage river designation gives the river a special title. This title is important in getting people to appreciate that the river is indeed special and therefore, needs to be conserved and protected with a greater duty of care exercised by all. A heritage designation will not impact on First Nations or Métis rights nor affect current land ownership or land uses along the river. It will promote the river's recreation and tourism opportunities. For additional information on the Canadian Heritage River System go to www.chrs.ca.

How did the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers get nominated as a Heritage River?



The Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB) along with other organizations, including the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies, undertook a background study on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers (SaskRivers) that extends border to border from west of Leader to east of Cumberland House. A nomination document was prepared that identified the extensive and diverse natural and cultural heritage and recreation values along the river. Based primarily on its cultural heritage values, Saskatchewan and Canada formally nominated the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers (SaskRivers) as a Canadian Heritage River in May, 2012. The nomination was endorsed by over 22 organizations and individuals. The nomination document and letters of endorsement are available on the Heritage Rivers portion of the PFSRB webpage at www.saskriverbasin.ca.

What is SaskRivers, Our Heritage-Our Legacy?

SaskRivers, Our Heritage-Our Legacy is the next step leading to the designation of the river as a Canadian Heritage River. The project will encompass further research and extensive consultation with First Nations and Métis, with other communities and interests along the river, with the general public and across government. The work will culminate in a "Legacy Document" that will identify the values to be conserved, protected and/or

promoted and how this might occur in the future. A component of the document will address monitoring and reporting of any significant changes in the river's values or uses.

The project is being undertaken by consultants working for PFSRB. Consultations will be phased over a 2 year period (2012 to 2014).

- Phase 1 began in the fall of 2012 and runs until early in 2013. During this phase the consultants are requesting public input to confirm the key cultural heritage, natural heritage and recreation values of the river and to identify the issues and opportunities that need to be addressed. You are encouraged to read about the river and its values in the nomination document found on the Heritage River portion of the PFSRB webpage at www.saskriverbasin.ca
- Phase 2 will commence after the public input, with the completion of a draft management plan/Legacy Document which will be available for broad consultation.
- Phase 3 will start by the summer of 2014 with the completion of a final management plan/Legacy Document which will be available to all interested individuals and groups. The consultants will seek to have it broadly endorsed before being tabled with the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board.

What are the benefits of a Canadian Heritage River Designation?

Some of the benefits of a designation are:

- The opportunity for people to reconnect with the river, its history and help guide its future
- The opportunity to gain respect and appreciation for culturally rich and diverse communities, share stories of the past and move forward together;
- The opportunity to promote healthy ecosystems for current and future generations
- To enhance opportunities for water-based recreation and eco-tourism;
- To enhance business opportunities compatible with the heritage values of the river.



Kayaking near Saskatoon Photo by J. Vandall

How can you get involved in the Project?

Getting involved is easy, and as public consultation is an essential aspect of the management plan/Legacy Document, it is certainly appreciated! Your thoughts, questions, or concerns are essential to helping us shape the future of the river together. Throughout the designation process it will be possible to contact us through email at saskrivers@myaccess.ca. We will receive your input and if requested, will contact you directly.

You are also encouraged to find out more about both the project and the river itself. Visit the river, and see for yourself the importance it plays in Saskatchewan. Talk to those who live, work, and play along its shores. Discover its historical significance, its contemporary importance, and the opportunities it provides for the future. Check out the information on the Partners webpage www.saskriverbasin.ca.

During the first phase of the project, we are seeking information as to what you value most about the river, including any stories, pictures or songs. We want to hear from those with an interest in the river whether they be individuals or groups, First Nations, Métis or other communities. Together, we can help to shape the future of the river. If you include an attachment with your e-mail, please identify who produced the work and whether it can be reproduced either with full credits or anonymously. Also please include your name, address, phone, and postal code.

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