



**HAYES RIVER**  
**A Canadian Heritage River**  
Ten-year Monitoring Report: 2006 – 2016

Prepared by

Manitoba Sustainable Development  
Parks and Protected Spaces Branch

for

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board  
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# Acknowledgements

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- Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage
- Manitoba East Side Road Authority
- Manitoba Hydro
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hayes River, Manitoba's longest naturally flowing river, is rich in cultural history and the sights and sounds of the wilderness. Opportunities for natural heritage appreciation and adventure abound for those who undertake the challenge of paddling down all or a portion of the 600-kilometre route. On the basis of these and other values, the Hayes was designated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) in 2006. The CHRS requires that a detailed monitoring report be prepared every ten years from designation to confirm that rivers continue to possess the natural, cultural and recreational values for which they were designated.

This Ten-year Monitoring Report lists activities, events and research that occurred on the Hayes River since its designation to the CHRS. It describes the current condition of the river's natural heritage values, cultural heritage values, recreation values and integrity values. It also notes any changes or threats to those values. The management actions identified in the management plan for the river are reviewed and their achievement assessed. Benefits of CHRS designation are also described.

The Hayes River typically sees relatively little activity in comparison with some of Canada's busier rivers. The river is accessed by a fair number of canoeists each summer, as well as by people who reside in communities on or near the river corridor, but is remote enough that it does not receive a high volume of traffic. As such, relatively few events have occurred on the Hayes since 2006.

Various research and monitoring projects have been conducted in the Hayes River corridor over the past ten years. Much of this has been done by or for Manitoba Hydro in relation to its hydroelectric developments on the nearby Nelson River. Work was also undertaken to protect York Factory National Historic Site, located at the downstream end of the route, from natural erosion processes. Other activity in the area involved the work of river stewards, provincial staff who travelled the river corridor maintaining the route and campsites over the course of several summers, and the gradual development of an all-season road network in the area, including the replacement of one of the bridges that crosses the Hayes. The Parks and Protected Spaces Branch of Manitoba Sustainable Development (previously Conservation and Water Stewardship) also undertook several initiatives related to informing the public about the Hayes River.

Through the review of the Hayes River's natural, cultural and recreational heritage values, it was determined that only a few notable changes have occurred in the river corridor since 2006, and those are all considered to be minor and localized to specific sites. Implementation of the Management Plan for the Hayes River has been mostly successful, with the majority of the management actions achieved or ongoing, and CHRS designation is found to have generated multiple benefits. This report has concluded that the natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreation values of the Hayes River have remained intact since CHRS designation in 2006 and the river is worthy of continued designation as a river of national significance within the CHRS.

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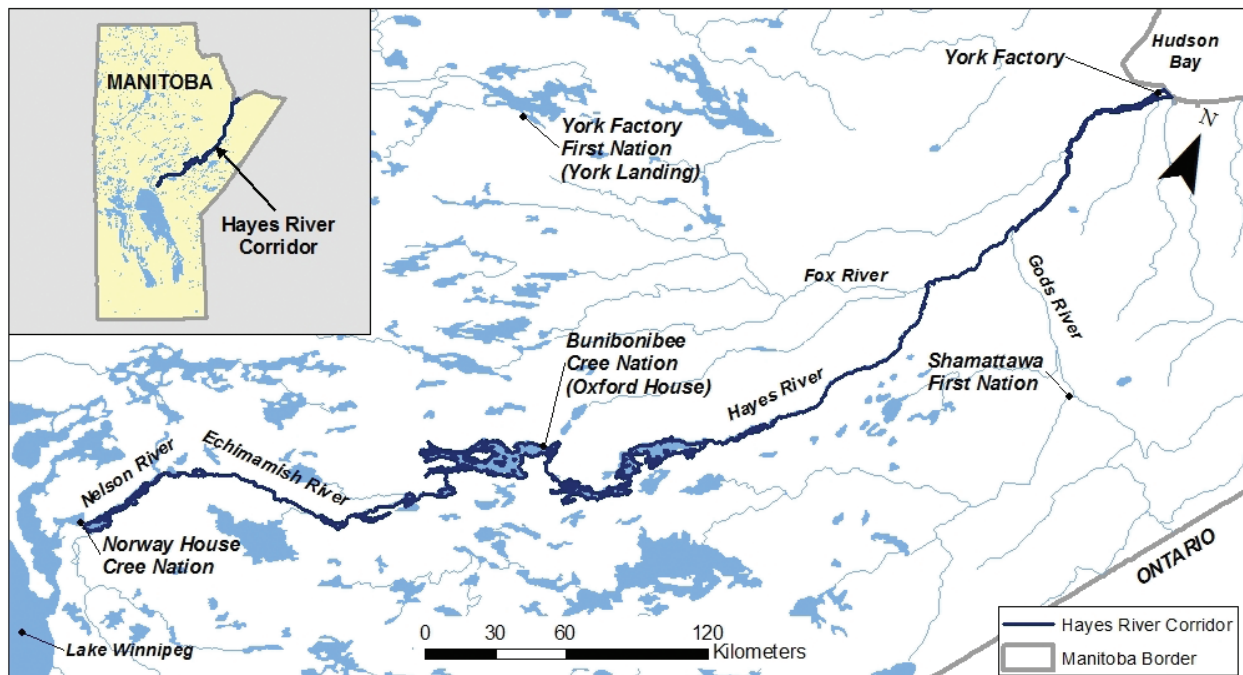


The Hayes River is a nationally significant waterway that presents outstanding examples of natural and cultural heritage and an exceptional recreational experience. It was on the strength of these natural, cultural and recreational values that the river was designated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) in 2006.

The CHRS is a national river conservation program established in 1984 by federal, provincial and territorial governments to help conserve and recognize Canadian rivers with exceptional natural, cultural and recreational heritage values. Rivers designated to the CHRS are subject to annual reviews, as well as more in-depth monitoring reports conducted every ten years from the year of designation. The decadal reports are intended to review the state of the rivers and any changes or threats to the values for which they were nominated to the CHRS.

The objectives of the Hayes River Ten-year Monitoring Report are to:

- Describe any significant events, research, actions and changes since the river was designated a Canadian Heritage River.
- Review the natural, cultural and recreational values for which the river was nominated, identify any changes or threats to these values and determine if the river continues to possess them.
- Review the integrity values of the river, identify any changes or threats to these values and determine if the river continues to possess them.
- Review the river management actions recommended in the Management Plan for the Hayes River in Manitoba (2005) and assess their level of achievement.
- Identify any river conservation, stewardship, economic, cultural or other benefits that have arisen as a result of the Canadian Heritage River designation.



Map: Hayes River Corridor



The Hayes River route extends approximately 600 kilometres from Norway House near Lake Winnipeg to York Factory on Hudson Bay. It includes the entire 480-kilometre stretch of the Hayes River northeast of Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay as well as a 43-kilometre section of the Nelson River north from the community of Norway House and the 67-kilometre Echimamish River connecting the Nelson and the Hayes (see Map on page 1). Throughout this report, **Hayes River** should be interpreted as referring to the entire designated route.

The Hayes River is one of the most remote, scenic and unaltered waterways in Manitoba, and the longest naturally flowing river in the province. At its upper reaches at the north end of Lake Winnipeg, the river flows through the boreal forest of the Canadian Shield. Moving toward the river's lower reaches at Hudson Bay, dense spruce forests are gradually replaced by stunted black spruce and tamarack interspersed with bogs, followed by lowlands and the treeless tundra at the coast. The river corridor offers a mix of whitewater, large lake systems, deep valleys and gorges in the south, and muskeg, lakes, streams and bogs in the north, with tidal flats extending seaward for several kilometres at the river's mouth.

The Hayes River played a significant role in early Canadian history, serving as a travel route and a source of livelihood for Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. This history is illustrated by the numerous archaeological sites, such as pictographs, campsites and artifacts, found along the river corridor. One of the most significant sites is the Painted Stone Portage, a sacred place of worship that existed long before Europeans arrived. The Hayes River was also instrumental in the Canadian fur trade, serving as the main route from Hudson Bay to the interior of western Canada for fur traders, settlers and explorers from 1670 to 1870. Several key Hudson's Bay Company posts were established along the Hayes, most notably York Factory at the mouth of the river, which was

the company's centre of operations for over 200 years and is now a National Historic Site (NHS) of Canada. Many European explorers also used the route as a gateway to inland exploration and commerce. River travellers today are likely to find evidence of the river's fur trade history, such as grave sites, trapper's cabins, the ruins of Hudson's Bay Company outposts, and other remnants of the industry. In addition to York Factory, other prominent Hudson's Bay Company posts along the route included Norway House and Oxford House, which are modern Indigenous communities today.



*The depot building at York Factory National Historic Site*

The Hayes River's natural state, unaltered by hydro-electric or other major developments, combined with its place in human history, provides river travellers with an outstanding, unique recreational experience. The river offers exceptional whitewater and flat water paddling, fishing and hunting experiences. These are enhanced by the opportunities for natural and human heritage appreciation found along the route. Travellers may observe harbour seals, beluga whales and polar bears in the lower 10 kilometres of the Hayes. In the summer months, they can visit York Factory NHS. There are two lodges located on the river corridor, although one has been closed for several years.

The Hayes is not a completely isolated river and as such commercial activities, such as mineral

exploration and development and electrical transmission lines, are evident at some sites along the route. Winter road crossings are also present, and bridges have been developed at some of the crossings. Indigenous peoples and other residents of Norway House, Oxford House and other communities in the area continue to use the river corridor for traditional harvesting activities and travel. There are several different jurisdictions that have responsibility for land, water and resources along the route. The river corridor includes provincial Crown lands as well as reserve lands for Norway House Cree Nation, Bunibonibee Cree Nation (Oxford House), Shamattawa First Nation

and York Factory First Nation. The York Factory First Nation and Norway House Cree Nation Resource Management Boards facilitate the joint planning and management of resources between those two communities and Manitoba.

The Hayes River was nominated to the CHRS in 2000 and formally designated a Canadian Heritage River in 2006. Relevant documents prepared as part of that process include The Hayes River CHRS Background Study (1987), the CHRS Nomination Document for the Hayes River in Manitoba (1999) and the Management Plan for the Hayes River in Manitoba (2005).



# METHODOLOGY

Several methods were used to gather information for this report. These included:

- review of the Hayes River Annual Monitoring Reports prepared between 2006–2015
- review of the Hayes River nomination documents
- a literature review of relevant research, articles and reports
- discussions by phone and email with individuals and agencies knowledgeable about activities on the river, including staff of Manitoba Sustainable Development and other provincial departments, Parks Canada and members of First Nations

Based on the information gathered through the above methods, a table was prepared summarizing Hayes-related activities, research and events since the river's CHRS designation in 2006. Changes and threats to the natural, cultural and recreational values for which the river was designated, as well as the CHRS integrity values, were assessed. The actions recommended in the Hayes River Management Plan were reviewed for an assessment of their degree of implementation and the benefits of CHRS designation for the Hayes River were identified.





Table 1 lists Hayes River-related events, actions, research or studies that occurred since designation in 2006.

**TABLE 1: Chronology of Events since 2006**

Year	Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 2006
2006	<p>An Education Kit for the Hayes River was prepared for teachers of middle and high school students. It was designed to help students better understand the Hayes River and its importance in the development of Manitoba and Western Canada. The kit covered a variety of topics, from history, geography and environment, to trip planning and canoeing. Kits were presented to community educators at the Hayes River designation ceremonies at Oxford House, Norway House and York Factory by the minister of Conservation.</p>
<p>The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) designated the Nelson River population of lake sturgeon, which includes lake sturgeon in the Nelson River downstream of Lake Winnipeg and all related drainages, as Endangered.</p>	
2006–2014	<p>Between 2004 and 2014, Manitoba Hydro conducted a number of environmental studies for the purposes of the potential Conawapa generation project on the lower Nelson River. In July 2016, these studies were summarized in a series of technical memorandums. The Hayes River corridor features prominently in these studies as an example of an undisturbed river system. Data was collected via various methods, including aerial, sign and auditory surveys along the shoreline of the Hayes River and in the terrestrial region surrounding the river. This data was used as a reference for comparison with the areas that could be affected by the potential Conawapa project. Highlights of the studies related to the Hayes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on observations in 2007 and 2008, it was concluded there may be a small breeding population of American toads in the Hayes River area in an area 100 kilometres north of their documented range.</li> <li>• Grizzly bear signs were reported along the Hayes corridor in 2007 and 2008, despite the species being listed as extirpated in Manitoba. Signs including tracks and scat were reported at the confluence of the Hayes and Gods rivers and the Hayes and Fox rivers.</li> <li>• In 2007, the mean frequency of moose signs was somewhat greater on the Fox and Hayes rivers than in other parts of the overall study area.</li> <li>• Invasive and non-native plant species were found with considerably lower frequencies in the Fox/Hayes/Gods River systems sampling areas compared with the Nelson River system.</li> <li>• Bird species at risk sightings along the Hayes River included: the common nighthawk (listed as Threatened by COSEWIC and Canada’s Species at Risk Act (SARA)); the bank swallow (listed as Threatened by COSEWIC), and the rusty blackbird (listed as a Species of Special Concern by COSEWIC and SARA).</li> <li>• Riparian songbird density and richness was slightly higher on the Hayes River islands compared to the Nelson River Islands.</li> </ul>
2006–2016	<p>Water flow and level monitoring by Environment Canada continued at the Hayes River Below Gods River station.</p> <p>Periodic field studies and monitoring work was undertaken for and by Manitoba Hydro in relation to its hydroelectric developments and associated infrastructure in the Nelson River sub-watershed (in addition to the studies described above). Activities on the Hayes River included monitoring of colonial water bird numbers, monitoring of waterfowl numbers, and mark and recapture studies of lake sturgeon. Notable lake sturgeon movements included sturgeon moving into the Hayes River and upstream to Red Sucker Rapids. Lake sturgeon were also shown to move from the Hayes River back into the Nelson. Data collected indicated that the Hayes River estuary is important for breeding and staging waterfowl. Waterfowl concentrations were highest during the spring and fall migration periods, with an average of 114 birds per square kilometre in the Hayes River estuary during the fall migration period.</p>
2007	<p>The management plan for York Factory NHS was revised by Parks Canada. Planning to account for riverbank erosion on the Hayes and other environmental threats was an important aspect of the plan.</p>

Year	Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 2006
2007-2012	<p>The Saving York Factory Riverbank Erosion Project was initiated in 2007. This was a multi-year undertaking to determine what could be done to save the York Factory NHS from riverbank erosion threatening permanent loss of the site. Partners involved in the project included Parks Canada, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, Natural Resources Canada, the University of Manitoba, Fox Lake Cree Nation and York Factory First Nation. The project was completed in 2012. Over the course of five years, the project team carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• archaeological monitoring to track the eroding riverbank and identify immediate threats</li> <li>• botanical research to inventory on-site vegetation and determine if vegetation management could be used to reduce erosion</li> <li>• research on the Hudson's Bay Company's challenges with surface drainage and erosion at the site</li> <li>• explorations of First Nations' traditional knowledge to help understand how the site was managed in the past</li> <li>• permafrost research</li> <li>• hydrological investigations</li> <li>• digital elevation modeling</li> <li>• design, installation and monitoring of a pilot bank stabilization project on a portion of the riverbank</li> </ul>
2007-2013	<p>Manitoba Conservation staff began working on a GIS inventory of sites on the Hayes River corridor in 2007. Work on this project continued off and on until 2013.</p>
2008-present	<p>The Coordinated Aquatic Monitoring Program (CAMP) was initiated in 2008. This long-term program, managed through a partnership between Manitoba Hydro and the government of Manitoba, studies and monitors the health of water bodies affected by Manitoba Hydro's generating system. Annual sampling is conducted along an approximately 20 kilometre long reach of the lower Hayes River. Monitoring activities include sampling and testing of fish, water quality, benthic invertebrates and hydrometrics.</p>
2009	<p>York Factory NHS had 100 visitors (45 in July and 55 in August).</p>
2009-2011	<p>Manitoba Hydro installed erosion monitoring transects on the lower Hayes near York Factory and the Pennycutaway River in 2009. The transects provide a baseline used to compare erosion on the Nelson River resulting from hydro developments to erosion on the Hayes. Erosion monitoring continued in subsequent years.</p>
2010	<p>Manitoba Conservation river stewards based in Norway House conducted multiple patrols along the river in the summer, cleaning up garbage and clearing portages of debris. They cleared portages and rapids of numerous trees that had been downed by heavy winds and conducted an inventory of cabins along the Nelson River from Norway House to just beyond Sea Falls.</p> <p>York Factory NHS had 337 visitors. High attendance was partially because of two events held at York Factory with Fox Lake First Nation and York Factory First Nation. Of the 337 visitors, approximately 10 to 15 percent arrived at the site after travelling down the Hayes River by canoe.</p> <p>The book <i>River Rough, River Smooth: Adventures on Manitoba's Historic Hayes River</i> was published. The book recounts the author's journey on the Hayes from Norway House to Oxford House with a group of men from Norway House Cree Nation attempting to paddle a York boat replica down the river, and his later journey by canoe from Oxford House to York Factory.</p> <p>A study examining lake sturgeon populations in the Nelson River was released. Tagging data analyzed by the authors indicated lake sturgeon move from the Nelson River into the Hayes River and that the sturgeon can move extensively up the Hayes and into its tributaries. This raised questions about whether these areas warrant consideration as separately designated units (re: population assessments).</p>
2011	<p>York Factory NHS had 29 visitors who arrived via canoe or kayak on the Hayes River.</p> <p>Two river stewards were hired to work based from Oxford House, in addition to the river stewards working based from Norway House. The river stewards conducted multiple patrols along the river, cleaning up garbage and clearing debris. Existing campsites were cleaned up and steel fire pits were installed at 11 campsites. The river stewards made signs with the names of water bodies and travel directions. These were installed along the river to replace older signs in poor condition.</p> <p>High water levels resulted in increased erosion in some areas as well as the death of spruce and pine trees along the river due to drowned roots. Several beaver dams were washed out by high water reducing the number of pullouts and portages along the river.</p>

Year	Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 2006
2011	<p>Manitoba Parks and partners produced a series of Canadian Heritage River posters, including one for the Hayes River. The posters presented information about the rivers and were intended to help inform Manitobans on this aspect of the province's cultural and natural history. The posters were distributed to individuals and communities interested in the rivers.</p> <p>Manitoba Parks developed a survey directed at Hayes River canoeists. The survey was intended to collect information about people canoeing the river (age, level of experience, etc.), trip details and logistics, and overall feedback about the experience. The surveys were sent to Manitoba Conservation District Offices for distribution.</p> <p>The Canadian Heritage River plaque and mount installed at Oxford House were damaged by vandalism.</p> <p>The Final Report of the East Side of Lake Winnipeg Large Area Transportation Network Study was released. The project involves the development of an all-season road network to the Oxford House area including potential water crossings over the Hayes River corridor. The report noted that a 200-kilometre buffer between the all-season road and the Hayes River corridor would require respect because of the Hayes River's Canadian Heritage River status and any new river crossings would require careful design and assessment.</p> <p>A Heritage Gathering was held at York Factory (this was the third since 2005), bringing together more than 100 extended family members of York Factory Cree Peoples.</p>
2012	<p>River stewards performed regular portage clean up and brushing during June and July. Numerous campsites were maintained and 126 people were encountered along the route. Water levels were reported as low.</p> <p>York Factory NHS had a reduction in staff numbers and season length. Staff were on site from July 15 to August 31 only. The site switched to a non-personal interpretation model and a smart phone app was developed, as well as a booklet and map for visitors. The camping compound used by people travelling the Hayes by canoe was also open from July 15 to August 31.</p> <p>The Breeding Bird Atlas conducted an inventory in the area from Gods River to York Factory.</p>
2012-2015	<p>In 2012, the Manitoba Geological Survey initiated a project to remap and explore the economic potential of the Oxford Lake-Knee Lake greenstone belt, beginning at Oxford Lake and extending to the south basin of Knee Lake in 2015. The results of the various surveys and remapping activities were summarized in a number of technical reports published on the Manitoba Mineral Resources website.</p>
2013	<p>The Oxford House plaque was repaired and reinstalled on the opposite side of the river where it is less accessible to vandals.</p> <p>A reduction in staffing of Manitoba's river steward program led to no river stewards working on the Hayes River.</p> <p>York Factory NHS received approximately 50 to 60 river travellers between July 15 and August 31.</p> <p>Manitoba halted the provision of hard-copy information kits for canoeists considering paddling the province's Heritage Rivers as they were no longer being requested by the public.</p> <p>In late 2013, Manitoba initiated a planning process to establish a provincial park in the Hudson Bay area to protect polar bear habitat including existing and newly-found polar bear denning areas, and to better promote the area as an international destination. A 2.9 million hectare study area, which included approximately 70 kilometres of the lower Hayes River, was identified.</p> <p>A forest fire burned an area of approximately 225 square kilometres on the lower Hayes River, in the area where the Gods River meets the Hayes.</p> <p>An article was published following a review of historical records and observations of the silver lamprey, a fish found primarily in the United States and southern Canada and variously identified as at risk or of special concern, in the Hayes River. The authors asserted that silver lamprey collections confirm the presence of the fish in the Hayes River system and that this finding has implications for silver lamprey conservation biology.</p> <p>Zebra mussels, an aquatic invasive species, were confirmed in Lake Winnipeg (which is upstream of the Hayes River) in the fall.</p>

Year	Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 2006
2013– 2014	<p>Manitoba Breeding Bird Atlas surveys were conducted along the Hayes River in 2013 and 2014. Numerous bird species were recorded, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the trumpeter swan (listed as Endangered under Manitoba’s Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act)</li> <li>• the olive-sided flycatcher (listed as Threatened by COSEWIC and SARA)</li> <li>• the rusty blackbird (listed as a species of Special Concern under SARA and COSEWIC)</li> <li>• the barn swallow (listed as Threatened under COSEWIC)</li> </ul>
2014	<p>Manitoba Parks engaged in data gathering and consultation on the proposed provincial park study area with First Nations, the Town of Churchill, local industry, tourism operators and others throughout 2014.</p> <p>Manitoba Parks updated its Canadian Heritage Rivers webpage to provide more information on canoeing the Seal, Hayes and Bloodvein rivers. Details were added related to route access and egress, trip descriptions and topographic maps.</p> <p>MB Conservation and Water Stewardship (CWS) staff conducted a patrol of the Echimamish River and the Hayes south of Robinson Lake in late September. Staff noted issues with litter and abandoned materials and equipment along the route. Staff also noted apparent recent vandalism to the rock at the Painted Stone Portage.</p> <p>The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority continued pre-construction phase work related to the East Side Large Area Transportation Network Study. Work included designing a road and bridge network, and a detailed design of environmental mitigation techniques.</p> <p>York Factory NHS reported 102 visitors to the site in July and August.</p> <p>Extensive polar bear den surveying work was conducted in the coastal Hudson Bay area, including the lower Hayes River, in February and March.</p>
2015	<p>Manitoba Parks continued consultations regarding the proposed establishment of a provincial park in the Hudson Bay area.</p> <p>Parks Canada reported 84 visitors to York Factory NHS, about half of them arriving by canoe along the Hayes. The rest arrived by aircraft or by jet boat.</p> <p>The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority continued to move forward with construction of an all-season road network on the East side of Lake Winnipeg. Construction on a replacement Acrow panel bridge crossing the Hayes at Wipanipanis Rapids began in March. Heritage resource impact and aquatic habitat assessments were completed prior to the start of construction, with lake whitefish, walleye, white sucker and logperch (fish species) as well as fatmucket, giant floater and creek heelsplitter (mussel species) found in the river at Wipanipanis Rapids. Spawning habitats for large bodied fish such as white sucker and walleye were identified 200 metres upstream, and 125 metres downstream below a set of rapids.</p> <p>CWS staff conducted a hunting and fishing patrol of the Hayes River and Robinson Lake in September. Staff noted that most of the designated campsites were in good condition and free of garbage, however they were concerned with the amount of litter on the portages and around some of the cabins along the route. Staff endeavored to work with cabin owners to address this concern.</p> <p>The canoe route survey for the Hayes River route was revised and redistributed to CWS district offices in the Hayes River area.</p> <p>Manitoba Hydro and CWS undertook polar bear denning surveys in an area including the lower Hayes River in February and March.</p>
2016	<p>The federal government announced new funding for national parks in Manitoba, including \$1.1 million to repair buildings at York Factory NHS. The project description announced by the government indicated:</p> <p>The staff house will see replacement of the tubs, toilets, shower fixtures, carpets, hot water heater and siding. In addition, repairs will be made to the windows and the doors and ceilings will be painted. The uninsulated archaeologists’ hut will be replaced with a renovated section of the staff house to be used instead to allow for occasional short-term winter occupancy. The library will be decommissioned and safety upgrades will be made to the powder magazine. The tool and fuel sheds will be replaced, repairs will be made to the floating dock and boat launch system, and the depot building will receive repairs and fresh paint on the exterior.</p>

**Year**      **Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 2006**

**2016**      The Manitoba East Side Road Authority completed construction and installation of the Acrow panel bridge at the Hayes River winter road crossing at Wipanipanis Rapids. It replaced a previously existing winter road bridge that had reached the end of its design lifespan. The project improved the navigability of the river at that location by removing a portion of the pre-existing causeway, increasing the river width at the crossing site and returning the hydraulic flow in that area to something more reflective of natural conditions. The bridge structure and associated causeway were widened to improve road safety and elevated such that the bridge is now higher above the water than the previous structure, further improving navigability of the waterway.

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Manitoba Sustainable Development staff conducted winter and fall hunting and fishing patrols in the Norway House – Robinson Lake area. In the winter they checked trap lines for compliance to ensure that legal trapping devices (for species such as marten and wolverine) were being used, and in the fall they primarily checked hunters.

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Parks Canada reported 224 visitors to York Factory NHS, with approximately 50 travellers arriving by canoe along the Hayes.

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York Factory NHS hosted a York Factory Gathering from July 31 to August 4 attended by members of Fox Lake Cree Nation and York Factory First Nation. About 80 to 100 community members attended.





At the time of its nomination, the Hayes River corridor met all of the CHRS natural heritage value guidelines. Specific natural heritage values of the river include:

- The Hayes River is an outstanding example of a major river that is unaltered by hydro-electric or other development.
- The Hayes is a unique representation of natural stream flow through the Nelson–Churchill Trough, which is a significant feature of North American geology.
- The lower Hayes is an outstanding representation of prehistoric marine sea inundation, including ancient marine shorelines and beach ridges.
- Highly visible migration of the river’s channel, bank collapse and delta formation are excellent representations of ongoing geomorphologic and fluvial processes.
- The processes of crustal rebound receive outstanding representation at the river’s mouth through the emergence of Marsh Point and accelerated island and bar formation in the river’s lower reaches.
- The Echimamish River basin is an extraordinary natural phenomenon linking the Hayes and Nelson drainage basins by a unique two-way flow system.
- Hell Gates Gorge, Robinson Falls, Trout Falls and the Brassey Hill glacial complex are examples of areas of exceptional beauty.
- Numerous species of provincially rare plants have been identified along the river corridor and the river provides habitat for significant species such as the olive-sided flycatcher, woodland caribou, wolverine and polar bear.

## Condition of Natural Values since 2006

The Hayes River corridor continues to provide habitat to a variety of plant and animal species. Notable species occurrences that have been recorded in recent years include:

- Canada warbler (Threatened Species under SARA and COSEWIC)
- common nighthawk (Threatened Species under SARA and COSEWIC)
- olive-sided flycatcher (Threatened Species under SARA and COSEWIC)
- woodland caribou (Threatened Species under SARA and COSEWIC)
- rusty blackbird (Species of Special Concern under SARA and COSEWIC)
- polar bear (Species of Special Concern under SARA and COSEWIC)
- bank swallow (Threatened Species under COSEWIC)
- barn swallow (Threatened Species under COSEWIC)
- trumpeter swan (Endangered Species under The Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act of Manitoba)

Grizzly bear signs were also reported along the Hayes corridor in 2007 and 2008 despite the species being listed as extirpated in Manitoba. In addition, the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre has noted occurrences of a number of vascular plants in the Hayes River corridor which are considered to be rare or very rare throughout their range or in the province. At the time the Hayes was nominated, the ivory gull (listed as an Endangered

Species by COSEWIC and SARA) was noted as being found in the area. Today, it is listed as occurring only in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ongoing and varied research conducted for or by Manitoba Hydro in the Hayes River area, as well as by researchers and other agencies, continually enhances knowledge about wildlife, plants, and erosion and other natural processes occurring in the river corridor. The Hayes has remained free of hydroelectric developments and studies often use it as a baseline comparison for the Nelson River, which contains significant hydroelectric infrastructure. Active mineral exploration licences and mining claims continue to exist in the Hayes River area today but are not known to be causing negative impacts to the river corridor.



*York boat shooting rapids (1910) - photo credit Manitoba Archives*

An individual from one of the communities along the river corridor reported that water levels in recent years have seemed to be low and it has been more difficult to travel upstream. However, there is no data to corroborate this observation so it is difficult to determine if the individual's experience was a product of natural fluctuations in river levels or if there was another factor at play.

# CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES

At the time of its nomination, the Hayes River corridor met all of the CHRS human heritage value guidelines. Specific human heritage values of the river include:

- The Hayes River is important as a geographical focus of the evolution of the North American Indigenous way of life, with a major concentration of prehistoric Indigenous sites representative of the pre-European contact hunter-gatherer culture found along the river, illustrating continuous occupation.
- The Hudson's Bay Company's first contact with Indigenous Peoples in west-central Canada was made along the Hayes River.
- The establishment of Hudson's Bay Company posts along the route and Indigenous Peoples' growing use of European technology were part of the significant transition of Indigenous communities from the dispersed hunter-gatherer pattern to settlement.
- Important pre and post-contact sites along the Hayes River route include National Historic Sites at York Factory and Norway House, the Painted Stone Portage, four sets of pictographs and the tramway at Robinson Falls, which is one of only a few of its kind in Western Canada.
- The Hayes River fur route was the central artery for explorers, fur traders and settlers who shaped the early development of a large part of Western and Northern Canada.
- The Hayes River had a major influence on settlement as a result of its function as the main transportation route in Western Canada, facilitating the settlement of several northern Manitoba communities, as well as the Canadian Prairies and what is now Winnipeg.
- The Selkirk Settlers travelled the Hayes from York Factory in 1812 en route to establishing the colony on the banks of the Red River, which

began a new era in Canadian history.

- The Hayes River became a military route in 1846 as part of efforts to protect the Red River Settlement from potential American invasion during the Oregon crisis.
- Many of Canada's great explorers travelled the Hayes, including Henry Kelsey, the first European to see the Canadian prairies; David Thompson, who mapped out huge areas of previously unknown territory in western Canada; Samuel Hearne, renowned for his legendary journeys through the barren lands; and several notable Hudson's Bay Company surveyors.
- The Hayes is recognized by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as a nationally significant Canoe Route of Canada.



## Condition of Cultural Heritage Values since 2006

The cultural heritage values of the Hayes River remain as awe-inspiring and remarkable as they were at the time the river was designated to the CHRS. Visitors from within and outside Manitoba continue to travel the river and make the trek to York Factory NHS to see the glimpses of history the Hayes provides, and Heritage Gatherings have continued at York Factory every few years, bringing



together 100 or more extended family members of the Cree Peoples from the York Factory area.

However, the progression of time and the ongoing natural erosion process continue to put at risk the preservation of York Factory NHS. The Saving York Factory Riverbank Erosion Project was initiated in 2007 to identify methods to preserve the site and save it from permanent loss resulting from riverbank erosion. The site continues to

be monitored today but remains at risk. On the positive side, in 2016 the federal government announced \$1.1 million in future funding to repair buildings at York Factory NHS.

Another unfortunate impact to the river's cultural heritage values occurred in 2014 when the rock at the Painted Stone Portage was vandalized. Despite this event, the site remains intact and a notable stop for travelers passing through.



# RECREATIONAL VALUES

At the time of its nomination, the Hayes River corridor met all of the CHRS recreational value guidelines. Specific recreational values of the river include:

- The Hayes River offers an outstanding whitewater wilderness canoe route, encompassing two distinct canoeing environments (Canadian Shield whitewater and lowlands calm water), over 80 sets of challenging rapids, nine lakes and the northern boreal forest.
- The Hayes River's place in Canadian history and its strong association with Manitoba's first people offer an outstanding opportunity for human heritage appreciation and interpretation.
- The combination of the Hayes River's opportunities for natural and human heritage appreciation give the river nationally significant recreational value. Few opportunities exist in Canada to experience a recreational opportunity of this quality and significance.
- The Hayes offers outstanding opportunities for nature appreciation, with excellent scenic quality and diversity along the river. The opportunity to experience the transition between the Precambrian shield and the Hudson Bay lowlands is particularly noteworthy.
- The lowlands region offers excellent wildlife viewing including moose, polar bears, Canada and snow geese, bald eagles, woodland caribou, harbour seals and beluga whales.
- The river offers excellent fishing opportunities throughout its course, with brook trout particularly sought-after.
- The route includes recreational infrastructure such as campsites and multiple options for access.
- Developments at Norway House, Oxford House, Knee Lake and York Factory are localized and do not adversely affect the recreational experience. In many cases they add to the overall experience.
- The river has low levels of annual recreational use which do not significantly affect its natural, historical or aesthetic qualities.

- The York Factory NHS is one of the most significant human heritage resources along the Hayes River and serves as a strong attraction at the downstream end of the route. The NHS at Norway House has the potential to serve as an attraction at the upstream end.

## Condition of Recreational Values since 2006

Over the past ten years the Hayes River's status as a premier wilderness canoeing experience has been maintained. Media have promoted visiting York Factory NHS and paddling the Hayes, and outfitters continue to offer the river as a destination for canoeing and hunting trips.

For a period of time the recreational values of the river were improved as river stewards working for Manitoba Conservation (now Manitoba Sustainable Development) travelled portions of the Hayes corridor picking up litter, clearing portages of debris and downed trees, and making minor improvements to campsites. However, in 2013 Manitoba's river steward program was reduced, resulting in no river stewards being available to work on the river. In the years since, department staff have periodically conducted patrols on portions of the river corridor. Some concerns have been raised about garbage left on portages and around some cabins. Staff have taken steps to get these areas cleaned up when they can.

One site that has seen an improvement to the condition of recreational values is Wipanipanis Rapids. The winter road bridge at this location was replaced in 2016. As part of the replacement project, a portion of the pre-existing causeway (installed at the time of the original bridge construction) was removed, increasing the width of the river at the crossing site. The new bridge is also more elevated, increasing its height above the water. These changes served to improve navigability of the river at this location.



*Old bridge at Wipanipanis Rapids*



*New bridge at Wipanipanis Rapids*

Table 2 summarizes changes and threats to Hayes River Natural, Cultural and Recreational Heritage Values since 2006. Values which have not been subject to any change are not listed in the table.

**TABLE 2: Changes and Threats to Hayes River Natural, Cultural and Recreational Heritage Values since 2006**

Values	Description of Change in Value	Reason for Change	Actions Taken in Response
<b>Natural Values</b>			
Channel Profile	Positive change: The new bridge at Wipanipanis Rapids improved hydraulic flow at this location.	Management action	N/A
Aquatic Ecosystems	Potential threat: Zebra mussels found in Lake Winnipeg. Zebra mussels could have an impact on the Hayes' aquatic ecosystem should they move into the waterway; this is not a threat at present but could be in the future.	N/A - change has not yet occurred	N/A
Fluvial Landforms	Ongoing: Changes to the landscape via natural erosion processes.	Ongoing natural fluvial processes	N/A
Significant Animal Populations	Positive change: Increased knowledge about wildlife in the river corridor as a result of ongoing research and monitoring.	Research/monitoring activity	N/A
	Potential threat: A future all-season road network in the Oxford House area could potentially impact wildlife (e.g. woodland caribou) in the area, but no evidence of any stressors or threats has been presented at this point.	N/A - change has not yet occurred	N/A

Values	Description of Change in Value	Reason for Change	Actions Taken in Response
<b>Cultural Values</b>			
Spiritual Associations	Negative change: In 2014 vandalism was observed at the Painted Stone Portage.	This was a one-time incident and the specific cause is unknown; there is no known threat of future additional damage occurring.	Staff will continue to patrol the area and take action as necessary if additional damage is observed in the future.
Jurisdictional Use	Ongoing: Natural erosion continually changes the riverbank at York Factory NHS.	Natural erosion processes present a long-term threat to the site.	The Saving York Factory Riverbank Erosion Project was undertaken to identify methods of protecting the site. Parks Canada will continue to monitor the site.
<b>Recreational Values</b>			
Boating	Positive change: The new winter road bridge at Wipanipanis Rapids is higher above the water, improving navigability of the river at that crossing.	Management action	N/A
Water Associated Activities (Camping)	Positive change: Provincial staff installed steel fire pits at some campsites along the river and replaced deteriorated signage.	Management action	N/A
Boating	Positive change: The new winter road bridge at Wipanipanis Rapids is higher above the water, improving navigability of the river at that crossing.	Management action	N/A
Water Associated Activities (Camping)	Positive change: Provincial staff installed steel fire pits at some campsites along the river and replaced deteriorated signage.	Management action	N/A
Natural and Human Heritage Appreciation	Potential negative change: Concerns have been raised about garbage left behind around portages and other more developed areas of the river corridor, although it is not possible to quantify whether this is a change from the situation prior to 2006.	Human activity - This is not a threat unless the amount of garbage and debris begins to increase.	Provincial staff have communicated with cabin owners in the area of the river corridor regarding cleaning up sites and reducing litter.
	Negative change: Manitoba's river steward program was reduced in 2013, removing stewards from the Hayes River. This reduced Manitoba's ability to monitor the river corridor and maintain the wilderness experience.	Management action	N/A





# INTEGRITY GUIDELINES

In order to be designated a Canadian Heritage River, a river and its immediate environment must meet certain natural, cultural and recreational integrity values. A review of the CHRS integrity values has confirmed that the Hayes River continues to meet these values and that they have been subject to no changes or threats. An increase in garbage found around some of the portage areas on the route is concerning, however any related impact to the natural aesthetic value of the river is minor and has only a localized effect, if any.



See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of CHRS integrity values.



# MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

The Hayes River designation document Management Plan for the Hayes River in Manitoba was prepared in 2005. The document describes the Management Goal for the river, and associated Management Intents and Actions to be employed to achieve that goal. According to the Management Plan:

*The goal of the Hayes River Management Plan is to complement and apply existing processes for cooperation and integrated resources management that will recognize, promote and sustain the natural heritage,*

*cultural heritage and recreational values for which the Hayes River was nominated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.*

Table 3 lists the Management Plan Intents and Actions and reports on their degree of achievement through the work of the Manitoba government and other governments or agencies. The Management Plan also lists several actions intended to facilitate co-operation between all the parties associated with the Hayes River and assist in the implementation of the plan. Those are also listed in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: Hayes River Management Plan Recommendations and Current Status**

Management Plan Intents and Actions	Degree of Achievement	Actions/Comments
<b>Water Flow and Water Quality</b>		
Manitoba, Canada and the First Nations will monitor activities along the Hayes, and where an activity may present a significant risk to water quality, cause to have an appropriate water quality monitoring program implemented.	Ongoing	No activities that present a significant risk to water quality have taken place. Manitoba Hydro's Coordinated Aquatic Monitoring Program monitors water quality in the lower Hayes River.
To minimize the risk of negative impacts on water quality, Manitoba will investigate the potential to designate portions of the Hayes and Echimamish Rivers as Water Quality Management Zones in accordance with the Water Protection Act.	Not initiated	This designation has not been pursued to date but is still an option that will be investigated.
<b>Public Understanding, Awareness and Interpretation</b>		
Government management agencies, First Nations, private tourism enterprises and public stakeholders alike will be encouraged to prepare and deliver products, programs and facilities for the public to appreciate, use, and enjoy the Hayes River in ways that conserve its values.	Partially initiated	Although Manitoba has produced a variety of products aimed at increasing public appreciation of the Hayes River, to date emphasis has not been placed on encouraging the same from other agencies, First Nations or stakeholders.
Manitoba will work with partners to produce and distribute a set of Hayes River CHRS media, such as a full colour poster, an edu-kit for use in schools, a river guide, and Hayes River CHRS education and training programs.	Partially Completed/ Ongoing	The edu-kit was produced and distributed to schools in 2006. The poster was produced in 2011 and continues to be available for distribution at present. A river guide has not been produced however information provided about the river on the Manitoba Parks website has been enhanced.

Management Plan Intents and Actions	Degree of Achievement	Actions/Comments
<b>Integrity of Natural Heritage Features and Processes</b>		
Manitoba will endeavour to maintain a current and complete Geographic Information System (GIS) inventory and mapping of natural features and values. This inventory can be linked with field research and surveys such as wildlife counts and creel censuses. This database will enable informed and timely identification, consideration and monitoring of these values by resource managers.	Partially Completed/ Ongoing	Work was conducted toward the development of a database and interactive map with information on the Hayes River's natural, cultural and recreational values. The project will be reassessed with the intent of creating a more user-friendly product and making use of modern technology for online interactive tools.
A notation will be placed on the Crown Lands Registry to assist in the identification of lands contained within the river corridor for resource management purposes.	Not initiated	A notation was not made on the registry; however current GIS technology now enables easy identification of lands within the river corridor. The potential benefit of making this notation will continue to be investigated.
Land use permit and work permit terms and conditions will reflect protection and conservation requirements for natural heritage features and values, and will incorporate best practices guidelines where available.	Ongoing	Parks and Protected Spaces Branch is included in the review of applications for land use and work permits in the area in or near the Hayes River corridor. The river's status as a Canadian Heritage River and its associated natural, cultural and recreational features are considered and accounted for in permit conditions.
<b>Integrity of Cultural Heritage Features</b>		
Manitoba will endeavour to maintain a current and complete GIS inventory, mapping and description of impact sensitivity of particular cultural heritage features. This information base will enable informed and timely identification, consideration and monitoring of these values by resource managers. Information on certain of these features may not be made available to the public if there is a significant risk that increased access or visitation could pose a threat to the feature.	Partially Completed/ Ongoing	Work was conducted toward the development of a database and interactive map with information on the Hayes River's natural, cultural and recreational values. The project will be reassessed with the intent of creating a more user-friendly product and making use of modern technology for online interactive tools. Information on sensitive cultural features will only be shared with the public if and when appropriate.
Land use permit and work permit terms and conditions will reflect protection and conservation requirements for cultural heritage features and values, and will incorporate best practices guidelines where available.	Ongoing	Parks and Protected Spaces Branch is included in the review of applications for land use and work permits in the area in or near the Hayes River corridor. The river's status as a Canadian Heritage River and its associated natural, cultural and recreational features are considered and accounted for in permit conditions.

Management Plan Intents and Actions	Degree of Achievement	Actions/Comments
<b>Public Enjoyment and Recreational Use</b>		
Manitoba will endeavour to maintain a current and complete GIS inventory and mapping of campsites, recreational sites and recreational features, including notable scenic areas. Such a spatial and relational information base will enable informed and timely identification, consideration and monitoring of these sites by resource managers.	Partially Completed/ Ongoing	Work was conducted toward the development of a database and interactive map with information on the Hayes River's natural, cultural and recreational values. The project will be reassessed with the intent of creating a more user-friendly product and making use of modern technology for online interactive tools.
Land use permit and work permit terms and conditions will reflect protection and conservation requirements for recreational sites and opportunities, and will incorporate best practices guidelines where available.	Ongoing	Parks and Protected Spaces Branch is included in the review of applications for land use and work permits in the area in or near the Hayes River corridor. The river's status as a Canadian Heritage River and its associated natural, cultural and recreational features are considered and accounted for in permit conditions.
Manitoba will continue to work with the tourism industry to encourage and promote tourism facilities, attractions and activities that are appropriate to the Hayes and its primary recreational opportunities.	Ongoing	Opportunities for such promotions and activities do not arise frequently due to the remote nature of the Hayes. Manitoba Sustainable Development will continue to work with the tourism industry on these endeavours as appropriate.
<b>Implementation Actions</b>		
Manitoba will work towards improving the operation of the review and referral system for development proposals between: Manitoba Conservation; Water Stewardship; Industry, Economic Development and Mines; and Culture, Heritage and Tourism.	Ongoing	Manitoba's system for coordinating proposal review between various interested departments is continually being adjusted and improved upon.
Manitoba will ensure that Bunibonibee and Shamattawa First Nations are involved in an appropriate review process when significant developments are proposed within their respective traditional areas along the Hayes River corridor.	Ongoing	Manitoba First Nations continue to have the opportunity to review development proposals within their traditional areas. Indigenous rights are respected within and outside the river corridor.
All First Nations along the Hayes will be encouraged to identify a councillor portfolio responsible for implementation of the Hayes River CHRS management plan.	Ongoing	Efforts continue to be made to involve these communities in CHRS-related responsibilities, particularly annual and decadal monitoring. Manitoba will seek to renew the relationships established with these communities during the Hayes River designation process and affirm their ongoing support for CHRS designation.
A Hayes River CHRS Committee will be established consisting of representatives from Manitoba, Parks Canada (York Factory NHS) and the four First Nations along the Hayes. This committee would be convened as may be needed in the future to address major issues that might affect the designation of the Hayes, or to update or revise this plan.	Not initiated	This committee was not established; however all of the named parties would be engaged if any major issues affecting the designation should arise, or to update the river's Management Plan.



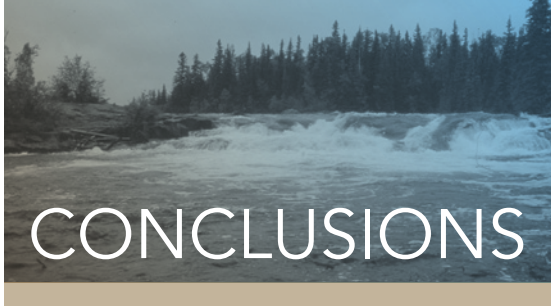


A requirement of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System – Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines is for decadal monitoring reports to report on conservation, stewardship, economic, and cultural benefits resulting from CHRS designation. The most obvious and important benefit of the designation for the Hayes River is that it has helped to maintain a buffer area between the river and

development, and supports conservation of the river and preservation of its values. This designation will continue to play a key role in the continued conservation and celebration of the river’s natural, cultural and recreational values. Table 4 lists the various benefits of CHRS designation that have been identified for the Hayes River.

**TABLE 4: Benefits of Canadian Heritage River Designation for the Hayes River**

Type of Benefit	Description
<b>Environmental Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased support is provided for conservation of the river corridor, habitat and surrounding environment.</li> <li>The designation and potential impacts to Heritage River values are considered during the review of proposals for development or other activities along the river corridor. As it concerns the planning process for the potential future all-season road network in the area, this has resulted in development plans respecting a buffer around the river corridor and river crossings being designed particularly carefully.</li> <li>The Hayes is maintained as an example of an unregulated river, to provide a baseline for comparison and research related to hydroelectric development of other rivers (particularly Manitoba’s Nelson River).</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and awareness of the need to identify and protect archaeological resources and culturally significant sites or artifacts is increased.</li> <li>Increased profile for the river in Manitoba and across Canada leads to improved knowledge of and appreciation for the river’s natural and cultural history and features.</li> <li>The designation provides the rationale for the production of interpretive materials such as the edu-kit and poster.</li> </ul>
<b>Recreational Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of the designation, information for canoeists and paddlers interested in the Hayes is provided on the Manitoba Parks website; information on paddling the river that is available to potential canoeists has improved and increased.</li> <li>The designation may have slightly increased the number of people paddling the river as a result of its increased profile.</li> </ul>
<b>Improved Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of vegetation, landscapes, wildlife, cultural history and other values has improved through the preparation of background and nomination documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Development of Communications Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Hayes’ status as a Canadian Heritage River has been emphasized in various media publications.</li> <li>The designation has encouraged the production of materials such as a promotional/educational poster and a canoeist survey.</li> <li>The Manitoba Parks website includes a page with information on the CHRS and Manitoba’s Heritage Rivers.</li> </ul>



The Hayes River is an outstanding example of a Canadian Heritage River. Over hundreds of kilometres, the river travels through varied landscapes and passes by stunning vistas and unforgettable natural features. The Hayes played a key role in history for thousands of years, first for the Indigenous Peoples of the area and later for explorers and fur traders. This connection to history and the multitude of significant cultural features found along the river corridor, combined with the challenge and beauty of the route, provides river travellers with an unparalleled recreational experience.

A review of the Hayes River's natural, cultural and recreational heritage values has revealed that there have been only a few notable changes in the river corridor over the past ten years. These changes are all considered to be minor in nature and localized to specific sites. They do not impact the overall characteristics of the river's heritage and integrity values. Numerous benefits of the Hayes' CHRS designation have been identified,

and implementation of the Management Plan for the Hayes River has been mostly successful, with many of the management actions achieved or ongoing. Manitoba will continue to seek to engage the First Nations along the river corridor who were involved in the designation process in future CHRS-related management activities and reporting processes.

Based on the findings of this report, the natural heritage, cultural heritage and recreation values of the Hayes River have been determined to be intact and for the most part unchanged since CHRS designation in 2006. As such, the Hayes River is worthy of continued designation as a river of national significance within the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

## Overall Assessment

The designation of the Hayes River as a Canadian Heritage River should remain in place.



# APPENDIX A: CHRS Natural, Cultural and Recreational Integrity Values

## 1. NATURAL INTEGRITY VALUES

- 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 section includes those ecosystem components which contribute significantly to the provision of habitat for species in need of protection.
- There are no human-made impoundments within the nominated section.
- All key elements and ecosystem components are unaffected by impoundments located outside the nominated section.
- The water in the nominated section is uncontaminated to the extent that its natural aquatic ecosystem is intact.
- The natural aesthetic character of the nominated section is free of, or not adversely affected by, human developments.

## 2. CULTURAL INTEGRITY VALUES

- The nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representations of all of the features, activities or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding cultural value.
- The visual character of the nominated section enables uninterrupted appreciation of at least one of the periods of the river's historical importance.
- The key artifacts and sites comprising the cultural values for which the river is nominated are unimpaired by impoundments and human land uses.
- The water quality of the nominated section does not detract from the visual character or the cultural experience provided by its cultural values.

## 3. RECREATIONAL INTEGRITY VALUES

- The river possesses water of a quality suitable for contact recreational activities, including those recreational opportunities for which it is nominated.
- The river's visual appearance is capable of providing river travelers with a continuous natural experience, or a combined natural and cultural experience, without significant interruption by modern human intrusions.
- The river is capable of supporting recreational uses without significant loss of, or impact on, its natural and cultural values or its visual character.

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