TOPIC Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) BRIEFING Designation - Portion of the North Saskatchewan River Canadian Heritage Rivers System **PROPOSAL** Further to the Letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, that Strathcona County Council provide a Letter of Support to Smoky Lake County regarding the possible Designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). In 2019, the Smoky Lake County Council Regional Heritage Board (SLCRHB) **BACKGROUND** initiated a project to potentially designate a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). In October 2020, the Province of Alberta indicated that Alberta Environment and Parks will support the Nomination. To-date, Smoky Lake County has received *22 Letters of Support, including from: o the City of Spruce Grove, o the Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Paddle Alberta and Paddle Canada, o the Town of Stoney Plain, Travel Alberta, the Village of Clyde, Westlock County, o the River Valley Alliance, o the Town of Rocky Mountain House, and Lamont County CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM (CHRS) 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: o Vision: This Charter affirms the vision of the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board that: 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: This Charter sets out a framework for cooperation between Canada and the participating Provinces and Territories (hereinafter together referred to as "the Participants") 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)

<u>Headwaters of the Athabasca</u> (~168km within Jasper National Park)

- 2003: Clearwater River (~326km from Fort McMurray, into the Province of 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 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.
- Alberta's representation to the CHRS is presently administered through Alberta Environment and Parks.

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.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Letter dated October 23, 2020 from Minister for Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), the Hon. Jason Nixon.
- Draft Letter of Support

CORRELATION TO BUSINESS (STRATEGIC) PLAN

• Promote Economic Development, Tourism

LEGISLATIVE, BYLAW and/or POLICY IMPLICATIONS

 Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies, Part II -Activity Policies: Canadian Heritage Rivers Policy

BENEFITS

- Regional, National, and International exposure for the area
- Opportunities for unlocking of grants, etc.
- Natural, land, and river-based tourism development opportunities.

REQUEST

Further to the Letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, that Strathcona County Council provide a Letter of Support to Smoky Lake County regarding the possible Designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).



OCT 23 2020

Office of the Minister Government House Leader MLA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre

Reeve Craig Lukinuk Smoky Lake County PO Box 310 4612 McDougall Driver Smoky Lake AB TOA 3C0 craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca

Dear Reeve Lukinuk:

Thank you for your letter regarding the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

Alberta Environment and Parks supports your group's effort to nominate this river and, as the jurisdictional representative, we will make the formal nomination on your behalf. A heritage river designation would reflect the care and stewardship that local governments and stakeholders have undertaken along the river corridor, and help local municipalities and businesses promote the natural beauty, rich cultural history, and myriad recreation and tourism opportunities in your region.

Once the nomination is endorsed by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System Board of Directors, the next step is for Smoky Lake County to prepare a nomination document with relevant information and background studies. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a grassroots, locally driven program in Alberta. Alberta Environment and Parks will support your efforts where possible, and share available data about natural, cultural and recreation/tourism values pertinent to the river.

I applaud your efforts in pursuing this nomination, and for assembling substantial local and regional support in this regard.

Sincerely

Jason Nixon Minister

cc:

Tracy Draper, Alberta Environment and Parks Brian Joubert, Alberta Environment and Parks Smoky Lake County Council 4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310 Smoky Lake, AB TOA 3C0

Sent by: Regular Mail

DATE

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Lamont County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Importantly, Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

cc:

NAME Mayor, Strathcona County e: @ / p: (780) XXX-XXXX

Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, < kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca>