



# THE ST. JOHN RIVER SOCIETY LA SOCIÉTÉ DU FLEUVE SAINT-JEAN



## **BACKGROUND**

### **The St. John River as a Canadian Heritage River**

The St. John River has been nominated as a Canadian Heritage River. It is the 42<sup>nd</sup> river to be nominated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System- a program of Heritage Canada. What follows is a summary of the players, the process and expected outcomes as we enter the next and last stage - the development of a management plan to support the designation of the St. John River as a Canadian Heritage River.

**The St. John River** in New Brunswick is well known for its pivotal role in shaping and refining the history, culture and development of Canada - it is often referred to as the "Road to Canada". For thousands of years, the Wolastoqiyik traveled and lived along the St. John River. Many significant events, places, and people are identified with the St. John River. These values are unique to the river and are representative of major Canadian cultural themes.

**The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS)** is a cooperative program of the federal, provincial and territorial governments and is managed by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, which reports to the Minister of the Environment. Established in 1984, it gives national recognition to the important rivers of Canada, to conserve the best examples of Canada's river heritage and to encourage the public to learn about and appreciate Canada's rivers. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System recognizes cultural and natural heritage values, along w. recreational values.

**The St. John River Society** is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1992 and dedicated to the appreciation and wise use of the natural and cultural resources of the St. John River. The Society has four programming pillars based around its mission: recognition, access, education and sustainable management.

Establishing a Canadian Heritage River is a two-step process: nomination and designation. The St. John River was nominated to the Canadian Heritages Rivers Board by The St. John River Society and the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources in June 2008. Preparation of "The Road to Canada - Nomination of the St. John River in New Brunswick as a Canadian Heritage River" was undertaken by The St. John River

Society over a 1-year period. To nominate a river to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, the river must have outstanding natural, cultural and/or recreational values, a high level of public support, and it must be demonstrated that sufficient measures will be put in place to ensure that those values will be maintained. The St. John River was nominated based on its extensive cultural heritage values, and acknowledges its significant natural and recreational values.

The next step in the process for the St. John River is the development of the designation document. The St. John River can be designated a Canadian Heritage River once a heritage strategy is developed and submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board that ensures the river will be managed to conserve its outstanding cultural values (with appropriate recognition of the natural and recreational values). This process engages communities and stakeholders along the river to improve our understanding of the cultural heritage values (along with natural and recreational values) and in basic terms outlines what is needed, and what needs to be done to conserve these values.

The designation document will describe the management issues, opportunities and constraints, and policies and guidelines to be followed by the New Brunswick government, in co-operation with local Aboriginal peoples and local stakeholders, in managing the heritage values of the St. John River. All protective actions on Canadian Heritage Rivers depend on existing laws and regulations, and respecting the rights of Aboriginal peoples, communities, private landowners, and other stakeholders. The process is based on extensive public consultation and consensus.

Coordination and preparation of the designation document on the St. John River will be the responsibility of The St. John River Society in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and the stakeholders.