

# **Heritage Rivers Bulletin**

## **Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer, 1998**

### **McGregor Recognizes 7 New Rivers**

In her keynote address to the recent Rivers Conference '98, BC Environment Minister Cathy McGregor announced a third set of rivers endorsed by the government as part of BC's Heritage River System: the Alouette, Columbia, Middle, Peace, Prophet and Stuart Rivers and Mission Creek. "Each of these rivers stands out on its own," said McGregor, "and Heritage River status will draw more attention to the exceptional value of these rivers." In response, BC Heritage Rivers Board Chair Mark Angelo emphasizes the importance of such public recognition to the health of the rivers: "The historical, cultural and environmental values of BC's latest additions to the Heritage Rivers system are sure to promote community awareness and appreciation, thus providing the base for river stewardship in all communities."

One of the interesting characteristics of this most recent group of rivers is that it includes, for the first time, rivers which have significant hydroelectric production-the Alouette, Columbia and Peace. The recognition of these rivers marks a further endorsement of the concept of a working river, where the approach to stewardship integrates economic activities with natural heritage, recreational, historic and traditional cultural values. With a total of eighteen recognized rivers, the BC Heritage Rivers System is nearing completion.

### **Board Changes**

At the close of the first three year mandate of the BC Heritage Rivers Board, members Bill Bourgeois and Linda Thorstad are leaving their positions. Over his three year term, Bill made a major contribution to public awareness of the program, and he was a key representative at regional public consultation meetings concerning controversial river suggestions. Linda played an important role in the development and use of media, working to present the program and its objectives to the general public. Thanks to both Linda and Bill for their excellent work over the formative years of the Board and the program.

The Board, in consultation with government, is currently involved in a search for individuals to fill these vacant positions for the upcoming term.

The initial three year mandate of the BC Heritage Rivers Board, completed in May 1998, has been extended by the Minister of Environment Lands and Parks for two years, and with the system nearly complete the Board and the public are looking towards a new phase of the initiative. As the Board moves into its second term, the focus will shift from identifying and nominating rivers to promoting community based monitoring and stewardship of recognised heritage rivers.

## **Our Newest Heritage Rivers**

The following are the vision statements for the newest Heritage Rivers, as outlined in the recently released government report entitled "Response to the Heritage Rivers Board's 1997 Nominations:"

**Alouette:** a restoration of the natural, cultural heritage and recreational values of the river through adaptive management consistent with the continued operation of hydroelectric generation facilities.

**Columbia:** a river of provincial and international historical and cultural value that has been and continues to be a significant contributor to the economy and quality of life for all British Columbians.

**Middle:** a river managed to protect the integrity of its natural resources, in particular the salmon fishery and cultural resources, in recognition of its continued importance to First Nations.

**Mission Creek:** a model of community involvement in the management of an urban stream environment.

**Peace:** a river managed for a variety of resource-based uses, including power generation, a critical cornerstone of the province's economy, while maintaining representative natural heritage qualities and recognising the historical heritage value of the river corridor to First Nations and non-aboriginal people.

**Prophet:** a river managed to retain the outstanding natural qualities and wilderness character in its upper reaches, and to recognise the need to integrate riparian, recreation and industrial uses consistent with natural and cultural heritage values in its lower reaches.

**Stuart:** a river managed to sustain a diversity of conservation and integrated resource use activities.

## **New River Selection**

With eighteen rivers now designated, the Board anticipates nominating only one or two more to complete the system. The selection process for these final additions to the system has been suspended, however, until a new Board is in place. At that time a review of all the rivers currently under consideration will be conducted. The Board wishes to respond to the desire of a number of groups to have their proposals reexamined, and it will approach this step with a view to recognizing strong public stewardship and addressing regional gaps in the system. The Board greatly appreciates the significant efforts of many groups and individuals who have mounted strong campaigns to demonstrate the heritage values of particular rivers and the public support for their initiatives. The new Board will review their cases as soon as possible.

## **Yakoun Deferred**

While the Yakoun River, on the Queen Charlotte Islands, was nominated in the Board's 1997 report, the government deferred its decision, identifying a need for further community-based consultation and discussion-particularly with the Haida Nation-in the context of the land use planning process currently being initiated in the area. The role of the BC Heritage Rivers

Board will be to establish appropriate communication linkages with this process, in order to promote river stewardship of the Yakoun with the hope of achieving the outcome of recognition within the BCHRS.

## **Rivers Conference '98**

Rivers Conference '98: Conserving and Restoring our River Heritage was hosted by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System and the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia, at the Delta Airport Hotel in Richmond, B.C. from May 3-5. The event drew together researchers, land managers, and river activists from across North America and featured presentations on topics such as natural and altered river systems, the values associated with wilderness rivers, working rivers and urban streams, and recent progress in the area of responsible waterways management.

In a wide variety of workshops offered over the course of the three-day conference, participants had the opportunity to discuss both the principles of river stewardship and strategies for their implementation in the context of small groups which drew together individuals with diverse interests and expertise. Field workshops on the second day of the gathering gave delegates a first-hand look at key issues in waterways management, with expeditions focusing on wetland habitat, river-based industrial activity, watershed issues, urban stream restoration, and interpretive efforts.

The conference wrapped up with a summary of the key points and suggested actions generated by the Conference Advisory Committee and several of the workshop discussion leaders. These points will become the Richmond Action Plan and will be published in the conference proceedings.

Conference proceedings are expected to be published in the late summer. To order either print or CD-ROM copies, contact the Outdoor Recreation Council office by phone, fax or e-mail. BC Outdoor Recreation Council, #334 - 1367 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4A9. Tel: (604) 737-3058 Fax: (604) 737-3666. E-mail: [orcbc@istar.ca](mailto:orcbc@istar.ca)

## **Web Site Announcement**

We are pleased to announce that the public can now access information about the BC Heritage Rivers System on the new web site at [www.islandnet.com/bchrs](http://www.islandnet.com/bchrs). The purpose of the web site is to increase the profile of the Heritage Rivers program and the system, as well as to connect with other organizations and initiatives promoting river stewardship. The site includes background information on the program and the Board, and information on the status of the system, including profiles of both recognized and suggested rivers. All government and Board reports, press releases and newsletters are also posted on the site. One page is devoted to upcoming events related to river stewardship, and we would appreciate your help in keeping the page up to date. If you are involved with an event promoting rivers, please send us the details by e-mail, fax or post, so that we can include them on the Events page. Also, if you are interested in having your organization identified on our links page, please let us know.

## **Photos**

Do you have pictures of our provincial waterways that offer a glimpse of the heritage values of these living rivers and the activities they support? We need photographs to include in newsletters and reports, and we welcome your contributions. Please send regular format prints with descriptive captions to the Secretariat at the address indicated below. Although no remuneration is possible, we do give photo credits, so please remember to include your name.

## **Please Contact Us**

The Heritage Rivers Board is always interested in hearing from the public. Please let us know your ideas, concerns and suggestions about how we can help improve river stewardship throughout British Columbia.

### **BC Heritage Rivers Board Secretariat**

2034 Casa Marcia Cres Victoria, BC, V8N 2X3

Tel: (250) 477-5333 Fax (250)477-5325

Email: [bchrs@islandnet.com](mailto:bchrs@islandnet.com)

Web Site: <http://www.islandnet.com/bchrs>