

## HAYES RIVER HERITAGE DESIGNATION

BRIEF FROM: MANITOBA PROSPECTORS & DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION  
June 4, 2003 Meeting

The Manitoba Prospectors and Developers Association (MPDA) strongly opposes the Hayes River being designated as a Canadian Heritage River.

MPDA's firm position is that the interests of Manitoba will best be served by leaving the Hayes River as is, governed by the Provinces existing, strict, environmental laws and regulations. MPDA therefore requests that the current process, for designation and management planning for the River, be stopped immediately.

The principal reason for this position is that the Hayes River dissects and passes completely through the north-central Superior Geological Province of the Precambrian Shield of Canada in Manitoba. The Canadian Shield, from Labrador to Manitoba and in the NWT/Nunavut, is the treasure house of enormous mineral wealth in Canada and is and was the principal economic engine for the development of northern Canada and a major contributor to the high standard of living established in our Country.

The Superior Province within Manitoba's borders is largely an under-explored, untapped region of great mineral potential. Mineral exploration and development is by far the best opportunity for economic progress and job creation for the many depressed communities of northern Manitoba.

Even if a Hayes Heritage River management plan clearly states that it accommodates mining development, the perception and indeed experience of the industry is that there is another added discretionary control and impediment. Future investment in high risk, high cost prospecting and exploration in the huge Hayes River basin will diminish or cease. This was the case after the Seal River became a Heritage River; work dried up in the Seal River Greenstone mineral belt.

The operative words in the current Hayes River documentation is 'preservation' and 'conservation'. Industry knows that this is the ultimate objective or why bother declaring the River. Prospectors and geologists explore under the strict, Manitoba Work Permit regulations which includes the packaging of all garbage etc. and fly out, often at great expense. Drawing more attention to the Hayes through Heritage designation will result in much increased traffic by the tourist, canoeist and camper, well known to be the greater polluters of the wilderness.

The Hayes River passes through many Greenstone Belts from Norway House, Echimamish River, Logan, Oxford, Knee, Swampy Lakes and Fox River and many others on its path and in its watershed. These Belts are highly prospective for gold, silver, copper, zinc, nickel, platinum metals and diamonds. East of Knee Lake the Gods Lake gold mine operated 1935-1943 and the Monument Bay gold deposits are currently being drilled. Diamonds are receiving considerable attention in the northern Superior and there are many known mineral occurrences in this vast region of the Hayes basin.

Recent discoveries and mine developments of diamonds and nickel-copper in similar rocks in the Shield of NWT and Labrador are adding billions of dollars to the economies of the north and Canada as a whole.

All mining activities in Manitoba, past and present, have occupied land comparable in size to Winnipeg airport or a loonie on a football field. Mining borrows the land for a relatively

short period of time to extract minerals essential to our modern way of life; then with current, stringent environmental laws of operation and closure, the disturbed land is quickly reclaimed by nature.

Most Provinces and Territories have two Heritage Rivers so Manitoba is well represented with the two it already has, the Seal River in the north and the Bloodvein River in the south. Let us just leave it there.

The Manitoba Protected Areas campaign, of which the MPDA is an active and positive participant, is doing an excellent job of preserving, from any development, large regions of land throughout Manitoba, including in the Hayes River basin.

There are many difficulties facing mine finders in Manitoba and Canada. Ever increasing Parks, Wildlife and Ecological and Heritage management areas, Treaty Land entitlements, Northern Flood settlements, Resource Management and Community Interest Zones, Work Permit regulations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada new regulations, tighter securities regulations, competing resource developers eg. Hydro, strong, drawn out environmental reviews and regulations and general land access problems. As a result investments in this very uncertain sector have been falling badly for years.

Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines have many positive policies and programs trying to attract mineral developers to our Province. It is discouraging that the Manitoba Conservation Department continues to generate programs that counteract these incentives for northern economic development and job creation.

The MPDA feel that the establishment of the Hayes as a Heritage River will be 'the last straw' resulting in a serious reduction or end to future mineral development in a vast part of the prospective, north-central Shield of Manitoba. This would result in the loss of potential, major economic progress in a region so in need of job creation. The MPDA therefore requests that the Hayes River Heritage program cease immediately.

Submitted on behalf of: Manitoba Prospectors & Developers Association  
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cc. Premier, Manitoba

Ministers, DMs, ADMs; Industry, Trade & Mines and Conservation.

MPDA Officers, Directors, Members

Man-Sask PDA

Mining Association of Manitoba

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