



Heritage Rivers Background Study Underway

In 1991 a "systems study" was carried out on 17 Prince Edward Island rivers to assess their potential of becoming Canadian Heritage Rivers. Included in the study were the Brudenell, Cardigan, Dunk, Fortune, Hillsborough, Hunter, Kildare, Mill, Montague, Morell, Murray, Southwest, Stanley, Trout, Vernon, West (Eliot) and Wheatley rivers. Of these rivers three were selected for further study including the Hillsborough, West (Eliot) and the Morell. Of consideration in selecting these rivers were natural, recreational and human heritage values as well as management feasibility. The natural history is perhaps less significant, there being far less wilderness on our rivers as compared to many other Canadian nominees. With this in mind we are inviting submissions from members of the Natural History Society who have recorded observations on the natural history of the West (Eliot), Hillsborough or Morell Rivers.

This summer is the second year of what could be a 4 to 6 year process. It will involve a more in-depth study of the three selected rivers in order to determine the best candidate(s) for nomination as a heritage river. If a nomination occurs, it will most likely be in recognition of extensive cultural (human) heritage and/or recreational values. Observations on their natural history are nonetheless encouraged and surprises cannot be ruled out completely.

The National Canadian Heritage Rivers Board met on Prince Edward Island for the first time on the week of June 21, 1992. They visited the West (Eliot), Hillsborough and Morell River watersheds. The Board reviews nominations and recommendations of rivers. The Government of Canada, eight provinces and both territories from the co-operative program. Doug Murray, Director of the Parks Branch of the Provincial Department of Tourism and Parks, is the board representative for the Island. He currently serves as Chair for the board.

Once nominated, a management plan for the river is designed to conserve and improve those values for which the river is nominated in the first place. On P.E.I. nominations of any river or part of a river will very likely be based on cultural (human) heritage values and/or recreational values. Community, group and individual participation in the process is being encouraged this summer at the background study level. If the program is to succeed, this participation will have to be ongoing beyond the 4 to 6 years when actual designation might take place.

If you feel that you would like to assist, your observations on the natural, recreational and human heritage of these rivers may be forwarded. Interested persons or organizations are invited to contact Fred Horne at the Island Nature Trust, P.O. Box 265, Charlottetown, C1A 7K4, 566-9150, (368-4283 summer months), FAX 566-7279.