

**From:** Kyle Schole <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

**Sent:** Sunday, July 30, 2023 9:20 AM

**To:** Kyle Schole <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

**Cc:** Lorne Halisky <[lhalisky@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:lhalisky@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>; council <[council@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:council@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>; Jordan Ruegg <[jruegg@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:jruegg@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>; Lydia Cielin <[lcielin@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:lcielin@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>; Patti Priest <[patti.priest@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:patti.priest@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

**Subject:** Heritage River Correspondence (Brazeau County)

**Importance:** High

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning Reeves/Mayors/Councillors,

I have recently enjoyed the pleasure of seeing many of you at Council or Committee as a Delegation, and for some others we very soon still will be. The purpose for those visits has been to provide a project update, and an opportunity for direct input on the [draft Heritage River Concept Plan](#).

Now, please note and consider the enclosed (*extremely* well-written) staff report, that went to Brazeau County Council on June 20, which adds context to their recent correspondence relating to this item. Indeed, we have addressed the Brazeau's stated concerns *several* times before and provided evidence and tangible examples, but to no avail. Senator Paula Simons also [aptly wrote](#) about this, back in Fall 2021.

As you've heard before, this collaborative initiative is being driven among partnerships, and from Smoky Lake - not Ottawa, and not Edmonton. In fact, every single immediately river adjacent municipal council across 718km has previously provided their support, minus Brazeau.

Please do not hesitate to contact Reeve Halisky or me, *at any time* for questions! Thank you.

Best Regards,

*Kyle Schole*

Planning Technician | Planning & Development Services | Smoky Lake County

Vice Chair | Member-at-large, Board of Directors | [North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance \(NSWA\)](#)

River Manager: [North Sask. \(Alberta\) Canadian Heritage Rivers System Designation Initiative](#) (718 km / 57,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Stories)



4612 - McDougall Drive, PO Box 310, Smoky Lake, Alberta, T0A 3C0  
cell: 780-650-2059 | office: 780-656-3730 | toll free 1-888-656-3730  
web: [www.smokylakecounty.ab.ca](http://www.smokylakecounty.ab.ca)

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and Twitter: [@smokylakecounty](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#)

ᓆᓆᓆᓆᓆᓆ ᓆᓆᓆᓆᓆᓆᓆ (kaskapatau sakahigan) / Димних Озеро (Дымных Озеро) / Lac qui Fume / Smoky Lake on Treaty 6 Territory, and Homeland of the Métis Nation

*Recent studies show that trees live longer if they aren't cut down - please only print this email if truly necessary!*



## BRAZEAU COUNTY UPDATE REPORT TO COUNCIL

---

**SUBJECT:** Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) Designation

**DATE TO COUNCIL:** June 20, 2023

**PREPARED BY:** Martine Martindale, Development Officer

**REVIEWED BY:** Lee Chambers, Director of Community Services

**FILE NUMBER:** 21M-002

**UPDATE INFORMATION:** At the April 19, 2023, regular Council meeting Public Input Session, Louise Weber spoke in opposition of the proposal for the North Saskatchewan River to be designated as part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. She presented her research debunking Kyle Schole's report.

**248/23-04-18** Moved by A. Heinrich to direct Administration to research history on designation and see who supported it and prepare a report that could be used to resist the classification.

### **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Based on the Resolution 248/23-04-18, Administration offers the following:

#### **Brazeau County Council CHRS Presentations and Research History**

December 1, 2020 – Mr. Kyle Schole's initial delegation and presentation (research requested – Resolution 0944-20-12-01);

January 19, 2021 – Update Report (tabled – Resolution 054/21-01-19);

February 2, 2021 – Update Report and Mr. Schole's second presentation for Letter of Support (tabled – Resolution 090/21-01-19); and

March 2, 2021 – Request for Letter of Support returned to Council for a decision (defeated/file for information – Resolution 188/21-03-02).

#### **The Heritage River Initiative**

In August 2022, the governments of Alberta and Canada accepted the nomination for the North Saskatchewan River as a Canadian Heritage Rivers System designation. The intent of Heritage Rivers is to boost and support

tourism, business, and recreation. This is an initiative driven by local partners and is not related to Alberta Land Use Framework Regional Plans.

### **CHRS Designation Support**

Participation in the designation program is voluntary and is non-legislative. 'Substantial public support' was needed to meet the designation criterion for nomination and there is no threshold of support from either private business or public sectors.

Sixteen (16) of the seventeen (17) river-adjacent municipalities, as well as various communities, clubs, utilities/industry, etc. gave support of the designation nomination. Approximately 70 letters were received to date (see attached page 6 in Appendix A, a non-exhaustive list). Letters in support of the designation can still be directed to the Minister of Environment and Parks (now Minister of Environment and Protected Areas) or Smoky Lake County Council. Minister Jason Nixon signed the nomination document in April 2022, and the Federal Minister endorsed it in July 2022.

Brazeau County Council declined to send a letter of support for the North Saskatchewan River to have Heritage Rivers designation. **Brazeau County is the only river-adjacent municipality currently not partnering in the program.** The North Saskatchewan River nomination encompasses the 718 km of the river from the Banff National Park boundary to the Alberta/Saskatchewan border.

### **Status of Designation, Next Steps and Timelines**

The status of this proposal is now on **Step 6 of 7** - producing a designation document (see attached Page 3 in Appendix A for Steps). An intermunicipal advisory committee has been established, and the firm O2 Planning & Design has been retained to assist in a Concept Plan, along with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) taking a leadership role in the initiative since March 2023.

It is anticipated that the non-binding, commemorative/honorific designation Concept Plan will be completed this summer (end of June 2023) and Mr. Schole will be providing update information to all partners and municipal Councils. Submission of the document to the Province/Heritage Rivers Board is expected to be made by September 2023.

**Step 7** – The designation Concept Plan will be seeking endorsement from both provincial and federal Ministers early next year (Spring 2024).

### **Effect on Development**

The Heritage Rivers designation is commemorative and honorific with no effect on industrial, commercial, or other land use decisions along the river

corridor. Municipal decisions will be based on Land Use Bylaws and any other statutory documents. No changes will be required.

**Option 1: No action is required** – the designation program is voluntary and does not require participation and will have no representation on the advisory committee.

**Option 2: Support the designation program** – to support the program a letter of support can be sent to the Minister or Smoky Lake County Council if Brazeau County Council passes a motion by resolution. Private businesses, communities and clubs can also support and collaborate with partners in the program to assist in education, grant funding, advertising, etc. to increase tourism, business, and recreation. There is also no obligation to participate in all or any of the activities in the program; the Concept Plan is simply a way to bring public awareness to the area and its designation. Brazeau County would then be regarded as stewards of the river, and as such, be a part of the advisory committee. Costs associated may include Council member/staff time on the advisory committee to attend/monitor if Brazeau County so chooses.

**Option 3: Objection to the designation** – this may be redundant as the North Saskatchewan River has already received nomination approval, recognizing it as a Heritage River. However, an opposition letter to the Minister or Smoky Lake County Council can be sent by Brazeau County Council, by resolution, in order to confirm its opposition to the designation program and Concept Plan (which will be available for information by the end of June 2023).

## **Appendix A – Mechanics of the Heritage River Nomination Designation Process**

The above is a brief summary of the designation program and the Brazeau County history with this initiative. The following links offer more fulsome information for Council’s consideration.

### **Designation Guidelines and History**

- Canadian Heritage Rivers System – Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines (PPOG) 2023:  
[https://chrs.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/PPOG\\_2023\\_EN\\_Final\\_1.pdf](https://chrs.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/PPOG_2023_EN_Final_1.pdf)
- The Canadian Heritage Rivers System Charter:  
<https://chrs.ca/sites/default/files/2021-04/2014%20CHRS%20Charter%20Font%20Edited%20EN%202018.pdf>
- Canadian Heritage Rivers System 2020-2030 Strategic Plan:  
<https://chrs.ca/2020-2030-strategic-plan/index.html>



Canadian  
Heritage Rivers  
System

Réseau des  
rivières du patrimoine  
canadien

ᑭᓇᑕᑦ  
ᑕᓇᑭᑦᑎᓇᑭᑦ  
ᑭᓇᑕᓇᑭᑦ

# Mechanics of the Heritage River Nomination/Designation Process

### LOCAL PARTNERS

Local Partners author a Nomination Document, and then subsequently, a Management Plan (aka Designation Document).



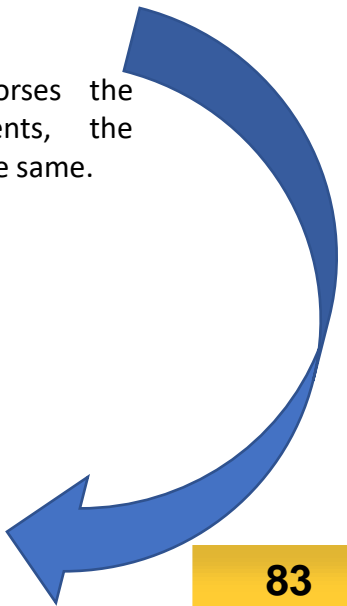
The CHRS Board reviews the Nomination/Designation Documents against the System Frameworks, Gap Analysis, and Strategic Plan.



On the Recommendation of the CHRS Board, the Provincial Minister considers endorsing the Nomination/Designation Documents.



If the Provincial Minister endorses the Nomination/Designation Documents, the Federal Minister considers doing the same.



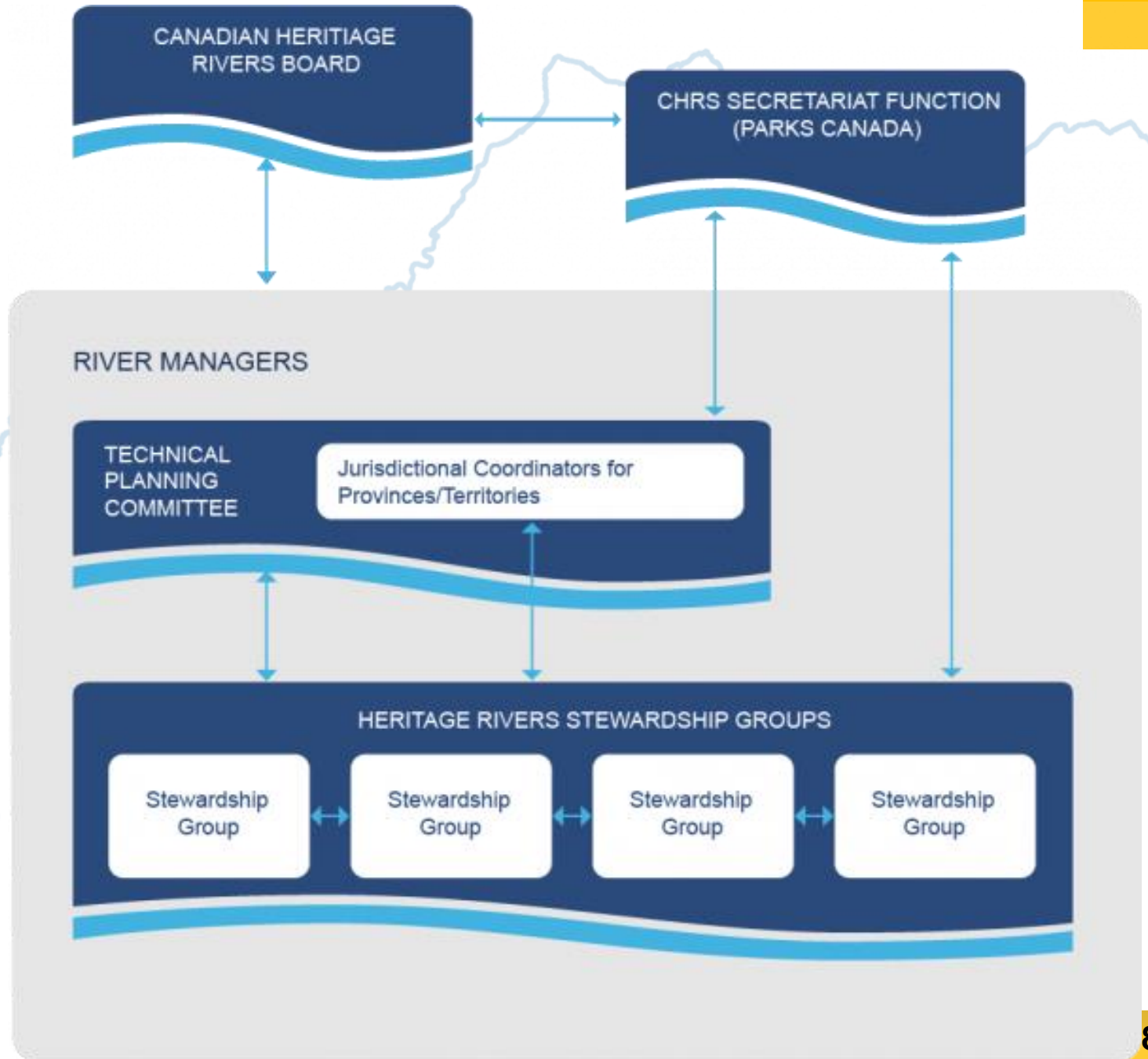


Canadian  
Heritage Rivers  
System

Réseau des  
rivières du patrimoine  
canadien

ba.CF  
ᐱᓐᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ  
ᑯᐳᑦ

## Program Structure:







# Timeline:







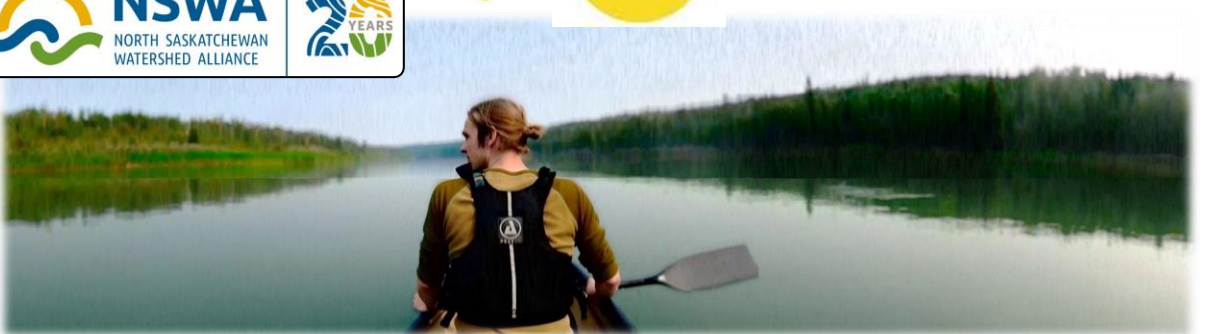
# Who is supporting this?

Edmonton

EPCOR



LAC STE. ANNE COUNTY



^Courtesy of the Government of Alberta, Victoria Settlement Provincial Historic Site



# Brazeau County

7401 – Twp Rd 494, P.O. Box 77, Drayton Valley, Alberta T7A-1R1  
PHONE: (780) 542-7777 - FAX: (780) 542-7770  
www.brazeau.ab.ca

July 25, 2023

Honourable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate  
Change  
Government of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Honourable Rebecca Schulz  
Minister of Environment and Protected  
Areas  
Government of Alberta  
204 Legislature Building  
10800-97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6



Dear Ministers Guilbeault and Schulz,

## **CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM DESIGNATION FOR NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER**

I am writing on behalf of Brazeau County Council to share serious concerns we have with the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River into the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). We ask that you decline to endorse the designation concept plan expected to be presented to you in spring 2024.

When first approached to support the designation in late 2020 and early 2021, our Council declined, for the same reasons I will outline below. Our opposition has not diminished, and we are in fact more concerned today now that the CHRS process has progressed.

While we have been told the designation is honorific and non-binding, we are concerned that this designation is only the first step in a process to have the federal and provincial governments usurp local land use planning and decision-making from municipalities. We understand the stated goal is to increase tourism, business, and recreation, however the Canadian Heritage Rivers System 2020-2030 Strategic Plan offers no specific initiatives to further those goals. It does make several references to river management, but no definition of what that management entails, or who will carry out this management. There are references to management plans by "local river managers, other stewardship groups and partner organizations" (page 11 of the Strategic Plan). As Brazeau County did not and does not support the designation, our Council wonders if decision-making will be taken from the locally elected municipal council, and put into the hands of unelected groups? This is not acceptable to us.

We also worry about the eventual scope of the CHRS designation. The North Saskatchewan River watershed area encompasses a vast portion of central Alberta, from the Rocky Mountains to the

Saskatchewan border, and most of Brazeau County. We are concerned that intrusion into land use decisions will extend in the future from the river itself to its tributaries. We do not accept that local land use decisions will be made by the federal or provincial governments, or unelected organizations under authority bestowed by the CHRS designation.

Brazeau County is not opposed to conservation measures; in fact, we promote them. We are home to two first-of-their-kind environmentally-friendly wastewater treatment facilities that use plants to clean water in lagoons, as well as a hub for innovative companies looking to add value to the oil and gas industry while recycling oil industry waste and re-using infrastructure. In addition, we are proud of our ALUS Brazeau program, which has enrolled 1,600 acres in the program to conserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas on private land.

We urge you to reconsider the designation of the North Saskatchewan River, and allow municipalities and local organizations to manage the river and its watershed unencumbered by federal and provincial overreach.

Thank you for consideration of our letter. Please do not hesitate to call me at 780-542-0999 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bart Guyon', written in a cursive style.

Bart Guyon  
Reeve, Brazeau County

cc: North Saskatchewan River CHRS partners