

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 14 November 1998

TO/DEST. Coordinator, Planning and Environment Committee

FROM/EXP. Wendy Stewart, Regional Councillor, Ward 16

SUBJECT/OBJET **RECOGNITION OF THE RIDEAU WATERWAY AS A
CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVER**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That Planning and Environment Committee recommend that Council support the effort to have the Rideau Waterway from Ottawa to Kingston recognized as a Canadian Heritage River.

BACKGROUND

In correspondence dated 17 July 1998, Mr. Cam McNeil, Chairman of the Coordinating Committee for the Rideau Waterway, requested the Region support its efforts to have the Rideau Waterway recognized as a Canadian Heritage River. This correspondence, together with information on the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS), is held on file in the Regional Clerk's office.

DISCUSSION

The CHRS is a way of recognizing and celebrating Canada's outstanding rivers. The designation gives municipalities and businesses a marketing opportunity to use or not to use as they see fit. Recognition brings with it awareness and status because the system as a whole is promoted nationally and internationally. By helping to attract visitors, recognition helps attract jobs, residents and economic development. The annual economic benefits attributable to the CHRS in 1997 was estimated at \$32 million.

There is absolutely no downloading of cost to municipalities. There is no regulatory aspect to the recognition at all. There is no power to change, over-ride or alter any existing municipal responsibility, regulation or decision-making power. There is no effect on private property rights.

Heritage rivers do require a management plan, and in the Rideau's case, this will be the existing Rideau Canal Management Plan (1996). It has already been accepted as the management guidelines to be used following the Rideau's recognition. It is the product of extensive public and

municipal consultation all along the waterway, already in use for two years. There will be absolutely no change in management from what exists now.

For more information, a letter from Don Gibson, National Manager of the CHRS explaining more fully what the Heritage River designation means, and does not mean, has been appended to this report.

CONCLUSION

This effort to designate the Rideau waterway has the full moral and logistical support of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Parks Canada (Rideau Canal Office) and the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority. The nominating committee is in the process of documenting the broad public support expressed through community associations, historical societies, environmental groups, boating and recreational associations, municipalities, political leaders from all levels, chambers of commerce and individuals. A resolution of support from the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton would become part of this record.

I would urge Planning and Environment Committee and Council to support this endeavour.

*Approved by
W. Stewart*

Attach. (1)



October 13, 1998

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M5

Mr. Cam McNeil
Chair
Rideau (CHRS) Coordinating Committee
c/o Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Box 599
Manotick, Ontario.
K4M 1A5

Dear Mr. McNeil:

As National Program Manager for the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS), I am pleased to provide you with an explanation of the CHRS program as it relates to your committee's interest in seeking Canadian Heritage River recognition for the Rideau Waterway. You are welcome to share this information with whomever you wish.

CHRS recognition involves a partnership based on cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders including federal, provincial and municipal governments. While responsibility for administering the CHRS rests with government, achievement of the program's vision depends, in large part, on the support and stewardship of local people. Full respect is shown for the rights and concerns of communities, Aboriginal Peoples, land owners and other stakeholders in the nomination, recognition and management of Canadian Heritage Rivers. Indeed, this principle is reflected in the CHRS Charter which was signed last year by all federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for the CHRS.

To date, 31 rivers totalling 8125 km have been included in the national heritage rivers system. Community interest and support for the CHRS continues to grow rapidly and is the main driving force behind the program and its many successes. Rivers nominated to the CHRS which flow through a large number of municipalities, including major cities and private lands, are the entire 1,375 km Fraser River in British Columbia whose lower section flows through the cities of Coquitlam, New Westminster, Burnaby, Richmond and Vancouver; the Grand in Ontario which includes over 60 rural and urban municipalities in its watershed; the Humber which flows through Mississauga and Toronto and numerous municipalities to the north of Toronto; the Thames which flows through a large number of rural and urban jurisdictions including London and the Hillsborough in Prince Edward Island which flows through various rural municipalities before reaching Charlottetown. In each of these cases, municipal governments expressed overwhelming support for CHRS nomination.

I hope that the information contained herein satisfies your request for clarification on certain key issues affecting the CHRS program. Should you or any other members of the nomination committee wish further information, I would be pleased to assist in whatever way I can.

Yours sincerely,



Don Gibson
National Manager
Canadian Heritage Rivers System

c.c. N. Richards