



Environment and Labour  
Environmental and Natural Areas Management Division  
Protected Areas Branch

# Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia

## Questions & Answers

February, 2006

### **O**verview

#### **Q: What is the Canadian Heritage Rivers System?**

A: The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) is a national recognition program that honours and promotes Canada's leading rivers.

The CHRS was established in 1984 by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize the best examples of Canada's river heritage, and to encourage the public to care for, enjoy, and appreciate them. It is a cooperative program of the governments of Canada, all 10 provinces, and the three territories.

#### **Q: What does Canadian Heritage River designation mean?**

A: Designation is a formal proclamation that a river has a recognized set of natural and/or cultural values of Canadian importance. Recreational values are also considered during nomination. Designation also means that the provincial or territorial government and stakeholders are committed, through a plan or strategy, to maintain these values over the long term.

#### **Q: Does Canadian Heritage River designation mean new regulations and rules?**

A: No. The CHRS has no legislative authority. The program is driven by voluntary participation, partnership, and community involvement. Following designation, governments retain their regular powers and responsibilities.

#### **Q: What are the benefits of becoming a Canadian Heritage River?**

A: Canadian Heritage River designation usually results in increased monitoring and better coordinated river management. Working together, stakeholders and governments

can enhance environmental and cultural protection, improve recreational opportunities, encourage research and education, and support broad-based stewardship.

Many Canadian Heritage River communities identify the greatest benefit as being the new relationships between individuals and organizations which are formed through the designation process.

Canadian Heritage Rivers are often a great source of community pride - drawing together various users to enjoy and celebrate their river and its associated natural, cultural and recreational attributes.

#### **Q: Will designation bring more money to our community?**

A: While designation does bring recognition and status to a river, it is not accompanied by operating funds. However, many communities find that recognition as a Canadian Heritage River can be used to promote and market their river, thereby increasing economic opportunities.

#### **Q: What effect does Canadian Heritage River designation have on adjacent landowners?**

A: Protective actions on Canadian Heritage Rivers rely on existing laws and regulations, and on the voluntary actions of stakeholders. Landowners may benefit from the increased profile of Canadian Heritage Rivers through higher property values.

#### **Q: Does Canadian Heritage River designation mean there will be restrictions on development?**

A: The primary management intent is to maintain the natural, cultural or recreational values for which the river was included in the system. While existing laws and regulations may be used to help protect these values consistent with a specific heritage river plan, no new restrictions are imposed through designation.

**Q: How many Canadian Heritage Rivers are there in Canada / Nova Scotia?**

A: There are 39 nominated and designated rivers across Canada. There are two designated rivers in Nova Scotia.

In Nova Scotia, the Shelburne River was designated in 1997, and the Margaree-Lake Ainslie in 1998.

**Q: How is the Canadian Heritage Rivers System administered?**

A: A 15-member national board administers the program. This board is made up of private citizens and senior officials from government departments responsible for the protection of the Canadian environment. The board is supported by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board secretariat under Parks Canada, and a national Technical Planning Committee, made up of planners from all participating jurisdictions.

Individual rivers are managed by communities, organizations, and provincial/territorial government partners, consistent with the plan or strategy under which the river was designated.

**Q: How are Canadian Heritage Rivers selected?**

A: After comprehensive research and public discussion, Canadian Heritage Rivers are established through a two-step process - nomination and designation.

Nomination

A nomination document outlining river values, integrity and merits as a Canadian Heritage River is submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board by the provincial or territorial board member.

To be considered for nomination, the river must have outstanding natural or cultural values and a high level of public support. A Background Study is used to evaluate values, and help determine a river's potential for nomination.

Once nominated, the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board reviews the nomination and, upon acceptance, recommends to the appropriate

provincial or territorial Minister and the Minister responsible for Parks Canada that the nomination be approved. Once approved, the river is considered part of the CHRS as a Candidate Heritage River.

Designation

A nominated river becomes designated once a management plan or strategy that ensures the river will be managed to conserve its outstanding natural, cultural and/or recreational values is accepted by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board.

**Q: How long does Canadian Heritage River designation take?**

A: The full process leading to designation often takes 3-5 years. This period allows for continued participation from all stakeholders and the public throughout the nomination and designation process.

**Q: How is the management plan or strategy developed?**

A: Production of a plan or strategy is based on public consultation and consensus. All protective actions on Canadian Heritage Rivers depend on existing laws and regulations, and respect the rights of Aboriginal peoples, communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders.

## **Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia**

**Q: What department is responsible for Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia?**

A: In Nova Scotia, Canadian Heritage Rivers are administered by Protected Areas Branch of Nova Scotia Environment and Labour.

**Q: Is government pursuing the nomination of any additional Canadian heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia?**

A: No new nominations are being considered at this time. However, in the 2003 provincial green plan, government identified a priority to explore opportunities to designate additional outstanding rivers to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

**Q: What criteria will be considered for nominating new rivers form Nova Scotia?**

A: Any new river considered for nomination from Nova Scotia will need to show that it has natural or cultural values that are significant from a Canadian perspective. There also needs to be strong grass-roots leadership, and a clear demonstration of interest in Heritage River nomination from associated communities and stakeholders.

**Q: Are any additional Canadian Heritage Rivers being considered for Nova Scotia?**

A: As a result of strong community interest and a preliminary consideration of Canadian Heritage River potential, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is leading a background study of the Shubenacadie Waterway.

**Q: What is a Canadian Heritage River background study?**

A: A background study is an information document used to identify the natural, cultural, and recreational features associated with a river, and compare those values to national Canadian Heritage River criteria. It can also help identify possible stakeholders, and help gauge the level of public interest in moving a river towards nomination.

**Q: How will the public and stakeholders be involved in any future Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia?**

A: Public and stakeholder leadership is essential in considering additional Canadian Heritage Rivers in Nova Scotia. There will be numerous opportunities for public involvement throughout the process for any rivers considered for Canadian Heritage River nomination in Nova Scotia. Stakeholders and the public will have an opportunity to contribute to and review the Shubenacadie Waterway background study.

**For More Information**

Pick up these publications at your regional Environment and Labour office or view them on the Protected Areas website:

- *Your River, Your Heritage, Your Future - A Guide to Establishing a Canadian Heritage River*
- *The Canadian Heritage Rivers System - Annual Report*
- *The Shelburne Canadian Heritage River Management Plan*
- *Margaree-Lake Ainslie Canadian Heritage River - A Partnership Strategy*

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Canadian  
Heritage  
Rivers  
System



Le Réseau  
des rivières  
du patrimoine  
canadien

*Shelburne Canadian Heritage River*