

## **Q What does a heritage river designation mean?**

**A** Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) designation is a recognition bestowed upon rivers in Canada that have outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values.

From coast to coast to coast, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System encourages residents and visitors to experience great waterways, learn about their rich history, and share in their stewardship. The program helps recognize and conserve these outstanding rivers that are an enduring part of our national heritage and identity and encourages partnerships and collaborations among many river users.

## **Q Will this designation change anything about how people in Alberta are able to use the river or river valley?**

**A** In short: no. Designation is honorific, which means that people will continue to be able to use the river and river valley for the many activities that they currently do!

## **Q Will this designation change anything about how we work related to the river or river valley?**

**A** In short: no. However, as a living or ongoing strategy, the designation represents a commitment by many project partners to continue to work collaboratively and cherish and learn more about this gem of a river.

## **Q How does this designation align with the idea of “Water for Peace,” the official theme for 2024 World Water Day?**

**A** Overall, the Canadian Heritage Rivers system embodies the principles of sustainable water management, cultural preservation, collaboration, and education, all of which are integral to the theme of "Water for Peace" for World Water Day. By recognizing the intrinsic value of rivers and promoting responsible stewardship, this designation contributes to the broader goal of ensuring water security and fostering peace at local, national, and international levels.

1. **Promotion of Conservation and Stewardship:** Canadian Heritage Rivers are recognized for their outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values. Heritage designation is an implicit acknowledgment of the importance of conserving water resources. This conservation effort promotes peace by ensuring equitable access to water for both present and future generations, reducing conflicts over water scarcity.
2. **Celebration of Cultural Heritage:** Canadian Heritage Rivers often have deep cultural significance to Indigenous communities and other groups. Recognizing and protecting these cultural heritage sites fosters respect and understanding among different communities, contributing to social cohesion and peace-building efforts.

3. **Encouragement of Collaboration**: Designating a river as a Canadian Heritage River involves collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and local residents. This collaborative approach encourages dialogue, cooperation, and consensus-building, essential elements for maintaining peace and resolving disputes related to water management and usage.
4. **Promotion of Sustainable Development**: Canadian Heritage Rivers are managed with the goal of balancing conservation with sustainable development. This approach emphasizes the importance of using water resources wisely to meet the needs of both humans and the environment. By promoting sustainable water management practices, the Canadian Heritage Rivers system contributes to long-term peace and stability by mitigating conflicts arising from unsustainable resource exploitation.
5. **Education and Awareness**: Designating certain rivers as Canadian Heritage Rivers helps raise public awareness about the importance of water conservation and the cultural significance of rivers. Through education and outreach efforts, people become more informed about the value of water resources and the need to protect them, which can lead to greater respect for water as a shared resource and, consequently, contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

## **Q As our Watershed manager, do you / why do you think this designation is a good thing?**

**A** The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) designation offers several benefits, making it a positive initiative for Canada's rivers and the communities that depend on them:

1. **Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage**: CHRS designation acknowledges the exceptional natural and cultural values of designated rivers. It promotes the conservation and protection of these valuable resources, ensuring that they are preserved for future generations to enjoy and learn from.
2. **Stewardship and Collaboration**: CHRS involves collaborative stewardship efforts that bring together various stakeholders, including government agencies, Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and local residents. This collaborative approach fosters dialogue, cooperation, and shared responsibility for managing and protecting rivers in a sustainable manner.
3. **Promotion of Sustainable Development**: CHRS encourages sustainable development practices that balance conservation with responsible use of river resources. By promoting sustainable recreation, tourism, and other economic activities, CHRS helps support local economies while ensuring the long-term health and resilience of river ecosystems.

4. **Enhanced Public Awareness and Education:** CHRS designation raises public awareness about the importance of rivers and the need for their conservation. It often involves educational programs, interpretive signage, and public outreach initiatives that help foster appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural values associated with designated rivers.
5. **Recreational and Tourism Opportunities:** Many CHRS-designated rivers offer exceptional recreational opportunities, such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and hiking. By promoting sustainable recreation and tourism, CHRS designation helps support outdoor recreation industries, create jobs, and enhance the quality of life for local communities.
6. **National and International Recognition:** CHRS designation provides national and international recognition for designated rivers, highlighting their importance as natural and cultural treasures of Canada. This recognition can attract visitors, researchers, and investors interested in experiencing and learning from these unique river environments.
7. **Learning, Respect, and Preservation of Indigenous Culture and Heritage:** Many CHRS-designated rivers hold significant cultural value for Indigenous communities, who have longstanding connections to these waterways. CHRS designation helps recognize and protect Indigenous cultural heritage associated with these rivers, fostering respect for Indigenous rights and traditions.

Overall, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) designation is a positive initiative that promotes the conservation, stewardship, and sustainable use of Canada's rivers, while also recognizing their cultural significance and supporting the well-being of local communities.

## **Q What is the most important thing you think people should take from this designation?**

**A** Overall, the CHRS designation for the North Saskatchewan River serves as a reminder of the river's significance and the collective responsibility to protect and steward this valuable resource for the benefit of present and future generations. It underscores the importance of balancing conservation with sustainable use and fostering respect for the river's ecological and cultural values.

**CHRS designation is not just a one-time recognition but represents an ongoing commitment to the conservation and stewardship of the North Saskatchewan River.**

People should recognize the importance of sustained efforts to protect the river for future generations, ensuring its continued health and vitality.