

OTTAWA RIVER HERITAGE DESIGNATION MEETING SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

GENERAL

The meeting, which began with the singing of “O Canada” by Rev. Daniel Forget in both French and English, was held at the Petawawa Civic Centre on **Tuesday, September 30, 2003**. Mr. Steele, on behalf of Mayor Bob Sweet, welcomed those in attendance to Petawawa.

Mr. Hopkins thanked all in attendance for coming to the meeting and gave a brief explanation as to the purpose and importance of the meeting, official designation of the Ottawa River as one of Canada’s Heritage Rivers. The Ottawa River, stated Mr. Hopkins, deserves its rightful place in the history of Canada: it is the 3rd largest river in terms of the volume of water that passes through it and it reaches depths of 245 feet in Petawawa area and as deep as 600 feet in the Lake Temiskaming area. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that heritage designation is not in conflict with the Temiskawa Waterway Corporation which is dealing with navigational by-passes of major obstacles on the Ottawa, but in fact, the Temiskawa Waterway Corporation is very much a part of the heritage group. Heritage designation, continued Mr Hopkins, is of vital importance not only from an historical vantage point, but also has an economic importance because of the worldwide publicity the river will receive. Mr. Hopkins asked all to relax and enjoy the meeting and to feel free to contribute at any time.

Mr. Ray Bonnenberg welcomed all to the Pembroke District of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and pledged his office’s support to the Heritage Program stating that three people from his Department are already in place to support the program.

Mr. Brian Grimsey from Parks Canada spoke of the Designation and Nomination process, the Canadian Heritage Rivers System and his role in the process which is to provide support from Heritage Canada. Brian emphasized that Designation and Nomination process is a grass-roots program driven by people who get excited. He pointed out that Canadian Heritage Rivers System is **Canada’s** program with every Canadian jurisdiction having at least one river, a total of 10,000 kilometres of river. He added that the program includes both northern rivers which, for the most part, still maintain their pristine, natural beauty, and southern rivers which are working rivers, sometimes altered, but a life force of the communities that line their shores. In speaking of the Ottawa River, Mr. Grimsey commented that although not yet included as a Heritage River, the Ottawa has been long deserving to be identified as an elite river, to become a showcase to the world.

With Mr. Hopkins acting as moderator and with recorders in place, the working part of the meeting began. The full agenda follows.

AGENDA

- I. REV. DANIEL FORGET: "O CANADA"
- II. MR. STEELE: WELCOME ON BEHALF OF MAYOR BOB SWEET
- III. LEN HOPKINS
 - A. Thank you
 - B. Good group
 - C. Heritage designation not in conflict with Temiskawa Waterway Corporation which is dealing with navigational by-passes of major obstacles on the river. Ottawa River Heritage will bring world - wide publicity.
 - D. Aim: Ottawa River gets its rightful place in the history of Canada - 245 feet depth in Pontiac - Chalk River area, in Lake Temiskaming 690 ft deep. The Ottawa River is 3rd largest in world in terms of the volume of water that passes through it.
 - E. All relax and enjoy and contribute ... don't be afraid to stand and comment at any time.
- IV. RAY BONNENBERG
 - E. Welcome to Pembroke District
 - F. Support Project
 - G. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to work with the Ottawa River Project. Ray stated that three people from his department are already in place to support the program.
 - H. Living Legacy, 12 Kiosks that are now in place from Hawkesbury to New Liskeard, are already a positive stepping stone to designation.
- V. BRIAN GRIMSEY: PARKS CANADA: HERITAGE RIVERS
 - A. People who get excited are important
 - B. Grass roots program
 - C. Brian provides support
 - D. Canadian Heritage River's System is Canada's Program
 - E. Thirty - nine rivers have been either Nominated or already Designated
 - F. The total is 10,000 kilometres of river
 - G. Every jurisdiction has at least one river
 - H. These include both Northern and Southern rivers with Southern rivers being working rivers
 - I. They capture the full breadth of heritage: transportation, fishing, aboriginals, cultural, natural and recreational
 - J. The Detroit River is now in the program with a good management plan to clean it

- up and make what is good even better.
- K. The Ottawa River is not yet included: It is long deserving to become an elite river
 - L. Its natural and cultural and recreational values are a showcase to the world of a healthy, beautiful river.

VI. STAGES

A. PRE - SCREENING STAGE

The Pre -Screening Stage, information collected and presented to the Board, which has one Board Member from each province and territory, has already been successfully completed.

B. NOMINATION STAGE

Justification for **Nomination** is presented in the form of a document to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. Parks Canada, Quebec, and Parks Ontario support and work with The Ottawa River Heritage Organization in the preparation of this document, but **champions in the communities** along the Ottawa River must drive the process. A river can be nominated under three categories:

1. Natural
2. Recreational
3. Cultural

It is important to note that because of hydro dams, Heritage Canada has advised that the Ottawa River no longer meets the Natural Setting Nomination criteria because human intervention has altered the river's flow and shores. However, the committee will still include the natural history of the river because this history is the very basis of our study and because it will support the Cultural and Recreational stages of designation. In addition, either Recreational or Cultural designations, or both, will qualify the Ottawa River for heritage designation. Consequently, Committees along the river must collect information and make this information available (See Thames Report Document): The Nomination Document must tell why the Ottawa River meets the natural, cultural and recreational criteria. This prepared document goes to Parks Ontario and Parks Quebec through Natural Resources Departments for approval. Then, the document is sent to Heritage Canada for approval by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System Board and Federal Government Agencies. When the nomination stage is complete, the committee has earned the right to proceed with its final designation document.

C. THE DESIGNATION STAGE

This Designation Stage is a plan put in place to improve, protect and maintain the natural, healthy state of the river. This plan must include public awareness, community buy-in, and action for the river's well-being. The benefits of this procedure are

1. Economic: a possible 40 million dollars worth of benefits
2. Heritage appreciation and protection
3. Ownership and community pride in river, responsible action
4. Coordinated river management that brings partners together and bridges any gaps
5. Catalyst for water quality improvement
6. Selling point for the river, additional research, water quality monitoring, eco tourism improvements
7. Sustainable business opportunities: when people experience the river and its communities and cultures
8. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System website: receives 300, 000 hits a year, proving people around the world show interest in Canada's rivers.
9. This Canadian grass roots initiatives and cooperative program: brings people from around the world to view process and results as evidenced by the Chinese delegation that is coming to see and learn first hand.
10. Continues the respects for the Aboriginal People's belief and teachings that the river is spiritually and culturally meaningful as evidenced by Elder William Commanda's Healing Centre on Turtle Island (Victoria Island)
11. Communities may be marketed on the health and beauty of the river.

For these benefits to come to fruition, the Designation Process must include a management plan to ensure the protection, promotion and maintenance of the river's qualities. The communities along the river will develop these plans along formal lines that are generated by their pride and stake in the river so that a longterm commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of the river's qualities will result. The plans will be the product of the communities of the Ottawa River corridor and accepted by the Heritage Rivers Board and senior levels of government. When accepted by the governments, a plaque will designate the Ottawa River as a Canadian Heritage River. In the end, the hard copy of the Report on both the Nomination and Designation Process as well as CD ROM versions are sent to schools and libraries. This circulation of the Report makes the plan a living document for all.

VII. GEOGRAPHIC AND ACADEMIC PROCESS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The meeting, to facilitate future meetings and plan development, divided the river into five sections:

- Section I: North of Lake Temiskaming to the source of the Ottawa River in northwestern Quebec**
- Section II: Mattawa to New Liskeard on the Ontario side / Temiscamingue to Notre-Dame -du-Nord on the Quebec side**
- Section III: Mattawa/Temiscamingue to Ottawa / Gatineau**
- Section IV: Ottawa / Gatineau to Prescott/Russell / St. Andre D'Argenteuil (Carrillon Area)**
- Section V: Prescott/Russell / St. Andre D'Argenteuil (Carrillon Area) to Montreal and St. Lawrence Area**

The meeting emphasised the selection of a Director for each geographical side of the five designated sections of the Ottawa River. Each Director will **bring local citizens together with skills and interests in**

- A. Historic sites
- B. Local history
- C. River settlements
- D. Recreation: Boating
- E. Historic background, etc.

The Directors from each geographic area will facilitate the process by instilling community pride and love of the work and by bringing together Directors and local committees with common interests. However, the director must delegate ... “delegate or die” , that is, not feel responsible for all the work. To assist in the process, the director will initiate the formation of local committees comprised of

- A. Chairperson
- B. Members (people knowledgeable in a number of areas, especially in local history, geography, nature, traditions and folklore)
- C. Local researchers
- D. People knowledgeable on topics and sites to be investigated on the Ottawa: Historic site, Industrial, river tributaries, etc.
- E. Other enthusiasts

VIII. NECESSARY RIVER LENGTH STUDIES

Because they encompass the entire length of the river, the following are considered river

length studies outside the arbitrary Five Sections of the Ottawa River

- D. Aboriginal: The Aboriginal Communities
- E. Archeological Studies
- F. Geological Studies
- G. Historical: Explorers, Fur Trader, Missionaries, Settlers
- H. Logging
- I. Historical Contribution to Canada: Formation of a Country
- J. Ottawa River's European Connection: Beaver Hat/Style and Fashion

IX. OTHER AREAS OF STUDY

In addition to River Length Studies, communities in each of the five designated Sections of the Ottawa River will bring together local expertise and enthusiasts to gather and record information in the following areas that, once combined, will be part of the final document.

X. THE HEADINGS UNDER WHICH A RIVER CAN BE DESIGNATED AS A CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER

K. NATURAL HERITAGE VALUE

1. Earth's evolutionary history as represented in Canada: geology of area
2. Geomorphological: eskers, drumlins, bed rock, any distinguishing surface feature caused by movement of ice and water and wind (LAND FORMS)
3. Fluvial: living things in fresh water, something belonging to rivers, produced by river action (Biology)
4. Features/ Formations: Rock slopes, farm land, mountains, still waters and rapids
5. Biotic: life or living or abiotic: devoid of life
6. Habitat of rare or endangered species of plants or animals
7. Etc.

Canada has 20% of the world's fresh water.

B. CANADIAN CULTURAL VALUES

1. The river's impact on the development of Canada
2. The river's effect on immediate region

3. The river as associated with persons, events, or beliefs: jobs, settlements, language, religion (missionaries), food, homes
4. The river's part in Hudson Bay Company/North West Fur Trading Company (McGill University Archives)
5. Archeological Works or Sites which are rare or of great antiquity
6. Sites that are part of major themes in Canadian History: Fur, Lumber, Hydro, Nuclear, Recreational, Aboriginal Activities.

C. RECREATIONAL VALUES

1. River rafting (Whitewater)
2. Boating / sailing
3. Fishing
4. International recognition for rapids
5. Tourism
6. Hunting/ Ducks Unlimited
7. Camping
8. Hockey, skating,
9. Snowmobiling
10. X-country skiing / snowshoeing
11. Ice-fishing
12. Wild-life viewing
13. Hiking
14. Natural and cultural appreciation
15. Swimming
16. Water-skiing
17. Beaches

D. NATURAL VISUAL AESTHETICS

1. Artistic Work
2. Photography
3. Scientific Designation
4. Provincial and Public Parks
5. Navigability/ Rapids
6. Volume: 130,000 cubic feet per second on an average day
5, 000 cubic metres per second (flood stage/ Spring)
1, 500 cubic metres per second past Ottawa
7. Accessibility and Suitable Shoreline (Use)
8. Safety
9. "Islands of Council Fire": Meeting Spots (Aboriginal): Beaches that draw people/Confluences of Rivers

Brian Grimsey (Brian.Grimsey@pc.gc.ca) from Heritage Canada informed the

meeting that Canadian Heritage River Systems Framework Documents are available as Texts to work with.

X. TIME FRAME

- A. Three years for whole process, but sooner if possible. Two years for nomination, two years for designation is an optimistic aim.
- B. The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board meets once a year in February.
- C. October of 2004, 2005 or 2006 is the time to have the Nomination Proposal completed for submission in order to meet the Board's February deadline.
- D. Once the Board approves the Nomination, the Management Plan must be prepared within three years.

XI. NOTES OF INTEREST and IMPORTANCE

- A. Algonquin Concern: Any designation of the Ottawa River will be done without prejudice to the Algonquin land claims
- B. Both Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Grimsey reiterated that the Ottawa River Designation, as stated in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System Charter, has no impact on Aboriginal land claims
- C. Algonquin Name for the Ottawa is Kichi Sibi, Big River
- D. The meeting ended with the Story of Captain Emond, the captain of a ferry linked Pembroke and the Pontiac.