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**Environment - National Heritage
Rivers**

DRAFT

File -
Environment
American
Rivers.

February 26, 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR DON BAER AND RAHM EMANUEL

From: Kathleen A. McGinty and Bruce Reed

Subject: American Heritage Rivers — key dates and potential events

As you know, President Clinton announced a new program in the State of the Union to designate “American Heritage Rivers” for special attention to environmental protection, historic recognition and economic revitalization. The Cabinet is preparing specific program recommendations by early May which will include the process by which stretches of rivers will be nominated and selected, and the support the federal government will offer to American Heritage River communities. President Clinton pledged to name ten rivers this year.

This memo describes the program’s projected schedule and potential events for the President or Vice President.

Since the State of the Union, the response from communities around the country has been terrific. About ten mayors from New Orleans to Chicago to Richmond to Providence have endorsed the program, and more than 15 communities already have announced their intention to nominate their stretches of river.

The program continues to spawn local stories across the country. In addition, CNN is beginning a 30-part series on international rivers and water supplies in which American Heritage Rivers is likely to figure prominently. The PBS *NewsHour* is developing a special on the program, probably to focus on a community that has already restored their rivers and revitalized their waterfront, and another that intends to.

Major Milestones. We anticipate that the next major news events to be:

- *Announcement of Program Design.* The first major news peg is in May when the President announces program specifics based on the Cabinet recommendations. At this time, communities will be able to begin formally nominating stretches of rivers for the program.
- *Announcement of first American Heritage River(s).* Our goal is to name the first river or two by summer -- providing time to develop the program and time for communities to prepare solid nominations. We cannot name rivers before we develop program specifics such as the nomination criteria and process. We will press to have designations as soon as possible while recognizing that our ability to achieve this goal depends on having credible and broadly-supported nominations from communities.

Timeline.

- Early March - Begin formal outreach sessions with key constituents on program design
- March 17 - Draft program options to Secretaries
- Late March - Begin presenting program options to constituents
- April - Release draft American Heritage Rivers program]

During this program development stage, it might be desirable to have a big American Heritage Rivers conference and it will almost certainly be desirable to have a series of meetings or hearings across the country with Cabinet members, all of which will get local or regional press.

Moreover, one of the program elements is to identify community leaders with experience in river and waterfront restoration for a national "talent bank" of experts. Cabinet members could attract good local media meeting with these local leaders, much as Secretary Babbitt did for the past two years during his "natural heritage tours."

- May - President announces program design and declares the nomination process is formally open. (Communities are already declaring their intent to make nominations and are likely to be preparing nominations according to draft specifications before this date.)

This announcement, while process oriented, will be somewhat newsworthy. The event will outline the federal resources available for American Heritage Rivers, and there will be a number of communities proclaiming themselves in pursuit of the designation.]

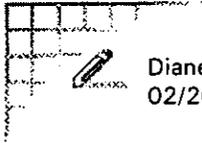
- Summer '97 - Designate first American Heritage River(s)

The President's announcement to name the first American Heritage Rivers will of course be the biggest news item for the program.]

- Summer '97 on - Designate other rivers

Attached: list of endorsers and selected clips

Env - National Heritage
Rivers



Diane C. Regas
02/26/97 12:23:25 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Paul J. Weinstein Jr./OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
Subject: Approvals needed

As I mentioned to Bruce this morning, Katie wants to send a joint memo today on Amer. Heritage Rivers. The memo is to Rahm and Don Baer laying out possible press opportunities in the upcoming year. I have edited the first draft and will get CEQ's final draft to Bruce for signature unless you want to see it first.

ON Monday I need to go to New York to meet with port interests (unions and companies) on the implementation of the Vice President's plan for dredging of the New York New Jersey harbor. The meeting was requested by Congressman Menendez. Who is doing travel authorizations? Who is approving them?

February 6, 1997

NOTE TO: Wesley Warren
Ray Clark

FROM: Diane Regas

SUBJECT: Natural Heritage Rivers - Process Issues for the next 88 days

Because I will be out of town, I wanted to write down a few suggestions I have about process. Let's talk on Tuesday about these issues.

1. We should not attempt to make this a department-led process because I believe that the leadership issues will be much more-easily resolved when we are further along.
2. To keep the housing, development, and other domestic issues fully integrated into this initiative, I think it would be helpful for the WH process to be jointly led by CEQ and DPC.
3. Other departments that should be included: HHS, HUD, and Education. As Wesley mentioned to me, Cabinet Affairs will be helpful in bringing folks in.
4. At our next interagency meeting we might try to put forward a draft schedule with goals, milestones, and windows for outreach. This will help focus everyone on how much we have to do in a short time. I can draft this if you like.
5. Outreach is key. I know that American Rivers would be willing to pay to bring community representatives in to talk to us. Maybe leg. affairs should be brought in to i.d. key members. How do we reach out to governments? I see this as a very important part of what we need to plan for.

FYI
Not intended
for paper
Release.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS
DRAFT - February 3, 1997

QUOTE

Q: What is the American Heritage River Initiative?

A: This initiative is about providing federal tools to communities who wish to protect, restore and revitalize their rivers and riverfronts.

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As our nation has grown, rivers have played a vital role in commerce and culture. Cities grew up around rivers, rivers were the routes into the wilderness. In recent years communities have increasingly recognized the importance of rivers to their well-being—and taken action to restore them. In some places this means parks along a river—like in Kansas City. In some places this means in-river recreation—as in Tucson. (CK) In some cities, like Chicago, this means reuniting the community with its river resources. In some cities this means encouraging riverside commercial development that will revitalize the surrounding community—as in Cleveland. The American Heritage River initiative seeks to add federal tools for those communities working to protect, restore and revitalize their communities.

The President's American Heritage Rivers effort will better coordinate the federal government's actions that affect all river communities, and it will focus special help to those communities on rivers named American Heritage Rivers. For all river communities, federal agencies will bring together existing tools—like grant programs, local water quality data, research and other resources to support work communities have undertaken to restore and revitalize rivers and riverfronts. This means reorganizing federal work so that information is easy to get and programs are accessible. Second, the President will recognize some rivers based on the importance of the river, the work the community is doing to protect a river, their plans for restoration, and the resources they are bringing to bear to revitalize the community around the river. Once the President recognizes a river, the federal government will invest in the community's work, and create models of successful federal support for these local initiatives. This recognition will be similar to an historic landmark designation with an added component of federal resources targeted to support action to protect restore and revitalize rivers and the health of communities around them.

Q: Give me an example of a government program that might be targeted to this effort?

A: In 90 days the Cabinet will make recommendations to the President about the program specifics, so it is premature to promise resources from any one program. However, to illustrate, under the Clean Water Act, EPA targets resources to research and demonstration projects, and under their authorities the NEH supports exhibits in particular communities which in the past have included cultural and historical examinations of rivers.

These kinds of programs could, in appropriate circumstances, help an American Heritage River.

Q: Where did this idea come from?

A: The President and the Cabinet have spent four years learning about successful community efforts to revitalize local rivers and local economies.

For example, Secretary Babbitt met with people working to protect some 70 waterfronts. From the Pine River in Michigan to the Blackstone River in New England, communities are cleaning up their rivers and the results are breathing new life into their towns. Secretary Babbitt's meetings highlighted the successful interactions with some federal programs, and the tremendous potential to integrate programs and to spread ideas across the country.

Similarly, Secretary Browner has implemented the Brownfields program which brings together in a new way environmental protection and job-creation. The Brownfields effort has shown that clearing up environmental concerns clears a path for economic and recreational opportunities in a community.

Secretary Glickman has experimented with focusing federal resources in partnerships to revitalize urban areas, for example, working with citizens in the South Bronx to clean up the Bronx River and creating a corridor from the subway to the Bronx zoo—a new economic development tool for the neighborhood.

These experiences suggest that federal agencies can do a lot more to support and catalyze a community's work, and that federal agencies can help spread good ideas that work. It became increasingly clear that we could do more to build on their efforts and more to celebrate our river heritage.

Q: Why is it necessary?

A: Our rivers are an integral part of our culture and history, and important to past a future economic development—but while we have national parks to protect our greatest lands and empowerment zones to revitalize our cities, we do not have an effort that brings together federal agencies in partnership with communities to celebrate and restore our nation's rivers.

Q: By what authority does the President name American Heritage Rivers?

A: The National Environmental Policy Act recognizes a continuing federal responsibility to use all practicable means "to improve and coordinate federal plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the Nation may-- (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing

surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

[Alternate, short version: NEPA recognizes a continuing federal responsibility to use all practicable means "improve and coordinate federal plans, functions, programs, and resources"... "to preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage." *Reviewers: does the longer version help or is it distracting?*]

This is part of our efforts to fulfill this responsibility; the President has the authority to recognize rivers, target resources, and coordinate the federal government within statutory limits to achieve these goals.

Q: Has anything like this ever been done before without Congressional direction?

A: Not surprisingly, Presidents have used their inherent authorities in different ways in their efforts to preserve and protect national and natural treasures. For instance, President Theodore Roosevelt named Pelican Island in Florida as the nation's first wildlife refuge; it was not created by Congress.

Q: Roosevelt's creation of the first wildlife had tremendous ramifications for land use. Is this a land grab?

A: Quite the contrary. This is an effort to increase community enjoyment of rivers, not to increase federal lands around rivers. This is a program where communities nominate their stretch of the river to be named an American Heritage River. This initiative is intended to support community plans—including protection, recreation, and job creation. To accomplish these goals the Administration will better coordinate federal environmental and cultural programs with the communities along rivers, and give people better access to existing federal resources.

Q: What won't a landowner be able to do when his land is in an American Heritage River area?

A: This program is about what federal resources will be available to communities, and not about what individuals can or can not do. It redirects federal resources towards communities that are striving to preserve their cultural heritage. This does not alter state, local, federal laws.

Q: But it will mean more regulation, right?

A: This is not about more regulation, it is about more effective action. Each American Heritage River will be different according to the unique needs of that particular community and river. In some cases, federal or state agencies might decide that their regulatory programs are not effective enough in some places or for certain purposes and target those programs differently.

Q: What regulations might be applied differently? Will wetlands permits become harder to obtain? Or water permits?

A: Permits will be decided according to those programs' laws and regulations. However, agencies will improve their consultation with local governments and communities along the river and consider the area's American Heritage Rivers status. Our experience has been that greater community involvement and careful consideration of a community's needs can mean that federal agencies make different—and better—decisions.

Q: What about bigger federal actions such as dams?

A: As part of the "good neighbors" policy, federal agencies would formally consider the effects of some of their actions upon American Heritage Rivers. This policy will be developed in detail after consultation with other branches and levels of government and with the public.

Q: How can this have no budget impact? Is all this accounted for in your '98 budget proposal, or in the existing budgets?

A: These projects will be undertaken under existing budgets through smarter utilization of existing resources, and by targeting resources to this very important area. American Heritage Rivers will operate within the tradition of President Clinton and Vice President Gore's reinventing government: there are dozens of relevant programs within the agencies and better coordination might actually *save* money. Agencies working in a more coordinated fashion will deliver these services for less. The program the cabinet recommends to the President will fit within the current budget.

Q: How can you take money away from things for which Congress has appropriated it and spend it on this?

A: A great Congressionally-mandated and appropriated programs exist that affect rivers and river communities; American Heritage Rivers is an organizing tool to make them more effective. Within the programs that Congress budgets, agencies always set priorities and make choices. This initiative will target a small portion of those programs towards protecting, restoring and revitalizing American Heritage Rivers. Depending on a specific community's proposal, it may be appropriate to fund activities within clean water projects,

habitat restoration partnerships, humanities grants, or other specific programs. This initiative will be an organizing tool to coordinate different federal actions and work better with local communities.

Q: Over the longer term, if this program works, will it affect the budget?

A: American Heritage Rivers will be designed to have no net budget impact. However, agencies' future budget proposals may reflect what they learn through this program. For example, agencies might be to consolidate existing programs to support expansion of these ideas.

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Q: You say this is a partnership that will work with the ground up. With which communities did you consult when you were preparing this idea?

A: [See "Where did this idea come from?" above about Babbitt, Browner, Glickman travels.] Administration officials have traveled and listened to groups across the country. The Administration has talked with governors, mayors and community organizations. This initiative is a reflection of what we have heard. They say they don't need bigger programs or a lot more money. They need specific kinds of help targeted for the challenge they face in solving these problems. Sometimes, recognition of their efforts is enough to energize them or get others interested in helping them.

The President has set out a vision and goals. Within that very broad vision, members of the Cabinet will work with communities, the Congress, and state, tribal, and local government to recommend a specific program with broad support within 90 days.

Do we want to give out for INB

Q: What agencies participated in the preparation of the program, and which agencies will be involved in the future?

A: Communities and states work with a number of federal agencies, all of which have something to offer, although none of them could solve problems alone. Senior officials at the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Interior and Transportation, the Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Endowment for the Humanities helped develop this program and will participate in the future. [Missing anybody?]

Q: Have any communities expressed interest in the program?

A: Many communities have sought federal support for their protection, restoration, and revitalization efforts. If the Empowerment Zones and Brownfields programs are any indication, we expect widespread interest in this program. In addition to the local leaders consulted by Secretaries Babbitt and Glickman, Administrator Browner and other Administration officials in their travels, we have spoken to a number of mayors regarding whether this type of effort would be helpful. [For example, Mayor Dennis Knobloch at

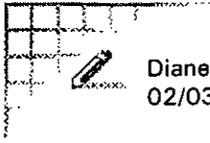
Valmeyer, Ill, Mayor Vince Cianci of Providence, Rhode Island and Mayor Marc Morial of New Orleans all responded positively about such a partnership and will be consulting with members of the Cabinet as they prepare recommendations for the President.]

[Is it wise to name names here? I might prefer to circulate a contact list of people who have expressed interest.]

Q: How is this different from the XX historic river corridor?

A: This initiative brings nationwide, cross-agency recognition to community efforts to protect, restore and revitalize rivers.

[Still need specifics about other programs to be able to explain the differences.]



Diane C. Regas
02/03/97 06:59:20 PM

Record Type: Record

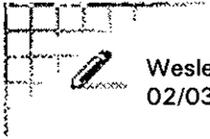
To: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Paul J. Weinstein Jr./OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: American Heritage Rivers

----- Forwarded by Diane C. Regas/OPD/EOP on 02/03/97 06:54 PM -----

Attached is the document reflecting White House staff agreement on the American Heritage River announcement. The document is being circulated to departments, but I believe that there are no outstanding issues.



Wesley P. Warren
02/03/97 06:41:29 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP

cc: Diane C. Regas/OPD/EOP, Brian J. Johnson/CEQ/EOP

Subject: American Heritage Rivers



Here TP_RIVER.J is a copy of the most recent AHR background paper.

I:\persdir\tp_river.j30

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS
DRAFT -- NOT ADMINISTRATION POLICY
February 3, 1997 - 6:45 PM

OBJECTIVE

Objective of American Heritage Rivers Initiative. To protect and restore America's great rivers to enhance our citizens' enjoyment of their historic, cultural, recreational, economic and environmental value and the health of our communities.

CHARGE TO CABINET

President Clinton is charging his Cabinet to work with communities to design an initiative that will support community efforts on behalf of their rivers. The Cabinet will report the results of this effort with recommendations to the President within 90 days for his approval.

CORE ELEMENTS

- **Matching Community Involvement with Federal Support.** The American Heritage Rivers effort is a partnership between the federal government and the people who enjoy the many values of a river. The partnerships will be created from the community up, through local, state, tribal, and federal governments rather than from the top down.
- **Giving Communities the Tools They Need.** President Clinton is directing federal agencies to provide better tools to all communities to enhance America's rivers and create greater opportunities for the people who live along them.
- **"American Heritage Rivers."** In addition, President Clinton will offer special recognition to outstanding stretches of America's rivers by selecting them to be "American Heritage Rivers." Communities will nominate sites to be considered for this status. Federal agencies will refocus resources to provide particular assistance to these areas.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **A Call to Action.** The President is calling on communities around the country to bring private companies, non-profit organizations, and state, local, and tribal resources together to restore, protect, and revitalize rivers that run through their communities. President Clinton is directing his Cabinet to reach out to those people to encourage and expand on successful efforts.

- **Using Partnerships to Chart Each Community's Unique Course.** The American Heritage Rivers initiative will center around partnerships between communities and state, local, tribal, and federal governments. Each river and every community is different, and requires different solutions. The federal government will support community efforts to chart a course that makes the most sense based on the area's economic, social, historical, and environmental conditions, drawing on local expertise already devoted to river and community enhancement.

TOOLS FOR ALL RIVER COMMUNITIES

The Cabinet will prepare recommendations for improving federal help to all river communities, including but not limited to American Heritage Rivers. Examples of activities that the federal government can undertake include the following:

- **Access to Federal Programs and National Expertise.** Communities need help penetrating the maze of federal programs available to assist them. Agencies will make it easier to access available federal resources to support community restoration, protection and revitalization efforts, and will create a clearinghouse for this information. This effort will also make national expertise available to communities and actively promote successful ideas about how our heritage can be preserved.
- **Comprehensive Information for Communities.** For the first time communities will have access to all the data available to the federal government about the health of their rivers and the challenges to continued protection. Agencies will make this information easily accessible using the Internet and other methods.
- **A Talent Bank Across Communities.** Many communities are already engaged in work to preserve their river and revitalize their communities. Federal agencies will create a "talent bank" of experienced local people who are willing to share knowledge and techniques about community river restoration efforts.

SELECTION OF "AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS"

- **American Heritage Rivers.** In addition to the better help provided to all communities, the President will select outstanding river sites as American Heritage Rivers. In the first year up to ten such sites will be selected to demonstrate successful models of community action. Lessons learned from these sites will be shared across the country.

- **Enhanced Government Tools.** President Clinton is directing his Cabinet to refocus programs, grants, and technical assistance to provide special support to American Heritage Rivers. Each community supporting an American Heritage River will be given resources to catalyze their community's work on behalf of a restored, revitalized river.
- **Better Decisions.** President Clinton is directing the federal agencies to adopt a "good neighbor" policy in making decisions, taking into consideration the effects upon American Heritage Rivers of actions by federal agencies.
- **Community Representative.** Federal agencies will provide a community representative to help implement the community's vision and provide a contact for federal resources in each American Heritage River community.
- **Nominations.** Communities will be able to nominate outstanding stretches of river for consideration as an American Heritage River. Nominations will include information on the importance of the stretch of river to the nation's culture and history; to past and future economic development; and to public health and environmental quality. In addition, the Administration will ask for a community plan for revitalization, broad support for the plan and a commitment of non-federal resources.

FULFILLING THE PRESIDENT'S CHARGE

- **Directive to Cabinet.** The President is directing the Cabinet (including agencies responsible for natural resource management, economic development, environmental protection, and historic preservation) to develop the American Heritage Rivers effort by reaching out to those with experience in revitalizing their communities and rivers -- civic leaders, businesses, government at all levels, historians, non-governmental organizations. Within 90 days the Cabinet will report to the President the design of a program that will carry out the objectives of this initiative.
- **American Heritage River Selections.** As part of the design of the overall program, the Cabinet will recommend specific basic program procedures, including the process for nominating and selecting sites for American Heritage River recognition, and the considerations that will affect the selection. The President will select up to 10 American Heritage Rivers for recognition within one year from the announcement of the final program.
- **Budget Impact.** This effort is not to rely on net increases in federal spending or regulations, but rather newly-targeted budget resources and more effective regulation.