

# Planning for the Future

## Consultation on the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site



### An invitation to take part!

The Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site is planning its operations for the next few years. To this end, we will be holding public consultations from July 5 to August 5, 2018. I encourage you to take part in this process by sharing your perspectives and suggestions.

The purpose of these consultations is to give the public, Indigenous communities, municipality, partners, and community stakeholders an opportunity to get involved in the decision-making process of managing a national historic site.

The management statement will guide the governance of this historic site over the next ten years (2018–2028). It will provide direction for the protection of cultural and natural resources, the visitor experience, outreach, and educating the public.

This national historic site belongs to you! Join the Parks Canada team in developing a common vision, upholding protection efforts, and encouraging visitors to discover this distinctive site.

Nadine Blackburn  
Director  
Management Unit for the Mauricie and West of Quebec

### Parks Canada's mandate

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

## Context

Parks Canada manages a network of the world's largest and most beautiful historic sites. Its mandate is to protect and showcase these sites for the benefit of present and future generations. This management statement details Parks Canada's management approach and outlines specific goals for the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site.

The Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site is located at the heart of the municipality of Saint-Lin-Laurentides in the Lanaudière region, approximately 60 km north of Montréal. The site was recognized as having national historic importance in 1938, as illustrated in the following commemorative statement:

*"The site, as the birthplace of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, commemorates the life and work of this prime minister of Canada."*

The site is dedicated to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the first francophone to become prime minister of Canada. An interpretation centre tells of his life and political career. In the small Robinette House, constructed in 1871 on a property belonging to Laurier's father, visitors can discover the politician's place of origin. Housing more than 600 objects, this residence reproduces the interior of a country home from the nineteenth century. Visitors can also enjoy the yard and the garden. Each year, the site hosts Canada Day celebrations and the town's Fête au village.

The site is open to the public during the summer (June 23 to September 3). In 2016 and 2017, the site drew 623 visitors. In 2017, 1,900 people visited the site for free for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

To extend its reach, the national historic site works with several local partners, such as the Société d'histoire et du Patrimoine de Saint-Lin-Laurentides and the Association des loisirs folkloriques de Lanaudière. The site also collaborates with the two other national historic sites commemorating Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Laurier House in Ottawa and the Musée Laurier in Arthabaska.



## Key achievements since the implementation of the 2007 Strategic Plan

Reorganization of the site's visit offer

Addition of interpretation material (outdoor panels, display window, digital album)

Addition of a roadside sign

Enabling virtual visits of the site's exterior through Google Street View

Preservation of the Robinette House and collection objects

Analysis of the property in 2017 using a georadar to detect archeological remains

Highlighting the garden using permaculture

Community loom

Croque-livres

Day-camp program

## Main challenge:

### The national historic site's visitor numbers:

Since 2012, the site's visitor numbers have been steadily dropping. In 2016, we counted 623 visitors compared to 2,600 in 2011. This decrease is due to the smaller number of events held on the site, in addition to its shorter operating season. In 2017, however, visitor numbers reached 1,908 thanks to the free Parks Canada Discovery Pass.

## Proposed management approach:

Parks Canada's aim is to continue with the management approach established for the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site. The site will remain a protected heritage area dedicated to discovery and education. Its goal will be to showcase the life and work of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as well as rural lifestyle at the turn of the twentieth century. Parks Canada will also work on fostering partnerships to take advantage of opportunities that further the discovery of the national historic site through increased visitor attendance generated by alternative activities or events.

## Management goals:

**Preservation of resources:** Parks Canada protects the cultural resources of heritage sites in accordance with the Cultural Resource Management Policy and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. To maintain the site's commemorative integrity, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site strives to preserve cultural resources for current and future generations. These efforts include the continued monitoring of cultural resources, as well as the completion and documentation of ad hoc conservation projects. Moreover, any action that could negatively impact the cultural resources will be the subject of an impact assessment, as stipulated in the Cultural Resource Management Policy.

- ✓ Continue to perform regular maintenance of the building envelope.
- ✓ Safeguard the most significant collectibles.
- ✓ Monitor cultural resources on an ongoing basis to avoid major deterioration.
- ✓ Carry out impact assessments during projects that affect cultural resources.

**Public understanding, commemoration, and appreciation:** Parks Canada's goal is to continue communicating and effectively commemorating the life and work of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as well as presenting the rural lifestyle at the nineteenth century. The national historic site will also continue to provide information online to help people learn about the childhood home of this politician. Finally, the site will keep improving its visibility by working jointly with other sites dedicated to Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

- ✓ Commemorate the life and work of Wilfrid Laurier.
- ✓ Continue to depict the rural lifestyle.
- ✓ Use traditional and digital media to promote the site.

**Relationships with local and regional partners:** The national historic site would like to seize opportunities for collaboration with the town, partners, and Indigenous communities to promote the site and hold activities that complement the current offering. This will help animate the site, facilitate its integration with existing networks, and allow a greater number of Canadians to take advantage of the space.

- ✓ Occasionally host special events and activities.
- ✓ Collaborate with other historic sites commemorating Wilfrid Laurier.
- ✓ Work with the community to host events and activities.

**Maintaining the site:** Parks Canada maintains the area to support its heritage value, to present a positive image to the public, and to affirm Parks Canada's brand.

- ✓ Continue Parks Canada's efforts to preserve national historic sites.

## Strategic environmental assessment

In compliance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2010), a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is carried out for all management statements introduced in Parliament. The SEA aims to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of policies, plans, and program proposals to support environmentally conscious decisions. The specific projects developed to implement the national historic site's management statement objectives will be separately evaluated to establish if an environmental impact assessment is necessary under the *2012 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* or any successor legislation.

The goals set out in the management statement proposal consist in continuing with the management approach established for the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site. The site will remain a protected heritage area dedicated to discovery and education. Parks Canada will also try to establish partnerships to take advantage of opportunities that further the discovery of the national historic site through increased visitor attendance.

The implementation of measures to achieve the objectives set out in the management statement proposal will help promote the site and its activities. The impact assessments will evaluate the negative effects that each of the proposed projects could have on the site.

The strategic environmental assessment confirmed that the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site's management statement proposal would have several positive effects on the visitor experience, and that significant negative environmental impacts would be unlikely.

It is impossible to determine whether the management statement proposal will make a significant contribution to the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy's goals, but it is unlikely that it will hinder their progress.

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





## What do you think?

The present document summarizes and presents the site, its challenges, and managerial goals and strategies. Now it's your turn to take part in the discussion! Here is your chance to add to the conversation and help us develop the Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site's management statement. Your knowledge of the area, your experience with the site, and the future you envision for it are important to us.

## How can I take part?

If you cannot attend the consultation, you can share your thoughts with us either:

- By e-mail: [sebastien.bachmann@pc.gc.ca](mailto:sebastien.bachmann@pc.gc.ca)
- Or by mail:  
Public Consultations – Sir Wilfrid Laurier NHS  
Parks Canada Agency at Fort Chambly  
2 De Richelieu Street, Chambly, QC J3L 2B9, Canada

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like further information on the public consultation.

Visit the Parks Canada website:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/qc/wilfridlaurier>

You have until August 5 to send us your opinions, comments, and ideas.

Thank you for your cooperation!

