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Volume 3

Welcome to "Confluence," the newsletter of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) Program. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep people with an interest in Alberta's rivers updated on the progress of the CHRS Program. Please feel free to make copies and share this newsletter with others.

What's happening in Alberta?

This edition features updates from the three Alberta rivers presently involved in various stages of the Alberta Canadian Heritage Rivers process. On the Athabasca, local municipalities are preparing to do a background study documenting the river's natural history, human history, and recreational values. The background study of the Peace River is almost complete, under the guidance of the local steering committee. The Clearwater/Christina is now nominated, and all those concerned are working together on a management plan, which could lead to designation. Beyond these major steps, stakeholders on each river have designed a unique process to meet their needs, based on the Guiding Principles for Consensus Processes. These principles are also featured in this edition.

The Clearwater/Christina Rivers

The Clearwater/Christina Rivers, in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, are the first rivers to be nominated in Alberta outside the national parks. The Clearwater River Committee (CRC), a committee designed by and for all stakeholders, is now working to resolve the issues identified in the Background Study through its management-planning process. A draft of the management "action statements" is currently under review by the CRC. The members are striving to complete their plan early in 1998.

Canadian
Heritage
Rivers
System



Le Réseau
des rivières
du patrimoine
canadien

1998

Heritage

September 1997



Jet Boating Tour of the Peace

Not surprisingly, industries that are interested in putting pipelines across the Clearwater, as well as other developers and regulators, are approaching the Clearwater River Committee for advice and to get the approval of the member groups. The CRC has no formal authority except its substantial ability to influence the member groups, which hold the authority, and the value of their collective vision and voice for the river. The management plan is not even complete, and yet positive coordinated efforts are already occurring.

"The Clearwater Rivers collaborative process was established just in time to enable all stakeholders to work cooperatively with industries on upcoming developments. Together we can now preserve the natural beauty and wilderness character of the Clearwater River Valley."

*Ruth Kleinbub
Fort McMurray Field Naturalists*

Alberta
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Clearwater Management Planning Process Fosters Community College Involvement

This summer, the Clearwater River Committee added a new dimension to the wide support that industry in oil, gas and forest sectors and government agencies at both provincial and federal levels have given to Keyano College's Environmental Worker Program. By providing a field practicum opportunity during the cartography and survey preparations for the Clearwater River's management plan, the CRC has added river and watershed management to the extensive list of practicum opportunities available through this program.

"The support that industry, government and community stakeholders has provided to the Environmental Worker Program ensures that the students are gaining relevant and practical field experience," says Jeanne MacIntyre, coordinator of the program.

The CRC's field practicum assignment included a recreational users survey, instrument design, work shadowing with the Clearwater River Guardian, and more recently, the beginning of extensive cartography work to record and generate a master overview of existing trails in the Clearwater valley. Other organizations supporting practicum positions for the program include AlPac, Syncrude Canada Ltd., Fort McKay Environmental Services, Environment Canada Ltd., Fort McKay Environmental Services, Environment Canada and Alberta Environmental Protection, Fish and Wildlife Division.

Ruth Kleinbub
(represents the Fort McMurray
Field Naturalists on the CRC.)

The Peace River

The municipalities and other key stakeholders are working together on the background study documenting the human heritage, natural heritage and recreational values of the Peace River from the Peace Canyon Dam in British Columbia to the river's confluence with the Slave River in Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta. Through a series of meetings in the spring of 1997, a small steering committee was formed that included the major stakeholders on the Peace River. Its purpose is to guide the consultants in compiling the background study and to prepare for a broad review of the study content. Local authorities will then have more information on the value of the Peace as a Canadian Heritage River, and more information on issues of concern to them and others.

A working draft of the background study is now under review by the committee. They plan to have a draft background study for public review this fall.



The Beautiful Peace River Valley

"The process used to prepare the Peace River Background Study includes various stakeholders, including municipal governments. This is an important part of the process as it is critical to have the support of municipalities affected by the heritage river's designation."

Bill Neufeld,
Chairman,
Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency
Councillor Municipal District of Mackenzie

This July, after the Committee's regular meeting, the members participated in a field trip on the scenic, historic Peace River from Dunvegan to the confluence with the Whitemud River some 40 kilometres downstream of the town of Peace River. Representatives shared their knowledge of the river's history and present use, while historian Adele Boucher amazed us with a constant flow of stories on the people and places of the Peace. The vistas were amazingly varied from canyons to ranchlands. Wildlife sightings were common including eagle, elk, moose and bear. Participants not only gained a greater knowledge of the river's natural values, history and recreational opportunities but also why these aspects are important to other members of the committee.

If you would like to learn more about what is happening on the Peace River or review the background study, contact Susan Gillespie at 310-0000 (toll free) and ask for 624-6502.

Why use a Consensus Process? What is it?

In 1992 a multisectoral Provincial Advisory Committee to Ralph Klein (the then-Minister of Environment) reviewed Alberta's participation in the CHRS Program and submitted five recommendations to the Minister. They unanimously agreed that Alberta should join the CHRS Program and that negotiation through a consensus-building process be used to guide Alberta's participation, and to help participants make decisions and recommendations. Following consultation with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Rural and Improvement Districts Association of Alberta, Cabinet determined that for a river to be designated the management plan must have the support of the municipalities, along the river or reach, that represent at least 50 percent of the population and 75 percent of the land base. This process is currently being used by the stakeholders of both the Clearwater and Peace rivers.

Alberta has adopted the Guiding Principles for Consensus Processes as the most effective principles for shaping the processes used to explore nomination and to structure management planning discussions leading to designation of Canadian Heritage Rivers. These principles were developed by the Canadian Round Tables in their search for a process that could be used to resolve issues related to sustainable development. A consensus process can be adapted, by those concerned, to fit almost any situation and set of circumstances.

Near the beginning of each process, groups must determine what consensus means to them. This discussion and group decision can begin with the definition adopted by the Canadian Round Tables, which states:

... A consensus process provides an opportunity for participants to work together as equals to realize acceptable actions or outcomes without imposing the views or authority of one group over another.

A consensus process is one in which all those who have a stake in the outcome aim to reach agreement on actions and outcomes that resolve or advance issues related to environmental, social, and economic sustainability.



Clearwater River Committee Workshop

In a consensus process, participants work together to design a process that maximizes their ability to resolve their differences. Although they may not agree with all aspects of the agreement, consensus is reached if all participants are willing to live with the total package.



The following principles were also designed to inform and guide the use of the process.

Guiding Principles of Consensus Processes

Canadian Round Tables, May 1993

Purpose Driven:

People need a reason to participate in the process.

Inclusive not exclusive:

All parties with a significant interest in the issue should be involved in the consensus process.

Voluntary Participation:

The parties who are affected or interested participate voluntarily.

Self Design:

The parties design the consensus process.

Flexibility:

Flexibility should be designed into the process.

Equal Opportunity:

All parties must have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.

Respect for Diverse Interests:

Acceptance of the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of the parties involved in the consensus process is essential.

Accountability:

The parties are accountable both to their constituencies, and to the process that they have agreed to establish.

Time Limits:

Realistic deadlines are necessary throughout the process.

Implementation:

Commitment to implementation and effective monitoring are essential parts of any agreement.



Peace River Hoodoos

The Athabasca River

Municipalities along the Athabasca River are in the preliminary stages of exploring the value of the Canadian Heritage River Program to their river and to the activities on and around the river. Reeve Claude Gould and the Municipal District of Woodlands council have taken the lead role in this discussion and have recently requested Alberta Environmental Protection to do a background study of the Athabasca River.

Woodlands has written to all the municipalities along the river inviting them to participate in the background study and to identify stakeholders (industry, recreation, etc.) who should also have the opportunity to participate. Twelve municipalities (11 rural and one urban) have indicated they would like to proceed at this time, while three municipalities (one rural and two urban) have not yet decided to give their support at this time. The MD of Woodlands believes it is most efficient and effective to study the entire river. In any case, the background study will provide all authorities with an excellent information source for reference in future decision making. At the conclusion of the background study, municipalities and other local authorities, regardless of their participation in the study, will be given an opportunity to review the document. Then they can consider if they wish to support the potential nomination of the Athabasca or any specified portions of it to Alberta's Canadian Heritage Rivers Program.

If you live, work or recreate on the Athabasca and want to participate in this process, please call Ted Dykstra at 310-0000 (toll free) and ask for 427-9381. You will then be "in the loop."

"The CHRS provides the municipalities along the river with the opportunity to identify and conserve select human history, natural history and recreational values of the river so they can be used in the context of a regional framework for sustainable development."

*Claude Gould, Reeve,
M.D. Of Woodlands*



*Dunvegan Mission,
Historic Site*



Peace River

Committee Members at Dunvegan Historic Site

NOW AVAILABLE Rivers of Canada

"Rivers of Canada: How They Shape Our Country" is a new CD-ROM, produced by Harcourt Brace and Company, Canada, Canadian Geographic, and Medium Cool. The interactive program is geared to students. It uses maps, images, videos and text to explore 11 Canadian rivers including the Saskatchewan, Yukon, Mackenzie, Fraser, Red, Grand, Saguenay, Churchill, Saint John, Annapolis and Hillsborough rivers.

The high quality CD-ROM is accompanied by a user's guide, and is being marketed to school boards across Canada for \$179.00. For information, call Liz Stephens, Harcourt Brace and Company Canada Ltd., at 1-800-387-7278.

ALBERTA RIVERS WITH CHRS POTENTIAL

All or part of the following rivers are potential candidates for CHRS status:

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| Athabasca
(Background study - being initiated) | *Highwood |
| Battle | Little Smoky |
| Beaver | *Milk |
| Belly | North Saskatchewan |
| Bow | *Oldman |
| *Castle | *Peace
(Background study in progress) |
| *Clearwater/Christina
(Nominated 1996)
(Management Plan in Progress) | Red Deer |
| Clearwater (North Saskatchewan) | Sheep |
| Crowsnest | Slave |
| | Smoky |
| | *South Saskatchewan |

* Notation means the entire length of the river is an exceptional potential candidate.

NEWS ON THE NATIONAL FRONT

Canadian Heritage Rivers System Status

The CHRS continues to grow. The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board at its meeting in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland on June 21, 1997, approved the nominations of two new rivers. These nominations have now been submitted to the ministers of the provincial departments responsible for the program.

The new additions include a 125-km reach of the St. Mary's River, Ontario between Lake Huron and Lake Superior, which was nominated for its cultural heritage and recreational values; and 142 km of the Little Southwest Miramichi River in central New Brunswick, which was nominated for its natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreational values.

The system now includes 34 rivers comprising a total length of 8511 km. Fifteen of those have been nominated (4024 km) and the remaining 19 have received designation (4487 km) because their management plans are complete.

CHRS Board Meeting

The CHRS annual board meeting will be on February 3 and 4, 1998, in Quebec City. Board members will be reviewing new nominations and accepting management plans. They will also be considering future funding options for the system.

CHRS Planners Workshop

The 8th annual CHRS Planners workshop will be held September 10 to 13, 1997, in Shelbourne, Nova Scotia. Some 20 to 25 planners from across North America will be presenting and discussing different management planning strategies and looking for ways to forge better communication between the Canadian and American Heritage Rivers Programs.