

# **Heritage Rivers Bulletin**

## **Vol. 2 No. 1, Spring, 1997**

### **13 Rivers Still in the Running for 1997**

The BC Heritage Rivers Board had the daunting task of reviewing 30 suggested rivers in the search for its next slate of nominations. Some of the suggestions were deferred from the 1996 process, but many are the result of the increased public profile of the BC Heritage River System (BCHRS). The Board has created this higher profile through their activities and the support of many local groups and individuals throughout the province.

The Board has concluded a preliminary assessment of the rivers suggested and has decided to focus their further detailed review on 13 of the most promising candidate rivers: Alouette, Chilcotin, Columbia, Flathead, Middle, Mission Cr., Peace, Prophet, Shuswap, Skeena, Squamish, Stuart, and Yakoun. In addition, negotiations pertaining to the Tatshenshini are continuing (see article Page 2).

The preliminary review considered the identification criteria (the significance of heritage resource values) for all of the rivers and began looking at the selection guidelines (specifically, regional balance, types of rivers and land use issues). In the more detailed review of the remaining 13 rivers that will now follow, a strong focus will be on the public interest and support for the possible nomination and the specific nature and compatibility of the long term vision for the river with its regional context. Public feedback will be extremely important in this further assessment and the Board welcomes all input.

The review and decisions of the Board are difficult since the public suggestions are inevitably based on important river values and sincere concern on the part of local groups and individuals. It is simply not possible, however, to include all the suggestions in the BCHRS. The Board is anxious to point out that all the suggestions made for Heritage River status demonstrate the need and public desire for improved river stewardship along the suggested rivers. Thus the BCHRS choices made by the Board are relative and seek to provide a balanced system across the province. Such a system will enshrine examples of river stewardship that can be models of inspiration to all areas of the province and beyond.

The rivers that were reviewed but did not remain in the selected list for further detailed review are: Atlin, Brunette, Campbell, Cheakamus, Chilko, Coquitlam, Elk, Finlay, Granby, Harrison, Inklin, Kicking Horse, Kootenay, Lillooet, Nakina, Pitt, Quesnel, Sheslay, Similkameen, Slokan, Tahsis, Taku, Thompson, Tlell, Turnagain, White, and Wigwam. The Board appreciates the effort and interest shown on the part of the proponents of these rivers and will continue to encourage active stewardship of these important rivers as well as those that are accepted into the BCHRS.

## **Promoting Stewardship: A Real Need!**

The BC Heritage Rivers Board is seeking to establish a system of BC Heritage Rivers that will stand as a model of both the significance of our river heritage and how that heritage can be managed cooperatively for future generations. The program has had some good successes with rivers such as the Fraser, Cowichan and Stikine. Many rivers have been recognized with more to come as the system continues to grow. However, selecting the candidates for the system is not an easy task; take some recent cases - the Similkameen, the Elk, and the Taku rivers.

In these cases the Board is not proceeding with the intent to nominate the river. The reason for not proceeding is because there is not yet a sufficient demonstration of cooperative support from the broad range of local interests to the long term integrity of the rivers' heritage values. However, in each case there is support for improved stewardship of the river and a need to reconcile diverse views and attitudes. Hopefully, future discussions and cooperative action can lead to management of the river for sustainability.

The BC Heritage Rivers Board was established by government to promote better stewardship of our rivers as well as to recommend candidates for the BC Heritage Rivers System where there is strong and diverse community support. Promoting river stewardship will include working with a broad and informed public to seek ways in which conflicts can be resolved for the good of the river through cooperative management. The sustain-ability of our provincial river heritage is at risk if we are unwilling to take precautions in order to ensure long term water quantity and quality. The BC Heritage Rivers Board wants to work with local interests to help achieve the goal of sustainability and perhaps to use rivers such as the Elk, Similkameen and Taku to measure the success of growing river stewardship throughout the province.

### **Objectives of the BC Heritage Rivers Board**

- \* raise awareness and promote good stewardship of British Columbia's rivers
- \* engage the public in discussions concerning the natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreational values of rivers
- \* identify examples of rivers in British Columbia that reflect a diversity of natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreational values
- \* link the stewardship of rivers to existing land use planning and management processes

## **The Exceptional Tatshenshini**

Also on the list of rivers reviewed by the Board were the Alsek and Tatshenshini rivers. As most readers will be aware, the government indicated an intent to nominate the Tatshenshini River at the time British Columbia joined the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

Subsequent negotiations with the Champaign - Aishihik people of the Yukon with respect to park status in the area and the intent of CHRS nomination are ongoing. The Board respects these negotiations. While no specific action by the Board is needed at this time, the Board

will support the government's future action regarding CHRS nomination at the appropriate time.

### **One More Step for the Fraser!**

At the recent Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) Board meeting in Peterborough, Ontario, the Fraser River was formally nominated to the CHRS. The Hon. Cathy McGregor announced the acceptance of the Fraser by the CHRS Board, adding that the Fraser was an obvious and important choice for CHRS because of its major role in the history and development of Canada. Marking one of the major intentions of the BC Government in joining the CHRS, Minister McGregor also remarked that BC's nomination of the Fraser would set a new standard for the national system.

David Marshall (Executive Director of the Fraser Basin Management Program), attending the meeting along with the official BC representative, Mark Angelo (Chair, BC Heritage Rivers Board), was also pleased with the national recognition the Fraser will receive as a result of nomination. He indicated the profile would reinforce the goals of the Fraser Basin Management Plan to participating governments, businesses and community groups.

With this milestone passed, the BC Government will now submit a management plan for the Fraser River to the CHRS Board to finalize its designation within the program.

### **Board Participates in First Nations' Fisheries Workshop**

The 3rd annual "Visions in Shared Management" fisheries workshop for the Fraser River Basin proved to be an excellent place for the BC Heritage Rivers Board to meet with a wide range of First Nations' bands and individuals. There were many opportunities to discuss the BC Heritage Rivers program, and to consider how First Nations people can participate in it more fully. Held February 18-20 in Merritt, the workshop was hosted by the Nicola Band. The varied and full program included a review of First Nations' conservation activities, DFO policies and negotiations with the USA, along with updates on salmon stocks in the Fraser River watershed. The Board thanks the organizers, in particular Arnie Narcisse, for the opportunity to attend this important gathering.

Eva Durance's presentation to the workshop participants on the BC Heritage Rivers System and the work of the Board was well received. Some concerns were expressed that the emphasis would be on preserving rivers for recreation and other interests of mainstream BC society to the detriment of the First Nations' fisheries rights. This is a frequently expressed concern but narrow interpretation of the system's aims. In practice there is a broad range of values by which a river gains heritage status. In addition the Heritage Rivers Board would embrace First Nations fisheries interests in its mandate to encourage better stewardship of all BC rivers.

The Board is heartened by the great interest shown by workshop participants in the BC Heritage Rivers program and is delighted at the interest both in proposing rivers for recognition and in pursuing Board participation. The lack of a First Nations member has been a long-standing concern of the Board. Increased input from bands and individuals around the Province is encouraged. In addition, within the limited budget and membership of

the Board, requests for the Heritage Rivers display and speakers at First Nations events are welcomed.

**Board Member Profile:  
Linda Thorstad**

Strongly rooted in British Columbia and the province's resource industries, Linda comes to the BC Heritage Rivers Board with an impressive list of credentials and experience. Following her graduation with a BSc (Hons) in 1977 from the University of British Columbia, she began a career in the resource development field. She completed a MSc. in 1984 and established a consulting partnership providing resource-based clients with technical, planning, communications and management advice. Subsequently, Linda went on to provide leadership and a strategic focus for two junior resource companies. She was also active, on behalf of industry, lobbying for a 'made in BC' land use strategy.

In 1992 Linda joined the Commission on Resources and the Environment. It was through her work with the Commission that she began a consultative role with the Fraser Basin Management Board, a role she continued until 1996. Presently, Linda is Vice-President of Corporate Relations with Viceroy Resource Corporation of Vancouver.

In addition to the heavy demands of her job, Linda has demonstrated a strong commitment to the broader professional and local community. She served as President of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC in 1995/96 and is now past President, as well as being a member of the Vision Implementation Task Force of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers. In addition, she serves on the boards of the BC Council for Sustainability and the Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts and Science World. For her notable achievements, she was awarded the YWCA 1996 Woman of Distinction Award for Management and the Professions.

As a member of the BC Heritage Rivers Board, Linda has provided insight into the needs of industry in land use planning and has been a leader in the effort to nominate the Fraser River to both the BC and Canadian Heritage River Systems.

**Photos Needed !**

Can you help? We desperately need good quality photos of the rivers within the BC Heritage Rivers System. Photos should illustrate the important features of the river (recreational use, historic and modern day uses, and natural values) and the reasons why it was included within the system. Please send standard sized prints to Board Secretariat. Be sure to include specific information on the location and subject matter of the photo and your name for credit purposes. The Board is unable to provide payment for use of photos but credit will be given for all published photos. Thanks for your help.

## **Conference and Meetings**

The Board is seeking to contact a wide variety of public interest groups which are concerned about river stewardship. If your group would like to have a presentation by a representative of the Board and/or a display promoting river stewardship, please contact the Board. We will attempt to fulfill requests as our resources permit.

## **BCHRS Posters**

A few copies of the Board's popular poster are available for free distribution. If you have a prominent display location where this poster could assist in increasing awareness of the BCHRS program and river stewardship in general, please contact the Board Secretariat.

## **Videos**

The BCHRS video, "Rivers for the Future," is still available. It can be borrowed free for a period of three weeks, or purchased at a cost of \$16.00, including shipping and handling. Please contact the Board Secretariat to receive a copy.

## **Display**

The BCHRS Display has already been shown at a number of festivals and events in B.C. If you are interested in having the display at an upcoming event in your area, please contact the Board Secretariat.

## **Please Contact Us:**

BC Heritage Rivers Board  
2nd Floor, 800 Johnson St.  
Victoria, BC, V8W 1X4  
Fax: (250) 387-5757

Secretariat  
c/o PRP Inc.  
2034 Casa Marcia Cres  
Victoria, BC, V8N 2X3  
Tel: (250) 477-5333 Fax: (250) 477-5325  
E-Mail: [bchrs@islandnet.com](mailto:bchrs@islandnet.com)