

# **Heritage Rivers Bulletin**

## **Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring, 1998**

### **Rivers Conference '98**

#### **Conserving and Restoring Our River Heritage**

#### **You're invited!**

Here is a close-to-home opportunity to connect with river enthusiasts from across Canada and the United States. Come to a unique educational conference focusing on current problems and practical solutions in stream and river management. The first national rivers conference was held in Peterborough, Ontario, in 1994 marking the 10th anniversary of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). The Outdoor Recreation Council, a long time leader in BC river management issues, has taken the initiative locally in offering to co-host this second national conference with the CHRS.

Rivers Conference '98 will bring together land managers, academics and grass roots groups, who are committed to the best possible management of rivers. They will share information and ideas on conservation issues, management strategies, restoration initiatives, water use planning and river stewardship. Workshop sessions will be used to take full advantage of the broad spectrum of interests and ideas represented by the conference delegates and give everyone the opportunity to participate fully. This year's conference has the added interest of a series of field workshops which will scatter across the lower mainland and investigate five theme areas (see Page #2).

Keynote speakers include: the Honourable Cathy McGregor, Minister of Environment, Lands & Parks; Andrew Mitchell, MP and Secretary of State for Parks; Mark Angelo, Chair, BC Heritage Rivers Board; Michael Quick, UBC; Donna Williams, Massachusetts Audubon Society; David Boyd, Sierra Legal Defense Fund; and, Stephen Gates and Jacques Houle, Rivers and Lakes Society.

With our BC Heritage Rivers System in its formative stages and with the beginnings of BC representation within the CHRS, this is an opportune time to get involved with river heritage initiatives in British Columbia. Please join in the discussion, activities and fun of Rivers Conference '98. You'll be glad you did!

#### **The Canadian Heritage Rivers System**

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a cooperative program, developed and run by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to give national recognition and protection to the important rivers of Canada. The primary objective of the program is to ensure that rivers which are outstanding examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, which have played a significant role in Canadian history, or which offer outstanding opportunities for recreation, are managed in such a way that their distinctive value is conserved while public use and enjoyment is enhanced.

On January 18, 1984, the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board was established to administer the CHRS program and to review river nominations for inclusion in the program. The CHR Board currently is comprised of fourteen members, two appointed by the federal government and one appointed by each of the provincial and territorial governments. As of January 1, 1998, sections of 30 different rivers, with a total length of over 8,000 km, had been nominated to the System.

Nomination of rivers to the CHRS may be made only by participating governments. However, private citizens or groups may suggest rivers to the responsible provincial or territorial agencies.

### **The BC Heritage Rivers System at Rivers Conference '98**

The conference provides a marvelous opportunity to profile the BC Heritage Rivers System. This is unique in Canada - an approach to river conservation leaders here feel should be a model for other jurisdictions across the country. People involved with the system are participating as leaders in the workshops and you might want to get involved in the discussion of the BC system.

Mark Angelo, Chair, BCHR Board

\* topic: BC Rivers Day and moves towards a national rivers day

Bruce Downie, Secretariat, BCHR Board

\* topic: Fostering Stewardship Within the BCHRS & Beyond

Terje Vold, MoF and BCHRS Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

\* topic: Strategic Land Use Planning and BC's Rivers

Gil Scott, BC Parks and BCHRS Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

\* topic: the BC Heritage Rivers System

There are also many individuals with strong links to rivers within or nominated for the BCHRS that are leading workshops related to individual river initiatives.

David Marshall, Fraser Basin Council

\* topic: Challenges to Managing Complex River Systems

Mike Halleran, Westland TV Series

\* topic: Columbia River Treaty and Columbia Basin Trust

Rik Blacklaws, Langara College

\* topic: Fraser River and Archaeology

Maggie Rochon, Volunteer

\* topic: the Cowichan Watershed Council

The BC Heritage Rivers Board is an enthusiastic supporter of this event and we encourage you to participate. We hope the participation at this event will spark a growing interest in the BCHRS and encourage greater stewardship of rivers throughout the province through the expanding involvement and energy of committed people.

## **Rivers Conference '98**

### **Highlights of the Preliminary Program**

#### **Sunday, May 3**

AM Plenary Session speakers:

- \* Donna Williams: International Context for Canada's Rivers
- \* Michael Quick: Processes Affecting River Conservation & Restoration
- \* Panel on the values of working, wilderness and urban rivers

PM Plenary Session speakers

- \* Minister Cathy McGregor: Provincial River Initiatives
- \* Mark Angelo/David Boyd: Challenges Facing Our River Heritage

PM Workshops

#### **Monday, May 4**

All Day - Field Workshops

- \* (see below)

Evening BBQ Banquet:

- \* MC - Mark Angelo

Evening Presentations:

- \* Stephen Gates & Jacques Houle: Rivers & Lakes Foundation
- \* Iona Campagnolo: Canada's River Heritage Awards

Slide shows

- \* Tim Palmer: Columbia Basin
- \* Richard Bocking: Fraser River

#### **Tuesday, May 5**

AM Plenary Session speaker

- \* Winifred Kessler: A Framework for Thinking About Tools and Solutions

AM Workshops

PM Plenary Session speakers

- \* Andrew Mitchell (invited): National River Initiatives

PM Workshops

PM Plenary Session speakers

- \* Bill Rees: Ecological Footprints & Rivers
- \* Pam Wright: Richmond Action Plan

## **Field Workshops**

Field workshops have been scheduled for Monday, May 4th. The program identifies five topic areas:

**Category A:** The focus will be on marsh and lowland sites important to migratory birds. Topics for investigation include dyke management, urban encroachment on habitat, recreational use, wetland restoration, agriculture and logging effects on wetlands.

**Category B:** The focus will be on management of large scale industrial uses of rivers and estuaries. Topics will include log storage, effluent management, habitat restoration and reconstruction.

**Category C:** The focus will be on understanding watershed management issues. A visit to a watershed will focus discussion on dams and storage areas, artificial spawning facilities, power generation, and community stewardship initiatives.

**Category D:** The focus will be on urban stream restoration. Topics will include daylighting streams, restoring fish populations, and community partnerships.

**Category E:** The focus will be on public education. Discussion will be stimulated through visits to established centres for interpretation and potential sites for new interpretive efforts. Sites include First Nations fishing sites, post-contact fishing and canning sites, and village sites.

## **Completing the BC Heritage Rivers System**

The BC Heritage Rivers Board has been active over the past three years formulating a provincial system that represents the diversity of character, history and location of our provincial river heritage. To date, 11 rivers that the Board has nominated have been accepted by the provincial government into the system. A decision on one other nomination was deferred and the government has yet to respond to the last report of the Board submitted in Sept., 1997 which included another 8 nominations.

Upon its establishment, the Board was given a general target of recommending approximately 20 rivers for the system. This target is very close to being reached, depending on the outcome of the government's review of the last set of nominations. However, the Board is concerned that balance be achieved and is considering a variety of other rivers to fill specific needs in the system. A few key additional nominations are expected from this assessment.

The public has also demonstrated a keen interest in a few rivers that, although previously considered, were not nominated by the Board. Given the continuing interest in these rivers (see below), the Board will include them in their final review and nomination process.

The timing of the Board's review will not be the same as in previous years because the Board has yet to receive a response from the government on the nominations from last fall. Only when the results of the government response are known will the Board be able to determine what gaps in the system are the most critical to fill with the remaining few nominations.

The full list of rivers that the Board will consider for filling the gaps in the system is not yet complete. Your further suggestions are welcome. Only one or two more rivers will be selected by the Board in view of the size of the system. The following rivers have been suggested by the public and will be considered. Highlights of the key points from public submissions are noted with each of the rivers.

**Campbell River:**

- \* prime salmon habitat supporting a world class fishing industry
- \* noted conservationist, author and fly-fisher Roderick Haig-Brown lived beside the Campbell and based his books on its environment

**Puntledge River:**

- \* important salmon habitat
- \* representative Vancouver Island drainage
- \* major industrial uses have impacted the system requiring major protection and restoration efforts

**Similkameen River:**

- \* free flowing and largely pristine character with rare riparian habitat
- \* important in the cultural heritage of the Okanagan First Nations
- \* important for the non-native settlers of the area and continues to support domestic, agricultural and mining activities in the watershed
- \* highly valued for river recreational activities

**Skeena River:**

- \* rich history relating to gold rush, riverboat transportation and the salmon canning industry
- \* important anadromous fishery and extensive wildlife habitat
- \* important recreation and tourism corridor supporting fishing, boating, rafting and scenic and wildlife viewing

**Tahsis River**

- \* home of the Mowachaht First Nation and was part of the original trade route across the north Island
- \* representative westcoast rain forest, extensive cave system, fossil site
- \* important salmon habitat and steelhead fishery

**Thompson River:**

- \* rich diversity of physical landscapes including examples of virtually every interior BC ecosystem - high mountain environments to desert
- \* major travel and commerce route for native people and early settlers which attracted settlement, farming, ranching, forestry and industry
- \* extensive, rich archaeological remains and First Nations use of the river continues today
- \* good access to virtually every type of water-based recreation

## **Community Support Building for the Campbell River**

A major public awareness effort and campaign to achieve BC Heritage River status for the Campbell River has been mounted by advocate Karen Furber. The Board has been impressed by the strength and diversity of support from such a wide cross section of interest groups and the general public. Here is one of a number of poems the Board received from a class of Grade 6 students in Campbell River. The Board also appreciated the major efforts of Grade 3 children in constructing an impressive river mural and a school of fish to accompany it. Thank you very much for all your submissions. These efforts are encouraging and demonstrate the willingness and commitment that river stewardship can generate in a community.

### **Rivers, Rivers, Rivers**

Rivers, rivers, rivers  
Running from ocean to ocean.  
Waves curling up two feet high.  
A leaping trout is caught in a rapid  
and washed into the faster currents.  
The waves look up beneath a bridge.  
They see a swimmer getting ready to jump.  
The swimmer crouches down, jumps up and splash, he's disappeared.  
The weeds tickle at his feet  
as a salmon swims by.  
The waves are gone  
and the rapids are calm.  
Then he comes up for air.  
The swimmer can relax as the calm current brings him down stream.  
The water is refreshing.  
He forms his hand into a cup and takes a drink of the cool water.  
He lays down on his back as he floats down stream.  
He thinks in his head,  
"Wow are we lucky to have a river like this."  
Rivers, rivers, rivers.  
by: Darcie Pineo, Grade 6  
Campbell River, B.C.

## **The Columbia River Hosts "Wings Over the Rockies" May 4 -10, 1998**

Here's another post Rivers Conference '98 activity! Why not head out to the Columbia Valley and take in the Wings Over the Rockies Bird Festival.

One hundred and fifty kilometers of Columbia River wetlands, flanked by grasslands, forest, and alpine tundra, lure in over 250 species of birds, including Lewis' Woodpecker, Blue Grouse, Blue Heron, Osprey, Golden Eagle and American Dipper. Enjoy presentations, interpretive walks, floats on the Columbia River, workshops, art displays, Children's Festival and live music while celebrating the return of birds to the Columbia Valley.

Some festival speakers/leaders include: Brian Keating, Birding in Zimbabwe; conservationists from Mindo, Ecuador, Protected Forests - A Paradise for Birders; Geoff Holroyd, Burrowing Owls and Tracking Migration of Raptors; Wayne Sawchuck, the Northern Rockies; David Bird, Watching Birds Naked; and, Bill Swan, Wildlife Trees.

For information:

Call toll free: (888) 933-3311  
local: (250) 342-3210 fax: (250) 342-9221  
E-mail: [wings@adventurevalley.com/wings](mailto:wings@adventurevalley.com/wings)  
Home page: [www.adventurevalley.com/wings](http://www.adventurevalley.com/wings)

### **Alouette River Featured in "Crossing Boundaries"**

The 7th annual conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, taking place at UBC June 10 - 14, 1998 is featuring the Alouette River as one of three workshops in its program. Participants will explore the multi-faceted plan for the river developed by local stakeholders, in conjunction with government agencies, First Nations and BC Hydro.

Recent efforts to increase water flows to re-establish the Alouette as a major salmon spawning stream are at the heart of this model for conflict resolution.

For Information contact IASCP:

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### **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**

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