



PARKS CANADA AGENCY

# WORDS TO *Action*



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### **Cover Photos**

Background image (front and back):

Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada,  
*J.F. Bergeron/ENVIROFOTO, 2000*

Featured Images (left to right, top to bottom):

Prince Albert National Park of Canada, *W. Lynch, 1997*; Gros Morne National Park of Canada, *Michael Burzynski, 2001*; Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site of Canada, *Chris Reardon, 2006*; Parkdale Fire Station, *Parks Canada*

### **Inside Cover Photo**

*S. Munn, 2000*

Amended (July, 2008)



# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PARKS CANADA'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES. . . . .</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>FACILITATING VISITOR EXPERIENCE. . . . .</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES. . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Healing Broken Connections at Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada . . . . .</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Explorer Quotient: Personalizing Visitor Experiences . . . . .</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Hands-on History . . . . .</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Inuit Knowledge at Auyuittuq, Sirmilik and Ukkusiksalik National Parks of Canada. . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Making Personal Connections Through Interpretation . . . . .</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Celebrating the Rideau Canal National Historic Site's World Heritage Designation . . . . .</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Employment Program: Enhancing Aboriginal Employment Opportunities . . . . .</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Geocaching: Using Technology as a Means to a Great Experience . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Enhancing the System of National Historic Sites. . . . .</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Presentation of Aboriginal Themes: Aboriginal Interpretation Innovation Fund . . . . .</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Planning for Great Visitor Experiences: The Visitor Experience Assessment. . . . .</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>A Role in the Lives of Today's Communities: Parkdale Fire Station. . . . .</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Commemoration of Aboriginal History. . . . .</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>CONTACTING PARKS CANADA. . . . .</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Sahoyué Şehdacho National Historic Site of Canada: A Sacred Place . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>OUTREACH EDUCATION . . . . .</b>	<b>31</b>		
<b>PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES . . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Reaching Canadians at Home: Using Technology to Connect with Canadians. . . . .</b>	<b>33</b>		
<b>Establishing New National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas . . . . .</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Reaching Canadians in their Lives: The BC Ferries Coastal Naturalists Program . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>		
<b>Ecological Integrity Monitoring and Reporting. . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Reaching Urban Canadians: Living Cities, Engaging Toronto . . . . .</b>	<b>36</b>		
<b>Active Management and Restoration. . . . .</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Reaching Youth: Canadian Geographic Kids . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>		
		<b>Reaching Youth: Nomads and Adventurers . . . . .</b>	<b>38</b>		



## Introduction

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# Canadian cultural and natural heritage places

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*“Integration of protection, education and memorable experiences is the foundation for our work while ensuring that we are relevant to, and representative of Canadians.”*

Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada

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Parks Canada is an international leader in the protection of natural and cultural heritage, the facilitation of memorable visitor experiences and the provision of learning opportunities.

Parks Canada’s network of national parks, national historic sites, historic canals and marine conservation areas is one of the finest and most expansive in the world. Each year, millions of visitors connect with Canada’s magnificent natural environments and the historic places that witnessed Canada’s defining moments.

Our world is changing. Now, more than ever before, Parks Canada is faced with the realities of changes in the Canadian demographic landscape and changes in Canadians’ underlying



values. These changes present Parks Canada with opportunities and challenges in maintaining relevance of Canada’s heritage places. Recent trends have seen a rapid increase in immigration and urbanization, and a collective consciousness towards being more environmentally respectful

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and responsible. With the increase in urbanization and the majority of New Canadians deciding to reside in urban settings, relevance becomes a challenge in the face of a mostly rural national heritage system.

In order to continue to fulfill its national mandate with the integrated delivery of protection, education and memorable experiences, Parks Canada is taking steps to ensure the continued relevance of national heritage places to society. These recent population trends underline the importance of reaching out to Canadians.

Indeed, our world is changing and Parks Canada is responding. The following are examples of proactive measures from across the nation reflecting Parks Canada's innovative, dedicated and unwavering commitment to protect, engage, promote understanding, evoke appreciation and inspire future stewards of our cultural and natural treasures for generations to come.

These examples illustrate that success is most evident when we work with all Canadians and our Aboriginal partners in this very special mandate of the Government of Canada.

## Conservation of Cultural Resources

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# A heritage for all Canadians

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*Currently, the Canadian family of national historic sites comprises 925 places of national historic significance in more than 400 communities across the country. Of these national historic sites, 158 are directly administered by Parks Canada.*

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Envision a Canada without the Cabot Tower looming over the entrance to St. John's harbour, the Quebec City walls and fortifications, Parliament Hill, the Banff Springs Hotel, or Stanley Park, and one sees a Canada impoverished by the absence of some of its defining national symbols. Canada's national historic sites capture the sense and spirit of the nation, connect urban and rural Canadians, link the young and the elderly, and provide a bridge between New Canadians and their adopted country. They are as important to our national identity as are the maple leaf, the Prairies or the Rocky Mountains.

National historic sites range from buildings, to gardens, to streetscapes and entire towns, from battlefields to Aboriginal sacred sites, and from archaeological sites to cultural landscapes. Some continue to play their traditional role while

others have been adapted to new uses. They offer the opportunity to connect with the very places that were witness to Canada's defining moments and to learn more about the people and events that shaped our nation. Their stories fire our imagination and tug at our heartstrings while providing moving and exciting learning experiences as well as instilling a sense of pride in our nation's history.

Parks Canada is responsible for the program of commemoration of persons, places and events of national historic significance, for the stewardship of some of these places, and for promoting greater appreciation and deeper understanding of Canada's history and historic places.

There are now 925 national historic sites of Canada in more than 400 communities across the country. Parks Canada is the steward of 17%, and the remainder are owned

and managed by provinces, territories, municipalities, federal departments, corporations, organizations, and individual Canadians. Through shared responsibility and partnership, the conservation and presentation of Canada's rich historic heritage is ensured for present and future generations.

The concept of commemorative integrity (CI) is central to the management of national historic sites. Commemorative integrity, meaning the health and wholeness of a site, includes the conservation of cultural resources, the communication of the reasons for designation as a national historic site, and a respect for other heritage values associated with the site.

The following examples illustrate the *Conservation of Cultural Resources* in action.



## Hands-on History



Charles Burke, Parks Canada, 2007

In July 2007, Parks Canada launched the new Beaubassin/Fort Lawrence Public Archaeology Experience at Beaubassin National Historic Site of Canada. This three-year project invites visitors to work under the expert supervision of a Parks Canada archaeologist and undertake a unique experience at a national historic site. The program helps Parks Canada increase existing knowledge of the archaeological resources of the sites, and provides experiences and meaningful learning opportunities to visitors who actively participate in the archaeological excavation. A similar program is also under way at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site of Canada.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognized the national significance of Fort Lawrence (1750-1756) in 1923, while Beaubassin (1672-1750) was declared a national historic site of Canada in 2005. The architectural ruins and features found at the sites attest to the Acadian way of life and to the geopolitical struggle between France and England for the control of Canada.



## Celebrating the Rideau Canal National Historic Site's World Heritage Designation



B. Morin, 1995

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee inscribed the Rideau Canal on the World Heritage List on June 27, 2007, at its 31st session held in Christchurch, New Zealand. This prestigious designation came as the Rideau Canal was celebrating its 175th year in operation.

The Rideau Canal World Heritage Site, North America's oldest operating canal, now joins the prestigious ranks of such global treasures as the Acropolis in Athens, the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Pyramids of Egypt. It is the fourteenth Canadian site to obtain such recognition.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site is a natural or cultural place which has been judged to be of "outstanding universal value." What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application; World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.

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*It's a very different type of World Heritage Site. It's not like Stonehenge. It's a region. It's a corridor."*

Dr. Brian Osborne  
Professor Emeritus, Queen's University

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A property nominated for inclusion to the World Heritage List is considered to be of outstanding universal value when the World Heritage Committee finds that it meets one or more of ten criteria. The Rideau Canal was inscribed under two criteria:

- *Criterion I:* The Rideau Canal remains the best-preserved example of a slackwater canal in North America demonstrating the use of European slackwater technology on a large scale. It is the only canal dating from the great North American canal-building era of the early 19th century that remains operational along its original line with most of its original structures intact.
- *Criterion IV:* The Rideau Canal is an extensive, well preserved and significant example of a canal which was used for military purposes linked to a significant stage in human history — that of the fight to control the north of the American continent.

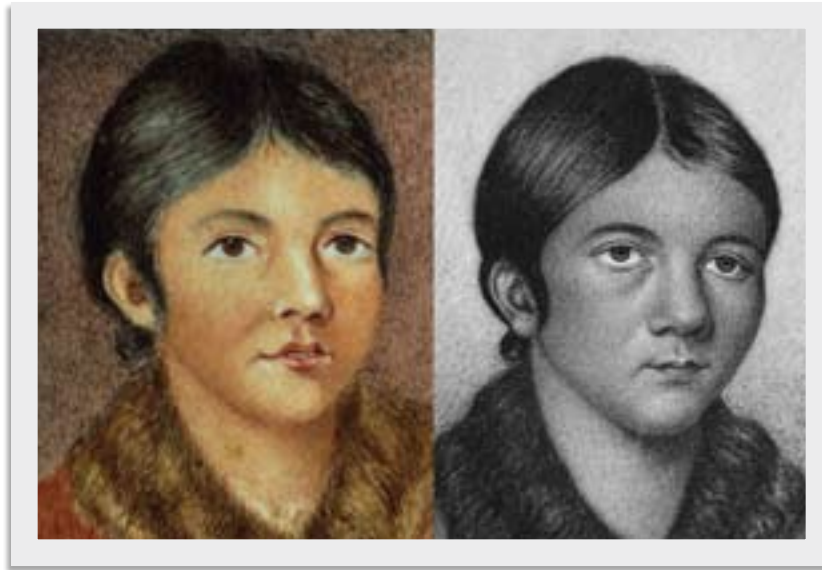
The designation not only places the Rideau Canal within a prestigious international list of heritage places but it will also position the canal as one of the premier cultural heritage destinations in Ontario.

#### **UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Canada**

- L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site (1978)
- Nahanni National Park (1978)
- Dinosaur Provincial Park (1979)
- Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek (1979, 1992, 1994)
- Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (1981)
- S~~h~~ang Gwaay (1981)
- Wood Buffalo National Park (1983)
- Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks (1984, 1990)
- Historic District of Old Québec (1985)
- Gros Morne National Park (1987)
- Old Town Lunenburg (1995)
- Waterton Glacier International Peace Park (1995)
- Miguasha National Park (1999)
- Rideau Canal (2007)

Canada currently chairs the World Heritage Committee, and in July 2008 will host the annual World Heritage Committee meeting in Quebec City.

## Enhancing the System of National Historic Sites



*Demasduit and Shanawdithit together created a legacy of knowledge about the Beothuk, Library and Archives Canada/C-087698 & C-038862*

One of Parks Canada's key objectives is to ensure that the system of national historic sites of Canada represents the history of all Canadians. When it was established, early in the twentieth century, the system reflected the contemporary preoccupation with the "great men and events" credited with establishing the nation. Mid-century saw a shift of that focus to political and economic history. In recent years, new interest in social history has brought to the forefront the history and contributions of previously under-represented groups.

Parks Canada has diligently worked to ensure that the system of national historic sites of Canada honours and recognizes all those who have shaped the story of Canada, and through the New Commemorations Initiative, has initiated ongoing consultations with under-represented groups through dialogue, meetings and workshops.

In the last five years, this work has proven to be highly successful. Half of the new designations made by the Minister, as recommended by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, have been related to the objective of commemorating Aboriginal history, ethnocultural communities' history and women's history.

## ETHNOCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

In 2006-07 there were three designations related to the history of ethnocultural communities:

- Doukhobors at Veregin, Saskatchewan (national historic site)
- Kensington Market, Ontario (national historic site)
- Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society (national historic event)

Parks Canada has, at the request of ethnocultural communities involved in consultations, prepared commemorative plaques for approved recommendations in non-official third languages. These bronze plaques reflect the national significance of a designated person, event or site. For example, in 2005-06, the plaque erected at the Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Défense in Montréal included texts in French, English, and Italian to acknowledge the importance of this site to Italian Canadians. In that year, plaques for other sites were also translated into Dutch and Chinese.



J. Dufresne, Parks Canada

### DOUKHOBORS AT VEREGIN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA (2006)

*The original Veregin settlement (of which the prayer home, machine shed, grain elevator and foundations of the old store survive) was the administrative, distribution and spiritual centre for the region during the first period of Doukhobor settlement in Canada. The spectacular prayer home reflects the settlement's importance to the Doukhobors as a religious and cultural centre, as well as the authority and the vision of the leader of the Doukhobors, Peter V. Verigin.*

## WOMEN

In 2006-07 there were six designations related to women's history:

- Harriet Brooks (national historic person)
- Contributions of the Augustines de la Miséricorde de Jésus of Québec City's Hôtel-Dieu in the Field of Healthcare (national historic event)
- Crossing of Lake Ontario by Marilyn Bell (national historic event)
- Fédération nationale Saint-Jean-Baptiste (national historic event)
- Contributions of the Religieuses hospitalières de St-Joseph in the Field of Healthcare (national historic event)
- Contributions of the Soeurs de Miséricorde in the Field of Healthcare (national historic event)

The Parks Canada website offers six 3D tours of national historic sites related to women's history (<http://pc.gc.ca/3d>).



Canada's Sports Hall of Fame

#### THE CROSSING OF LAKE ONTARIO BY MARILYN BELL

*On the evening of September 9, 1954, 16-year-old marathon swimmer Marilyn Bell became the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. Racing unofficially against the heavily favoured American swimmer Florence Chadwick, Bell endured eels, high winds, and frigid waters for almost 21 hours to complete her world-record-breaking 51.5-kilometre swim. Her courageous achievement won unprecedented attention both at home and abroad for the sport of marathon swimming in Canada. Bell's swim demonstrated that women could compete in even the most grueling sports and foster immense national pride.*

#### ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Parks Canada is committed to working closely with Aboriginal peoples to enhance the representation of their history within the system of national historic sites of Canada. To commemorate Aboriginal history more effectively, Parks Canada places greater emphasis on consultation throughout the nomination process and a recognition of the importance of oral history and traditions.

In 2006-07 there were two designations related to the history of Aboriginal peoples:

- Cypress Hills Massacre Site (national historic site)
- Pointe-du-Buisson (national historic site)



Judith Dufresne, 2005

#### POINTE-DU-BUISSON

*Pointe-du-Buisson is a complex of archaeological sites spread over a vast wooded plateau, located beside the St. Lawrence River in the community of Melocheville, south of Montréal. Pointe-du-Buisson, one of the most important sources of information on Aboriginal peoples who inhabited the St. Lawrence lowlands, was nominated by the current owners, Pointe-du-Buisson Archaeological Park.*

## A Role in the Lives of Today's Communities: Parkdale Fire Station

*"Heritage places represent the last reservoirs of authentic places to visit."*

Dr Julianna Priskin  
Researcher at the Chair in Tourism Transat  
Adjunct Professor, Department  
of Urban and Tourism Studies  
University of Quebec in Montreal



Parks Canada

### The Canadian Register of Historic Places

The pan-Canadian Historic Places Initiative (HPI) is the result of collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments. Together, we have created the tools to enable Canadians to learn about, value, enjoy and conserve our country's historic places. The Canadian Register of Historic Places, an online database at [www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca), has grown to over 7,000 listings. The continued growth of the Register demonstrates that Canadians are proud of their historic places and support the role of all levels of government in telling their stories and protecting and conserving these important places.

About 1,000 of the places now on the Register have been newly designated since the Register was established in 2004, and most of these listings have come from municipalities that have become engaged in identifying, designating and protecting historic places in their communities.

The Parkdale Fire Station, in Ottawa, Ontario, was the first project completed under the Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund (CHPIF), a pilot program designed to engage the private sector in conserving heritage properties. This program was not limited to national historic sites, but was open to any historic place listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places, and owned by a taxable Canadian corporation.

This pilot project has demonstrated the advantages of rehabilitating vacant and decaying buildings into viable commercial use, as well as the benefits to communities in terms of quality of life, the revitalization of downtown cores, and economic activity.

The Parkdale Fire Station is one of only three pre-1930 fire stations in all of Ottawa. Through the efforts of the Hintonburg Community Association, this fire station was designated as a municipal heritage site in 1996, and formally recognized by the province of Ontario. Although vacant for some time, this building has been renovated, refurbished and converted into commercial space, while retaining the building's character-defining elements tied to its primary function as a fire station. The heritage value was maintained by conserving the building's façade and hose tower.

Today, the Parkdale Fire Station is once again a lively hub of activity and a focal point in its community.



## Sahoyúé Şehdacho National Historic Site of Canada: A Sacred Place



James De Jonge, Parks Canada

On March 11, 2007, a landmark agreement was signed between Parks Canada, Déline First Nation and the Déline Land Corporation to work towards permanently protecting and cooperatively managing Sahoyúé Şehdacho (pronounced SAW-you-eh-DAH-cho) National Historic Site of Canada.

This will be the first national historic site of Canada acquired on the basis of consultation with Aboriginal peoples. The involvement of Parks Canada in the ownership and administration of a national historic site of Canada is a first for the Northwest Territories.

Sahoyúé Şehdacho represents an Aboriginal cultural landscape of 5,587 square kilometres located on two peninsulas at Great Bear Lake in the Mackenzie Lowlands, Northwest Territories.

The site has great cultural and spiritual significance to the Sahtugot'ine. The relationships between the landscape, oral histories, burial grounds and cultural resources, such as trails and cabins, contribute to an understanding of the origin, spiritual values, lifestyle and land use of the Sahtugot'ine.

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*"Today is a chance to be  
good ancestors..."*

Monte Hummel,  
President Emeritus of World Wildlife Fund Canada

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For the Sahtugot'ine this territory is sacred. These areas represent the importance of traditional narratives to their culture. The large tracts of land ground the stories that are used to pass information from the elders to the youth of the next generation.

Parks Canada continues to promote awareness of the need to protect places of national significance. The initiatives identified here have a common theme – working with and engaging partners and stakeholders so that we can continue to work together to promote a culture of heritage conservation.

## Protection of Natural Resources

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# Leading in ecosystem management and engaging stewards

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*“Canada’s natural spaces are replete with extraordinary beauty, raw strength and unmatched environmental richness. They are the doorways to truly understanding Canada; they represent the soul and the spirit of the country.”*

Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada

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Canada would not be what it is today without its varied and astounding landscapes. Our national parks, which represent Canada’s outstanding natural features, protect and present representative ecosystems from across Canada’s diverse landscape.

The concept of ecological integrity is the cornerstone underlying the management of Canada’s national parks. The ecological integrity of Canada’s wild places must be maintained to conserve their biodiversity and harmonious biological dynamics. “Ecological integrity” refers to the species, structure, functions and processes of the ecosystems that are likely to persist in a park’s natural region.

National parks also help visitors experience the Canadian landscape—the extraordinarily powerful and beautiful character of which influences all who travel and live in this country. Visitors to our national parks can paddle down rivers which flow through canyons that have been carved over thousands of years, observe birds as they stop to rest in their travels along ancient migration routes, or walk through vibrant young forests that have been renewed by fire. These experiences are further enriched by opportunities to learn by viewing native plants and animals through interpretive exhibits and walks, and a host of other possibilities.

Parks Canada plays a leadership role in ecosystem management and encourages Canadians to become stewards of their national parks so that resource protection can occur in harmony both inside park boundaries and beyond. Public support for and engagement in the activities of the Agency are essential in protecting our natural environment and ensuring, through responsible behaviour, that wild places will endure, intact and strong, for the enjoyment of future generations.

The following examples illustrate the ***Protection of Natural Resources*** in action.

## Establishing New National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas

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*"The Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve is the Inuit gift to the people of Canada."*

Toby Andersen,  
Chief Negotiator, Labrador Inuit Association

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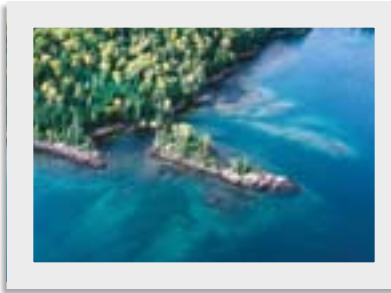


I.K. MacNeill, 1994

Creating new national parks and national marine conservation areas contributes to the protection of natural resources by increasing the total amount of land and marine environments conserved, and provides additional opportunities to work with partners to create networks of protected areas in Canada. Parks Canada continues to work towards the goal of completing the national parks system and expanding the national marine conservation areas system. Newly established national parks and marine conservation areas, and in some cases expanding national parks such as Nahanni National Park Reserve, also create additional opportunities for visitor experience and learning, and add to public support for their conservation. These actions contribute to protecting Canada's wilderness, biodiversity and the natural processes that provide us with clean air and water.

Recent highlights of establishment work are the signing of an agreement between Canada and Ontario to establish the 10,000-square-kilometre Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area and two announcements of interim land withdrawals for park purposes in Canada's North: 29,200 square kilometres in the Dehcho area for the purpose of expanding Nahanni National Park Reserve to about six times its present size, and 33,690 square kilometres in the area of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. Also of great importance, Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve was established under the Canada National Parks Act in 2005. The Lake Superior Agreement has increased the number of marine regions represented to 3 out of a total of 29 regions.

Parks Canada continues work on feasibility studies and negotiations for five proposed national parks and four proposed national marine conservation areas currently under consideration across Canada. One of these is a new proposal with funding announced in the recent federal budget to study a possible national marine conservation area in Lancaster Sound, Nunavut. With the oceans considered to be in crisis, marine conservation in Canada is becoming increasingly important and taking on a higher profile.



F. Mercier, 1994

### **SIGNING OF THE LAKE SUPERIOR NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA AGREEMENT**

On October 25, 2007, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Minister of the Environment announced an agreement with Ontario to establish a national marine conservation area in northern Lake Superior. A memorandum of understanding with the Northern Superior First Nations was signed at the same time, and will lead to their active engagement in the management and stewardship of the NMCA. This immense and magnificent area of about 10,000 square kilometres — a stunning seascape featuring a diversity of plant and animal life — will become the largest freshwater protected area in the entire world.



D. Harvey, 2003

### **A SIGNIFICANT LAND WITHDRAWAL FOR THE EXPANSION OF NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK RESERVE OF CANADA**

In August 2007, the Prime Minister of Canada announced a significant land withdrawal for the purpose of expanding Nahanni National Park Reserve.

The lands under interim protection in the Nahanni area are of a size equivalent to Vancouver Island. With their mineral hot springs, karst features of global significance and vital habitat for grizzly bear, woodland caribou and Dall's sheep, these truly magnificent lands join the current park reserve's outstanding treasures. Nahanni, which includes the renowned Virginia Falls and a portion of the South Nahanni River, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978.

The expansion work is guided by a memorandum of understanding with the Dehcho First Nations. Work continues on finalizing the boundaries and reaching agreements with Aboriginal organizations.

## Ecological Integrity Monitoring and Reporting

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*"Our youth environmental group is helping to monitor the Blanding's turtle and other rare species in Kejimikujik. This is part of our double focus on cultural revival in Mi'kmaq communities and monitoring of rare species."*

Shalan Joudry, L'sitkuk (Bear River First Nation)

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*"One person at a time, making a connection with this earth...we will protect what we love."*

Chris Heeter, The Wild Institute

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Duncan Smith, Parks Canada

Each of Canada's national parks is developing an ecological integrity monitoring and reporting program that generates knowledge on park ecosystems. This information is used to report on the health of the park. The ecological integrity monitoring and reporting program relies on the expertise of park specialists, local communities, citizen volunteers and Aboriginal partners to collect and interpret the information. Knowledge acquired through this program guides decisions on the actions that will be taken to improve park health. The health of Canada's national parks is reported every five years to the public in the *State of the Parks Report*.

### **MONITORING ENDANGERED SPECIES AT KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK AND NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA**

Kejimikujik National Park of Canada and the surrounding Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve are home to many rare species, 14 of which are listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). These include: Blanding's turtle, water-pennywort, piping plover, eastern ribbon-snake, and 11 species of Atlantic Coastal Plain flora.



Duncan Smith, Parks Canada

An innovative stewardship program at the park is helping to bring species at risk back from the brink of extinction. This program involves volunteers of all ages, who work side-by-side with researchers to monitor rare reptiles, constraints, and sensitivity to human activities. These volunteers come from various backgrounds and include Kejimikujik's repeat visitors (some of whom span at least three generations), members of local communities in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, and local First Nations and off-reserve Mi'kmaq.

Nellie Neish initially became involved in the volunteer program to enable her home-schooled son James to gain hands-on experience in Kejimikujik. *"My primary motivation was my son, but in the end I loved it as much as he did. It isn't until you start meeting the Parks staff and research students that you become much more aware of how fragile our environment is and that they need help to get all this data."*

A conservation culture is becoming evident in the lives of the volunteers, many of whom have become so dedicated that they put in time on evenings, weekends and during their annual vacations. Some bring years of knowledge and expertise to the program. One volunteer, a retired owner of a computer software company, has designed cutting-edge software and hardware for a GPS transmitter that is currently being tested on Blanding's turtles. This technological accomplishment will aid in understanding the habitat that is critical for the Blanding's turtle.

The hard work is paying off. An important discovery was made this past summer: while surveying waters in the Tobeatic Wilderness Area adjacent to Kejimikujik, a husband and wife volunteer team discovered a new and extremely rare population of Blanding's turtles (approximately 300). This new-to-science information will further contribute to the understanding of habitats.



## Active Management and Restoration



Alex Taylor, Parks Canada

Across Canada, national park staff, Aboriginal communities, community volunteers, local organizations, academics and other stakeholders and partners actively participate in a variety of activities aimed at improving the health of our national parks. Some of these activities — which include trail restoration, species at risk recovery, control of invasive plants, and restoring fire to the landscape — provide hands-on learning and engagement opportunities for park visitors and foster memorable connections to these special places.

### **LAKE LOUISE AREA STRATEGY: MEETING THE NEEDS OF BEARS AND HUMANS**

A multi-year integrated strategy that includes a trail and habitat restoration initiative designed to sustain grizzly bear populations while maintaining a positive visitor experience is under way and on schedule in the Lake Louise area. This initiative aims to reduce bear mortality and habituation to humans as well as provide enhanced visitor experiences and learning opportunities.



Through this initiative, trails have been redesigned to meet the needs of both bears and hikers. Some trails have been closed and others re-routed to avoid key feeding areas and allow bears good escape terrain. As a result, bear movement and habitat have been less disrupted and visitor opportunities are improved. The restoration program, along with efforts to relieve parking congestion, ease crowded trails and develop unique educational opportunities, has resulted in an enhanced experience for visitors to the Lake Louise area.



T. Grant

### **REDSTREAK RESTORATION PROJECT AT KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA**

The southwest corner of Kootenay National Park of Canada includes the Columbia Valley — a dry, low-elevation valley that supports rich biodiversity and critical wildlife habitat. Providing important winter range for wildlife such as the bighorn sheep, this area also contains the only example of dry Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and wheatgrass vegetation in Canada's national park system. Without the benefit of periodic, low-intensity surface fires, the valley has been transformed from a healthy mixture of young, middle-aged and old forests, shrublands, open meadows and dry grassy slopes to an even-aged blanket of mature forest that is encroaching on and dominating the original mosaic of species and habitats.

Through the Redstreak Restoration Project, Parks Canada has begun to restore the bighorn sheep winter range and associated open forest and grassland ecosystem as well as reduce the risk of catastrophic fire occurring next to Redstreak Campground and the community of Radium Hot Springs. The landscape has been transformed by restoring hundreds of hectares through the mechanical harvesting of trees followed by carefully planned and managed burns.

Since the area near Redstreak has been cleared, information obtained from radio-collared bighorn sheep has shown that the sheep are using the area in the spring during the transition from the lower, winter-grazing terrain to the higher alpine ranges.



C. Siddal, 2005

The park is committed to providing outreach and education opportunities through the Bighorn in Our Backyard education and awareness program, Head Banger Tours (tour participants can observe rutting rams), and newly created interpretive trails. In addition, the project has reached national and international audiences via the Canadian Geographic Kids TV episode and as a feature project on the United Nations Environmental Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre website.



Barrett & MacKay

#### **A CENTURY'S ABSENCE: REINTRODUCING THE PLAINS BISON TO GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA**

Grassland ecosystems of the world are renowned for their intense beauty and striking diversity, and those of Grasslands National Park of Canada are no exception. Prairie grasslands are among the most threatened ecosystems in Canada, and Grasslands National Park is the only national park in the country that presents and protects the Prairie Grasslands Natural Region. The patterns and processes that have attracted people to the prairies for millennia have been compromised by a century of agriculture and have been altered beyond what First Nations Peoples and early European settlers would have known.

In an effort to restore the critical components of the park to their historical ecological state, Parks Canada is re-introducing the essential element of large herbivore grazing—the bison. Grazing by bison removes vegetation cover, allowing

light and water to reach plants that otherwise would not be able to compete with taller grasses and dead material. Grazing also rapidly recycles nutrients and distributes seeds across the landscape, allowing plants to repopulate.

In December 2005, 71 bison were transported to Grasslands National Park from Elk Island National Park in Alberta and were wintered in a 40-acre holding facility. In May 2006, in an effort to restore ecological integrity and as part of the Prairie Persists project, the bison were successfully released into the largest parcel of Grasslands National Park's West Block, approximately 44,800 acres.

Through this project a host of educational programs for local youth are offered by the Prairie Learning Centre (an innovative educational partnership between Chinook School Division and Grasslands NP). As well, this project has led to a series of monitoring and research partnerships that will result in restoring grazing to the mixed-grass prairie ecosystem, enhance the long-term integrity of the park, and give Canadians the opportunity to see this powerful symbol of the prairies and our history.

## **BREATHING LIFE BACK INTO LA MAURICIE NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA'S AQUATIC SYSTEM**

Before the establishment of La Mauricie National Park of Canada, that region of Quebec was heavily impacted by human use. The state of the lakes and rivers had been altered due to logging and the movement of logs to mills to the south. Dams were built to artificially raise and maintain water levels, and many of the region's lakes were stocked with non-native species of fish in order to cater to the sport fishing industry. The result of alterations such as these is that when water does not flow, it loses its oxygen and becomes more acidic and cloudy due to decaying accumulated debris at the bottom.

A restoration project launched by Parks Canada has included the removal of over 3,000 logs, man-made structures and drowned trees to restore natural water levels, shoreline habitat and water flow and thereby improve the overall health of the park's freshwater ecosystem. Species that were native to the area such as Arctic Char and Brook Trout were re-introduced to several lakes.



Parks Canada, Mathew Greer



Parks Canada, Michel Plante

Interestingly, local artists and historians have since made use of the logs. Through dendrochronology, or the study of tree rings, historians have gained insight into the chronology of natural events such as fire and weather patterns. Park staff have also recycled some of the logs, using them for minor maintenance and repairs.

Efforts have been under way since the project's inception to inform and engage Canadians in this project, with a particular focus on youth and local Aboriginal residents. The park has also worked to reach out to fishermen who regularly use the park. Efforts to measure visitor experience with these restoration efforts will be conducted as part of the next phase of the project.



## Parks Canada's Relationships With Aboriginal Peoples

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# Sharing the stories of our land, our waters, our past

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*Aboriginal voices are an integral part of the Parks Canada Agency, and our relationships with Aboriginal partners help guide us in our journey of learning to listen to the stories of our land, our waters and our past.*

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Building strong, effective and mutually beneficial working relationships with Aboriginal peoples is an ongoing goal for Parks Canada. The Agency considers them not as stakeholders but as privileged partners, and seeks to collaborate with Aboriginal peoples in all areas of its mandate.

Aboriginal peoples have played and continue to play a pivotal role in the expansion and conservation of the national park and national marine conservation area systems. A vast amount of the lands managed by the Parks Canada Agency were traditionally used by one or more Aboriginal groups. Indeed, 68% of PCA-managed lands were negotiated through land claims, a direct result of Aboriginal commitment to preservation and conservation.

A broad range of formal and informal arrangements are contributing to the goal of strengthening relationships with Aboriginal communities. Currently, out of 42 national parks and national park reserves, 24 have a formal written process for engagement based either on an agreement or a memorandum of understanding.

Aboriginal world views and traditional knowledge meaningfully inform the establishment and management of national parks and national park reserves, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Aboriginal voices are an integral part of the Parks Canada Agency, and traditional knowledge guides us in our journey of learning to listen to the stories of our land, our waters and our past. Ultimately, this helps us understand the human relationship to the natural environment and enhances our experiences in nature.

The following examples illustrate actions taken by Parks Canada toward building effective *Relationships with Aboriginal peoples*.

## Healing Broken Connections at Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada

*"For years, the park has been missing an important component with the absence of Aboriginal people. This new program is breaking down barriers and providing First Nation members with the opportunity to reconnect with their land and share in its development."*

Craig McKinnon,  
Project Manager, Healing Broken Connections



J.F. Bergeron/ENVIROFOTO, 2000

Parks Canada has partnered with Kluane First Nation and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in recognition of the significant contribution that Aboriginal traditional knowledge can make to the management of Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada, particularly to the maintenance of ecological integrity in the park.

The Healing Broken Connections initiative helps build mutually respectful relationships. In Kluane, this means building relationships with the two First Nations and helping them reintegrate traditional activities into Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada.

The site, located in southwestern Yukon, became the Kluane Game Sanctuary in 1943, at which time Aboriginal peoples' access to the area for gaming and hunting purposes was no longer allowed. The site was designated a national park and reserve in 1976.

Launched in 2004, the four-year Healing Broken Connections project has taken important steps in welcoming members of Kluane First Nation and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations back into the area. These include youth and Elder culture camps, historical presentations and traditional knowledge workshops for Aboriginal peoples and Parks Canada staff.

To increase awareness of the links between Aboriginal peoples and the park reserve, visitor experience products communicate the history and values of the land to new visitors through stories about the people, the land and the trails.

## Inuit Knowledge at Auyuittuq, Sirmilik and Ukkusiksalik National Parks of Canada



W. Lynch, 1996

Parks Canada has entered into a collaborative agreement with Inuit communities in order to better understand the ecosystem and climatic changes in the Arctic. Specifically, Parks Canada is documenting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit knowledge) about the environment and natural resources of three national parks in Nunavut—Auyuittuq National Park of Canada, Sirmilik National Park of Canada and Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada.

Inuit use of the land through the millennia has generated important knowledge of the ecosystems where these national parks have been established. The ancient Inuit understanding of the human relationship with the ecosystem, combined with other sources of knowledge, informs Parks Canada's decision-making process that impacts the health of these national parks.

Traditional knowledge aids Parks Canada in monitoring the parks, understanding ecosystem and climate change, guiding management and research, and gaining knowledge and understanding of long-term changes resulting from stressors.

The project describes the current baseline of ecological conditions in the Arctic and develops improved techniques to monitor ecosystem changes. This sharing of knowledge contributes to Parks Canada's ongoing work to maintain the ecological integrity of Canada's Arctic national parks on behalf of all Canadians.



## Employment Program: Enhancing Aboriginal Employment Opportunities

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*"The ALDP is an incredible program that has been the catalyst for a journey of self-discovery. My entire life has been enriched by this experience, and the leaders of this Agency must be congratulated for their vision. I wish that every single person could be lucky enough to participate in a program this amazing. ...Thank-you!"*

Todd Sikkes, participant

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*"This program is a refreshing eye-opener that allows the participant to take the time to learn and self reflect, to help them move forward feeling stronger, wiser and up to the challenges of being a leader. It is also a program filled with great adventure, breathtaking scenery and creates friendship. It also enables people from all levels within parks and from different backgrounds to come together and create the most incredible positive energy I have ever experienced!"*

Stacey Taylor, participant

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Reg Sylliboy, Parks Canada

The Aboriginal Leadership Development Program's (ALDP) fundamental goal is to develop the participants to ensure the long-term retention of Aboriginal leaders in the Parks Canada Agency.

This four-year program is designed to create a knowledgeable and skilled group of individuals at various levels within the organization. These individuals enhance and enrich Parks Canada's perspective by integrating Aboriginal cultures and world views within all facets of our operations.

The ALDP provides a unique development opportunity for participants to begin a leadership journey with a network of other Aboriginal employees from across the country. This Yukon-based national program embraces a holistic approach, respecting Aboriginal cultures and incorporating them into all aspects of training and development.

Participants are challenged mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. The program helps participants develop individualized career plans and the opportunity to build a lifelong peer group, and enables them to develop their leadership potential and explore career opportunities within the Parks Canada Agency.

## Presentation of Aboriginal Themes: Aboriginal Interpretation Innovation Fund



W. Lynch, 1997

Since 2000, Parks Canada has been investing in its capacity to develop and deliver high-quality, on-site interpretation activities focusing on Aboriginal partnerships and personal interpretation. Recent projects in Pukaskwa National Park of Canada and Prince Albert National Park of Canada, for example, have created meaningful partnerships with indigenous people in order to promote the relevance of traditional knowledge and Aboriginal world views in the management of parks and sites.

### **HISTORY OF THE WOODLAND CREE PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCE ALBERT NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA**

Parks Canada is helping to address an urgent need to conduct in-depth research on the Woodland Cree's presence in this area as there is a risk that their culture and traditions will be lost forever. With the passing of the Woodland Cree Elders, their life experiences and stories will inevitably be forgotten if they are not recorded for posterity.

Prince Albert National Park of Canada recognizes the important relationship that the Woodland Cree people have with this land and is taking steps to ensure that understanding and awareness of the Woodland Cree culture and traditions live on. In order to prepare a Woodland Cree heritage presentation and curriculum-linked social studies manual, an

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*"The Woodland Cree have to have a sense of ownership to the history of Prince Albert National Park. The curriculum lesson plans are the only forum I know of that will acknowledge that."*

Noland Henderson when asked his opinion of the PANP Aboriginal history curriculum project.

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individual from the Woodland Cree community has been contracted to conduct preliminary oral history research, supported by Parks Canada staff. The manual will be posted on the Teacher's Corner on the Parks Canada web site. Elders from the neighbouring community of Weyakwin are part of the steering committee. Oral histories and traditional knowledge gathered from Elders are being compiled and organized into a series of stories that will comprise the manual and social studies curriculum.



M. Finkelstein

**NOOGON GAYE WEESHGAT  
(LINKING PAST AND PRESENT):  
PUKASKWA NATIONAL PARK  
OF CANADA**

Based on a working relationship between Pukaskwa National Park of Canada and local Aboriginal communities, this project is designed to bridge the gap between generations. Aboriginal youth explore the park with Elders and learn about the park from the Elders' perspectives.

Elders share their wisdom with youth, specifically imparting what they feel are the important messages the park environment embodies. The outcomes of this generational alliance include the development of interpretive panels along the park's existing Halfway Lake trail (a traditional route used by the Anishinaabe) and a learning kit for park visitors. These media complement existing Aboriginal programming, which includes personal interpretation at the park's Anishinaabe camp.

## Commemoration of Aboriginal History



Reg Sylliboy, Parks Canada, 2007

Parks Canada continues to strengthen its efforts to encourage proposals and nominations for the national designation of people, places and events important to Aboriginal history and heritage.

### **METEPENAGIAG HERITAGE PARK: “KEEPERS OF THE EASTERN DOOR”**

Celebrating a rich Mi'kmaq cultural presence spanning more than 3,000 years, Metepenagiag Heritage Park opened its doors to visitors on August 22nd, 2007. This world-class cultural tourism facility is the result of a partnership between the Province of New Brunswick, the Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq First Nation and the Government of Canada, including Parks Canada.

Located in the Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq First Nation community, Metepenagiag Heritage Park protects and presents the national significance of Augustine Mound and Oxbow National Historic Sites of Canada, two of the most significant Aboriginal heritage archaeological sites in eastern Canada.

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*“This park is a vehicle for the stories, the legacy and the heritage of the land and its people to live on. With the help of our Elders and other community members, this site will be a source of education and awareness for many generations to come.”*

Pam Ward  
Executive Director, Metepenagiag Heritage Park

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*“The most difficult journey you will make is from here (the intellect) to here (the heart). You cannot make a decision by only using your intellect, you must also use your heart.”*

Arleen Closter  
Senior Learning Specialist  
Aboriginal Program  
Canada School of Public Service

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Visitors to this new heritage park have the opportunity to discover the magic of these historic sites through an interpretation centre that houses a multi-screen theme theatre and a variety of engaging, multimedia interactive exhibits, with content presented in Mi'kmaq, English and French. Oxbow National Historic Site of Canada can be observed from an exterior viewing deck and a number of walking trails run through the site, providing visitors with the opportunity to connect with the spirit and beauty of the Metepenagiag landscape.

Metepenagiag, also known as Red Bank, is the oldest continuously occupied village in New Brunswick, dating back over 3,000 years. Since 1975, over 100 archaeological sites have been uncovered in the area.



Reg Sylliboy, Parks Canada, 2007



David Rohatensky, Parks Canada

### **CARRY THE KETTLE FIRST NATION: A FIVE-YEAR JOURNEY OF COMMEMORATION**

*"Your historic plaque is not wrong; the part of the story it tells is correct. The problem is that it does not tell the whole story. It does not tell our story."*

The above statement was given to Fort Walsh National Historic Site of Canada staff in 2001 by Elders from Carry the Kettle First Nation in regard to the commemoration of the 1873 Cypress Hills Massacre in which many of their ancestors were slaughtered. Parks Canada has since partnered with the Nakoda First Nation in order to ensure a complete telling of this tragedy.

While the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) plaque accurately explained that this event was instrumental in the formation of the North West Mounted Police, it did not convey the devastating impact that this event had on the Nakoda people. One hundred and twenty-eight years later, Carry the Kettle was determined not only to update history, but to become actively involved in sharing the story with all Canadians.

Over the following five years, the Nakoda First Nation worked to re-establish its connection to the site. This included ceremonial feasts to feed the spirits of their fallen ancestors and prayer ceremonies to seek permission from them for Parks Canada staff to tell the massacre story. A key part of the reconnection was a cultural camp for 18 Nakoda youth, who spent a week engaged in traditional cultural activities under the direction of Band Elders.

In August 2006, the Minister responded to the application by Carry the Kettle First Nation and the Cypress Hills Massacre was designated a national historic site of Canada. This set in motion a new form of partnership aimed at working together to fulfill the wishes of the Elders, who gave direction in 2001 that:

*"The massacre story was indeed a sacred story for the Nakoda people: but it should never be a private story. The story must be shared with all Canadians, so that they know and learn from what happened at that site in 1873...."*



## Outreach Education

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# Reaching out to Canadians at home, at leisure, at school and in their communities

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*The face of Canada is changing; urbanization and diversification are reflected in today's population. For Parks Canada, this raises both challenges and opportunities with respect to relevance, reach, representation and the building of new relationships.*

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Parks Canada's outreach education activities are aimed at increasing understanding and appreciation of the value and significance of Canada's systems of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas and encouraging individual and collective actions that support the protection and presentation of their cultural and natural heritage.

Achieving this goal requires Parks Canada to ensure it is relevant to Canadian society. This society is changing rapidly as immigration and urbanization increase and the values Canadians hold are adapted to the new reality. These population trends underline the importance of reaching out to urban audiences across Canada.

To reach out to urban and young audiences, Parks Canada is providing learning opportunities to Canadians at home, at leisure, at school and in their communities. Through outreach education initiatives grounded in these contexts, Parks Canada can help support a connection to place, fundamental to the fulfillment of the Agency's overall mandate. Parks Canada is thus expanding its reach through carefully targeted outreach education initiatives such as audience-focused features on the Parks Canada Web site; integration of Parks Canada activities into urban venues

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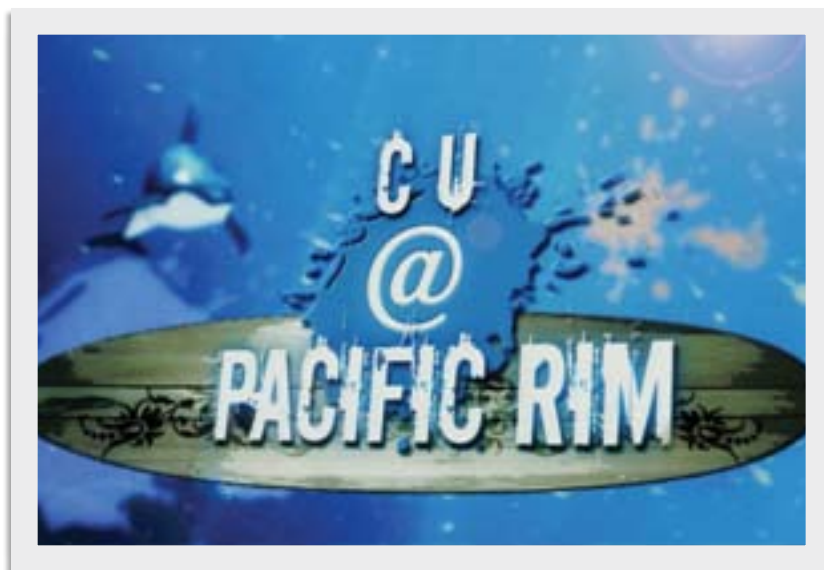
and events; engagement of local communities in citizen science; introduction of content into provincial and territorial school curricula; use of mass media such as television and magazines; and the exploration of new social media and connectivity technology.

Outreach education initiatives are at their most effective and relevant when they are carried out in collaboration with community stakeholders and partners. Reaching out to new audiences requires collaboration with organizations and individuals who can help open doors and enhance mutual understanding between Parks Canada and its publics. In addition, with many government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in natural and cultural heritage, Parks Canada has opportunities to establish strategic partnerships to achieve outcomes of common interest and to build a network of multipliers to optimize its reach.

The following examples illustrate ***Outreach Education in action.***



## Reaching Canadians at Home: Using Technology to Connect with Canadians



Parks Canada, 2006

Combining digital communications and interpretation, Parks Canada successfully piloted an innovative initiative called *The Parks Canada Connectivity Project* to connect Canadians with their natural and cultural heritage. This concept enables urban Canadian audiences to interact in real-time with expert specialists and conservation partners in remote heritage locations across Canada.

The first connectivity event took place in September 2006 at the Parks Canada Discovery Centre in Hamilton, Ontario, and at the Ontario Science Centre in central Toronto. The pilot showcased Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Two marine biologists and one park warden presented the park's beautiful but fragile ecosystems, and the research and monitoring they do to understand and protect them. The audience for the event was recruited from target groups including families with children, youth and teachers.

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*"The possibility to speak to the scientists makes it very interesting for the children."*

Parent who participated in pilot

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*"We need to start realizing what we are doing to the world around us and take action to make it better."*

Youth participant, age range 14-17

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*"Wonderful to get away from the books and I would like to have this for school. The kids I am teaching do not have the financial means to go over there, so this is great to show them what is out there."*

Teacher who participated in pilot

At the onset of the program, a high-definition video experience brought the park to life for the audience. Connecting to participants in real-time, the three experts were then interviewed and discussed their research via videoconference. The event's host encouraged audience questions and participation and engaged and entertained participants using props, humour and games. Interspersed throughout the videoconference were additional high-definition video footage, multimedia animations and maps of the park's marine ecosystems.



Andrew Manske, Parks Canada, 2006

Feedback from the audience was encouraging. Adults and children appreciated the entertaining and educational interactive approach. Parents were impressed with the program's ability to stimulate their children's imaginations while facilitating learning in unconventional and fun ways. Interestingly, the children's drawings after experiencing the program showed surprising detail and integration of concepts mentioned in the program that were not explicitly shown to them. From an education perspective, teachers saw the vast potential for opportunities in the classroom and field trips.



Parks Canada, 2006

While visiting a park or site in person provides unique opportunities for a memorable experience, virtual engagement is an extremely promising tool for building strong connections between our increasingly urban lives and the nation's diverse and very dispersed heritage locations.

## Reaching Canadians in their Lives: The BC Ferries Coastal Naturalists Program



Dale Mumford, Parks Canada

BC Ferries and Parks Canada collaborated on a successful onboard “coastal naturalists” program offered during more than 1,300 sailings between Tsawwassen and Swartz Bay, and between Horseshoe Bay and Departure Bay. The program, first introduced in 2006, ran from June 28 through September 9, 2007, and provided memorable experiences that both educated and inspired passengers as they traveled through the southern Strait of Georgia and Gulf Islands region. This innovative initiative is an example of how Parks Canada can integrate its activities into existing popular venues.

Using the outstanding local scenery, their own creative talents and a variety of props, nine coastal naturalists hosted thirty-minute educational presentations on the outer decks of the ferry vessels. Passengers had the opportunity to learn about the natural environment of the Gulf Islands, the whales and other marine life not always visible from the surface of the water, and the history of navigation, lighthouses and settlement in the islands.

Between 30 and 150 passengers participated in each presentation and an additional 20 to 60 engaged with the naturalists in one-to-one dialogue during each crossing. All told, over 130,000 passengers took part in these presentations.

## Reaching Urban Canadians: Living Cities, Engaging Toronto



Tamara Tarasoff, Parks Canada, 2007

Between April 27 and April 29, 2007, over 2,700 visitors explored the Parks Canada exhibit at Toronto's Green Living Show, a consumer show dedicated to sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyles. The message of our exhibit – Preserving your heritage: a part of sustainable communities – brought a heritage element and a different twist to the show's "green" theme. It also drew attention to the wealth of natural and cultural treasures in and around Toronto and furthered Parks Canada's objective of promoting public understanding and appreciation by reaching people in their own community.

The 600-square-foot exhibit was designed to engage audiences through a variety of media and personal interactions. Eye-catching banners and photos, a new high-definition production featuring national historic sites in the Greater Toronto Area, an Urban Detective game, and a dynamic activity on favourite heritage places ensured that there were a variety of ways in which participants could enjoy themselves while discovering and exploring their heritage. Interpreters and presenters from various Parks Canada locations also added a personal touch and expertise, which was greatly valued by visitors.

By participating in exciting venues and events in urban communities, Parks Canada can reach an increasing number of Canadians and enhance their sense of connection to their natural and cultural heritage.

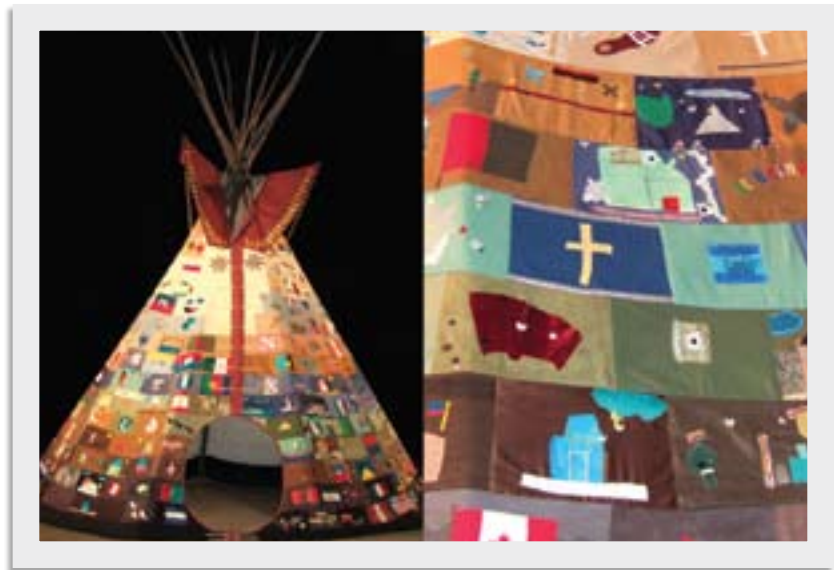
## Reaching Youth: Canadian Geographic Kids



Many urban youth will not visit a park or national historic site in person. Reaching this important market segment via the medium of television has therefore been a priority for the Agency. The year 2006-07 saw the production and airing of season six of CG (Canadian Geographic) Kids. CG Kids is a television series for children ages 8 to 12. Program hosts, Sid and Cat, travel across the country to discover Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Season six provided excellent profile for Parks Canada, with 11 of the 13 episodes featuring national parks, national historic sites and Parks Canada staff and partners. The programs began airing on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in January 2007, and continue to be aired on APTN and Discovery Kids. CG Kids is another great example of what can happen through collaboration and partnerships.

## Reaching Youth: Nomads and Adventurers



Esther Parent, Parks Canada

In 2007, staff at the Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site of Canada undertook a four-month project involving over 300 students in Montréal. In partnership with the McCord Museum, the Tohu Circus and the Quebec Ministry of Education, students discovered the nomadic ways of life of various First Nations, the explorations of fur trade-era Voyageurs and the moves of the “saltimbanques” (street entertainers) of traveling circuses. As the majority of the participants were first- or second-generation Canadians, a comparison was made with their own moves from different countries to Canada, and emphasis was placed on the cultural exchanges that took place then and today.

The result was a public show in June 2007 during which students presented their families’ travels via tales they had created with Fur Trade at Lachine interpreters. An impressive teepee was also presented: the covering was made with students’ drawings, which illustrated their countries of birth, their families’ moves across different countries, and their eventual arrival in Canada.

The children also came into closer contact with Cree culture when a Manitoba Cree dancer showed them a Pow-wow gathering dance. The teepee will be presented in the various participating schools as well as a number of public areas throughout Montréal.



## Facilitating Visitor Experience

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# Connecting with Canadians through meaningful visitor experiences

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*Canadians and international visitors currently make more than 22 million annual visits to Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.*

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With increased urbanization, an aging population, growing immigration and other social change, the lifestyles and values of Canadians are changing, as are their attitudes towards travel and leisure. By facilitating opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences in Canada's national heritage places, Parks Canada is facing the challenge of remaining relevant to and representative of Canadians.

Visitor experience is the cumulative result of the services, programs and infrastructure offered by Parks Canada and its partners that respond to visitor needs and expectations. These include the provision of pre-visit and on-site trip planning information, reception and orientation, interpretation programming, campgrounds, hiking trails, opportunities for recreational activities, visitor safety, the ongoing post-visit relationship, and much more.

Parks Canada's renewed focus on the visitor experience starts with the visitor. Agency decision-making is based on solid knowledge of visitor needs and expectations. The Agency has increased its social science research capacity in an attempt to better understand both current and potential visitors. This information is used to make decisions that better reflect the changing Canadian society and create more opportunities for experiences that are relevant to Canadians.

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Parks Canada is positioning itself to make a difference in the lives of Canadians who visit our national heritage places. This personal connection gained through enjoyable visitor experiences will ensure that national parks, national marine conservation areas and national historic sites are treasured by Canadians for generations to come.

The following examples illustrate *Facilitating Visitor Experience* in action.

## Explorer Quotient: Personalizing Visitor Experiences



Chris Reardon, 2006

Parks Canada is refining its current product and service offer to become more relevant and responsive to visitors. One example of this is through its application of the Explorer Quotient (EQ).

The EQ tool is the key component of the Canadian Tourism Commission's Keep Exploring brand program aimed at making travellers the focus of communications and product and service offering initiatives. It is a shift away from the traditional "one size fits all" to the personalization of travel opportunities. Environics Research Group and the Canadian Tourism Commission have established a scientific methodology and a set of tools to identify and assess the social values and lifestyle characteristics of travellers.

Based on significant research to examine people's social values and beliefs in the context of travel, a process was constructed that segments travellers into nine possible explorer types, identifying needs, interests, expectations, desires and social makeup. The nine explorer types are: Authentic Experienter, Cultural History Buff, Cultural Explorer, Rejuvenator, No-Hassle Traveller, Gentle Explorer, Free Spirit, Personal History Explorer, and Virtual Traveller.

In 2007, four Parks Canada locations (Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site and Riding Mountain National Park) used the EQ tool to match visitor/explorer values with opportunities to explore and discover the national park and national historic sites.

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*"The Explorer Quotient was accurate in identifying our 'profile' as 'Authentic Experiencers', and we already enjoy many of the attractions that we were directed to. New ones were also brought to our attention, which we look forward to exploring. We think this will be a very useful tool."*

Visitor comment, Riding Mountain National Park,  
August 2007

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*"This was my dream since childhood come true!"*

Visitor comment on being allowed privileged access to the upper floors of the warehouse,  
Lower Fort Garry NHS, August 2007

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*"It made something we've done before much more enjoyable."*

Visitor comment,  
Lower Fort Garry NHS, August 2007

To identify explorer types, visitors completed a brief quiz of 25 questions. A personal “concierge” service was provided as a service enhancement designed to assist visitors in optimizing their visitor experience opportunity. The interactions between visitors and the concierge provided the visitor with an experience or exploration description and a menu of opportunities, advising on the best way to explore and discover the park or site. Parks Canada staff were well versed in the different needs and expectations of each EQ type and understood what visitors were seeking through their visit.

Visitors were very pleased with the program. Some noted that they were left with an experience unique to them while repeat visitors felt empowered to do things differently than in the past, and most thought of the special place they had visited differently than they had previously.

In 2008, Parks Canada is expanding the EQ program to additional locations.

The EQ tool will become an important foundation element in Parks Canada’s approach to facilitating opportunities for visitor experience.

*An example of an explorer type menu for the Fortress of Louisbourg NHS of Canada:*

**For the Cultural Explorer we suggest...**

## GETTING STARTED

### **The Fisherman’s House**

*Cod Fishing ~ Meet the fisherman, visit his home and hear about his adventures at sea.*

## MAIN SELECTIONS

### **Life in Louisbourg**

*Engineer’s Kitchen ~ Talk with the servants while they prepare food over an open hearth.*

*Engineer’s Gardens ~ Ask the gardener about French potager gardens and ornamental gardens.*

*Governor’s Apartments ~ Marvel at the opulent lifestyle of 18th-century French high officials.*

*Soldiers’ Barracks ~ Learn about the living conditions and the daily routine of soldiers in Louisbourg.*

### **Demonstrations and Crafts**

*Bakery ~ Watch the baker at work and find out how 18th-century bread was prepared.*

*Forge ~ Let yourself be mesmerized by the fire and the rhythmic hammering of the blacksmith’s tools.*

*De Gannes House ~ Learn about the family life of an officer and watch a lace-making demonstration.*

*Music ~ Take a break and mingle with locals at the tavern while listening to the musicians.*

### **Louisbourg Commercial Entrepot**

*De La Vallière’s Storehouse ~*

*Learn about the importance of trade in Isle Royale’s economy.*

*Gift shop ~ Indulge in the latest Louisbourg delicacy: historic chocolate.*

### **Other Possibilities**

*Historic Dining ~ Enjoy an 18th-century meal at the Grandchamps or at L’Epée Royale.*

*Rochefort Point ~ Feel the power of the natural elements and sense the spirit of Louisbourg Harbour.*

*Evening Events ~ Visit the Fortress under a starry sky and observe the lives of Louisbourg residents.*

## WHILE IN THE AREA

*Mi’kmaq Trail*

*Louisbourg Playhouse*

*Lobster/crab fishing*



Chris Reardon, 2006

## Making Personal Connections Through Interpretation



Michael Burzynski, 2001

Enriched personal programming is one of the most powerful ways to engage the hearts and minds of visitors, and is at the core of many meaningful visitor experiences. Parks Canada strives to develop and deliver, often in collaboration with partners, high-quality, professional and authentic learning opportunities.

### **GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK: ART AS CONNECTION**

Over the past decade, Parks Canada has worked closely with the arts community to connect visitors with the iconic Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland and Labrador. Through the visions and expressions of talented musicians, painters, writers and other artists, visitors are able to connect to the park in a uniquely artistic, visual and lyrical manner.

One of the projects, titled “Art in the Park,” is the result of a partnership between Parks Canada, The Rooms - Art Gallery Division and the Canada Council for the Arts. Launched in 1998, Art in the Park invites up to five Canadian or international visual artists to live in Gros Morne for three to six weeks during the May to October period. There, the artists can explore, photograph and sketch inside the park.

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*“Programs like this one add a whole new dimension to the visitor’s experience. Bringing art into the park has allowed both the artists and the public to connect to their natural environment.”*

Barb Daniell, artist who took part in the program

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Their works are later exhibited in the adjacent community of Woody Point. Artists also take part in a public interpretation program, sometimes in local schools, where they host workshops and speak about their work.



J. Gordon, 2004

**FORT LANGLEY NATIONAL  
HISTORIC SITE:  
VOYAGEUR CANOE ADVENTURE**

The Voyageur Canoe Adventure curriculum-based program includes a canoe adventure on a quiet channel of the Fraser River, where students learn about the voyageurs and the fur trade. In the land-based program, students explore Fort Langley National Historic Site and discover how a small Hudson's Bay Company fur-trading post played a significant role in the story of Canada.

Interpreters in colourful costumes tell stories of the diverse families of the fur trade and of the interactions between Aboriginal peoples and European explorers and settlers in Canada from 1815 to 1914.

The following testimonial is from a member of a group of student teachers from University College of the Fraser Valley. As part of their studies, the group took the Voyageur Adventure program to learn about new school programs:

*"As part of a bonding trip for future teachers, our module was excited to explore the Fraser River by canoe and visit Fort Langley National Historic Site. It was a fantastic experience.*

*In the Voyageur Adventure, we were able to paddle the mighty river, barrel race, sign a gold mining license and hope to strike it rich at Fort Langley. We 'talked shop' with the local blacksmith, tried on period costumes, and watched a cooper make a barrel before our very eyes.*

*We could see, smell and touch history! I know myself and my fellow teachers are eager to bring our students back to this unique and exciting place. It makes history fun, relevant and real for today's kids."*



## Geocaching: Using Technology as a Means to a Great Experience



J. Yee, 2001

Geocaching is an activity that combines hiking and treasure-hunting using a GPS (Global Positioning System), which is an electronic navigation system or a modern version of the compass. Geocaching is suited to anyone who enjoys combining nature and technology. The goal of the activity is to find caches.

Geocaching is welcomed in national historic sites, national parks, and national marine conservation areas and has been practised in many of these locations for a number of years. In 2007, Parks Canada developed new guidelines in collaboration with the geocaching community and a variety of key stakeholders. These guidelines encourage wide and meaningful participation in this activity in a manner that respects the three facets of Parks Canada's mandate in an integrated fashion: protecting natural and cultural resources, offering meaningful learning opportunities and facilitating memorable visitor experiences.

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A member of the Parks Canada team will meet with geocachers wishing to place a cache in a national heritage place in order to approve the cache location, the container and its contents. Staff will affix an official seal to approved caches. Caches hidden in national heritage places will be located in public areas and will be accessible from trails and/or roads. Instead of containing trade items, caches will contain messages that present a unique aspect of the site, park or marine conservation area in which they are located, encouraging geocachers to share their enthusiasm for national heritage places.

Geocaching allows Parks Canada to reach Canadians who might not think to visit otherwise. By providing geocachers the opportunity to use national heritage places, we are also giving them a chance to discover a piece of Canadian heritage.

## Planning for Great Visitor Experiences: The Visitor Experience Assessment



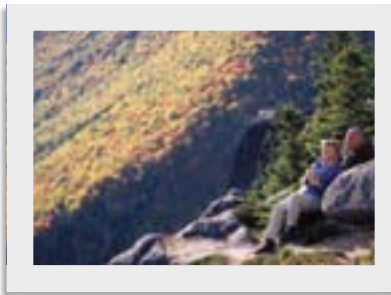
Dale Wilson, 2007

The Visitor Experience Assessment was launched in 2005 as an innovative tool for increasing staff understanding and involvement in realizing the visitor experience concept at the field level. Through an on-site workshop, staff are encouraged to bring the visitor perspective actively into mind during planning and decision-making. Results of the assessment are fed into State of Site/Park Reports produced as part of the management planning cycle. The Visitor Experience Assessment has increased a sense of client focus, promoted on-site teamwork, and generated a multi-year action plan to enhance opportunities for visitor experiences.

The Visitor Experience Assessment for each park, site or national marine conservation area is delivered through a workshop led by Parks Canada staff drawn from a national team of specialists. The facilitation team walks the assembled group of cross-functional site staff and key partners through an examination of their product offer “from the outside in”, as seen through the eyes of visitors.

Social science data on current visitors, complemented by an overview of social, leisure, and tourism trends influencing visitation both now and into the future, are considered in the discussions. Against this information backdrop, staff then assess the products and services the site offers in relation to each stage of the trip cycle, from pre-trip planning and way finding, to welcome/orientation, amenities, services, activities, interpretation and programs, and finally memorabilia. During the workshop, participants devise a practical action plan to address identified shortcomings. The workshop wraps up with a visioning exercise on ideal opportunities for visitor experiences at the site.

Forty-two Visitor Experience Assessments have been administered since 2005 at 13 national parks, 25 national historic sites, one national marine conservation area, one discovery centre, one townsite and one scenic parkway. These locations can have a favourable impact on the experiences of approximately six million visitors.



Dale Wilson, 2007

A year-end analysis of the assessments helps to identify recurring areas of strength and weakness, as well as areas for which tools may need to be developed by Parks Canada to assist field operations. The Visitor Experience Assessment will continue to be administered across the system in the order of about 30 per year.

## Contacting Parks Canada

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

#### Chief Executive Officer

##### Alan Latourelle

25 Eddy St., 7th floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
(819) 997-9525  
alan.latourelle@pc.gc.ca

#### Director General, National Parks

##### Doug Stewart

25 Eddy St., 4th floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
(819) 994-2657  
doug.stewart@pc.gc.ca

#### Director General, National Historic Sites

##### Larry Ostola

25 Eddy St., 5th floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
(819) 994-1808  
larry.ostola@pc.gc.ca

#### Director General, Western and Northern Canada

##### Bill Fisher

1550, 635 - 8th Avenue SW  
Calgary AB T2P 3M3  
(403) 292-6491  
bill.fisher@pc.gc.ca

#### Director General, Eastern Canada

##### Brendan McDonald

Historic Properties  
1869 Upper Water Street  
Halifax NS B3J 1S9  
(902) 426-4845  
brendan.mcdonald@pc.gc.ca

#### Director General, External Relations and Visitor Experience

##### Carol Sheedy

25 Eddy St., 6th floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
(819) 997-5963  
carol.sheedy@pc.gc.ca

#### Executive Director, Ecological Integrity Branch

##### Mike Wong

25 Eddy Street, 4th floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
(819) 994-2639  
mike.wong@pc.gc.ca

#### Executive Director, Quebec

##### Michel Boivin

3, Passage du Chien-d'or  
C.P. 6060, Haute-Ville  
Québec QC G1R 4V7  
(418) 648-4042  
michel.boivin@pc.gc.ca

#### Executive Director, Northern Canada

##### Kathryn Emmett

1550, 635 - 8th Avenue SW  
Calgary AB T2P 3M3  
(403) 292-8867  
kathryn.emmett@pc.gc.ca

#### Executive Director, Mountain Parks

##### Ron Hallman

P.O. Box 900  
Banff AB T0L 0C0  
(403) 762-1531  
ron.hallman@pc.gc.ca

### EASTERN CANADA FIELD UNIT SUPERINTENDENTS

#### Newfoundland East

##### Bill Brake

Terra Nova National Park  
Glovertown NL A0G 2L0  
(709) 533-3121  
bill.brake@pc.gc.ca

#### Newfoundland West and Labrador

##### Jeff Anderson

Gros Morne National Park  
P.O. Box 130  
Rocky Harbour NL A0K 4N0  
(709) 458-3539  
jeff.anderson@pc.gc.ca

#### Cape Breton

##### Chip Bird

Fortress of Louisbourg  
National Historic Site  
259 Park Service Road  
Louisbourg NS B1C 2L2  
(902) 733-3500  
chip.bird@pc.gc.ca

#### Mainland Nova Scotia

##### Linda Frank

Halifax Citadel National Historic Site  
P.O. Box 9080, Station A  
Halifax NS B3K 5M7  
(902) 426-4944  
linda.frank@pc.gc.ca

#### Southern New Brunswick

##### Pam Veinotte

Fundy National Park  
P.O. Box 1001  
Alma NB E4H 1B4  
(506) 887-6313  
pam.veinotte@pc.gc.ca

#### Northern New Brunswick

##### Robert Sheldon

Kouchibouguac National Park  
186, Route 117  
Kouchibouguac NB E4X 2P1  
(506) 876-2445  
robert.sheldon@pc.gc.ca

#### Prince Edward Island

##### Jewel Cunningham

Ardgowan National Historic Site  
2 Palmers Lane  
Charlottetown PE C1A 5V6  
(902) 566-7585  
jewel.cunningham@pc.gc.ca

#### Mingan

##### Cristina Martinez

1340, rue de la Digue  
Havre Saint-Pierre QC G0G 1P0  
(418) 538-3331 ext. 232  
cristina.martinez@pc.gc.ca

#### Saguenay–Saint Laurent

##### Nicole Ouellet (Acting)

182, rue de l'Église  
C.P. 220  
Tadoussac QC G0T 2A0  
(418) 235-4703 ext. 259  
nicole.ouellet@pc.gc.ca

#### Gaspésie

##### Stéphane Marchand

Forillon National Park  
122, boulevard Gaspé  
Gaspé QC G4X 1A9  
(418) 368-5505  
stephane.marchand@pc.gc.ca

#### Québec

##### Hugues Michaud

2, rue d'Auteuil  
C. P. 10, Station A  
Québec QC G1K 7A1  
(418) 648-4168  
hugues.michaud@pc.gc.ca

## **Mauricie**

### **Thierry Bouin**

La Mauricie National Park  
702, 5e Rue  
C.P. 160, Succ. Bureau-chef  
Shawinigan QC G9N 6T9  
(819) 536-2638  
thierry.bouin@pc.gc.ca

## **Western Quebec**

### **Carole Loiselle**

1899, boulevard De Périgny  
Chambly QC J3L 4C3  
(450) 447-4803  
carole.loiselle@pc.gc.ca

## **Eastern Ontario**

### **Gavin Liddy**

Rideau Canal National Historic Site  
34A Beckwith Street South  
Smiths Falls ON K7A 2A8  
(613) 283-7199 Ext. 235  
gavin.liddy@pc.gc.ca

## **Central Ontario**

### **Peter Frood**

Trent-Severn Waterway National  
Historic Site  
P.O. Box 567, 2155 Ashburnham Drive  
Peterborough ON K9J 6Z6  
(705) 750-4919  
peter.frood@pc.gc.ca

## **Southwest Ontario**

### **Field Unit Superintendent**

15 Duke Street E.  
Kitchener ON N2H 1A2  
(519) 571-5721

## **Northern Ontario**

### **Field Unit Superintendent**

Parks Canada  
214 Red River Rd., Suite 301  
Thunder Bay ON P7B 1A6  
(807) 346-2908

## **WESTERN AND NORTHERN CANADA FIELD UNIT SUPERINTENDENTS**

### **Banff National Park**

#### **Kevin Van Tighem**

Banff National Park  
P.O. Box 900  
Banff AB T0L 0C0  
(403) 762-1533  
kevin.vantighem@pc.gc.ca

### **Kootenay/Yoho/Lake Louise National Parks**

#### **Field Unit Superintendent**

Kootenay/Yoho/National Parks  
and Lake Louise  
P.O. Box 213  
Lake Louise AB T0L 1E0  
(403) 522-1276

### **Jasper National Park**

#### **Greg Fenton**

Jasper National Park  
P.O. Box 10  
Jasper AB T0E 1E0  
(780) 852-6172  
greg.fenton@pc.gc.ca

### **Mount Revelstoke/Glacier National Parks**

#### **Pam Doyle**

Mt. Revelstoke/Glacier National Parks  
P.O. Box 350  
Revelstoke BC V0E 2S0  
(250) 837-7510  
pam.doyle@pc.gc.ca

### **Waterton Lakes National Park**

#### **Rod Blair**

Waterton Lakes National Park  
Waterton Park AB T0K 2M0  
(403) 859-5116  
rod.blair@pc.gc.ca

## **Riding Mountain National Park**

### **Field Unit Superintendent**

Riding Mountain National Park  
Wasagaming MB R0J 2H0  
(204) 848-7222

## **Manitoba**

### **Dawn Bronson**

401-25 Fork Market Road  
Winnipeg MB R3C 4S8  
(204) 984-1111  
dawn.bronson@pc.gc.ca

## **Northern Prairies**

### **Alan Fehr**

Prince Albert National Park  
P.O. Box 100  
Waskesiu SK S0J 2Y0  
(306) 663-4563  
alan.fehr@pc.gc.ca

## **Saskatchewan South**

### **Cheryl Penny**

P.O. Box 150  
Val Marie SK S0N 2T0  
(306) 298-2257  
cheryl.penney@pc.gc.ca

## **Southwest Northwest Territories**

### **Ed Coulthard**

Wood Buffalo National Park  
P.O. Box 750  
Ft Smith NT X0E 0P0  
(867) 872-7943  
ed.coulthard@pc.gc.ca

## **Western Arctic (Northwest Territories)**

### **Field Unit Superintendent**

P.O. Box 1840  
Inuvik NT X0E 0T0  
(867) 777-8800

## **Nunavut Field Unit**

### **Nancy Anilniliak**

P.O. Box 278  
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0  
(867) 975-4683  
nancy.anilniliak@pc.gc.ca

## **Coastal BC Field Unit**

### **Steve Langdon**

2220 Harbour Road  
Sidney BC V8L 2P6  
(250) 654-4048  
steve.langdon@pc.gc.ca

## **Gwaii Haanas Field Unit**

### **Ernie Gladstone (Acting)**

P.O. Box 37  
Queen Charlotte City BC V0T 1S0  
(250) 559-6300  
ernie.gladstone@pc.gc.ca

## **Yukon Field Unit**

### **Anne Morin**

205-300 Main Street  
Whitehorse YK Y1A 2B5  
(867) 667-3972  
anne.morin@pc.gc.ca





This document was produced by Parks Canada's Stakeholder and Partner Relations Branch. For questions regarding the document or to acquire additional copies, please contact:

**Director, Stakeholder and Partner Relations**

Parks Canada  
25 Eddy St, 6th Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M5

**Email:**

[experiences.editor@pc.gc.ca](mailto:experiences.editor@pc.gc.ca)

