



THE FORKS

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
OF CANADA

Management Plan



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THE FORKS

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

Management Plan

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 The Forks 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 Forks National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

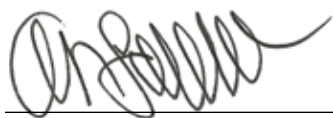
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Baird".

John Baird
Minister of the Environment

RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT

THE FORKS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA **Management Plan**

Recommended for approval by:



Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada



Dawn Bronson
Field Unit Superintendent, Manitoba

SUMMARY

The management plan for The Forks National Historic Site of Canada (The Forks NHSC) will provide a framework for management of this nationally significant heritage place, including measures to ensure its commemorative integrity and provide memorable and meaningful visitor experiences.

The Forks NHSC has been continuously occupied for millennia and continues to be a meeting place. Strategically located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, this place has witnessed many of the key events of Western Canada. Today, The Forks is a national historic site, an area of 25.3 ha in size, of which 3.6 ha is owned and administered by Parks Canada. The Forks NHSC is Winnipeg's and Manitoba's number one tourist attraction and a popular gathering place for recreation, dining, shopping and celebration. The Parks Canada Property at The Forks consists mainly of green space and provides an oasis of calm in the centre of a busy urban environment.

The management plan is based on a vision for The Forks NHSC. It is inspirational and guides the planning, management and operation of the site. A key element of that vision is to foster cooperation amongst those that use, enjoy and care for this nationally significant heritage. The completion of a commemorative integrity statement, in partnership with key stakeholders, will be the first step towards providing direction for an integrated and holistic approach to all activities affecting the cultural resources and the protection of the green space. Parks Canada will also partner with the adjacent landowners to gain a better understanding of visitors' needs and expectations. Visitor experiences that are complementary and enhance the overall offer at The Forks NHSC will be developed by working with them. Collaboration with others will augment the opportunities to present heritage programs and services that leave visitors with enduring memories of the historical significance of The Forks NHSC. Visitors will also gain an appreciation and understanding of Parks Canada's corporate message and services and of other historic sites in the City of Winnipeg and beyond.

The implementation of this management plan over the coming years will lead to the achievement of the site's vision. The plan will be reviewed every five years and will include public consultation to assess its continued effectiveness and relevance in the management of The Forks NHSC.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT	iii
SUMMARY	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA	2
1.2 THE FORKS: A PLACE OF NATIONAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE	2
1.3 MANAGEMENT PLANNING	5
2. CURRENT SITUATION AT THE FORKS NHSC	7
2.1 CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	7
2.1.1 THE FORKS NHSC	7
2.1.2 THE PARKS CANADA PROPERTY AT THE FORKS NHSC	10
2.1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES	10
2.1.4 HISTORIC OBJECTS FROM THE PARKS CANADA PROPERTY	10
2.2 VISITORS	11
2.3 HERITAGE PRESENTATION	11
2.4 VISITOR SERVICES AND VISITOR FACILITIES	12
2.4.1 VISITOR SERVICES OFFERED BY PARKS CANADA	12
2.4.2 VISITOR SERVICES OFFERED AT THE FORKS NHSC	12
2.4.3 VISITOR FACILITIES	12
2.5 PARTNERSHIPS	14
2.6 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION	15
3. VISION FOR THE FORKS NHSC	17
4. MANAGEMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS	19
4.1 HERITAGE CONSERVATION	19
4.2 A MEANINGFUL VISITOR EXPERIENCE	20
4.3 PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING	21
4.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT	22
4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP	23
5. MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	25
6. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	27



1 INTRODUCTION

The Forks has been continuously occupied for millennia and continues to be a meeting place for all. Today, The Forks National Historic Site of Canada (The Forks NHSC) consists of a small green space owned and operated by Parks Canada, a large land area managed by The Forks North Portage Partnership and land owned by the City of Winnipeg. This area, defined as the designated place, was declared by the Minister of the Environment to be of national historic significance at the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC).

This management plan describes the long-term vision for the protection, presentation and use of this vibrant historic place in the heart of downtown Winnipeg. The plan sets out the objectives, strategies and key actions towards achieving that vision. This management plan will address Parks Canada's role within

The Forks National Historic Site of Canada is the area 25.3 ha in size designated by the HSMBC. The Parks Canada Property at The Forks NHSC is the area owned and operated by the Parks Canada Agency, a green space 3.6 ha in size.

the green space owned and operated by Parks Canada, but will also discuss Parks Canada's relationship within The Forks NHSC with neighbours, other land managers, stakeholders and the public. Parks Canada will create a quality visitor experience in this historic meeting place – one of Canada's national treasures.



Aerial View of The Forks NSHC (Courtesy of The Forks North Portage Partnership)



1.1 National Historic Sites of Canada

The nation-wide network of Parks Canada protected heritage areas includes National Parks, National Marine Conservation Areas and some National Historic Sites.¹ National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas are established to represent clearly identified land and marine environments (refer to the Parks Canada National Parks System Plan and the National Marine Conservation Areas System Plan) and National Historic Sites are designated to commemorate various facets of Canada's history (refer to the Parks Canada National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan).

The Forks is of national historic significance because of its continuous use over time for transportation, trade and settlement. Strategically located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, it witnessed many of the events that shaped the Canadian West.

The objectives of National Historic Sites are:

- to foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past through a national program of historical commemoration;
- to ensure the commemorative integrity of National Historic Sites administered by Parks Canada by protecting and presenting them for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of this and future generations, in a manner that respects the significant and irreplaceable legacy represented by these places and their associated resources; and
- to encourage and support the protection and presentation by others of places of national historic significance that are not administered by Parks Canada (Parks Canada National Historic Sites Policy).

"Commemorative Intent" is the specific reason a place is designated nationally significant. Commemorative intent comes from the recommendations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which are approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

"Commemorative Integrity" is a concept created by Parks Canada to manage, evaluate and report on National Historic Sites. It is used to report to Parliament and the Canadian public on their condition and caretaking. A National Historic Site has commemorative integrity when:

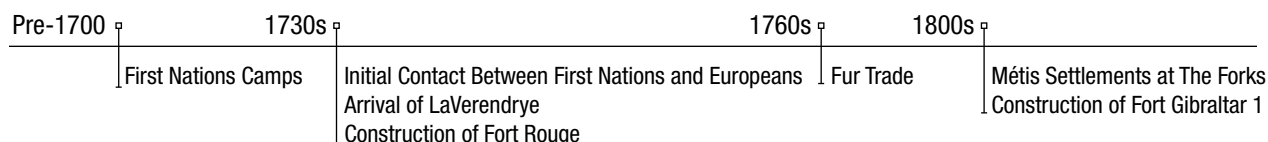
- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a National Historic Site are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for designation as a National Historic Site are effectively communicated to the public; and
- the site's heritage values are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

1.2 The Forks: A Place of National Historic Significance

The Forks NHSC was designated a national historic site in 1974. The 1986 HSMBC plaque text reads:

Strategically located at the junction of two major rivers which form part of a vast continental network, this spot has witnessed many of the key events of Western Canadian history. This was a traditional native stopping place and for this reason La Vérendrye erected Fort Rouge near here in 1738. It has been a centre for trade and exploration, a focus for the first permanent European settlement in the Canadian West, cradle of the province of Manitoba, nucleus of the city of Winnipeg, a hub of rail and road transport, and the gateway for the settlement of the prairies.

¹Only 154 of the more than 900 National Historic Sites are administered by Parks Canada; the remaining sites are administered by other federal departments, provinces or territories, or are privately owned. The Forks NHSC is jointly managed by Parks Canada, The Forks North Portage Partnership and the City of Winnipeg.



Upper Fort Garry (Armstrong/Public Archives Canada/C10514)

The confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers has been a focal point of human use for thousands of years. The two rivers were major transportation corridors connected to continental trade routes; their junction served as an opportune place to meet. Ecologically, The Forks was located in a transition zone between parkland and prairies. Prior to European contact, the area was rich in resources and served as a gathering place, fishing camp, trading site and settlement area. There is archaeological evidence from before the 1700s of numerous cultural groups occupying a large geographical area, all of whom used The Forks. Europeans arriving in the area in the 1700s recorded the presence of Assiniboine, Ojibwa (Saulteaux), Cree and Dakota (Sioux) living there intermittently or seasonally, depending on the availability of game.

Initial contact between the First Nations peoples and Europeans occurred first at The Forks in the 1730s, when French traders began exploiting the fur potential of the Great Lakes basin and established a network of trade and provisioning posts in the West. The Forks is the location of the HSMBC plaque commemorating Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye who established Fort Rouge at The Forks in 1738. La Vérendrye traded with bands of northern Ojibwa, Cree, Assiniboine and Gros Ventres living in the interior.

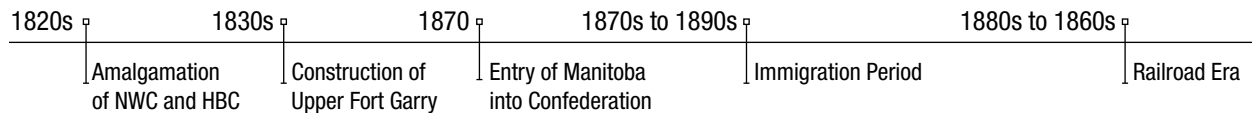
With the ceding of New France in 1760, independent traders re-established fur trade networks throughout the West and later created the North West Company (NWC). Initially, Cree and Assiniboine acted as middlemen, exchanging the furs from inland bands for European-manufactured goods. After 1780, the Plains Indians assumed the role of providing supplies, hunting bison and processing the meat and hides to support the expansion of trade into the districts of Saskatchewan and Athabasca. The NWC established Fort Gibraltar I at The Forks in 1810 to support this expanding network.

The emerging Métis gradually supplanted the Plains Cree and Assiniboine in their role of suppliers of pemmican and provisions to the fur posts in the interior. After 1804-1805, a number of Métis settled in the vicinity of The Forks, primarily upon the east bank of the Red River, where they worked as commercial bison hunters and contract freighters for the NWC. Bands of Cree and Saulteaux (Western Ojibwa) also lived near The Forks in the late 18th century. In 1812 the Selkirk Colony was established along the west bank of the Red, immediately north of the Forks.

After 1821 and the amalgamation of the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), which



Winter Fishing on the Ice, 1821 (National Archives Canada/C-1932)



Winnipeg in 1873
(National Archives Canada/NMC H2/540/Winnipeg/1880)

had moved inland to compete with the NWC for the fur trade, The Forks became the centre of settlement in Rupert's Land and a major debarcation point for traders, explorers and Christian missionaries. The HBC occupied Fort Gibraltar II and named it Fort Garry. In 1835 – 1837, a new and larger fort called Upper Fort Garry was built nearby to become the administrative and commercial centre of the settlement.

In 1869, the impending transfer of Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada set into motion the Red River Resistance. Louis Riel formed a provisional government to negotiate the entrance of Manitoba into Confederation on July 15, 1870. An HSMBC plaque at The Forks NHSC also commemorates this event.

In 1872, two immigration sheds were constructed at The Forks to accommodate immigrant passengers arriving from the United States by riverboat. These sheds could accommodate up to 500 people at a time and were removed by 1885.

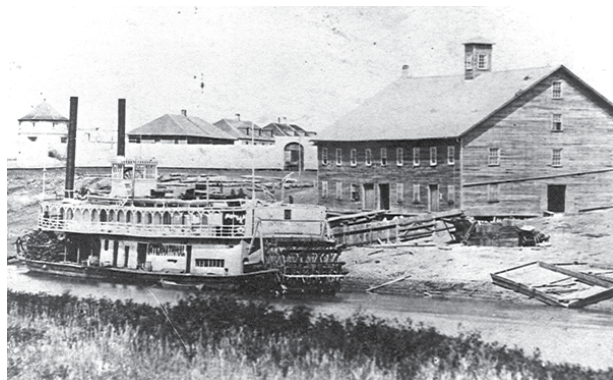
In 1888, land at The Forks was sold to the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railroad Company. Structures associated with the railroad

were built along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Some are still standing. Winnipeg rose to the status of regional metropolis with the opening of the Canadian West by the railroad. The metropolis saw rapid increases in population through immigration and the transformation of the economy from the fur trade to commercial agriculture. The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 drastically changed shipping practices globally. The Canal eliminated Winnipeg's economic advantage for transportation and reduced growth in Winnipeg.

When modernized rail facilities were built on the outskirts of Winnipeg in the 1960s, the marshalling yards at The Forks became obsolete. Much of the former yards were transferred in 1988 to The Forks Renewal Corporation, later to become The Forks North Portage Partnership. A parcel of 3.6 hectares was transferred to the Government of Canada, to be owned and operated by Parks Canada.

From its role in the fur trade, the settlement and expansion of Western Canada, the birth of Winnipeg and the range of recreational opportunities it offers, the Red River has been nominated for membership in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. In addition, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board is currently considering designations for Forts Rouge, Gibraltar I and Gibraltar II (Fort Garry), all of which were located at The Forks. The site is also thematically linked to Upper Fort Garry, which is located nearby on the west side of the railway lines.

It is for these reasons that The Forks is protected and presented for the benefit of this and future generations of Canadians. The Forks today, framed by the banks of the two rivers, is a vibrant setting in an urban environment where people continue to gather for celebrations, recreation, dining experiences, shopping and to



Steamboat International at HBC Fort Garry Warehouse, ca 1873 (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba)

meet one another as they have done over the millennia. A host of year-round outdoor and indoor attractions integrate the site's natural, historic and man-made features. The Forks is the number one tourist destination for Winnipeg and Manitoba.

1.3 Management Planning

A management plan must be tabled in Parliament for each and every National Historic Site administered by Parks Canada (*Parks Canada Agency Act*, 1998). The management plan must include provisions for the commemorative integrity, resource protection and visitor use for the Parks Canada Property at The Forks NHSC. This management plan will meet these requirements.

The heritage values, resources and messages that define the commemorative integrity of a National Historic Site are usually laid out in a commemorative integrity statement (CIS). The CIS document identifies the resources that relate to the reasons for designation – what is valuable and why. The CIS provides guidance on what conditions are needed to protect the

resources and to ensure that the heritage values and resources are understood, communicated effectively and respected.

At this time, there is only a limited CIS, drafted in July 2004,² to provide a basis for planning and decision-making on the 3.6 ha that Parks Canada owns and operates. There is no CIS for The Forks NHSC as a whole.

The principles and practices of Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* were applied in developing the directions in the management plan and an environmental assessment was done as required by *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*, 2004.

This plan will guide Parks Canada and its partners as we protect and present The Forks NHSC for all Canadians. It will provide long-range direction for the management of heritage resources and activities and will be reviewed every five years to assess its continued relevance and effectiveness.

In the following chapters, the current state of The Forks NHSC is reviewed (Chapter 2), a broad long-term vision for the site is articulated (Chapter 3), the objectives and actions to meet the vision are described (Chapter 4) and an implementation plan is summarized (Chapter 5).

²The Forks National Historic Site of Canada "Limited" Commemorative Integrity Statement, July, 2004

2 CURRENT SITUATION AT THE FORKS NHSC

2.1 Cultural Resource Management

A cultural resource can be a human work, or a place that shows evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning and has been found to have historic value. A cultural resource can be above ground or below, or under water. It can include both natural and fabricated features. In Parks Canada, cultural resource management means protecting and presenting cultural resources as set out in the Parks Canada *Cultural Resource Management Policy*. The practice of cultural resource management requires that the following four elements be in place in all decision-making that affect cultural resources:

- i) inventory of resources,
- ii) evaluation to determine historic value,
- iii) consideration of the historic value in actions that affect conservation and presentation, and
- iv) monitoring and review to ensure conservation and presentation objectives are met.

The following section details the cultural resources that are directly related to the importance of the site as a National Historic Site. It begins first by considering The Forks NHSC, and then the individual cultural resources of the Parks Canada Property at The Forks NHSC.

2.1.1 The Forks NHSC

The Forks NHSC, an area 25.3 ha in size, consists of two pieces of land, separated by the Assiniboine River, to the east of the railway lines and to the west of the Red River. Refer to the map on page 8. Urban renewal and waterfront development have changed the designated place over time, but its historic values and sense of place remain unchanged.

Over the centuries, the Red and Assiniboine rivers connected people from throughout the continent – a meeting place for people. Today, the meeting place theme extends to the vision, planning, programming and promotion of The Forks. There is something for everyone – shops and restaurants; parks and promenades; gardens and sculptures; and a multitude of attractions.



HSMBC Plaque (S. Richards)



Visually and symbolically, there are a number of landmarks and commemorations that remind visitors of key events in the history of western Canada that have taken place at The Forks NHSC:

- the HSMBC commemoration of the creation of the Province of Manitoba;
- the HSMBC commemoration of The Forks National Historic Site of Canada;
- the HSBMC commemoration of LaVérendrye;
- the view of the St. Boniface cathedral and St. Boniface museum, features of the emerging permanent settlement in the 19th century;
- the Esplanade Riel pedestrian bridge, linking the City of Winnipeg with historic St. Boniface, the French quarter;
- the adjacent operations of CN mainline and the Union Station, evoking the role of the railway in expanding and settling the Canadian west in the 19th and 20th centuries;
- the historic buildings from the turn of the last century that have been restored for reuse.



Esplanade Riel (S. Richards)



View of Historic St. Boniface (S. Richards)



2.1.2 The Parks Canada Property at The Forks NHSC

The Parks Canada Property is now largely green space that provides access to the Red River. The landscape along the Red River has been altered by fill during use of the site by the railway and some industries. The heritage value of the landscape is tied to its relationship with the rivers. The sediment deposits from flooding events hide evidence from the past. The soil layers, hidden beneath metres of fill, can be dated and provide a key to unlocking the hidden stories of occupation throughout thousands of years. Each layer provides a chapter of The Forks history.

The riverbank is bordered by a small urban forest of bur oak, Manitoba maple, cottonwood, aspen and dogwood that was re-established after the fur trade period and that survived the railway period. This forest fragment is characteristic of riparian habitat that would have been found at The Forks prior to the fur trade era, before the wood would have been used for construction and fuel.

2.1.3 Archaeological Sites

A patchwork of archaeological work on the Parks Canada Property offers a glimpse into the past of the area. Most of the cultural resources predating the arrival of Europeans are located adjacent to the north bank of the Assiniboine River, or just inland of the west bank of the Red River.³ These resources affirm the seasonal occupation and use of The Forks over centuries. This is based upon multiple strata or living floors containing tools and remnants of past subsistence activities, subsequently sealed by flood deposits and overlain by fill deposits. Distinctive differences in the strata have been identified from one area to another, suggesting that topographic variation greatly influenced site selection. These differences provide insight to past landscapes subsequently covered and modified by a combination of human actions and natural events.



View of the Red River and Urban Forest (S. Richards)

Archaeological investigations have also revealed historic features associated with Fort Gibraltar I, the HBC Experimental Farm and the railway period. Limited evidence of an earlier historic occupation was uncovered below Fort Gibraltar I and minimal structural evidence has been found associated with Fort Gibraltar II/Fort Garry I.

Only a small proportion of the Parks Canada Property has been subject to archaeological investigation. Within the green undeveloped Parks Canada Property the depth and quantity of fill deposits serve as a protective mantle over the buried resources, protecting archaeological remains.

Beyond the Parks Canada Property, within The Forks NHSC, numerous infrastructure and building projects have resulted in substantial impact to the site's broader subsurface and cultural layers. Archaeological assessments have focussed directly on the subsurface areas being impacted, but the patchwork of areas investigated has made it very difficult to link strata and gain a clear understanding of cultural layers and associations. This has limited our understanding of past activity areas.

2.1.4 Historic Objects from the Parks Canada Property

The archaeological investigations on the Parks

³ Cultural Resource Inventory and Cumulative Impacts Analysis: The Forks National Historic Site of Canada , Downie, 2002

Canada Property have uncovered almost 200,000 objects from an array of cultural groups representing a long time span. Included amongst these objects are pre-contact items manufactured from materials distinctive to the various environmental zones drained by the Red and Assiniboine rivers. These objects suggest a complex trade network between people inhabiting the Plains, Parkland and Boreal Forest regions. The artefacts reveal individuals bringing their specific regional adaptations to The Forks location and influencing each other both economically and culturally.

The range of recovered artefacts associated with the fur trade and railway periods speaks to the continuation of this process of interaction and movement of peoples well into the Historic Period.

The objects from the Parks Canada Property are primarily housed at the Parks Canada Western and Northern Service Centre. In 2003, a project was undertaken to bring the collection up to current collection management standards. In addition an illustrated catalogue of selected artefacts comprising a reference collection was developed on themes related to The Forks NHSC.

2.2 Visitors

The Forks NHSC is Winnipeg's and Manitoba's number one tourist attraction and the most popular gathering place. The great majority of its visitors are Winnipeggers, but many travellers are also attracted to The Forks. It is where the city meets and celebrates.

The Forks North Portage Partnership (FNPP) is responsible for the ownership, management and continuing renewal of The Forks. The Partnership currently operates a number of commercial activities at The Forks: surface parking, a market, a skateboard plaza and a parkade. Land is leased for a number of developments including the Manitoba Theatre for Young People, The Forks Market, the Citytv

“The Forks shall be developed as a ‘Meeting Place’, a special and distinct, all-season gathering and recreational place at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, through a mixed-use approach including recreational, historical and cultural, residential, and institutional and supportive commercial uses.”

FNPP Mission

Studio Facility, the Explore Manitoba Tourism Information Centre, the Johnston Terminal Office and Retail Complex, the Inn at The Forks, the Manitoba Children's Museum and Sugar Mountain Express. Development is strongly rooted in the reuse of historic buildings within the context of the meeting place theme, although contemporary facilities have been integrated into the mix. The Partnership maintains public amenities that enhance the viability and public use of its site.

2.3 Heritage Presentation

The Forks NHSC draws people of all ages and interests including children, youth, seniors, Aboriginal groups and new Canadians. Because of its location, there is always a ready-made audience for Parks Canada programs and services even though visitors mainly come to The Forks for recreation, shopping, celebration and enjoyment. In addition, the array of entertainment and leisure opportunities provided by adjacent landowners makes the communication of historical messages to visitors more challenging - there is much competition for their interest and attention. The Parks Canada Property is only a part of this much larger Winnipeg attraction. The main feature of the site, tranquil open-air green space, highly valued by visitors, provides a venue that leads to opportunities to present the stories of The Forks in creative and innovative ways by Parks Canada staff and partners. Various groups use this flexible space as a stage for special events.

Currently, heritage presentation programs are strategically designed for children, Aboriginal groups, the general public, special event audiences and corporate convention groups. On-site media include artistic installations and interpretive exhibits. Personal programming such as tours and theatrical performances is made available where people naturally congregate on the Parks Canada Property and at other locations at The Forks. School tours are proactively offered to the educational community in Winnipeg. These interpretation services cover the broad extent of the messages of The Forks and stimulate people to want to learn more about the rich history of the site. This approach also provokes interest in other nearby historic sites such as Lower Fort Garry, Riel House, the Exchange District and the St. Boniface Museum.

Interpretation programming initiatives have also been developed and delivered with partners that have a vested interest in The Forks including:

- the Manitoba Theatre for Young People;
- the Winnipeg International Children's Festival;
- the Festival du Voyageur;
- the St. Boniface Museum;
- The Forks North Portage Partnership .

2.4 Visitor Services and Visitor Facilities

2.4.1 Visitor Services Offered by Parks Canada Agency

Visitor information services are offered during the summer at the Parks Canada information desk (kiosk) located in the Travel Manitoba Centre at The Forks. There, visitors are received, welcomed and oriented to The Forks NHSC and to other Parks Canada sites in Manitoba and across Canada. The kiosk serves as a staging

area for guided tours. Parks Canada works closely with Travel Manitoba staff who provide information about provincial attractions to visitors.

Visitors to The Forks NHSC can prepare for their trip virtually. The Parks Canada website provides pre-trip information and directions on finding The Forks.

Events and activities permitted within the Parks Canada Property have evolved to meet a broad range of requests from the community. Use is based in large part on the carrying capacity of the green space. The number of visitors per event is managed carefully. Numbers vary dramatically from a few hundred to tens of thousands. Events range from weddings to major festivals.

2.4.2 Visitor Services Offered at The Forks NHSC

The Forks NHSC is home to a diverse range of on-site tenants, all of whom offer their own unique product, service or venue to visitors. Shopping and dining choices, promenades, gardens and sculptures, accommodation, spa services, meeting and reception space are available year-round. The Forks also hosts over 200 events that are offered throughout the year, most of them free.

2.4.3 Visitor Facilities

An assessment of Parks Canada infrastructure⁴ was carried out to look at the existing infrastructure and to compare it to the infrastructure of the surrounding properties. Each asset is discussed in relation to its importance to visitors.

The Green Space

The main asset on the Parks Canada Property is the green space – this includes the wide-open grass lawns, the riverbank forest and the river

⁴Assessment and Options Analysis Study The Forks National Historic Site, David Wagner Associates Inc., 2006



Open Spaces at The Forks NHSC (S. Richards)



Heritage Adventure Playground (S. Richards)

walk surrounding The Forks NHSC. This asset increases in value as The Forks NHSC becomes more developed. The green space provides an oasis of calm and an opportunity to commune with nature in the centre of a busy urban environment.

- The open green space is in poor condition, in part due to poor maintenance and to stress from use. This is especially apparent since the adjacent green spaces managed by The Forks North Portage Partnership are green and lush.
- The riverbank forest and the river walk are subject to flooding every spring and sometimes during the summer, creating maintenance and aesthetic issues.

Heritage Adventure Playground

The playground is a combination of play area for children and interpretive elements for children and parents. It is the only public children's outdoor play space within The Forks NHSC that is free of charge, accessible year-round throughout the day and into the evening.

- The playground and its sand base currently do not meet CSA standards. There are few play components and these are in poor condition; the playground is not accessible to all.



Orientation Node (S. Richards)

The Orientation Node

The original entrance to the Parks Canada Property is a circular plaza and attached building housing public washrooms.

- This asset is in generally good condition other than requiring minor maintenance.

“...dedicated to all those who came to The Forks and shared their visions for a better future. Their hopes and dreams became the Canadian West.”

Orientation Node



Path of Time Sculpture (S. Richards)

The Amphitheatre

The amphitheatre on the riverbank links to the river walkway and provides access down to the river. The original role of the amphitheatre as a stage for heritage programming has shifted with newer facilities available for similar functions at The Forks NHSC.

- This asset is rated as poor. Before any upgrading is done, the future role of the asset and its relevance within the context of The Forks NHSC will need to be defined.

The Boat Dock

The boat dock is located along the Red River walkway and is used by the City of Winnipeg for river interpretive tours and for staging of water-based festivals.

- The boat dock is in fairly good condition, but sees little use. The Forks Historic docks on the Assiniboine River are much larger in scale and see much more use. Boat tours and water taxi service are offered from the Historic docks.

2.5 Partnerships

Parks Canada partners with a multitude of groups, agencies, associations and other organizations within The Forks NHSC and beyond. A key partner is The Forks North



The Forks Historic Docks on the Assiniboine River (S. Richards)

Portage Partnership and its Heritage Advisory Committee. The Committee, which includes Parks Canada representation, provides advice to the Partnership on the interpretation of heritage resources and community participation in development at The Forks. The shared mandate for telling the history of The Forks provides a basis for Parks Canada and The Forks North Portage Partnership to collaborate at every opportunity: during site operations and management, marketing, programming, promotion.

The Forks Foundation, a registered charitable organization, also provides a vehicle for people from all walks of life to contribute to The Forks vision of a special meeting place. Charitable donations support new projects that identify, interpret and display the site's historic legacies. Parks Canada has an opportunity to partner in these initiatives that are aimed at encouraging present and future generations to enjoy and experience the diverse offerings that define The Forks.

Other important partners include the Manitoba Theatre for Young People, the Manitoba Children's Museum and Travel Manitoba. In addition, two key programming partners are the Children's Festival and the Festival du Voyageur. Initially intended to draw and attract important summertime and wintertime events to The Forks, this partnership has grown and evolved to a working relationship to deliver programming on The Forks NHSC property.



The Forks NHSC also partners opportunistically with several other organizations – Aboriginal community (event use such as the North American Indigenous Games), St. Boniface community (heritage presentation), Inn at the Forks (promotional and programming purposes), Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (treaty payments at The Forks NHSC), City of Winnipeg (educational programs), Tourism Winnipeg, Manitoba Museum, Rivers West (heritage river designation), Red River College interpretation program, and several other third party event proponents. Partnerships have been and will continue to be developed to enhance heritage presentation programs and products delivered both at The Forks NHSC and off-site.

2.6 Administration and Operation

Parks Canada administers The Forks NHSC under the authority of the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*. The Manitoba Field Unit administers the site from leased space in the Johnston Terminal on the greater Forks property. The Field Unit also has responsibilities for several National Historic Sites including Lower Fort Garry, Riel House, St. Andrew's Rectory, Linear Mounds, York Factory, Prince of Wales Fort, and for Wapusk National Park.



3 VISION FOR THE FORKS NHSC

In 15 years....

- The Forks NHSC is known in Winnipeg as “the meeting place” and a heritage centre, combining commerce, recreation and education.
- The Parks Canada Property plays a special role at The Forks NHSC. It is the place where visitors can quietly reflect on its historical significance in a protected green space, an oasis of calm in the centre of a busy urban environment.
- Through research, Parks Canada and other landowners understand the expectations and the needs of the visitor to The Forks NHSC.
- Parks Canada and its many partners work collaboratively to share in the story telling. Visitors to the site experience and understand the many layers of history that contribute to the historic significance of this special place in a seamless way.
- The Forks NHSC welcomes events, recreational and commercial activities, festivals and artistic performances that provide rewarding experiences for all visitors. Through celebration and innovative heritage presentation programming, visitors feel an emotional connection to the site and a sense of personal relevance and ownership.
- All landowners at The Forks NHSC recognize, celebrate and protect the commemorative integrity and the spirit of this national historic place, one of Canada’s treasures.
- The Forks NHSC is the gateway to learn about historic sites in the City of Winnipeg and beyond. The stories of The Forks are linked to other important heritage stories. It is a place where people can learn about the birth of the city, the province and Western Canada.
- Parks Canada uses its programs at The Forks NHSC as a window into Parks Canada’s larger thematic stories and corporate messages.
- Contemporary assets on the Parks Canada Property are designed to complement the facilities and services offered by other landowners and to protect the green space.



4 MANAGEMENT GOALS AND ACTIONS

4.1 Heritage Conservation

This section outlines Parks Canada's commitment to respect, maintain and conserve the cultural resources and heritage values of The Forks NHSC - this will be achieved in the context of a commemorative integrity statement for the National Historic Site. Management actions will also be proposed to protect the resources, as they are currently understood, in the interim.

Goals for Development of a Commemorative Integrity Statement

The commemorative integrity statement (CIS) for The Forks NHSC will provide an integrated and holistic approach to the management of the cultural resources. It will help all the land managers making decisions that affect the cultural resources, including:

- identifying the resources and their historic values;
- providing guidance on the protection of these resources; and
- promoting and presenting the resources to increase public understanding and their enjoyment.

The CIS will also identify resources, messages and values that are not related to the reasons for designation, and provide guidance on the management of these. The completion of the CIS will provide key direction to Parks Canada and other land managers within the designated place on the planning and decision-making for The Forks NHSC. The CIS will clearly lay out the messages and themes that make The Forks a designated National Historic Site. Parks Canada will work with other land managers to weave these messages into programming at The Forks NHSC.

The commemorative intent and designated place as described in the HSMBC plaque text for The Forks NHSC go beyond the physical boundaries of the Parks Canada owned and operated property. There are multiple themes and stories to present, and more have been uncovered in the archaeological investigations that have taken place over the years.

Conserving Heritage Resources – Benefit to Canadians

Parks Canada protects nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage so that citizens of today and tomorrow can experience and be inspired by the special places and rich stories of our nation's past. Ecological and commemorative integrity are guiding management principles for national parks and national historic sites, and environmental sustainability is key to national marine conservations areas. These when achieved, ensure that Canada's national treasures are conserved for present and future generations."

(Parks Canada Agency

Corporate Plan 2005 – 2010)

The Forks NHSC also has heritage value, beyond its historic significance, related to its development as a reclaimed green space within an urban environment. In concert with the adaptive reuse of heritage structures, The Forks' popularity as a destination in Winnipeg has exposed a large community of interest to the historic significance of The Forks.

Management Action

Many key stakeholders have an interest in The Forks NHSC – The Forks North Portage Partnership, First Nations, Métis, adjacent landowners, attraction managers, event organizers, the Francophone community, and the interested public. Parks Canada will invite these partners and interested stakeholders to collaborate in the development of the CIS.

Goals for Cultural Resource Protection

In the absence of a CIS, specific management actions are recommended to ensure that the values of cultural resources are not diminished by actions and activities that occur at The Forks NHSC.

Management Actions for The Forks NHSC

Parks Canada will nurture existing relationships with adjacent landowners to encourage activities and development at The Forks NHSC that take into consideration the heritage values. Parks Canada will clarify its role as a partner in The Forks NHSC and clearly define its responsibilities.

Management Actions for The Archaeological Sites

Parks Canada will continue to work with the Province of Manitoba, The Forks North Portage Partnership, site developers and interested members of the heritage community to develop comprehensive archaeological mitigation plans for future proposals within The Forks NHSC. Successfully implemented, the improved quality and nature of the archaeological information will provide opportunities to greatly enhance and

further develop current heritage presentation programs.

Management Action for The Historic Objects

Parks Canada will create interpretive media for the telling of stories based on the Parks Canada reference collection, associated catalogue and records, to enhance presentation programs.

4.2 A Meaningful Visitor Experience

Parks Canada is challenged to provide a meaningful experience for visitors to The Forks NHSC that meets the needs of an evolving Canadian demographic and changing visitor needs and expectations. This is accentuated by the fact that the adjacent landowners are able to provide visitors with a multitude of experiences, from dining to entertainment to accommodation. Parks Canada needs to work effectively with its partners to ensure that experiences are complementary and enhance the overall offer.

Management Actions

Parks Canada will work with partners to conduct socio-economic research to answer some key questions about the needs and expectations of visitors. This research will assist in local planning and decision-making for The Forks NHSC.

Parks Canada will continue to respond to demands for hosting of events, targeting markets, special events and other avenues for revenue generation, while respecting the carrying capacity of the green space and existing infrastructure.

Parks Canada will develop an action plan for its visitor facilities based on the results of the infrastructure assessment study, the value of the assets within the context of The Forks NHSC and visitor needs. This plan will be implemented over the next few years, funded with available resources within the Manitoba Field Unit.

Parks Canada will develop options for a unique architecturally interesting playground



maintaining an interpretive component to replace the existing heritage adventure playground. This feature could integrate the larger stories in a unique and novel setting and play an important role in downtown Winnipeg for families and school groups. Developed in partnership, this feature could enhance the visit for the targeted groups, providing an avenue for fun and learning.

Parks Canada will partner with The Forks North Portage Partnership and other land managers to develop and offer visitor experiences to complement the range of activities offered within The Forks NHSC.

Quality Visitor Experience – Benefit to Canadians

“Parks Canada aims to offer memorable experiences that help foster a shared sense of responsibility for environmentally and culturally sound actions that will extend beyond park and site boundaries, and influence the values of Canadians as a whole. Experiences gained through visits to national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas provide visitors with a clear and strong sense of Canada, adding to the well-being and health of all Canadians.”

(Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan 2005 – 2010)

4.3 Public Appreciation and Understanding

The geographical location of The Forks NHSC, as part of Winnipeg’s key inner city urban attraction that draws millions of people annually of all ages and interests, creates an open book for potential visitors and visitor experiences. Children, youth, seniors, Aboriginal groups and new Canadians are all current and key users of The Forks for whom heritage experiences are being designed. The Forks NHSC, with all of its attractions and venues, encourages the gathering of large groups. This ready-made



Guided Interpreter at the Orientation Node (Parks Canada)

audience provides The Forks NHSC and Parks Canada with the opportunity to provide strategic and effective programming to these receptive audiences.

Goals

Parks Canada’s goal is to facilitate truly memorable visitor experiences. Entertaining and enjoyable heritage presentation programs and services will be available for all visitors to the site so that they leave with positive and enduring memories of the messages. The visitor will leave with an understanding of the stories of The Forks, a sense of the linkages between The Forks NHSC and other heritage places beyond, and an understanding of Parks Canada’s corporate role in the conservation and presentation of Canadian history. This will be achieved by offering visitors choices to meet their personal needs and interests.

Promoting Public Appreciation and Understanding – Benefit to Canadians

“Through the building of awareness and understanding, Parks Canada’s goal is to ensure that Canadians are comfortable in the knowledge that their special heritage places are protected for present and future generations. [As well,] Visitors to Canada will have the opportunity to experience and appreciate Canada’s national treasures. Canadians benefit from a greater sense of shared identity and from the economic benefits of visitation to Canada.”

(Parks Canada Agency Corporate Plan 2005 - 2010)

Management Actions

Parks Canada will develop personal and non-personal heritage interpretive programming based on research and with those who share a common interest in heritage presentation and an interest in The Forks NHSC - partners, stakeholders, landowners at The Forks, and partners in the greater Winnipeg area.

Parks Canada will continue to explore new innovative approaches and partnering to reach the ready-made audiences at The Forks NHSC through well-planned interpretive programming. Collaboration with others will amplify the projection of messages to meet mutual goals. The presentation of corporate Parks Canada messages and services will be integrated into the heritage interpretation program plan.

4.4 Partnerships and Stakeholder Involvement

Partnerships and stakeholder involvement will continue to be pivotal in all aspects of The Forks NHSC. Throughout the life of this plan, the development of programming at The Forks NHSC will continue to see an increase in the number and variety of external organizations, stakeholders, markets and individuals who will



Winter Heritage Programming
at The Forks NHSC (Parks Canada)



Telling the Stories
of The Forks NHSC
(Parks Canada)

be invited to take part in appropriate aspects of the design and delivery of program services. The Forks now acts as a hub where congregations of people are received and then provided with experiences and key heritage messages – this opportunity will continue to be enhanced through partnerships.

Unique and exciting heritage programming and visitor experience opportunities will be created with the vast number of potential and current partners and sponsors, many of whom are in the education or public programming fields. The Forks NHSC will also participate in pilot projects that explore Parks Canada’s presence in an urban environment.



The dialogue that will be needed to produce the commemorative integrity statement will provide an important opportunity to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the near future – First Nations, Métis, adjacent landowners, St. Boniface community, heritage institutions, partners, the interested public, and others. Parks Canada is committed to continuing and strengthening this dialogue that will begin with the development of the commemorative integrity statement and will continue over the life of the management plan and beyond for the future management and direction of The Forks NHSC.

Goals

Commemorative integrity, public appreciation and understanding, and meaningful visitor experiences of The Forks NHSC will be enhanced through the continuing development of partnerships and the expanded involvement of stakeholders.

Management Actions

First and foremost, Parks Canada will invite partners and stakeholders to collaboratively develop a CIS for the designated place at The Forks NHSC. The CIS will provide an integrated and holistic approach to the management of the cultural resources on the designated place.

Parks Canada will share its professional expertise in developing content and telling the stories of the history of The Forks with those partners who bring audiences to The Forks.

The stories and themes presented at The Forks will be linked to other National Historic Sites within Manitoba, owned both by Parks Canada and others.

Parks Canada will actively seek opportunities with other organizations at The Forks NHSC and with other heritage institutions to create connections and partnerships where interests are shared. We will be open and receptive to innovative and dynamic programming

opportunities by providing leverage funding and professional support to encourage these partnerships.

4.5 Environmental Stewardship

This section outlines the approaches taken by The Forks NHSC to protect the natural and cultural heritage values during site operation and maintenance.

Goals

Parks Canada demonstrates exemplary environmental management and shows leadership in sound environmental practices in its operations at The Forks NHSC. Impacts on the environment from site operation will be minimized and carried out in accordance with the sustainability principles and practices of Environment Canada.

Management Actions

The Manitoba Field Unit Environmental Management Action Plan has been implemented for The Forks NHSC. Parks Canada will periodically audit implementation of the plan for its effectiveness and to determine if remedial action needs to be revised or updated.

Proposed projects and activities at The Forks NHSC will be assessed as required by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and as directed by the strategic environmental assessment of this management plan.

5 MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The management plan provides long-term strategic direction for Parks Canada managers of The Forks NHSC. It is a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making respecting future management and operations.

Implementation of the plan is the responsibility of the Manitoba Field Unit Superintendent. Implementation will be done through the Manitoba Field Unit business plan. The business plan identifies which actions of the management plan will be realized within a five-year time period. Any changes to the five-year forecast are captured by the annual review and updating of the business plan. Implementation of the actions may be reconsidered in response to new circumstances or information, unexpected opportunities or changing national priorities and decisions.

Progress on management plan implementation will be communicated through annual reporting and the Parks Canada *State of the Protected Heritage Areas Report*, which is updated every couple of years. The management plan will also be subject to periodic review and can be amended to reflect changes. The public will be consulted about major changes.

The most important priority in the management plan will be the production of the commemorative integrity statement that will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders who have an interest in The Forks NHSC. The commemorative integrity statement will provide the direction required to identify and protect and present the historic resources. It will also provide guidance on promoting and presenting the reasons for designation to the public to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the site.



6 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

This management plan was subjected to a strategic environmental assessment, as required by *The Cabinet Directive on The Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals, 2004*. The purpose of the assessment was to identify potential negative and positive environmental effects of the plan directions, and to suggest actions to mitigate these effects.

Many positive residual effects will remain as a result of the implementation of the plan including: improved links to other National Historic Sites and Parks; improved visitor facilities; improved programs, products, and activities; and stronger partnerships with key stakeholders. The most important positive effect of this plan will be the development of a Commemorative Integrity Statement that will allow the direction and planning of future actions to protect the cultural resources and commemorative integrity of the site.

There are a couple of initiatives identified in the management plan that could potentially result in negative environmental effects. However, these effects can be minimized through following existing guidelines such as those in the *Management of Pesticides by Parks Canada* Management Directive 2.4.1 (Parks Canada 1998) and by doing project-level environmental assessments when necessary.

A newsletter was distributed to stakeholders and public comments were sought during a two-day information session at The Forks. Public concerns raised were incorporated into The Forks NHSC Management Plan.

The Forks NHSC Management Plan will protect and present the site while working to develop and enhance its commemorative integrity. Taking into account the mitigation measures that are proposed in the strategic environmental assessment, including project specific environmental assessments, these actions will not result in important negative environmental effects.