



Canadian
Heritage Rivers
System

Réseau des
rivières du patrimoine
canadien

2024 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORTS SUMMARY

Summary of Canadian Heritage River Annual Monitoring Reports



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Annual Monitoring Reports Summary is a culmination of the key information and updates from Canadian Heritage Rivers across Canada. The information in this summary was extracted from the individual Annual Monitoring Reports compiled by River Stewards and Stewardship Groups and reviewed by their jurisdictional representative prior to submission.

A few common themes were found across the 2024 annual monitoring reports. These themes included:

- New / increased collaborations with First Nation, Métis and or Inuit partners and stakeholders
- Ongoing Indigenous trapping, hunting, fishing / rebuilding connections to the land
- New / increased focus on preventing and or managing aquatic invasive species
- Changes in water levels related to climate change (flooding, droughts, heavy rainfall)

Recurring threats identified across multiple annual reports included natural disasters such as landslides, hurricanes, and wildfires; fluctuations in water levels and rising temperatures; the presence of blue-green algae and aquatic invasive species; and increasing recreational pressures, including boating, fishing, ATV encroachment, and littering. While these threats do not currently indicate a need to change any CHR nominations or designations, impacts from them should continue to be monitored and mitigated, where possible, in the years to come.

**Not every heritage river submitted their annual report for 2024. This summary contains information from those who completed and submitted their report by July 31, 2025.*



ALSEK

2024 was a year of connection on the Alsek River. Meetings were held with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) to discuss cooperative management, with commercial river operators to address common issues and the river's condition, and with partner governing agencies from the UNESCO World Heritage site. In July, Parks Canada collaborated with CAFN to host a river trip and culture camp aimed at reconnecting citizens, elders and knowledge holders to the Alsek River and Nàtùdäy (Lowell Glacier).

ATHABASCA

The 2024 Jasper Wildfire burned through the Athabasca Valley, consuming 33,000 hectares of forest on both sides of the Athabasca River. Changes in flow, sedimentation, and bank stability are expected in places, but river-specific impact assessments or other studies have not been conducted at this time. Ecological integrity monitoring continues for this ecosystem.

In 2024, Jasper National Park's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention program continued until park operations were disrupted by the wildfire from July until the end of 2024.

BAY DU NORD

The Bay du Nord Canadian Heritage River remains in a condition that reflects the natural values for which the river was designated.

BLOODVEIN (ON)

A relatively dry summer in 2024 caused low water levels and the risk of forest fires. Fortunately, the dry conditions did not result in any major fires and the river had another year to recover from the unprecedented 2021 season. Ontario Parks crews capitalized on this opportunity by clearing portages and conducting several enforcement flights along the Bloodvein.



BLOODVEIN (MB)

There were no major changes in the Bloodvein River corridor in 2024. The Bloodvein continued to be a popular destination for whitewater paddling, and the Pimachiowin Aki Assembly of Partners continued and initiated work on a variety of projects related to the area's UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.

BONNET PLUME

In fall of 2024, the First Nations elected to put management planning and formal park designation and establishment of Tagé Héninlin (Nijin Han Niinlaih) Territorial Park on hold. This park, which includes the Bonnet Plume River, has been protected from development since the approval of the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan in 2019. However, without formal designation and establishment as a protected area through legislation, active management of the area is not possible.

BOUNDARY WATERS-VOYAGEUR WATERWAY

2024 had normal/typical recreational use levels along the waterway. The Canada Border Services Agency's remote area border crossing program was re-instated, post covid, in late summer of 2022 and this program was utilized at expected levels in a normal operating year. Environmental conditions were varied but we enjoyed higher rainfall than in 2023 and a shift closer to typical water levels for a large portion of the summer. Water levels did decrease in the late summer and fall but we luckily had no fire bans or extended dry periods.

CLEARWATER (AB)

In keeping with the Vision for the Clearwater River Corridor as per the Clearwater and Christina Rivers Management Plan, the Clearwater River and Christina River Valleys continue to offer all users a wilderness adventure in an industrial free atmosphere.



COWICHAN RIVER

The Quw'utsun Sta'lo' (Cowichan River) continues to face significant challenges due to climate change and human activities along its 47-kilometre course. Elevated water temperatures and reduced flow levels have led to decreased oxygen concentrations and increased pH levels, adversely affecting salmon and trout populations. These conditions have been linked to harmful algal blooms, which further degrade aquatic habitats.

DETROIT

2024 was another successful year in conserving, interpreting, enhancing, and appreciating the values of the Detroit River. Significant Government investments were committed to restore critical habitat in the Detroit River. Continued progress was made towards creating the proposed Ojibway National Urban Park, bordering the Detroit River.

FRASER

First Nations continue their long-standing leadership roles as stewards of the Fraser River and its lands and life. Collaborative approaches to Fraser River stewardship continue to strengthen and deepen, as illustrated in the initiatives highlighted in this year's annual report. The health and sustainability of the Fraser River system requires the leadership and collaboration of First Nations, Local, Provincial, and Federal orders of government, as well as nongovernmental, academic and private sectors.

FRENCH

In 2023, Ontario Parks added a Park Interpreter position to the staff at the French River Visitor Centre. This continues to be a hugely important position to enhance the public's understanding of the importance and significance of the river. This interpreter highlights the cultural, historic, and ecological uniqueness of the French River area, enhancing the amazing information already provided at the award-winning French River Visitor Centre.

There were no major changes in the Hayes River corridor in 2024. Various wildlife monitoring and studies were conducted in the river corridor and surrounding area by the Manitoba government and other partners.

HARVAQTUUQ | HАҢӘӨҤҖ | KAZAN

Traditional Inuit use of the Harvaqtuuq / Kazan River and surrounding area by Inuit of Baker Lake travelling and harvesting on the lower reaches of the river and surrounding area. The area surrounding the upper reaches of the Harvaqtuuq/Kazan River are commonly used for traditional harvesting activities by Inuit residents of Arviat, and other communities in the southern Kivalliq Region of Nunavut. The Harvaqtuuq/Kazan Heritage River and watershed is an important to Inuit of the region for hunting, fishing, camping and recreational use.

Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement signed January 18, 2024, in Iqaluit, NU by the Government of Canada, Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, whereby public lands once the authority of the federal government will now be passed on to the Government of Nunavut.

In a press release November 2024, The Athabasca Denesuline (AD) and Ghotelnene K'odtineh Dene (GKD) have made important progress with the governments of Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Canada and all parties have initialed the respective land claims agreements – the Athabasca Denesuline Agreement and the Ghotlenenen K'odtineh Dene Agreement.

HILLSBOROUGH

The combined work crews of the Hillsborough River Association (HRA) and its partner, the Pisquid River Enhancement Project (PREP) opened 6.25 km stream enhancement worker trails /tertiary roads as well as Pigot's Trail damaged by post-tropical storm Fiona. These trails and tertiary roads and the blowdown removals were critical in allowing Atlantic salmon electrofishing and redd surveys to be conducted. Work was completed on the opening of two of the signed CHRS access roads to the Hillsborough. P.E.I. Watershed Management Fund, Foundation for Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, student employment funding and other projects assisted with the monitoring and enhancement of Atlantic salmon populations, finfish stream access, and education programs. Sediment

KICKING HORSE

Overall, visitation continues to increase, with the most pronounced visitation noted at Takakkaw Falls and Emerald Lake day use areas. The increase in visitor numbers has resulted in garbage management concerns, vegetation degradation and braiding, and during the summer months daily the overflow of vehicles beyond the capacity of the built parking lots.

KUUJJUAQ | ᐃᓴᐱᓴᐱ | SOPER

Traditional Inuit use; harvesting, fishing, trapping and camping etc. throughout the year of 2024, continues the length of the Kuujuaq/Soper river and watershed by Inuit of Kimmirut. Visitation from non-Nunavut residents is slow to return to pre-pandemic numbers but did have seven registered visitors in Katannilik Territorial Park which lies within the watershed of the Kuujuaq/Soper Heritage River.

LISTUGUJ | UPPER RESTIGOUCHE

Low Atlantic salmon population and difficult weather conditions afflicted many rivers in the Maritime. The Restigouche River was not spared as high temperature and low water levels worsen the low fish returns and affected river habitat for many aquatic species. Consequently, fishing activities were also relatively very bad. Navigation issues were notable due to important traffic and low flows.

The amount of garbage to pick up on campsites was not monitored this year as the massive outreach campaigns performed in the past decades made a real difference on the habits of users and overall cleanliness of the river. Nonetheless, flyers were given out during the summer to folks doing recreational activities and using campsites.

MAIN

The Main River Canadian Heritage River remains in a condition that reflects the natural and recreational values for which the river was designated.



MARGAREE

Recreational use of the Margaree/Lake Ainslie main systems and watershed areas has dramatically increased with a number of new ecotourism operators. Environmental challenges continue to affect the system with rising temperatures of both the air and water, seriously impacting the health of the system(s). Collaboration with various voluntary organizations that has resulted in several events celebrating the river and lake system.

MATTAWA

In 2024, Discovery staff at Sam D presented over 130 school programs to 3,133 kids across Ontario, including in-person programming at schools, supporting CHRS objectives. Discover the Mattawa River: Big Canoe Tours (formally Voyageur Adventure Tours) continued in 2024 with over 40 immersive Discovery programs successfully delivered to park visitors and communities from across Ontario and beyond. Water quality analysis was conducted by NBMCA from 9 tributaries and near the mouth of the Mattawa River, as well as routine sampling on three lakes in the Mattawa River watershed (Trout Lake, Lake Nosbonsing, and Papineau Lake).

MISSINAIBI

On-going management of the Missinaibi River by Ontario Parks as a significant whitewater canoe route tracing the traditional routes of First Nations and the historic European fur trade from Lake Superior to Hudson's Bay. Ontario Parks continues to promote whitewater recreation along the river.

NAHʔA DEHÉ | SOUTH NAHANNI

The Nahʔa Dehé (South Nahanni River) is the centerpiece of Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR). The river supports crucial habitat for a wide range of plants and wildlife while also attracting outdoor enthusiasts from around the globe as a world class whitewater and paddling destination. In 2024, visitor numbers rose by 15.2% from the previous year, increasing from 736 to 848. Warmer temperatures and reduced winter snowfall resulted in abnormally dry conditions, lower-than-average water levels, and an elevated risk of moderate and severe drought in some areas throughout the summer.



NORTH SASKATCHEWAN (BANFF NATIONAL PARK)

The Jasper wildfire of 2024 significantly impacted the livelihood of Jasper residents. This major event resulted in significant decrease in public visitation north of the Saskatchewan River Crossing resort due to mandatory highway, hiking trail, and campground facility closures.

RED

There were no major changes in the Red River corridor in 2024, and a variety of fish studies, wildlife monitoring and water quality monitoring work continued. Notable improvements were made in municipalities and provincial parks along the river corridor to improve access and recreation facilities for Manitoba residents and visitors.

SHELBURNE

As a remote wilderness river, not a lot of activity has taken place on the Shelburne River in 2024-25. No new threats have been identified. Plans are underway to celebrate the river with the local community in 2025.

ST. CROIX

2024 marked the final year of the Milltown Dam removal project, as well as increased awareness surrounding ongoing sea-run fish restoration led by the Passamaquoddy Tribe alongside State and Federal agencies from the US and Canada in a joint effort. Ongoing efforts were continued to improve recreational access and campsites within the CHRS designation corridor.



ST. MARYS

The St. Marys River is a Great Lakes connecting channel between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. In 2024, two beneficial use impairments for the St. Marys River Area of Concern (AOC) were officially redesignated to a 'not impaired' status. In November 2024, the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) hosted an open house to help raise awareness of environmental issues in the AOC.

TATSHENSHINI | SHÄWSHE CHÚ

Overall, the Tatshenshini River's Yukon portion retained its natural, cultural and heritage values for which the river was designated.

No industrial land use permits were issued and the existing mineral claim is static with no new developments.

The most recent Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) survey of the campsites on the upper Tatshenshini was conducted in August 2019. Among the sites surveyed, there were no discernible changes to sites and impacts are minimal. There are no significant threats to the heritage values on the river.

THAMES

The heritage values of the Thames River are actively upheld by river managers and a diverse group of supporters, including local First Nations, individuals, committees, clubs, agencies, and municipalities. The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA), as river managers, play a key role in delivering environmental and recreational programs. Cultural heritage preservation and interpretation are carried out by various First Nations, museums, historical sites, plaques, reenactment societies, heritage committees, and other organizations throughout the watershed.



THIRTY MILE

The 2024 summer season saw continued reliable maintenance and some minor upgrades of the campsites in Thirty Mile, along with some dramatic conservation efforts to some of the historic structures. Forest fires were present in the area but none of the campsites or historic features were at risk. Water levels were average this year, with no significant flooding occurrences.