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Fort Chambly

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2018



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FORT CHAMBLY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2018.

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Foreword



Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas belong to all Canadians and offer truly Canadian experiences.

These special places make up one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and cultural heritage areas in the world.

The Government is committed to preserving our natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places and contributing to the recovery of species-at-risk. At the same time, we must continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities so that more Canadians can experience Parks Canada places and learn about our environment, history and culture.

This new management plan for Fort Chambly National Historic Site of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed through extensive consultation and input from various people and organizations, including Indigenous peoples, local and regional residents, visitors and the dedicated team at Parks Canada.

National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are a priority for the Government of Canada. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of co-operation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the Fort Chambly National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

Catherine McKenna
*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and
Minister responsible for Parks Canada*

Recommendations

Recommended by:

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Executive Summary

The Fort Chambly National Historic Site is located in Chambly, Quebec, roughly 30 kilometres southeast of Montreal. Before the arrival of the Europeans, it was a portage site used by Indigenous peoples. Given its strategic importance, the French fortified the site. Fort Chambly became an icon of Canada's military history. Today, it is an eloquent testimony to the efforts made by France and Great Britain to protect their North American colonies. The fort rises proudly at the foot of the Richelieu Rapids and Chambly Basin. The local population visits and enjoys the surrounding park, which spans four hectares.

In the present Management Plan, two key strategies are presented that aim to guide the historic site's management for the next decade.

KEY STRATEGY NO. 1: AN ATTRACTIVE, DYNAMIC, AND VIBRANT TOURIST DESTINATION
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This strategy emphasizes the importance of capitalizing on the site's reputation, offering a dynamic service, providing a varied thematic program, and collaborating with stakeholders and regional partners.

The strategy aims to:

- Diversify and regularly update the program to attract new visitors and encourage repeat visits.
- Maintain and renew collaborative efforts with stakeholders and regional partners to organize activities, events, or other uses of the site.
- Broaden the site's thematic range to ensure that its different historical periods are presented.
- Collaborate with indigenous communities, linked to the site, in order to honor and showcase their culture and to present their contributions to the history.

KEY STRATEGY NO. 2: A COMMEMORATED AND PRESERVED HERITAGE SITE AND AN EVOCATIVE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ADAPTED TO THE PUBLIC'S NEEDS

This strategy consists in continuing efforts to conserve and develop heritage buildings, archeological resources, and the cultural landscape.

The strategy aims to:

- Develop and implement a landscape management approach that reconciles the area's many uses as a cultural landscape of national historic significance, an urban park for daily enjoyment, a place for interpretation activities and events, and a natural environment to be protected.
- Develop and implement measures to better present the offer inside the fort and attract various park visitors. By drawing more visitors to the site's exhibitions, we will be able to better communicate and commemorate the area's historical messages.
- Preserve the built cultural resources and protect the archeological resources.

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and those national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's vision:

Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by the Agency. The *Fort Chambly National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how national historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

Canadians, including Indigenous peoples were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of the Fort Chambly National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of the Fort Chambly National Historic Site in years to come.

Map 1: Regional Setting



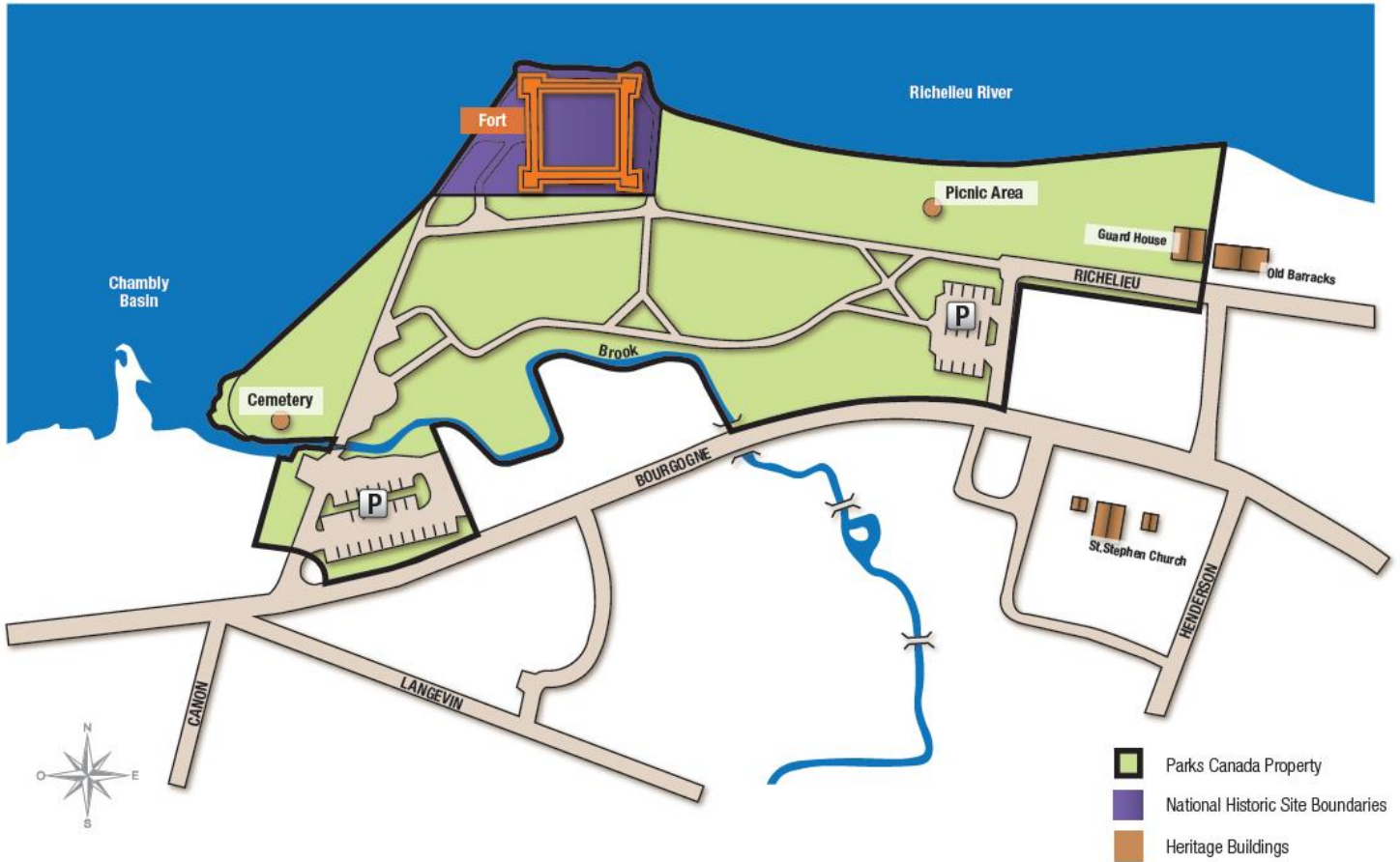
LOCATION



Map 2: Fort Chambly National Historic Site



Arrangement of exterior spaces



2.0 Significance of the Fort Chambly National Historic Site

The Fort Chambly site was recognized as having national historic importance in 1920, as illustrated in the following commemorative statement:

- Fort Chambly was used continuously during the French and British regimes as an essential component of Canada's defence infrastructure.
- Fort Chambly played a defensive role during the armed conflicts of the 17th and 18th centuries (Iroquoian Wars, Anglo-French Wars, American War of Independence, War of 1812-1814, Rebellions of 1837-1838).

During the paleohistoric era, the area was of strategic importance for Indigenous peoples as it was an inevitable portage path near the rapids and Chambly Basin. The present stone fort was built between 1709 and 1711 by the French colonial authorities. Three wooden forts built in the 17th century preceded this fortification. In the 18th century, the British took possession of Fort Chambly and built a military complex of approximately forty buildings. Of these buildings, only the guard house, built in 1812, still exists.

Fort Chambly is the only French fort still standing in Canada. From 1979 to 1982, Parks Canada worked to restore and partly rebuild the fort. The property administered by Parks Canada is much larger than the area designated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. In fact, the designated area is limited to the fort's physical structure, whereas the property administered by Parks Canada covers approximately four hectares. It includes a park, two visitor parking lots, a former military cemetery, the remnants of a portage path, and a British guard house.

Visitors entering the fort can browse the permanent exhibitions on the different historical periods of Fort Chambly, as well as the temporary exhibitions. They can also participate in various interpretation activities offered by the site presenters in the fort and park. The site's event programming changes with the seasons and attracts a wide and diverse audience. Finally, visitors can walk along the Chambly Canal National Historic Site, located approximately 700 metres east of the fort, also administered by Parks Canada.

The park surrounding the fort is a charming location where visitors can walk along the banks of the Richelieu River, pause at the picnic area to admire the rapids, or even play outdoor sports. It is considered and used as an urban park.

3.0 Planning Context

The Fort Chambly National Historic Site opened its doors to the public in 1983. To date, conservation and development efforts have been carried out based on two previous management plans, the most recent of which has been in effect since 2007. Most of the management measures set out in the 2007 Management Plan were implemented.

Since 2010, the fort has benefitted from investments to update and improve the visitor experience and expand indoor and outdoor rental possibilities. These improvements include the installation of new exhibitions, a rental space and kitchenette for events and

meetings, and outdoor interpretation panels. In addition, the site's activities have been made more flexible and dynamic, and run continuously as opposed to according to a fixed schedule.

Funds were also invested in conservation projects (entrance gate, cornerstones, bank retaining walls). To preserve the heritage buildings and prevent irreversible deterioration, regular maintenance and recapitalization investments in the masonry will be necessary.

While the park is open year-round, the fort is only open to the public from mid-May to mid-October. Groups can receive a guided tour of the site outside of this period. Many spaces are also available to rent for meetings or events.

Most people who visit the national historic site also explore the park. In fact, locals who use the area regularly consider the park to be the main attraction. Over the past few years, only 16% of visitors on average also visited the fort. In comparison, 84% of visitors are content to explore the park.

On average, 142,000 people visited the national historic site in both 2015 and 2016. Of these, approximately 23,000 visited the fort. However, 2017 was an exceptional year due to the interest generated by the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The site welcomed more than 167,000 people, of whom around 82,000 visited the fort.

Every year, various events are held in the park ("Bières et Saveurs" beer festival, "Artistes sur le champ" art symposium, the feast of St. Louis, etc.) drawing more than 70,000 visitors on average. Small-scale group activities, such as fitness classes, birdwatching, and photography are regularly held in the park.

Many issues were raised during the Management Plan's development, such as:

- The difficulty of maintaining visitor numbers at the site: After a significant drop between 2010 (145,000 visitors) and 2013 (105,000 visitors), visitor numbers have increased in the past few years, reaching an average of 142,000 (not including 2017). However, this growth remains fragile.
- Challenges in cultural landscape management: The park surrounding the fort is an integral part of the area's military history, but also serves as an urban park and public space for events. Careful reflection is needed to harmoniously integrate the park's various roles.
- Preservation of cultural resources: Human and financial resources are continuously required to keep the fort and guard house in good condition. The site's archeological resources, most of which are still buried, require protection as well.
- The need to adequately convey all aspects of the site's history: The territory was used by different communities, including Indigenous peoples, the French military, and the British military. Certain chapters of its history are well-explained to the public, but others, such as the site's Indigenous history, could be better addressed.

4.0 Vision

Fort Chambly is an iconic remnant of New France. The only French fort still standing in Canada, it recalls the settlement of francophone communities in North America, and the establishment of Canada's defence infrastructure. The park surrounding the fort is a vibrant and majestic cultural landscape appropriated by the local population.

Within the next 15 years, the national historic site will be:

One of the main tourist destinations in Montérégie.

A vibrant and lively site known for its successful collaboration with stakeholders and partners, and well-loved by the community.

A site that is continuously renewed, with diverse activities offering individuals and groups a host of possibilities: events, space rentals, self-guided visits, etc. Visitor experiences will be interactive, fun, and immersive. Visitors will feel engaged and moved by their experiences and create lasting memories. All the important chapters of the site's history, from its use by Indigenous people to the present day, will be presented to the public. Complementary activities that align with the site's purpose will be offered in the park and inside the fort to attract a greater number of visitors to the fortification.

A heritage place where the historic buildings, collections, archeological relics, and cultural landscape will be preserved in good condition, and their presentation will contribute to an authentic visitor experience for current and future generations.

5.0 Key Strategies

<p>KEY STRATEGY NO. 1: AN ATTRACTIVE, DYNAMIC, AND VIBRANT TOURIST DESTINATION</p>

This strategy emphasizes the importance of capitalizing on the site's reputation, offering a dynamic service, and providing a varied thematic program to better meet the expectations of the public and attract a greater number of visitors. Collaboration with our partners and stakeholders will allow us to enhance the national historic site's vibrancy and visibility.

Objective 1.1: Diversify and regularly update the program to attract new visitors and encourage repeat visits.

- Target: Launch five new or updated activities by 2028.

Objective 1.2: Maintain and renew collaborative efforts between stakeholders and partners when organizing activities and events on site that align with the area's purpose.

- Target: The historic site will host two annual events or visitor experiences, organized in collaboration with partners or stakeholders.

Objective 1.3: Broaden the site's thematic range to ensure that its different historical periods are presented.

- Target: By 2028, new interpretation themes are presented to the public.

Objective 1.4 : Work together with indigenous communities, linked to the site, in order to honor and showcase their culture and to present their contributions to the history

- Target : By 2020, build a relationship with the Indigenous communities linked to the site.
- Target : By 2025, hold activities or events at the site in collaboration with the Indigenous communities

Objective 1.5: The site uses digital and traditional media to strengthen its links with its target audience and enhance its visibility.

- Target: Annually, the site follows trends and is present on the most promising digital and traditional platforms.

KEY STRATEGY NO. 2: A COMMEMORATED AND PRESERVED HERITAGE SITE AND AN EVOCATIVE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ADAPTED TO THE PUBLIC'S NEEDS

This strategy consists in continuing efforts to preserve, commemorate, and present heritage buildings, archeological resources, and the cultural landscape. As the cultural landscape is both tangible evidence of the site's history as well as an urban park, its management must be particularly sensitive to this fact. Furthermore, the site hosts several interpretation activities and events.

Objective 2.1: Develop and implement an integrated approach to cultural landscape management. This approach must reconcile the site's many uses as an area of historic significance, an urban park for daily enjoyment, a place for interpretation activities and events, and a natural environment to be protected.

- Target: By 2020, develop an integrated approach to cultural landscape management.
- Target: By 2028, implement the integrated approach to cultural landscape management.

Objective 2.2 : Improve the presentation of activities offered inside the fort to those using the park. By drawing more visitors to the site's exhibitions, we will be able to better communicate and commemorate the area's historical messages.

- Target: By 2028, increase the number of fort visitors by 20% compared to reference year 2016 (23,215).

Objective 2.3 : Continue to ensure the protection of cultural resources.

- Target: By 2022, implement a monitoring and maintenance plan to ensure the long-term preservation of cultural resources.

6.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impacts of management actions on ecosystems and on cultural resources. The *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, requires a strategic environmental assessment of all plans and policies submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a Minister for approval deemed to have important positive or negative environmental effects.

A strategic environmental assessment was undertaken on this management plan, and the management direction found within has been adjusted to respond to findings. The following is a summary of the environmental assessment:

The scope of the strategic environmental assessment included the area contained within the limits of the historic site and administered site and spanned a 10-year period. In addition to the cultural resources, the environmental components worth mentioning in this area include the green and peaceful forest vegetation, the riparian strip along the river, and the aquatic fauna, including endangered fish species in the bodies of water on and bordering the Fort Chambly National Historic Site.

Certain strategies/objectives/targets identified in the management plan are likely to have negative environmental effects. In particular, more visitors and increased site usage may result in greater resource usage and waste production, which may in turn impact the site's cultural resources. The strategic environmental assessment also made it possible to identify potential environmental effects on the site's vegetation, riparian strip, and bodies of water. Proper maintenance of the vegetation is recommended to minimize the decline in tree numbers and preserve the canopy area index, as the canopy is highly appreciated by visitors. Other potential environmental impacts can be mitigated by following the existing guidelines and carrying out impact assessments for the projects. These assessments will determine the effects on the site's valuable features and help minimize potential negative impacts on the cultural and natural resources, the visitor experience, and the relationships with different partners.

The implementation of the plan will have many positive residual effects. The plan's most significant positive effect, resulting from increased visitor numbers, will be the public's greater understanding, awareness, support, and appreciation of the site's natural and cultural resources.

This plan supports the following federal sustainable development strategy, which consists in "connecting Canadians to nature." We can assume that other measures will be considered during the project's development or day-to-day operations.

No significant negative environmental impacts are expected following the implementation of the management plan.