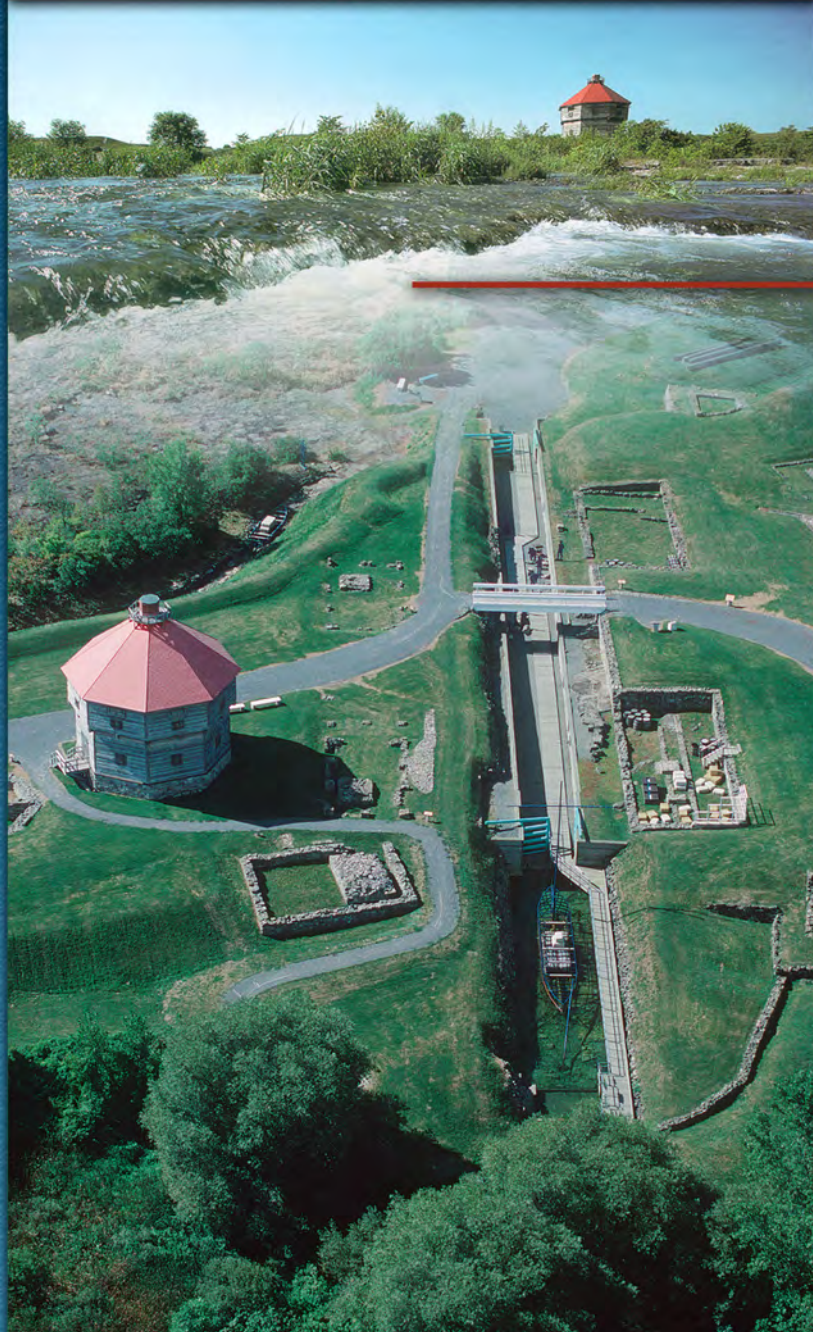




COTEAU-DU-LAC

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

Management Plan



Parks Canada Parcs Canada

Canada

COTEAU-DU-LAC

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Western Quebec Field Unit

October 2007

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 fun 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 unique opportunities to experience Canada. 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 each of these special places is conserved.

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 Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site 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 Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John Baird". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Baird
Minister of the Environment

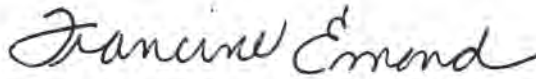
**Coteau-du-Lac
National Historic Site of Canada**

M A N A G E M E N T P L A N

RECOMMENDED BY:



Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada Agency



Francine Émond
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	9
1.1 Parks Canada mandate and legislative framework	9
1.2 Management plan development process	10
1.3 Designated place	10
2. Historical Background	15
3. A Fundamental Concept: Commemorative Integrity	19
4. Cultural Resources and Messages	21
4.1 Resources directly related to the reasons for the national historic site designation	21
4.2 Effective communication of the reasons for the national historic site designation	26
4.3 Resources unrelated to the reasons for the national historic site designation	28
5. Current Operational Context	31
5.1 Visiting the national historic site	31
5.2 Conveyance of commemorative messages	32
5.3 Attendance and satisfaction	33
5.4 Regional tourism context	34
5.5 Environmental management	34
5.6 Strengths and weaknesses	36
6. Objectives	39
7. Looking to the Future: Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada in 2020	41
8. Presentation	43
8.1 1986 Presentation concept	43
8.2 Management measures	43
9. Conclusion	47

10. Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment	49
10.1 Assessing the potential impacts of activities and management measures	49
10.2 Assessing the potential cumulative impacts of activities and the management plan's management measures	49
10.3 Mitigation measures to eliminate or minimize negative impacts	50
10.4 Conclusion	50
Planning Committee	51
Appendix A: Summary of Commemorative Integrity Assessment	53
Studies, Research Reports and Other Reference Material	57

1. Introduction

1.1 Parks Canada mandate and legislative framework

A federal agency reporting to the Minister of the Environment, Parks Canada's mission is essentially to fulfill Canada's national and international mandate regarding the recognition and conservation of heritage. Parks Canada carries out this role by protecting and presenting various significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. It aims to ensure ecological or commemorative integrity as well as promoting public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.

One of the most tangible results of the action taken by Parks Canada is the national historic sites network, to which Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada belongs. Parks Canada manages 154 national historic sites, 28 of which are in Quebec. The national historic sites are managed according to the following objectives:

- Promote knowledge and appreciation of Canadian history through a national historic commemoration program.
- Ensure their commemorative integrity, protect and present them for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations while demonstrating the respect that these precious and irreplaceable heritage sites and resources deserve.
- Encourage and support initiatives aimed at protecting and presenting sites of national historic significance that are not managed by Parks Canada.

By virtue of the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998), the Agency must produce or update the management plan for each national historic site that it manages. The main purpose of the management plan is to establish guidelines for actions aimed at the protection, heritage preservation, use and management of the site. The plan is developed in conformity with the *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*, including the *National Historic Sites Policy* and the *Cultural Resources Management Policy*. Parks Canada's strategic objectives are also taken into account in the preparation of a management plan. For a historic site, the plan expresses Parks Canada's general policies while taking into account the concerns and viewpoints of the public.

The nationwide family of National Historic Sites of Canada comprises sites that embody and demonstrate the various facets of the history of our nation, its character, identity and fiber. Upon the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, the Minister of the Environment has designated our national historic sites so as to provide an enriching view of how history has left its mark on the Canadian landscape. These sites help us see our country from a broader perspective so we can develop a uniquely Canadian identity. They are part of our past and represent the heritage of all our compatriots. The Parks Canada's commemoration program applies to sites but also to people and events of national historic significance. More than 915 sites, 590 people, and 365 other aspects of our history have been officially recognized as being of national importance.

1.2 Management plan development process

This management plan was prepared according to the provisions of section 32.(1) of the *Parks Canada Agency Act*, and will be reviewed according to the provisions of section 32.(2) in 2011. The Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site management plan is the result of the work of a multidisciplinary team at Parks Canada. The team analyzed the situation at the site and identified the primary management challenges. It then developed a vision for the future and proposed management measures to achieve this vision. In September 2006, public consultations were held in Compton to present the vision and management measures to interested groups and members of the public. Through the public consultation strategy, the team was able to hear the opinions of stakeholders with a potential interest in site development and management. In all, the public responded very favourably to the planning team's proposals. Citizen comments were compiled, analyzed, and taken into consideration in

drawing up the management plan. The plan was then submitted to an environmental assessment to ensure that the management measures were environmentally sound. It was then reviewed by the national office and presented to the minister of the Environment for approval. Once approved, the document was tabled in Parliament.

1.3 Designated place

In 1813, when British soldiers built a blockhouse at Coteau-du-Lac to protect the canal, a highly strategic corridor during the War of 1812, they had no idea that the defence works would still be standing nearly two centuries later and have come to be the visual symbol of the municipality of Haut-Saint-Laurent. It is a place steeped in history that has seen a succession of Amerindians, French travellers, and British soldiers, the latter of whom buried their dead there, built a "rigolet" (small stream) canal and lock canals, and controlled the passageway from their fortifications or customs office.



Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada
Parks Canada / Jean Audet

COTEAU-DU-LAC

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

LOCATION



The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended designating Coteau-du-Lac as a site of national historic significance at its May 25, 1923 meeting. The Board confirmed that decision in June 2002. An initial commemorative plaque was unveiled in 1929 and a second in 1980. Although the substance of the plaques' texts varies a bit, this historic site commemorates the military outpost that defended the goods transport corridor on the St. Lawrence River in Coteau-du-Lac. It also commemorates the place's strategic importance during the American Revolution and War of 1812 and serves as a reminder that Coteau-du-Lac was one of the first lock canals in North America.

The national historic site at 308A Chemin du Fleuve in Coteau-du-Lac is about 40 km southeast of Montreal and 20 kilometres from the Ontario border, via highway Jean-Lesage (Highway 20). Its irregularly shaped land mass is located at the fork of the Delisle and St. Lawrence rivers. It spans an area of 3.09 hectares. The site's lot number is 1,687,822 in the revised Quebec land register (formerly part of lot 130 N.S.). Coteau-du-Lac contains many archaeological remains, related both to the canal and the military outpost, and a large archaeological collection consisting of some 426,000 artefacts.

For local and regional residents, the site is also a riverside park on the St. Lawrence and Delisle rivers ideal for relaxing and bird-watching. Its grassy expanse offers many paths and trails, and it is dotted with low and tall shrubs on its periphery. The site has a parking lot with 53 spaces, located near the interpretation centre and partly underground so as to integrate it into the landscape and keep the environment's historical and archaeological fabric intact. Since the site is subject to the National Historic Parks Order, the *National Historic Parks General Regulations of Canada* and *National Historic Parks Wildlife and Domestic Animals Regulations* apply within its boundaries.

The Coteau-du-Lac national historic site officially opened its doors to the public in May 1968. The site currently operates under the 1986 management plan, which has not been revised since. During the 1999 summer season, a visitor satisfaction survey was carried out. In addition, an assessment was conducted during the 2000 summer season before the exhibits presented in the blockhouse were updated. This qualitative study gauged visitors' prior knowledge of the historic site, as well as their expectations of and interest in the new facilities planned. Finally, in February 2004, a commemorative integrity statement was approved for the site and its commemorative integrity was evaluated in May 2005.

2. Historical Background

The St. Lawrence River has always been a major transportation route to the continent's interior.¹ Yet it is fraught with obstacles that make it difficult to navigate. Stretching from Lake Saint-François to Lake Saint-Louis, the Coteau Rapids are the narrowest and most turbulent leg of the waterway. The small Coteau-du-Lac peninsula is therefore a natural stopping place and bypass. The Amerindians used this corridor almost 6,000 years ago. The French later followed their example and used it as a portage point for their canoes. However, in the late 17th century, when the volume of goods required to supply trading posts in the country's interior increased, they abandoned their canoes in favour of "batteaux," or larger, flat-bottomed barges. Batteau boats were safer and able to carry more goods. On the other hand, it was practically impossible to portage them. In 1749, the construction of a "rigolet" canal improved navigation conditions in Coteau-du-Lac. An embankment of rocks along the outside perimeter of the rapids, parallel to the shore, created a corridor in which the "batteaux" were hauled, sheltering them from the fast-running currents. It was a rudimentary but nonetheless effective method.

The start of the American War of Independence and Canada's invasion by rebel forces pointed up the strategic importance of Coteau-du-Lac. British military outposts in the Great Lakes, which protected the country's western border, were isolated and hard to supply, making them more vulnerable. This situation worried Governor Haldimand, who

ordered the construction of a storage depot in Coteau-du-Lac to improve the supply line. The engineer William Twiss suggested building a canal. Work began in the summer of 1779 and by the spring of 1781 the canal was operational. Hollowed right out of the rock, it ran 100 metres and was 2.5 metres wide. It had three locks 12 metres in length and 1.8 metres wide, with a draught of 80 cm. The new canal compensated for the two-metre drop between the head and bottom of the rapids. The corridor's northern and southern ends were protected by two wood block-houses. A fixed bridge spanned the canal, which was the first of its kind in Canada.

The canal was used for both military and commercial purposes as soon as it opened, Haldimand having authorized civil navigation in exchange for a fee. This immediately made life easier for Montreal merchants and lowered the costs of building the St. Lawrence canal system for, innovative as it was, the Coteau-du-Lac lock canal solved only some of the transportation problems. In 1783, three other canals were dug near the first, namely Faucille, Trou-du-Moulin, and Rocher-Fendu.

With the end of the American Revolution, the massive influx of Loyalists into Canada spurred trade between Upper and Lower Canada. "Batteau" craft gave way to Durham boats, a barge larger than its predecessor and originating in the northern United States. This prompted the replacement of the Faucille and Trou-du-Moulin canals by the Cascades canal in 1805.

1. This summary, also found in the commemorative integrity statement approved in 2003, was based on George C. Ingram et al. *The fort at Coteau-du-Lac. Four Reports*. National Historic Parks and Sites Branch (Unpublished work No. 186), 1977, 275 pages.

and

Normand Lafrenière. *Coteau-du-Lac : un canal fortifié*. Parcs Canada, 1981, 34 pages.



An artist's rendering of the Coteau-du-Lac canal during the War of 1812 era
Confederation Life Insurance Company, Toronto

In 1812, hostilities with the Americans broke out once again. In fact, the new conflict was merely a continuation of the American War of Independence, which had ended with the Treaty of Versailles (1783) establishing the borders between the two countries. But the British had not vacated their former posts now in American territory. Another factor was the North American impact of the Napoleonic Wars: the British and Americans had divergent economic interests. Canada became the theatre of repeated attacks by the Americans, reviving the canal's military function. Beginning in 1813, fortifications, a blockhouse, a powder magazine, a guard house, and various other structures were built and a garrison was stationed there. Coteau-du-Lac had become a major military site. However, its facilities were never put to the test.

Between 1814 and 1817, the canal doubled in width to facilitate the passage of Durham boats and the three locks were replaced by two other, more suitable ones. In 1820, the fixed bridge was replaced by a swing bridge. In the years that followed, the canal was maintained regularly but the military outpost lost its importance. As a result, the defence facilities were neglected and quickly deteriorated in the harsh Canadian winters. At the time of the 1837-1838 rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, the Coteau-du-Lac fort was renovated and its garrison reinforced. When the conflict was over, the lessons of the

popular uprisings were noted and some military installations, in both Upper and Lower Canada, were improved. However, Coteau-du-Lac was ignored. When the two Canadas were united, the new government embarked on a canal-building program, and in 1845 the Beauharnois canal replaced Coteau-du-Lac, long considered outdated. However, the canal was still kept in working order so that service could resume in the event of a major breakdown on the new canal. Ultimately, military authorities turned over the Coteau-du-Lac canal and fort permanently to the government of United Canada in 1856.

Between 1856 and 1865, Georges-René de Beaujeu, Seigneur de Soulanges, claimed ownership of the site the government had appropriated during the American Revolution. In 1863, to assert his rights, he operated a stone quarry there, on the edge of the Delisle River. The court ultimately decided in the government's favour.

The site was used for various purposes during that same period. From 1858 to 1865, it was leased to L. Adams, who used it as pasture land, then leased again from 1865 to 1889 to Georges Beaudet, who built a sawmill on it, on the northern end of the canal. The military installations deteriorated and quickly fell into ruins. In 1891, when work to build the Soulanges canal began, the site was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Railways and Canals. The latter continued to operate the quarry. It is also possible that the canal and military building stones were extracted there. Eventually the canal was totally abandoned, around 1920. When in 1923 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada took an interest in the site, the portion located east of the highway was returned to the Department of the Interior, which was responsible for historic sites, for conversion into a "historic memorial." A commemorative plaque was unveiled in 1929. In 1965, Parks Canada began a major campaign of archaeological digs. In 1967, the remains of the military buildings were presented and the site was then

opened to the public. Its infrastructure was completed in 1969-1970 with the building of an octagonal blockhouse replica, followed in 1989-1990 by the construction of a reception and interpretation centre. Finally, in early 2003 a new exhibit was added to the blockhouse replica, focusing more on the role and functioning of that kind of structure. So Canada's first lock canal operated for 64 years and was the first step in the St. Lawrence sea approach.

3. A Fundamental Concept: Commemorative Integrity

The concept of commemorative integrity is used by Parks Canada to describe, plan and monitor the condition of national historic sites.² When the commemorative integrity of a place is evaluated, each of the following three aspects is examined separately: the condition of its resources, the effectiveness of communication of heritage messages, and the management methods implemented at the site. A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity when:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat,
- the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public, and
- the site's heritage values (including those not related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.³

To guarantee the satisfactory protection and presentation of national historic sites, Parks Canada has developed a *Cultural Resource Management Policy*. This policy is based on five major management principles: value, public benefit, understanding, respect, and integrity. As a rule, fulfilling the requirements of these principles is sufficient for assuring the commemorative integrity of a national historic site. In practice, the application of this policy signifies that the cultural resources have been identified and evaluated and their



***The blockhouse – both a landmark
and a symbol of Coteau-du-Lac***
Parks Canada / Jean Audet

historic value has been taken into consideration each time that measures are readied for implementation.

The commemorative integrity statement for Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site was approved in 2004. It sets forth the site's commemorative objectives and describes and assigns a value to the cultural resources that

2. Refers to the entirety, the quantitative and qualitative whole of the site and its components.

3. Parks Canada, *Guide to the Preparation of Commemorative Integrity Statements*, (Ottawa), Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2002, p. 2.

embody or typify its national importance. It also presents to the public the reasons for its designation as a national historic site. Finally, the statement describes the other heritage values, that is, the ones unrelated to the reasons for designation as an historic site. The statement also sets objectives for preserving historic values and communicating them to the public. It thus describes the site's overall desired state. The statement provides a frame of reference for planning, management, operation, and site evaluation, as well as the implementation of corrective measures. It is used by all those involved in the site's protection, presentation, and management. Comparing the desired state and current condition helps define the management measures needed to conserve and present the site.

The reasons for designating Coteau-du-Lac a national historic site were stated in the 2004 commemorative integrity statement as follows:

- It is the site of one of the oldest lock canals in North America.
- From 1778 to the mid-19th century, Coteau-du-Lac was the site of a British military post that defended the corridor and facilitated the transportation of merchandise on the St. Lawrence River.
- Coteau-du-Lac was a strategic point during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.
- Coteau-du-Lac was long the main entry port for goods heading to Upper Canada.

4. Cultural Resources and Messages

A cultural resource's value is determined by its connection with the reasons for designation as a national historic site: a cultural resource can be directly related (Level 1) or unrelated (Level 2) to those reasons. To ensure a site's commemorative integrity, all cultural resources, whatever their level, must be protected, conserved, and presented and the reasons for designation as a national historic site must be effectively communicated to the public. The resources related directly to the reasons for designating Coteau-du-Lac a national historic site include the following:

- the designated place;
- the landscape and landscape features;
- the archaeological sites;
- the artefacts.

Resources unrelated to the reasons for designation as a national historic site include an 1813 blockhouse replica, archaeological sites, and ethnological and archaeological collections.

4.1 Resources directly related to the reasons for the national historic site designation

Designated place

The designated place encompasses the Parks Canada property located at 308A, Chemin du Fleuve in Coteau-du-Lac, that is, lot No. 1,687,822 of Quebec's revised land register (formerly part of lot 130 N.S.). The land covers an area of 3.09 hectares.

The **historic values** attributed to the designated place are as follows:

- The designated place is associated with one of the oldest lock canals in North America.
- The designated place serves as a reminder of the transport of goods and troops between Upper and Lower Canada on the St. Lawrence River and of its own roles as a gateway into Upper Canada and as a border crossing point.
- It also calls to mind Coteau-du-Lac's strategic position on the St. Lawrence River.
- It calls attention to Coteau-du-Lac's strategic role during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.
- Coteau-du-Lac's various onsite cultural resources reflect its importance as the location of one of the oldest North American lock canals and as a military outpost defending the navigable corridor that facilitated the transport of goods and troops to Upper Canada on the St. Lawrence River.

Landscapes and landscape features

Although the surviving buildings and structures associated with the Coteau-du-Lac canal and military presence there consist entirely of archaeological remains, several landscape features evoke the site's strategic importance and military activities. The view of the Coteau-du-Lac rapids from the peninsula is a major significant outlook, despite the roughly 2.5 metre decline in water

level. The landscape features that best characterize the site are the peninsula, which comes to a point opposite the rapids, the remains of the canal, its ground plan, and the former rigolet canal, the earthworks, the many remains of military buildings, the cloverleaf battery, the octagonal blockhouse—a major visual landmark, even though it is only a replica—and the narrowness of the navigable corridor between the site’s point and Île Arthur, which lies across from it.

Currently the main changes in the landscape include the roughly 2.5 metre decrease in water level that occurred after the construction in the 1940s of a dike and dam upstream of the site. The lower water level has resulted in a drier coast downstream of the canal and vegetation has taken over. The wooded area that now occupies the canal outlet makes it hard to imagine the former flow of water to the river.



The Coteau-du-Lac rapids
Parks Canada / Jean Audet

The **historic values** attributed to the landscapes and landscape features are as follows:

- The point of land (peninsula) jutting out into the river and the rapids still visible at the site help visitors understand why it was chosen as a location for a canal.

- The current landscape features call to mind views or visual lookouts present during the era when soldiers occupied the site and the canal was in operation.
- The canal remains, the earthworks, and the ground plans of many buildings evoke the canal’s presence and the sizeable military infrastructure created to protect it.
- The landscape’s characteristic features serve as a reminder of the site’s dual purpose, as a military post and a transportation route.
- The visual landmark of the blockhouse has symbolic value to the people of the region and is associated with the 1813 blockhouse.





Archaeological sites

The archaeological remains of the site consist of part of the canal itself (waterway, locks, bridges), a certain number of defence works related to the military post (palisades, ramparts, ditches, abatis, barricades, and blockhouse), and a number of associated buildings (guardhouse, powder magazine, barracks, officers’ quarters, warehouses, hospitals, bakeries, kitchens, and workshops) and infrastructures (latrines, circulation areas, fences, gardens, wharf, and jetty).

Archaeological excavations of the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site conducted since 1965 have unearthed a total of 54 remains associated with its 3 main periods of occupation, including military works, buildings, infrastructures, and landscaping. Of this total, 9 belong to the first occupation period (1778 to 1811), 34 (the majority) to the second period (1812 to 1837), and 11 to the third period (1838 to 1856). Most of the remains are associated with resources found inside the military post. Apart from a few remains linked directly to the canal, all others are related to the site’s military function.



LEGEND

-  Designated Place and Parks Canada Property Boundaries
-  Property under Military Occupation
-  Remains
-  Earthworks





*A presentation of artefacts
from the archaeological collection*
Parks Canada / Normand Rajotte

The **historic values** attributed to the archaeological sites are as follows:

- The archaeological remains belonging to the two lock-canal-building eras bear witness to the evolution of canal-building techniques between the third quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century, during which the waterway had to be adapted to the size of new ships being built at the time.
- The fortification remains recall the size of the original fortifications.
- The archaeological resources associated with works of the military post fortification bear witness to the defence of a key post in the army supply network for outposts.
- The remains of the military works bear witness to the logistical system for defence of the western part of the colony.
- The remains of the military works bear witness to the defensive role Coteau-du-Lac played during the American War of Independence, the War of 1812, and the 1837-1838 Rebellion.

- The great number of military buildings built on the site during this period (barracks, officers' quarters, and service buildings) are evidence that a large garrison was present there.
- The remains associated with the Coteau-du-Lac Canal waterway bear witness to the first lock canal built in Canada. They also recall its use for civil and commercial purposes.
- A number of remains are associated with the site's function as a supply depot for the most remote posts.
- The remains associated with the excavation and widening of the canal bear witness to the evolution of navigation methods and especially the use of the new Durham boat, which was longer and had a greater draught than its predecessors.

Objects

The Coteau-du-Lac ethnological collection is made up of a framed oil painting of Henry Evatt (1774-1850), his presentation sword, his rank slip-on, and his scabbard. Captain Evatt was Assistant Barracks Master in Coteau-du-Lac from October 1819 to December 1826, then Barracks Master for at least the month of September 1831 and May 1835. These objects are conserved in the Parks Canada storeroom in Québec City.

The **historic values** attributed to the objects in the ethnological collection are as follows:

- the objects associated with Captain Evatt bear witness to his presence at Coteau-du-Lac.

Archaeological excavations conducted at the Coteau-du-Lac site in 1965, 1966, 1968, and 1982 as well as occasional minor digs since



*A presentation of artefacts
from the archaeological collection*
Parks Canada / Normand Rajotte

1982 have generated an archaeological collection totalling 748,000 objects associated with the French regime, British regime, and Canadian period. Unfortunately, most of the collection has not been inventoried. Nevertheless, certain analyses have concluded that about 426,000 objects are related to the British regime and thus the reasons for the historic site designation.

The **historic values** attributed to the objects in the archaeological collection are as follows:

- About 57% of the updated Coteau-du-Lac archaeological collection is associated with the site's three major periods of occupation (1778 to 1811, 1812 to 1837, and 1838 to 1856) by the British military.

- The collection, which includes a number of architecture tools and pieces of hardware, bears witness to canal and military-building techniques.
- A great quantity of ceramic and glass objects stored on site bear witness to the trade and transportation of merchandise between Lower and Upper Canada.
- Lastly, close to 1,000 artefacts are part of the national reference collection conserved in Ottawa due to their workmanship and representativeness.

4.2 Effective communication of the reasons for the national historic site designation

The reasons for the national historic site designation of Coteau-du-Lac stem directly from the commemoration objectives:

- It is the site of one of the oldest lock canals in North America.
- From 1778 to the mid-19th century, Coteau-du-Lac was the site of a British military post that defended the corridor and facilitated the transportation of merchandise on the St. Lawrence River.
- Coteau-du-Lac was a strategic point during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.
- Coteau-du-Lac was long the main entry port for goods heading to Upper Canada.

To better understand the reasons for the national historic site designation of Coteau-du-Lac, it would be worthwhile to develop them while bearing in mind the following:

It is the site of one of the oldest lock canals in North America:

- Located between lakes Saint-François and Saint-Louis, the “Coteau rapids” are the narrowest and most turbulent section of the St. Lawrence River, representing a 25.6 metre drop over a distance of 25 kilometres.
- Between 1689 and 1701, the Sulpicians of Montreal attempted to dig a canal between Montreal and Lachine around the rapids. Only one-third of the project was completed due to a lack of funds and to technical problems.
- Construction of the first Coteau-du-Lac canal and its three locks began in summer 1779.
- Canals were built in the United States at the same time as the one in Coteau-du-Lac, but the latter was the first to start operating in spring 1781.



The scale model of the Coteau-du-Lac area is a valuable interpretation tool
Parks Canada / Normand Rajotte

From 1778 to the mid-19th century, Coteau-du-Lac was the site of a British military post that defended the corridor and facilitated the transportation of merchandise on the St. Lawrence River:

- In the 18th century, the country’s western border was protected by military posts in the Great Lakes region. The presence of rapids on the St. Lawrence River slowed provisioning of these posts and made them vulnerable. Coteau-du-Lac therefore became a strategic point in the supply corridor of these forts.
- Starting in summer 1779, British authorities decided to build a canal in Coteau-du-Lac, along with a warehouse protected by two small blockhouses and a palisade.
- In the following years, a barracks, hospital, bakery, and other auxiliary buildings were built.
- On the occasion of the War of 1812 and the arrival of a garrison at Coteau-du-Lac, major work was undertaken to improve the military facilities. An entrenchment, octagonal blockhouse, guardhouse, cannon platform, and powder magazine were built. Coteau-du-Lac became a veritable fortified canal.
- Apart from its military vocation, the Coteau-du-Lac canal also met business needs. Following the American Revolution, the arrival of Loyalists quickly increased the population of Upper Canada. The Coteau-du-Lac Canal became key to supplying these new settlements.
- With the construction of the drain, canoes were abandoned for the “batteau,” a bigger, flat-bottomed barge. Following the American Revolution, the Durham boat was adopted, which originated in the northern United States and was even larger.
- The type of watercraft in use at Coteau-du-Lac was subject to the volume of merchandise shipped through it. Consequently, the canal’s clearance and locks had to be adapted to fit these craft.

Coteau-du-Lac was a strategic point during the American Revolution and the War of 1812:

- On the occasion of the American Revolution (1774-1783), the invasion of Canada at Québec City and Montreal drew attention to the absence of an adequate communication and supply network between fortified posts in the Great Lakes region and these cities.
- In 1779, the British established a military depot in Coteau-du-Lac aimed at expediting merchandise to Western posts. They also constructed a set of buildings on Prison Island (Île Arthur) across from Coteau-du-Lac to house American prisoners. It was therefore feared that the Americans would try to seize the Coteau-du-Lac post.
- With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, the south shore of the St. Lawrence River upstream of Coteau-du-Lac became the property of the United States, making the supply corridor for Great Lakes military posts even more vulnerable.
- During the War of 1812 (1812-1814), Upper Canada was the target of most American attacks. One of the American army's strategies was to cut off military supplies to Upper Canada, so the Coteau-du-Lac canal became a highly strategic location, with British authorities turning it into a veritable fortified canal.

Coteau-du-Lac was long the main entry port for goods heading to Upper Canada:

- Starting in 1797 and until at least the Union Act of 1840, a customs office operated in Coteau-du-Lac, where duty was charged on wine, spirits, and other items imported into Upper Canada by boat or carriage.

- The presence of a customs office in Coteau-du-Lac turned the site into the main entry port for Upper Canada. Imported items had to be sent via Coteau-du-Lac for accounting purposes, thereby helping to evaluate the share of duty paid at the port of Québec City that was owed Upper Canada.
- Coteau-du-Lac was equipped with warehouses because it served as a transit point. In fall and winter, merchandise was transported from Montreal to Coteau-du-Lac by land or ice, from whence it was reshipped to Lake Ontario the following spring.
- Coteau-du-Lac was designated a national historic site by the Government of Canada because of its national historic importance.

4.3 Resources unrelated to the reasons for the national historic site designation

This component concerns the cultural resources and messages that, although not directly related to the reasons for the designation, still possess historic significance for the site.

Buildings and structures

In 1969-1970, a replica of the 1813 octagonal blockhouse was built near the remains of the original. This building is a landmark known throughout the region. The municipality of Coteau-du-Lac has adopted it as its graphic symbol.

The **historic value** attributed to the blockhouse is as follows:

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- the replica of the blockhouse bears; symbolic value for people in the region; it is also associated with the 1813 blockhouse.

Archaeological sites

By virtue of its geographic position vis-à-vis the river rapids, the Coteau-du-Lac site has been subject to human occupation for at least 6,000 years. It was a portage and campsite highly frequented by Amerindians. Numerous traces of this human presence can therefore be found there, including some 20 graves and numerous artefacts. Later, at the end of the French regime, the site was subject to a first attempt at canal building with the construction of a rigolet canal. Not long after the site was transferred to the government of United Canada, a man named Georges Beudet built a sawmill powered by hydraulic energy at the north end of the canal. Lastly, starting in the 1860s, an open-pit mine was operated on the right bank of the Delisle River until the 1890s, when the Soulanges Canal was built.

The **historic values** attributed to the archaeological sites are as follows:

- The remains associated with paleo-historic occupation bear witness to human occupation of the region for at least 6,000 years.
- The remains of the drain bear particularly eloquent witness to the first attempts at canal building on the river in Haut-Saint-Laurent.
- The remains of the sawmill recall the use of the canal's water to produce the hydroelectric power the mill required, after the waterway was no longer used for navigation purposes.
- The configuration of the right bank of the Delisle River recalls the former operation of an open-pit stone mine as well as the construction of the Soulanges Canal.

Objects

The Level 2 ethnological collection numbers four pieces of artillery located in the clover-leaf battery. They consist of three cannons and one carronade. Because these pieces likely do not come from Coteau-du-Lac but rather from Ontario and New York State, they are not directly related to the reasons for the historic site designation. The collection also includes two plaques the Commission unveiled in 1929 and 1980, which are kept on site. The 1980 plaque is still affixed to the entrance to the interpretation centre.

The **historic values** attributed to the objects in the ethnological collection are as follows:

- The artillery pieces are representative of the type of armament installed at Coteau-du-Lac following the War of 1812.
- The artillery pieces kept on site evoke the means used by colonial authorities to control the strategic Coteau-du-Lac channel.
- The 1929 plaque recalls how long the Coteau-du-Lac has been commemorated.

Close to 9,600 objects bear witness to the occupation of the site during various paleo-historic periods, from the Laurentian Archaic to the Woodland periods. These artefacts come from various sectors of the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site. The vast majority, however, were found out of context after the British dug up the subsurface during construction of the defence works and military post buildings and infrastructures. The collection is made up of various objects such as flake tools, grinders, awls, stone axes, finely wrought beaver teeth, pottery fragments, pipe fragments, various projectile heads, and numerous sizeable pieces of debris. Some objects also come from the graves of at least 20 individuals, including an anthropomorphic stone—a rarity in Eastern Canada—tools of all types, projectile heads, adornments, and

other. About 39,000 ecofacts round out this collection. Some 748,000 objects make up the entire archaeological collection, with approximately 74,000 from the French regime. Lastly, 246,000 artefacts are associated with the Canadian period.

The **historic values** attributed to the objects in the archaeological collection are as follows:

- The value of the collection lies in the fact that it bears witness to continuous, major human occupation of this part of Haut-Saint-Laurent during various paleohistoric periods.
- This collection also bears witness to the various ways of life of Coteau-du-Lac Amerindians.
- The artefacts from the French regime are related to the setup of the drain, evidence of the first attempts at canal building in Haut-Saint-Laurent.
- The artefacts from the Canadian period bear witness to occupation of the site after it was abandoned by the military.

Messages unrelated to the reasons for the designation

- The Coteau-du-Lac site was occupied from 6,000 to 500 years ago, serving as a place of passage and a portage and campsite highly frequented by Amerindians. When they stayed there, they dried the meat and fish they caught in the area and prepared the skins.
- The current location of the cloverleaf battery was used as a grave site by Amerindians (Archaic Period).

- Between 1750 and 1781, five rigolet canals (embankments formed by a chain of rocks parallel to the shoreline) were built between Lachine and Milles Roches near Cornwall, including one located on the Coteau-du-Lac point. These structures were devoid of locks.
- During the War of 1812, a blockhouse and battery were built on Prison Island (Île Arthur) across from Coteau-du-Lac. Following the conflict, the island served as pastureland.
- The St. Lawrence canal network was later completed with the opening of the Lachine Canal (1825), Beauharnois Canal (1845), Galops Canal (1846), Farran's Point Canal (1847), Rapide Plat Canal (1847), and Soulanges Canal (1899), then the St. Lawrence Seaway (1959).
- From the end of the military occupation in 1856 until 1865, the site was used as pastureland.
- From 1865 to 1889, the Coteau-du-Lac site was leased to local entrepreneur Georges Beaudet, who built a sawmill at the north end of the canal.
- In 1923, the Coteau-du-Lac site became part of the network of national historic sites commemorating Canada's national canal network and the defence of Canada, particularly during the War of 1812.
- Canada Post issued a stamp in 1983 to commemorate the Coteau-du-Lac site.
- The national historic sites administered by Parks Canada belong to all Canadians.

5. Current Operational Context

5.1 Visiting the national historic site

The Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site commemorates the oldest lock canal in North America, which facilitated the transport of goods on the St. Lawrence River. The site was of strategic importance during the American Revolution and the War of 1812, and was defended by a British military position up to the mid-19th century. Since 1965, numerous archaeological excavations have helped unearth 54 remains associated with the military structures and buildings as well as canal infrastructures. These remains have been developed so that visitors now walk into a veritable “archaeological garden.” A replica of the 1813 bunker has also become a landmark and regional symbol. Lastly, the exhibitions presented at the interpretation centre and bunker help visitors become familiar with the site’s history.

The site is open daily to the public from mid-May to late August, then weekends until mid-October. Organized groups are welcomed from mid-May to mid-October on appointment. There is a charge for onsite activities. Services are offered in both official languages, and buildings meet standard accessibility requirements.

Independent visitors to the site are greeted at two points, the first one being the parking lot gate, where they are told about the site and where to pay admission. At this stage, more than half who come on other than special activity days do not wish to tour the entire site and leave. Those who continue in can be divided into two groups: those who wish to enjoy the site for its recreational benefits and those who wish to discover history. The latter go to the interpretation centre, where

they are greeted more formally. They learn more about the reasons for the designation. Although they can visit the site on their own, a guided tour is also available. A number of personalized interpretation activities are also offered, either at the interpretation centre itself or the blockhouse. The multimedia presentation is extremely popular, with over 60% of blockhouse visitors taking part. On weekends, visitors can take part in two interpretation activities: the *Défi du canon* presented at the cloverleaf-shaped battery and a presentation of the archaeological module.



A guided tour of the historic site
Parks Canada / Normand Rajotte

School and other organized groups tour the site with an interpreter-guide. Some activities are designed specifically for school groups and are adapted to the human sciences program of Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation. Through these activities, students discover the figures who marked the site's history, become familiar with canal building, and are introduced to archaeology. Post-visit activities designed to review in class the knowledge learned on site are suggested to teachers.

Lastly, special activities are presented to visitors each season with the backing of partners. These activities help bring the site to life, present the commemorative messages, and ensure the site's visibility and integration into the community. These activities also help explain the reasons for the historic site designation to an audience that would probably otherwise not come to the site. Canada Day is the biggest of these activities. It alone attracts over one-quarter of total annual visitors.

5.2 Conveyance of commemorative messages

Messages of national historic importance are conveyed mainly through personalized interpretation activities. Interpreter-guides contribute significantly to helping visitors understand the site's history. They begin with a presentation at the interpretation centre on the history of canal building on the St. Lawrence and the Coteau-du-Lac fortified lock canal. The main interpretation tool used is the scale model representing the site circa 1820. They then make a presentation in the replica of the blockhouse, which is the highlight of the tour. They explain what a blockhouse is, why the Coteau-du-Lac blockhouse was built, its characteristics and interior design, and how it fit into the Coteau-du-Lac defence system. The tour ends with a multimedia presentation that explains the site's historical evolution in its geopolitical context. Independent visitors can read the

interpretation panels located along the trails and view exhibits at the interpretation centre and blockhouse.

An educational program exists for organized groups, mostly school groups, on the following themes:

- *Il était un petit navire* (120 min./preschool): History of the site and canal building
- *La légende de Grincheux le lutin* (120 min./grades 1 and 2): History of the site and introduction to the concept of historical time
- *Les aventuriers des objets perdus* (120 min./grades 3 and 4): Canal building, archaeology, and conservation
- *Un fleuve apprivoisé* (120 min./grades 5 and 6): Navigation and canal building

Playground groups are offered an activity adapted to their play-oriented activities, called *Les héros de Coteau*, which raises awareness of the heritage value of the site's cultural resources.



A costumed interpretation activity
Parks Canada / Daniel Beaudin

To reach clientele unable to visit the site, Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site has created an off-site program adapted to their needs. *La paléohistoire de la plaine laurentienne* activity is designed to meet the

objectives of the Secondary II history program. It covers Native peoples and archaeology. Secondary IV history students can take part in *De l'astrolabe au carbone 14* activity, which provides an overview of the site's history. Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site also has its own website, which presents the reasons for its designation and related historical information, describes the educational program it offers, and provides prerequisite information for visiting the site.

5.3 Attendance and satisfaction

Attendance for 2005 was estimated at 17,500, which represents approximately 4,000 fewer visitors than the annual average for the past five years. Of this number, it is estimated that 23% paid admission and another 28% took part in the special "open door" activity on Canada Day. During parking lot business hours, an estimated 50% of people greeted there choose not to visit the site. Close to half the interpretation activities are made available to organized school, tourist, and playground groups. It should be noted that organized groups represent only 9% of total attendance. In recent years, attendance has fluctuated considerably. This may be explained by special circumstances—such as the introduction of an admission fee in 1995 or changes to the season length—but weather appears to be the most decisive factor. The site's attractions are mostly outdoors and subject to weather conditions. One thing is clear—recorded attendance is not up to expectations for the region.

In summer 1999, before the blockhouse was upgraded, a study on the satisfaction of independent summer visitors was conducted. The main results obtained from visitors aged 16 and over were as follows:

- Ninety-one percent of visitors to Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site were from Quebec, including 35% from the area itself (Beauharnois-Salaberry and Vaudreuil-Soulanges region).
- Eighty-six percent spoke French.
- The majority (57%) were first-time visitors. Among regular visitors, 92% said they had visited the site at least once or twice in the past two years. This data reflects both visitor turnover and loyalty.
- The average size of independent visitor groups was 2.5 people, and the average time they spent visiting the site was 1.25 hours.
- The clientele was made up mainly of adults (72%). Adults with children/teens represented a small percentage of visitors.
- Clientele age 35 to 54 represented 37% of visitors, the highest age group percentage. Children under 17 made up 19% of attendance. Visitors aged 55 and over represented only 18%.
- Seventy-eight percent of visitors were excursionists, which means they did not spend the night outside their homes on the occasion of their visit.
- A small percentage of visitors (17%) indicated that visiting the site was the main reason they had come. However, 39% said it was a planned stop. The other 44% had not planned to stop at the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site.
- For 27% of respondents, friends or family had motivated them to visit the site, 15% were motivated by tourist guides or brochures, while 11% had discovered it through road signs.

The study also demonstrated that most visitors were very satisfied with their visit experience. Respondents were asked to rate a number of tangible aspects of their visit, including the facilities/services, on-site staff, availability of information, other aspects, and the overall visit. Ratings of “4” and “5” (on a scale of 5) are considered indicators of a satisfactory visit. Eighty percent of the various aspects evaluated received these positive rankings, with only two exceptions. Ten items were ranked with high scores by 95% or more respondents. All visitors agreed on the outstanding kindness, courtesy, and communication skills of the staff, but some disagreed on other aspects, particularly the admission fee (48%). Lastly, although the souvenir shop (67%) and children’s satisfaction (67%) received a passing grade, they didn’t seem to meet the expectations of most visitors.

5.4 Regional tourism context

Coteau-du-Lac is located in the Suroît sector of the Montérégie tourism region, just west of the Island of Montreal⁴ on the road to Toronto and Ottawa, Suroît is a real land of discovery for tourists with its rich history, proud innovations, and abundance of local treasures. It is also home to a great river system that served as a transportation route to the west and quickly became known for its strategic value. Eloquent witnesses to history can still be found in the area, including vestiges of primitive Amerindian settlements, the 18th century French seigniorial regime, 19th century British fortifications, and the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the late 1950s. Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site offers a compelling synthesis of these aspects in the lay of the land itself. Its authentic, representative character makes it an attraction whose worth is much under-utilized.

The site must position itself as a key Suroît regional tourist attraction. It is an integral part of the canal system, which is one of the five engines of tourism growth identified in the *Plan d’action marketing et du développement touristique de la Vallée du Haut-Saint-Laurent*. For a number of years, management has joined with various partners, including the municipality of Coteau-du-Lac via its Recreation Department and Fire Department, to put on Canada Day celebrations. Active partnerships also exist with Tourisme Suroît, Archéo-Québec, Agro-Parc, Pointe-du-Buisson Archaeological Park, the municipalities of Saint-Zotique and Les Cèdres, and the Coteau-du-Lac Historical Society, which sells items at the gift counter to finance some of its activities.

Parks Canada development initiatives have helped diversify tourism in Suroît. Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site can be visited as part of a wider circuit thanks to a well-developed road network. The site is the starting point for an archaeological bike tour—Archéo-Tour—that presents the archaeological attractions of the Soulanges region to cyclists. The site’s contribution to regional tourism is evidenced by the services it offers, its contribution to the visitor experience through attractive regional packages (Saint-Zotique Beach, Base de plein air Les Cèdres, Pointe-du-Buisson Archaeological Park, and Vaudreuil-Soulanges Regional Museum), and its co-organization of cultural activities (Archaeology Month).

5.5 Environmental management

Natural resource management

Management of the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site poses special challenges given that historical facts are commemorated and

4. Inspired by Tourisme Québec and Tourisme Montérégie, *Montérégie. 2005-2006 Official Tourism Guide*, p. 17.

cultural resources presented in an important and distinctive natural environment. In fact, the Coteau Rapids are the main reason why the site is here. The biophysical resources are linked to the history of the site and were a major influence on the layout and methods chosen for its construction. Human activities at the site have had a significant impact on these resources, which today create a setting that adds to the beauty and character of the site.



The Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada is immersed in nature
Parks Canada / Daniel Beaudin

Sustainable development

The Canadian government has made a commitment to sustainable development.⁵ It does its best to prevent pollution and protect the environment in the course of performing its duties. The *Sustainable Development in Government Operations* initiative supports this commitment by:

- incorporating sustainable development principles into all federal government operations;

- coordinating and publishing the federal government's efforts to "green" its operations;
- sharing its knowledge of sustainable development tools.

Parks Canada is one of the agencies and 25 government departments subject to the *Sustainable Development in Government Operations* initiative and is required to prepare sustainable development strategies.⁶ The goal of sustainable strategies is to ensure that the departments and organizations concerned consistently factor environmental, economic, and social considerations into their decision-making processes. They also aim to introduce changes to policies, programs, and operations to advance the cause of sustainable development. Hence the federal government's insistence that each government department and agency meet or exceed legal and environmental regulatory standards, adopt model environmental practices, and establish an environmental management system to "green" its operations. Parks Canada must report to Parliament concerning its efforts to fulfil its environmental responsibilities.

Parks Canada is a leader in natural and cultural resource management. Its partners and the public recognize this and expect Parks Canada activities and facilities to be managed such that no resource is compromised. The Agency therefore has a special responsibility with regard to how it manages its park and historic site facilities as well as its commercial activities.

Some recommended measures of the Western Quebec Field Unit's environmental management system apply to Coteau-du-Lac

5. Sustainable development: development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

6. www.greeninggovernment.gc.ca

National Historic Site. The site's location, size, area, and infrastructures pose environmental and sustainable development challenges, including the following:

- management of the canal ecosystem;
- updating of the biophysical inventory, which hasn't been done in years;
- management of tree cover throughout the site;
- management of the small mammals.

5.6 Strengths and weaknesses

The commemorative integrity assessment of the site produced in May 2005 and Appendix 4 of the *State of the Parks 1997 Report*—whose findings are still valid—helped identify the main integrity-related strengths and weaknesses of Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site cultural resources. The weaknesses are issues that require appropriate corrective measures.

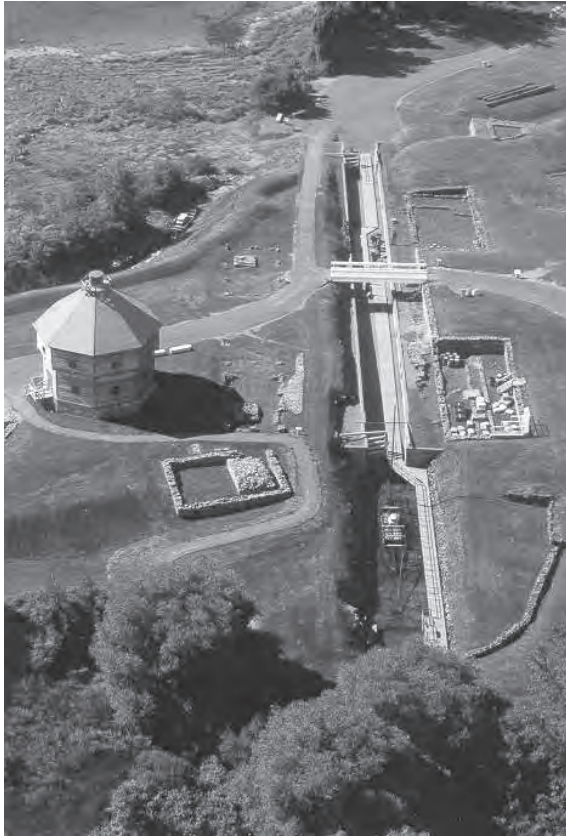
Strengths

- Authenticity of the resource with respect to its commemoration objective
- Symbolic value of the blockhouse replica
- Dedicated, professional interpretation team
- Good conveyance of both personalized and non-personalized messages
- Evocative power that accentuates the site's spirit, due its location and configuration (peninsula and rapids)
- Rich archaeological collection
- Rich and diversified theme that speaks to various clienteles

- Cultural integration into the local community, which creates a feeling of belonging
- Modern elements that blend well with the environment
- Accessibility from main thoroughfares (first national historic site in Quebec for travellers arriving via Highway 401 from Ontario; accessible via highways 20 and 40 in Quebec)

Weaknesses

- Site entrance and visitor welcome
- Attendance drop linked to visitor welcome and admission rates
- Problem of charging admission to a historic resource
- Growth of pervasive weeds, which endanger the historical remains and riverscape elements, such as the jetty, drain, and lower lock entrance
- Natural erosion of earthworks
- Pervasive presence of small mammals (groundhogs), which threaten the earthworks
- Absence of an exhaustive inventory and evaluation of archaeological documents and collections
- Condition of metal and organic objects in the archaeological collection (about 15%), deemed fair to poor
- Conservation management of exposed archaeological remains, which are threatened by water infiltration and the freeze-thaw cycle; a number of these remains require repair and annual maintenance
- Protective works for the canal remains
- Management of seaweed and vascular plants in the lower lock



An aerial view of the canal and the blockhouse
Parks Canada / Jean Audet

- Updating of historical knowledge
- Advanced state of deterioration of the outdoor interpretation panels
- Certain messages, notably those regarding Native peoples, little or not at all conveyed to the public
- Lack of knowledge regarding the ownership of the drained land
- Lack of financial resources to extend the site's operating hours
- Lack of coherence between objectives of the Commemorative Integrity Statement and cultural resource management practices due to a critical lack of financial and human resources

6. Objectives

Parks Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, protects and presents significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and promotes knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of them among the public such that their ecological and commemorative integrity are preserved for generations to come. In the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site Commemorative Integrity Statement, specific objectives were set to help ensure the site's commemorative integrity:

To **protect cultural resources**, Parks Canada proposes the following:

- Maintain or restore views from the canal to the river and rapids, notably downstream.
- Make the spatial organization and functional interrelationship of the site's various components better known and understood.
- Respect the resources and their inherent values.
- Ensure management decisions are based on accurate and complete information and are consistent with the principles and practices of the *Cultural Resources Management Policy*.
- Ensure resources and their inherent values are not lost, damaged, or threatened by natural causes (such as erosion and deterioration) on or around the site.
- Ensure resources and associated values are not lost, damaged, or threatened by the presence of people on or around the site.

- Raise awareness among site staff of the importance of preserving inherent landscape features.

To **present cultural resources**, related values, and messages concerning national historic importance, Parks Canada proposes the following:

- Communicate the historic value of resources to visitors and staff.
- Ensure the overall heritage presentation conveys the reasons for the national historic site designation.
- Ensure that visitors and site staff understand the reasons for the national historic site designation.
- Ensure that messages unrelated to the reasons for the national historic site designation and the presentation of these messages do not overshadow the presentation and understanding of the site's national historic importance or adversely affect them.

For **visitor attendance and use**, Parks Canada proposes the following specific objectives:

- Offer the various clienteles a meaningful, quality experience that meets their specific needs and interests.
- Foster community involvement to improve the site's services.
- Take the measures necessary to increase attendance while preserving the site's integrity and the quality of the experience.

Parks Canada proposes the following to **integrate the site into the regional tourist network**:

- Work with the regional tourism industry and the Parks Canada national network to ensure good visibility for the site and increase awareness of it, notably among Ontario tourists, as well as tourists in general.
- Position the site in the regional tourism industry as a major protector of regional cultural heritage and a source of onsite historical knowledge.
- Ensure the site is positioned as a leader in Canada's network of historic canals.
- As a national historic site, take part in local and regional social and cultural development and the celebration of local and regional heritage.

Parks Canada proposes the following **environmental management** objectives:

- Determine the condition of the biophysical resources and identify those of significant importance that require protection.
- Adopt healthy environmental practices in all operations and work constantly to improve the site's environmental efficiency.
- Make allowance for climate change in all aspects of property, cultural resource, and biophysical resource management.

7. Looking to the Future: Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site of Canada in 2020

The following paragraphs are intended as a statement of the vision for the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site covering a 15-year horizon. This vision is primarily concerned with safeguarding the commemorative integrity of this site and making Canadians partners in protecting this integrity and communicating messages of national historic significance. Thus:

- At Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site, cultural resources will be protected. The archaeological vestiges of the canal and the defence works will be stabilized and no longer exposed to the threat of various natural phenomena; the visually meaningful features of the landscape and environs will be made easier to distinguish and comprehend through the appropriate management of the surrounding vegetation.
- The major archaeological collection will be inventoried, analyzed and thereafter managed according to the appropriate conservation techniques.
- This national historic site will enjoy a solid reputation for its leadership in protecting and disseminating archaeological heritage. In particular, it will be recognized as both a unique witness to human occupation of the region during the last 6000 years or more and as a major link in the history of the development of canal systems along the St. Lawrence.
- The historical knowledge conveyed in the commemorative messages of this historic site will be updated so as to enable visitors to grasp the functioning of this military

post and the interrelationships between its various components. Visitors will thus be able to gain awareness of the strategic importance of this location, geographically, militarily and commercially.

- This national historic site will remain a “user-friendly” place and will comply with high standards pertaining to heritage presentation and quality of visitor experience.
- The site will be an important component of a dynamic tourism network in the Suroît region, and attendance will grow in keeping with staffing decisions designed to assure visitors a memorable experience.
- The involvement of the local community will constitute a springboard for building the site’s offering of activities and services, particularly in relation to the commemorative potential of Aboriginal themes.



An aid to visualizing a Durham boat
Parks Canada / Normand Rajotte

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- Site management will have deployed a comprehensive strategy aligned with the Canadian government's sustainable development guidelines, especially in terms of environmental management. Their environmental leadership, which fosters a healthy environment for people, biophysical resources, and cultural resources, will be a positive force in the community.

8. Presentation

8.1 1986 Presentation concept

The Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site officially opened its doors to the public in May 1968, although it had been welcoming visitors since the previous summer on the occasion of the World Fair in Montreal. The 1986 management plan sought to preserve the site's archaeological character, exploit the interpretative potential of its onsite resources, provide the facilities required for visitors, present the theme, provide for park operations, and take part in regional tourism development. To date, the site has been preserved and presented in this spirit and all major work planned has been completed. The main purpose of the current management plan update is to maintain and strengthen what has been accomplished since 1986. Better regional integration and the participation of partners should help achieve this objective and thereby allow visitors to enjoy an experience they will not soon forget.

8.2 Management measures

The commemorative integrity of cultural resources will be ensured mainly through application of management measures regarding commemoration objectives, the boundaries of the designated area, protection and presentation of cultural resources, conveyance of their inherent values, and communication of messages of national historical importance. Management measures have also been suggested with regard to site attendance and site integration into the regional tourism network.

For the **commemoration objectives and boundaries of the designated area**, Parks Canada proposes to:

- Initiate consultations with Native communities closest to the site to gauge their interest in how Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site commemorates Native history.
- Take the legal steps necessary to determine who owns the drained area adjacent to the site, along the St. Lawrence River and the Delisle River.



The downstream entrance to the canal
Parks Canada

To **protect cultural resources**, Parks Canada proposes to:

- Perform a systematic computerized inventory of the entire archaeological collection and evaluate it to determine its historic value (Level 1 or 2).
- Re-examine the primitive historical collection in terms of current knowledge on dating and cultural characteristics.
- Develop an annual followup, maintenance, and stabilization plan for the onsite archaeological remains to ensure they are preserved.

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- Perform an in-depth analysis of the condition of the rampart, then develop and implement mitigation measures to stop erosion.
 - Verify the condition of the protection system for the canal remains and, based on the analysis, take the appropriate measures to preserve them.
 - Produce an annual vegetation management plan that establishes how often actions need to be taken to eliminate and control vegetation in order to restore significant views, make the lower entrance to the canal visible to visitors, and protect the rigolet canal.
 - Establish and implement a method to control the presence of groundhogs.
 - Arrange a meeting with the owner of the cemetery and, if necessary, draw up a cooperation agreement with a view to improving the protection and presentation of the site.
 - Assess the impact of activities on the quality of the visitor experience and understanding of the theme.
 - Improve the quality of the water in the lock through an algae and water plant management plan to allow visitors to appreciate the canal and lock remains.
 - Analyze various options to develop new visitor reception facilities that would replace the current parking lot gate to help visitors get a better idea of the experience that awaits them.
 - Consider the possibility of lower admission fees for Coteau-du-Lac municipality residents.
 - Improve the website by adding educational content related to commemoration objectives and heritage messages developed in the Commemorative Integrity Statement and consistent with the Quebec Education Program.

To **present cultural resources**, the significance attached to them and the messages of national historic significance, Parks Canada proposes to:

- Develop a message dealing with the fact that Coteau-du-Lac was for a long time the main port of entry for imports heading to Upper Canada, a message dealing with the history of the rigolet canals between Lachine and Cornwall, and messages dealing with the Native component, using either personalized or non-personalized means.
- Replace the dilapidated interpretation panels, because they are key to understanding the “archaeological garden”.



The interpretation circuit
Parks Canada

For **visitation** to the site and **integration in the regional tourism network**, Parks Canada proposes the following management measures:

According to an analysis conducted in 1997,⁷ potential Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site attendance for 1999-2000 was 8,172 paying visitors, given its various clienteles, whereas 4,100 were recorded in 2005. From 1997 to 2002, the annual average was 5,500 paying visitors, with no special action plan in place. These results therefore seem to suggest that attendance could be increased in the medium term. To do so, Parks Canada intends to draw on its recognized strengths: its warm welcome, personalized interpretation activities, a sense of discovery, and recreational enjoyment. The following management measures are therefore proposed for the site:

- Choose better defined markets and clienteles in order to significantly improve the site's positioning, notoriety, and popularity.
- Survey visitors to find out their expectations and needs so that management can understand them better and make better decisions.
- Evaluate how visitors are greeted and informed about the site as compared to their expectations and consider ways to improve the process.

- Regularly measure performance indicators on visitor satisfaction and the visitor experience to ensure that attention is paid to designing and implementing the necessary management measures for attaining goals.
- Measure and document site attendance (revise visitor traffic estimation method) with a view to setting awareness objectives, measuring the progress achieved, and providing meaningful direction to Parks Canada management.
- Position the site to reap the benefits of the Vallée du Haut-Saint-Laurent marketing plan and the planned reopening of the Soulanges Canal for tourism purposes.
- Foster inhouse and external partnerships to increase the site's ability to improve the program and services it offers the public.

Parks Canada proposes the following **environmental management** measures:

- Conduct a biophysical inventory of the site.
- Analyze the state of environmental management on the site, and specifically the energy efficiency of site buildings.
- Update and implement the site's environmental management plan.

7. Desjardins Marketing Stratégique, *Élaboration d'un plan stratégique et d'action marketing 1997-2000, Lieux historiques nationaux du district de Montréal, Rapport final*, Québec, mars 1997, p. 114.

9. Conclusion

Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site's management plan provides benchmarks and management parameters based on Parks Canada's mission, to protect and commemorate the site. Although the most important measures aim to ensure the site's commemorative integrity, others are also recommended to enhance visitor experience, improve visitor services, boost site attendance and name recognition, and minimize the environmental impact of Parks Canada's activities.

It is obvious that implementing the proposed management measures will require a potentially large investment. The Western Quebec Field Unit plans to finance the proposed measures using current budget allocations, additional, one-time budget funding, existing programs for which it might be eligible, or partnership agreements with the community. If such revenue sources are not available to the field unit in the short term, the new funds the Agency will have should make it possible to successfully meet the main challenges. This proposed management plan is intended to update the 1986 plan. Although it provides a five-year management framework, it is part of a vision with a time horizon of 15 years. Deployment of the proposed management measures must therefore be viewed over the long term, when the required financial resources are available or circumstances allow.

Subject to securing the required financing and with a primary view to guaranteeing the site's commemorative integrity, Parks Canada plans to give priority to the following general management measures over the next five years:

- Perform an in-depth analysis of the condition of the rampart, then develop and implement mitigation measures to stop erosion.
- Verify the condition of the protection system for the canal remains and, based on the analysis, take the appropriate measures to preserve them.
- Produce an annual vegetation management plan that establishes how often actions need to be taken to eliminate and control vegetation in order to restore significant views, make the lower entrance to the canal visible to visitors, and protect the rigolet canal.
- Develop a message dealing with the fact that Coteau-du-Lac was for a long time the main port of entry for imports heading to Upper Canada, a message dealing with the history of the rigolet canals between Lachine and Cornwall, and messages dealing with the Native component, using either personalized or non-personalized means.
- Replace the dilapidated interpretation panels, because they are key to understanding the "archaeological garden".
- Analyze various options to develop new visitor reception facilities that would replace the current parking lot gate to help visitors get a better idea of the experience that awaits them.

-
- Survey visitors to find out their expectations and needs so that management can understand them better and make better decisions.
 - Evaluate how visitors are greeted and informed about the site as compared to their expectations and consider ways to improve the process.
 - Measure and document site attendance (revise visitor traffic estimation method) with a view to setting awareness objectives, measuring the progress achieved, and providing meaningful direction to Parks Canada management.



A guide-interpreter in period attire
Parks Canada / Daniel Beaudin

10. Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

A strategic environmental assessment was conducted of Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site's management plan. Its goal was to review the effects of activities and the proposed management measures on the site's commemorative integrity and the protection of its biophysical resources.

The assessment is based on the 1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan, and Program Proposals. It complies with the guidelines of the *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies of Parks Canada* (1994) and the *Management Directive 2.4.2 on the Assessment of Impacts* (1998).

An initial audit finds that the management plan complies fully with the policies of Parks Canada and the Canadian government.

The assessment's scope tells us what is included in the environmental assessment. The spatial limitations for purposes of the assessment are the designated place's boundaries. The timeframe is the same as the vision's time horizon, or 15 years.

10.1 Assessing the potential impacts of activities and management measures

Factors that stress cultural and biophysical resources are analyzed to determine their impacts on heritage resources. Analysis shows that most potential stress sources

have no impact on cultural and natural resources. A few have a weak to medium impact.

The operation of some historic sites can jeopardize heritage resources, while some management measures can have side effects and therefore require special attention. The proposed mitigation measures can alleviate certain adverse impacts on commemorative integrity and biophysical resource protection.

On the whole, the analyses find that the management plan has a positive effect overall on Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site's commemorative integrity.

10.2 Assessing the potential cumulative impacts of activities and the management plan's management measures

This assessment is based on the principle that the combined effects of various projects and activities can have a greater or different impact than that of each individually.

An audit of the management plan's residual impacts has shown that few impacts should persist once the mitigation measures and strategies are in place.

The plan's overall consequences for cumulative impacts involve climate change, attendance growth, and site utilization.

10.3 Mitigation measures to eliminate or minimize negative impacts

As with the management plan, the measures taken to mitigate impacts will be strategic. The mitigation strategies aim to achieve the following:

- Apply the precautionary principle and adaptive management in the Parks Canada strategy for protecting the commemorative integrity and natural resources at the designated and administered site.
- When planning projects or activities to implement the management plan, minimize the effects on cultural and natural resources (an environmental assessment process will be used to determine impacts).
- Take an environmental approach to managing the historic site's programs and operations.
- Devise a preventive strategy to adapt to climate change in order to protect the site's cultural resources, biophysical resources, and infrastructures.

10.4 Conclusion

The findings of the strategic environmental assessment support the conclusion that, based on available information, the presentation concept chosen for the site meets heritage requirements. The exercise showed that the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site management plan can be used to upgrade commemorative integrity and the protection of biophysical resources. Several negative impacts can be mitigated through strategies and measures. However, the strategy review highlighted several concerns with respect to cultural and natural resource protection.

The most worrisome potential negative impacts can be mitigated by deploying known technical measures and other means shown to be effective in the past. Environmental assessments of the projects will have to be conducted at a later planning stage, when enough details about their implementation are known. The identified potential impacts of operating the historic site could be monitored through an environmental operations audit.

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Appendix A:

Summary of Commemorative Integrity Assessment

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* states that in the national interest, the commemorative integrity of national historic sites must be ensured and Parks Canada must report to Parliament regularly on the state of protected heritage areas entrusted to it. The commemorative integrity assessment for the Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site meets this requirement. Such assessments also provide management with information on site strengths and weaknesses with regard to commemorative integrity. This assessment is based on the site's Commemorative Integrity Statement and the *Parks Canada Cultural Resource Management Policy*. It also meets the standards indicated in the *Commemorative Integrity Rating Guide*.

The assessment was entrusted to a multidisciplinary team and conducted on May 25 and 26, 2005.

The main strengths identified during the assessment are as follows:

- Condition of resources: one of the site's major strengths is its authenticity with respect to its commemoration objectives. The designated historic site strongly evokes its history. The site's location on the point with its view of the rapids continues to evoke its strategic importance. The canal, cloverleaf-shaped battery, and numerous archaeological remains add to the site's appeal. Although the blockhouse is a replica, it contributes to the visitor experience and adds symbolic value to the Coteau-du-Lac community. The site also boasts a rich archaeological collection that would profit from being better presented.

- Effectiveness of communications: all of the messages are well conveyed to the site's various clienteles thanks to a dedicated team of professional guides who offer first-rate service personalized for the needs of visitors. Interpretation is well balanced and compelling. The use of a wide range of non-personalized media helps enrich the visitor experience. A combination of personalized contact and diversified interpretation methods (interpretation panels, meaningful books, multimedia, models, cards, artefacts, etc.) helps visitors understand the site's specific messages. Varied and rich, the content is conveyed in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.
- Management practices: the community feels a sense of ownership of the site, which is culturally well integrated into the local population. In general, relations with the community are consistent with the cultural resource management principles and practices. The addition of modern approaches is also noteworthy, with on-site staff using the least destructive and most reversible methods possible, as was the case with the reconstitution of structures atop the remains. In general, the site is well maintained and has maintenance plans for its buildings, structures, archaeological remains, and exhibited objects. These plans are adequately followed given the resources available.

The main weaknesses identified are as follows:

- Condition of resources: the condition of certain remains and riverscape elements (jetty, drain, lower lock entrance) leaves

something to be desired because of uncontrolled vegetation growth. The condition of the archaeological sites is fair, notably because the earthworks have deteriorated and certain remains require repair. Objects made of metal or organic materials in the part of the collection that has been stored but not inventoried are presumed to be in fair to poor condition due to the nature of the materials.

- Effectiveness of communications: in general, the communication program is excellent. Certain limitations to communicating and presenting heritage resources in the archaeological garden were, however, identified by the assessment team. A lack of new historical research was also perceived as a weakness affecting the quality of the communication program.
- Management practices: the management team complies with cultural resource management principles and practices to the extent their financial means allow. However, certain weaknesses were noted with regard to the maintenance program and the design and implementation of corrective measures, notably the absence of a structured plan for landscape elements, the lack of a concrete plan to measure the effectiveness of communication tools,

and the urgent need for a management plan to control pests and vegetation. It is important that ownership of the drained land be ascertained, because the forest growing on it compromises certain viewpoints identified in the Commemorative Integrity Statement.

- The absence of an inventory of the archaeological collections and documents is a major weakness, because it makes it impossible to perform a proper assessment of these resources and their conservation and presentation. In addition, work is not always documented, and communications are not always preserved and archived. An inventory of natural resources and rare or interesting specimens will soon be conducted.
- The assessment team also noted the need to update and complete the historical research. A number of issues regarding the lack of financial and human resources were also raised, notably the fact that certain professional services— notably in historical research, material culture, and conservation—are hard to find. The assessment team noted inconsistencies between the objectives of the Commemorative Integrity Statement, management practices, and allocated funds.

The assessment results are as follows:

Legend:	
Green	Good and effective, with no current deficiencies. Green indicates there is no threat to the site's commemorative integrity.
Yellow	Fair, with mild to moderate deficiencies. Improvements are required.
Red	Poor and ineffective, with significant deficiencies or absence of defining characteristics.
N/A	Not applicable.
N/R	Not rated because information is not available.
+ or -	The current condition of the site is at the upper or lower limit of the colour rating.
↑ or ↓	Indicates a trend toward improvement (↑) or deterioration (↓).

CONDITION OF RESOURCES	
General	Yellow
Resources related to the reasons for its designation	Yellow
Resources not related to the reasons for its designation	Yellow +
Types of cultural resources:	
. Landscape features	Yellow
. Buildings, works	Green
. Archaeological sites	Yellow
. Objects	Yellow +
. Designated place	Green
Other heritage resources	Yellow
EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIONS	
General	Green
Reasons for designation	Green
Messages not related to the reasons for designation	Green
Media effectiveness	Green
Public understanding	N/R
Scope and complexity of perspectives presented	Green
General values of national historic sites	Green
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	
General	Yellow
Inventory and assessment of cultural resources	Yellow
Compliance with cultural resource management practices and principles	Yellow +
Archives and records	Yellow
Maintenance programs	Yellow
Followup and corrective measures	Yellow

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