



Cape Breton Highlands

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

2010



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**For more information about the management plan or about
Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada:**

Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada
Ingonish Beach, NS B0C 1L0

tel: 902-224-2306, fax: 902-285-2866
e-mail: information@pc.gc.ca
www.parkscanada.gc.ca/

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Foreword



Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas offer Canadians from coast to coast to coast unique opportunities to experience and understand our wonderful country. They are places of learning, recreation and inspiration where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of these places offers Canadians and visitors several experiential opportunities to enjoy Canada's historic and natural heritage. These places of beauty, wonder and learning are valued by Canadians—they are part of our past, our present and our future.

Our Government's goal is to ensure that Canadians form a lasting connection to this heritage and that our protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' and 'P' followed by a long horizontal line.

Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

Recommendations

Recommended by:



Alan Latourelle
*Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada*



Chip Bird
*Field Unit Superintendent
Cape Breton Field Unit
Parks Canada*

Executive Summary

This management plan for Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada (CBHNP) provides strategic direction for achieving Parks Canada's mandate, namely: protection of ecological and cultural resources; the facilitation of meaningful visitor experiences; and fostering public appreciation and understanding of Parks Canada's heritage places. The plan was developed with partner, stakeholder, staff, visitor, and public involvement. It will be the primary public accountability document for the Park and provides Parks Canada staff with a framework for decision making.

The management plan includes:

- A vision for the future;
- Four key strategies, which will guide the direction of the Park over the next fifteen years;
- An area management approach, which provides strategic direction for the Northern Highlands, the Ingonish Beach Recreation Area, the Acadian Coast, and the Cabot Trail.
- A zoning plan that classifies land and water areas according to their need for protection;
- A summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) conducted for this management plan; and,
- An implementation strategy that summarizes the planned actions.

Following is a description of the four key strategies. These strategies provide concrete direction for addressing the major issues and opportunities facing the Park and focus efforts and resources towards achieving the vision.

(Choose your own) Big Adventure: Cape Breton Highlands National Park will develop program and adventure choices that incorporate the national park and local communities and culture. As part of this approach, the Park will partner with the local community

to provide a seamless menu of activities, keeping visitors in the area for a longer stay, for example, the Park will establish the Old Cabot Trail as the backbone of a system of hiking/biking trails, linking communities and the park.

Telling Our Stories: Cape Breton Highlands National Park will actively reach out to cultural knowledge holders to facilitate opportunities for these individuals to tell their own stories, the human history of the Highlands. Part of this approach will involve uncovering the human history stories that should be interpreted within the Park, including stories from before the Park was established to the stories of today.

Mosaic Landscape: Cape Breton Highlands National Park will focus on promoting a natural range of plants and animals, with an emphasis on Boreal forest reestablishment. Management projects, public outreach education and visitors will come together in the restoration of the health (also referred to as ecological integrity) of the Park's forests. Re-establishing a healthy mosaic landscape will ensure adequate habitat for species of concern within CBHNP. One of the objectives of this approach will be to better understand and manage moose impact within the Park landscape.

Collaborative Management: Cape Breton Highlands National Park will seek to formalize the working relationships with the local Mi'kmaq communities, in order to collaborate on broader interests related to both natural and cultural resource management, of interest to both the Mi'kmaq and the Park. One key objective under this approach would be to develop a role for the Mi'kmaq in research, protection, identification, interpretation and presentation of areas of value to their communities.

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada is responsible for protecting and presenting Canada's network of national parks, national marine conservation areas, and the national historic sites it administers, for all time. Parks Canada's mandate, which underpins all management planning, consists of three elements: protecting heritage resources, facilitating opportunities for visitor experience, and providing public outreach education. Canadians have a strong sense of connection to their parks, and Parks Canada facilitates opportunities to discover, appreciate and understand these special places in ways that ensure that they are available for future generations.

The *Canada National Parks Act* (2000) and the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998) require Parks Canada to produce a management plan for each national park. The purpose of a management plan is to develop clear direction for the management and operations of a park for a 10 to 15 year period. These plans reflect the legislation and policies of the Agency, and are developed with public consultation. Management plans are approved by the Minister and are tabled in Parliament.

Public involvement is essential to the management planning process. A management plan is a key instrument for ensuring that Parks Canada delivers on its commitments to the people of Canada. The process of management planning allows Aboriginal communities, stakeholders, partners, local residents, and the public to have an effective voice in shaping the future direction of a national park.

Building mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal communities is a priority for Parks Canada. Section 35 of *The Constitution Act* (1982) recognizes and affirms the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia claim unextinguished Aboriginal title, treaty rights, and other Aboriginal rights throughout Nova Scotia and adjacent areas of the offshore, including on the federal lands of Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

The Mi'kmaq are currently involved in treaty negotiations with the Province of Nova Scotia and Canada.

Parks Canada entered into a process of consultation on this management plan with representatives of the thirteen Mi'kmaq First Nations in Nova Scotia through the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and with the Native Council of Nova Scotia. These consultations provided a good opportunity to share information and build on the collaborative relationship that exists between Parks Canada and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. Accommodations appropriate for the management plan process have been included in this plan document, while other identified issues will be addressed at the main Made-in-Nova Scotia Negotiation Table.

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

This management plan replaces the 1994 Amendment to the Park Management Plan, which updated direction contained in the 1985 management plan for Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The planning process was undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of Parks Canada staff, beginning in 2001. While evaluating issues and options, the planning team sought input on various topics from key stakeholders and the public via small focus groups, a community planning committee, and meetings with specific organizations. Draft proposals were summarized in newsletters that were distributed to the public. A series of open houses and stakeholder meetings in 2002 and 2003 allowed for a broad spectrum of public comment on the draft management proposals. Further discussions with the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq community, provincial government departments, and various stakeholders helped to refine management direction for the Park. In 2009, further open houses and stakeholder meetings provided the public an update on the management planning process, and provided

opportunities for further input and comment. All input received has been taken into consideration in the development of this management plan.

The revised Park Management Plan provides Parks Canada staff with a framework for decision-making. It will guide the development of the Field Unit Business Plan, and the park work-planning processes. An annual implementation report will monitor progress towards achieving management plan priorities. A State of the Park Report will be prepared in advance of the next park management plan review. Subsequent State of the Park reports will be prepared on a five-year cycle. This management plan ensures that actions undertaken by park managers for protection, visitor experience and public outreach education are integrated and mutually supportive. The plan also ensures that effective use of public funds in park management by providing for the means to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the actions.

The changing context for managing protected areas necessitated a review of the 1994 management plan and subsequent development of a new management plan that reflects public opinion and responds to current priorities.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BASIS FOR MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Various statutes provide legislative support for achieving the Parks Canada mandate. The 1998 *Parks Canada Agency Act* established Parks Canada as a separate agency. The *Canada National Parks Act*, enacted in 2000, modernized the Agency's historic role, but also continued the legislative tradition of dedicating national parks to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, charging the Agency to ensure that they are maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (s. 4). This Act also affirms maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity as the first priority when considering all aspects of the management of national parks.

The *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* (1994) provides the broad policy basis for management planning. The *Guide to Management Planning* (2008)

outlines Parks Canada's principles of management planning and provides direction on how to prepare a management plan according to the Agency's integrated delivery of the mandate.

1.3 PLANNING ACCORDING TO PARKS CANADA'S MANDATE

Parks Canada's Mandate

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

- from Parks Canada Agency's Charter

Parks Canada's mandate comprises three mutually supportive areas:

- Protection of heritage resources,
- Facilitation of opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences, and
- Fostering public appreciation and understanding about Canada's heritage.

Protection of Heritage Resources

In national parks, protection includes all those activities related to the protection of cultural and natural resources and natural processes.

Meaningful Visitor Experience

Visitor experience is defined as the sum total of a visitor's personal interaction with protected heritage places and people, an interaction that awakens the senses, affects the emotions, stimulates the mind, and leaves the visitor with a sense of attachment to these places.

Public Appreciation and Understanding

Parks Canada provides public outreach education opportunities for Canadians to discover and learn about these places while at home, at leisure, at school and in their communities. The Agency also strives to engage stakeholders and partners in the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places.

2.0 Importance of Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada



The world famous Cabot Trail loops across Northern Cape Breton. Chris Reardon

The National Parks System Plan provides a framework for park establishment in Canada. The plan is based on a land classification system that divides the country into 39 distinct terrestrial natural regions. One of Parks Canada's goals is to establish at least one national park in each of these regions. Within this context, the primary role of Cape Breton Highlands National Park is to protect for all time a representative example of the Maritime Acadian Highlands Natural Region.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada was established in 1936 as the first national park in Atlantic Canada. It remains the largest national park in the Maritimes, protecting 950 km² of the Maritime Acadian Highlands Natural Region. This natural region, which is also represented by Fundy National Park of Canada in New Brunswick, is characterized by a rolling hilly plateau cut by

deep valleys and cascading rivers. The Park is located in northern Cape Breton and is bordered on the west by the Gulf of St. Lawrence and on the east by the Cabot Strait. (*Map 1 – Regional Setting*)

2.1 REGIONAL SETTING

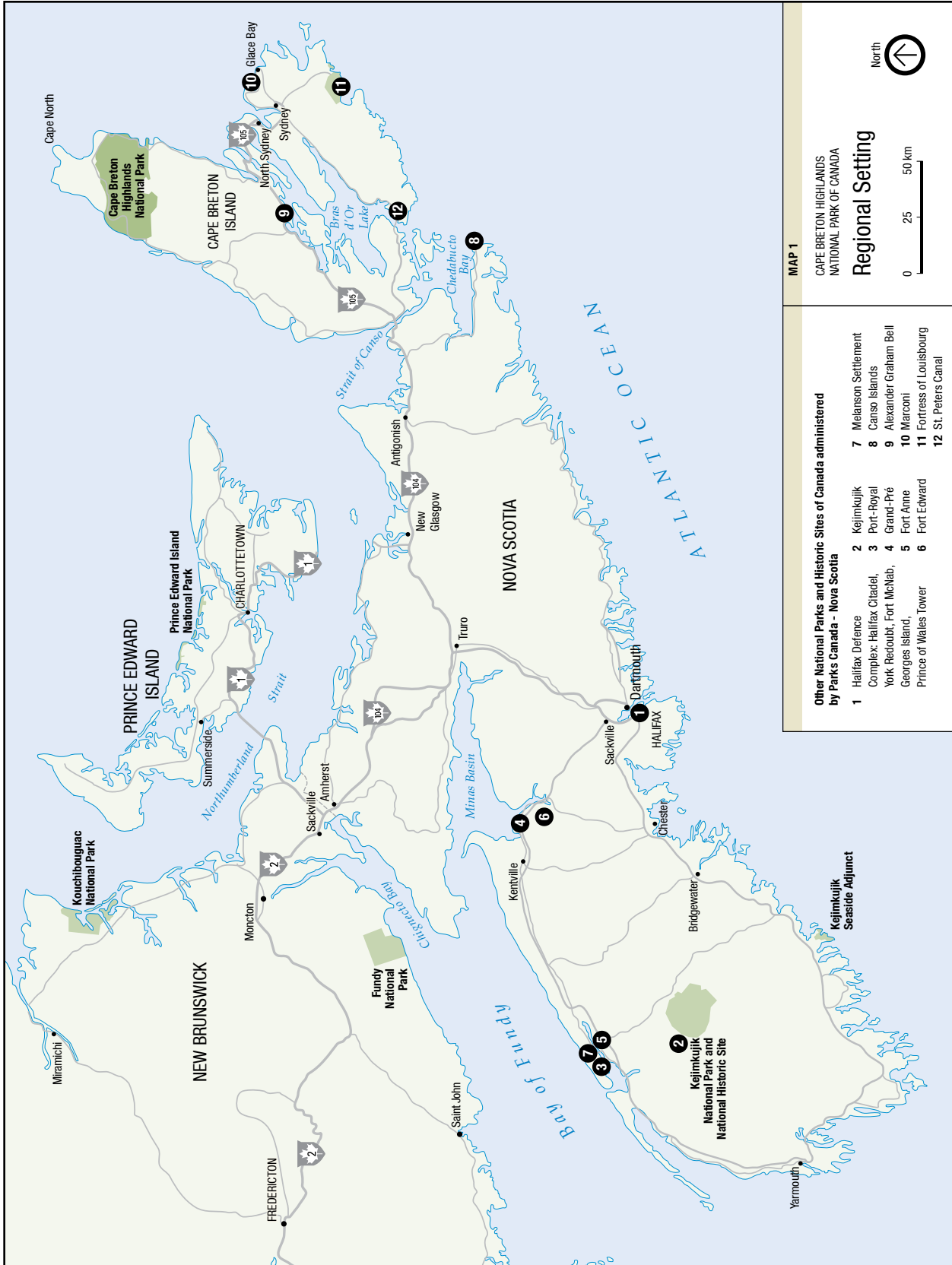
In recent years the proportion of protected area in northern Cape Breton has increased. In 1998, the Province of Nova Scotia introduced the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, which included designation of several provincial wilderness areas in the Northern Cape Breton ecosystem (*Map 2 – Land Uses in the Northern Cape Breton Ecosystem*). Those closest to the park include the Jim Campbell's Barrens Wilderness Area south of Chéticamp, the Margaree River Wilderness Area south of

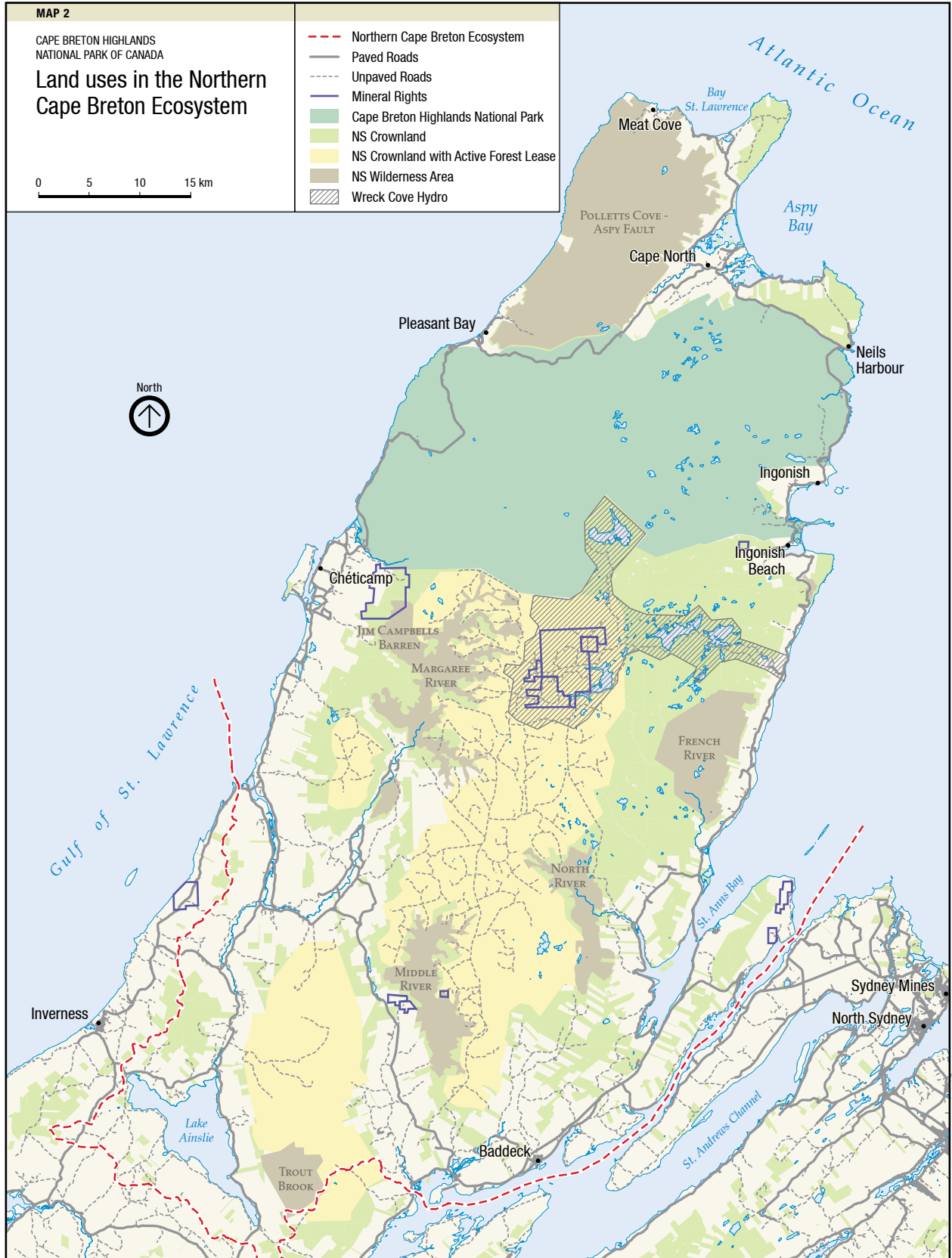
the park, and the largest provincial wilderness area in northern Cape Breton, the Pollets Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Area, which is immediately adjacent to the park to the north. Also, the Margaree River to the south of the park is a designated Canadian Heritage River. These protected areas improve habitat connectivity in northern Cape Breton and contribute to the ecological integrity of the area.

There are a number of communities situated around the perimeter of the park, connected by the famous Cabot Trail. The economy of the area is closely tied to its natural resources. Key industries include tourism, forestry, hydroelectric generation and commercial fishing.

2.2 OTHER HERITAGE VALUES

Northern Cape Breton has a rich cultural heritage. Beginning with the Paleo-Indians and Maritime Archaic peoples, aboriginal peoples have lived on the island for 10,000 years. They followed the seasons and the game and fish upon which their lives depended. The Mi'kmaq are part of this tradition and have preserved their language and culture. It was the Mi'kmaq who helped European immigrants adapt to their new homeland. Today, cultural resources in Cape Breton Highlands include Aboriginal sites, and remnants of early Acadian, Scots, Irish, French, Basque, Portuguese and other settlements in the area. Protecting and presenting this cultural heritage is an important priority for Cape Breton Highlands. The Park is also home to several recognized heritage buildings and cultural landscapes such as the Ingonish Administration Complex, Highland Links golf course and the Lone Shieling building.





3.0 Current Context

This plan for Cape Breton Highlands National Park sets the course for broader and more innovative visitor experiences, public outreach education and engagement that builds upon the strong protection actions of the previous plan and amendment. For the Park, this means protecting the ecosystems, biodiversity, and ecological processes that are characteristic of the Maritime Acadian Highlands Natural Region in northern Cape Breton, and facilitating opportunities for Canadians to create personal connections to this magnificent national park.

This Management Plan represents the first step in a new approach to the reporting on the management of Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada. A management plan sets out a long-term (15-year) vision for achieving Parks Canada's mandate. In looking forward, it is important to draw inspiration and direction from past experience and the current condition of the park. A "State of the Park Report" for Cape Breton Highlands, which provides a comprehensive snapshot of the current state of ecological integrity, visitor experience and public outreach education, as well as the results of the park's efforts to maintain or improve the state of the park, will be completed by the summer of 2010. As there is currently no state of the park report, the current situation and challenges facing the park are outlined below.

3.1 PARK HISTORY

Portuguese arrived in Ingonish in the early 1500s, mostly for seasonal fishing. The French began settlement in the mid-1600s. France established a fishing settlement at Ingonish in 1729, as an outpost of the Fortress of Louisbourg. In 1737, Ingonish was the second largest French settlement in Cape Breton after Louisbourg. Ingonish was burned just prior to the fall of the Fortress of Louisbourg in 1749.

In 1755, the Acadians were expelled from their lands in mainland Nova Scotia. Some of the exiled Acadians found their way to the Chéticamp area where they farmed and supplied fish to Huguenots, French-speaking merchants from the English Jersey Islands. More French immigrants came to Cape Breton following the French Revolution of 1789. Today, the Chéticamp area retains its distinct Acadian culture and, French is still the language of daily life. Descendants of these early immigrants lived at Cap Rouge along the western side of what is now Cape Breton Highlands National Park. In the 1930s, the federal government expropriated their homes to establish the Park.

In the early 1800s, Scottish and Irish immigrants came to the region that would become Cape Breton Highlands. Around 1820, families of these immigrants began to homestead in Pleasant Bay and the Grande Anse valley, supporting themselves by fishing and subsistence farming. The influence of the Gaelic language can still be heard in the speech of their descendants.

Around the same period, about a dozen English, Irish, and Dutch immigrants became the first permanent European settlers in Ingonish. Some of the land that they occupied, such as Warren Lake, Clyburn Valley, and Middle Head Peninsula, later became part of the Park. A few people, including American Loyalist, settled along the shore of Aspy Bay, and with the influx of Highlanders after 1800 the backlands around Big Intervale were settled.

Encouraged by merchants who promised to buy their fish, Newfoundland immigrants of English descent settled in Neil's Harbour in the 1860s. Today you can still detect a trace of Old World inflection in the speech of Neil's Harbour's inhabitants.

All of these communities, and the people that have come since those first settlers, have contributed to the rich cultural diversity of the area.



Building the Cabot Trail. Parks Canada

Cape Breton Highlands National Park was created in the early 20th century, after much lobbying by the province of Nova Scotia. Northern Cape Breton was chosen after the Department of the Interior looked at several areas of Nova Scotia. Tourism was a growing industry in the early 1900s and pressure was on the government to improve and complete a travel circuit around the northern area of Cape Breton Island. Interior travel and natural resource extraction were restricted by the mountainous terrain, and overland travel was limited to footpaths. The construction of the Cabot Trail in the 1920s complemented the development of the national park. Today, the Cabot Trail is a world-renowned scenic highway and remains the only transportation route linking communities in northern Cape Breton.

3.2 HERITAGE RESOURCES CONSERVATION

3.2.1 Biophysical Context

The park and northern Cape Breton are truly “where the mountains meet the sea.” The dominant feature of northern Cape Breton is the elevated plateau, divided by steep-walled river canyons. This range of elevations enables the coexistence of northern species and habitats on the plateau and temperate habitats and species in the valleys and lowlands.

Climate, past and present, has shaped the character of the Highlands, including landforms, plants, animals, and people. The climate in northern Cape Breton is controlled by both global (northern latitude, Arctic air masses) and local factors (the moderating effects of the ocean and Les Suêtes phenomenon). The ocean’s effect results in delayed springs, cooler

summers, longer falls and warmer winters than would otherwise occur at this latitude. Altitude creates noticeable climate differences between the lowlands and the Highlands.

Ecological Land Regions

The forests in Cape Breton Highlands National Park are the dominant ecosystem; close to 88% of the Park is forested ecosystem. The plateau is dominated by Boreal and Taiga vegetation, and lowlands are dominated by Acadian forest. These three forest regions co-exist within a very small area because of the wide elevation range, and maritime climate.

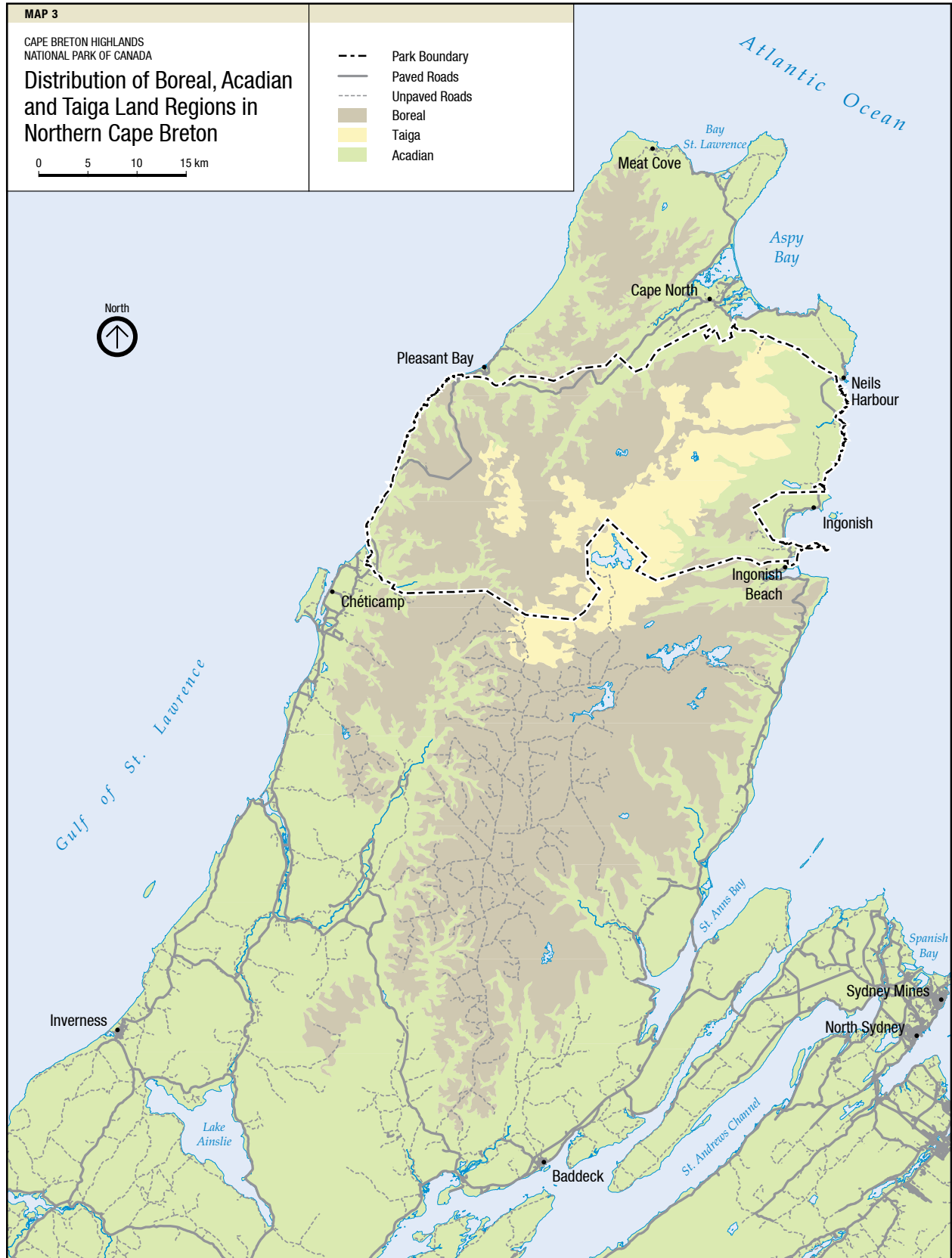
Nowhere else in Canada is this particular mix of northern and temperate, terrestrial and marine species found.

The **Acadian Land Region**, covers 29% of the Park, and includes a mixed forest that on lower canyon slopes, coastal fringes and the lower reaches of major rivers and streams. The Acadian Forest is a mix of northern and temperate plants and animals, including pure sugar maple stands, which are found only in the northern part of this species’ range. Some of the Park’s old growth stands are over 350 years old, making these biological wonders some of the oldest in the province.

The **Boreal Land Region**, covers much of the high regions of the plateau, or about half of the park. It is dominated by coniferous trees interspersed with barrens and wetlands. This region contains almost all of Nova Scotia’s remaining population of Canada lynx, which is endangered throughout the Maritimes. Other characteristic animals include moose, snowshoe hare, spruce grouse, and American marten.



Parks Canada



The **Taiga Land Region**, a tundra-like landscape, consists of scrub forest extensive heath-lichen barrens, and sphagnum bogs. Primarily on the interior plateau, it covers about a quarter of the park. Believed to be of fire origin, it likely persists because of severe weather and poor soils. Specially adapted plants and animal species in this region can withstand extreme conditions – heat, drought, acidity, cold, heavy snowfall, and icy winds. Cape Breton Highlands protects two-thirds or 224 km² of all Nova Scotia's Taiga.

Coastal and Marine Habitats

The ocean and rugged coastline are what make this area special to residents and visitors. Sandwiched between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Cabot Strait, Cape Breton Island's climate, vegetation, wildlife and people are greatly affected by these two huge bodies of salt water. Ocean currents and tidal upwelling bring nutrients to the surface, resulting in a diverse marine food chain which includes krill, lobster, seabirds and whales. The interface of mountains and ocean creates a variety of intertidal and coastal habitats, including barren headlands, rocky shores, cobble beaches, sandy coves and estuaries.

Freshwater Aquatic Ecosystems

Cape Breton Highlands includes forty-four watersheds of which most are enclosed within its boundary. While habitat is there, some waterbodies currently have no fish. The past practice of fish stocking has confused our understanding of where fish occur naturally. The aquatic ecosystem in the park is strongly influenced by the peatlands of the plateau that give rise to the low pH and dark colour of many lakes and ponds. Part of the importance of the freshwater aquatic ecosystems, is that they connect the three land regions to both each other and to the coastal and marine habitats. Atlantic salmon return from the sea to spawn in the rivers that drain the plateau and valleys. Tidal up-welling brings oxygen and nutrient-rich water to the surface to support a rich marine food chain.

3.2.2 State of Ecological Integrity

Parks Canada defines ecological integrity as:

“with respect to a park, a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and is likely to persist, including abiotic components and the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes.” (Canada National Parks Act, 2000)

Achieving ecological integrity requires an integrated approach. The national park, combined with other nearby protected areas, contributes to the ecological and economic health of northern Cape Breton. The economy of northern Cape Breton is closely tied to the biological diversity and wild beauty of the landscape. An integral factor for the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity is effective involvement of and collaboration with Mi'kmaq, neighbours, stakeholders, visitors, and interested Canadians.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park has built on previous research, collaboration, and discussion to define monitoring goals. A bio-regional process was begun in 2003 that brought together external partners and numerous parks in a collaborative process to select efficient and meaningful monitoring measures to assess the state of the parks over the long term.

Five key ecosystems are monitored at Cape Breton Highlands National Park, namely: forest, aquatic, wetlands, barrens, coastal. A monitoring plan delivered in March 2008, identifies new initiatives including monitoring of moose abundance and population demographics and American marten management in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources.

Cape Breton Highlands has also worked with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources to monitor both adult and juvenile Atlantic salmon.

3.2.3 Key Ecosystem Stressors

The first State of the Park Report using the new ecosystem indicators is currently in production. Key concerns that are currently flagged include connectivity, invasive species, and pollution.

Connectivity

The landscapes of northern Cape Breton are naturally fragmented and isolated due to topography. Settlement patterns in the lowlands and industrial and general use of the plateau further fragment the natural landscape. In the Boreal Land Region, outbreaks of spruce budworm and moose have decimated large tracts of Cape Breton's stands of mature balsam fir, resulting in the reduction of habitat and prey base for key species such as marten and lynx. Aquatic fragmentation has been caused by the installation of culverts along coastal roads and the channelization of the Clyburn and Chéticamp Rivers. These actions have reduced access to and caused the destruction of spawning and rearing habitat for trout, salmon, and eels.

Invasive Species

Non-native species can disrupt ecosystems by displacing native species through competition or predation, or by introducing disease. The Park is reducing the numbers of both Japanese knotweed, an invasive plant that can destabilize riverbanks resulting in siltation of fish habitat, and Spiny-cheeked crayfish, a voracious predator recently discovered in one of the Park's lakes.

Pollution

The Park is susceptible to pollution from a variety of origins. Extensive shipping along the Cabot Strait raises concerns about marine oil spills. Heavy automobile activity results in many small releases of petroleum products and airborne pollutants which may concentrate locally in sensitive areas, such as the Grande Anse Valley. Past operations have resulted in the need to manage ten registered contaminated sites containing substances such as petroleum products and heavy metals. Road salt application has been linked to concerns in some wetlands and lakes adjacent to highways.

3.2.4 Species Requiring Protection

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is home to a number of rare species, some of which are classified as "at risk" in varying degrees at various geographic scales. Nationally-listed species at risk found in northern Cape Breton include Olive-sided Flycatcher, Canada Warbler,



American marten. K. Chin

American Eel, and Bicknell's Thrush. Parks Canada anticipates Species at Risk Act (SARA) obligations related to the recovery of Bicknell's Thrush, as it was recently listed as Threatened by COSEWIC. Atlantic salmon (Eastern Cape Breton population) is currently being assessed; it could be assigned a status and be scheduled under SARA within the life of this management plan. Several other species found in park are included in the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, namely American marten (Cape Breton population), Canada lynx, and Chimney Swift. The Park continues to work with federal, provincial, and Mi'kmaq agencies, along with various non-governmental organizations to protect "at risk" species.

3.2.5 The State of Cultural Resource Management

A *cultural resource* is a human work or place that gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning, and which has been determined to have historic value. Cultural resource management includes the identification, protection and care of cultural resources, as well as the promotion of public understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of these resources.

Northern Cape Breton has a rich cultural heritage dating from Mi'kmaq occupancy since time immemorial through more recent human settlement and use. The natural resources of this region have provided a livelihood to people for thousands of years, ranging from the traditional hunting, fishing and gathering economies of the Mi'kmaq to the fishing, farming and forestry that attracted Acadian, Gaelic and other European settlers to the area. Although

the inventory of cultural resources within the park is not complete, a significant number of cultural resources have been identified. Most are archaeological sites representing early European homesteads. The Park is also home to several recognized heritage buildings and a number of significant landscapes, such as the Ingonish Administration Complex, the Lone Shieling shelter, Highland Links golf course, Acadian settlements and the Cabot Trail.

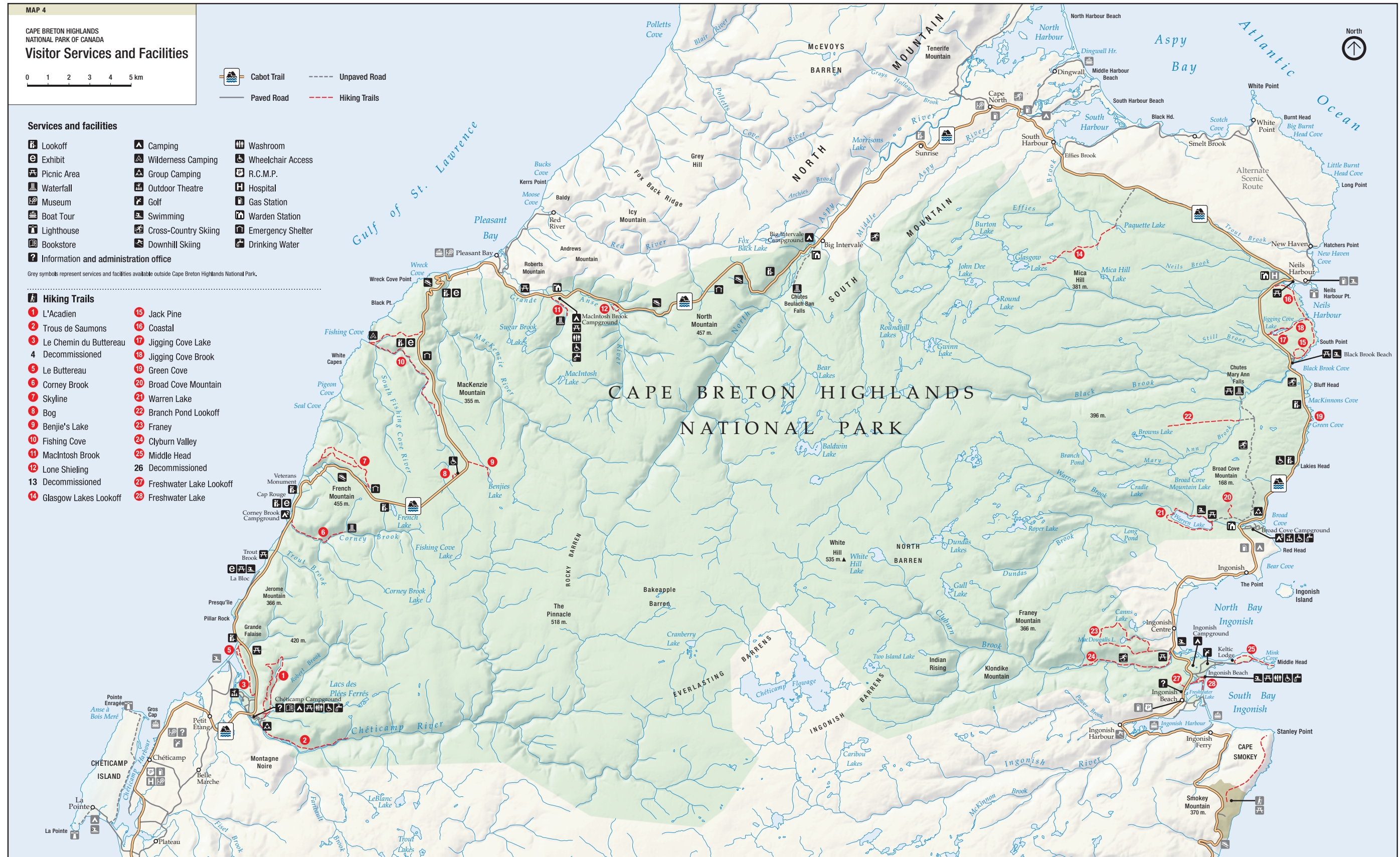
The golf course occupies the site of old homes, and campgrounds and other Park facilities occupy some of the other farmlands taken over by the Park. In places where the old clearings are being reclaimed by the forest, the mossy stone cellars, wells and stone walls remind us of the joys, grief, hardships and simplicity of another era.

Although a preliminary inventory of the Park's cultural resources has been undertaken, considerable work is required to complete the inventory and properly assess their value and condition. A strategic document, known as a cultural resource value statement, identifies the scope of cultural resources, their values, and associated messages, is also required for effective management.

Parks Canada must ensure that cultural resources and cultural landscapes are recognized, protected and presented so that the public can learn about and better appreciate the park's cultural heritage in ways that are complementary to ecosystem management objectives. Management of cultural resources in national parks is guided by Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy (1994). Section 3.2.4 of this policy states:

"Management planning that affects cultural resources in national parks will deal with cultural resources on the basis of this policy and will be consistent with human history themes established for a park".

In recent years, the importance of protecting and presenting the cultural resources associated with the pre-park communities and residents has become increasingly apparent. Parks Canada works closely with local Mi'kmaq communities to ensure the protection and presentation of Mi'kmaq cultural resources. As outlined in Key Strategies 2 – Telling Our Stories, and 4 – Collaborative Management, of this management plan, honouring the past, assessing the value of cultural resources, and appropriately protecting and presenting cultural resources and cultural heritage are priorities for the park.



MAP 4
 CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS
 NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA
Visitor Services and Facilities
 0 1 2 3 4 5 km

Cabot Trail Unpaved Road
 Paved Road Hiking Trails

- Services and facilities**
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Lookoff | Camping | Washroom |
| Exhibit | Wilderness Camping | Wheelchair Access |
| Picnic Area | Group Camping | R.C.M.P. |
| Waterfall | Outdoor Theatre | Hospital |
| Museum | Golf | Gas Station |
| Boat Tour | Swimming | Warden Station |
| Lighthouse | Cross-Country Skiing | Emergency Shelter |
| Bookstore | Downhill Skiing | Drinking Water |
| Information and administration office | | |
- Grey symbols represent services and facilities available outside Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

- Hiking Trails**
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 L'Acadien | 15 Jack Pine |
| 2 Trou de Saumons | 16 Coastal |
| 3 Le Chemin du Buttereau | 17 Jigging Cove Lake |
| 4 Decommissioned | 18 Jigging Cove Brook |
| 5 Le Buttereau | 19 Green Cove |
| 6 Corney Brook | 20 Broad Cove Mountain |
| 7 Skyline | 21 Warren Lake |
| 8 Bog | 22 Branch Pond Lookoff |
| 9 Benjies Lake | 23 Franey |
| 10 Fishing Cove | 24 Clyburn Valley |
| 11 MacIntosh Brook | 25 Middle Head |
| 12 Lone Shieling | 26 Decommissioned |
| 13 Decommissioned | 27 Freshwater Lake Lookoff |
| 14 Glasgow Lakes Lookoff | 28 Freshwater Lake |



Dale Wilson

3.3 VISITOR EXPERIENCE

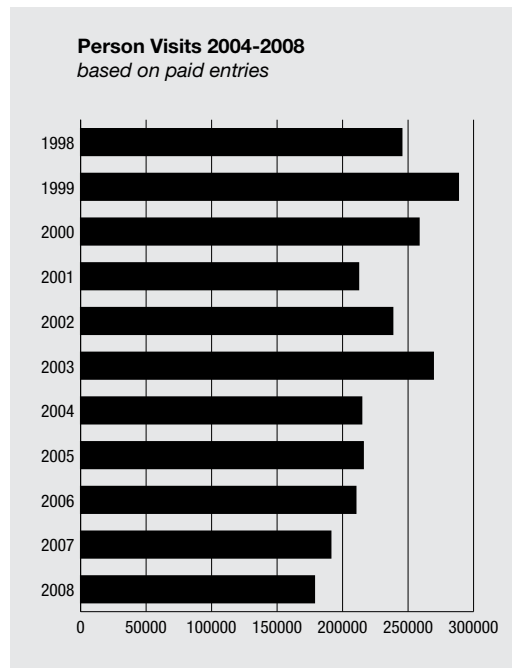
Parks Canada facilitates meaningful visitor experiences so that visitors have an opportunity to create a personal sense of connection to their heritage places.

“Connection to place” is a concept that expresses the emotional, intellectual and spiritual attachment Canadians and visitors feel towards Parks Canada’s natural and cultural heritage places.

At Cape Breton Highlands, Parks Canada facilitates opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences by providing pre-trip information, offering a variety of programs and activities for visitors, and presenting a unique heritage attraction supported by facilities and services.

3.3.1 Special Characteristics of Cape Breton Highlands National Park

The northern area of Cape Breton is one of Atlantic Canada’s most significant tourism destinations. The area attracts tourists from the Atlantic region, other parts of Canada, the United States, and abroad. The draw is primarily related to the spectacular terrain and the opportunity to experience nature. The Cabot Trail, which circles the northern peninsula, is a tourism icon for the province and Atlantic region. The vistas and viewpoints from the Cabot Trail have consistently been rated as among the best in North America by the tourism media. Throughout the park, day hiking and walking form the signature recreational offer, with 62-72% of visitors participating. (2005 VIP)



3.3.2 Park Visitors

In 2007-08, Cape Breton Highlands National Park had approximately, 171,216 visit days. Parks Canada and partners have collected data on visitors to Cape Breton and the Park for the past 30 years. Most visitors come to the park travelling in individual groups (82% adults only-mostly couples) and originate from

Ontario (24%), Québec (17%) and the eastern United States (33%). Most are well-educated adults with post-secondary degrees, and are visiting the park for the first time (75%). They are drawn to the area by the opportunity to drive the famous Cabot Trail, see the spectacular ocean and mountain scenery, experience nature and enjoy recreational activities, particularly scenic walking and hiking. 25% of visitors utilize the camping offer, and 76% of visitor stay overnight in the Cabot Trail Area. On average, visitors explore the park for 3 days.

Winter use of the park is low and is primarily by local residents who use the park for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The limited tourism infrastructure available in northern Cape Breton during the winter months restricts winter use by visitors from outside the area.

3.3.3 The State of Visitor Experience

Data from the most recent visitor survey (2005) indicates that the overwhelming majority of visitors (95%) are satisfied with their visit. Most visitors (94%) are satisfied with the recreational experience they had at the park while only slightly fewer felt that the park provided a satisfying educational experience (87%). Overall 93% of park visitors felt that their park experience met their expectations. The majority of visitor use is concentrated along the Cabot Trail corridor and the facilities and services easily accessible from the road are the most heavily used. The Park has considerable data regarding visitor use for many trails and visitor facilities including information from the most recent visitor survey (2005), on-going trail-use counts, and bicycle- and motorcycle-use counts of the Cabot Trail. Additional assessments of the where visitors are going and what services they are utilizing throughout the park landscape would provide additional valuable information. In addition, during the life cycle of this management plan, social science work within the Park will also be focussing on better understanding the motivations and interest of visitors.

Replacing aging visitor facilities and infrastructure is a major challenge for the park. Currently, less than 30% of built assets are rated as being in good condition. Future

investments will focus on facilities and infrastructure that respond to current and potential visitor needs and expectations in order to facilitate meaningful visitor experiences and discovery opportunities.

Parks Canada is responsible for providing a public safety program that deals with the specific incidents and issues encountered within each heritage area. Although there is national coordination of the public safety program, levels of service, prevention and methods of dealing with incidents vary from one heritage area to the next. Cape Breton Highlands has an abundance of wildlife and exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities, and Parks Canada recognizes that park visitors have a certain responsibility for their own safety, and that risk management must become an integral part of their experience. Cape Breton Highlands will continue to help visitors make informed decisions about their recreational experience.

Through the enhancement of visitor experience elements and associated services offered in the Park, and through focused market research and promotion, Cape Breton Highlands National Park will seek to increase visitation to the Park by 16% over the next two years. Actions linked to the implementation of these goals are more fully explored in the Key Strategies found in sections 5 and 6.

3.4 PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING

Parks Canada engages its many stakeholders and partners and encourages shared leadership through active participation in the development and implementation of the future direction for Parks Canada. In particular, partners and stakeholders were essential in sculpting the long-term vision for this management plan.

Parks Canada will continue to work with partners to advance sustainable tourism and heritage conservation while also broadening its base of support through other strategic partnering opportunities.

3.4.1 The State of Public Outreach Education and External Communications

Parks Canada provides opportunities for Canadians to discover and learn about Cape Breton Highlands National Park through publications, websites, programs delivered in local schools, and other media. Parks Canada also promotes understanding and appreciation of the national significance of the park and the Agency’s system of heritage places.

Cape Breton Highlands has been very engaged in the local schools, and runs a very successful formal outreach program.

“As usual, the presenter did a marvelous job. Teachers are very positive about the park’s presentations. You are always so enthusiastic, well prepared and the topics relate directly to curriculum and the everyday lives of our classes. It helps them become more aware of their surroundings! I enjoyed the presentation as much as the children. It’s always more enjoyable when different faces teach the classes.”



Parks Canada in schools. Mariève Theriault

Over the past five years, Cape Breton Highlands National Park has been offering intensive school programs on Cape Breton Island. At the elementary level, the park has been delivering up to four programs to local classes each year, in schools and in the Park.

The school programs can be considered successful for several reasons.

- First by the positive evaluations received repeatedly by the teachers through feedback forms gathered at the end of the classroom presentations. The forms deal with both the in-class presentations and field trips. The evaluation forms have a series of 4 questions, graded from 1 to 5, 1 being “very poor” and 5 being “excellent”. Over the years, 86% of the ratings were 5/5. The remaining 14% were a mix of 4/5 and 5/5.
- Positive relationships are built with Mi’kmaq schools, as Cape Breton Highlands staff have visited all of the schools on the island. Some groups now come to the park for field trips, requesting longer outings, and some even make the point of staying overnight.
- As with all schools, repeated visits were key to this success.

To inform, influence and inspire our youth, Parks Canada needs to continue to focus resources on enabling more youth to connect their hearts and minds with the national park. This happens, in part, through the opportunity to have a quality visitor experience, but can also be facilitated through participation in engaging educational park programs, focused on the wants and needs of this target audience. In the future, the Park may seek funding partners to support schools/school boards with the transportation costs and to ensure that there is adequate park staff to meet the demand of quality interactive park programs.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park will seek to further enhance opportunities to facilitate meaningful connections to the Park by implementing a number of actions linked to the Key Strategies. These actions include partnering opportunities, and the use of new media and social media to reach Canadians at home during their leisure time. These ideas are more fully explored in sections 5 and 6.

3.4.2 The State of Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Parks Canada participates in regional planning and research initiatives with various organizations including the Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, the Pollets’s Cove-Aspy Fault

Wilderness Area Stewardship Committee and various academic institutions. Parks Canada also works co-operatively with other federal and provincial government agencies, and local authorities, to ensure that park management efforts are integrated into the context of the surrounding area, and to encourage compatible land management practices on adjacent lands. At the same time, Parks Canada strives to ensure that activities at Cape Breton Highlands National Park have beneficial ecological, social, and economic effects within the surrounding region.

In the future, Cape Breton Highlands National Park will seek to more fully engage Canadians through public outreach education, awareness campaigns and proactive media relations. In doing so, a number of actions linked to the key strategies are more fully explored in sections 5 and 6.

4.0 Vision for Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada

The vision statement is a critical component of the management plan. This vision is meant to articulate, in an engaging manner, the special character of Cape Breton Highlands National Park, and paint a picture of its desired future. While achieving this vision will be challenging, it conveys a sense of place to Canadians who may never be able to visit the site.

Through the mist, we turn a sharp corner. Around us sprawl the tree-covered mountains and magnificent valleys of Cape Breton Highlands National Park, the ocean meeting the mountains. The winding line of the Cabot Trail runs like an ancient river along the nooks and crannies of the breathtaking coastline. We feel the forest breathe, we see the waters sparkle, and we hear the beaches beckon.

Our ride into the Park has made us eager to rest and play at one of the beautiful beaches sprinkled between the many vibrant villages nestled along the coast. Daily life seems to melt away while we watch the sea shape the land in this timeless place. It is a living landscape, a confluence of cultures, rich with stories of those that discovered this place before us, and of those that live here now. For countless generations, the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors have called this place home, and for centuries, the Gaelic and Acadian settlers of this Island nurtured their heritage in relative isolation, but now this community of cultures is open to the world to share and celebrate. Stories of the past are retold and remembered together, and stories for the future are being created.

As dusk begins to settle over the land, and the Park awakens and its inhabitants venture out from under their forested cover. An enormous moose lazily ambles across the path in front of us, in search of succulent new growth. Working with the Mi'kmaq, the province and external land holders, a balance has been struck in the forest, ensuring healthy ecosystems, and showcasing the power of working together.

While we settle in for the night, a campfire winks at us from nearby. Our neighbours invite us to sit and swap stories of our days. Our story elicits appreciative smiles, and we hear tales of spectacular backcountry hiking and sightings of marten chasing down prey in overhead branches. We also hear of the bountiful salmon-run on the Chéticamp River and the youth volunteers monitoring their numbers, and we hear of a perfect round of golf on a course that seems shaped by nature rather than built by hands. Exhausted, yet exhilarated by our day, we watch the sparks and smoke spiral upwards into the unending stars. We are eager for the sun to rise, excited by the possibilities that tomorrow will bring.

5.0 Key Strategies



Enjoy a stroll along Ingonish Beach. Dale Wilson

Key strategies provide concrete direction for addressing the major issues facing the park, and focus efforts and resources towards achieving the vision. The key strategies also address how the three mandate elements of protection, visitor experience, and public appreciation and understanding will be achieved in a mutually supportive manner.

5.1 Key Strategy #1 – (CHOOSE YOUR OWN) BIG ADVENTURE

This strategy focuses on developing a variety of adventure choices that incorporates the national park, local communities and culture. A strong connection to place is key to the long-term relevance of the Park to visitors and the surrounding population. The goal is to create and be an active participant in the Northern Cape Breton neighbourhood, showcasing Cape Breton Highlands and the neighbouring communities, and the unique combination of visitor experience opportunities offered in Northern Cape Breton. To address changing

demographics and trends in outdoor recreation, the Park is moving to revitalize its current offer to meet the needs and expectation of visitors through a menu of opportunities, such as high-quality coastal opportunities, cultural entertainment and heritage, outdoor experiences, and international events.

5.1.1 Objective #1: A range of new and enhanced visitor opportunities for adventure is developed.

Targets:

- 85% of visitors at all surveyed locations that consider Cape Breton Highlands as meaningful to them.
- 90% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied, and 50% are very satisfied with their visit to Cape Breton Highlands.
- 90% of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit to Cape Breton Highlands.

Actions:

- The Park will employ primary and secondary social science research to better understand our visitors, and develop opportunities that meet their needs and expectations. Continue to administer VIP surveys to measure satisfaction levels, personal connection and better understand the expectations of visitors, and identify social science gaps.
- Develop a suite of indicators defined from a visitor's perspective that will monitor the effectiveness of interpretation programs and visitor experience investments. Indicators will include VIP surveys, attendance statistics, revenue and website hits. Measures and thresholds will be established to effectively evaluate the state of the visitor offer.
- Enhance the Explorer Quotient menus, and have them available for pre-trip planning in print and online.
- Based on identified needs and interests of visitors, review the trail system, including the Cabot Trail, and consider developing trails for use by cyclists. If feasible, create infrastructure to support activities, such as accessible rest stops for cyclists, with bike stands, water stations etc.
- Based on visitor and community interest, establish the Old Cabot Trail as a multiuse trail, linking communities and the Park.
- Explore the possibility of water-based experiences (e.g., through partners in kayaking, or cruises). These activities take place outside the Park but offer a unique perspective (i.e., see the Highlands from the sea, as the first explorers and settlers did).
- Explore the development of a multi-use shelter at Ingonish and at La Rigouche to enhance existing services (weddings, groups, community fairs).
- Complete Warren Lake trail as a multi-use trail (family cycling, walking, running, fitness stations, interpretation) to meet the identified needs of local residents, campers at Broad Cove, and other visitors.

5.1.2 Objective #2:**A seamless menu of activities, developed with Partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.***Targets:*

- By 2015 average visit length increase of 25% over 2005 VIP
- Increase % of stakeholders and partners that support the protection and presentation of Cape Breton Highlands, by March 2014
- Increase % of stakeholders and partners that feel that they have opportunities to influence and contribute to activities in Cape Breton Highlands.

Actions:

- Use market research, and explore opportunities to partner with in-bound operators to develop programs and activities that fill niche markets, including packages that combine activities in communities and in the Park.
- Increase the participation of communities in Cape Breton Highlands National Park management and decision-making through true engagement between the park and local communities, including exploring community interest in the creation of a local advisory committee.
- Working with partners, explore the possibility of offering a natural/cultural experience where visitors not only enjoy natural surroundings but may also immerse themselves in the deep cultural roots within the communities.



Enjoy the beauty and serenity as you hike in the park.
Dale Wilson

- Encourage and work with local communities and the Mi'kmaq to develop tourism offers or other economic development opportunities associated with or complementary to the Park's offer and meet the needs and expectations of visitors.
- Increase cooperation and integration with the regional tourism sector, including promoting local businesses, and participating in community tourism events and initiatives.

**5.2 Key Strategy #2 –
 TELLING OUR STORIES**



Each of the exhibits through the Park have a different story to tell. Michael Wood

This strategy focuses on the management of the park's cultural resources and the stories linked to those resources. In collaboration with communities and stakeholders, the Park will explore the human history of the Highlands. By linking the past and the present, our cultural heritage helps us appreciate the human experience and better understand who we are as Canadians. In order to best tell these stories, Cape Breton Highlands will concentrate on collecting and evaluating the resources/information that exist within the Park, and identify strengths and gaps in the information where further research is needed. Cape Breton Highlands will also actively reach out to cultural knowledge holders to facilitate opportunities for these individuals to tell their own stories, to foster a greater sense of stewardship and build the bridges for current and future partnering.

**5.2.1 Objective #1
 Our partners are engaged in sharing their stories.**

Targets:

- Increase % of stakeholders and partners that support the protection and presentation of Cape Breton Highlands, by March 2014.
- Increase % of stakeholders and partners that feel that they have opportunities to influence and contribute to activities in Cape Breton Highlands.

Actions:

- Engage regional Mi'kmaq communities in the management and presentation of related cultural resources and stories, increasing the presentation and interpretation of the historical significance of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.
- Develop a strategy that ensures true engagement between the park and local communities, including exploring community interest in the creation of a local advisory committee, and understanding how stakeholders want to participate and interact with us.
- Implement a community history project.
- Participate in speakers series that utilizes both Park staff and local community members.
- Invite local communities to participate in the revitalization of interpretive media in the visitor centres.

**5.2.2 Objective #2
 Interpretive programming and visitor experience products and experiences are enhanced and enriched with human history and cultural knowledge.**

Targets:

- 85% of visitors at all surveyed locations that consider Cape Breton Highlands as meaningful to them.
- 90% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied, and 50% are very satisfied with their visit to Cape Breton Highlands.
- 60% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned about the heritage of the Cape Breton Highlands.



Skyline trail. Julia Thomas

Actions:

- In consultation with Cape Breton Field Unit and National Office explore the development concept of a home grown, public archaeology program.
- Communicate cultural landscapes with community input.
- Based on identified need, work with partners to revitalize visitor centre.

5.2.3 Objective #3

The range, significance and condition of cultural resources within the Park is understood.

Targets:

- The condition of cultural resources in Cape Breton Highlands National Park is maintained.

Actions:

- Prepare a Service Delivery Agreement (3 to 5 year implementation plan) with the Atlantic Service Centre to undertake the necessary research for the following deliverables:
 - A comprehensive Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation
 - A Cultural Resources Values Statement
 - A Cultural Resource Conservation and Monitoring Plan (a working document, measureable data, action on the ground).
- Jointly identify resources and develop a workplan with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia for surveys and research related to Mi'kmaq cultural resources.

5.2.4 Objective #4

Our stories are reaching audiences beyond the park and neighbouring communities.

Targets:

- Increase the % of Canadians that consider that they learned something about Parks Canada administered places by March 2014.
- Increase the % of Canadians that understand that nationally significant places that are administered by Parks Canada are protected and presented on their behalf by March 2014.

Actions:

- Update web content to include experiences, such as photo and story submissions from residents, staff and visitors.
- Develop and deliver an engaging CBHNP outreach exhibit for use at special events on Cape Breton Island.
- In conjunction with the other sites in Cape Breton Field Unit, develop public outreach education material for use in high-traffic pedestrian locations (e.g. ferries) to improve awareness of the Park.
- Expand relationships with regional media and potential partners (MEC, Halifax Library, and Cape Breton University etc) to promote awareness and stimulate regional and urban interest in Cape Breton Highlands through video, speaker series and public outreach education exhibits.

**5.3 Key Strategy #3 –
MOSAIC LANDSCAPE**

This strategy will focus on promoting a natural range of plants and animals, with an emphasis on Boreal forest re-establishment and habitat connectivity. Active management projects, public outreach education and opportunities for visitor experience will come together in the restoration of ecological integrity. This mosaic landscape will ensure adequate habitat for species of concern within Cape Breton Highlands National Park.



The cool maritime climate and rugged landscape of the park permit a unique blend of Acadian, Boreal and Taiga habitats, plants and animals. Michael Wood

5.3.1 Objective #1 Forest ecosystem health is in moderately good condition and improving.

Targets:

- Achieve average moose population density in CBHNP to within the “Good” condition range, as defined in the Park’s Ecosystem Integrity Monitoring Plan (Good range is currently set at 0.4 - 1.0 moose per km²)
- Improve the condition or trend of the Boreal Succession Index, as defined in the Park’s Ecosystem Integrity Monitoring Plan, from the current “Poor” condition baseline established in 2007.
- Improve at least one ecological integrity indicator for Cape Breton Highlands National Park by March 2014

Actions:

- Monitoring the moose population density and their reproduction, and employ active moose density reduction measures, such as moose removal and habitat manipulation, as warranted.
- Monitoring of species of concern population numbers and employ active measures such as reintroductions/augmentation of populations of species of concern, as warranted.
- Collaborate/information share with Newfoundland Field Units on moose issues.
- Mitigate the impacts of invasive species. Educate and promote stewardship in order to prevent incidental species invasions.
- Employ active and passive measures to improve habitat conditions for Boreal ecosystem species of concern, including replacing portions of savannah with boreal forest species

- Investigate the role of fire in forest succession, and where appropriate promote natural fire regime. Consult with local and provincial fire management agencies and take traditional knowledge into account. Develop a fire plan that addresses both the need for fire suppression as well as the potential for fire as a resource management tool.

5.3.2 Objective #2 Visitor experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage in active management and monitoring.

Targets:

- Increase public/volunteer involvement in monitoring, protection and restoration efforts (measured by number of volunteers and volunteer hours).

Actions:

- Establish mechanisms using a collaborative management approach with the Mi’kmaq to preserve and maintain the cultural significance of the moose population within the Park.
- Engage the public in active park resource management activities including the establishment of a Citizen Science program for monitoring, restoration and invasive species control.
- Educate and promote stewardship in active monitoring.

5.3.3 Objective #3 Aquatic connectivity contributes to strong links within the terrestrial mosaic and with the marine ecosystem.

Targets:

- Complete the development of a monitoring program that measures aquatic connectivity by 2014.

Actions:

- Complete a GIS tool to assess the connectivity impacts of all road and trail stream crossings structures; develop a priority list of structures which have the greatest impact on aquatic connectivity.



A bull moose. Michael Wood

- Modify the priority fish passages that most limit connectivity, both opportunistically as part of planned road projects and through special aquatic connectivity projects.
- Ensure all new culverts installations meet the Park's requirements for fish passage.
- Revise the stream passage structures inventory periodically to account for additions, deletions, and condition changes; update the GIS tool and the aquatic connectivity index accordingly.

5.4 Key Strategy #4 – MI'KMAQ COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT – MOOSE AND BEYOND

This strategy will focus on establishing collaborative management opportunities with the local Mi'kmaq communities. While Cape Breton Highlands has been working collaboratively with the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources moose population monitoring, American eel research, and active management of American marten, Cape Breton Highlands National Park will seek to formalize the working relationship with the local Mi'kmaq communities and their designated representatives. This relationship will provide for a forum for discussing management objectives at the holistic level. There are opportunities within this strategy to collaborate on broader interests in both natural and cultural resource management, of interest to both the Mi'kmaq and the Park.

5.4.1 Objective #1:

A collaborative management arrangement is established with the Mi'kmaq for Cape Breton Highlands.

Targets:

- A Terms of Reference for a Collaborative Management Committee is established by 2015
- Reports developed by the collaborative management committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee indicate participating Mi'kmaq groups both influence and contribute to Parks Canada's activities by 2020.

Actions:

- Work with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia to develop a clear approach to Mi'kmaq admission and use of the Site.
- Collaboratively define the Mi'kmaq role in interim planning and management planning in the future.
- Identify and undertake projects of mutual interest.
- Collaboratively define the Mi'kmaq role in research, protection, identification, interpretation and presentation, and Aboriginal artefacts.

5.4.2 Objective #2:

Natural and cultural resource management is informed and enhanced through traditional knowledge and expanded world-views.

Targets:

- TK and other knowledge systems are incorporated into decision making to the satisfaction of the Collaborative Management Committee by 2020.

Actions:

- Enhance public outreach education to Aboriginal schools.
- Facilitate projects to enhance knowledge of the cultural resources in the Park, including the compilation of oral histories, archaeological research, and the gathering of traditional knowledge for presentation and conservation purposes.
- Help provide opportunities for members of regional Aboriginal communities to visit the Park for spiritual reconnection with the land.

6.0 Area Management Approach



North Mountain. Michael Wood

Previous chapters set out an integrated strategy for protection, visitor experience, public outreach education and decision-making for Cape Breton Highlands National Park as a whole. While key strategies focus on addressing issues and challenges that affect the Park as a whole, there will be certain areas within a protected heritage place that merit a specific management focus. The fundamental purpose of presenting the management plan by area/location is to facilitate the integration of planning solutions and their subsequent implementation.

Four area management units are identified for Cape Breton Highlands National Park: The Northern Highlands, Ingonish Beach Recreation Area, The Acadian Coast and The Cabot Trail.

6.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE AREA: NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

History and Context

Chéticamp and Ingonish offer the vast majority of visitor services and facilities at Cape Breton Highlands and for many it is the only part of

the park that they knowingly experience. Yet it is the Park's more remote northern frontier that allows visitors to view a piece of the Taiga forest. The northern border of Cape Breton Highlands National Park is also immediately adjacent to the largest provincial wilderness area in northern Cape Breton, the Pollets Cove-Aspy Fault Wilderness Area.

This 'northern' area is home to many long-standing communities with deep roots. Prior to the establishment of the National Park and the cutting of the Cabot Trail, most residents came and went from their communities via the water and narrow cart paths. Today, these communities still experience a degree of being land locked, having to pass through the National Park to come and go.

The Grande Anse Valley of Cape Breton Highlands National Park is internationally recognized for its Acadian old-growth stands of hardwood trees, especially for its nearly pure stands of sugar maple. The presence and protection of old-growth hardwood forests within the park is important as very little old-growth hardwood forest remains in eastern North America due to extensive logging. Old-growth forests are home to many different species and

provide critical habitat for several specialized plants and animals. The presence of the park allows a portion of old-growth hardwood forest to remain in a relatively natural state for our generation and future generations to enjoy.

Cape Breton Highlands operates several facilities in the "Northern Highlands." MacIntosh Brook Campground is a small, open area nestled at the base of the mountains in the Grande Anse Valley near Pleasant Bay. It has ten unserviced sites, a large kitchen shelter, playground, flush toilets and a hiking trail. Another small campground is located at the base of North Mountain ten kilometres from Cape North. Big Intervale Campground has 10 unserviced sites, fireplaces, pit privies and hiking.

Lone Shieling is a the stone crofter's hut built in 1942 to commemorate Cape Breton Island's Scottish heritage. Located in the Grande Anse Valley, the hut, trail and washroom facility presents unique management challenges. Lone Shieling has been designated a federal heritage building and is managed as a culturally important resource in the national park.



A reproduction of a stone crofter's hut – Lone Shieling. Shanna Fidler

Challenges and Opportunities

Lone Shieling is a high use area located in an ecologically important and sensitive valley bottom. This has led to a number of management concerns including: air pollution from idling vehicles in the parking area; protecting the cultural resource; use of a suitable and cost-effective roofing material that does not compromise the ecological integrity of the area or the heritage character of the building;

management of the washroom facility and associated impacts on a nearby salmon stream.

The old growth hardwood forest in the Grande Anse valley may be suffering from air pollution caused by the traffic passing through the valley. Currently the park is monitoring levels of ozone in the area.

6.1.1 Objective #1

Enhance the partnerships needed to promote connectivity of protected areas.

Actions:

- Share scientific information to enhance decision making in the greater park ecosystem.
- Participate in public land use strategic initiatives within the greater park ecosystem, such as NSDNR's current Natural Resources Strategy project.

6.1.2 Objective #2

Visitor experience, environmental, aesthetic and cultural values of these areas are ensured.

Actions:

- Develop a strategy to address the Lone Shieling Day Use Area, the adjacent salmon stream and surrounding air quality.
- Monitor use of Halfway Brook and associated environmental conditions.

6.1.3 Objective #3

Strengthen the Northern offer by improving infrastructure to respond to visitor needs and interests, and involving communities.

Actions:

- Investigate options to improve the Glasgow Lakes trail, which provides an opportunity for experiencing the Taiga land region – a rare experience in Nova Scotia, and implement environmental protection strategies in order to protect the sensitive environment and increase visitor experience opportunities.
- Reopen Aspy Trail.

- Working with partners, explore the possibility of offering a natural/cultural experience where visitors not only enjoy natural surroundings but may also immerse themselves in the deep cultural roots within the communities, such as the Highland Museum.
- Increase cooperation and integration with the regional tourism sector, including promoting local businesses, and participating in community tourism events and initiatives.



"Nature must always be the architect's model" according to Stanley Thompson. Enjoy the natural setting as you play golf at Highlands Links. Chris Gallow, Highland Links Golf Course

6.2 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE AREA: INGONISH BEACH RECREATION AREA

History and Context

Ingonish Campground is a large, open campground with 90 unserviced sites. There are showers, kitchen shelters with wood stoves, communal fireplaces, a playground, and a wheelchair-accessible washroom. The Ingonish Beach Day Use Area, adjacent Ingonish Campground, is the only beach in the park featuring both fresh and salt water swimming. The day use area has washrooms and change houses, a playground, picnic area, large sports field, tennis courts, and a canteen that operates during July and August. Surf guards are on duty at both saltwater and freshwater beaches during July and August. These amenities make Ingonish Campground and Ingonish Beach Day Use Area well suited to families, novice campers or first time visitors who are looking for a safe and comfortable experience. This area is also used by Ingonish-area residents as a community park.



Camping at Ingonish Beach. Dale Wilson

Golfing has been available in the Park since 1941 with the development of the Highlands Links golf course. The 18-hole course provides a unique experience for golfing in a spectacular national park setting. Highlands Links is internationally recognized and is consistently rated as one of the premier courses in Canada. The course was designed by Stanley Thompson to blend with the park's environment and to capitalize on its spectacular natural setting. Given the cultural importance of the course and its national park setting, Highlands Links is managed to maintain its historic character and as a model for sound environmental management. The course has been recognized for its success in environmental management. Although golf is not a typical activity for national parks, the park environment contributes significantly to the golfers' experience and presents an opportunity to engage a group of visitors that may not otherwise visit national parks.

Challenges and Opportunities

The last major improvements to Ingonish Campground took place in the 1970s and the campground facilities are now dated. Over the same period of time there have been significant changes in Canada that have impacted camping and outdoor recreation: increased urbanization, an aging population, increased immigration and ethnic diversity and youth gravitating to technology rather than nature. To address this, the Park must develop a fresh and unique camping experience.

The number of golfers rose to a peak of 28,000 in 2000. Since 2004, there has been a steady decline in rounds played. One of the largest challenges facing the course is the

inconsistent approach to long term planning and maintenance for Highland Links. Potential enhancements such as recapitalization of assets have been forced to compete with other park priorities, leading to an inability to implement a strategic plan to keep the golf course in authentic condition.

Parks Canada recognizes the significant value of the Highlands Links to the National Park and the communities in the surrounding area. Highlands Links is an integral part of the visitor experience in the area and as such, the efficient operation of this facility is crucial. Highlands Links also faces stiff competition from new “modern” golf courses. The traveling golfer has high expectations when coming to a lauded course with an internationally recognised reputation, such as Highlands Links. The challenge Highlands Links faces is maintaining the course conditions with the capital investment it receives.

Spiny-cheeked Crayfish, and invasive species, has recently been identified within the waters of Freshwater Lake, a lake adjacent Ingonish Beach Day Use Area. This crayfish species affects freshwater snails and mussels through aggressive predation. Parks Canada staff have been removing individuals, monitoring this population, and researching long-term management options.

**6.2.1 Objective #1:
Understand current and potential visitor needs and expectations with regards to our camping offer.**

Actions:

- Use current market research to guide development of high-quality and distinctive day-use and camping opportunities at Ingonish to draw new visitors.
- Develop a recapitalization plan for campgrounds to address infrastructure (i.e. electrical and water systems), ecological restoration requirements and to ensure that they remain relevant to visitor needs and expectations.
- Improve promotion for autumn season camping at Ingonish Campground. Fall offers an outstanding experience with vibrant colours, tranquillity, pleasant weather and no bugs, yet it is significantly underutilized.
- Using VIP surveys and visitor attendance statistics, monitor the effectiveness of investments and make necessary adaptations to ensure visitor satisfaction.

**6.2.2 Objective #2:
Facilitate opportunities for ‘soft’ adventure, with the objective of sparking interest in outdoor pursuits.**

Actions:

- Consolidate and modernize facilities to offer better services for visitors and to ‘green’ operations.
- Develop interpretive products in Ingonish that complement natural and cultural features to convey a sense of place.
- Offer packaged camping experiences, where gear will be supplied as park staff provides visitors with a varied and educational camping experience in a safe, organized and comfortable way.

**6.2.3 Objective #3:
Ensure the Highland Links is managed and presented as one of Canada’s premier golf courses.**

Actions:

- Restore Highlands Links to the original design intent of Stanley Thompson.
- Develop an optimum business approach for guiding Highland Links into the future.
- Support the Stanley Thompson design/intent heritage values and present and celebrate the designation of Stanley Thompson as a person of National Significance.
- Operate the course as a model of environmental management.
- Interpret the cultural significance of the location of the course, and its relationship to the creation of the Park.

**6.2.4 Objective #4:
 Restore the aquatic ecosystem health of
 Freshwater Lake.**

Actions:

- Continue current removal program to reduce the invasive Spiny-cheeked Crayfish population as much as reasonable; explore and implement other active measures aimed at reducing numbers and preventing spread to other waterbodies.
- Re-establish elements of native biodiversity where feasible, such as white perch.
- Continue to enhance visitor and general public awareness of crayfish to help lessen the spread to other waterbodies.
- Work with external agencies to collaborate on education and mitigation strategies.

**6.3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR
 THE AREA: ACADIAN COAST**

History and Context

Before Cape Breton Highlands National Park was established, more than 30 Acadian families living between the Chéticamp River and French Mountain -- an area that is now part of the National Park. This area, known as Cap-Rouge, included several small communities.

Although the rocky cliffs and jagged coastline of Cap-Rouge offered very little shelter for fishing boats, cod was plentiful near these shores. Little by little fishing activity became concentrated at La Bloc. Although La Bloc was the economic centre with its lobster cannery, fish shacks and wharf, people lived not only

in the neighbourhood of the wharf but also at Ruisseau du Canadien, Rivière à Lazare (now known as Corney Brook), Ruisseau des Maurice, Presqu'île, Source de la Montain, Le Buttereau and La Rigouèche. Fishing brought pioneers here as early as 1821. Today these fishing families from Cap-Rouge, their land expropriated at the time of park establishment, reside for the most part in Chéticamp and the surrounding area.

The Chéticamp Campground is located in the Rigouèche Valley, approximately 8 km north of the village of Chéticamp, with mountains on one side and the river on the other. Chéticamp Campground has 125 unserviced sites; 13 electrical sites; 24 sites with 3-way hook-ups; wheelchair-accessible sites and washrooms. There are both wooded and open sites, hot showers, playgrounds and kitchen shelters with wood stoves. Within walking distance, from the site is the outdoor theatre featuring evening nature programs and concerts, the Information Centre with exhibits, slide show and nature bookstore, as well as hiking trails.

Located 15 km from Chéticamp, Corney Brook is an oceanside campground with 20 unserviced sites. There are fireplaces and one washroom building with flush toilets, but there is no potable water on site. There is ocean swimming and hiking nearby.

La Bloc Beach is the only beach on the western side of the park. A pebbly beach, it is excellent for walking but also is popular with sunbathers and swimmers. It is also a spectacular place to watch the sun set.

Challenges and Opportunities

During a major storm event, the road at La Bloc was severely damaged, and the Park considered closing it. Feedback from the community however made it clear that repair was a more culturally appropriate response. This area, and the adjacent Cabot Trail, remains vulnerable to coastal erosion during severe storm events.

Corney Brook/Chéticamp campgrounds: The last major improvements to these campgrounds took place in 1994, and the campground facilities are now dated. Over the same period of time there have been significant changes in Canada that have impacted



The Cabot Trail looking towards Chéticamp. Parks Canada



La Bloc. Gordon Harvey

camping and outdoor recreation: increased urbanization, an aging population, increased immigration and ethnic diversity and youth gravitating to technology rather than nature.

**6.3.1 Objective #1:
Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.**

Actions:

- In cooperation with local residents, ensure that local cultural heritage and knowledge is appropriately incorporated into research, visitor experience, and educational programming.
- Develop opportunities to effectively honour local history, including the protection and maintenance of La Bloc.
- Develop the “Heritage Trail” concept and construction: Old Cabot Trail – longer, more challenging hiking, community to community.
- Ensure that that any new exhibits and films, as well as any new interpretation panels in the Visitor Centre include updated history and cultural heritage themes.

**6.3.2 Objective #2:
Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art and culture infrastructure.**

Actions:

- In partnership with communities and cultural groups, encourage events in the park that celebrate the cultural heritage of the park and the area.

- Recapitalize Corney Brook campground as a pilot showpiece – modern camping experience: green, self sufficient, off the grid, low impact.
- Ensure marketing and outreach strategies emphasize the park’s cultural heritage to visitors (current and anticipated) and outreach audiences.
- Explore an “Art in the Park” concept with local community.

**6.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE AREA:
CABOT TRAIL**

History and Context

The Cabot Trail is the most important visitor facility in Cape Breton Highlands National Park and is the primary means by which people visit the park and northern Cape Breton. The Cabot Trail is of key importance to northern Cape Breton and the province as an internationally recognized scenic drive, the premier vehicle touring route in Atlantic Canada, and the only highway transportation corridor linking the communities of northern Cape Breton.

Driving the Cabot Trail is the most popular visitor activity at the Park. This long-established visitor experience is supported by numerous roadside look-offs and extensive interpretive exhibits, which are located throughout the park. Visitor surveys have shown high levels of satisfaction with viewpoints and look-offs along the Cabot Trail. As a historic roadway that was central to the



The Cabot Trail. Shanna Fiddler

establishment of Cape Breton Highlands, there are opportunities to further enhance the vistas originally intended by the road’s designers through viewplane maintenance. The physical condition of the road is the most significant challenge facing the Cabot Trail.

Challenges and Opportunities

Parks Canada manages approximately one third of the Cabot Trail. The remainder is owned and managed by the Province of Nova Scotia. Past recapitalization expenditures have not kept pace with the rate of deterioration and the condition ranges from good to fair to poor depending on the section of road in question. In order to keep the roadway in good condition and to maintain its status as a major tourism attraction, significant funding for ongoing maintenance and recapitalization is required both for the portion of the road within the park and the entire length of the Cabot Trail in northern Cape Breton.

Cycling the Cabot Trail is an alternate and physically challenging way to tour the park that has been increasing in popularity in recent years. Visitors that cycle the Cabot Trail are faced with a high volume of motorized traffic, and have to compete with automobiles for road space. On a highway that has as many twists, turns and climbs as the Cabot Trail, there are a number of safety concerns.

As with any highway in a nation park, there are concerns related to habitat connectivity and quality related to water flow and associated culverts, road salt impacts on water quality and wetlands, and migrations across highways, especially amphibian.

Since for many, the destination is really the Cabot Trail rather than the park, there is confusion about the need to pay and where the park is, and about what is in the park and what is not in the park. Parks Canada also has very little wayfinding signage to park, and Nova Scotia highway signage rules do impede some improvements to this. Parks Canada has installed new signage on the main highway, which conform to Nova Scotia highway signage.



Driving the Cabot Trail. Shanna Fiddler

6.4.1 Objective #1
Maintain the Cabot Trail as a destination driving experience and as well as a critical transportation corridor.

Actions:

- Maintain viewplanes at the look-offs on the Cabot Trail to optimize opportunities for visitors to appreciate the significant features of the park, and scenic and historic vistas.
- Participate in regional planning initiatives that relate to the role of the highway in northern Cape Breton.
- Collaborate with the Province of Nova Scotia on consistent approach to road maintenance.

6.4.2 Objective #2

Reduce the impacts of winter highway maintenance on adjacent wetland and aquatic ecosystems while maintaining visitor safety

Actions:

- Examine current road salt application practices which impact adjacent sensitive wetlands; identify and implement mitigation measures such as application reductions in these zones and alternatives to current salt application.
- Monitor impacts through the Ecological Integrity Monitoring Plan and promote continuous improvement.
- Improve information and education efforts aimed at motorists.

6.4.3 Objective #3

Establish the Cabot trail as a destination cycling experience.

Actions:

- Use current market research to guide development of high-quality cycling experience.
- Review trail system, including the Cabot Trail, for mountain biking, and develop trails for use by cyclists. Create infrastructure to support activities, such as bike paths to alleviate safety concerns related to highway sharing, accessible rest stops for cyclists, with bike stands, water stations etc.

7.0 Zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration



Fall colours on North Mountain. Shanna Fiddler

Parks Canada uses a zoning system to recommend the types of activities that are appropriate in specific areas based on ecological and cultural resource sensitivities and the types of visitor experiences that can be sustained in the long-term. As such, zoning is a valuable tool in the translation of general policy into park-specific application. It sets limits on what activities can occur and where they can occur in the park and provides a graphical summary of the management objectives for those areas. Parks Canada uses a system of five zones ranging in intensity of use from Special Preservation to Park Services.

Zoning plans are based on the best available natural and cultural resource information. Given the importance of zoning in supporting management objectives, the zoning plan will be periodically reviewed and assessed during the life of the management plan and amended as required as part of a management plan review process. Particular attention will be paid to Zones I and II. During this management plan review, no changes have been made to the zoning plan, as outlined in the 1986 Management Plan and 1994 Amendment (see map 4). As well, consultation and boundary delineation for the designation of a wilderness area in accordance with Section 14 of the

Canada National Parks Act, will continue for this management planning cycle.

Zone I: Special Preservation

Zone I is the most protective category in the Parks Canada zoning system. This zone is applied to areas which deserve special preservation because they contain or support unique, threatened, or endangered natural or cultural features, or are among the best examples of the features that represent the Maritime Acadian Highlands Natural Region. Within Zone I areas, preservation is the primary management concern. Motorized access and circulation is not permitted and visitor access is strictly controlled. Approximately 14.9% of Cape Breton Highlands National Park falls under this category.

Zone II: Wilderness

Zone II designation provides a high level of protection for large areas that provide good representation of the natural region and will be conserved in a wilderness state. Perpetuation of native ecosystems and ecological processes is the key management goal. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience the park's ecosystems first hand in ways that require few, if any, rudimentary services and facilities. Motorized access and circulation is not permitted. Approximately 71.8% of Cape Breton National Park falls under this category.

Zone III: Natural Environment

Zone III designation is given to areas that are managed as natural environments and that provide opportunities for visitors to experience the park through outdoor recreation activities requiring minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. While motorized access may be allowed, it is controlled. Approximately 10.3% of Cape Breton Highlands National Park falls under this category.

Zone IV: Outdoor Recreation

Zone IV designation is given to small areas that are capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for education and outdoor recreation, including the major facilities and infrastructure required for visitor experience. Direct access by motorized vehicles is permitted. Approximately 2.4% of Cape Breton Highlands National Park falls under this category.

Zone V: Park Services

Zone V designation has been given to the Ingonish Headquarters area owing to its concentration of visitor-support services, Park administration functions, and outdoor recreational opportunities. Motorized access is acceptable in Zone V, but protection of natural values is important. Approximately 0.6% of Cape Breton Highlands National Park falls under this category.

Declared Wilderness Area

Any area of a national park that exists in a natural state or that is capable of returning to a natural state may be declared, by regulation, as a wilderness area under section 14 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. Unlike the zoning plan, which is based on policy, a Declared Wilderness Area (DWA) is established in law, by regulation under the Act. Once established, no activity that would compromise the wilderness character of these areas can be authorized. Initial wilderness declaration mapping was done for the park area, meetings were held with the Mi'kmaq and public consultations were conducted throughout the management planning process. It became clear during discussions with both the Mi'kmaq and the local communities, that more discussion and further input is required. Cape Breton Highlands will continue to consult with the Mi'kmaq and local communities about the geographical boundaries of a Declared Wilderness area for the Park, with the intent on moving forward with a declared wilderness area in the next management plan.

8.0 Administration and Operations



Winter driving near Fishing Cove. Arlie Fitzgerald

The Cabot Trail is of key importance to northern Cape Breton and the province as a whole as an internationally recognized scenic drive, the premier touring route in Atlantic Canada and the only highway transportation corridor linking the communities of northern Cape Breton. Roads are a key component of the park's infrastructure, providing access to a variety of park facilities and visitor opportunities. Maintaining an adequate and safe road system continues to be a management priority.

Parks Canada manages approximately one third of the Cabot Trail. As a result of budget 2005 and the current Economic Action Plan, some major construction work was initiated in 2008. This includes re-surfacing, bridge work and construction on the Cabot trail, replacement of the Chéticamp River bridge and, adapting the Cabot trail as a bicycle friendly roadway.

Intensive winter road maintenance is required to ensure public safety on the Cabot Trail. As a result, large volumes of salt are used to maintain passable road conditions. Parks Canada's objective is to use road salt in

the most environmentally responsible manner while ensuring public safety. It is important for the Park to further determine correlation between the new brine application system implemented in the last 5 years and ecosystem health. To further reduce environmental impacts, winter road safety materials and practices will be explored where possible.

Over the life of this management plan, Parks Canada will continue to seek cost-effective means of carrying out park operations. Parks Canada will seek opportunities for partnerships, where appropriate, with the Province of Nova Scotia, and other agencies such as Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Timely and appropriate maintenance will help to ensure that park assets are maintained to acceptable standards over the full span of their economic life. Park structures, facilities, grounds and roadways will be operated and maintained to comply with established safety and health standards, in a manner that promotes environmental stewardship.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is developing an Environmental Management System to reduce the environmental impact of Parks Canada operations. The Park will continue to implement this action plan over the life of this management plan, and will promote environmental stewardship by integrating the use of sound environmental practices and technologies into park operations. Parks Canada will also demonstrate leadership by exploring opportunities to integrate renewable energy technologies into existing park facilities, improving the environmental performance of park campgrounds, and using appropriate native vegetation around park facilities and road corridors.

The environmental performance of existing park buildings can also be improved during scheduled recapitalization through design modifications and the installation of



Chéticamp Visitor Centre. Shanna Fiddler

infrastructure that improves energy efficiency. Over the course of this plan, Cape Breton Highlands will investigate opportunities for implementing technologies to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Reduction of fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions through energy conservation measures is a priority for the park Environmental Management System.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park has a large inventory of assets, many of which are in deteriorating or poor condition. Major investment is required to recapitalize the asset base, some of which is in excess of 50 years of age. At present, 28% of the asset base is rated as good, 42% is rated fair, 27% poor and 3% are rated for closure. Recapitalization of infrastructure will be strategic in order to focus investments on facilities that directly support and enhance visitor experience and ecological integrity.



Ingonish Visitor Centre. Jocelyne Quann

The Park operates two information centres, one in Ingonish and one in Chéticamp. Bilingual staff are on hand to provide knowledge of hiking trails, facilities, current events and community services. The Chéticamp Visitor Centres holds information displays to give visitors a sense of what the Park is all about and why it is here in Northern Cape Breton.

The Ingonish Visitor Centre is a small historic stone building 'in the middle of the road'. Staff offer the same expert information services: selling park permits, giving directions, and providing current facility information.

As asset improvement progresses in CBHNP, the following elements will be taken into consideration: low energy consumption, environmentally friendly design and construction, modern technologies, design and landscape details respecting early 20th century architecture where applicable and overall visitor experience.

9.0 Monitoring



Dale Wilson

Management planning is not a static process. Monitoring of the on-going implementation of the plan provides an evaluation of the planned actions to determine that they are effective in achieving the key strategies. The management planning cycle incorporates monitoring and evaluation to assess progress. Annual implementation reports record performance in putting the management plan into action. State of the Park Reports provide an assessment of the park's condition and trends relative to the Agency's three mandate areas and report on the progress in meeting corporate performance expectations. "State of" reports also give an account of what has been done to maintain or improve the state of the park, by assessing performance in achieving desired results identified in the management plan. A State of the Park Report will form the basis for the Cape Breton Highlands five-year management plan review, and for determining major issues and challenges to be addressed in the next management planning cycle. The State of the Park Report for Cape Breton Highlands National Park is currently being developed, and is

expected to be completed by the summer of 2010.

Parks Canada utilizes two types of monitoring: condition and management effectiveness.

9.1 CONDITION MONITORING

Condition monitoring is designed to answer the question "What is the current state of the park?" It is a snapshot of long-term trends that serves to determine if the Park's ecological condition, visitor experience offer, and educational program is improving, deteriorating or remaining relatively stable.

9.1.1 Ecological Integrity

A comprehensive suite of key ecosystem indicators has been developed in recent years, resulting in the implementation of a data collection and management program. The Park's Ecological Integrity Monitoring Plan contributes directly to State of the Park reporting.

The primary focus of the ecological condition monitoring program will be the forest and aquatic ecosystems. These ecosystems are the primary focus due to their size, importance, sensitivity to potential stressors and development, and stated concern in past park management plans. A basic monitoring program will also be carried out in barrens, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems. The monitoring plan built on existing data, partnerships, and new research affiliations. Each ecosystem will be monitored using a mixture of landscape and plot level projects that are representative of the park ecosystems. The forest program will focus effort on both the boreal and the Acadian forest.

The first State of the Park Report using the new ecosystem indicators is currently in production. Key concerns that are currently flagged include moose, boreal forest, aquatic connectivity, chloride impacts on wetlands, and air pollution as determined by lichen monitoring.

9.1.2 Cultural Resources

Over the course of the next two management plans, Parks Canada will implement a structured monitoring program that will measure the state of cultural resource management in Cape Breton Highlands National Park. This program will use the comprehensive Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation, Cultural Resources Values Statement, and Cultural Resource Conservation and Monitoring Plan developed under Key Strategy #3 to develop measurable data and action on the ground.

9.1.3 Visitor Experience

During the course of the management plan, Parks Canada will implement a structured monitoring program that will measure the state of visitor experience offerings to ensure that Cape Breton Highlands National Park is successfully facilitating opportunities for visitors to establish a strong sense of connection to the Highlands. The program will use Visitor Information Program Surveys and trends in attendance as tools to monitor condition.

9.1.4 Public Outreach Education

The success of Parks Canada Public Outreach Education programming will be monitored at

a national level, and Cape Breton Highlands National Park will implement activities that conform to national baselines. Generally the public will have an understanding of the Park and Parks Canada through public outreach education programs where they receive information that is of interest to them when they want it through a variety of media. Cape Breton Highlands will also ensure that interested partners and stakeholders will have the opportunity to join the Park and the Agency in joint initiatives that meet mutual interests.

9.2 EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

Effectiveness monitoring evaluates the specific results of direct management action. These are shorter-term performance evaluations used to determine if management decisions leading to actions are achieving the intended results.

9.2.1 Ecological Integrity

A major performance expectation in the 2009/10 Parks Canada Corporate Plan is that all parks will improve aspects of ecological integrity by 2014. Active management projects that restore a valued ecosystem component or significantly reduce an ecosystem stressor will be a key method to meet this performance expectation. The results of actions will have to be demonstrated by management effectiveness monitoring. Four key projects are currently underway that have management effectiveness components are American marten augmentations, road salt reductions in sensitive areas, contaminated site restoration, and removal of invasive organisms such as crayfish and Japanese Knotweed. Future strategies are anticipated to improve conditions in the boreal forest using vegetation and herbivore management.

9.2.2 Visitor Experience

Management decisions related to Visitor Experience will also be monitored for effectiveness. For example, through the offer of relevant opportunities has the quality of the visitor experience been improved? Has the action resulted in greater use of a trail or a facility, with perhaps an associated increase in revenue? Effectiveness is measured both



Enjoy the views afforded from the top of Franey Mountain. Dale Wilson

qualitatively and quantitatively, and the desired results are twofold – an increase in the level of satisfaction of visitors thereby creating a sense of personal connection, combined with a prudent expenditure of public funds.

Several indicators are used to monitor the effectiveness of management actions at CBHNP:

- The Visitor Information Program (VIP) survey, conducted every five years, assesses visitor satisfaction levels concerning various aspects of park facilities, services and programs. Parks Canada strives to have over 90% of visitors satisfied with their experience, and over 50% very satisfied with their experience.
- Visitor statistics and attendance numbers can be used to infer satisfaction through repeat visitation (visitors are satisfied with the experiences and make the decision to return) or new growth areas that suggest park products are meeting user demands and expectations.
- Direct feedback through visitor comments and public consultation exercises.
- Uptake on the “soft adventure” camping experience and reaching new audiences.

Other visitor experience ventures alluded to in the plan but not yet fully developed will, when implemented, be scrutinized for their effectiveness in the same fashion.

9.2.3 Public Outreach Education

One of Parks Canada’s priorities is to build support for national protected heritage places, including National Parks, through increasing Canadians’ awareness, appreciation and understanding of them. Parks Canada Agency is in the process of developing a national program that will measure Canadians’ level of awareness and understanding of Parks Canada’s administered places and the level of stakeholder and partner engagement in their protection and presentation. Cape Breton Highlands National Park will continue to develop activities and programs that will help to achieve the national objectives and contribute to the national outcome. The Park will also measure the effectiveness of its activities and programs in reaching targeted Canadians, and in engaging its stakeholders and partners.

10.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impact of its actions on natural ecosystems and cultural resources. The "*Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*," requires an environmental assessment of all plans and policies submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a Minister for approval, including management plans for national parks.

Accordingly, a strategic assessment of the objectives, programs, and management actions outlined in the management plan was carried out. The objectives of the environmental assessment were:

- to ensure that the strategic directions, objectives, and specific actions contained within the plan respect and support the ecological integrity goals and objectives for the Cape Breton Highlands National Park;
- to assess the implications of various alternatives considered in the plan, to enhance positive effects and avoid or mitigate negative effects;
- to ensure that the plan adequately addresses the multiple stressors and concerns relating to the residual and cumulative effects; and,
- to document the potential tradeoffs and implications, including both positive and adverse residual impacts of the overall plan.

The assessment included evaluation of cumulative environmental effects from all proposed actions. It also considered the full range of potential impacts on the natural and cultural resources of the Park, both from ongoing operations and from proposed actions.

Relevant federal environmental policies, including those of Parks Canada, were considered in the policy review. The proposed strategic directions outlined in the management plan are consistent with these policies. Implementation of the management direction and the specific actions that are proposed are expected to result in the maintenance of ecological integrity for Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada.

The management plan proposes several management actions that may be subject to project-specific environmental assessments under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. These initiatives are:

- Moose removal and habitat manipulation;
- Reintroductions/augmentations of populations of species;
- Fish passage modification;
- Culvert replacement;
- Excavation for cultural resource inventory/monitoring purposes;
- Special events that occur in the Park;
- Installation of new structures;
- Restoration/recapitalization activities;
- New recreational activities;
- Vegetation management, salt management, and highway improvements;
- Recapitalization of Park infrastructure; and
- Contaminated sites remediation.

Collectively, the strategic direction and management actions outlined in the management plan will contribute to an overall improvement in the ecological integrity of Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Planned Actions

Implementation of a management plan is directly linked to the Field Unit's annual business plan, where resources are specifically allocated for plan implementation. The following high priority items will be completed within the next five years.

Key Strategy #1

(Chose Your Own) Big Adventure

The Park will employ primary and secondary social science research to understand our visitors, and develop opportunities that meet their needs and expectations. Continue to administer VIP surveys to measure satisfaction levels, personal connection and better understand the expectations of visitors, and identify social science gaps.

Develop a suite of indicators defined from a visitor's perspective that will monitor the effectiveness of interpretation programs and visitor experience investments. Indicators will include VIP surveys, attendance statistics, revenue and website hits. Measures and thresholds will be established to effectively evaluate the state of the visitor offer.

Enhance the Explorer Quotient menus, and have them available for pre-trip planning in print and online.

Based on identified needs and interests of visitors, review trail system, including the Cabot Trail, and consider developing trails for use by cyclists. If feasible, create infrastructure to support activities, such as accessible rest stops for cyclists, with bike stands, water stations etc.

Use market research, and explore opportunities to partner with in-bound receptive operators to develop programs and activities that fill niche markets, including packages for activities in communities and in the Park.

Increase the participation of communities in Cape Breton Highlands National Park management and decision-making through true engagement between the park and local communities, including exploring community interest in the creation of a local advisory committee.

Encourage and work with local communities and the Mi'kmaq to develop tourism offers or other economic development opportunities associated with or complementary to the Park's offer and meet the needs and expectations of visitors.

Increase cooperation and integration with the regional tourism sector, including promoting local businesses, and participating in community tourism events and initiatives.

Key Strategy #2

Telling Our Stories

Develop a strategy that ensures true engagement between the Park and local communities, including exploring community interest in the creation of a local advisory committee, and understanding how stakeholders want to participate and interact with us.

Participate in speakers series that utilizes both Park staff and local community members.

Prepare a Service Delivery Agreement with the Atlantic Service Centre to undertake the necessary research for the following deliverables:

- A comprehensive Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation
- A Cultural Resources Values Statement
- A Cultural Resource Conservation and Monitoring Plan
(a working document, measureable data, action on the ground).

Update web content to include experiences, such as photo and story submissions from residents, staff and visitors.

Jointly identify resources and develop a workplan with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia for surveys and research related to Mi'kmaq cultural resources.

Engage regional Mi'kmaq communities in the management and presentation of related cultural resources and stories, increasing the presentation and interpretation of the historical significance of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

In conjunction with the other sites in Cape Breton Field Unit, develop outreach material for use in high-traffic pedestrian locations (e.g. ferries) to improve awareness of the Park.

Key Strategy #3

The Mosaic Landscape

Monitoring of species of concern population numbers and employ active measures such as reintroductions/augmentation of populations of species of concern, as warranted.

Collaborate/information share with Newfoundland Field Units on moose issues.

Mitigate the impacts of invasive species. Educate and promote stewardship in order to prevent incidental species invasions.

Investigate the role of fire in forest succession, and where appropriate promote natural fire regime. Consult with local and provincial fire management agencies and take traditional knowledge into account. Develop a fire plan that addresses both the need for fire suppression as well as the potential for fire as a resource management tool.

Engage the public in active park resource management activities including the establishment of a Citizen Science program for monitoring, restoration and invasive species control.

Complete a GIS tool to assess the connectivity impacts of all road and trail stream crossings structures; develop a priority list of structures which have the greatest impact on aquatic connectivity.

Key Strategy #4

Mi'kmaq Collaborative Management – Moose and Beyond

Work with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia to develop a clear approach to Mi'kmaq admission and use of the Site.

Collaboratively define the Mi'kmaq role in interim planning and management planning in the future.

Area Management#1

Northern Highlands

Share scientific information to enhance decision making in the greater park ecosystem.

Participate in public land use strategic initiatives within the greater park ecosystem, such as NSDNR's current Natural Resources Strategy project.

Monitor use of Halfway Brook and associated environmental conditions.

Investigate options to improve the Glasgow Lakes trail, which provides an opportunity for experiencing the Taiga land region – a rare experience in Nova Scotia, and implement environmental protection strategies in order to protect the sensitive environment and increase the visitor experience opportunities.

Reopen Aspy Trail.

Area Management#2

Ingonish Beach Recreation Area

Use current market research to guide development of high-quality and distinctive day-use and camping opportunities at Ingonish to draw new visitors.

Develop a recapitalization plan for campgrounds to address infrastructure (i.e. electrical and water systems), ecological restoration requirements and to ensure that they remain relevant to visitor needs and expectations.

Using VIP surveys and visitor attendance statistics, monitor the effectiveness of investments and make necessary adaptations to ensure visitor satisfaction.

Develop interpretive products in Ingonish that complement natural and cultural features to convey a sense of place.

Develop an optimum business approach for guiding Highland Links into the future.

Operate the course as a model of environmental management.

Continue current removal program to reduce the invasive Spiny-cheeked Crayfish population as much as reasonable; explore and implement other active measures aimed at reducing numbers and preventing spread to other waterbodies.

Continue and enhance visitor and general public awareness of crayfish to help lessen the spread to other waterbodies.

Work with external agencies to collaborate on education and mitigation strategies.

Area Management#3

Acadian Coast

In cooperation with local residents, ensure that local cultural heritage and knowledge is appropriately incorporated into research, visitor experience, and educational programming.

Develop opportunities to effectively honour local history, including the protection and maintenance of La Bloc.

In partnership with communities and cultural groups, encourage events in the Park that celebrate the cultural heritage of the Park and the area.

Area Management#4

Cabot Trail

Maintain viewplanes at the look-offs on the Cabot Trail to optimize opportunities for visitors to appreciate the significant features of the Park, and scenic and historic vistas.

Participate in regional planning initiatives that relate to the role of the highway in northern Cape Breton.

Collaborate with the Province of Nova Scotia on consistent approach to road maintenance.

Use current market research to guide development of high-quality cycling experience.

Review trail system, including the Cabot Trail, for mountain biking, and develop trails for use by cyclists. Create infrastructure to support activities, such as bike paths to alleviate safety concerns related to highway sharing, accessible rest stops for cyclists, with bike stands, water stations etc.

Examine current road salt application practices which impact adjacent sensitive wetlands; identify and implement mitigation measures such as application reductions in these zones and alternatives to current salt application.

Monitor impacts through the EI Monitoring Plan and promote continuous improvement.

Improve information and education efforts aimed at motorists.

APPENDIX B

How the CBHNP Management Plan Supports
 Parks Canada’s Corporate Performance Expectations

HERITAGE RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Corporate Performance Expectations	Objectives that support corporate performance expectation
Ecological Integrity	
80% of national parks have at least 1 improved ecological integrity indicator from March 2008 to March 2014.	5.3.1 Forest ecosystem health is in moderate to good condition and improving.
	5.3.2 Visitor experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage in active management and monitoring.
	5.3.3 Aquatic connectivity contributes to strong links within the terrestrial mosaic and with the marine ecosystem.
	5.4.2 Natural and cultural resource management is informed and enhanced through traditional knowledge and expanded world-views.
	6.1.1 Enhance the partnerships needed to promote connectivity of protected areas.
	6.1.2 Visitor experience, environmental, aesthetic and cultural values of these areas are ensured.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained and presented as one of Canada’s premier golf courses.
	6.2.4 Restore the aquatic ecosystem health of Freshwater Lake.
	6.4.2 Reduce the impacts of winter highway maintenance on adjacent wetland ecosystems while maintaining visitor safety.
Cultural Resources	
The condition of cultural resources administered by Parks Canada in national parks is maintained.	5.2.3 The range, significance and condition of cultural resources within the Park is understood.
	5.4.2 Natural and cultural resource management is informed and enhanced through traditional knowledge and expanded world-views.
	6.1.2 Visitor experience, environmental, aesthetic and cultural values of these areas are ensured.
	6.1.3 Strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained and presented as one of Canada’s premier golf courses.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.4.1 Maintain the Cabot Trail as a destination driving experience and as well as a critical transportation corridor.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE	
Corporate Performance Expectations	Objectives that support corporate performance expectation
<p>85% of visitors at all surveyed locations that consider the place is meaningful to them.</p> <p>90% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied, and 50% are very satisfied with their visit.</p>	5.1.1 A range of new and enhanced visitor opportunities for adventure is developed.
	5.1.2 A seamless menu of activities, developed with partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.
	5.2.2 Interpretive programming and visitor experience products and experiences are enhanced and enriched with human history and cultural knowledge.
	5.3.2 Visitor experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage in active management and monitoring.
	6.1.3 Strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.2.1 Understand current and potential visitor needs and expectations with regards to our camping offer.
	6.2.2 Facilitate opportunities for 'soft' adventure, with the objective of sparking interest in outdoor pursuits.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained as Canada's premier public golf course.
	6.2.4 Restore the aquatic ecosystem health of Freshwater Lake.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.
	6.4.1 Maintain the Cabot Trail as a destination driving experience and as well as a critical transportation corridor.
	6.4.2 Reduce the impacts of winter highway maintenance on adjacent wetland ecosystems while maintaining visitor safety.

Corporate Performance Expectations	Objectives that support corporate performance expectation
Marketing and Promotion	
<p>Increase the number of visits at CBH by 16%, by 2012.</p>	5.1.2 A seamless menu of activities, developed with partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.
	6.1.3 Strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.2.1 Understand current and potential visitor needs and expectations with regards to our camping offer.
	6.2.2 Facilitate opportunities for 'soft' adventure, with the objective of sparking interest in outdoor pursuits.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained and presented as one of Canada's premier golf courses.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.
	6.4.1 Maintain the Cabot Trail as a destination driving experience and as well as a critical transportation corridor.
	6.4.2 Reduce the impacts of winter highway maintenance on adjacent wetland ecosystems while maintaining visitor safety.
	6.4.3 Establish the Cabot trail as a destination cycling experience.
National Parks Interpretation	
<p>60% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned about the heritage of the location.</p>	5.1.1 A range of new and enhanced visitor opportunities for adventure is developed.
	5.1.2 A seamless menu of activities, developed with partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.
	5.2.2 Interpretive programming and visitor experience products and experiences are enhanced and enriched with human history and cultural knowledge.
	5.3.2 Visitor experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage in active management and monitoring.
	6.1.3 Strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.2.2 Facilitate opportunities for 'soft' adventure, with the objective of sparking interest in outdoor pursuits.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained and presented as one of Canada's premier golf courses.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.

Corporate Performance Expectations	Objectives that support corporate performance expectation
National Parks Visitor Activities and Services	
90% of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit	5.1.1 A range of new and enhanced visitor opportunities for adventure is developed.
	5.1.2 A seamless menu of activities, developed with partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.
	5.2.2 Interpretive programming and visitor experience products and experiences are enhanced and enriched with human history and cultural knowledge.
	5.3.2 Visitor experience is enhanced through opportunities to engage in active management and monitoring.
	6.1.2 Visitor experience, environmental, aesthetic and cultural values of these areas are ensured.
	6.1.3 To strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.2.1 Understand current and potential visitor needs and expectations with regards to our camping offer.
	6.2.2 Facilitate opportunities for 'soft' adventure, with the objective of sparking interest in outdoor pursuits.
	6.2.3 Ensure the Highland Links is maintained and presented as one of Canada's premier golf courses.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.
	6.4.1 Maintain the Cabot Trail as a destination driving experience and as well as a critical transportation corridor.
	6.4.2 Reduce the impacts of winter highway maintenance on adjacent wetland ecosystems while maintaining visitor safety.
	6.4.3 Establish the Cabot trail as a destination cycling experience.

PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING

Corporate Performance Expectations	Objectives that support corporate performance expectation
<p>60% of Canadians appreciate the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada by March 2014.</p> <p>80% of Canadians support the protection and presentation of places administered by Parks Canada by March 2014.</p>	5.2.1 Our partners are engaged in sharing their stories.
	5.4.1 A collaborative management arrangement is established with the Mi'kmaq for CBH.
	6.1.1 Enhance the partnerships needed to promote connectivity of protected areas.
	6.2.4 Restore the aquatic ecosystem health of Freshwater Lake.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.

Outreach Education and External Communications

<p>Increase the % of Canadians that consider that they learned something about Parks Canada administered places by March 2014.</p> <p>Increase the % of Canadians that understand that nationally significant places that are administered by PC are protected and presented on their behalf by March 2014.</p>	5.2.4 Our stories are reaching audiences beyond the Park and neighbouring communities.
	6.2.4 Restore the aquatic ecosystem health of Freshwater Lake.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.

Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

<p>Increase % of Stakeholders and Partners that support the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places, by March 2014</p> <p>Increase % of Stakeholders and Partners that feel that they have opportunities to influence and contribute to Parks Canada's activities.</p>	5.1.2 A seamless menu of activities, developed with partners, keeps visitors in the area for longer.
	5.2.1 Our partners are engaged in sharing their stories.
	5.4.1 A collaborative management arrangement is established with the Mi'kmaq for CBH.
	6.1.1 Enhance the partnerships needed to promote connectivity of protected areas.
	6.1.3 Strengthen our Northern offer by improving infrastructure and involving communities.
	6.3.1 Acknowledge and honour the past history of the area of the Acadian coast.
	6.3.2 Create/develop a sense of place for future generations and a sustainable year-round offer of art & culture infrastructure.

