



Wabagishik Rapids



The Significant Heritage of the Vermilion River

In January of this year the City of Sudbury requested public input into its Official Plan Review, and the Vermilion River Stewardship (VRS) took that opportunity to submit a formal request for the City to adopt a Natural Heritage Strategy (NHS), similar to the Guelph-OPA 42. The purpose of a NHS is to promote and protect important natural heritage features, not just for our own enjoyment today, but also for our future generations; and to maintain, restore and, where possible, improve biodiversity, connectivity and ecological function of the NHS network, including surface water and groundwater features. A NHS would provide a Significant Natural Area (SNA) designation to all waterways and their floodplains.

More specifically, a request was made to designate the Vermilion River as a Significant Heritage Feature (SHF) to recognize its rich cultural, historical and social value. This designation would foster partnerships with public agencies, such as our recent collaborative alignment with Conservation Sudbury–NDCA, and with community organizations, private land owners, and First Nations, by promoting stewardship and enjoyment of this vital natural asset, while protecting it from misuse, overdevelopment, and unscrupulous exploitation for financial gain. Currently the Vermilion River is at risk from numerous development pressures, and these vital water resources are encompassed within the “Ring of Fire”, so is destined for many more challenges in the years ahead.

This River provides habitat for numerous endangered species such as the Bald Eagle, Blanding Turtle, Whippoorwill, Sturgeon, Common Nighthawk, and numerous others, and is a popular recreation destination to those seeking diverse beauty, enjoyment, and tranquility.

The Vermilion also boasts a rich and active Finnish culture and history dating back to the early 1900's, with the River at its center; and an ancient history with artifacts found on its shores dating back to the Archaic period, indicating thousands of years of habitation by First Nation peoples.

Please let our Mayor and Councillors know that you support the NHS, and a SHF designation for the Vermilion River. I encourage you to get involved with your local Stewardship Council – water keepers are essential to secure clean water for our future generations.

Linda heron
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