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Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding

National Historic Sites of Canada

**Management
Statement**

2023



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Boishébert and
Beaubears Island
Shipbuilding
National Historic Sites of Canada

Management Statement

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BOISHÉBERT AND BEAUBEARS ISLAND SHIPBUILDING NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA MANAGEMENT
STATEMENT, 2023.

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Note to readers

The health and safety of visitors, employees and all Canadians are of the utmost importance. Parks Canada is following the advice and guidance of public health experts to limit the spread of COVID-19 while allowing Canadians to experience Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Parks Canada acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic may have unforeseeable impacts on the *Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites of Canada Management Statement*.

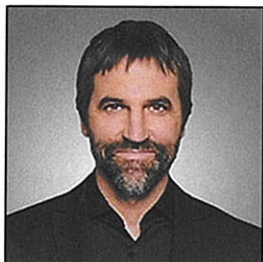
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Foreword



From coast to coast to coast, national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas are a source of shared pride for Canadians. They reflect Canada's natural and cultural heritage and tell stories of who we are, including the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples.

These cherished places are a priority for the Government of Canada. We are committed to protecting natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

At the same time, we continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities to ensure that more Canadians can experience these iconic destinations and learn about history, culture and the environment.

In collaboration with Indigenous communities and key partners, Parks Canada conserves and protects national historic sites and national parks; enables people to discover and connect with history and nature; and helps sustain the economic value of these places for local and regional communities.

This new management statement for Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites of Canada supports this vision.

Management statements are developed by a dedicated team at Parks Canada through extensive consultation and input from Indigenous partners, other partners and stakeholders, local communities, as well as visitors past and present. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of cooperation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the *Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites of Canada Management Statement*.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven Guilbeault', written in a cursive style.

Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada

Recommendations

Recommended by:



Ron Hallman
*President & Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada*



Andrew Campbell
*Senior Vice-President
Operations Directorate*



Géraldine Arsenault
*Superintendent
Northern New Brunswick Field Unit*

Parks Canada administers one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Parks Canada is committed to a system of national heritage places that recognizes and honours the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples to society, their scientific knowledge, histories and cultures, as well as the special relationships Indigenous peoples have with ancestral lands, ice and waters. Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites of Canada are situated on the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Mi'gmaq People and are subject to the Peace and Friendship treaties co-developed and signed with the British Crown in the 18th century. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands, waters or resources but in fact recognized Mi'gmaq, Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), and Peskotomuhkatiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Background

Since time immemorial, the Miramichi region has been home to the Mi'gmaq, whose way of life is based upon the rich resources of the river and adjacent woodlands. Beaubears Island covers an area of 72 hectares and sits at the confluence of the southwest and northwest branches of the Miramichi River in New Brunswick, immediately downstream from what is today known as Wilsons Point and has served as a gathering place for Indigenous peoples of the Miramichi watershed for at least the past two millennia. The island consists largely of old-growth forest ecosystems.

European fishermen began visiting the Gulf of St. Lawrence beginning in the 16th century. In the 17th century, the Miramichi area was at the centre of the large trade concession granted to Nicolas Denys of western France. His son, Richard Denys de Fronsac, married a Mi'gmaq woman from the nearby community of Esgenooptitj¹, Anne Parabego (Paratarabego), and was granted a seigniorship in the region in approximately 1680 as his father's successor. He built a post and mission at Sainte Croix on the Miramichi River and established a settlement.

In the summer of 1756, during the deportations that began in 1755, and in the backdrop of the Seven Years' War, the Miramichi River junction became a site of refuge for many fleeing Acadians and their First Nation allies who followed the leadership of French officer Charles Deschamps de Boishébert after the Deportation. Those who landed here suffered greatly, with many dying of famine or disease, as the French were not able to consistently provision the site that became known as Camp d'Espérance. This influx of refugees had a profound effect on the Mi'gmaq already living in the region, whose resources were depleted trying to support the refugees. The refugees began moving north toward Ristigouche or Quebec after the winter of 1757 at which point Boishébert abandoned the post, but a small Acadian population continued in the region. After 1760, the remaining French and Acadians, as well as the Mi'gmaq Chief of Miramichi, surrendered at Fort Cumberland and were imprisoned until the end of the war.

The location of Beaubears Island made it suitable for the shipbuilding industry that developed on the river in the 19th century. James Fraser and James Thom established the first shipyard there in 1790. Joseph Russell, a shipyard owner in Chatham, purchased the yard in 1838. In 1849, he sold the yard to John Harley and George Burchill, marking the beginning of what was regarded as the golden age of Miramichi shipbuilding. Harley continued to operate the yard after Burchill's departure in 1856. In 1866, Harley launched the barque *La Plata*, believed to be the last vessel constructed at Beaubears. The island, deserted for a time, was acquired by the O'Brien family in 1920 and willed to the Government of Canada in 1973, following the death of J. Leonard O'Brien, former lieutenant governor of New Brunswick. A memorial plaque in his name can be found on the island.

Boishébert first obtained designation as a national historic site in 1930. The reason of designation was later revised in 2000 to more clearly commemorate the experience of the Acadians who sought refuge following the deportations that began in 1755. The designation includes both Beaubears Island and

¹ From oral Mi'gmaq history

Wilsons Point. While the former is land owned and administered by Parks Canada, the latter is located on provincially owned land within the larger Enclosure Park. Wilsons Point has its own designation as a Provincial Historic Place.

Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Site was designated in 2002 for its association with the 19th century shipbuilding industry of the Maritimes.

This management statement outlines Parks Canada's management approach and objectives for Boishébert National Historic Site as well as Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Site and it replaces the 2011 management plan. Parks Canada's management statements differ from management plans in that they guide management decisions and actions at heritage places with limited management complexity, which are either owned by Parks Canada but are non-operational or operated by a third party, or that have a minimal service offer. In this case, programming and tours of the site is the responsibility of Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated through a contractual agreement with Parks Canada.

Management Approach

Parks Canada's intent is to continue along the management path established in the 2011 *Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites Management Plan* to ensure the sites will remain protected and accessible to Canadians.

As Parks Canada's primary partner on site, the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated provide visitor experiences, communicate key messages to visitors, ensure visitor safety and compliance, janitorial services as well as fire prevention on the island on behalf of Parks Canada through a contractual service agreement. Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated also offers a ferry service from June to September each year ensuring safe visitor access to the island. Furthermore, Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated operates an interpretive centre, located on the mainland, and owned by the City of Miramichi. The interpretive centre serves as the starting point for a wide range of programs and events offered by Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated throughout the summer season.

Parks Canada, Mi'gmaq representatives, Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated, and Acadian representatives will work together to offer more diverse and inclusive stories through interpretive programming, maintaining adequate protection of the sites, and increased awareness and appreciation of the sites' role in history.

Parks Canada's priorities also include maintaining a strong relationship with Indigenous peoples of New Brunswick, by working with Mi'gmawé'l Tplu'taqnn Incorporated, an organization representing the province's Mi'gmaq communities, as well as Kopit Lodge, which represents Elsipogtog First Nation. These relationships help ensure that Mi'gmaq knowledge and values are respectfully interwoven into the conservation and the interpretation of the sites.

Management Objectives

The following section outlines the strategic direction for the management of Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites over the next ten years. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue with stakeholders and rights holders in New Brunswick, particularly the Mi'gmaq, on the implementation of this management statement to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful.

Parks Canada will meet annually with Mi'gmaq rights holders in New Brunswick, the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated, and Acadian representatives to seek input on work plans that will achieve the objectives of this management statement.

1. Building Relationships with Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick

Parks Canada respects Indigenous rights, and building mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous communities is a priority.

Parks Canada works with Mi'gmaq representatives to respectfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge, values, and cultural heritage into site management, and to engage visitors to learn about and connect with Indigenous histories, experiences, and perspectives. Parks Canada will facilitate these connections through actions such as coordinating meetings and product development sessions between Mi'gmaq partner organizations and the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in programming and visitor experiences on the island. Parks Canada will facilitate networking between neighbouring Metepenagiag Heritage Park and the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated to cross promote and partner on Indigenous-related initiatives and programming. Parks Canada recognizes the need for an Indigenous knowledge study to help all parties better understand the role of the Mi'gmaq in the long history of these important heritage sites. Parks Canada will pursue and improve its relationships with Mi'gmaq partners in a spirit of respect, collaboration, and reconciliation, and will ensure that current or future agreements concluded with the Mi'gmaq in New Brunswick, or other Wabanaki nations in New Brunswick, are implemented in a timely manner, and encourage a transition toward a greater role in decision-making.

2. Cultural and Natural Resource Management

Parks Canada's approach to conserving cultural resources and preserving the commemorative integrity of its protected heritage areas is in accordance with its *Cultural Resource Management Policy*² and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. This includes basic monitoring of the state of cultural resources, documentation of interventions at the national historic sites and training of Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated staff on cultural resource management protocols (i.e., when encountering artefacts). Respect for specific Mi'gmaq protocols in this area is equally important and these are to be properly communicated to both Parks Canada and Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated staff and volunteers.

Parks Canada will consolidate research and knowledge on the sites' history and archaeology, namely the location of graves of Acadian refugees at Camp d'Espérance, the sites' importance as part of the deportation story and other migration movements given their location at the confluence of two branches of the Miramichi River, and Beaubears Island's rich shipbuilding heritage. Parks Canada will work with the Province of New Brunswick to ensure the protection of cultural resources at Wilsons Point. Parks Canada will facilitate an Indigenous knowledge study to not only help all parties better understand the specific and important role of the Mi'gmaq in the long history of these important heritage sites, but also to help inform future programming and management planning.

Additionally, Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites are subject to several legislative, regulatory and policy instruments which govern the conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity. Notably, Parks Canada is legally responsible for protecting individuals of species listed under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*. It is committed to protecting these species and their critical habitat on all lands that it administers and will manage the sites accordingly. Parks Canada recognizes the importance of the sites' flora and fauna to Mi'gmaq, including but not limited to their medicinal and ceremonial uses, and will work with Mi'gmaq to integrate notions of two-eyed seeing into its resource conservation work, considering both western science and Indigenous knowledge.

Present and future climate change impacts on the island's natural and cultural resources will be taken into

² In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action number 79 and other drivers, Parks Canada is undertaking a review and renewal of its cultural heritage policies, including the *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

consideration. Parks Canada will continue to monitor, adapt to, and mitigate these impacts, such as coastal erosion, on the island’s natural features, prioritizing the use of nature-based solutions. In addition, Parks Canada will continue to enforce the fire ban on the island while working with rights holders and stakeholders as well as local and provincial authorities on the implementation of its Wildfire Response Operation Procedures. Parks Canada will continue to actively work toward the conservation of the sites’ various ecosystems, including old-growth forest communities, through control of invasive species and other available means. It will also continue to build on past efforts to survey and monitor the island’s flora and fauna, bolstered by the highly valuable contribution of local naturalists and citizen scientists. Parks Canada recognizes the natural heritage value of Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites, having identified them as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure³ in 2022, and will strive to manage them in ways that are compatible with the protection of both natural and cultural resources.

3. Partner, Stakeholder, and Rights Holder Relationships

Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites contribute to New Brunswick’s tourism industry and the local economy by attracting visitors to the greater Miramichi region. Parks Canada will continue to regularly engage and work with Mi’gmaq rights holders, the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated, the City of Miramichi, Acadian groups, and relevant provincial agencies and departments to strengthen the island’s position within the provincial tourism industry. Furthermore, Parks Canada is interested in exploring the toponymy of places under its administration, including Mi’gmaq and former Acadian names for some geographic locations that are now identified with an anglicized name, and integrating these into future interpretive programming and signage. Finally, Parks Canada is interested in furthering both Mi’gmaq and Acadian historical knowledge of the general area surrounding the historic sites.

4. Visitor Experience and Outreach

Parks Canada will continue to work with the Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated to maintain safe access to the island through the operation of a ferry boat service and to increase use of the island, in a sustainable way. The story of these historic sites highlights the special relationship between the Acadian and Mi’gmaq people through time. An accessible and inclusive family-oriented outdoor experience will be made possible through the provision of high-quality visitor experiences ensuring diverse perspectives are respectfully woven into the sites’ offer. The Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated will also pursue efforts to engage youth through targeted school programming and youth volunteer and employment opportunities. Similarly, Parks Canada will work with Friends of Beaubears Island Incorporated and Mi’gmaq to strengthen Indigenous programming and employment opportunities.

5. Site Maintenance

Parks Canada maintains the property to respect the sites’ heritage values in accordance with its *Cultural Resource Management Policy* and associated guidelines and best practices. The maintenance of the island’s infrastructure and the environmental monitoring are provided respectively by the Kouchibouguac National Park assets and resource conservation teams. These teams visit the sites regularly for various maintenance duties during the operational season, such as trail clearing, dock maintenance, fire prevention, control of invasive species, and regular inspection and upkeep of plaques and monuments (including those at Wilsons Point). Law enforcement officers provide services to the island by patrolling the site as needed.

³ Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure is defined by the *Convention on Biological Diversity* as “a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values.”

Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

The purpose of a strategic environmental assessment is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals, to support environmentally sound decision-making. In accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2010), a strategic environmental assessment was conducted on the *Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites of Canada Management Statement*.

The objectives in the management statement are expected to have positive effects on the level of cultural resource protection and commemorative integrity of Boishébert and Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Sites. The management statement will also help connect Canadians with nature, contributing to the implementation of the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*.

Potential negative environmental effects will be mitigated through adequate natural resource management, notably the implementation of wildfire response procedures and the active control of invasive species on the island. Operations at the sites are required to mitigate impacts on climate according to Greening Government requirements in support of the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*. There are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the management statement. Individual projects at the site will be evaluated separately under the *Impact Assessment Act* (2019), or successor legislation, as necessary.

Site Map

