
Letter of Support Request from Smoky Lake County**Report Purpose**

To seek Council approval on a request from Smoky Lake County on a letter of support to designate the North Saskatchewan River in the Canadian Heritage River System.

Recommendation

THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter indicating the County's support for the designation of the North Saskatchewan River in the Canadian Heritage River System.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Goal 5 - Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships

Report

On November 13, 2020 Smoky Lake County contacted Strathcona County to request a letter of support for the possible Designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

The CHRS is Canada's national program for recognizing Canada's important rivers. It is a cooperative initiative of the federal, provincial, and territorial governments in conjunction with local communities and citizens who play a key role in the program.

The CHRS Charter speaks to the Vision and Purpose of the program:

Vision - The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a model of stewardship, cooperation and participation; one that engages society in valuing the natural and cultural heritage of rivers and river communities as essential to the identity, health and quality of life of Canadians.

Purpose – To set out a framework for cooperation between Canada and the participating Provinces and Territories... to recognize, conserve and manage, in a sustainable manner, Canada's designated heritage rivers and their natural qualities, cultural/historical heritage, and recreational values. The Charter provides a tangible public expression by governments in Canada of their support for and participation in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System and acknowledges the operation of the program through a strategic plan.

Created in 1984, Alberta joined the program in 1994, and currently enjoys three Designations under the System:

- 1989
 - Headwaters of the North Saskatchewan (48km within Banff National Park)
 - Headwaters of the Athabasca (~168km within Jasper National Park)
- 2003
 - Clearwater River (~326km from Fort McMurray into Saskatchewan)

The objectives of the Canadian Heritage Rivers program are to give national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers as part of a comprehensive and representative system and to encourage long-term management that will conserve their natural, cultural, and recreational values for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians, now and in the future.

The CHRS is a model of stewardship, cooperation and participation; one that engages society in valuing the natural and cultural heritage of rivers and river communities as essential to the identity, health and quality of life of Canadians.

Alberta's representation to the CHRS is presently administered through Alberta Environment and Parks.

Smoky Lake County has so far obtained more than fifty letters of support, including:

- Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)
- Travel Alberta
- City of Fort Saskatchewan
- Sturgeon County
- Lamont County
- Thorhild County
- Parkland County
- Paddle Alberta
- Paddle Canada
- Town of Stoney Plain
- Town of Rocky Mountain House
- Clearwater County

Designation under the CHRS does NOT impact or increase development restrictions along the River. No new rules or restrictions are created as a result of Designation.

Enclosure 1 provides the request package received from Smoky Lake County, including a proposed letter.

Other Impacts

Policy: None

Legislative/Legal: None

Interdepartmental: Planning and Development Services was consulted and is supportive of the recommendation.

Master Plan/Framework: None

Enclosure

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Strathcona County Request from Smoky Lake County