Nomination Document for the South Saskatchewan River and Saskatchewan River
Saskatchewan 2011

CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM

Submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board by the Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Photos used in cover from top to bottom:


2. Boilers of S.S. Northcote. 1885. Saskatchewan Archives Board. R-B259

3. Saskatchewan Forks Project. Photo courtesy of Saskatchewan Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.


5. The Wreck of the City of Medicine Hat. 1908. Saskatoon Local History Room. LH438


7. Two men mapping the medicine wheel at Wanuskewin. Saskatoon Local History Room. LH-5054.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVER NOMINATION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Heritage Designation Initiative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Designation Steering Committee</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Support and Involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The Canadian Heritage Rivers System</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Context of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Role of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Description of Cultural Heritage Values</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Harvesting</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Transport</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian Settlement</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Recreation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurisdictional Use</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Assessment of Cultural Heritage Values</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Description of Natural Heritage Values</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiography</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Morphology</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotic Environment</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauna</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.1 Canadian Heritage Rivers Map................................................................. 6
Figure 1.2 Drainage Basins Map.................................................................................. 9
Table 1.1 South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers Cultural Heritage Theme
Representations........................................................................................................... 12
Figure 2.1 Cultural Heritage Map.............................................................................. 19
Figure 2.2 Fishing in the River.................................................................................. 20
Figure 2.3 Gardiner Dam.......................................................................................... 22
Figure 2.4 Unidentified man on board the Half-Breed Commissioners’ York boat,
Saskatchewan River NWT, 1900.............................................................................. 23
Figure 2.5 The Wreck of the City of Medicine Hat. 1908.......................................... 25
Figure 2.6 Samuel Hearne....................................................................................... 26
Figure 2.7 The Siting of Cumberland House........................................................... 26
Figure 2.8 Camp at Elbow, 1871. Canadian Pacific Railway Survey....................... 27
Figure 2.9 Two men mapping the medicine wheel at Wanuskewin.......................... 29
Figure 2.10 Hospitals in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 1885...................................... 30
RIVER NOMINATION

• Whereas, the tributaries of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers bring huge volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains which sustained plant and animal life that attracted First Nations people to occupy the area some 10,000 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

• Whereas, the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because they were the battleground for a fierce rivalry for the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based at York Factory, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort a La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the Province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 fur trading post sites, often with rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta border to the Manitoba border.

• Whereas, the Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

• Whereas, exploration of the Prairies by John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led to a period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers.

• Whereas, the decimation of the bison herds on the plains and the decline in the fur trade changed the lives of the First Nations and Métis people forever. The South Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it marks the transition of the region’s Aboriginal population from a nomadic to a more permanently settled agarian lifestyle. The Métis turned to farming and settled permanently along the South Saskatchewan River at St. Laurent, Batoche, Fish Creek, Halcro and Adam’s Crossing, using a river lot settlement pattern. First Nations groups signed Treaties and settled on reserves.

• Whereas, the South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on 9 to 12 May 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites, reflecting their significance in Canadian history.

• Whereas, The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a 225 km long reservoir, Lake Diefenbaker, that provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, flood control, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial to the future development of Saskatchewan.
• Whereas, the South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six different ecoregions.

• Whereas, the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

• Therefore, it is recommended by the Province of Saskatchewan that the entire section of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers in the Province of Saskatchewan from the Alberta border to the Manitoba border be nominated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System for the purpose of recognizing, celebrating and conserving the river’s outstanding cultural heritage values.

Honourable Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Province of Saskatchewan

Date
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers Heritage Designation Initiative

Over the years a number of individuals and groups have been interested in having portions of the Saskatchewan River Basin in Saskatchewan designated a Canadian Heritage River. But it was the upcoming 125th anniversary of the Northwest Resistance that encouraged these individuals and groups to come together in 2007 to investigate the possibility of a designation under the auspices of Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB). The events surrounding the Resistance were intimately tied to the river and to changing the face of Canada. Indeed, many of the lands surrounding the river formed our very own Plains of Abraham.

PFSRB, a non-profit organization, took on the task of supporting the committee in managing the process. PFSRB was established in 1993 with a mandate to promote stewardship and sustainability in the Saskatchewan River Basin. The mandate of PFSRB originates in the Rocky Mountains in Alberta and ends in the sea in Hudson Bay. Partners include individuals and organizations from all sectors of society and all geographic areas of the basin (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba).

PFSRB’s mission is “to promote watershed sustainability through awareness, linkages and stewardship.” PFSRB accomplishes its mission by developing and implementing environmental stewardship and education projects across the basin. “FOR” is capitalized to remind everyone that this organization is directed toward taking action. Every resident of the basin has opportunities and responsibilities to work FOR the health and sustainability of the river basin that is our home as well as the home for many other living things.

PFSRB is developing and implementing programs consisting of three pillars of activity:

1) Education and Stewardship
2) Communications and Information
3) Influence and Decision Making

The web page www.saskriverbasin.ca provides more information about these many projects.

Critical to the process was the Gabriel Dumont Institute, which produced a great deal of research, particularly in the cultural component of the designation.
1.1.1 South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Heritage Designation Steering Committee

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers Nomination Document is part of a community initiative seeking Canadian Heritage River designation for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. Numerous individuals from various agencies, municipalities, local organizations and the general public have donated their time, energy and experience to this project.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon undertook the cultural research for the background report upon which this nomination document is based and as such, should be recognized for their contribution to the project.

A complete listing of individuals and organizations involved in this initiative can be found in Appendix A.

1.1.2 Community Support and Involvement

Support for the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as Canadian Heritage Rivers has been widespread throughout Saskatchewan. Meetings have been held throughout Saskatchewan with communities, stakeholders and individuals. A measure of the support for this nomination can be found in the number of letters of support that we have received. A complete listing of the letters of support can be found in Appendix A along with copies of the actual letters. Additional letters of support are continuing to be submitted and are available upon request.

Please refer to Appendix A: Community Meetings along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers for a full list of meetings held to date.

1.1.3 Methodology

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers within Saskatchewan are being nominated for their outstanding cultural heritage values and integrity, thereby adhering to the submission requirements of the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. Though not nominated for its natural and recreational values, the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide significant representation of a number of natural and recreational values. The above more than justifies the inclusion of the system in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS).
1.2 The Canadian Heritage Rivers System

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) was established in 1984 as a cooperative program to provide national recognition to Canadian rivers that have been identified as having outstanding natural and human heritage values. These rivers also provide significant recreational opportunities. The federal government of Canada, the provinces, and territories all participate in the program. Participation in the CHRS program is voluntary and it is important to note that all participants retain their traditional jurisdictional powers and management responsibilities throughout this process. This includes land ownership.

Figure 1.1 indicates the rivers currently included in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport; Parks Service Division represents Saskatchewan on the CHRS Board and manages Saskatchewan’s involvement in the CHRS program. The objective of the CHRS is to provide Canada’s important rivers with the national recognition and protection so that:

- The cultural heritage of the area is conserved and interpreted;
- The natural heritage of the area is conserved and interpreted;
- The recreational and heritage appreciation opportunities are realized by the residents of and visitors to Canada.

In order for a river to qualify for inclusion in the CHRS, it is necessary that the river “meets one or more of the natural or cultural selections guidelines, as well as a set of “Integrity Guidelines” (CHRS, 2001).

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the nomination document contain information on the cultural, natural heritage, and recreational values of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers to be assessed against the CHRS Selection and Integrity Guidelines. This information will be used to determine the strength of the proposal.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board is comprised of federal, provincial and territorial representatives. Once the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board has received the nomination document, these individuals will examine the document regarding the suitability of including the nominated river as a heritage river. The Board will use the nomination document to determine whether or not and to what degree the nominated river adheres to the “Guidelines for the Selections of Canadian Heritage Rivers”.

Once the nomination has been accepted, a management plan must be submitted to the board. The nominating committee has a maximum of three years to complete and submit the management plan. Once this has been completed, the river or section of river shall be formally included in the CHRS. Periodic reviews of Canadian Heritage Rivers will be conducted to ensure that the designated rivers continue to merit inclusion in the CHRS.
The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers can be seen in the context of the entire basin. The waters of the 405,864 km² Saskatchewan River Basin rise in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains and flow eastward across the prairie provinces joining Lake Winnipeg and then to Hudson Bay via the Nelson River. About 90% of the flow in the river originates in the mountains with the remaining flow being contributed by prairie runoff in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The basin is larger than Germany and smaller than France. 52% of the basin is in Alberta, 42% in Saskatchewan and 6% in Manitoba. Approximately three million people live in the basin, 95% of them in urban centres in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The major tributaries of the Saskatchewan River Basin are the South Saskatchewan River and the North Saskatchewan River. This document nominates the South Saskatchewan River from

Figure 1.1 Canadian Heritage Rivers Map. Base map provided by Canadian Heritage Rivers System (www.chrs.ca)

1.3. Context of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers can be seen in the context of the entire basin. The waters of the 405,864 km² Saskatchewan River Basin rise in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains and flow eastward across the prairie provinces joining Lake Winnipeg and then to Hudson Bay via the Nelson River. About 90% of the flow in the river originates in the mountains with the remaining flow being contributed by prairie runoff in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The basin is larger than Germany and smaller than France. 52% of the basin is in Alberta, 42% in Saskatchewan and 6% in Manitoba. Approximately three million people live in the basin, 95% of them in urban centres in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The major tributaries of the Saskatchewan River Basin are the South Saskatchewan River and the North Saskatchewan River. This document nominates the South Saskatchewan River from
the Alberta border to the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River below the confluence to the Manitoba border for inclusion in the Canadian Heritage River System. The major tributaries of the South Saskatchewan River in Alberta are the Bow and the Oldman Rivers.

**Human Influences**

The nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as heritage rivers will raise the profile of the rivers, while providing people with the opportunity to address the various issues and threats faced by the river system. The designation will provide people with a forum for discussion and over the long term will create an awareness of the special values that need to be taken into account in the basin.

The Saskatchewan River Basin has been profoundly altered by human activity. This is particularly evident in loss of wetlands and native grasslands, and in the conversion of forestlands for agricultural use. Much of the present land surface is devoted to agricultural production, streams have been dammed for power production, and the basin contains some of the fastest growing and most prosperous urban centres in Canada.

Water demands, both consumptive such as irrigated agriculture and non-consumptive such as hydroelectric generation, and the trends in water demands are important considerations throughout the basin. Improvements to policies, laws and procedures for water allocations for encouraging increased beneficial use, and for water conservation will be needed.

The water in the Bow and Oldman Rivers is fully allocated and therefore closed to further water licenses. This leads to the selling and transferring of water licenses. However, it is important to note that 100% of the water license is not transferred as the province keeps some of the water license to create riparian areas.

The North Saskatchewan has few water allocations and water is abundant. This leads to discussions of diversions and transfers of water resources.

The Saskatchewan River has few allocations but is fully dammed. This causes issues, especially in regards to the Saskatchewan River Delta and Cumberland Lake. Although the Saskatchewan River Delta is the largest inland delta in North America, there is little information known about the delta and no legislation or processes have been established to protect it.

In addition to natural variability, water availability in downstream provinces is governed by the Prairie Provinces’ Water Board’s Master Agreement on Apportionment. The agreement, in general, specifies that each year Alberta must pass half the natural flow that arises in the province on to Saskatchewan and that Saskatchewan must pass on half the water it receives plus half the water that arises in Saskatchewan to Manitoba. Water use trends in Alberta are therefore of interest to Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and water use trends in Saskatchewan are of interest to Manitoba. Flows in the South Saskatchewan River have been reduced, particularly by irrigation water use in Alberta, and modified by the operation of the Gardiner Dam in Saskatchewan. Nonetheless Alberta on average delivers 68% of the natural flow to Saskatchewan; in 2001, a dry year, this declined to 58%.

Key vulnerabilities of the basin pertain to physical and ecological effects of landscape modification, water supplies to meet human and other needs, the effects of urban development
on water quality, natural hazards such as floods and droughts and invasive species. The challenge for integrated water resources management in the basin is to attempt to balance human and environmental needs within this diverse river basin.

There have been many different ways in which humans have impacted the basin. With the European and Euro-Canadian settlement of the basin came agricultural production. Habitat for many plant and animal species has been lost to a grains and forage monoculture, and altered by the introduction of invasive species. Remaining areas of unaltered wildlife habitat have become fragmented, often too small to sustain viable populations of once abundant species.

As communities grow and expand, their footprint on the landscape also increases. Almost all of the water used in the cities of the basin is surface water. Groundwater tends to be used only by smaller communities and farmsteads. The continuing urban growth and related demand for water services such as water supply, wastewater treatment and storm water drainage are a considerable challenge.

The Saskatchewan River Basin is subject to floods and droughts. Traditionally, the construction of dams was used for flood and drought management. Dams and weirs change the portion of the river channel where the project is constructed from a river environment to a lake environment. Their presence fragments the natural ecosystem by providing barriers to migration of aquatic species and disrupting riparian habitat. Current approaches tend to be non-structural and include the usage of zoning principles.

Climate change is a global problem that will affect the Saskatchewan River Basin. Even if future water supply conditions are within basin residents’ ability to adapt, climate change could lead to a higher probability of extreme conditions such as floods and droughts.

Governments at all levels have developed a sophisticated web of legislation and programs that apply to various aspects of water management in the Saskatchewan River Basin. Contemporary water management seeks to engage basin interests and the general public in meeting the needs of society without degrading the natural environment. There is an underlying concept of shared governance, at least as it pertains to water planning.

In the Saskatchewan River Basin, it is necessary to work with four political jurisdictions – the federal government and the three Prairie Provinces. Each of these political entities has different priorities, responsibilities and approaches.

Current issues with contamination in Lake Winnipeg and water quantity in the Saskatchewan River Delta have raised the profile of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers within the entire basin.
1.4 Role of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System

The 2010 CHRS Gap analysis states that the eight most under-represented values and/or themes are, in order: agricultural extraction, architectural responses to river locations, human consumption, Aboriginal-European conflict, interprovincial-territorial boundaries, trans-boundary rivers, collections of shellfish, and land-based tourism. Of these eight values, the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers specifically address five of these values. These values are: agricultural extraction, architectural responses to river locations, human consumption, Aboriginal-European conflict and trans-boundary rivers.

The CHRS Strategic Plan has four priorities. Priority 1: Build a comprehensive and representative system that recognizes Canada’s river heritage; Priority 2: Conserve the natural, cultural, and recreational values and integrity of designated Canadian Heritage Rivers; Priority 3: Engage communities and partners to maximize the full range of benefits associated with the Canadian Heritage program; and Priority 4: Foster excellence in river management.

The nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers addresses the concerns of at least two of the above priorities. Priority 1 concerns the need to build a comprehensive and representative system of rivers throughout Canada. The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers lie within the Prairies physiographic region of Canada. The Red River in Manitoba is the only river designated in the CHRA representing the Prairies. The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are also the only rivers that extend through five distinct ecoregions.

Priority 3 concerns the need to engage communities and partners to advance the CHRS program and to deliver broad environmental and societal benefits associated with responsible river management. The nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers comes directly from a working relationship between communities and partners. Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin, a non-profit organization, took on the task of supporting the committee in managing the nomination process, acting as a liaison between the different groups and composing the final document for approval.

The rivers represent a number of cultural heritage themes that are significant in Canadian history. Table 1, identifies the cultural heritage themes and sub-themes outlined in the Policies and Guidelines of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System represented by the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as well as a number of other rivers in the system representing the sub-theme. These values will be incorporated at a later date into a monitoring checklist. This will ensure that the values that the river is nominated for will continue to be evaluated and are not compromised.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers add geographic context to themes that are already well represented in the system. Other themes/sub-themes which are not well represented in the CHRS, such as extraction of water, river-influenced transportation, conflict and military associations, and boundaries, are also represented.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers would enhance the CHRS cultural heritage theme representation by contributing the following cultural heritage values:
• Provided the necessities of life and spiritual and ceremonial sites for the nomadic inhabitants of the northern plains of North America for over 8,000 years.

• Major trade and travel route for aboriginal peoples and the transportation of furs to English traders on the shore of Hudson Bay via the Nelson River and the Hayes River (a designated Canadian Heritage River).

• Route used by fiercely competitive fur trading companies, construction of fur trading posts, and further western exploration that led to the first crossing of North America north of the Rio Grande.

• Location for the first permanent settlements marking the transition of First Nations and Métis people from a hunting/gathering culture to farming.

• Steamboat transportation of early settlers, equipment and dignitaries before the arrival of railways.

• Diversity of agricultural settlement patterns including river lots, ranching, and homesteading, especially by the Temperance Colonization Society.

• Extraction of water for a variety of uses including agricultural irrigation, power generation, community water supplies and industrial uses led to the second largest government cost-shared public works project in Canadian history; The South Saskatchewan River Project.

• The last military expedition and conflict on Canadian soil; the Northwest Resistance

• Establishment of The Prairie Provinces Water Board to manage the use and apportionment of the water in this trans-boundary river which spans all three prairie provinces.

Though not nominated for its natural and recreational values, the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide significant representation of a number of natural and recreational values:

• The rivers flow through the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada. The Red River in Manitoba is the only river designated in the CHRS representing the Prairies.

• The river valleys contain significant remnants of representative natural vegetation that has been lost to cultivation on much of the surrounding uplands.

• The Saskatchewan River Delta, the largest fresh water delta in North America, provides habitat for many species of birds, mammals, and fish.

• Confirmed populations of regionally or federally recognized plants and animal species at risk.

• The South Saskatchewan River provides readily accessible canoeing opportunities for residents and tourists to enjoy the rich cultural and historic resources within a natural setting.

• Meewasin Valley Authority provides an excellent array of urban recreation facilities and opportunities to experience the natural phenomena of the South Saskatchewan River within the city of Saskatoon.

• Reservoirs provide excellent boating opportunities and other water-related activities, including world-class sport fishing, in close proximity to urban centers and where alternate sites are lacking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHRS Cultural Framework Theme/Sub-theme/Element</th>
<th>*Number of CHRS Rivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. RESOURCE HARVESTING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.1: Fishing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Aboriginal Prehistoric fishing</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological evidence at 4 sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Historic domestic fishing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological evidence in settlements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 Commercial fishing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent activity on Lake Diefenbaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4 Collection of shellfish</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlook and Cumberland House archaeological sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.2: Shoreline Resource Harvesting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Trapping of fur bearing animals</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver and muskrat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Collection of Plants</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal purposes, tools, shelter, watercraft, maple syrup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3 Hunting of birds and animals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammoths, horse, camel, bison, waterfowl and other birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.3: Extraction of Water</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Human Consumption</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic distribution Saskatoon 1906, diversion to Regina/Moose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaw from Lake Diefenbaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 Agricultural extraction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranching and homesteading, irrigation from Lake Diefenbaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.4 Industrial extraction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydro-electric power, potash mines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. WATER TRANSPORT

### Sub-theme 2.1: Commercial Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.1 Prehistoric trade</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade goods in archaeological sites from areas remote to Saskatchewan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.2 Historic human-powered freight</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birch bark canoes, Canot du Nord, York boats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.3 Powered Commercial freight</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steamboats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.4 Surface bulk transport</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Log drives and lumber rafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sub-theme 2.2: Transportation Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2.1 Fur Trade posts</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort a La Corne 1753, Cumberland House 1774, 16 other sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2.2 Navigational improvements</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portage slides for York boats, few improvements for steamboats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sub-theme 2.3: Exploration and Surveying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.3.1 French exploration</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LaFrance, de Niverville, LeVerendrye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.3.2 British exploration</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey, Hearne, Henday, Fidler, Thompson, MacKenzie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.3.3 Migration and settlement</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Palliser, Hind, Macoun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.3.4 Surveying expeditions</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thompson, Fidler, Franklin, steamboat potential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. RIPARIAN SETTLEMENT

### Sub-theme 3.1: Siting of Dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1.1 Shoreline seasonal dwellings</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal seasonal dwelling sites, Petite Ville Heritage Property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1.2 Riverside homesteads and farms</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goodwin House, homestead cellar depressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1.3 Permanent riverside dwellings sited with respect to rivers</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marr residence in Saskatoon, President’s Residence at the University of Saskatchewan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1.4 Dispersed dwellings in settlement patterns</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River lot settlements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sub-theme 3.2: River-based Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.2.1 Permanent shoreline Aboriginal settlements</th>
<th>22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland House, St. Laurent, Batoche, Fish Creek, St. Louis, 5 First Nation reserves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sub-theme 3.3: River-influenced Transportation

3.3.1 Ferries and fords
- Saskatchewan Landing, Clark’s Crossing, Gabriel’s Crossing,
  Batoche Crossing

3.3.2 Road bridges
- Saskatoon ‘City of Bridges’

3.3.3 Rail bridges
- Saskatoon 1889/90, Outlook 1912, Nipawin 1924

### 4. CULTURE AND RECREATION

#### Sub-theme 4.1: Spiritual Associations

4.1 Sacred or spiritual sites
   - Roy Rivers Medicine Wheel, Cabri Lake Human Effigy, Bull’s Forehead Coulee, The Forks, Wanuskewin Heritage Park

4.1.2 Ritual or ceremonial structures and sites
   - Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Batoche Church

4.1.3 Aboriginal burial places
   - Batoche Cemetery, Round Prairie Métis Cemetery

4.1.4 European burial places
   - Nutana Cemetery in Saskatoon

#### Sub-theme 4.2: Cultural Expression

4.2.1 Riverside museums, art galleries and commemorative structures
   - Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Batoche National Historic Site

4.2.3 River-based cultural landscapes
   - Saskatoon Temperance Colony, river lot settlements

4.2.4 Architectural response to river location
   - Bowerman House in Saskatoon

#### Sub-theme 4.3: Early Recreation

4.3.1 Recreation boating
   - Canoeing and boating in Saskatoon

4.3.2 Angling
   - Common at all river access points
### 5. JURISDICTIONAL USE

#### Sub-theme 5.1: Conflict and military Associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1.1 Aboriginal internecine conflict</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gros Ventre-Cree battles of 1793 and 1794 near South Branch House, murder of Iroquois employees of Hudson’s Bay Company at Fort Chesterfield in 1802</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1.2 Aboriginal/European Conflict</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Resistance battles at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche in 1885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1.4 Military expeditions</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middleton forces during the Northwest Resistance crossed the South Saskatchewan River on ferries, transported supplies, battle casualties and prisoners by steamboat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sub-theme 5.2: Boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2.3 Land use boundaries</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rivers act as boundaries between Crown and private land, Crown/private land and First Nations reserves, and between rural municipalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2.4 Trans-boundary rivers</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Saskatchewan River originates in Alberta and Saskatchewan River flows into Manitoba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sub-theme 5.3: Environmental Regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.3.1 Flood Control</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of the objectives of the South Saskatchewan River Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

**Table 1.2: South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers**

**Natural Values Theme Representations**

### NATURAL

#### 1. Hydrology

**Sub-theme 1.1: Hydrology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1.1 Drainage Basin</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nelson River / Hudson Bay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1.2 Stream Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd stream order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-theme 1.2: Seasonal Variation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.2.1 High and Low Flows</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May Secondary Peak / July High / December Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sub-theme 1.3: Water Content
1.3.1 Physical Properties
   Moderate sediment load
1.3.2 Chemical Properties
   High total dissolved solids

Sub-theme 1.4: River Size
1.4.1 Total River Length
   1000km total length (>1000km for drainage basin)
1.4.2 Average Flow Volume
   Large river category

2. Physiography

Sub-theme 2.1: Physiographic Region
2.1.1 Region
   Prairie Physiographic Region

Sub-theme 2.2: Geological Processes
2.2.1 Bedrock Formation
   Glacial drift and sedimentation
2.2.2 Surficial Material Formation
   Glacial transport

Sub-theme 2.3: Hydrogeology
2.3.1 Properties of Bedrock and Unconsolidated Materials
   Medium porosity

Sub-theme 2.4: Topography
2.4.1 Gradient and Relief
   400-1000m above sea level for majority of river

3. River Morphology

Sub-theme 3.1: Valley Types
3.1.1 Valley Walls
   Concave valley walls
3.1.2 Valley Floors
   Significant floodplain
3.1.3 Interfluves
   Peaked interfluves

Sub-theme 3.2: Channel Patterns
3.2.1 Stream Configurations
   Braided, anastomosing, meandering, sinuous, branching
3.2.2 Lake Systems
   Floodplain lakes, feeder lakes, artificial elongated lakes
## Sub-theme 3.3: Channel Profile

### 3.3.1 Level Water
Low channel gradient, flatwater at SK Delta

### 3.3.2 White Water
Riffle rapids only

### 3.3.3 Waterfalls
No natural waterfalls

## Sub-theme 3.4: Fluvial Landforms

### 3.4.1 Depositional and Erosional Features
Point bars, longitudinal bars, deltas, levees, oxbow lakes, gullies, undercutting, slope failures, gorges, terracing

## 4. Biotic Environments

### Sub-theme 4.1: Aquatic Ecosystems

#### 4.1.1 Riverine Systems
Middle zone riverine system

#### 4.1.2 Lake Systems
Mesotrophic (Diefenbaker, Tobin, Codette)
Oligotrophic (parts of Diefenbaker)
Eutrophic (Cumberland Lake)

#### 4.1.3 Estuarine Systems
None

#### 4.1.4 Wetland Systems
Marshes (throughout basin)
Bogs / Fens (SK Delta)
Swamps (SK Delta)

## Sub-theme 4.2: Terrestrial Ecoregions

#### 4.2.1 Terrestrial Ecozones
Prairie Ecozone (540 km)
Boreal Plains (465 km)

## 5. Vegetation

### Sub-theme 5.1: Significant Plant Communities

#### 5.1.1 Species Type and Exceptionality
Cottonwood forests, Protected riparian forest

### Sub-theme 5.2: Rare Plant Species

#### 5.2.1 Rare Aquatic / Riparian Plants
Selaginella selaginoides (Prickly Selaginella), Najas flexilis (Flexible Naiad), Eleocharis compressa (Flat-Stemmed Spike-Rush), Eleocharis engelmannia (Engelmann’s Spike-Rush), Scirpus rufus, variety neogaeus (Red Club Rush), Spergularia marina (Salt-Marsh Sand-Spurrey), Hutchinsia procumbens (Prostrate Alpen-Cress), Anagalis minima (Chaff-Weed), Gentiana aquatica (Moss Gentian), Carex obtusata (Blunt Sedge), Carex retrorsa (Turned Sedge), Carex sprengelii (Sprengel’s Sedge)
### 5.1.2 Rare Vascular Plants

- Dalea villosa var. villosa (Hairy Prairie Clover)
- Halimolobos virgata (Slender Mouse-ear Cress)
- Chenopodium subglabrum (Smooth Arid Goosefoot)
- Tradescantia occidentalis (Western Spiderwort)
- Tripterocalyx micranthus (Small-flowered Sand-verbena)
- Cryptantha minima (Small Cryptantha)
- Allium cernuum (Nodding Onion)
- Botrychium multifidum (Leathery Grape-Fern)
- Agropyron dasystachyum (Sand-Hill Wheatgrass)
- Elymus glaucus (Smooth Wild Rye)
- Lupinus pusillus (Small Lupine)
- Prunus americana (American Plum)
- Scirpus pumilus, variety rollandii
- Viola pedatifida (Crowfoot Violet)
- Corallorhiza striata (Stripped Coral-Root)
- Potentilla nititima (Prairie Cinquefoil)
- Potentilla quinquefolia (Five-Fingered Cinquefoil)
- Petalostemon villosum (Hairy Prairie Clover)
- Atriplex nutallii (Nutall’s Atriplex)
- Silene menziesii (Menzies Catchfly)
- Stellaria crassifolia (Fleshy Stitchwort)
- Ranunculus sceleratus (Celery Leaved Buttercup)
- Ribes americanum (Wild Black Current)
- Geum alleppicum (Yellow Avens)
- Potentill hippiana (Wooly Cinquefoil)
- Astragalus striatus (Ascending Purple Milk Vetch)
- Oxytropis divaricata (Loose Flowered Milk Vetch)
- Oxytropis Campestris (Late Yellow Locoweed)
- Oxytropis deflexa (Reflexed Locoweed)
- Lysimachia thyrsiflora (Tufted Loosestrife)
- Primula incana (Mealy Primrose)
- Asclepias viridiflora (Green Milkweed)
- Lappula deflexa (Nodding Stickseed)
- Lycopus asper (Western Water Horehound)
- Erigeron asper (Rough Fleabane)
- Erigeron caespitosus (Tufted Fleabane)
- Haplopappus spinulosus (Spiny Ironplant)

### 6. Fauna

#### Sub-theme 6.1: Significant Animal Populations

**6.1.1 Species Type and Exceptionality**

- Diversity of bird species - Saskatchewan Delta
- Diversity of fish species - Saskatchewan Delta
- Piping plover - Lake Diefenbaker

#### Sub-theme 6.2: Rare Animal Species

**6.2.1 Rare Mammals**

- Vulpes velox (Swift Fox)
- Dipodomys ordii (Ord’s Kangaroo Rat)

**6.2.2 Rare Birds**

- Buteo regalis (Ferruginous Hawk)
- Numenius americanus (Long-billed Curlew)
- Asio flammeus (Short-eared Owl)
- Coturnicops noveboracensis (Yellow Rail)
- Euphagus carolinus (Rusty Blackbird)
- Podiceps auritus (Horned Grebe)
- Chordeiles minor (Common Nighthawk)
- Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides (Loggerhead Shrike)
- Anthus spragueii (Sprague’s Pipit)
- Wilsonia canadensis (Canada Warbler)
- Melanerpes erythrocephalus (Red-headed Woodpecker)
- Falco peregrinus anatum (Peregrine Falcon)
- Charadrius melodus circumcinctus (Piping Plover)
- Charadrius montanus (Mountain Plover)
- Athene cunicularia (Burrowing Owl)
- Megascops kennicottii macfarlanei (Western Screech Owl)
- Grus americana (Whooping Crane)
- Grus Canadensis (Sandhill Crane)
- Phalacrocorax auritus (Double-crested Cormorant)
- Accipiter striatus (Sharp-shinned Hawk)
- Accipiter cooperii (Cooper’s Hawk)
- Falco columbarius (Merlin)

**6.2.3 Vertebrates**

- Danaus plexippus (Monarch Butterfly)

**6.2.4 Fish**

- Acipenser fulvescens (Lake Sturgeon)

**6.2.5 Amphibians**

- Bufo cognatus (Great Plains Toad)
- Phrynosoma hernandesi (Greater Short-horned Lizard)
The name Saskatchewan originates from the Cree word, “kisiskâciwanisîpiy” meaning “swift flowing river.” The significance of the river to the past and future of Western Canada is reflected in the selection of the name for one of the two provinces established in 1905.

This chapter describes the cultural heritage themes represented by the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. These themes are the basis for the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as a Canadian Heritage River.


### 2.1 Description of Cultural Heritage Values

#### Theme 1: Resource Harvesting

The South Saskatchewan River supplies a reliable source of fresh water in an otherwise semi-arid environment on the northern plains. Plants and animals thrive in the river, the river valley and tributary coulees. The First Nations people of the territory were attracted to the river because of the abundant resources and shelter it provided.

**Fishing**

Archaeological evidence from sites near Outlook (Sjovold site) and Batoche on the South Saskatchewan River and near Nipawin and Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River indicate that fish was a common food.

The most abundant type of faunal remains found in the excavation at Cumberland House were sturgeon, and there is evidence that weirs made with rocks were used to trap them. Evidence for the collection of freshwater clams have also been found at the archaeological sites at Outlook and Cumberland House, but it is unlikely they were an important food source.

There is no information suggesting commercial fishing occurred prior to 1993 when the Cangro Fish Farm, which raises rainbow trout on Lake Diefenbaker, was established.

**Shoreline Resource Harvesting**

Trapping of fur-bearing animals, particularly beaver and muskrat, along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers was the first significant commercial activity in what is now Western Canada. The trading of furs led to further exploration and settlement, and eventually to the development of the plains.

Muskrats were also an important food source in some communities such as Petite Ville near Saskatoon, mostly because bison herds declined in the late 1800s. Eventually, the trapping industry declined due to over-harvesting. In the late 1930s there was resurgence in trapping in
the Cumberland House area in the Saskatchewan River Delta when government-funded dams, canals, and other water-control measures were constructed to increase the muskrat population.

Numerous plants found along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers were used by early Aboriginal peoples for various purposes. Fireweed, horsetail, yarrow, and Saskatoon berry had medicinal uses for treating wounds and various ailments. Small trees and shrubs were used for bows, arrows, spears, and other tools. Large shrubs and trees were used for the construction of dwellings and watercraft. The Saskatoon berry was a staple of the northern plains as an ingredient in pemmican, and its stems were used as arrow shaft. Maple syrup was harvested in the Saskatchewan River Delta by the Red Earth Cree.

Since prehistoric times, the most common animal harvested along the South Saskatchewan River was the bison. Cliffs along the river valley were ideal for buffalo jumps, which were the primary method of harvesting bison. There is archaeological evidence that buffalo jumps were used as far back as 8,500 years ago. The Saskatoon site on the South Saskatchewan River contains remains of mammoth, horse, camel, bison and deer that had been harvested by humans thousands of years ago. Most are types of Rancholabrean land mammals which overlapped with man’s entry into North America. Waterfowl and other game birds such as Ruffed Grouse, Sharp Tail Grouse and the Prairie Chicken would also have been significant food sources.

There are no mines or quarries in the bed or banks of the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Extraction of Water**

A steam power generating station was constructed in the City of Saskatoon in 1910. River water was pumped to the power plant and heated with crushed coal to produce steam to turn the turbines. River water was also used to cool the turbine condensers and flush the used coal clinkers into ash hoppers. The A.L. Cole Pumphouse, constructed in 1911, was decommissioned in 1983 but it, along with the surrounding site, are currently being reclaimed.

Water from the river was first drawn and distributed to residents and businesses in 1906 by the City of Saskatoon. Commercial use of the river water in Saskatoon included the Saskatoon Bottling Works Company and the Arctic Ice Company which harvested and distributed blocks of ice.

Other communities along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers such as Outlook and Nipawin get their water from wells. The provision of a reliable supply of water for the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw from the Qu’Appelle Dam on Lake Diefenbaker to a treatment plant on Buffalo Pound Lake was one of many benefits of the South Saskatchewan River Project.

The South Saskatchewan River was particularly important in the development of the agricultural industry. A number of ranches in southwest Saskatchewan had river frontage for livestock watering and access to the best grass next to the river.

The Matador Land and Cattle Company Limited is of historical interest. This cattle empire was incorporated in 1882 by a syndicate of Scottish commercial bankers whose only interest was raising beef cattle. The company was initially established on 1.5 million acres of leased land in western Texas and eventually became the largest ranching empire in the world, expanding into Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Brazil and Saskatchewan.
The Matador Land and Cattle Company Limited secured a lease from the Government of Canada, in 1903, for 140,000 acres of land on the north side of the South Saskatchewan River, north of the City of Swift Current. When the Canadian government terminated the lease in 1921, a 3,500-head cattle drive from the Matador Ranch to the Montana Matador headquarters at Fort Belknap in Montana took place. This is believed to be the last major cattle drive in North America. The remaining 2,500 head of cattle were shipped by rail and ship to Great Britain in November, 1921. A lasting legacy of the Matador Ranch and the community pasture that succeeded it is the protection of this natural grassland ecosystem from cultivation.

The Canadian government's effort to bring settlers to Western Canada in the early 1900s was extremely successful. The population in southwest Saskatchewan increased from 8,253 in 1901 to 52,505 in 1906 and 313,673 in 1931, the highest ever. Many homesteaders near the South Saskatchewan River hauled water for household use and for watering their gardens because wells were either difficult to dig or not very productive.

The drought of the 1930s convinced many political leaders that a major project to supply water for agriculture and community development was necessary if the Province of Saskatchewan was to thrive. By 1947, the scope of the project had been defined and the site for the main dam had been selected. The Saskatchewan government had committed funding for the project a number of years earlier. However, it was the election of John G. Diefenbaker as Prime Minister in 1957 and 1958 that resulted in the federal government's financial commitment to the project. In 1959, the second largest public works project in Canadian history got underway. The South Saskatchewan River Project consists of the Gardiner Dam, located 25 kms downstream of Elbow on the South Saskatchewan River, and the Qu’Appelle Dam, located 19 kms southeast of Elbow and 45 kms southeast of the Gardiner Dam. It also includes Lake Diefenbaker, a 225 km long multi-purpose reservoir. When completed in 1967, the Gardiner Dam was one of the largest earth-filled dams in the world. The construction of the South Saskatchewan River Project was an important historical event in the development of Saskatchewan.

Although irrigation for agricultural purposes was the highest priority, the South Saskatchewan River Project was truly a multi-purpose project with benefits to agriculture, municipal water supplies, power generation, flood control, industrial use, and tourism and recreation.

The Gardiner Dam accommodates turbines to generate power for the provincial grid during peak-use periods, the winter months. This necessitates the release of water during the winter months and recharging of the reservoir during peak river flows in summer. The result is a dramatic change in the natural flow of the river below the dam. Two other hydroelectric dams have been constructed on the Saskatchewan River, the E.B. Campbell Dam in 1963 and the François Finlay Dam in 1986.

Extraction of water for industrial uses was not significant until the 1960s when potash mines were developed in southern Saskatchewan. Water from the South Saskatchewan River is diverted from Lake Diefenbaker through a network of canals and pipelines to seven mines.
**Theme 2: Water Transport**

The Saskatchewan River and its tributary, the South Saskatchewan, was a major transportation route for centuries. This water route was ideal for transportation because of the large volume of swift flowing water during the summer months (fed by the melting snow pack and rainfall in the Rocky Mountains), the low gradient, and the lack of waterfalls and rapids (which eliminated the need to portage) from the Alberta/Saskatchewan border to the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border. Although travelling upstream could be arduous, the downstream trip was much easier. The main concern was drifting onto sandbars, which often shifted in location unpredictably.

**Commercial Transportation**

Evidence of trade between Aboriginal peoples before European contact has been found in archaeological sites along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. Stone projectile points originating in what is now the northern United States and pottery produced from areas far from the Saskatchewan River have been discovered.

In the late 1600s at the outset of the fur trade with the English Company of Adventurers Trading into Hudson Bay (Hudson’s Bay Company), the Algonquin birch bark canoe was the watercraft used on the river for transporting furs to York Factory on Hudson Bay. These vessels could carry only two or three people and a small load of furs or trade goods. There are reports of upwards of 300 canoes arriving at York Factory.

As French Canadian (Canadien) voyageurs joined the fur trade on the South and Saskatchewan Saskatchewan Rivers, a larger birch bark canoe (the Canot du Nord) arrived. This canoe with a crew of seven could carry up to 1300 kg of freight.

By the early 1800s the York boat was the most common means of freighting trade goods. Two York boats with a crew of eighteen could haul the same amount as 40 men in canoes.

Powered commercial freight began when the first steamboat transported goods on the Saskatchewan River in 1874. The steamboat era was relatively short lived, with the years 1877-1887 being the most active. Four steamboats were in service in 1882 and 1883. The boats carried necessities for settlements along the river that was 320 km and more north of the railway. Steamboats were plagued by shallow water, shifting sandbars and ice damage in the spring because the boats could not be removed from the river for the winter.

The most common route for the steamboats was from Lake Winnipeg to the Forks, then taking the North Saskatchewan River to Fort Edmonton. Although less travelled, the South Saskatchewan River provides the best known use of a steamboat. General Middleton and the Canadian Militia used the SS Northcote and other steamboats to transport medical supplies, weapons and troops during the Northwest Resistance. The Northcote was also used as a
gunboat during the conflict at Batoche. The boilers from the Northcote are on display in the Cumberland House Provincial Historic Park.

After a brief period of dormancy, steamboats again appeared on the Saskatchewan Rivers around 1900. The last steamboat on the South Saskatchewan River was the SS City of Medicine Hat, which struck the Traffic Bridge in Saskatoon and sunk in June, 1908. A few boats operated on the Saskatchewan River out of The Pas, Manitoba until about 1920. However, railways gradually expanded northward and replaced steamboats for moving freight.

There was some use of the Saskatchewan River to float logs from the forests in the Nipawin and Cumberland House areas for processing in The Pas. Also, lumber for the first houses in the Temperance Colony in Saskatoon were rafted down the South Saskatchewan River from Medicine Hat, Alberta.

**Transportation Services**

The Hudson’s Bay Company constructed forts at the mouths of the major rivers flowing into Hudson Bay. These forts housed the traders and support staff, warehoused the trade goods, and packed and stored the furs for shipment to England. The company depended upon the First Nations people to transport the furs downriver to the forts. Fort Nelson was constructed at the mouth of the Nelson River in 1682, but this fort was destroyed by the French in 1684 and replaced by York Factory at the mouth of the Hayes River in 1697.

The North West Company and other independent traders from Lower Canada (now Quebec) moved onto the Saskatchewan River and its tributaries and intercepted those individuals transporting furs before they could reach York Factory.

In order to remain competitive, the Hudson’s Bay Company moved their trading facilities inland. Cumberland House was founded in 1774 by Samuel Hearne and this community, now the oldest continuously occupied community in Saskatchewan, became the main distribution centre for the fur trade. Cumberland House was strategically located not only for the fur trade on the Saskatchewan Rivers but also the Churchill River and beyond.

In 1753 Fort-á-la-Corne, just a few kilometres downstream from the Forks, was constructed by French Canadien traders as their main distribution point for the fur trade on the Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers. A post at this general location existed until 1930.

For a brief period starting in 1802, the XY Company, headed by Alexander Mackenzie, also built forts on the Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers and competed with the established companies before amalgamating with the North West Company.

There are at least 18 locations on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers where fur trade posts were constructed. A number of locations had two competing posts within sight of each other and many were abandoned in less than two years.

In 1821, the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company merged under the Hudson’s Bay Company name. This resulted in a significant reduction in the number of fur trading posts, and Fort Edmonton became the strategic centre for the vast Saskatchewan District and regions to the north.
The End of the Steam Boat Era

The S.S. City of Medicine Hat has the distinction of being the wreck that ended all sternwheeler navigation on the South Saskatchewan River. The sternwheeler was built by Medicine Hat hotelier and Scottish nobleman Horatio Ross. The ship was built during the winter of 1906-07 and the engine and the fittings were reportedly the best available at the time. Construction costs were $28,000, a large sum at the time.

The City of Medicine Hat left Medicine Hat, Alberta on May 29 1908 on a combination pleasure cruise/business trip to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Besides the five businessmen aboard the ship, there was also a cargo of bagged flour in the hold and a barge in tow loaded with 50 tons of coal to be used as fuel for the voyage. The City of Medicine Hat reached Saskatoon ten days later. The South Saskatchewan River was swollen by spring floods, and the combination of the strong current and the number of bridges that the ship had to pass under concerned the captain. The ship passed under the first bridge safely (Grand Truck Pacific Railway Bridge), but the Canadian Northern Railway Bridge was more of a problem. By lowering the smokestack slightly, it was determined that the ship would be able to pass under this bridge as well and so it did. But concerned, the captain planned to steer to shore and measure the clearance under the next Traffic Bridge before proceeding. Unfortunately for the Medicine Hat, the Canadian Northern Railway’s telegraph wires were strung low alongside the Traffic Bridge, hidden just under the surface of the water. The rudder got entangled in the wire, causing the captain to lose control. Unable to steer the ship, the captain tried to run it aground.

The current however, was too strong, and the Medicine Hat was carried downstream, striking a girder on the Traffic Bridge. The ship flipped on its side, impaling the hull upon a pier. At this same moment, cattle were being herded onto the south end of the foot bridge, traveling over the bridge to the stock yards on the north side of the river. The cattle stampeded across the bridge causing the people gathered on the bridge to climb into the upper portion of the bridge for safety. None of the spectators on the bridge were injured.

Fortunately, the passengers on the Medicine Hat had been placed on shore before the ship had attempted to pass under the Traffic Bridge. Only the crew necessary to pilot the ship were present during the crash. Because the ship’s hull was impaled on the bridge pier and was therefore stationary, a ladder was placed from the bridge to the ship to allow the crew to climb to safety.

City workers, fearing that the steamboat might damage the new bridge, pried the ship free from the pier. The wreck then travelled approximately 300 metres downstream where it filled with water and sank. The only items salvaged from the wreck at the time were its boilers. However, in 2008, one hundred years later the SS City of Medicine Hat’s anchor was also pulled from the river, and now sits on display under the Traffic Bridge.

The Saskatoon Star described the wreck of the City of Medicine as “the greatest marine disaster in the history of Saskatoon.”
Navigational improvements on the Saskatchewan River and its tributaries were limited to portage improvements (widening and installing logs to slide York boats) during the era of human-powered freighting. Other improvements costing $20,000 were approved by the Parliament of Canada in 1880 during the steam boat era.

There were no shipyards or facilities constructed for the landing or provisioning of passengers noted in historic documents.

**Exploration and Surveying**

Early exploration was linked to expanding the fur trade or searching for the Northwest Passage. The first account of French Canadien exploration on the South Saskatchewan River was by Joseph LaFrance in 1740-1742. In 1751, an expedition by Joseph Boucher de Niverville was recorded, and Louis-Joseph LaVérendrye reported reaching the Forks of the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers in 1749.

In 1691, Henry Kelsey, an Englishman working for the Hudson’s Bay Company, was the first European to explore the Saskatchewan Rivers. He suggested, based on stories from the Aboriginal people he met, that the Saskatchewan River might be used to reach the Western Sea. In 1754, Anthony Henday, an employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, travelled over land from the Carrot River and recorded crossing the South Saskatchewan River, and the Red Deer River, meeting the Blackfoot people and seeing the Rocky Mountains in the distance.

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**Samuel Hearne**

(excerpt from Saskatchewan River Delta Symposium Presentation, Sid Robinson)

Samuel Hearne joined Britain’s Royal Navy in 1756 at the age 12 and saw action in naval engagements during the Seven Years’ War. He joined the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1766 working in various capacities, exploring northern areas until in 1771 he became the first European to reach the Arctic Ocean by an overland route.

The Hudson’s Bay Company sent Samuel Hearne inland in 1774 to build a trading post at what would become Cumberland House. Hearne himself, along with some men, arrived at Cumberland Lake in August of 1774 and started looking for a place to build. Hearne was on Cumberland Lake a hundred years before the avulsion that caused a big part of the Saskatchewan River to leave the “Old Channel” and detour into Cumberland Lake.

A main reason for Hearne choosing to build at Cumberland House was because it was said to be located in the middle of three groups of First Nations people. This picture shows an artist’s depiction of Hearne starting to build the Cumberland House post. He and his men spent a day in early September putting handles on the axe heads they had brought with them. They then went to work cutting trees down. They first built a temporary structure that Hearne refers to in his journal. You can see it in the background of the picture. That first building was 28 feet by 14 feet (8.5m X 4.3m), a relatively good size.

The Hudson’s Bay Company stayed on the site chosen by Hearne for about 15 years. It then moved to the community site around 1792. By this time, the fur trade had shifted a lot of its operations further west and north. Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca in particular was becoming a major fur trade centre. But Cumberland House stayed important to the fur trade by becoming a pemmican supply depot.
Several other well-known explorers in Canadian history spent time on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers:

- Peter Pond came to the Saskatchewan Rivers in 1775 from Connecticut by canoe. He is credited with developing a pemmican trade with the plains Aboriginal peoples and establishing a network of pemmican food caches on major transportation routes to facilitate exploration. Pond prepared the first map of the Saskatchewan area in 1787.

- David Thompson, the premier surveyor of North America, was stationed at several posts on the Saskatchewan Rivers and wintered in South Branch House in 1786-87. He later discovered a route from the North Saskatchewan River to the Columbia River (which he followed to the Pacific Ocean) and surveyed and mapped his extensive exploration routes.

- Peter Fidler built Fort Chesterfield at the confluence of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer Rivers in 1800 for the Hudson’s Bay Company. He mapped the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers in 1800-02.

- Alexander Mackenzie constructed fur trade posts on the Saskatchewan River and its tributaries as head of the XY Company after he became the first European to cross North America and reach the Pacific Ocean in 1793.

In the mid-1800s, the agricultural potential of the prairies became a focus for exploration. Captain John Palliser explored along the South Saskatchewan River in 1857 and declared much of the prairies south of Saskatoon to be too dry for agriculture. This area has been known since then as the ‘Palliser Triangle.’

Henry Youle Hind, sponsored by the government of the Province of Canada, explored the South Saskatchewan River area in 1858. He was the first to propose a dam on the South Saskatchewan River near the site of the existing Gardiner Dam. Hind’s proposal was to divert water from the South Saskatchewan River down the Qu’Appelle Valley to the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, creating a steamboat route from Fort Garry to the Rocky Mountains. He also suggested water could be diverted for irrigation for agricultural purposes. Hind’s proposal for a steamboat route was rejected in favour of a railway.  

In 1882, Surveyor John Macoun and others reported that the Prairies could be farmed successfully, and this led to the federal government’s efforts to encourage settlement of the west. The earliest settlers used the Saskatchewan River for transport, and the earliest settlements occurred along the Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers (Cumberland House, St Laurent Settlement, Prince Albert Settlement, Battleford, Saskatoon, Outlook, Nipawin). However, the settlement of the Prairies was influenced more by the location of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways than by the rivers.

At least five surveys of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers were undertaken between 1857 and 1915 to determine the potential for navigation by steamboats. All of these reports suggested steamboat transportation was possible with some improvements. However, the decision to construct the Canadian Pacific Railway made these reports obsolete.
Even though Plains Aboriginal peoples travelled over wide areas in search of food, they usually returned to the same sites on a seasonal basis. The river environments provided fresh water, food, shelter and firewood, so that is where they congregated.

**Siting of Dwellings**

Wanuskewin Heritage Park, north of Saskatoon, may have been regularly occupied since 8000 years ago. Archaeological excavations have identified three bison jumps, a bison pound, a medicine wheel, and numerous tipi rings. South of Saskatoon on the flat terraces, archaeological sites have been discovered that indicate the area was heavily occupied approximately 6-7,000 years ago. These sites include the remnants of bison butchering sites and campsites.

Three significant seasonal dwelling sites have been identified on the Saskatchewan River below the Forks: Pehonan or Fort-à-la-Corne on the James Smith First Nation just east of the Forks, Nipowiniinhk near the town of Nipawin, and Pasquatinow (meaning “bald hill”) approximately 50 km southwest of Cumberland House.

The South Saskatchewan River accommodated a number of Métis wintering sites, many of which became permanent settlements after the decline of the plains bison. The local Métis populations were also enhanced by migration of former residents of the Red River settlement after the 1869-70 resistance. Historic documents indicate that in 1868, forty Métis families established a seasonal community known as Petite Ville on the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River opposite the community of Tourord’s Coulee/Fish Creek. The residents decided in 1871 to settle permanently in the St. Laurent district.

European and Euro-Canadian settlement in the prairies was influenced more by the railways and homesteading than by the rivers. The arrival of the railways led to the wide dispersal of people rather than the concentration in larger communities. There are no structures from the homesteading era still existing along the South Saskatchewan River, as sod and log structures that were built were modest and had short life spans.

There are a limited number of permanent dwellings that were located to take advantage of the river. A number of private residences in Saskatoon including the Marr Residence, one of the early houses built in the Temperance Colony, were sited to take advantage of the spectacular scenery of the South Saskatchewan River valley. As well, the Bessborough Hotel and the President’s Residence at the University of Saskatchewan are noteworthy.

The Goodwin House, now the Visitor Centre at Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, was constructed of field stone between 1897 and 1900 by Frank Goodwin, a former officer with the North West Mounted Police. The house was built at the historical crossing point of the South Saskatchewan River on the Battleford Trail between Swift Current and Battleford. The Goodwin House served as a store and post office for a brief period.

The French Métis settlement of St. Laurent consists of river lots along both sides of the South Saskatchewan River for over 40 km. Batoche, Tourond’s Creek/Fish Creek, and St. Laurent were communities within the settlement. The river lot system still exists today and contrasts the land survey system used elsewhere in Saskatchewan. The early Métis settlers in the vicinity of Halcro (later known as St. Andrew’s) and Adam’s Crossing (later known as Fenton) also used a river lot settlement pattern on the South Saskatchewan River.
River-based Communities

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation arrived from the United States in 1862 and they were given a reserve on the west side of the South Saskatchewan River, 26 km south of Saskatoon in 1881.

The Story of Wanuskewin

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is a 300 acre, National Historic Park located along the South Saskatchewan River, three kilometres north of the city of Saskatoon. This site is the only designated heritage site in Saskatchewan to feature pre-contact resources.

The park is an archaeological treasure trove. Archaeological surveys have discovered the presence of 2 historic and 19 pre-contact archaeological sites. The pre-contact sites include a medicine wheel, tipi rings, bison jumps and pounds, habitation sites, and stone cairns. These diverse archaeological sites are clustered within one kilometre of each other. Although some of the pre-contact sites are located in the upland area, the majority are situated on point bars or terraces in the bottom of Opimihaw Creek or in coulee depressions along the bank of the river. The majority of these sites are multi-component and deeply buried in sediment. The fact that these sites are multi-component in nature indicates that people kept returning to the same location again and again.

The sites show intensive occupation, particularly of the valley, over the past 6,000 years. Evidence for an even earlier occupation of the region is revealed by the recovery of artifacts from the uplands near the park. The discovery of a Cody knife from a surface scatter suggests human occupation going back 7,000 to 8,000 years in the region of Wanuskewin.

The unusual concentration of sites and the multi-component nature of the archaeological sites is clear evidence that this relatively small tributary creek valley attracted human occupation for thousands of years. The preservation of archaeological remains was excellent. The majority of the sites at Wanuskewin are undisturbed because there has been little or no cultivation within the park boundaries. Secondly, periodic flooding of the creek valley sealed most of the occupation levels in clay-silt deposits, which are highly conducive to the preservation of organic remains.

Saskatchewan’s First Nations are a vital partner in the development and operation of the park. An interpretive centre has been built overlooking the valley, archaeological excavations are conducted by the University of Saskatchewan, and students and visitors alike learn about the past, present and future of Saskatchewan’s First Peoples.

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation arrived from the United States in 1862 and they were given a reserve on the west side of the South Saskatchewan River, 26 km south of Saskatoon in 1881.
The One Arrow Cree First Nation, located approximately 80 km north of Saskatoon, signed Treaty 6 in 1878 and settled on the reserve in 1880. The St. Laurent Settlement which includes Tourond’s Creek/Fish Creek, Batoche, and St. Laurent, became permanent agricultural settlements in the 1870s.

Almost 13 km downstream from the St. Laurent settlement is the Métis community of St. Louis which was occupied by the early 1880s. The English Métis settlements of Halcro and Adam’s Crossing are located a short distance downstream from St. Louis. These settlements, which were underway by the mid 1870s, were comprised of approximately 100 river lots.

The Muskoday First Nation, with land on both sides of the South Saskatchewan River, was also settled in a river lot pattern by John Smith and his followers from St. Peter’s Reserve in Red River, Manitoba. The reserve was established after the signing of Treaty 6 at Fort Carlton in 1876.

The James Smith Cree Nation reserve is approximately 20 km east of the Forks on the Saskatchewan River. The reserve was granted to James Smith and his followers after they arrived from St. Peter’s Reserve in Manitoba in 1875 and signed Treaty 6 in 1876. Three other First Nations were added later: Big Head Band in 1885, Chakastaypasin Band in 1898 and Peter Chapman Band in 1902. The Cumberland House Creek First Nation reserve was established southeast of Cumberland House in 1883.

There are no fortification-based communities or river industry-based communities on either the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers.

The City of Saskatoon was settled by the Temperance Colonization Society under a program introduced by the Government of Canada in 1881 to sell land to colonization companies in return for the companies agreeing to locate a specified number of settlers on the land. The Temperance Colony had land on both sides of the river, but development occurred first on the east side straddling the Moose Woods-Batoche Trail. The town site was surveyed in 1883, and
lumber for building the first houses was rafted downstream from Medicine Hat. Development on the east side of the river expanded rapidly, especially after the railway arrived in 1889. A few months later, the railway bridge was completed, and the railway station was relocated to the west side of the river, which encouraged development around the station.

**Bois de flèche: Saskatchewan’s Metropolis (by Darren Prefontaine and Karon Shmon)**

The dominant historical narrative indicates that Saskatoon was “founded” as a temperance colony by Ontario Protestants in 1882. However, the site of Saskatoon was settled by the Métis prior to 1882. In 1924, Patrice Fleury indicated that the area was an old Métis bison hunting ground from 1858 until the mid 1870s. By the 1870s, present-day Saskatoon was part of a larger Métis community that included the Prairie Rond Settlement (Dundurn) to the south as well as Batoche and other Southbranch settlements—Toround’s Coulee, St. Louis, St. Laurent, and Petite Ville—to the north. Saskatoon even had a Métis name. As late as 1889, Gabriel Dumont called Saskatoon Bois de flèche or ‘Arrow Woods.’ Even before it was incorporated as a city, Saskatoon had a significant Métis presence including various communities such as Frenchmen’s Flats and nearby Prairie Rond.

A 1927 memoir by Archie Brown tells of a bison hunt in what is now Saskatoon, which Gabriel Dumont related to him. Brown and Dumont were helping their friend “Andy,” a Métis ferryman who lived near the site of the present-day Rawlco Radio building, recuperate after he split his foot open cutting wood.

*During the first snowfall a party of them (Dumont and his bison-hunting party) were running buffalo on the flats where Saskatoon now stands. He had shot a buffalo and, getting off his horse straddled the buffalo intending to cut its throat. The buffalo rose to its feet and started with him on its back or neck. He soon fell off, however, and the buffalo went a short distance and fell again. He then finished him and he had a ride on a wild buffalo. I had noticed that many of the older men had the trigger finger missing. He said it was caused by the bursting of the old muzzle loader when running buffalo. No time was spent in re-loading as it was all done on horseback, at the gallop. They would ride close to a buffalo and shoot, then pour some powder in the barrel by guess, spit a ball, of which they had one or two in their mouth, into the gun, give the barrel a slap with their hand, ride up close to another buffalo and shoot. Sometimes the bullet had only gone a short distance down the barrel, then likely the gun burst and the hunter was short a trigger finger at least.*

These narratives tell another side of our shared history and illustrate that what is remembered and retold is contextual to the experiences and valued memories of the storyteller.
The Town of Outlook, south of Saskatoon, developed on lots sold by auction by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1908 near the proposed bridge and large railway station. The town grew rapidly during the construction of the railway bridge which was completed in 1912.

The Town of Nipawin developed next to the Canadian Pacific Railway when it reached the south side of the Saskatchewan River in 1924. Buildings from the settlement known as “Ravine Bank,” where a fur trading post was built in 1910, were moved approximately 6 km to the new community with teams of horses.

**River-influenced Transportation**

The South Saskatchewan River was a major barrier to overland travel because high flows and swift currents made forging the river difficult. Since the river floodplain was wide and the valley was deep, bridges were expensive to build and many were destroyed by ice during spring break-up. Ferries were a common means of crossing the river. Over the years, many ferries were replaced by bridges. However, there are still nine ferries operating on the South Saskatchewan River.

The most significant ferries include:

- **Saskatchewan Landing north of Swift Current** was a popular river crossing point used by Aboriginal peoples and early travellers. General Middleton’s troops, under the command of Colonel Otter, used the site to board the S.S. Northcote and “Tim’s ferry” to cross the South Saskatchewan River enroute to Battleford in 1885 and later to transport medical personnel, supplies and ammunition to Batoche. The site is located within Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park and was flooded by Lake Diefenbaker in 1967. A bridge was built in this historic location in 1951.

- **Clark’s Crossing** is where the Battleford-Fort Qu’Appelle Trail crossed the South Saskatchewan River north of Saskatoon. Here, during the North West Resistance of 1885, General Middleton divided his field force, placing one-half of his troops on each side of the river, to begin the advance on Batoche. The force on the east side of the river was ambushed and defeated by the Métis led by Gabriel Dumont at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek. Clark’s Crossing was also one of the first locations for settlement and homesteading adjacent to the South Saskatchewan River.

- **Gabriel’s Crossing** had a licensed ferry operated by Gabriel Dumont, the famous Métis leader, from 1877 until 1883.

- **Batoche’s Crossing** was first operated by Xavier Letendre dit Batoche in 1871 using a barge for the convenience of settlers in the nearby Métis communities. The barge was replaced by a cable ferry, the first in the North West, in 1873. During the 1885 battle at Batoche, the cable was lowered in an attempt to capsize the S.S. Northcote.

The most road bridges of heritage value are located in Saskatoon, the “City of Bridges.” The 19th Street Traffic Bridge was constructed

![Figure 2.12. Ferry at Gabriel's Crossing. 1940s. Saskatchewan Archives Board. S-B318.](image)
on concrete pilings and steel superstructure in 1907. The bridge was a unifying force in the
development of Saskatoon by finally encouraging travel between the growing communities
previously divided by the river. The construction of the University Bridge began in 1913 using
an innovative design of reinforced concrete arches instead of steel girders. This was the largest
bridge of this type in Canada at the time. The Broadway Bridge was built in just 11 months in
1932 using relief workers in the Great Depression.

The rail bridge at Outlook was constructed by the Canadian Pacific Railway beginning in 1910
using nine concrete piers and re-machined steel from the old Lachine Bridge across the St.
Lawrence River near Montreal. The bridge is over 910 metres in length and 45 metres above
the water. When the rail line was abandoned the bridge was converted to a pedestrian bridge
and is now a link in the Trans Canada Trail.

The steel railway bridge across the
Saskatchewan River at Nipawin was constructed in 1928. This bridge includes a
two-lane vehicle deck below the railway deck. When crossing the river on this bridge, motorists
were required to make six turns. A new vehicle bridge was constructed in 1976.

There are no roads or railways that can be considered “river-influenced roads and railways”
according to the definition in the guidelines.

**Theme 4: Culture and Recreation**

**Spiritual Associations**

There are few “sacred or spiritual sites” remaining near the South Saskatchewan River. The Roy Rivers Medicine Wheel just east of the Alberta border may be a ceremonial site of a Blackfoot women’s society or a summer-solstice marker. The Cabri Lake Human Effigy site in the same area consists of many stone lines and a ceremonial circle in addition to the effigy.

There is a boulder monument in the Wanuskewin Heritage Park National Historic Site north of Saskatoon. This is the most northerly occurring boulder monument (also known as a medicine wheel).

The “Mistaseni or mistassiny or mostos-awâsis” stone, which was destroyed to make way for the Gardiner Dam, was of sacred significance to First Nations people. Many Sundance ceremonies were held here and Henry Youle Hind described miles of tipis in seasonal encampments in this area.\(^6\)

Bull’s Forehead Coulee, at the forks of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan Rivers, is a prominent landmark that was a ceremonial and prayer site of great significance to Aboriginal people.

The Forks of the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers was significant as a meeting place for First Nations people. The Dene from the northwest, and the Cree from the northeast and southern tribes met here to trade, and conduct peace negotiations.
The site of “Our Lady of Lourdes” Shrine, located between Batoche and St. Louis on the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River, has been the location for religious activity and prayer since 1879. There is a grotto, log church and visitor centre at the site where pilgrimages, mass, and other ceremonies take place.

The cemetery at Batoche overlooks the picturesque South Saskatchewan River valley. The Nutana Cemetery in Saskatoon, on the east bank of the Saskatchewan River, is a municipal heritage site. Because of riverbank erosion, the cemetery was moved back from the river in 1904 and again in 1969. The Round Prairie Métis Cemetery south of Saskatoon has a magnificent view of the South Saskatchewan River.

Cultural Expression

Two sites with facilities developed to commemorate the cultural heritage of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are of national significance: Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Batoche National Historic Site.

At the Wanuskewin Heritage Park visitors can view pre-Contact sites over 6,000 years old including bison kill sites, tipi rings, and a medicine wheel. Artifacts include pottery fragments, plant seeds, projectile points, egg shells, and animal bones. The interpretive centre offers programs in tipi-raising, bannock baking and guided trail walks. Traditional dances by Aboriginal people take place in May and June. The trails provide opportunities to view native plants and animals in all seasons. Wanuskewin Heritage Park was designated as a provincial heritage property in 1984 and a National Historic Site in 1986.

The Batoche National Historic Site depicts the lifestyle of the Métis along the South Saskatchewan River in the Batoche settlement and commemorates the armed conflict between the Canadian government and the Métis provisional government in 1885. The National Historic Site, established in 1923, includes remnants of the Carlton Trail, the village of Batoche and the battlefield itself overlooking the South Saskatchewan River Valley. The site includes some restored buildings and a modern interpretive centre.

Examples of “River-based cultural landscapes” on the South Saskatchewan River are present in Saskatoon and the St. Laurent settlement.

The City of Saskatoon has a history of protecting the natural beauty of the South Saskatchewan River Valley within its municipal borders. This important legacy is now the responsibility of the Meewasin Valley Authority, an organization established in 1979 and dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural resources of the river valley. The original survey of the Temperance Colony town site is still reflected in the streets and parks of old neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. The Bowerman House in Saskatoon is an example of this.

The agricultural landscape on both sides of the South Saskatchewan River in the Batoche area reflect the river lot settlement pattern traditionally used by French Canadians and Metis.
There is little written material on early recreation on the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers; however, there are photographs of Saskatoon residents bathing in the river. Angling and hunting were popular leisure activities as well as sources of food. Also, the natural beauty of the river and its deep and wide valley would have been ideal for scenic walks, picnicking, horseback riding, and auto touring. The swift currents, however, would have presented limitations for swimming and recreational boating.

**The Story of Batoche**

The Batoche National Historic Site is the location where, over one hundred years ago, a turning point in the history of Canada occurred.

The community was located on the Carlton Trail, which for decades was the main overland trade route between Fort Edmonton and Fort Garry. Portions of the trail are still clearly visible, especially the section leading to the river crossing where the ferry was built in 1872.

In 1872, Xavier Letendre dit Batoche founded a village at this site where Métis freighters crossed the South Saskatchewan River. Approximately 50 families lived along the river in the area by 1884. Widespread anxiety regarding land claims and a changing economy provoked a resistance against the Canadian government. At Batoche, 300 Métis and First Nations led by Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont fought a force of 800 Northwest Field Force men commanded by Major-General Middleton between 9 to 12 May 1885. The resistance failed, but the battle did not mean the end of the community of Batoche.

Today, Batoche is home to “Back to Batoche Days,” an annual cultural celebration which occurs during the week of July 24. During “Back to Batoche Days,” thousands gather to celebrate Métis culture and heritage. For the Métis, Batoche is more than a place to celebrate their culture: it is also a sacred place, where their ancestors resisted marginalization. It is the Saskatchewan equivalent of the Plains of Abraham. All that remains at the site are the remnants of the Métis’ rifle pits, a church, a rectory, and a cemetery containing the graves of nine Métis killed during the Battle of Batoche, as well as the grave of Gabriel Dumont.

**Theme 5: Jurisdictional Use**

**Conflict and Military Associations**

Over a period of many years and many conflicts before 1800, the various First Nations groups had relatively well-defined territories. As the fur trade grew, the Cree, acting as guides for fur traders expanding the search for furs on the South Saskatchewan River, entered into territory occupied primarily by the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre plains people. This resulted in Aboriginal internecine conflicts.
In 1793, near South Branch House on the South Saskatchewan River, the Cree attacked and killed a band of Gros Ventre. In retaliation, the Gros Ventre attacked the Hudson’s Bay Company’s South Branch House in 1794 and killed all the occupants, including many First Nation women, among them the Assiniboine wife of the post manager. The Gros Ventre then immediately attacked the North West Company post. In total there were 20 casualties.

In the spring of 1802 at Chesterfield House, at the junction of the Red Deer River and South Saskatchewan Rivers, 14 Iroquois, employees of the Hudson’s Bay Company, and two “Canadians” were killed by the Gros Ventre.

The battles of the Northwest Resistance in 1885 are the most recent and perhaps the most significant Aboriginal/European conflicts in Canadian history. These battles occurred over a wide area near the South Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers.

First Real Time War Photographs (written by Dave Richards)

The South Saskatchewan River above St Louis takes a beautiful run of long sweeping curves through bluffs topped with mixed forest and open grassland. It is the original home of Métis people who migrated here in the mid 1800’s. Their village of Batoche occupied the north end of a pretty bend in the river. South of that, there is a deep coulee that empties a creek into the river. It is called Tourond’s Coulee or Fish Creek. In the spring of 1885, the Canadian Army met the Métis/Dakota First Nation warriors in battle in that coulee. During a few hours fighting, 17 young men were killed and over 50 were wounded. It was a fierce little battle that shook both sides by its ferocity. It also produced unique historic moments for the new nation of Canada. It was the very first battle fought by the fledgling Canadian Army on Canadian soil.

One of the soldiers was a forward thinking captain named James Peters who loved photography. He carried a camera that was a marvel for its time. It was a wooden container about the size of a large shoebox that contained dry chemical glass plates that recorded a picture in a “snap” when Peters removed the lens cap. Peters was in the thick of the battle. Half of his men became casualties in an attack that failed to dislodge the determined Métis/Dakota First Nations warriors. Astonishingly, he also stood in full view of the Métis and photographed the battle. There are pictures of soldiers lying flat on the prairie – under fire; soldiers at the edge of the ravine shooting down; and ranks of soldiers retiring from their battle positions. They are the first combat photographs ever taken anywhere in the world. Two weeks later, Peters repeated this feat downstream during the Battle of Batoche when the Métis forces were finally overrun after four days fighting. He even got one photo of a cannon being fired. Moments later, Métis under Elie Dumont loosed a volley of bullets at the cannon then rushed it. Combat photography indeed!

Figure 2.16. Shelling Batoche, last shot before the attack on the guns, Saskatchewan. 1885. Glenbow Archives. NA-363-43.
In 1885, 10 weeks of fighting broke out on the western prairies between Canadian soldiers and the Métis and First Nations peoples over land and treaty rights. This series of battles has since come to be known as the Northwest Resistance.

In early 1885, violence had already erupted at Duck Lake in March when North West Mounted Police and militia clashed with Métis. This earlier skirmish convinced the Canadian government to dispatch the newly formed North West Field Force, led by General Middleton, to the village of Batoche, the heart of the Métis community and the seat of Louis Riel’s provisional government.

Heading west by rail, Middleton divided his force into three, and personally accompanied the main column on its advance toward Batoche. His 700 troops were mostly raw recruits, untrained and untempered in battle.

Gabriel Dumont planned to ambush Middleton and his men before they reached Batoche. The original plan was to attack under cover of darkness, but the Métis and their First Nations allies were unable to locate the general’s camp before sunrise. Instead, Dumont turned to a daytime strike.

Dumont determined the best spot for an ambush was the road through Tourond’s Coulee, a depression from which Fish Creek ran to the main South Saskatchewan River. Just 17 kilometres from Batoche, it was, as one historian pointed out, “the kind of natural trap in which, if everything went well, a small army might be closed off and systematically potted until the survivors gave in.”

Early that morning, Dumont hid his troops in the natural cover of the ravine. By 9 a.m., the battle had begun on the north shore of the creek, near the homestead of the Touronds, a prominent Métis family.

Silhouetted at the top of the coulee, the Canadian forces attempted to shell the Métis with their nine-pound cannon. However, the cannons could not shoot accurately into the ravine, and the dense brush and topography sheltered the Métis from their opponents’ fire. With limited ammunition, the Métis fired back cautiously.

By evening, the Métis had regrouped on the east side of the coulee. Some had fled, but 70 reinforcements had arrived from Batoche in the meantime. With ammunition all but gone, Dumont set fire to the prairie in the hope of repelling the militia. Near the end of the day, Dumont and his men slipped away, while Middleton withdrew his troops to a camp about a kilometre from the battlefield to regroup.

The exact number of casualties at the Battle of Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek is uncertain. Some died on the battlefield, others later of their wounds. At least four Métis were killed, and their names are engraved in a monument erected at the Batoche Cemetery in 1901. The monument also names the two Dakota First Nations warriors known to have perished in battle. The North West Field Force under General Middleton lost at least 11 soldiers. Three casualties are listed on the monument found at Middleton’s camp, suggesting they are buried there.

Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek is a cultural landmark, not only as a famous battle site, but also as the southern boundary of the Métis St. Laurent Settlement.
Boundaries

The rivers are often used as boundaries between adjacent rural municipalities and between First Nation and private or provincial Crown lands. The South Saskatchewan River flows into Saskatchewan from Alberta and the Saskatchewan River flows into Manitoba.

Environmental Regulation

There are only a few communities that lie within the flood plain of the South Saskatchewan River, so damage from flooding is rare. The large reservoir on the river Lake Diefenbaker which stores water during the seasons of peak flows has substantially reduced the flood risk downstream.

Improvements to water management, management of aquatic ecosystems, and regulation of river access and use are the joint responsibilities of the governments of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and Canada through the Prairie Provinces Water Board.

A Naval Battle on the South Saskatchewan River

In 1885, the sternwheeler S.S. Northcote, a veteran of North Saskatchewan River shipping, was called into service during the Battle of Batoche. The boat had overwintered in Medicine Hat. In mid-April it left Saskatchewan Landing with troops, a field hospital, munitions, provisions and forage. The boat towed two supply barges. Water levels were low and the boat ran aground several times before reaching Major-General Middleton’s camp upstream of Batoche village on May 5.

At 6:00 a.m. on May 7, the Northcote, carrying 50 riflemen and still towing two barges, pulled anchor and turned downstream as part of a coordinated attack. It tooted its whistle at 7:40 a.m. as a signal to Middleton and continued downstream. Coming abreast of Batoche, the boat came under heavy fire and was unable to anchor because of the strong current produced by the now rising water levels.

Seizing the moment, the Métis commander Gabriel Dumont ordered the ferry cables lowered. The cables caught the Northcote’s smokestacks, at the same time taking out the boat’s signalling whistle. The boat was unable to set its anchor until it had drifted some distance downstream. The civilian crew declined to rejoin the battle. The boat continued further downstream to take on supplies. It finally returned to Batoche on May 12 to find that Middleton had seized the village earlier that day. The Northcote’s engagement in the only naval battle on the prairies had lasted a little over an hour. The boat was beached at Cumberland House in 1886 and never sailed again.

Figure 2.18. Boilers of S.S. Northcote. 1885. Saskatchewan Archives Board. R-B259.
2.2 Assessment of Cultural Heritage Values

The following assessment applies the Canadian Heritage River System Guidelines from A Cultural Framework for Canadian Heritage Rivers: 2nd Edition, 2000 to the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. The assessment demonstrates that both rivers satisfy all of the selection and integrity guidelines for cultural values.

Outstanding Canadian cultural heritage values will be recognized when a river and its immediate environment meets the following guidelines:

Guideline 1: Is of outstanding importance owing to its influence, over a period of time, on the historical development of Canada through a major impact upon the region in which it is located or beyond.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers were instrumental in opening the western plains of North America to European influence and eventual settlement. The Hudson's Bay Company established a fur trading post on the shore of Hudson Bay at the mouth of the Nelson River in 1682 and acquired furs from the First Nations people of the Saskatchewan River basin via Lake Winnipeg and the Nelson River. Rival fur traders from Montreal brought trading goods to the Saskatchewan Rivers from a more southern route. The intense competition for furs drove the traders further inland, led to the construction of many fur trading and provisioning posts along the Saskatchewan River and its major tributaries, exploration into other watersheds, and soon after, the discovery of routes to the Pacific Ocean.

The nomadic lifestyle of the Métis and First Nations people changed as the bison herds were decimated and the fur trade declined. The Métis turned their attention to farming and established permanent settlements on the South Saskatchewan River (the St. Laurent Settlement). When their grievances with the Government of Canada went unresolved, the Métis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, formed their own “Provisional Government of Saskatchewan”. The Government of Canada responded to this and other provocations by sending a military force led by General Frederick Middleton. Five battles took place within a period of two months and over a large geographic area near the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, culminating in the surrender of the Métis forces at the Battle of Batoche on May 12, 1885.

Early Euro-Canadian settlers along the Saskatchewan Rivers freighted heavy agricultural implements on steamboats for a brief period before railroads were available.

Guideline 2: Is strongly associated with persons, events, or beliefs of Canadian significance.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are associated with famous fur traders and explorers including Henry Kelsey, Joseph LaFrance, Louis-Joseph LaVérendrye, Joseph Boucher de Niverville, Anthony Henday, David Thompson, Peter Fidler, Alexander Mackenzie and John Franklin. Exploration and writing by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind and John Macoun influenced agricultural development on the prairies. Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont
and General Frederick Middleton are the most famous people associated with the Northwest Resistance of 1885.

The Saskatchewan Rivers are strongly associated with the Métis people in Western Canada. The annual "Back to Batoche Days" is the cultural focus of the Métis people of Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada. Métis culture, traditions and heritage are celebrated and their heroes are honoured. The year 2010 marked the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Batoche and the 30th anniversary of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Métis educational and cultural institution.

**Guideline 3: Contains historical or archaeological structures, works or sites which are unique, rare or of great antiquity**

Archaeological sites on the South Saskatchewan River at Saskatoon contain remains of mammoth, horse, camel, bison, and deer harvested by humans thousands of years ago. There are a few boulder monuments remaining that attest to pre-contact Aboriginal presence on the river.

In the Wanuskewin Heritage Park a wide variety of First Nations archaeological artifacts have been found. This includes such features as bison jumps and pounds, butchering sites, camp sites, tipi rings, a bison rubbing stone, and a boulder monument (medicine wheel).

The Petite Ville Provincial Heritage Property contains artifacts of the 1870s Métis wintering village and some of the best known archaeological evidence of Métis life after bison hunting ceased.

**Guideline 4: Contains concentrations of historical or archaeological structures, works or sites which are representative of major themes in Canadian history.**

Archaeological and spiritual sites indicate the presence of First Nations cultures on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers for more than 8,000 years.

Provincial Historic Parks and Sites commemorate the fur trade and steamboat eras on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. National Historic sites mark the locations and remaining structures representative of the battles of the Northwest Resistance of 1885 that shaped the history of Canada.

### 2.2.1 Integrity Guidelines: Cultural Values

To have outstanding Canadian cultural value, a river must meet one or more of the above cultural value selection guidelines and the following cultural value integrity guidelines:

**Guideline: The nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representation of all of the features, activities or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding cultural value.**

The segment of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers being nominated extends from the Alberta/Saskatchewan border to the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border, a channel distance of approximately 1000 kilometres. All of the features, activities or phenomena which give these rivers their outstanding cultural value are represented.
Guideline: The visual character of the nominated section enables uninterrupted appreciation of at least one of the periods of the river’s historical importance.

Unlike the adjacent uplands, the visual character of the river and the river valley appear much as they did during the periods which give them their outstanding cultural and historic value. This enhances visitor appreciation of the historic and cultural values.

Guideline: The key artifacts and sites comprising the cultural values for which the river is nominated are unimpaired by impoundments and human land uses.

Despite the reservoirs that exist on the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers, there remain long stretches of unaltered river landscapes where the cultural and historic values may be fully appreciated. The visual appearance of the rivers’ natural landscape adds to the cultural appreciation of the many protected historic sites including: Wannuskewin Heritage Park and National Historic Site, Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek Battle Site and Batoche National Historic Site; Cumberland House Provincial Historic Park; South Branch House Provincial Historic Site; and the Petite Ville Provincial Heritage Property.

Guideline: The water quality of the nominated section does not detract from the visual character or the cultural experience provided by its cultural values.

The Water quality in the rivers meets all guidelines for water contact recreation activities and does not detract from the visual character or the cultural experience the rivers offer.

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Outlook, Saskatchewan, History, [http://town.outlook.sk.ca/history.htm](http://town.outlook.sk.ca/history.htm) [http://town.outlook.sk.ca/skytrail/skytrail-2.htm](http://town.outlook.sk.ca/skytrail/skytrail-2.htm)
CHAPTER 3: NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES

This chapter describes the outstanding natural heritage features of the South Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River which are being nominated as a Canadian Heritage River. An assessment of the natural features will outline the value that the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers will bring to the Canadian Heritage River System.

The information is organized according to the format provided in A Framework for the Natural Values of Canadian Heritage Rivers, 2nd Edition, 2001.

3.1 Description of Natural Heritage Values

Theme 1: Hydrology

Drainage Basins

The three major tributaries of the South Saskatchewan River (the Red Deer, Bow and the Oldman Rivers) originate in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta and provide over 90% of the water in the South Saskatchewan River. These rivers bring fresh water from the mountains to the semi-arid plains of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The South Saskatchewan River begins at the confluence of the Bow and Oldman Rivers west of the City of Medicine Hat, Alberta. The third major tributary, the Red Deer River, joins the South Saskatchewan River just east of the interprovincial boundary.

The Swift Current Creek is the only other significant tributary to enter the South Saskatchewan River before it joins the North Saskatchewan River east of the City of Prince Albert to form the Saskatchewan River. The Saskatchewan River flows northeast across the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border into Lake Winnipeg and eventually into Hudson Bay via the Nelson River.

The South Saskatchewan River sub-basin has a gross drainage area of 59,500 km², but when combined with the main tributaries, the basin covers an area of 163,800 km². The Saskatchewan River below the confluence or “Forks” of the South Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers has an additional drainage basin area of 81,700 km². The Saskatchewan River system from the mountains to Lake Winnipeg is approximately 1,940 km in length, making it the fourth longest river in North America.

The South Saskatchewan/Saskatchewan River joins the Nelson River before flowing into Hudson Bay. The Hudson Bay drainage basin covers about 38.6% of Canada’s surface area.

Seasonal Variation

The seasonal flow of the South Saskatchewan River has been dramatically altered by man-made dams and diversion projects. Under natural conditions, flows in the South Saskatchewan River would peak in July when snow melt from the mountains reached the Prairies. There was a smaller peak in April-May as the runoff accumulated from local spring runoff. Much lower flows were experienced during the November to March period.

Since the completion of the Gardiner and Qu’Appelle Dams in 1967, which formed Lake Diefenbaker, the flows downstream of the Gardiner Dam have been somewhat reduced. The
flow is consistent throughout the year because in winter water is released from the Gardner Dam to generate power. During the summer flows are significantly held back to recharge the reservoir. The overall decrease in the river flow can be attributed to upstream irrigation development, evaporation from Lake Diefenbaker, and diversions down the Qu’Appelle Valley for municipal water supplies, industrial and agricultural uses, and lake-level stabilization purposes.

The figure below, (Figure 3.2) prepared by the Partners For the Saskatchewan River Basin, illustrates the impact of the South Saskatchewan River Project on the seasonality of the river flow. Flows in the South Saskatchewan River below Gardiner Dam peak in January and February when electrical power needs are the greatest.

![Figure 3.2 Effects of River Regulation Downstream of Gardiner Dam, (From the Mountains to the Sea-the State of the Saskatchewan River Basin Report. PFSRB 2009)](image)

![Figure 3.3 Median Monthly Naturalized Flow for Saskatchewan River at The Pas. (From the Mountains to the Sea-the State of the Saskatchewan River Basin Report. PFSRB 2009)](image)
Water flows in the Saskatchewan River downstream of the Forks, near Prince Albert, more closely resemble the natural flow pattern of high summer peaks and low winter flows because the North Saskatchewan River does not have a major hydroelectric project and therefore, the uncontrolled flow somewhat mitigates the impact of the Gardiner Dam. Downstream of the Forks on the Saskatchewan River, the François Finley Dam (Codette Lake) and the E.B. Campbell Dam (Tobin Lake) are much smaller reservoirs than Lake Diefenbaker and take much less water to refill. Consequently, Saskatchewan River flows near and past the Manitoba border display evident, but subdued seasonal patterns (Figure 3.3).

**Water Content**

Data from four sampling stations and field observations on the nominated section of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers from 1990 to 2006 arrived at the following conclusions:

- In terms of “physical properties” the rivers are classified as having a moderate sediment load, averaging 10.77 NTUs (Nephelometric Turbidity Units).
- The chemical content of the river water averages 339.31 mg/litre putting the river in the high dissolved solids category. The water is slightly alkaline with an average pH of 8.3 in the main stream.

Values were calculated from raw surface water quality data received from the water quality database of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (Water Quality Monitoring Data, 2009).

**River Size**

The South Saskatchewan River from the confluence of the Bow and Oldman Rivers to the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River is 998 km long. The length of the Saskatchewan River from the Forks to Lake Winnipeg is 642 km. Together the two rivers total 1,640 km in length.

The Prairie Provinces Water Board administers a water sharing agreement, known as the Master Agreement on Apportionment, to divide the natural flow of the South Saskatchewan River between Alberta and Saskatchewan and the natural flow of the Saskatchewan River between Saskatchewan and Manitoba. According to the Master Agreement, Alberta has the right to divert or store 2,589,000 dam$^3$ (cubic decametres) but cannot reduce the flow of the South Saskatchewan River upstream of the confluence with the Red Deer River to less than 42.5 m$^3$ per second. On average, Alberta delivers 78 percent of the combined natural flow of the South Saskatchewan and Red Deer Rivers to Saskatchewan. The median annual flow in the South Saskatchewan River downstream of the Red Deer River confluence is 8,661,000 dam$^3$.

The Master Agreement also stipulates that Saskatchewan pass 50% of the natural flow received from Alberta plus half of the natural flow originating in Saskatchewan on to Manitoba. The average flow at the Manitoba border was 564 m$^3$/second in the ten-year period between 1998 and 2008 but varied significantly (from 321 m$^3$ per second in 2002 to 959 m$^3$/second in 2005). Both the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are categorized as large rivers.
**Theme 2: Physiography**

**Physiographic Region**

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers lie within the Prairies physiographic region of Canada. The Saskatchewan Representative Areas Network has identified eleven ecoregions in the province. The South Saskatchewan River runs through four of these ecoregions, including the Mixed Grassland, Moist Mixed Grassland, Aspen Parkland, and Boreal Transition. The Saskatchewan River originates at the confluence of the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers in the Boreal Transition ecoregion and enters the Mid-boreal Lowland halfway between the Forks and the Manitoba border. The South Saskatchewan/Saskatchewan River Valleys display excellent representative examples of the natural features of these five distinct ecoregions.

**Geological Processes**

The near-surface bedrock of the prairies was formed by sedimentation in the epeiric seas of the North American continent during the Cretaceous Period. The chemical and organic sediments are rich in limestone, dolomite, and fossil fuels. Several periods of glaciation deposited glacial drift over the sedimentary bedrock of the prairie region. The retreat of the most recent continental glacier (the Laurentide ice sheet of the Wisconsin glacial stage) left the surficial landscape we see today.

There are many features within the nominated river basins that reflect glacial transport, deposition, and erosion. These include moraines, drumlins, erratics and eskers throughout the basins of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. Abundant layers of clay and silt deposited in post-glacial lakes are commonly overlain by sand and gravel deposited by flowing water. The South Saskatchewan River Valley was greatly affected by large volumes of glacial meltwater.

At one time the South Saskatchewan River flowed eastward down the Qu’Appelle Valley, one of the largest meltwater channels in North America. The valley likely became dammed by ice, near the Village of Elbow, and forced the water to flow to the north, creating a new channel for the South Saskatchewan River.

Sand dunes formed by wind deposition occur in localized areas of the South Saskatchewan River basin.

The Saskatchewan River Delta, the largest inland delta in North America, was initiated when the post-glacial Saskatchewan River flowed into glacial Lake Agassiz.

**Hydrogeology**

From the Alberta border to the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River, the South Saskatchewan River passes through the following bedrock formations: Lea Park/Milk River Formation (marine shale and muddy sandstone), Belly River Formation (siltstone and mudstone), Bearpaw Formation (grey claystone, shale and siltstone) and the Lea Park Formation once again. Porous sandstone is present in almost all formations.

The bedrock underlying the Saskatchewan River below the Forks includes the above materials but also includes the Ashern and Interlake formations which contain dolostone and dolomitic
shale as well as quartzite, and mudstone near the Manitoba border. Impermeable bedrock is not present along the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers.

The surficial geology of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers is a mixture of unconsolidated materials which vary in size from fine silt to large boulders. Within the river beds, water action creates sandy flats and gravel bars and carries finer materials downstream to be deposited in reservoirs and deltas.

**Topography**

According to the digital elevation maps, near the Saskatchewan/Alberta boundary, the nominated section of the river has an average elevation of about 580 m above sea level. At the confluence of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, elevation is approximately 400 m, demonstrating that channel gradient in the South Saskatchewan River at this portion of the river is fairly small with a total change of 180 m elevation over a length of 680 km for a gradient of about 0.27 m per km. From the confluence, elevation slowly decreases along the Saskatchewan River to an average elevation of 260 m near the boundary of Manitoba (an additional 140 m of elevation change) over a length of 320 km, making for a gradient of 0.44 m per km. Therefore, there is a total change in elevation of 320 m for the entire nominated portion of the river (580 m - 260 m of elevation change). With a length of 1000 km, this makes for a total average gradient of 0.32 m per km, which puts the nominated section of the river into the “shallow gradient” category. Two-thirds of the nomination river section is at an elevation of more than 400 m, starting with the South Saskatchewan from the boundary of Saskatchewan and Alberta to a point about 100 km upstream of the Tobin Lake Reservoir. After the confluence of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, gradients in the Saskatchewan River are steeper, with the nominated section from Tobin Lake to the boundary of Manitoba and Saskatchewan being in the elevation range of about 260 to 380 m about sea level. This puts the nominated section of the river into two categories for elevation, 0-400 m above sea level, and 400-1000 m above sea level, with the majority of the river being in the 400-1000 m above sea level category.

**Theme 3: River Morphology**

**Valley Types**

The South Saskatchewan River Valley has a wide flood plain base with concave walls typical of post-glacial meltwater channels. The existing river bed meanders across the wide flood plain and gradually becomes more deeply incised as the soft underlying sediments are eroded. An interfluve is the region of higher land between two rivers that are in the same drainage basin. Interfluvies are peaked and subject to slope failure.

The appropriate category for the South Saskatchewan River Valley is category 7: peaked interfluvies and significant floodplain. In some areas, the South Saskatchewan

![Figure 3.4. Meandering channel form of the South Saskatchewan River (photo courtesy of Google Earth)](image)
River has only narrow floodplains between high embankments. The Saskatchewan River Valley is similar except in the Saskatchewan River Delta where there is no discernable valley present.

**Channel Patterns**

Between the Alberta/ Saskatchewan boundary and Lake Diefenbaker, the channel is ‘branching’ and ‘meandering’ (see Figures 3.4).

Downstream from Gardiner Dam and south of the City of Saskatoon the channel is meandering and braided (see Figure 3.5). Two oxbow lakes are present including Pike Lake, where Pike Lake Provincial Park is located and water from the river is pumped to stabilize the lake level.

North of Saskatoon, where the glacial till is coarser and less prone to erosion, the channel takes on a more sinuous pattern (see Figure 3.6).

Below the confluence of the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers, the Saskatchewan River has a meandering pattern that continues to Codette Lake, above the François Finlay Dam.

The Saskatchewan River splits into numerous smaller channels when it reaches the Saskatchewan River Delta, many of which rejoin to form anastomosed networks. (see Figure 3.7).

The only natural lakes in the Saskatchewan River valleys are two flood plain lakes south of Saskatoon. Numerous shallow and marshy lakes occur in the Saskatchewan River Delta (Cumberland Lake is the largest).

Artificial elongated lakes have been formed behind the three dams.
Channel Profile

The most appropriate description for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers would be flatwater. Whitewater in its usual interpretation does not exist in either the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers. Riffles are encountered where shallow swift running water crosses submerged sand and gravel bars. There are no natural cataracts, whirlpools, chutes or waterfalls on these rivers, although there are small rapids below the EB Campbell Dam on the Saskatchewan River.

Fluvial Landforms

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers contain many depositional landforms including deltas, braiding throughout most of the rivers’ length, levees (especially in the Saskatchewan River Delta), and oxbows south of Saskatoon and abandoned river meanders throughout.

Erosional landforms are also found along the river valleys. Intermittent streams and tributaries have formed numerous gullies in the soft glacial materials along both rivers. Undercuts on outside bends which lead to slumping are very common. There are also examples of slumping higher up on the valley walls as well as terraces from earlier floodplains.

The South Saskatchewan River has created a gorge north of Saskatoon where the river is deeply incised. The steep banks here rise nearly vertical up to 10 to 15 metres above the river. Undercuts and slumps are especially common in this area.

Theme 4: Biotic Environment

Aquatic Ecosystems

High sediment load, variable discharge and high species diversity in the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers suggest that these are middle-order zone riverine systems. The Saskatchewan River Delta would be categorized as a lowland zone where sediment deposition, fine sediment substrate, and high species diversity occur.

The reservoir lakes-Diefenbaker, Codette and Tobin- are examples of prairie metamorphic lakes where the productivity of the aquatic ecosystem is the foundation of a thriving sport fishery. Cumberland Lake in the Saskatchewan River Delta is shallow and warm with high organic content and low oxygen levels. This lake and other smaller water bodies in the Delta are eutrophic. There are no estuarine systems on these rivers.

Within the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan River valleys, the common wetlands would be former meander scars regenerated by spring runoff, river floods and seepage from the main channel.
The most significant wetland is the Saskatchewan River Delta overlapping the boundary of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. This delta, the largest inland delta in North America, has a variety of wetlands including fens, marshes and bogs. These wetlands are sustained by both natural and artificial levees and water control structures managed by Ducks Unlimited Canada.

The Saskatchewan River Delta is 190 km long, 9,950 km² in area, and divided into parts separated by a glacial moraine known as the The Pas Moraine. The upper delta, is located mainly in Saskatchewan and is more than double the size of the lower delta, which is located entirely in Manitoba east of The Pas.

**Terrestrial Ecosystems**

The South Saskatchewan River is located predominantly within the Prairies Ecozone. Only the most northerly 100 km is located within the Boreal Plains Ecozone. The Saskatchewan River is located completely within the Boreal Plains Ecozone.

**Theme 5: Vegetation**

Short and tall grass prairie dominated the landscape of the Western Plains before European settlement. The landscape of the flat uplands is now almost completely dominated by crop production and livestock grazing. The remnants of the natural vegetation exist only in the steep slopes of river valleys of the Saskatchewan and Qu’Appelle rivers and their tributaries and a few protected areas.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan River Valleys sustain a tremendous number and diversity of native plants. Between 1969 and 1974, 100 “Natural Areas” were identified in Saskatchewan by the International Biological Programme (IBP). Six of these natural areas are along the South Saskatchewan River, including four in the Mixed Grassland ecoregion.

Of special interest is the Matador Grassland on the north side of Lake Diefenbaker adjacent to Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park. This site is the largest remnant of the Wheat grass-June grass grassland type in Canada, is one of five Natural Sites of Canadian Significance in Saskatchewan identified by Parks Canada, and is of international significance as a grasslands research centre.

Yorath Island, just south of the City of Saskatoon, has the most northerly cottonwood forest in North America. Cottonwood forests grow mainly on the riparian floodplains of large rivers in the plains region of North America.

No rare aquatic or riparian plants or species at risk in Canada have been found along the South Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Rivers. However, there are many plants considered to be regionally rare.

The Conservation Data Centre has identified four species of vascular plants that the Committee on the Standards of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COEWIC) has listed as threatened and two species listed as endangered.
Threatened species of vascular plants are:

- Dalea villosa var. villosa (Hairy Prairie Clover)
- Halimolobos virgata (Slender Mouse-Ear Cress)
- Chenopodium subglabrum (Smooth Arid Goosefoot)
- Tradescantia occidentalis (Western Spiderwort)

The two species classified as endangered are:

- Tripterocalyx micranthus (Small-flowered Sand-verbena)
- Cryptantha minima (Small Cryptanthae)

There are 28 other vascular plants that are considered regionally rare.

Three IBP sites have been identified on the Saskatchewan River. Anderson Island, declared a “Protected Area” under the Parks Act in 1986 in the Saskatchewan River Delta, supports a mature stand of trembling aspen, balsam poplar and white spruce over 170 years old.

A large area in the Delta area is recognized by IBP for its levee plant communities, lake margin communities (fens and swamps), floating aquatic plants and bogs.

**Theme 6: Fauna**

The South Saskatchewan River Valley provides a significant wildlife corridor for the movement of animals between the prairie and the boreal forest.

In terms of animal and plant communities, the Saskatchewan River Delta is of national significance. There are over 120 species of birds, 43 species of mammals, 48 species of fish, and six species of amphibians and reptiles. The population of waterfowl alone has been estimated at 500,000.

**Table 3.1 List of Threatened Animals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mammals</th>
<th>Of Special Concern</th>
<th>Threatened</th>
<th>Endangered</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Burrowing Owl</td>
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<td>Golden Eagle</td>
<td>Common Nighthawk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Horned Grebe</td>
<td>Loggerhead Shrike</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peregrine Falcon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lake Sturgeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>Great Plains Toad</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short-Horned Lizard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The eastern portion of Lake Diefenbaker is significant for supporting the largest population of nesting Piping Plovers in North America (3.5% of the world’s population of Piping Plovers). The west end of Lake Diefenbaker is well known for the spectacular numbers of migratory waterfowl each fall.

Table 3.1 lists rare animal species found along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers.

### 3.2 Assessment of Natural Heritage Values

The South Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River meet the selection guidelines for the Natural Values of Canadian Heritage Rivers. However; they cannot be designated on the basis of their natural values because the flows are artificially controlled by dams.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are located within the Prairies Physiographic Region which is not currently represented in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

#### Selection Guidelines for Natural Heritage Values

Outstanding Canadian natural heritage values will be recognized when a river environment meets one or more of the following guidelines:

**Guideline 1. Is an outstanding example of river environments as they are affected by the major stages and processes in the earth’s evolutionary history which are represented in Canada.**

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers present two very different representations of the process of glaciation, which have significantly shaped much of Canada, particularly in the nation’s recent evolutionary history. The glacial period of the Wisconsin Age is responsible for most of the unique land forms in the Prairie Provinces by providing material for sand dunes in central Saskatchewan, till for the hills and moraines in the grasslands, eskers, drumlins, and kettle lakes in the boreal forest, and by creating the broad, rolling plains so well known in the prairies. It is through this post-glacial landscape that the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers flow, connect, and shape the environment, and the impact of glaciation is still prevalent in the riverine environments of both systems. The South Saskatchewan River floodplain presents outstanding evidence of post-glacial meltwater scour which formed a broad channel through which the river now meanders south of Saskatoon. In the Saskatchewan River, perhaps the most outstanding evidence of post-glacial landscape evolution is the Saskatchewan River Delta, which formed as a result of deposition in a large glacial meltwater lake (Lake Agassiz), creating a broad expanse of stratified sediment to form the largest inland delta in North America.

**Guideline 2. Is an outstanding representation of significant ongoing fluvial, geomorphological and biological processes.**
The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers continue to shape the post-glacial landscape of Saskatchewan in a myriad of ways. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of geomorphological processes which are ongoing along the nominated section of river is the diversity of channel forms. These create a marked progression from anastomosing, highly channelized river formations in post-glacial flood plains of the South Saskatchewan River, to the eroding, straight channels north of Saskatoon, and finally the meandering Saskatchewan River which meets the Saskatchewan Delta only to form an extreme example of channel braiding through the delta. The classic braided channels downstream of the Gardiner Dam and the 1870s avulsion that led to the development of the Saskatchewan River Delta have attracted much scientific attention and study, including researchers from overseas.

Guideline 3. Contains along its course unique, rare or outstanding examples of natural phenomena, formations or features.

Certainly the argument has been made that the Saskatchewan River Delta, through which a portion of the nominated section of the Saskatchewan River flows and contributes, is an outstanding example of an geomorphological formation which has resulted in a richly diverse and productive biotic ecosystem. As the largest inland delta in North America (around 10 000 square kilometers in area), its formation is outstanding in rarity and size. In addition, it is also outstanding in the productivity of its wetlands, and in its provision of ecologically significant wetland habitat. The delta is home to over 120 species of birds, 43 species of mammals, 48 species of fish, and 6 species of amphibians and reptiles. The delta is the largest Ducks Unlimited Canada management area in Canada.

Guideline 4. Contains along its course habitats of rare or endangered species of plants and animals including outstanding concentrations of plants and animals of Canadian interest and significance.

While the Saskatchewan River Delta is of particular importance in terms of providing habitat for rare species, it is not the only habitat along the course of the nominated section of river which contains rare plant and animal species. In addition to the delta, within which there is a remarkable concentration of rare waterfowl (including the Sandhill Crane, and Whooping Crane), there are other important areas of wildlife habitat along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. These other areas include old growth riparian forests home to the threatened Canada Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Western Screech Owl. They also include upland grasslands which provide nesting or feeding sites for the Long-billed Curlew, the Ferruginous Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Common Nighthawk, Loggerhead Shrike, Burrowing Owl, and Horned Grebe. All of these birds have been documented in habitat along the South Saskatchewan River and rely on the river itself, either directly for food or indirectly by creating landscapes with suitable nesting grounds and protective cover.

There have also been documented occurrences of rare species such as the Monarch Butterfly, Swift Fox, and Ord's Kangaroo Rat in habitats within 30km of the river channel. The Great Plains Toad, Greater Short-horned Lizard, and Lake Sturgeon have been found either directly within or adjacent to the river channel.

Numerous aquatic and vascular plants considered regionally rare, nationally threatened, or nationally endangered have been documented in the same habitats in which rare animal species have been found, including 12 species of aquatic plants, and 38 species of vascular plants.
Two outstanding examples of rare species communities found along the nominated section of river are the population of Lake Sturgeon found in the Saskatchewan River (one of only two rivers to support this species of sturgeon) and the piping plover population found nesting along the eastern shores of Lake Diefenbaker, which is the largest population of Piping Plovers in North America.

### 3.2.1 Natural Integrity Values

In addition to meeting one or more of the above natural heritage value guidelines, for a river to be judged to have outstanding Canadian natural heritage value, it must meet all of the following natural integrity guidelines:

**The nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representations of all of the natural processes, features, or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding natural value;**

The nominated portion of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers contains significant examples of geomorphic processes, landforms, and plant and animal communities. By including the entire portion of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers that lie within the province of Saskatchewan, this nomination ensures that the nominated section is of sufficient length to include all aspects and characteristics on which nomination is based.

**The nominated section includes those ecosystems components which contribute significantly to the provision of habitat for species in need of protection;**

All rare plant and animal species that are either regionally rare or submitted for protection under the Species at Risk Act of Canada and that are mentioned in this report have been documented as occurring either directly within the river channel of the nominated section, or within 30km of the nominated section. In addition, the habitats on which these rare species rely are directly connected to the nominated portion of the river, either hydrologically or topographically. For example, alkaline bogs are created by underground springs which come to the surface along the river bank and drain into the South Saskatchewan River (and are found in the nominated section). Oxbow lakes and adjacent marshes are created by isolated river channels as the South Saskatchewan River meanders north and south of Saskatoon. The Cumberland marshes are fed by the Saskatchewan River and comprise a major portion of the Saskatchewan River Delta. Riparian forests which house rare bird species are found within the river valley along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan River nominated sections, and uplands with rare plant or animal species are found at the top of banks along the nominated portions of the river. The nominated section of river itself creates the habitat on which rare species rely, or houses the aquatic ecosystems on which rare species rely. Therefore the river creates, or is a significant portion of, the ecosystems which provide habitat for the rare plant and animal species mentioned in this report.
There are no human-made impoundments within the nominated section;

There are several anthropogenic impoundments found along the nominated section of river, including the Qu’Appelle, Gardiner, Francois Finlay, and E.B. Campbell dams, and the City of Saskatoon Weir.

The water in the nominated section is uncontaminated to the extent that its natural aquatic ecosystem is intact; and

The natural ecosystems of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers, along the nominated section of river, have been affected by anthropogenic changes. Man-made impoundments and effluents have impacted the natural ecosystems; however the extent of that impact is subject to debate. Certainly there has been some impact in terms of increases in nutrient content in the river due to sewage effluent and runoff from agricultural production. There has also been an increase in heavy metal contamination from industrial effluent, flooding caused by dam reservoirs, and the existence of pulp and paper mills that were historically located on the nominated portion of river. However, critical ecosystem function remains intact, as signified by water quality which is well within water quality standards for the Province of Saskatchewan, and the presence of higher organisms which rely on ecosystem function, such as fish and aquatic invertebrates. In fact, it can be argued that in some cases aquatic ecosystem function has been enhanced by the creation of reservoirs, such as Lake Diefenbaker, which provide significant spawning habitat for major fish species.

The natural aesthetic character of the nominated section is free of, or not adversely affected by, human developments.

Any river system which travels through areas of human development will be affected by that development, often adversely. As the nominated portion of river flows through areas of dense agricultural production and industrial and urban development, it is likely that the river system has been impacted by that development. However, the natural aesthetics of the nominated portion of river has been well protected by the creation of several provincial and regional parks and wildlife reserves along its length. In addition, the largest urban development along the nominated portion, Saskatoon, has established a conservation authority to protect the river aesthetics from the negative impacts of urban development. This responsibility is assigned to the Meewasin Valley Authority whose mandate is to balance natural conservation with human development. As a result of the creation of such protected areas, the nominated portion of river not only retains its natural aesthetic, but the enjoyment of its natural ecosystems is encouraged and enhanced by such parks and preserves.
References


Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. Canadian Heritage Rivers – South Saskatchewan & Saskatchewan River Background Document (Draft). 2009


*Water Quality Monitoring Data (2009), Provincial Water Quality Database, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment. Provided by Pam Minifie, Environmental Information Section, Municipal Branch: September 11, 2009 (File #1475-55)*
CHAPTER 4: RECREATION VALUES

This section describes the recreational values of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers and the reservoirs that have been created along the rivers. Together the rivers and the reservoirs provide a wide range of recreational activities, from dispersed activities such as canoeing, hiking and hunting to intensive activities including swimming, picnicking, and camping. The rich natural and cultural heritage resources enhance the quality of recreational experiences and the potential for tourism.

4.1 Description of Recreation Values

Recreational activities vary significantly on the river, on the reservoirs, and within the urban centres. Therefore, this section is organized according to River-based Recreation, Reservoir-based Recreation and Urban-based Recreation rather than by specific activities.

Theme 1: River-Based Recreation

The South Saskatchewan River provides opportunities for canoeing and boating through a natural landscape which varies from grassland to boreal forest. Because of the depth of the river valley, the cultivated flatlands are generally not visible, and the river provides the user with a feeling of remoteness and association with nature.

Watercraft will be carried by the current when travelling downstream. There are ample opportunities to launch canoes at river-crossing sites, and there are no dangerous rapids or waterfalls. This makes the South Saskatchewan River ideal for novice canoeists to gain experience before tackling the more challenging wilderness canoeing opportunities in other regions. Boating on the rivers is a more difficult proposition because there are a limited number of launch sites, and boaters must continually avoid sandbars.

Angling occurs mainly at river-crossing sites due to the lack of public access and difficult terrain along most sections of the rivers. Hunting remains a popular recreational activity in the river valleys as well as snowmobiling during the winter, although use of the river itself is hazardous.

There are three regional parks on the South Saskatchewan River between the Alberta border and the City of Saskatoon that are not located on reservoirs. These parks provide recreational activities for local residents. Lemsford Ferry, Eston Riverside and Outlook and District Regional Parks have campsites, picnic areas, playgrounds, hiking and cross country ski trails in the attractive setting of the natural river valley. Eston Riverside and Outlook and District Regional parks also have swimming pools, serviced campsites, golf courses, and nature trails. They also provide access to the river for fishing and canoeing.

Pike Lake Provincial Park, located within a 30-minute drive south of Saskatoon in the South Saskatchewan flood plain, was developed to provide public recreation facilities near the city. Facilities include a swimming pool, water slide, campground, two beaches, picnic grounds, nine-hole golf course, nature trails and canoe and paddle boat rentals. The level of Pike Lake is maintained by a pumping station on the South Saskatchewan River.
Theme 2: Reservoir-Based Recreation

Dams built for hydro-electric power generation and other purposes have enhanced the potential of the rivers for recreation and tourism. The reservoirs have increased the diversity of experiences available to visitors.

Lake Diefenbaker, created by the construction of the Gardiner and Qu’Appelle Dams, has provided a large lake in western Saskatchewan where there were no other lakes of significant size with water quality suitable for recreation. Lake Diefenbaker is located within a one hour drive of Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and less than two hours from Regina.

Lake Diefenbaker is 225 km long with a surface area of 430 km². Because of the ever-present wind, it is considered to be the best lake for sailing in Western Canada. There are major marinas with sail boat moorings at Saskatchewan Landing on the west end and Elbow Harbour at the east end of the lake. There are also boat launches at Danielson and Douglas Provincial Parks and Cabri, Palliser and Herbert Ferry Regional Parks on the south side of Lake Diefenbaker and Prairie Lake Regional Park on the north side. Boating and fishing have made Lake Diefenbaker a popular tourist attraction.

There are more than 800 km of sandy beaches on Lake Diefenbaker, making swimming and water skiing at all of the parks, cottage subdivisions and remote beaches are popular activities.

Saskatchewan Landing and Douglas Park are classified as Natural Environment Provincial Parks which provide large scenic natural areas for viewing their abundance of wildlife and native vegetation.

Interpretation of the cultural heritage of the river region is provided in the historic Goodwin House in Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park, and the history of the South Saskatchewan River Project is presented in the Gardiner Dam Visitor Centre in Danielson Provincial Park.

The Blackstrap Reservoir, located 40 minutes south of Saskatoon, was made possible by the creation of Lake Diefenbaker. The water level in the reservoir is maintained by a canal delivering water from Lake Diefenbaker. The main attractions are boating and fishing. Blackstrap Provincial Park is located on the east side of the reservoir.

The Saskatchewan River has two reservoirs developed for hydro-electric power generation. Both Tobin Lake and Codette Lake are located in the Boreal Transition ecoregion of eastern Saskatchewan where there are a number of other lakes with excellent recreation capability. Because Tobin and Codette Lakes are further removed from major population centres, they do not attract as many recreational users as Lake Diefenbaker.
Tobin Lake is 60 km long and is widely known for its abundant large Northern Pike and Walleye fish. It attracts anglers from across Canada and the United States. Tobin Lake anglers have landed the record walleye at 18.2 pounds and the largest known Northern Pike at 38 pounds.

The Nipawin and District Regional Park, which features a full-service campground, 18-hole golf course, boat launch and trails for cross country skiing and snowmobiling, adds to the region’s recreation and tourism potential.

Wapiti Valley Regional Park is located on Codette Lake and features a downhill ski facility with chairlift, a boat launch and dock on the reservoir, a campground, and cross country skiing and snowmobile trails.

Cumberland Lake in the Saskatchewan River Delta is shallow and has limited potential for recreation. However, the Cumberland House Provincial Historic Park provides interpretation of the historic community, including a display on the boilers of the Northcote steamboat. The abundance of wildlife in the marshes of the Saskatchewan River Delta is attractive for wildlife viewing and hunting.

**Theme 3: Urban-Based Recreation**

The Meewasin Valley Authority is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural heritage resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley in Saskatoon and immediate area. The Authority is supported by the Province of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan.

The Meewasin (a Cree word meaning “beautiful”) Valley Authority has jurisdiction over an area of approximately 60 km along the river from Pike Lake through the heart of Saskatoon to Clark’s Crossing northeast of the city. The Meewasin Valley Trail, which runs the length of the Authority, provides opportunities for cycling, jogging, cross country skiing and leisurely walks through landscaped parks and natural areas along the river banks. Programs focussing on river valley education, development and conservation are provided.

The weir across the South Saskatchewan River maintains a stable water level, ensuring a consistently attractive landscape within the City of Saskatoon. The weir is also a favourite fishing spot for local anglers.

There are a number of parks overlooking the river that provide picnic sites, sports facilities, playgrounds, memorials, public art works, and public washrooms.
Power boats are permitted on the river between the University and Idylwyld bridges and outside the city limits. This allows for activities such as waterskiing, tubing and wakeboarding. Saskatoon provides river boat tours during the summer months.

The parks along the river bank host many events that are major tourist attractions for the City of Saskatoon. These events include the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival, the Sasktel Saskatoon Jazz Festival, A Taste of Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Dragon Boat Festival, and the Saskatoon Fireworks Festival.

Cranberry Flats and the Beaver Creek Conservation Areas provide a variety of opportunities to experience the natural heritage of the South Saskatchewan River Valley south of the City of Saskatoon. Beaver Creek provides outdoor educational programming for school children, displays and brochures about the area and a number of nature trails of various lengths. Cranberry Flats provides opportunities for viewing scenic landscapes, native prairie vegetation, animals and birds. During the winter, Beaver Creek is a popular skating, cross country skiing and snowshoeing area.

The Wanuskewin Heritage Park, 5 km north of Saskatoon, focuses on the interpretation of the cultural heritage of the area. Nineteen pre-Contact sites which were occupied by northern plains people featuring summer and winter campsites, bison kill sites, tipi rings, and a medicine wheel are located in the park. Visitors can participate in tipi-raising, outdoor bannock baking and guided walking tours. Traditional dances are performed daily during the summer. During the winter months, visitors can snowshoe on the trails.

The towns of Outlook and Nipawin are partners in the Regional Park Authorities within their respective communities, and their citizens enjoy the amenities these parks provide (see previous section on River-based recreation and Reservoir-based recreation).

4.2 Assessment of Recreational Values

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities that are enhanced by the cultural and natural heritage resources of the rivers. These recreational values enhance the potential of the rivers to meet the selection and integrity guidelines of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

Selection Guidelines: Recreational Values.

Outstanding Canadian recreational value will be recognized when a river and its immediate environment possess a combination of river-related recreational opportunities and related cultural and/or natural values, which together provide an opportunity for outstanding recreational experiences.
Guideline: Recreation opportunities include water-based activities such as canoeing and other forms of boating, swimming and angling, and other activities such as camping, hiking, wildlife viewing and natural and cultural appreciation, which may be part of a river-touring experience.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide excellent canoeing opportunities for novice canoeists within a scenic valley, and one which is representative of the natural environment prior to settlement and which has been lost to cultivation on the surrounding plains. Cultural heritage resources are readily accessible from the river including the Wanaskewin Heritage Park, Petite Ville Provincial Heritage Property and Battle of Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek National Historic Site, the cultural landscape of the St. Laurent Settlement, the Batoche National Historic Site, the Forks of the South and North Saskatchewan Rivers and the site and remnants of the Hudson’s Bay Company post and the Northcote steamboat at Cumberland House.

The outstanding natural heritage resources that can be viewed while canoeing and boating include the natural vegetation of the Red Deer River Forks which includes habitat for rattlesnakes, spectacular numbers of waterfowl during migration at the west end of Lake Diefenbaker, the cliffs of the Swift Current Creek and possible sighting of Golden Eagles or Peregrine Falcons, native plant species of the Matador Grasslands, sand dunes in Douglas Provincial Park, Beaver Creek and Cranberry Flats natural areas, cottonwood forest on Yorath Island and the unique natural features of the Saskatchewan River Delta.

Lake Diefenbaker, the reservoir created by the construction of the Gardiner and Qu’Appelle Dams, is an outstanding recreational resource in southwest Saskatchewan. Opportunities for boating, sailing, angling, swimming, and camping are popular here because of the proximity to major population centres.

Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park provides opportunities to interpret the grassland natural environment and cultural heritage features such as the Goodwin House Visitor Centre, tipi rings, a bison rubbing stone, homestead cellar depressions, remnants of the Battleford Trail, and the Heavy Haul Trail.

Within the urban setting of Saskatoon, the city and the Meewasin Valley Authority have undertaken programs and projects to protect the natural and cultural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley and preserve its scenic beauty.

The Saskatchewan River is less attractive for canoeing because the river is interrupted by two reservoirs. Tobin and Codette Lakes have flooded the natural river valley, but they attract anglers from distant locations because of their reputation for producing record-size Northern Pike and Walleye. Other water-based recreation opportunities such as boating and swimming are important to local residents.
**Guideline:** Natural values include visual aesthetics, and physical assets such as sufficient flow, navigability, rapids, accessibility and suitable shoreline.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are especially attractive from the valley walls or on the rivers because the steep slopes, native vegetation, and flowing water are in dramatic contrast to the adjacent uplands.

The rivers have sufficient flow and are navigable for canoeing, however they lack rapids which make them too tame for many expert canoeists. The shorelines are often difficult to access due to erosion and high banks along the river. However, they are usually high and dry, making them good locations for camping and hiking. Access to the rivers is usually possible only at river crossing sites and within provincial or regional parks.

### 4.2.1 Integrity Guidelines: Recreation Integrity Guidelines

In addition to meeting both of the recreation value guidelines, for a river to be judged as having outstanding Canadian recreational value, it must meet all of the following recreation integrity guidelines.

**Guideline:** The river possesses water of a quality suitable for contact recreational activities, including those recreational opportunities for which it is nominated;

Water quality in the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers is monitored regularly for key contaminants including heavy metals, fecal coli forms, and ion concentrations. The water quality of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers meet all guidelines for water contact recreational activities.

**Guideline:** The river’s visual appearance is capable of providing river travellers with a continuous natural experience, or a combined natural and cultural experience, without significant interruption by modern human intrusions;

Although Lake Diefenbaker floods 225 km of the South Saskatchewan River, more than 500 km of the river from the Alberta border to the Forks is not submerged. There are three distinctly different sections of the river that are not impacted significantly by human intrusions: the Mixed Grassland ecoregion from the Alberta border to Lake Diefenbaker; the Moist Mixed Grassland ecoregion from the Gardiner Dam to Saskatoon; and the Aspen Parkland ecoregion and the Boreal Transition ecoregion between Saskatoon and the Manitoba border.

The City of Saskatoon must be considered a modern human intrusion; however, the Meewasin Valley Authority has made a concerted effort to protect the river valley’s natural values and improve the aesthetics of the riverbanks negatively affected by earlier urban developments.
The Saskatchewan River Delta near Cumberland House has been negatively impacted by the upstream reservoirs which have altered the river flow. The delta still provides a unique and diverse ecosystem of great interest to nature-oriented visitors. Visitors can also visit the Cumberland House Provincial Historic Park which displays the Hudson’s Bay Company powder house and the boilers from the Northcote steamboat. A casual trip by canoe on the canals, which were developed in the 1930s to facilitate increased muskrat populations, provides excellent wildlife viewing, and hiking through the unique vegetation communities can be exhilarating.

**Guideline:** The river is capable of supporting recreational uses without significant loss, or impact on, its natural or cultural values or its visual character.

The natural and cultural resources of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers have been utilized well below their potential due largely to lack of promotion. Canoeing on these rivers has traditionally been ignored in favour of longer excursions on northern rivers. The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for day trips or weekend trips. Since the natural and cultural resources are under utilized, an increase in growth can be managed without impact.

Awareness has been steadily growing from both Saskatchewan and Alberta residents regarding the recreational value of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers and Lake Diefenbaker. The designation of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as a Canadian Heritage River will increase public awareness of their significance to the Province of Saskatchewan and increase tourism that will help develop a more sustainable economy for river related communities.

**References**

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin. Canadian Heritage Rivers – South Saskatchewan & Saskatchewan River Background Document (Draft). 2009

About Meewasin  [http://www.meewasin.com/about/](http://www.meewasin.com/about/)

Regional Parks Association  [http://www.saskregionalparks.ca](http://www.saskregionalparks.ca)

The nomination document demonstrates that the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers possess outstanding cultural heritage values and meet all CHRS cultural heritage value selection and integrity guidelines outlined in *A Cultural Framework for Canadian Heritage Rivers*.

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers will contribute to the Canadian Heritage River System by representing cultural heritage themes related to the use of the river and adjacent plains. This includes Aboriginal people prior to European contact, the fur trade and exploration of western Canada, the Northwest Resistance, the settlement of the western plains and the development of the largest multi-purpose water use project in Canadian history.

The Nomination Document also demonstrates that the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers possess outstanding natural heritage values that are currently not represented in the CHRS. However, because there are impoundments on the river, it cannot satisfy the integrity guidelines for nomination based on the natural heritage values. Nevertheless, if the nomination is approved based on the cultural heritage values, the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers will fill a major gap in the CHRS representing the prairies physiographic region of Canada.

The Saskatchewan River System is the fourth longest in North America. It passes through all three Prairie Provinces and should be recognized in the CHRS for its tremendous significance to the cultural, natural, and recreational heritage of Canada.

The designation of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers will aid in the protection of these rivers while enhancing and publicizing the cultural, natural and recreational heritage of the river. The letters of support from residents, communities and stakeholders from along the river demonstrates a strong desire to protect the river.
APPENDIX A

Community Meetings along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

April 8, 2008  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
May 21, 2008  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
June 26, 2008  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
September 11, 2008  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
November 5, 2008  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
December 16, 2008  Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
February 18, 2009  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
March 4, 2009  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
May 11, 2009  Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
June 17, 2009  6th Canadian River Heritage Conference, Ottawa, Ontario
June 21-22, 2009  Batoche National Historic Site, Batoche, Saskatchewan
June 23, 2009  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
October 9, 2009  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
March 4, 2010  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
June 15, 2010  Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
July, 2010  Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
September, 15, 2010  Mini Saskatchewan River Delta Symposium, The Pas, Manitoba
February 18, 2011  Northeast Tribal Councils, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
March 4, 2011  Meewasin Valley Authority board meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
March 8, 2011  Cumberland House Cree Nation, Cumberland House, Saskatchewan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 9, 2011</td>
<td>Northern Village of Cumberland House, Cumberland House, Saskatchewan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 10, 2011</td>
<td>Shoal Lake First Nation, Shoal Lake First Nation Reserve, Saskatchewan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14, 2011</td>
<td>Town of Nipawin, Nipawin, Saskatchewan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 17, 2011</td>
<td>Association of Saskatchewan Urban parks and Conservation Agencies, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18, 2011</td>
<td>One Arrow First Nation, Batoche, Saskatchewan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25, 2011</td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers Nomination Document is part of a community initiative seeking Canadian Heritage River designation for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. Individuals from agencies, municipalities, local organizations and the general public have donated their time, energy and experience to this project. Dedicated volunteers have assisted with the writing, editing and information sharing essential to the coordination of the document. We would like to thank all those who assisted with the project.

We would especially like to acknowledge the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon for all their work in undertaking the cultural research for the background report upon which this nomination document is based.

Amy Briley Gabriel Dumont Institute
Amanda Burke Meewasin Valley Authority
Mark Calette National Historic Sites
Nicole Carey MidSask REDA
Scott Duffee Gabriel Dumont Institute
Gary Carriere Northern Village of Cumberland House
Raymond Dussion Cumberland House Cree Nation
Ken Engele Sagehill Community Futures
Mark England West Central Tourism
Randy Fernets Tourism Saskatoon
Janette Hamilton Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, Parks Service Division
Owen Einsiedler Saskatchewan West Central
Calvin Kirby Consultant
Susan Lamb Meewasin Valley Authority
Ken Lozinsky Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, Parks Service Branch
Lis Mack Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin
Russ McPherson Waterwolf Economic Development
Ian McGilip  Tourism Saskatchewan
Jennifer Nelson  Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin
Colleen Norish  Trails of 1885
Diane Olchowski  Sagehill Community Futures
Tim Ouellette  Tourism Saskatchewan
Oren Robison  The Nipawin Bridge Magazine
Peggy Sargent  Saskatoon Heritage Society
Wayne Schick  Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, Parks Service Division
Karon Shmon  Gabriel Dumont Institute
Brenda Wallace  South Saskatchewan Watershed Stewards
Rick West  SaskPower
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support for South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers Heritage Designation have been submitted by the following organizations and individuals.

Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies
Cumberland House Fisherman’s Co-operative
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Robert M. Gordon
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy
Leaning Tree Ranch
Meewasin Valley Authority
Minister of Culture, Parks and Recreation
One Arrow First Nation
Prairie Wild Consulting
Saskatchewan West Central Tourism
Saskatoon Heritage Society
Shearwater River Cruises
Shoal Lake Cree Nation
South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards
The Northern Village of Cumberland House
The Town of Nipawin
Tourism Saskatchewan
Tourism Saskatoon
University of Nebraska Lincoln
Wanuskewin Heritage Park
Whitecap Dakota First Nation

Additional letters of support are continuing to be submitted and are available upon request.
March 21, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

The Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies, Inc. (ASUPCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to conservation, development and education in seven Saskatchewan cities. Its members include: BATTLEFORDS - Battlefords River Valley, SWIFT CURRENT - Chinook Parkway, SASKATOON - Meewasin Valley, PRINCE ALBERT - Pehonan Parkway, WEYBURN - Tatagwa Parkway, MOOSE JAW - Wakamow Valley, REGINA - Wascana Centre. ASUPCA member agencies represent 60% of the population of the province. The individual members each have a water body, work to a locally developed master plan and have an independent board. They have chosen to conserve their parks and conservation zones, educate the public about them and develop them for public access.

ASUPCA supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at...
Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a reservoir 225 km long (Lake Diefenbaker) that provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial for the future development of Saskatchewan.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

ASUPCA believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons ASUPCA heartily supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers for an Heritage River designation.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Keith Anderson
President

WPSFHOME/DESKTOP/ASUPCA/SUPPORT LETTER HERITAGE RIVER.DOC
March 14, 2011

Mr. Lennard Morin
President, Cumberland House Fisherman's Co-operative
Box 72
Cumberland House, Saskatchewan

SOE OSO

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon Saskatchewan S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and
Saskatchewan Rivers

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan
River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and
Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage river. The Cumberland House
Fisherman's Co-operative Ltd. supports the nomination for the
following reasons:

- Cumberland House is the oldest continuously occupied
  community established in 1774 by Samuel Hearne for the
  Hudson's Bay Company during the fur trade era. The site was
  chosen because it was strategically situated on the
Saskatchewan and commanded the route north to the Churchill river system.

- The river system was very important for the fur trade and expansion to the west. The first Steamboat to arrive in Cumberland House was the Northcote from Grand Rapids. Cumberland House became a transportation centre and distribution depot. Supplies transported by the Northcote were dropped off in Cumberland House.

- The strategic location of the Cumberland post was obvious. The water routes from York Factory and Montreal converged in Cumberland Lake.

- In the 1880's, the use of Steamboats was decreasing. In 1886, the SS Northcote was permanently beached at Cumberland House. Sternwheelers were later used to haul copper from north of Cumberland to the railhead at The Pas. When the railway reached Flin Flon in 1925, the steamboat era ended.

- The community continued to thrive by living off the land and water. Our industry was trapping and fishing in what is well known as the Cumberland "DELTA".

Projects upstream from Cumberland House, namely hydro electricity developments have had a devastating impact on the trapping and fishing industry in Cumberland House. For these reasons, The Fisherman's Co-op supports the heritage nomination solely in our jurisdiction, the Cumberland 'Delta'. Furthermore, The Fisherman's Co-op supports the nomination on the understanding
that no future hydro development projects are constructed from the Rocky Mountains to the Cumberland 'delta'.

Sincerely,

Lennard Morin

President, Fishermans Co-op
November 9, 2010

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Susan Lamb, Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK
S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

I have learned from my colleagues who attended the mini symposium on the Saskatchewan River Delta in The Pas that a group of volunteers, led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin, has drafted a nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as a Canadian Heritage River.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has been involved with wetlands conservation in Saskatchewan for over 70 years and actively involved with projects near Cumberland House in the upper reaches of the Saskatchewan River Delta (SRD) since the 1960’s. Of key importance to the health of the SRD is the proper stewardship of the Saskatchewan River upstream and within this internationally recognized wildlife area.

Achieving Canadian Heritage River status will not only acknowledge the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan River, including the SRD, as having historical and cultural significance but it will provide a profile for important ecological attributes that these rivers provide such as a healthy water supply and fish and wildlife habitat. It is for these and other reasons that Ducks Unlimited Canada supports this nomination.

Further more, DUC supports the recommendation by the Province of Saskatchewan that the entire section of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers, from the Alberta to the Manitoba borders be nominated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

On behalf of Ducks Unlimited Canada, we wish you all the best with this important nomination.

Sincerely,

Brent Kennedy
Manager of Provincial Operations

PO Box 4465, 1030 Winnipeg St. Regina, SK S4P 3W7
Phone: 306-569-0424  Fax: 306 -565-3699

Diamond Legacy Sponsor SaskPower
Powering the future
HERITAGE RIVERS NOMINATION FOR THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN
AND SASKATCHEWAN RIVERS.

I support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan as a heritage river for the following reasons.

The creation of Lake Diefenbaker on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River in 1967, fulfilled a decades long dream of the residents of southern Saskatchewan to have a sure source of water for irrigation, community development and a place for recreation. This project was labeled as crucial for the future of Saskatchewan. Its completion has proven, beyond a doubt, that it was a project that exceeded all expectations of its benefits. A testimony to the determination of our forefathers.

The development of Lake Diefenbaker has given the people of Canada the benefits of a world class refuge and staging area for waterfowl, called Galloway Bay, which is located at the terminus of Lake Diefenbaker. The Canadian Wildlife Service can provide all the details you would need to impress critics. This lends support to the actions of the Federal Government in 1965 when it recognized the South Saskatchewan River as critical habitat for wildlife.

The South Saskatchewan River is the only significant source of water for over 45% of the entire population of Saskatchewan. The current and future demands from an expanding population dictate that this watershed is critical because there is no second guessing when it comes to a sure source of potable water.

This river belongs to all the residents of Saskatchewan, and we are entitled to the use and enjoyment of it. It is not a river to be placed in the hands of special interests or parcelled off for personal or political gain. The physical features of the south branch of the Saskatchewan River are appealing and at times breath taking all the way from the Drowning Ford to Gardiner Dam. Significant tracts of almost inaccessible terrain, near the Alberta border with Saskatchewan all the way to the Lancer Ferry, offer sightseeing without equal of an eco system that is largely intact.

More importantly, this river valley is a sanctuary and habitat for numerous species of flora and fauna. They are in their last refuge in this river valley and we are duty bound to protect it for future generations.

The river became and still is culturally and emotionally important to all the people, past and present, who have sought it out not only for survival but for support that sustained them in difficult times. To-day you have regional parks but, in the past you had meeting and picnic grounds in favourable locations, that are frequently mentioned in regional histories of the communities along the river.
I believe it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values. I support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

I leave you with this thought. “We inherit from our ancestors legacies often taken for granted. We are the links between the ages, continuing past and present expectations, sacred memories and future promise”.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Gordon
707-28th St West
Saskatoon Sask.

-80-
Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. I support the nomination for the following reasons:

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and
Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a reservoir 225 km long (Lake Diefenbaker) that provides water for hydroelectric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial for the future development of Saskatchewan.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

I believe it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons I heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

Jeremy Morgan
Diefenbaker Policy Fellow
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy
Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. Leaning Tree ranch supports the nomination for the following reasons:

*Insert the ones below most relevant to you:*

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson's Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada's most famous explorers searching for a
route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- Exploration of the prairies by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually, the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South and Saskatchewan Rivers.

- The decimation of the bison herds on the plains and the decline in the fur trade changed the lives of the First Nations and Métis people forever. The South Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it marks the transition of the nomadic aboriginal people to settlers. The Métis turned to farming and settled permanently on the South Saskatchewan River at St. Laurent, Batoche, Fish Creek, Halcro and Adam’s Crossing, using a river lot settlement pattern. First Nation groups signed Treaties and settled on reserves.

- The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Torsont’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a reservoir 225 km long (Lake Diefenbaker) that provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial for the future development of Saskatchewan.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker
and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

Leaning Tree ranch believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river's outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons we Paul Letkeman and Vivian Letkeman heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Vivian A. Letkeman
Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
402 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re:  Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and
      Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. For thousands of years previous, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The Meewasin Valley Authority supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied
- sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

The Meewasin Valley Authority believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons The Meewasin Valley Authority emphatically supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

Mike Velonas
Resource Planning Manager
Meewasin Valley Authority
April 4, 2011

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Nomination Support

This letter is to confirm the support of One Arrow First Nation for the nomination of the South Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River to be included in the Canadian Heritage River System.

If you have any questions, please contact One Arrow at the number above.

In Good Spirit

Kirk Matchap,
Vice Chief
Health and Urban Portfolio Councillor
One Arrow First Nation
July 9, 2009

Hon. Dustin Duncan,
Minister of Culture, Parks and Recreation
Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive,
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Minister,

I want to follow up on our conversation at the Saskatchewan Jazz Festival regarding potential new wilderness park designations in our province.

I raised with you the idea that the South Saskatchewan River valley where it enters the province would make a great wilderness park. I believe it would be very worthwhile to enter into discussions with Alberta about a joint Interprovincial park similar to Cypress Hills as this river valley, in this region, is very unique and has a lot of significant geographic and cultural aspects to it.

I would also strongly encourage you to consider the South Saskatchewan River for designation as a Canadian Heritage River. This is an important designation and the South Saskatchewan River has a long and storied history particularly in the southern part of our province.

If I can be of any assistance in this endeavour please let me know. I look forward to your reply. Thank you.

Yours truly

(David Forbes, MLA
Saskatoon Centre)

David Forbes, MLA  Saskatoon Centre, 904D 22nd Street W, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0S1
Ph: (306) 244-3555  Fax: (306) 244-3602  Email: dforbesmla@sasktel.net
Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin  
c/o Managing Partner  
405 Third Avenue South  
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. Our regional and community planning firm, Prairie Wild Consulting Co., works with various communities along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. With great enthusiasm we support the nomination for the following reasons:

- The South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers are an important resource generally and specifically for the communities that are located alongside these important waterways...
  - As an ecological habitat for flora and fauna;
  - As an important cultural heritage asset - being an ever unfolding story founded on it being home to many of our indigenous peoples, as an exploration route for new comers, and a key route from which our communities emerged and developed from.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for numerous integrated community development and conservation efforts that include though are not limited to - heritage and cultural interpretation, eco-based tourism, recreational activities and acting as an integral source of water and related ecological resources.

As a regional and community planning firm we could not think of a better way to ensure the sustainability of this most important living system by supporting the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Principal Partner

Date: January 28, 2011
October 8, 2010

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Susan Lamb, Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place here in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. For thousands of years before that, first Nations peoples came to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. And this story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, the faces of the peoples who live there and in the current of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has draft a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The Saskatchewan West Central Tourism Region supports the nomination for the following reasons:

The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Touront’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history. Today these and other sites which played a role in the events of 1885 comprise a tourism initiative called “The Trails of 1885.”
The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a reservoir 225 km long (Lake Diefenbaker) that provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial for the future development of Saskatchewan.

The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

For these reasons I (my organization) heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely,

Owen Einsiedler
Marketing Manager
January 28, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The Saskatoon Heritage Society supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River Systems. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

The Saskatoon Heritage Society believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons, we heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Chair, Saskatoon Heritage Society
March 17, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin  
c/o Managing Partner  
405 Third Avenue South  
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5  

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:  

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers  

Beginning in 1774 with the establishment of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s first inland post at Cumberland House, through the early 1870s and the heyday of steamboat travel which lasted through the turn of the century, the South Saskatchewan River was a key transportation link for the settlement of the prairies. In 1885, many key military actions of the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a Heritage River. In my capacity as a principal and manager of Shearwater River Boats (Saskatoon), and as a former Executive Director of the Heart of Canada’s Old North West tourism group, I support the nomination for the following reasons:

- The tributaries of the Saskatchewan River system bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- The Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

Shearwater Motor Ships, Box 309, Hafford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S0J 1A0  
tel. 306-549-2452  fax. 306-549-2199  email office@shearwatertours.com
• The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not yet exist led to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the Saskatchewan River system.

• The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Tourtord's Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

• The South Saskatchewan River provides opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

Shearwater River Cruises transport at least 5000 passengers annually on the South Saskatchewan River at Saskatoon, and we know from experience that our passengers – especially visitors from beyond our region and beyond our country’s borders, believe it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the rivers’ outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values.

Therefore, we heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan River as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

Peter Kingsmill
Manager of Operations.
Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. Shoal Lake First Nation supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson's Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada's most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Peter Fiddler, Samuel Hearne, Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- Exploration of the prairies by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually, the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led
to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South and Saskatchewan Rivers.

- The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Touroll's Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

- The Saskatchewan River is the main source or water for the largest inland delta in North America, The Saskatchewan River Delta. Locally known as Cumberland Delta, it consists of 10,000 square kilometres of important wetlands.

Shoal Lake First Nation believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river's outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons Shoal Lake First Nation heartily supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely

Rayme Whitecap
Band Councillor
Rayme Whitecap
South Saskatchewan River
Watershed Stewards

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc. (SSRWSt) support the nomination for the following reasons:

- The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- Exploration of the prairies by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually, the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South and Saskatchewan Rivers.

- The South Saskatchewan River Project, completed in 1967, created a reservoir 225 km long (Lake Diefenbaker) that provides water for hydro-electric power generation, agricultural irrigation, community water supplies, industrial development and recreation and tourism. This project was crucial for the future development of Saskatchewan.
- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

SSRWSI believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river's outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons SSRWSI heartily supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely,

Mike Velonas
Board Member
South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc.
The Northern Village of Cumberland House
P.O. Box 190
Cumberland House, Saskatchewan
S0E 0S0
Telephone: 306-888-2066/2216 Fax: 888-2103
Email: northernvillageofchouse@sasktel.net

Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had to come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage river. The Northern Village of Cumberland House support the nomination for the following reasons:

✓ For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

✓ The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

✓ The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland house in 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within
sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta Border to the Manitoba Border.

✓ The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Peter Fiddler, Samuel Hearne, Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

✓ Exploration of the prairies by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually, the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South and Saskatchewan Rivers.

✓ The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place the Tourend’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Metis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

✓ The Saskatchewan River is the main source of water for the largest delta in North America, The Saskatchewan River Delta. Locally known as Cumberland Delta, it consists of 10,000 square kilometers of important wetlands.

The Northern Village of Cumberland House believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons the Northern Village of Cumberland House heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Andy McKay,
Mayor
Northern Village of Cumberland House
March 18, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The Town of Nipawin supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding cultural heritage value because the area was a battleground for a fierce rivalry during the fur trade between the Hudson’s Bay Company, based on the Hudson Bay, and the North West Company, with headquarters in Montreal. These companies built trading posts that became the first permanently occupied sites (Fort La Corne in 1753 and Cumberland House 1774) in what was to become the province of Saskatchewan. There are at least 18 sites that had one or more fur trading posts, often rival posts within sight of one another, along the 1000 km of river from the Alberta border to the Manitoba border.

- The Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it was a gateway for Canada’s most famous explorers searching for a route to the Western Sea; included in this group are Henry Kelsey, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and John Franklin.

- Exploration of the prairies by Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, John Macoun and others after 1850 provided contradictory reports about the potential of the region for agriculture. Eventually, the Government of Canada introduced programs to encourage settlement. The need to transport supplies, equipment and settlers where railways did not exist led to a brief period when steamboats were an important means of transportation on the South and Saskatchewan Rivers.
- The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Souris’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Metis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers are of outstanding natural heritage value because the natural features of the valleys are representative of the Prairies Physiographic Region of Canada, which is underrepresented in the Canadian Heritage River System. The rivers and valleys also contain representative samples of the natural environments of six ecoregions in the province.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

- The Saskatchewan River is the main source of water for the largest inland delta in North America, The Saskatchewan River Delta. Locally known as the Cumberland Delta, it consists of 10,000 square kilometers of important wetland.

The Town of Nipawin believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons the Town of Nipawin heartily supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Council would like the opportunity to nominate representatives from Nipawin to serve on the Heritage Rivers management board. Please contact us / keep us informed as to the status of the nomination.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Lawrence Rosspad, Mayor
Heritage Rivers Nomination
November 19, 2010

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express Tourism Saskatchewan’s support for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers to receive official designation as Heritage Rivers.

Our support for this submission is based on several reasons. These rivers played a pivotal role for thousands of years as First Nations, including the Plains Cree, Woods Cree, and Swampy Cree, settled the areas and developed their trading economies. Centuries ago, when explorers sought gateways to the western sea, the Saskatchewan River routes were central to their efforts. They became important trade channels for the Hudson Bay Company and others that established posts in this area that would become Saskatchewan. Defining moments in Canadian history involved these waterways, notably key battles during the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

The South Saskatchewan River Project was critical to the development of the southern half of the province. At the time of construction, it was the largest earth-filled dam in the world until completion of the Aswan Dam in Egypt. The colossal reservoir that was created, Lake Diefenbaker, has been fundamental to a number of industries, not the least of which is tourism. Lake Diefenbaker and the surrounding area is now a flagship destination for Saskatchewan.

Many chapters from our rich past unfolded along the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences that are enjoyed today by our own residents and by visitors who travel from afar. These rivers are valuable, enviable resources that must not be taken for granted. Their protection is the responsibility of leaders, citizens, and all who have the good fortune to call Saskatchewan “home.”

Tourism Saskatchewan encourages you to consider this most worthy effort that seeks official Heritage River status for two important river systems in our province.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Lynda Haverstock, C.M., S.O.M., Ph.D., LL.D.
President/CEO
March 30, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin  
C/O Managing Partner  
405 Third Ave. S.  
Saskatoon, SK. S7K 3G5

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan River

I am writing to express Tourism Saskatoon’s support for the official designation of Heritage Rivers for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers.

Tourism Saskatoon views these rivers as the “stage” upon which cultural and heritage activities continue to flourish and succeed. The many festivals, cultural and sporting events that the river is part of helps to shape the cultural identity of Saskatoon. The Saskatchewan SaskTel Jazz Festival, Patash Corp Fireworks Festival, Wintershine, Taste of Saskatchewan, and the Reggae Festival are only a few of the experiences residents and visitors flock to year after year. These events are nurtured by our rivers and its surroundings and in turn, must be recognized and protected.

Tourism Saskatoon is a major partner in the development of the Trails of 1885 – a dramatic piece of our history that should be told through our geography, and the events of the 1885 resistance. The rivers were integral in the campaigns of the government and resistance forces. The stories and the sites situated on these rivers form the largest and most compelling part of this western Canadian tourism initiative.

This organization will always endeavor to be a part of the future development of river-based educational and cultural activities. Your consideration for these rivers to be nominated for a Heritage Designation would be another positive, and undoubtedly exciting, step in the history of the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Todd Brandt  
President & CEO Tourism Saskatoon

Saskatoon Shines!
To: Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin  
c/o Managing Partner  
405 Third Avenue South  
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

From: Norman D. Smith, Professor Emeritus  
Dept. of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln NE 68588-0340

Date: March 28, 2011

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

I enthusiastically support this nomination. I have been a professor of the geosciences for virtually all of my professional life, having held tenured faculty positions at two major U.S. universities (U. Illinois-Chicago, U. Nebraska-Lincoln) where I have specialized in terrestrial sedimentation systems, mainly rivers and river processes. A large proportion of my research activity has been conducted in central and western Canada, including the Saskatchewan River Delta (SRD) which I have studied with collaborators and students, off and on, for nearly 30 years. From this, you can surmise that the SRD holds a particular fascination for me, not only from a strict scientific viewpoint, but also for its beauty, natural and cultural histories, and the richness and diversity of its wildlife and geography. The SRD straddles the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border, approximately half lying in each province, so the upstream portion lies within the proposed Heritage Rivers reach of the South Saskatchewan/Saskatchewan River.

In my opinion, the following features of the SRD each contribute to the overall merit of the South Saskatchewan/Saskatchewan River as a strong candidate for Heritage River status:

- At 10,000 km² in area, the SRD is the largest inland delta in North America. It is the product of continuous sedimentation by the Saskatchewan River into lake basins vacated by receding Ice Age glaciers beginning about 9-10,000 years ago. The delta is continuing to grow today.

- The village of Cumberland House, in the heart of the SRD, is the oldest continuously occupied community in Saskatchewan. It originated in 1774 when Samuel Hearne built a fur-trading post for the Hudson Bay Company on the south shore of Cumberland Lake. For many years afterwards, Cumberland House was the crossroads of two major fur-trading routes established by the British Hudson Bay Company (westward routes via the North and South Saskatchewan River system) and the Montreal-based North West Company (northward routes via Cumberland Lake, Sturgeon-Weir River, and Churchill River systems). The location of the original HBC post is now an archeological site near the present village. A small provincial park hosts the remains of the old sternwheeler Northcote, which was a major freight hauler in the steamboat era in the late 1800s.
and figured prominently in the Battle of Batoche in 1885.

- The delta abounds with diverse wildlife—mammals, fish, birds—traditional sources of sustenance and livelihood for aboriginal peoples and early European explorers and fur-traders. It is a designated Canadian Important Bird Area of global significance and home for a half-million migratory waterfowl each year. Efforts to stabilize wetland water levels and improve wildlife habitat go back to early parts of the last century, first by the Hudson Bay Company to increase muskrat harvests, and subsequently (still ongoing) by Ducks Unlimited Canada to enhance and sustain waterfowl productivity.

- The Saskatchewan River both feeds and transects the SRD, and it has long served as a major travelway and location of rendezvous sites for pre- and post-contact aboriginal groups. The Pasquatinow site, situated on a high ridge at the north bank of the Saskatchewan River near the head of the delta, was such a gathering center (1). It is easily accessed from the river and affords a commanding view of the delta region.

- The SRD displays one of the scientifically best known examples of a river avulsion (= an abrupt diversion of flow out of one channel into a newly formed channel). This happened in the 1870s when discharge from the east-flowing Saskatchewan River diverted northward near the apex of the delta, forming what today is called the New Channel and virtually abandoning the former course, now called the Old Channel. This event has profoundly affected some 500 km² of the upper delta, converting marshy peatlands into a myriad of interconnecting small channels and shallow inter-channel lakes and ponds, modifications of which are continuing today 135 years later. These modifications are readily seen in the 75-km distance between the New Channel/Old Channel bifurcation and Cumberland Lake, which has dramatically reduced in depth due to siltation caused by the re-direction of river flow into the lake. This avulsion was the most recent of nine major avulsions that have modified and shaped the SRD in the past 5,400 years. The causes and after-effects of the 1870s avulsion have attracted scientists and students to the SRD from at least six different countries outside of Canada (USA, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Spain, Romania, and Russia). The first detailed study of this avulsion (2) has been cited over 180 times in the professional geoscience literature.

References:

Further details and additional aspects of the Saskatchewan River Delta, including environmental issues and a list of relevant literature sources, are summarized in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saskatchewan_River_Delta.
February 14, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and
Saskatchewan Rivers.

More than 125 years ago the Northwest Resistance took place in Saskatchewan on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The events of the resistance changed the face of Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. This story is one of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. I, Dana Sconias, Chief Executive Officer of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, support the nomination for the following reasons:

For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking. The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons, Wanuskewin heartily support the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely,

Dana Sconias
Chief Executive Officer

Wanuskewin Heritage Park
R.R. #1, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J7 Canada • Phone: (306) 931-4577 • Fax: (306) 931-4572
E-mail: wanuskewin@wanuskewin.com • Website: www.wanuskewin.com
March 31, 2011

Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin
c/o Managing Partner
405 Third Avenue South
Saskatoon SK S7K 3G5

To whom it may concern:

Re: Heritage Rivers Nomination for the South Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Rivers

More than 125 years ago Chief Whitecap recommended the current site of Saskatoon as the place for John Lake to establish his Temperance Colony on the shores of the South Saskatchewan River. Previously, for thousands of years, First Nations peoples had come to the river for shelter and sustenance. The War of 1812 and the events of the Northwest Resistance helped form Canada and resulted in Saskatchewan and later Alberta and British Columbia joining Confederation. These stories are some of the many still being told in the communities along the river, in the faces of the peoples who live there and in the currents of the river itself.

A group of volunteers led by the Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin has drafted a nomination of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers as a heritage River. The Whitecap Dakota First Nation supports the nomination for the following reasons:

- For thousands of years, mankind has gathered at the river for food, water and shelter. The banks of the river served as a support for buffalo hunts and berry picking.

- The tributaries of the South and Saskatchewan Rivers bring large volumes of fresh water from the Rocky Mountains to the arid southern plains. These waters sustained plant and animal life and attracted the First Nations people to occupy the area some 8,500 years ago. These people used the cliffs along the South Saskatchewan River to harvest large mammals, some of which became extinct thousands of years ago.

- The decimation of the bison herds on the plains and the decline in the fur trade changed the lives of the First Nations and Métis people forever. The South Saskatchewan River is of outstanding cultural heritage value because it marks the
transition of the nomadic aboriginal people to settlers. The Métis turned to farming and settled permanently on the South Saskatchewan River at St. Laurent, Batoche, Fish Creek, Halcro and Adam’s Crossing, using a river lot settlement pattern. Chief Whitecap settled his people on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River.

- The South Saskatchewan River was the focal point for the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Two battles between the followers of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont and the Government of Canada forces led by General Middleton took place at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and Batoche. The Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885 ended with the surrender of the Métis. Both battle sites are National Historic Sites that reflect their significance in Canadian history.

- The South and Saskatchewan Rivers provide opportunities for angling, canoeing, hiking, camping, wildlife and scenic viewing, hunting and a variety of winter recreation activities in close proximity to most residents. The reservoirs provide outstanding water-based recreational opportunities: excellent sailing, angling, swimming and camping on Lake Diefenbaker and trophy fishing on Tobin Lake. The cultural and natural heritage values enhance the recreational experiences and serve as tourist attractions to encourage local economic activity.

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation believes it is important to recognize, celebrate and conserve the river’s outstanding cultural, natural and recreational values of this great area. For these reasons the Whitecap Dakota First Nation heartily supports the nomination of the South Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Rivers as Heritage Rivers.

Sincerely;

[Signature]
Chief Darcy Bear
Whitecap Dakota First Nation