



St. Lawrence Islands

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

2010



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ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS

NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

Management Plan

April 2010

Minister's Foreword



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

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

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

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

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

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

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada Management Plan.

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

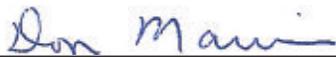
Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

Recommendations

This plan has been recommended for approval by:



Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada Agency



Don Marrin
Field Unit Superintendent
Eastern Ontario Field Unit
Parks Canada Agency

Haudenosaunee

(People of the Longhouse)

Foreword

Greetings to the Natural World

The People

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

Now our minds are one.

The Mother Earth

We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother, we send greetings and thanks.

And now our minds are one.

This is an excerpt from the “Thanksgiving Address” that has ancient roots, dating back over 1,000 years to the formation of the Great Law of Peace by a man called the Peacemaker, and perhaps before that. Today these words are still spoken at the opening and closing of all ceremonial and governmental gatherings held by the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse). The Mohawks of Akwesasne, part of the Haudenosaunee, include St. Lawrence Islands National Park as part of their traditional territory.

Ohên:ton Karihwatêhkwen

Onkwehshôn:ʔa

Onwa wenhniserâ:te
ionkwakiaʔtarô:ron ne iorihwâ:ke
ne aitewakaʔeniônnion
tsiniihtonhâ:kie tsinaʔtitewâtere
ne onkwehshôn:ʔa tânonʔ tsinî:iot
tsi rokwatâkwen ne ohontsiâ:ke.
Ne ne â:ienreʔk akwê:kon skên:nen
tsitewanonhtôn:nion ne
tsiniiionkwè:take kenhôn:we
iahitewaiaʔtaiê:ri oni tsi
ionkwataʔkarî:te iah thahò:ten
tekionkwakiaʔtônkion ne
kanonhwaʔktênhtsheraʔ. Ne kati
enhôn:we iorihwâ:ke tsi
entewâtkaʔwe ne
kanonhwaratônhtshera.

Êhtho niihtônhaʔk ne
onkwaʔnikôn:ra.

Iethiʔnistênha Ohônstia

Onen nô:n:wa ehnôn:we
nentsitewateʔnikonhraiê:raʔte
Iethiʔnistênha Ohônstia tsi neʔe
taiakohtkaʔwenhâ:kie
tsinahoʔtenʔshôn ionkionhêhkwen.
Iotshennôn:niaʔt tsi shê:kon
teionkhihsniêkie tsinî:iot tsi
shakohrienaiên:ni ne
shahakwatâ:ko ne tsiionhontsiâ:te.
Ne ionkhihawîhshon ne
onkwehshôn:ʔa tânonʔ
karioʔtaʔshôn:ʔa tsinikarî:wes
ohontsiâ:ke teionkwatawên:rie. Ne
kati ehnôn:we iorihwâ:ke tsi
entewâtkaʔwe ne
kanonhwaratônhtshera.

Êhtho niihtônhaʔk ne
onkwaʔnikôn:ra.



Aerial view of the Thousand Islands (Photo: Brian Morin)

Executive Summary

Since the park's establishment in 1904, the local community has been a key component in shaping what St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada is today. Many groups, organizations and other individuals have helped the park to protect the Thousand Islands ecosystem and facilitate meaningful opportunities for people to continue to enjoy this unique and special place.

This management plan replaces the 1998 plan for St. Lawrence Islands National Park, providing direction to managers for the facilitation of meaningful visitor experiences, heritage protection, and public outreach education. The priorities identified in this plan will guide business planning decisions, and the implementation of management actions will be reported on annually. A strategic environmental assessment of the management plan indicated no significant negative impacts or cumulative effects from its implementation.

The Vision

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is committed to preserving and celebrating the values and attributes of the Thousand Islands region, together with our local communities, for the enjoyment of present and future generations. In a rapidly urbanizing society, the park must be responsive to the needs and desires of urban Canadians, area residents and traditional users. The management plan describes a vision, *Where Land Meets the Water and People Live*, which will guide us to 2020:

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is scattered along an ecological crossroads where the Great Lakes escape to the Atlantic Ocean down the St. Lawrence River across the Frontenac Arch. This granite corridor, the uplifted roots of an ancient mountain chain, joins the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is where the bones of Mother Earth emerge from the waters of one of the world's great rivers. Long regarded as a sacred area and meeting place by Aboriginal People because of its natural beauty and bounty, the Thousand Islands, represented by the park, is a legacy to be cherished, enjoyed and protected for the benefit of all. The park is a place of beauty and host to an immense variety of plants and wildlife that persist in a relatively healthy ecosystem. It is a model of respect and responsibility for the land that sustains all life.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park exists for the benefit, use and enjoyment of Canadians, attracting visitors to experience and learn about the park and the region. The park is a community partner linking the efforts of many towards managing the landscape in a sustainable manner and is a catalyst to collaborative work between governments, organizations and communities. It is a regional showcase, known throughout Ontario and the National Capital Region for its outstanding services, creative and inspiring programming, progressive management of the ecosystem and leadership in sustainable land use practices.



Provincially endangered bald eagle
(Photo: Parks Canada)



Building a culture of environmental stewardship (Photo: Parks Canada)

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is an ambassador for Parks Canada. Aboriginal traditional knowledge and cultures are celebrated. It is a model of stewardship in action and memorable visitor experiences in a sustainable landscape.

The achievement of this vision is underpinned by three key strategies.

Key Strategy One: Strength through Regional Connection: working together to maintain natural and cultural authenticity.

- **Objective 1:** Develop a landscape level protected area strategy to ensure that the park's ecological integrity is maintained.
- **Objective 2:** Take a leadership role in the promotion of sustainable tourism principles and the identification of needs and interests of target markets.
- **Objective 3:** Foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.
- **Objective 4:** Strengthen the involvement of regional residents in the design and development of visitor experience, public outreach education and ecological integrity programs.
- **Objective 5:** Demonstrate and communicate leadership in environmental and cultural sustainability for park operational activities.

Key Strategy Two: An Expanded Sense of Place: exploring new landscapes, new markets, and new opportunities.

- **Objective 1:** Better understand our current and potential audiences and have the ability to assess and evaluate attitudes and values of key communities and client groups.
- **Objective 2:** Strategically focus on our priority markets of regional residents including the community of Akwesasne, as well as the markets of Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto's new Canadians and youth.
- **Objective 3:** Establish a relevant national park presence on the mainland and islands.

Key Strategy Three: Bones of the Mother: Aboriginal Inclusion. Working with the Aboriginal community in a meaningful way using Mohawk principles of respect, equity and empowerment.

- **Objective 1:** Establish mutually rewarding relationships.
- **Objective 2:** Enrich visitor experience and regional residents' awareness of the traditions and history of Aboriginal Peoples in the region.
- **Objective 3:** Share knowledge between SLINP and Akwesasne.

Area Management Approach

The key strategies in this management plan focus on issues that affect the park as a whole. The plan also contains an area management approach to detail the objectives at specific locations for the implementation of the strategies.

- **Objective 1:** Integrate the park's mainland offer at Landon Bay, Mallorytown Landing, Jones Creek and the Thousand Islands Parkway.
- **Objective 2:** Facilitate visitor experiences for the islands that considers visitor needs and expectations, the integrity of natural and cultural resources, the capacity of the park, learning opportunities and the enjoyment and benefit of the boating visitor.
- **Objective 3:** Perform a caretaker role that maintains the integrity of these properties and reflects their role as special places in the spirit of the *Canada National Parks Act* (2000).

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St. Lawrence Islands

National Park of Canada

Management Plan

“The National Parks of Canada are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment and shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations.” (Canada National Parks Act, 2000)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Management Plan

Parks Canada is responsible for protecting and presenting Canada’s network of national parks, national marine conservation areas, and the national historic sites it administers, for this and future generations. Parks Canada’s mandate, which underpins all management planning, consists of three elements: protecting heritage resources, facilitating opportunities for visitor experience, and promoting public appreciation and understanding.

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

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

1.2 A Management Plan for St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada

This management plan, the third plan for St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada (SLINP), ensures that actions taken by park managers for protection, visitor experience and public outreach education are integrated and mutually supportive, that they enhance the connection to a place of unique character for Canadians, and that the expected results of actions are clearly defined. The plan also aids in the effective use of public funds in management of the park by providing for monitoring of the effectiveness of the actions.

1.3 Planning and Managing National Parks According to the Integrated Delivery of Parks Canada's Mandate

Parks Canada’s mandate comprises three mutually supportive areas that are delivered in an integrated fashion. They consist of protection of heritage resources, facilitation of opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences, and fostering public appreciation and understanding of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage.

Protection of Heritage Resources:

National parks protect the habitats, wildlife and ecosystem diversity representative of, and sometimes unique to their natural regions. Parks Canada manages these special places to ensure that they remain healthy and whole. They conserve and protect both cultural and natural resources and features.

Meaningful Visitor Experience:

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

Public Appreciation and Understanding:

Parks Canada aims to reach Canadians at home, at leisure, at school and in their communities

through communication and education opportunities designed to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the significance of Parks Canada's heritage places and the importance of protecting and presenting them. Parks Canada also seeks to broaden its base of support by engaging its stakeholders and partners, and encouraging shared leadership through active participation in the development and implementation of the Agency's future direction.

What is Integration?

The mandate describes *what* Parks Canada does. Integration describes *how* that mandate is delivered. Integrated management planning requires that solutions for all aspects of the mandate are carried out concurrently, and results in improvements to each aspect in a mutually supportive manner. Integration means looking at issues holistically: that is, planning for visitor experience entails also planning for protection; making decisions about protection means also considering actions for visitor experience and public appreciation and understanding.

This management plan for St. Lawrence Island National Park of Canada reflects Parks Canada's integrated approach to planning by treating each mandate area as mutually supportive, particularly through the park vision, which expresses the long-term desired state for the park, and the key strategies, which set priorities for future management of the park.

As a strategic document, this management plan is not an end in itself; rather, it provides a framework within which subsequent management, implementation, monitoring and reporting take place. Implementation of the management plan will be linked directly to Parks Canada's Eastern Ontario Field Unit business plans, the Agency's Corporate Plan and its Performance Management Framework.

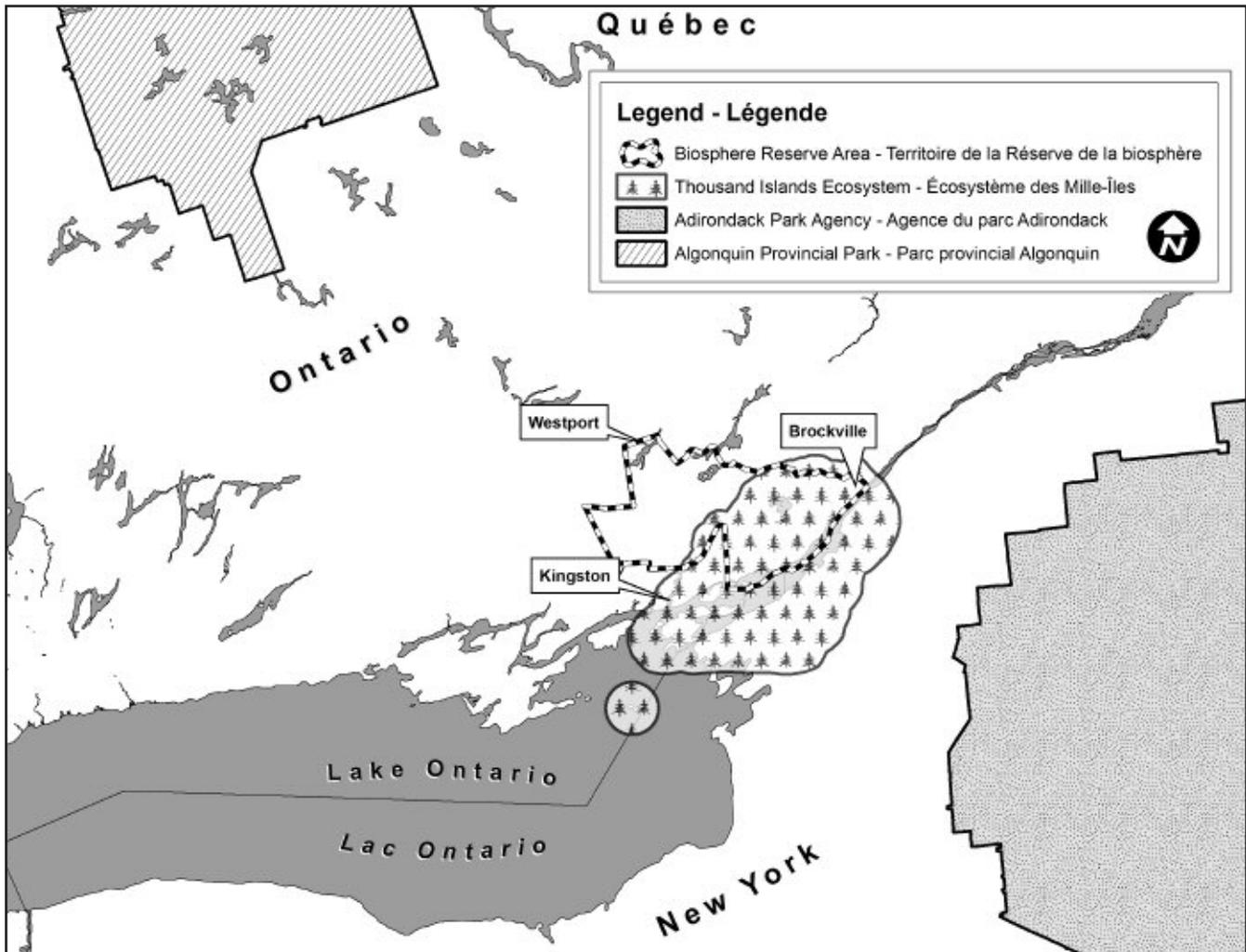
1.4 Regional Setting

Located in southeastern Ontario, SLINP is within one of North America's most popular summer

recreational corridors. It lies along the international boundary with the United States. There are six municipalities having jurisdiction in the park area with a total resident population of approximately 250,000 people. General travel trends in Ontario include the move toward shorter trips to destinations closer to the visitors' home and consequently less overnight travel and lower expenditure per trip. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism (2009) notes the importance of near markets in the United States and the domestic Ontario market as the anchor to the Ontario tourism industry, while pointing to the United Kingdom as the top source for international travellers over the next three years. Closer to home, Quebec is a relatively untapped market. Sustainable and adventure tourism is growing faster than any other type of tourism product in the province.

It is clear that the region is being visited by urban Canadians, though less so by urban youth. The average age of these visitors is 43, and the majority travel in pairs without children. While the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area is the region most populated by new Canadians (66% of immigrants to Ontario settle there – Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2007), it is unclear what proportion of visitors to the St. Lawrence River Corridor are new Canadians. Our knowledge of this market is largely anecdotal, coming from our tour boat tourism partners who believe that the majority of their clients fall into this category.

Ecologically, the park is at the intersection of two great landscape corridors of eastern North America: the Frontenac Arch, linking the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains, and the St. Lawrence River Valley which connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. The St. Lawrence River is the twelfth largest river in the world. SLINP consists of a number of small, dispersed land holdings embedded in a landscape that includes major roadways, intense human settlement, industry and agriculture.



Frontenac Arch wildlife corridor (Photo: Parks Canada)

1.5 Public Input

Parks Canada has continually consulted with stakeholders, the Mohawks of Akwesasne and other partners throughout the management planning process. Consultations with the public at large were held in the spring and summer of 2007. The SLINP newsletter, the *Pitch Pine Post*, delivered articles on the management plan review and an invitation to consult on proposed strategies to 150,000 households. Targeted groups and individuals, including the residents of Hill Island, Landon Bay and Jones Creek and members of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and the Eastern Ontario Model Forest, among others, were contacted. The park superintendent held discussions with the local member of parliament as well as with councillors from area municipalities and a Mohawk Council

of Akwesasne representative. SLINP visitors and all interested individuals and associations were encouraged to contribute their observations and provide feedback on the proposed strategies. During consultations, SLINP outlined the holistic approach that has taken the park from relative obscurity to a regionally respected leader determined to be a model of stewardship. The actions outlined in the management plan have benefited from this active exchange of ideas and views. This collaborative model of engagement is one that we continue to use in our interaction with partners, stakeholders and communities where as many opportunities as possible are provided to contribute and influence the direction that the park is taking. We will continue to seek out new methods of engagement as constituencies determine how they want to interact with the park and with each other.

2.0 IMPORTANCE OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

SLINP represents two natural regions within the national park system plan: the Central Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Precambrian Region and the Western St. Lawrence Lowlands Region. The park is located at the meeting point of two continental-scale biogeographic features. The St. Lawrence River and the Frontenac Arch both have a great influence on the biodiversity of the park. The granite-knob topography of the arch and a transition Zone between boreal and deciduous forest species create a series of microhabitats which help to support one of the highest biodiversities in Canada and a high number of species at risk (SAR). The rugged nature of the Frontenac Arch has resulted in less landscape modification than in most of southern Ontario and, as a result, the area remains important for both migrating and local species of flora and fauna.

Established in 1904, the park consists of all or part of 26 islands and 80 islets and shoals located along a 100-kilometre stretch of the St. Lawrence River, as well as a series of mainland properties. Main Duck Island and Yorkshire Island, within the Eastern Lake Ontario National Marine Conservation Area Candidate Site, are also managed by the park. The islands of SLINP are considered “stepping stones” in the connectivity corridor linking Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario and



Dawn at McDonald Island (Photo: Sheryl Shuchat)

Adirondack State Park in New York State. The park also represents a rich cultural landscape of human activity encompassing many generations that have connected to this place, including prehistoric and contemporary Aboriginal use, military and trade routes, early island settlement and farming and more recent recreational development.

The park has mainland holdings at three locations: Landon Bay, Mallorytown Landing and Jones Creek. There has been a major expansion of the park’s mainland holdings with the addition of 9 km² in 2007. With the new lands has come an incredible opportunity to create a stronger regional presence and facilitate more accessible and meaningful experiences for land-based visitors and regional residents.

Over 70,000 visitors come to the park each year. Over 400,000 visitors a year come to experience the Thousand Islands via tour boat travelling the St. Lawrence River among park islands. The last socio-economic study done on the benefits of the park to the regional economy indicated that that combined direct spending of both park visitors and the park consisted of almost \$4 million with park spending being just over half this total in goods, services and salaries.

The results of SLINP’s integrated outreach efforts are reflected in regional land use decision-making and community values. The park’s investment in public outreach education and new visitor opportunities is exemplified in the *Official Plan of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands* (2006) where it is singled out as a significant contributor to the regional economy and its natural heritage values. The official plan states: *“The preservation of the national park as a sustained contributor to the tourism economy must be given the highest priority in land use decisions....”*

A large portion of the area surrounding the park has been internationally recognized as the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR), designated under UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program. SLINP, having recognized the growing number of local organizations with a focus on sustainable development, has played

a leadership role within the FABR network of more than 80 organizations.



Balancing use and protection (Photo: Theyre Smith)

3.0 CURRENT PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 State of the Park

Over 70,000 visitors come to the Park each year for outdoor adventures and learning opportunities. More than half of the visitors to SLINP are from Ontario, including one-fifth from within a 100-km radius of the park. Visitors to SLINP consist of both island users and mainland users. Over 80 percent of island users are repeat visitors. In 2007, a significant proportion of visitors were comprised of older adults and the majority were traveling in parties of only adults or seniors. Approximately one-third of visitors came in parties with children 16 and under. Currently, mainland users are only a small part of the statistical program for the park. These statistics provide a general sense of the current state of visitation at SLINP. Future trends and conditions for visitor experience and public outreach education will be assessed and reported in the State of the Park Report which serves as a foundation for the identification of issues, opportunities and challenges facing the park.

With the acquisition of additional mainland properties, the opportunities for visitor experience will expand and visitation trends in the park will evolve. Several performance expectations and targets have been developed in

this management plan to monitor progress and report on the condition and trends associated with visitor experience, public outreach education and ecological integrity. The key strategies in this management plan have been developed to achieve these performance expectations.

The *State of the Park Report, St. Lawrence Islands National Park* (2004) indicated that the overall ecological state of the Thousand Islands ecosystem and SLINP is fair, but in a condition of fragile stability. With that assessment, a number of recommendations were proposed to protect native biodiversity, initiate arrangements with partners and facilitate opportunities for valued natural and cultural experiences for Canadians including regional residents, park visitors, the general public, agencies and organizations.

SLINP has made considerable progress toward implementing the recommendations of the *State of the Park Report*. Conceptual habitat models for the Thousand Islands ecosystem and thresholds and index values for ecological integrity indicators are complete. Using these models and indicators, the park is able to monitor and assess its ecological integrity profile on an ongoing basis. The status of ecosystem stressors confirms that many of the stresses on the park's ecosystem originate from outside its boundaries, confirming the importance of supporting land stewardship partnerships throughout the greater park ecosystem (the Thousand Islands ecosystem). The *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan for the Thousand Islands Ecosystem and St. Lawrence Islands National Park* (2006) will continue to be promoted in regional land use planning initiatives. The wisdom and guidance of Aboriginal traditions and knowledge and that of other traditional land users is also an integral part of managing, restoring, sustaining and protecting ecosystems. Ultimately, a positive influence on regional ecosystem sustainability will maintain and, where necessary, improve the ecological integrity of the park, thereby meeting its commitment to the *Canada National Parks Act* (2000), *Canada Species at Risk Act* (2002) and elements of the Parks Canada mandate such as authentic visitor experiences.



Grenadier Island (Photo: Parks Canada)

Parks Canada is committed to the protection and presentation of cultural resources in national parks. The *Cultural Resource Management Policy* (1994) provides a framework for managing cultural resources under Parks Canada's jurisdiction. The potential direct impact of proposed activities on any cultural resources will be assessed at the design stage. The park will adhere to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2003) to ensure that valuable cultural assets are protected.

SLINP will continue to work collaboratively with First Nations and regional communities to incorporate their cultural heritage values throughout resource inventories and assessments, planning and programming to provide meaningful opportunities to influence and contribute.



Mallorytown Landing picnic shelter (Photo: Parks Canada)

3.2 Opportunities for Visitor Experience, Public Outreach, and Education

In cooperation with partners and stakeholders the park conducted an integrated visitor experience assessment in 2008. To broaden our range of visitor opportunities, reach new markets with the unique aspects of this park and develop a comprehensive visitor experience plan, we have acquired the available data on current and emerging trends in target markets within the tourism industry at a regional, national and international scale. There has also been cutting-edge research commissioned by the park to look at values, attitudes, lifestyles, interests and opinions that influence trip motivation. This will be used to match potential with urban Canadians with a specific focus on Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto's new Canadians and youth. What remains is further investigation into the explorer types (travelers grouped according to values and motivations) of existing park audiences and potential group travel audiences along Highway 401. The future park visitor survey will allow us to gather the baseline for measuring opportunities for learning, enjoyment and meaningful connection to the park.

The values and attitudes survey of our regional residents conducted by the Parks Canada Ontario Service Centre in 2007 has given us a solid baseline for building a public education and outreach strategy. Additional research methods now available to Parks Canada will be conducted on the regional landscape to capture the full demographic and psychographic profile.

The park will be developing a social science strategy that will address information gaps and prioritize efforts. Results from the information gathered will continue to help redefine our visitor experience and public outreach education planning.

The park has expressed a commitment to facilitate memorable visitor experiences that meet the needs and expectations of our emerging land-based visitor by creating trails for walkers and hikers with views offering quiet moments for reflection and the experience

of being at one with a creek and marsh and 360-degree elevated views. Newly developed land based programming will foster memorable learning opportunities that reflect a variety of values and interests. Sustainable service options will be developed in concert with the existing boating public and potential paddling and urban markets.

We will know that we are successful with the visitor experience and public outreach education program when visitors, stakeholders and partners feel that we have engaged them from their perspective, met their needs and expectations, and inspired them to maintain or develop a connection to the park that is meaningful to those audiences.

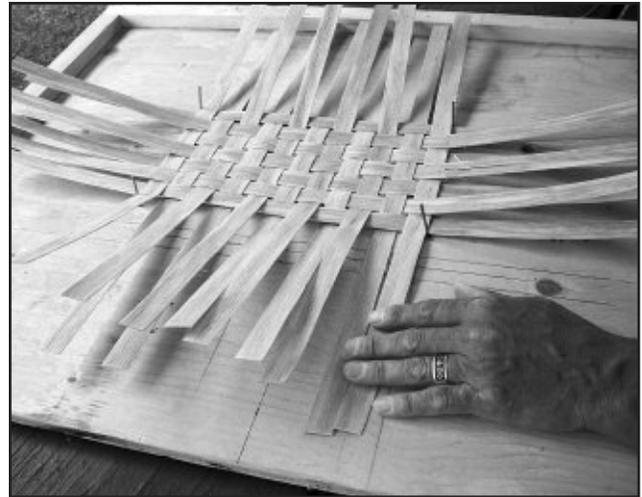


Visitor and interpreter (Photo: Parks Canada)

3.3 Aboriginal Partners

Aboriginal presence in this area reaches back as far as 10,000 years. First Nations have a profound stewardship message based on respect and responsibility for the land. Over the past three years, the park and the Mohawks of Akwesasne have made concerted efforts to establish a respectful and productive relationship. SLINP and the regional community were honoured in the summer of 2007 with a traditional Haudenosaunee Smoky Fire ceremony that formalized the park's relationship with the Mohawk community of Akwesasne. Visitors and residents are now able to learn from the Mohawks of Akwesasne about historical and contemporary use of the landscape and connection to place.

Resource management practices, visitor experience and educational programs will continue to be enriched through the integration of traditional Aboriginal knowledge.



Traditional Aboriginal basket weaving (Photo: Parks Canada)

3.4 Summary of Key Issues and Challenges

The following key issues are from the *State of the Park Report, St. Lawrence Islands National Park* and feedback from public consultation.

Lack of focal point: Currently, the park does not have a gateway for informing, orienting, educating and facilitating memorable experiences for visitors or regional residents. For SLINP to provide better visitor orientation, information and facilitation of experiences and to promote public outreach education and cultivate a sense of place and stewardship, the park requires a focal point.

Disconnected regional tourism offer: Although on the cusp of being able to do so, the traditional and non-traditional tourism providers of the region are not yet ready to offer visitors a coherent suite of choices.

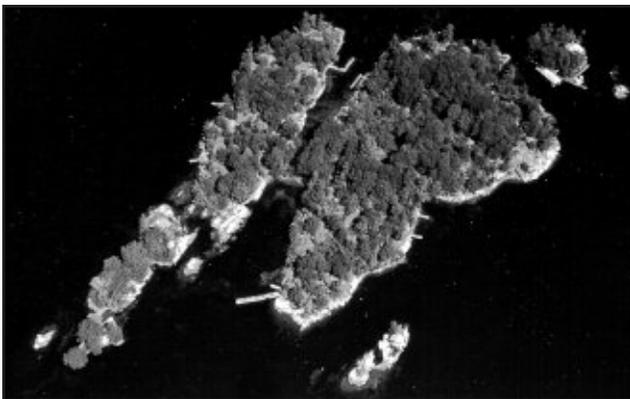
Uncontrolled park access: Much of SLINP consists of islands whose extensive shorelines provide an unlimited number of access points for visitors. Each island is, in essence, an isolated park, and visitors move frequently amongst the Thousand Islands. Uncontrolled



High visitor density (Photo: Parks Canada)

access presents a major challenge to the provision of visitor services, the protection of resources, the facilitation of visitor experience and the delivery of education programs.

Small and fragmented landholdings: The park's holdings are small, fragmented parcels along the St. Lawrence River. Jurisdiction over the region includes six municipal planning authorities and numerous federal and provincial regulatory bodies, which presents additional challenges to working on a landscape level. Transportation corridors such as Highway 401 and the St. Lawrence Seaway are major barriers to maintaining conductivity between the park and the Thousand Islands ecosystem.



Multiple park access points at Beau Rivage Island (Photo: Brian Morin)

High visitor density: SLINP has one of the highest visitor densities of all Canadian national parks. Each year there are approximately 7,283 visitors per square kilometre of the park's island properties. Services and facilities are offered at both the mainland and island properties. These locations host visitors who expect a wide range

of experience opportunities and the park must evaluate what is the sustainable level to protect natural resources and the quality of visitors' experiences.

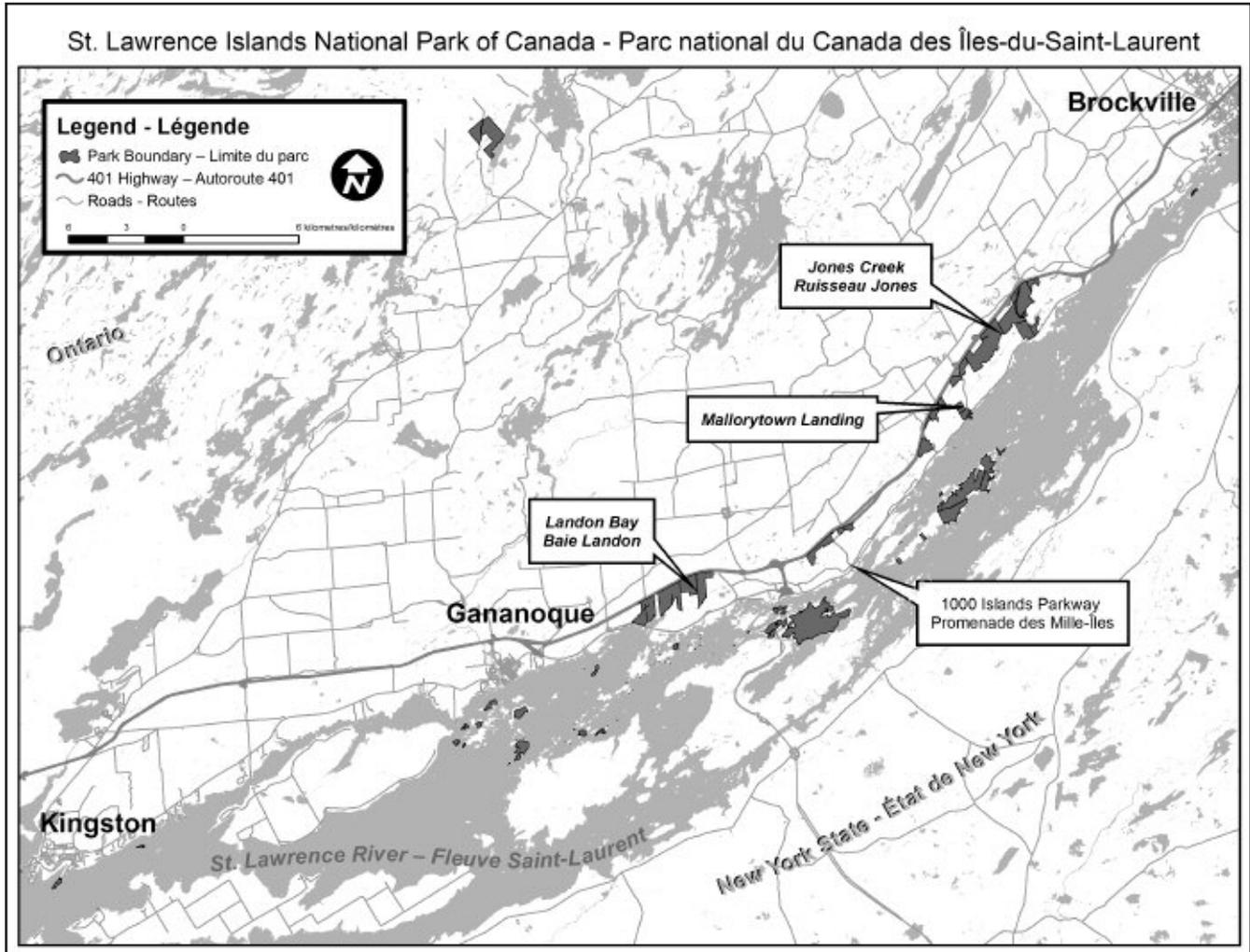
International stage: The park is the vulnerable keystone to an international wildlife connectivity corridor. The sustainability of the ecosystems and biodiversity found here has a direct impact on the long-term ecological health of the Algonquin to Adirondacks region. Since the Thousand Islands ecosystem includes areas of New York State, complications arise regarding ecosystem management projects. Management and research priorities differ between the American and Canadian sides of the St. Lawrence River and it is difficult to create collaborative projects or solutions.

Species at risk: The park and the Thousand Islands ecosystem have a relatively high level of species diversity. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has designated a high number of species at risk that occupy habitat that extends beyond the park boundaries. In order to fulfill our obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*, the park must work with partners on a broader landscape level for protection and public outreach education.

Hyperabundant wildlife: Too many deer can do immense damage to plant communities through overbrowsing. Insects, birds and other wildlife are also affected because they depend on those plants for habitat. Abundant raccoons threaten ecological health by preying on nests of birds and turtles. They can also threaten human health through transmission of rabies. The park must manage hyperabundant wildlife to protect ecological integrity and visitor experience.



Hyperabundant wildlife (Photo: Brian Morin)



Fragmented landholdings (Photo: Parks Canada)

4.0 THE PARK VISION FOR 2020

Where Land Meets Water and People Live

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is scattered along an ecological crossroads where the Great Lakes escape to the Atlantic Ocean down the St. Lawrence River across the Frontenac Arch. This granite corridor, the uplifted roots of an ancient mountain chain, joins the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is where the bones of Mother Earth emerge from the waters of one of the world's great rivers. Long regarded as a sacred area and meeting place by Aboriginal People because of its natural beauty and bounty,

the Thousand Islands region, represented by the park, is a legacy to be cherished, enjoyed and protected so that visitors can have the opportunity to connect personally with their natural heritage places. The park is a place of beauty and host to an immense variety of plants and wildlife that persist in a healthy ecosystem. It is a model of respect and responsibility for the land that sustains all life.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park exists for the benefit, use and enjoyment of Canadians, attracting visitors to experience and learn about the park and the region. The park is a community partner linking the efforts of many toward managing the landscape in a sustainable manner and is a catalyst to collaborative work between governments, organizations and communities. In close proximity to large urban areas where

potential visitors reside, the park is a regional showcase. St. Lawrence Islands National Park is known throughout southern and eastern Ontario and the National Capital Region for its outstanding services, creative and inspiring programming, progressive ecosystem management, leadership in sustainable land use practices and meaningful visitor experience opportunities.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is an ambassador for Parks Canada. Aboriginal traditional knowledge and cultures are celebrated at the park. It is a model of stewardship in action and memorable visitor experiences in a sustainable landscape.

5.0 KEY STRATEGIES

5.1 Key Strategy One

Strength through Regional Connection: working together to maintain natural and cultural authenticity

Until recently, the park holdings consisted primarily of land on islands. Building on the momentum created by the recent acquisition of additional mainland properties, SLINP will develop a protected area strategy and become an active member in a regional sustainable tourism approach that will extend the park's influence on the landscape, creating greater connectivity with wildlife and plant corridors, establishing the park as a leader in sustainable tourism and solidifying partnerships with agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in land and water conservation, tourism, education and management. Because the park's properties are too small and too separated to be able to maintain ecological integrity on their own, it is fundamental to engage regional residents in identifying and celebrating the unique, distinctive and cherished aspects of a vibrant cultural landscape or spirit of place. The park will take a proactive approach to building a culture of environmental stewardship by facilitating public outreach education and opportunities for visitor

experiences for regional residents. Visitors to the area will have the opportunity to hear directly from local residents and the Mohawks of Akwesasne. These stories and local people offer authentic experiences and perspectives about SLINP which will help to foster a special connection to the park for visitors and regional residents alike. By integrating the work carried out by Parks Canada, stakeholders and partners in ecosystem science, historical and archaeological research, tourism, education and visitor experiences, the park will be a leader in building cooperative networks and communities of interest.



Park ecologist and regional residents (Photo: Parks Canada)

Objective 1: Develop a landscape-level protected area strategy to ensure that the park's ecological integrity is maintained.

Key Actions:

- Through partners, develop and implement a strategy to acquire lands having high resource, connection to place, and visitor experience values that would otherwise be lost or impaired.
- Work to understand the primary issues affecting the ecological integrity of the park.
- Work with New York State and United States conservation organizations on conservation issues relating to the Adirondack corridor.

- Monitor the state of the park's ecological integrity, visitor experience programs and the integrity of cultural resources. The park's ecological integrity monitoring program is operational and programs to monitor visitor experiences and cultural resources will be completed during the life of this plan. Both science and traditional Aboriginal knowledge will be used in the monitoring programs.
- Continue to lead in the development and implementation of recovery strategies for those species at risk where leadership is assigned to the Parks Canada Agency, and participate in SAR recovery strategies for other species at risk found within the park and the Thousand Islands ecosystem.
- Implement the *Integrated Vegetation Plan*.
- Develop and implement a fire management plan that addresses both the need for fire suppression as well as the use of fire as a resource management tool. Addressing fire management operations will include consultation with local and provincial fire management agencies.
- Develop public outreach education programming and support existing partner programs that demonstrate measured improvements in ecological integrity and that work towards the recovery of SAR.
- Contribute knowledge and expertise to regional land-use planning activities within the Thousand Islands ecosystem.
- Promote the park as an economic development partner in the region.
- To create and promote packages within the regional landscape with others that include park experiences and that flesh out the menu for different types of explorers (travellers grouped according to values and motivations).
- Involve stakeholders and partners in park marketing planning.
- Conduct a broad-based consultation on a renaming of the park.
- Engage and encourage stakeholders to build relationships within the community.
- Continue to work with stakeholders and partners to foster a spirit of place in the Thousand Islands.
- Identify strategic partnering opportunities in the Thousand Islands ecosystem that will strengthen and maintain the region's biologically diverse and healthy ecosystem and visitor experience opportunities.

Objective 2: Take a leadership role in the promotion of sustainable tourism principles and the identification of needs and interests of target markets.

Key Actions:

- Carry out economic impact assessment model to estimate the value and impact of visitor expenditures in the area and the park, and integrate these results in the sustainable tourism model being developed by the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve.

Objective 3: Foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.

Key Actions:

- Integrate the results of the *Regional Resident Survey (2007)* into public outreach education and stewardship.
- Provide relevant opportunities for residents to share their values and connect through outreach activities and offer consultation on issues affecting regional residents.
- Develop and implement issue-based communication strategies that will include evaluation processes to gauge the public's level of participation, learning, enjoyment, satisfaction and connection.



Sharing expertise and information (Photo: Parks Canada)

- Attract regional residents through relevant programming at Mallorytown Landing, Jones Creek and Landon Bay.
- Develop stewardship programs with partners that already have strong relationships and credibility with relevant target audiences.
- Communicate a sense of place to our youth through in-park and formal school programming.
- Develop a comprehensive volunteer program that will build support for the park and include activities that are of interest and relevant for volunteers.

Objective 4: Strengthen the involvement of regional residents in the design and development of visitor experience opportunities, public outreach education and ecological integrity programs.

Key Actions:

- Incorporate the stories of regional residents and the Mohawks of Akwesasne into the park's natural and cultural resources programming.
- Provide opportunities for residents and visitors to learn and experience how the park is working to contribute to ecological integrity and facilitate memorable experiences.

- Invite stakeholders and partners to take part in program development, design and evaluation.
- Continue with the citizen science program to increase public engagement and contribute to the park monitoring program.
- Foster awareness and promote collaboration and involvement among regional residents and park visitors relating to ecological integrity management actions with regards to issues such as invasive alien plants, hyperabundant species and fire.
- Share scientific information with our partners and stakeholders to benefit decision making in the Thousand Islands ecosystem.
- Establish methods to promote a conservation ethic and the adoption of best management practices, to encourage involvement in park ecological integrity, and landowner conservation programs.
- Celebrate successes with park visitors and regional residents through on-site programming and public outreach education.

Objective 5: Demonstrate and communicate leadership in environmental and cultural sustainability for park operational activities.

Key Actions:

- Reduce the ecological footprint by adopting environmentally sensitive practices and technology and alternative energy generation where appropriate.
- Lead by example in the use of environmentally sustainable technologies and practices.
- Complete the replacement of vault toilets with a lesser number of composting toilets.
- Demonstrate and promote alternative energy options.
- Remove redundant built assets not having cultural value and restore the vacant lands.



Going green with solar panels (Photo: Parks Canada)

- Apply LEED Gold Standards to building design.
- Foster dialogue to promote public acceptance of “green” practices.
- Recognize and encourage environmental stewardship practices by our neighbours.
- Follow the recommendations in the approved *Kingston Fortifications Management Plan (2008)* for Cathcart Tower located on Cedar Island.
- Update and continue to implement the archaeological inventory and assessment program in the park.
- Undertake a cultural landscape plan for SLINP, in collaboration with First Nations, and prepare a cultural resource management plan that includes the preservation of oral histories and traditional knowledge.
- Manage and exhibit archaeological and historic objects in a culturally sensitive manner.

5.2 Key Strategy Two

An Expanded Sense of Place: exploring new landscapes, new markets and new opportunities.

The addition of new park lands is an incredible opportunity to create a stronger mainland presence and also facilitate more accessible and meaningful experiences for visitors. The park will reposition its promotion efforts from offering boat-access-only services and facilities to offering an eco-friendly mainland experience as well as an island experience. The park will strive to engage the urban markets of Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto by responding to visitor interests and expectations and by offering an authentic attraction known throughout the region and beyond for creative programming. Akwesasne and regional residents will be involved in both content and delivery and offer a varied menu reflecting a range of explorer types. This direction will be based on sound social science and visitor experience opportunities that meet needs and expectations of current and potential audiences. By responding to existing and potential visitor needs and interests the park will increase its relevance to Canadians.

SLINP will continue to facilitate an island experience that considers the enjoyment of visitors, the integrity of natural and cultural resources, and learning opportunities. As part of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, the park will play a key role in developing a sustainable regional tourism strategy together with a network of community groups working together to establish a sense of place in the Thousand Islands.

Objective 1: Better understand our current and potential audiences and have the ability to assess and evaluate attitudes and values of key communities and client groups.

Key Actions:

- Identify and prioritize gaps in social science related to existing audiences, regional residents and potential group travellers.
- Develop and implement a social science strategy that will improve the quality and quantity of relevant statistics resulting in more effective plans, and programming and decision making.

- Conduct a survey of existing audiences using the Parks Canada and Canadian Tourism Commission's explorer types.
- Develop an effective methodology for measuring attendance to the new mainland properties.
- Identify expectations, needs and interests of current and potential visitor audiences expectations and develop corresponding visitor experience opportunities.



*A national park experience for urban youth
(Photo: Parks Canada)*

Objective 2: Strategically focus on our priority markets of regional residents including the community of Akwesasne, as well as the markets of Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto's new Canadians and youth.

Key Actions:

- Raise public awareness and appreciation of the traditions and history of Aboriginal Peoples in the region through exposure to programs and events conducted with the Mohawks of Akwesasne.
- Provide Mallorytown Landing as a setting that encourages use of the park and its facilities by local community groups and residents to develop a sense of ownership and pride in the national park.
- Develop and implement an innovative marketing plan for the park.

- Explore the development of a SLINP experience-positioning concept with regional stakeholders in relation to the Parks Canada Agency brand essence: Inspiring discovery.

Objective 3: Establish a relevant national park presence on the mainland and the islands.

Park Focus: To develop an integrated visitor experience plan that is based on sound social science, visitor needs, interests and expectations.

Mainland Focus: To reposition the perception of SLINP from a boat-access-only facility to a comprehensive (island/mainland) national park experience that speaks to regional residents and a larger urban population.

Key Actions:

- Develop a volunteer trail steward program that will connect regional residents to the park and provide feedback for visitor concerns and level of satisfaction.
- Rehabilitate degraded habitat on new mainland property to offer new visitor experience opportunities and restore ecological integrity thereby demonstrating stewardship to our audience and encouraging public use of trails and facilities.



Cyclists and interpreter (Photo: Brian Morin)

Island Focus: To continue to facilitate an island experience based on visitor needs and interests that integrates natural and cultural resources,



The view from Fitzsimmons Mountain (Photo: Parks Canada)

the economic and ecological capacity of the park, educational opportunities and visitor enjoyment.

Key Actions:

- Implement two sustainable island service models that will facilitate opportunities that reflect visitor preferences, needs and desires. (Refer to Area Management Section 6.0).
- Prepare and implement an alternative energy communications plan to reduce the use of generators on park islands thereby improving visitor experience and fostering environmental stewardship.
- Promote a garbage policy to encourage pack-in, pack-out and reduce solid waste generation.
- Continue the island steward volunteer program that connects regional residents to the park and provides feedback for visitors' concerns and level of satisfaction.
- Continue to reach non-traditional audiences through roving interpretive programs, increasing contacts and enhancing visitor enjoyment and learning opportunities.
- Ensure the park has the operational capacity to facilitate safe and enjoyable visitor experiences.

5.3 Key Strategy Three

Bones of the Mother: Aboriginal Inclusion

Working with the Aboriginal community in a meaningful way using Mohawk principles of respect, equity and empowerment.

The Thousand Islands is part of traditional Mohawk territory and there is a long history of Akwesasne's commitment to SLINP, dating to early support and lobbying for its creation. In the summer of 2007, at Akwesasne's request, the park was honoured with a Smoky Fire Ceremony that served to not only solidify the relationship but also to raise the expectations for the future between the park and the community of Akwesasne. Parks are considered modern sacred places by the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse), and are perceived as having a living identity in addition to their value in terms of ecological goods and services.

SLINP will work together with the Mohawks of Akwesasne to deliver protection and education and to facilitate enhanced visitor experience programs. Working together will help to protect species and cultural values, build awareness for a culture and its attachment to the park, and

Smoky Fire Event at St Lawrence Islands National Park Helps Bridge Communities

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is continually interested in improving relations with their neighbours, friends and community. On August 1 and 2 2007, Parks Canada hosted the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and its Department of the Environment at the beautiful and historic St. Lawrence Islands National Park at Mallorytown Landing, Ontario.

The Smoky Fire Event was a collaborative event based on the Haudenosaunee tradition called the smoky fire. At the smoky fire is used by Haudenosaunee people to signal their arrival at the edge of a new territory or village. A smoky fire is lit which signals the invitation of the party to be received to meet in council on the territory or village.

Dialogue began almost five years ago concerning the creation of bonds and understanding between Parks Canada and the Mohawks of Akwesasne. In May of 2007 Elizabeth Nantze, Peggy Pike-Thompson and Richard David began discussions with Parks Canada to explore in detail to open the doors of communication between Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and Parks Canada, but also with the surrounding municipalities and towns. The collaborative dialogue between these parties is to have enhanced one another periodically for the non-Natives and Parks Canada to have a clearer and positive discussion on the views of Akwesasne Mohawks concerning the islands in the park.

On August 1st Grand Chief Tim Thompson, Chief Louis Lamoie, Joe Lyons, Larry King and Nina Bonaduce of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and representatives of the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs along with good number of Akwesasne Mohawks gathered at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park Interpretation Center. Museum representatives from various municipalities as well as other interested people congregated in the Smoky Fire Event. The occasion was given a brief description of the opening and greeting would be conducted. Immediately following

the initial meeting a fire was built and cedar branches were then cast into the fire creating a bright white column of smoke which signified the commencement of the event.

During the planning stages the Smoky Fire Event was initially supposed to be a very small affair of 15-20 participants, over 120 people participated in the event on August 1st 2007. John Swain of the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs received the Obenhor Karwahadowan and also addressed the museum delegates, the audience and the Parks Canada contingent on the morning of Obenhor Karwahadowan. Following the opening address Whitney Larkin of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment Department explained to those gathered the atmospheric reasons why these parties were gathered at the event. A number of speakers from Akwesasne as well as others addressed the gathering on their feelings about the event and the team relationship with Akwesasne.

The St. Lawrence Islands National Park was chosen due to its historical significance to Akwesasne. For over 3000 years Akwesasne people have used and occupied islands in and around this natural park. Successful Haudenosaunee articles have been unearthed in the area. During the 1600 and 1700's French colonial documentation clearly indicates that a Haudenosaunee settlement existed on the islands one settlement in particular is the settlement of Tawana which later likely evolved on Grand Island. Following the 17th American Revolutionary war and the Star of 1812 a number of sources indicated the claim to the land made by the Akwesasne Mohawks.

A great deal of respect and positive responses to the event have been noted in surrounding and allows for development and strengthening of the relationship between the Mohawks of Akwesasne, Parks Canada and the non-native people in that area. Parks Canada was very accommodating to the people of Akwesasne who came to the park for the event. One of the main goals of the event was to allow for a deeper understanding by Parks Canada and the surrounding com-

munities of the relationship to land as well as the cultural and traditional use of land by Mohawks. It is the hope of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment and Conservation Departments that Akwesasne Mohawks will have greater access to these islands for traditional uses like medicine gathering.

Important aspects were covered during the event including the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment Department's Species at Risk program. The Environment Department hopes to be able to carry on some of this work in cooperation with Parks Canada. A spirit of cooperation arose from this event, Grand Chief the Superintendent of Parks Canada related his interest in getting involved in the Haudenosaunee to Thompson Island Youth Camp. Another collaborative effort is the

creation and subsequent displaying of a series of video vignettes entitled Voices of Akwesasne. The multi-media display once completed will be viewable in the St. Lawrence Islands Interpretation Center. The production will be done by one Akwesasne Mohawk Elvira Sargent and one Parks Canada employee Paul Blaino. Together they will interview elders in Akwesasne for the interview drafts.

Both the Mohawks of Akwesasne and Parks Canada who planned with the human and the event as a whole, hopefully another similar event can be held with more intense studies carried out during the event.

For more information contact the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment Department at #613-373-2258



The smoky fire which signified the start of the event.



From left to right: Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment Department's Director if Tony Lyons, Chief Grand Chief Tim Thompson, Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs' Nina Bonaduce, and Richard David.

The Director of Parks Canada and the Superintendent of Parks Canada with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's Environment Department's Director if Tony Lyons, Chief Grand Chief Tim Thompson, Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs' Nina Bonaduce, and Richard David.

Source: Akwesasne, A Special People in a Special Place

engage the visitor in holistic and authentic experiences that have the potential to alter and enrich their perceptions of the park.

Objective 1: Establish mutually rewarding relationships.

Key Actions:

- Create a task force or technical working group for the review of projects and as a mechanism for ongoing evaluation.
- Create a solid base for learning and awareness of Mohawk culture and history related to the park amongst all park and field unit staff by developing ongoing training opportunities.
- Work closely with Akwesasne to ensure our friendship contributes economic and social value to both communities.

- Develop Akwesasne Community Days together with Akwesasne and the park communities.

Objective 2: Enrich visitor experience and regional residents' awareness of the traditions and history of Aboriginal Peoples in the region.

Key Actions:

- Develop a Mohawk node in the Heroes of the Landscape exhibit at Mallorytown Landing.
- Continue to include Aboriginal voices in park visitor experience and public outreach education programming.
- Promote the *Voices of Akwesasne* (a documentary of contemporary and historical attachment to the park, through the Mohawks of Akwesasne culture and values) regionally and nationally.

Objective 3: Share knowledge between SLINP and Akwesasne.

Key Actions:

- Document the Mohawk role in the creation of the park.
- Continue to work together to develop an Aboriginal cultural experience offer in the park.
- Continue to research Aboriginal People's use of and attachment to the Thousand Islands region.
- Work together to plan and implement the mitigation of hyperabundant deer populations in the park.
- Work together on SAR inventory and recovery (refer to Key Strategy One).
- Integrate traditional Aboriginal knowledge into the park's ecosystem science program and visitor experience and public outreach education programs.

6.0 AREA MANAGEMENT APPROACH

6.1 Mainland Properties

The mainland holdings of SLINP can be divided into three main nodes: Landon Bay, Mallorytown Landing and Jones Creek. The mainland properties are linked together by the Thousand Islands Parkway that follows the river's edge and is connected to Highway 401, which is the main highway between Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Each property is distinct. Landon Bay has dramatic lookouts and vistas of the famous islands scattered in the St. Lawrence River, Mallorytown Landing provides an intimate view of the river, while Jones Creek offers a small slice of accessible wilderness with a wetland complex of diverse flora and fauna and rocky terrain that typifies the Frontenac Arch. The majority of the mainland properties will remain backcountry (Zone II Wilderness) with primitive visitor facilities while having small areas designated Zone IV for motorized access and visitor facilities.

The mainland properties provide a complementary experience to the existing island experience by making a variety of natural and cultural features accessible to travelers on the Thousand Islands Parkway. The Landon Bay node, due to its accessibility, existing facilities, and extensive land base, will continue to be a focus for visitors to experience the mainland both on foot and via canoe or kayak as a jumping-off point to a more rugged hike up Fitzsimmons Mountain. The Mallorytown Landing node will provide direct access to the St. Lawrence River and opportunities for families large and small to picnic, play games, observe birds in built structures, explore and collect seeds from native wildflower gardens. Visitors can also enjoy hunting for the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address carved on rocks, sit quietly at a site of spiritual contemplation, view a mural of visitors representing the spectrum of Canada interacting with the location and sculptures leading visitors to Mallorytown Landing, and read stories of



Hiking Jones Creek Trails (Photo: Parks Canada)

community stewardship leaders on the landscape. The Jones Creek node will focus on facilitating visitors' experiences within a gentle and rolling landscape with a significant wetland complex providing a variety of tranquil viewpoints and including walking trails for an aging population in addition to more rigorous hiking adventure.

The park is working towards an interconnected trail network to link the nodes. These trails, developed with partners such as the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and private landowners, will establish the park as a special place for exploring by walking, hiking, paddling, geocaching and questing, and for more meditative moments of quiet reflection in beautiful surroundings. New opportunities will be developed based on social science which identifies the needs and expectations of a range of existing and potential explorer types. This work will be undertaken in concert with tourism operators and will involve focus groups with target audiences. Each activity will be an opportunity to create relevance and encourage meaningful and enjoyable experiences and inform, influence, and involve diverse audiences.

Gathering Place

Currently SLINP lacks a venue, or focal point, for engaging regional stakeholders and to reach current and potential land-based visitors directly with park messages, stimulating program options, facilities and staff. SLINP aspires to provide the Thousand Islands community, in conjunction with other funding partners, a vibrant mainland facility distinctive to the locale and reflective of its natural and cultural heritage. Over the course of this management plan, the park will work with other interested parties to initiate a centre where there will be the space and capacity to showcase Parks Canada's mandate. It will be a "gathering place" that will facilitate authentic place-based experiences to help visitors connect to the region by meeting their needs and expectations. SLINP will complete, in partnership with municipal governments and other partners, a feasibility study to examine options for the park's centre of operations, welcoming and orientation, stimulation of regional economies and reaching target markets.

Objective: Integrate the park's mainland offer at Landon Bay, Mallorytown Landing, Jones Creek and the Thousand Islands Parkway, ensuring a cohesive visitor experience and maintaining the properties' ecological integrity by implementing a comprehensive rehabilitation and restoration program.



Learning al fresco (Photo: Brian Morin)

Landon Bay

Key Actions:

- Implement the *Trail and Restoration Plan* (2008) to improve visitor experience and ecological integrity.
- Develop and implement the site plan for the Barbara Heck Foundation licence of occupation to delineate roles and responsibilities and to direct facility development.
- Assess and maintain SAR habitat.
- Address management priorities in the *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan*.
- Develop canoe- and kayak-friendly opportunities.

Mallorytown Landing

Key Actions:

- Implement a communications plan to increase public understanding and support for shoreline and parking lot restoration actions.
- Address management priorities outlined in the *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan*.
- Develop and implement a Grenadier Island wetland complex turtle protection strategy.
- Help to facilitate, with partners, access to an island experience for land-based visitors.

Jones Creek

Key Actions:

- Implement the *Trail and Restoration Plan* to improve visitor experience and ecological integrity.
- Address management priorities outlined in the *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan*.
- Develop canoe- and kayak-friendly opportunities in cooperation with partners and stakeholders.



Kayaking among the islands (Photo: Brian Morin)

6.2 Island Properties

Two island models were designed based on economic and environmental sustainability, and visitor feedback. This reorientation will also allow for staff to provide enhanced welcoming and orientation and hands-on prevention strategies.

Full-service Model: This model applies to Grenadier Central, McDonald, and Beau Rivage. They can sustain high visitation levels and will offer services including: garbage collection, boat generator use, ample dock space, and some wheelchair accessibility.

Self-service Model: This model includes Stovin, Adelaide, Grenadier East, Grenadier North, Grenadier West, Georgina, Constance, Hill, Gordon, Mulcaster, Camelot, Endymion, Mermaid, Aubrey, Thwartway, Milton, and Cedar. For the client seeking a more peaceful, natural setting, these islands will provide composting toilets, a pack-in and pack-out policy, primitive camping sites, no generator use, smaller docks, more mooring buoys, and shelters where appropriate.

Objective: Facilitate visitor experience on the islands that considers visitor needs and expectations, the integrity of natural and cultural resources, the capacity of the park, learning opportunities and the enjoyment and benefit of the boating visitor.

Key Actions:

- Develop and implement a garbage collection system that satisfies both the park's carrying capacity and the needs of the boating public.
- Evaluate all aspects of island access (e.g. anchoring, docking, designation, prevention, docking design, public safety) and implement appropriate changes.
- Help to facilitate, with partners, an island experience for land-based visitors.
- Ensure that there are opportunities available to our regional residents to connect to the park in a meaningful way (e.g. volunteer programs).
- Develop canoe- and kayak-friendly opportunities in cooperation with partners and visitors.



Thwartway Island (Photo: Parks Canada)

6.3 Main Duck and Yorkshire Islands and Skoryna Nature Reserve

Objective: Perform a caretaker role that maintains the integrity of these properties and reflects their role as special places in the spirit of the *Canada National Parks Act*.

Key Actions:

- Provide a caretaker role for Main Duck and Yorkshire islands that considers and manages

their natural resources and visitor appreciation in a manner that does not compromise their possible future transfer to a Lake Ontario national marine conservation area.

- Provide protection of key heritage resources.
- Initiate observation reporting on Main Duck and Yorkshire islands by means of the Island Stewardship Program.
- Continue ecological integrity monitoring and SAR recovery activities at the Skoryna Nature Reserve.
- Continue to encourage the formation of a friends organization for Main Duck and Yorkshire islands to help the park manage the property.
- Continue to work with groups in the Lower Beverly Lake area to help manage the Skoryna Nature Reserve property.



Basking map turtles (Photo: Parks Canada)

7.0 STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with stakeholders and partners is essential for Parks Canada to build mutual respect, identify mutual interests and achieve shared outcomes. Parks Canada's approach to partnering is that certain baseline criteria are to

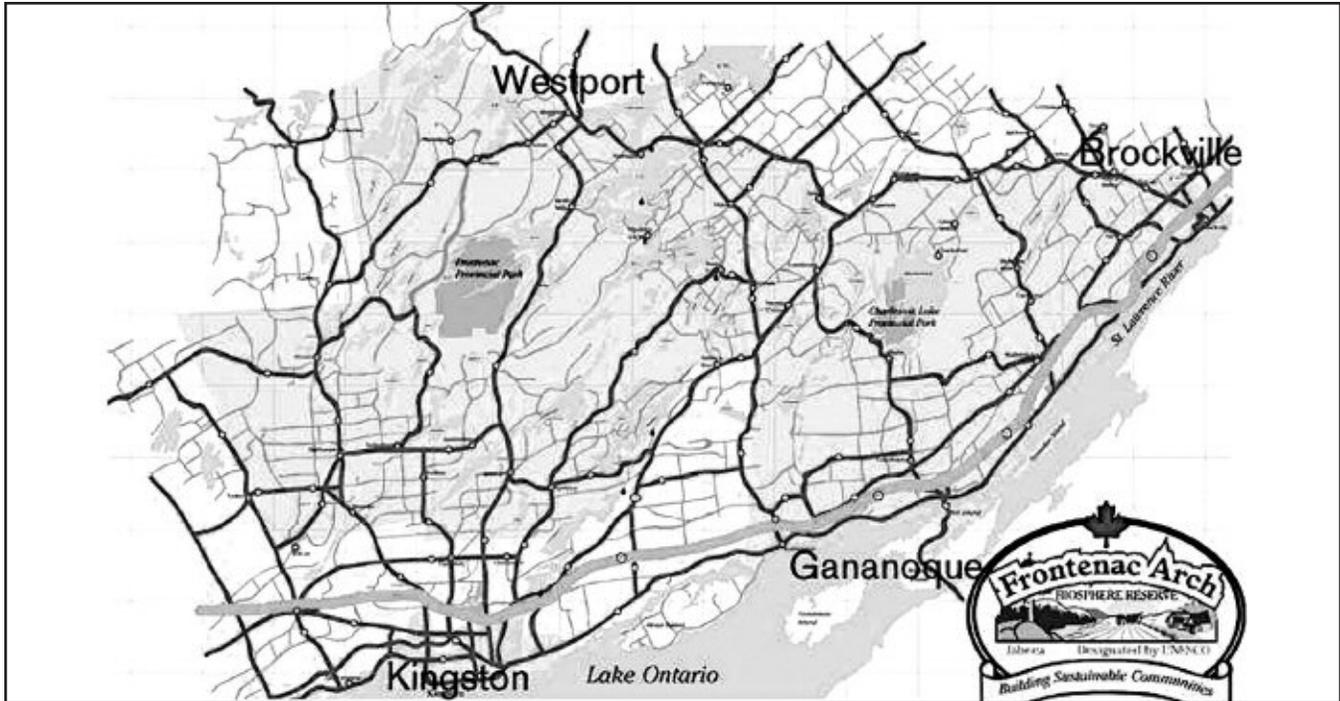
be met before partnering is engaged in. Criteria include a common vision and commitment to a mutually beneficial relationship, with an agreement to share information and knowledge. They also include a determination to undertake work together where resources are used to the best advantage, mutual objectives are met and shared outcomes are achieved.

SLINP has had considerable success in a number of initiatives by recognizing the importance of working with a range of partners. The park's geographic location, challenge in accessing both the group and independent traveller traffic on Highway 401, fragmented land holdings, numerous jurisdictions and the rate of development outside its boundaries require a variety of approaches to achieve a sustainable future for the park. SLINP values the "multiplier effect" of working successfully with partners in a spirit of shared ownership.

The park acts as a senior advisor to the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (FABR), which is an umbrella organization of natural and historic conservation organisations, tourism, economic and social development groups, and educational and scientific communities located within the Frontenac Arch region. The advisory teams of two of the initiatives of the FABR, the **Sustainable Tourism Project** and the **Environmental Education Network**, have SLINP representatives.

The **Species at Risk Habitat Availability Project** is a landmark initiative and a good example of a multi-faceted partnership. Conducted on a landscape level, it requires the engagement of the FABR, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Parks, local stewardship councils, Queen's University, University of Ottawa, Carleton University and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

The St. Lawrence Parks Commission and SLINP consult on land management and land acquisition issues. The park continues to support and work collectively with educational institutions and national SAR recovery teams to address crucial information gaps and make for informed management decisions.



Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Photo: FABR)

SLINP anticipates future successful associations over the next decade leading to enhanced visitor experiences and natural resource protection in the Thousand Islands ecosystem. Planned initiatives, such as partnering with local boat lines and canoeing and kayaking touring companies to offer an island experience to the urban youth and new Canadian audience, will be implemented.

The park is represented on a number of regional and community groups, which keeps it current with local issues and provides those groups an opportunity to engage the park in management planning discussions. SLINP will actively pursue opportunities for community involvement in visitor experience and resource management initiatives. A contact database is maintained to forward material to those who have expressed an interest and new collaborators will be sought.

The Mohawks of Akwesasne have enhanced this management plan by collaborating on key strategy three and by contributing the Haudenosaunee foreword and closing. Akwesasne and SLINP will continue to collaborate on a number of projects such as deer management, medicinal plants, a turtle protection strategy and *Voices of Akwesasne*. The

national park will ensure inclusiveness by interacting with the community at Akwesasne and by cultivating an equal partner status whereby both parties provide culturally appropriate resources to shared projects. SLINP will act as a bridge to facilitate the connection between the park's partners, the community and First Nations. The national park is learning from the Mohawks of Akwesasne how best to build a respectful relationship.

SLINP will work with organizations and agencies to facilitate visitor experiences, protection, restoration, land stewardship and tourism in the Thousand Islands ecosystem in order to add credibility to public outreach education and provide capacity in areas where knowledge gaps exist. As well, SLINP will work with partners to reach target markets and promote integrated community development strategies within the Thousand Islands ecosystem.

Opportunities to work with partners will be evaluated for effectiveness by assessing the quantity and quality of their programs in achieving park objectives and by measuring the amount of in-kind investment. The park's success in public engagement will be based on

mutual respect, mutual interests and shared outcomes. The park's ability to diversify its programs to reach multiple user groups at different levels of learning will be monitored and reported on.

8.0 PARK ZONING

National parks use a zoning system to regulate the types of activities that are permissible within specific areas, based on ecological and cultural resource sensitivities and the types of visitor experiences they can sustainably support. As such, zoning is a valuable tool in the translation of general policy into park-specific application. It sets limits on what uses can occur and where they can occur in the park, and provides a summary in graphic form of the management objectives for those areas. The Five-Zone system ranges in land use intensity from Special Preservation to Park Services. Table 1 summarizes the zoning system used within Parks Canada.

A review of the zoning scheme in the 1998 management plan concluded that changes were

required in order to sustain the park's ecological integrity, facilitate a diversity of visitor experiences and better reflect the park's role in the ecological health of the region. In addition, since 1998 there have been revisions to the criteria for Zone II (Wilderness), eliminating the size restriction and returning the intent of the designation to the identification of areas that are highly representative. The principles of conservation biology that focus on the ecological functioning of corridors and networks have also been applied to Zone II. This has allowed small parks like SLINP to utilize the Zone II designation.

Based on assessments of resource constraints and visitor experience opportunities and the inclusion of Zone II, the following zoning scheme (refer to maps) has been adopted in SLINP.

Zone I: Special Preservation

These Zones preserve unique natural and cultural resources in need of a high level of protection. Motorized access is not permitted and public access is managed to ensure protection is not compromised.

Table 1

Zoning in National Parks	
Zone I Special Preservation	Specific areas or features that contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features or values, or are among the best examples of a natural region. Preservation is the key consideration.
Zone II Wilderness	Areas that are good representations of a natural region and will be conserved in a wilderness state. Perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal management intervention is encouraged.
Zone III Natural Environment	Areas managed as natural environments, and that provide opportunities for visitors to experience a park's natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreation activities requiring minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. Motorized access, where allowed, is controlled.
Zone IV Outdoor Recreation	Limited areas capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciating and enjoying the park's heritage values and related essential services and facilities, in ways that impact the ecological integrity of the park to the smallest extent possible. Direct access by motorized vehicles is allowed.
Zone V Park Services	Communities in existing national parks that contain a concentration of visitor services and support facilities. Major park operation and administrative functions may also be accommodated in this Zone.

The following are the areas designated Zone I:

The majority of Endymion Island (rare plants), the majority of Hill Island (wetland complex, granite ridges, rare plants and herptiles), parts of the west end and the Brookers Creek area of Grenadier Island (wetland, rare plants, Aboriginal sites), the majority of Adelaide Island (wetlands, Aboriginal sites), and the Treasury Chambers (wetlands, Aboriginal sites).

Zone II: Wilderness

These areas are highly representative of the natural region and are managed for the preservation of natural and cultural resources. Since Zone II areas represent wildlife corridors and core protected areas, this is the predominant Zone in all national parks. Basic services and facilities are available for visitors, who are encouraged to enjoy a wide range of recreational activities and experiences that require a natural setting.

The following are the areas designated Zone II:

All of Cedar Island, Milton Island, Aubrey Island, Thwartway Island, Mermaid Island, Georgina Island, Lyndoch Island, Mulcaster Island, Camelot Island, Gordon Island, Constance Island, Red Horse Island, Victoria Island, Main Duck Island and Yorkshire Island. The majority of Grenadier Island, Lindsay Island, Stovin Island and McDonald Island, and parts of Hay Island, Adelaide Island, and Beau Rivage Island. The majority of all mainland properties (Jones Creek, Mallorytown Landing, Landon Bay) and Skoryna Nature Reserve. All of the park islets are Zone II.

Zone III: Natural Environment

These limited areas provide a variety of opportunities for visitors to experience the park's natural values through low-density outdoor activities, with appropriate facilities and services, while ensuring minimal impacts to ecological integrity.

The following are areas identified as Zone III:

Beau Rivage Island, Leeward Island, the south part of Grenadier Island and parts of Stovin Island, McDonald Island, Landon Bay and Mallorytown Landing.

Zone IV: Outdoor Recreation

These limited areas allow for a wider range of visitor experiences and services while ensuring minimal impacts to ecological integrity. Motorized access is permitted.

The following are areas identified as Zone IV:

Parts of Mallorytown Landing and Landon Bay.

Zone V: Park Service:

These limited areas provide a place for visitor services, support facilities, and the administrative functions needed to manage and operate the park. Parts of Mallorytown Landing are designated as Zone V.

Environmentally and Culturally Sensitive Sites:

Within SLINP, there are a number of natural and cultural resources that warrant protection but are small in extent, are located near disturbed or



Planning for new visitor opportunities (Photo: Parks Canada)

intensively used areas, or are of somewhat lesser significance than the valued resources in Zone I areas. Designation as an environmentally or culturally sensitive site provides a means by which these resources can be protected without completely restricting other park uses in the vicinity.

At present, 20 areas in the park warrant designation as environmentally or culturally sensitive sites. They include Cathcart Martello Tower on Cedar Island, several provincially designated Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), numerous Aboriginal sites, several biologically significant wetland areas, and a number of rare plant communities.

The degree of protection required at each site will be determined through an assessment of the importance and sensitivity of the resource. A program will be developed to determine the management practices required to protect each site. As new information on park resources is obtained, it may be necessary to refine the boundaries of sensitive sites or to identify new ones. If necessary, this designation may be removed from some sites. Changes to sites under this designation will not require a revision to the management plan.

Non-Conforming Uses

An inappropriate use within a Zone is termed a non-conforming use. There are four designations of this type in the park. The Thousand Islands International Bridge spans Constance and Georgina islands. The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority, by agreement with Parks Canada, maintains a cleared right-of-way under the bridge. This right-of-way is at variance with the Zone II designation of both Constance and Georgina islands. In order to minimize future impacts, consultations will be held with the bridge authority to establish guidelines for managing the natural resources along the right-of-way. There are three roads on Hill Island that are owned by the park but have access easements by private property owners. These are Skydeck, Blacksnake, and Park Hill Lane. They do not conform to the adjacent Zone II designation



Wetland monitoring (Photo: Parks Canada)

9.0 MONITORING

Parks Canada's Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Management plans outline the key strategies, objectives and actions to deliver the direction set out in Parks Canada's Corporate Plan. The management planning cycle incorporates monitoring and evaluation to assess progress. Annual implementation reports record performance of management plan actions. State of the Park Reports provide an assessment of the park's condition and trends relative to the Agency's three mandate areas: visitor experience, public appreciation and understanding and heritage resource conservation. A State of the Park Report assesses performance in achieving expected results identified in this management plan, and it will form the basis for the five-year management plan review.

The State of St. Lawrence Islands National Park Report also contributes to the Parks Canada Agency State of the Protected Heritage Areas Report, which reports on the state of all national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas administered by Parks Canada, and is presented to Parliament and to all Canadians every two years.

Monitoring Programs

Monitoring is an essential component of park management as it is a tool for detecting change in the state of the park. More specifically, condition monitoring programs are implemented to evaluate: the condition and trends of ecological integrity and the condition of cultural resources, the state of visitor experience as well as Canadians' level of awareness and understanding of Parks Canada's administered places and the level of stakeholder and partner engagement in their protection and presentation.

In addition to condition monitoring, Parks Canada implements effectiveness monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions, activities and programs related to facilitating visitor experience opportunities, reaching targeted Canadians and engaging stakeholders and partners, and conserving heritage resources.

The information from monitoring programs is synthesized in the State of the Park Report to form an overall picture of the park, and identify the major issues and challenges to be addressed in the next management planning cycle.

The State of St. Lawrence Islands National Park Report

While the current *State of the Park Report, St. Lawrence Island National Park (2004)* includes information related to visitor experience and external relations, the main emphasis was on the condition and trends of ecological integrity. This section of the management plan outlines Parks Canada Agency targets for heritage resources conservation, visitor experience, public outreach education and external communications, and stakeholder and partner engagement that will be reflected in the next State of the Park Report (planned for 2010). Additional insight into the local or specific elements of the state of the park will be incorporated into the monitoring program during plan implementation. Therefore, in subsequent State of the Park reports, the description and analysis of all elements of the Parks Canada mandate will be addressed in a comprehensive, balanced fashion.

9.1 Condition Monitoring

Condition monitoring is grounded in a well designed process for data collection and analysis. This type of monitoring is aimed at assessing the state of Parks Canada's protected heritage places through long-term data gathering and analysis. Table 2 provides a summary of Parks Canada Agency targets for condition monitoring, and how the St. Lawrence Islands National Park key strategies and objectives contribute to achieving these results.

Ecological Integrity

Parks Canada evaluates the condition and trends of ecological integrity through an ecological monitoring program. In SLINP, three indicators are measured, representing the major ecosystems found in the park and in the wider Thousand Islands ecosystem where it affects the park. These include streams and rivers, wetlands and forests. Each of the indicators is monitored using a number of measures that collect data on biodiversity, processes and functions, and stressors. Condition monitoring for ecological integrity is conducted at permanent monitoring stations, using the same protocols each time. These stations are monitored by staff and volunteers. Table 3 provides a summary of Ecosystem Condition Monitoring measures.

The Ecological Integrity Monitoring Program (EIMP) is the basis for the park heritage resource conservation program. It is used to assess both the health and trends of ecosystems as well as the effectiveness of management actions.

Visitor Experience

Our success in facilitating visitor experience opportunities at SLINP is achieved when a visitor creates a sense of personal connection with the park. SLINP takes pride in facilitating opportunities so visitors feel this place is meaningful to them and enjoy a high degree of satisfaction with their visit.

St. Lawrence Islands Management Plan – Condition Monitoring Key Strategies and Objectives that Support Parks Canada Performance Targets

Table 2

Program Activity	Parks Canada Agency Targets	Key Strategies	Objectives
Heritage Resources Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLINP to maintain state and trend of all ecological integrity indicators from March 2008 to March 2013. 	1 2 3	1, 3, 4 3 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 percent of active management targets to improve ecological integrity are met by March 2014. 	1 2 3	1 3 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the condition of cultural resources administered by SLINP by March 2014. 	1 3	1, 4 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLINP to implement Deerberry recovery strategy by 2013. 	1 3	1 3
Visitor Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 85 percent of visitors at surveyed locations consider the place meaningful to them. 	1 2 3	1, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 90 percent of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied with their visit. 	1 2 3	3, 5 1, 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 50 percent of visitors at surveyed locations are very satisfied with their visit. 	1 2 3	3 1, 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitation to SLINP increases by 10 percent between 2008 and 2012. 	1 2 3	2 1, 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 60 percent of visitors consider they have learned about the natural and cultural heritage of the place. 	1 2 3	3, 5 1, 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 90 percent of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit. 	1 2 3	1, 2, 3, 5 1, 2, 3 2
Public Outreach Education and External Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Canadians that consider that they learned about the heritage of Parks Canada's administered places by 2014. 	1 2 3	2, 3, 4, 5 2, 3 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of Canadians who understand that nationally significant places that are administered by Parks Canada are protected and presented on their behalf by March 2014. 	1 2 3	2, 3, 4 2, 3 2
Stakeholder and Partner Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of stakeholders and partners that support the protection and presentation of Parks Canada administered places by March 2014. 	1 2 3	1, 2, 3, 4 2, 3 1, 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of stakeholders and partners that feel they have opportunities to influence and contribute to Parks Canada activities by March 2014. 	1 2 3	2, 3, 4 2, 3 1, 2

Parks Canada is in the process of developing a structured monitoring program that measures the state of visitor experience and the national park's success in facilitating a sense of connection for the visitor to the park.

The Visitor Information Program (VIP), conducted every five years, is a valuable tool for assessing the state of visitor experience in the park. The VIP will be used to report on the park results in relation to corporate performance expectations

in this area, such as the percentage of visitors who enjoyed their visit and the percentage who consider SLINP to be meaningful to them.

Public Outreach Education and External Communication

In addition to heritage resource protection and facilitating visitor experience, Parks Canada's

Table 3

St. Lawrence Islands National Park – Ecosystem Condition Monitoring Summary

Indicator	Measure	Parks Canada Ecological Integrity Framework
Forest	Forest EMAN Annual Decay Rates Monitoring Protocol	Processes
Forest	Forest EMAN Tree Species Richness	Biodiversity
Forest	Forest EMAN Down Woody Debris Monitoring Protocol	Processes
Forest	Forest EMAN Seedling Regeneration Monitoring Protocol	Processes
Forest	Forest EMAN Tree Health Monitoring Protocol	Stressors
Forest	Forest FBMP Bird Monitoring Protocol	Biodiversity
Streams	Streams Fish Richness Monitoring Protocol	Biodiversity
Streams	Streams OBBN Benthic Invertebrate Monitoring Protocol	Processes and Stressors
Streams	Streams Water Quality Monitoring Protocol	Stressors
Wetland	Wetland Amphibian Monitoring Protocol	Processes and Stressors
Wetland	Wetland Invasive Alien Vegetation Monitoring Protocol	Stressors
Wetland	Wetland MMP Birds Monitoring Protocol	Biodiversity

aims to build support for national protected heritage places, including national parks, through increasing Canadians' awareness, appreciation and understanding of them. A successful public outreach education program and external communication will increase Canadians' appreciation of the significance of heritage places administered by Parks Canada and the importance of protecting and presenting nationally significant places like SLINP.

Parks Canada Agency is in the process of developing a national program that will measure Canadians' level of awareness and understanding of Parks Canada's administered places. SLINP is developing activities and programs to help achieve the corporate performance expectations.



A summer park experience (Photo: Brian Morin)

Stakeholder and Partner Engagement

Parks Canada seeks to broaden its base of support by engaging its stakeholders and partners, and encouraging shared leadership through active participation in the development and implementation of the Agency's future direction. Partners and stakeholders should feel invited to participate in, influence and contribute to park activities.

Parks Canada Agency is in the process of developing a national program that will measure the level of stakeholder and partner engagement in the protection and presentation of Parks Canada's administered places.

9.2 Effectiveness Monitoring

Effectiveness monitoring is conducted after a management action has been undertaken and helps evaluate if the desired effect of the action has been realized. Background research to establish a baseline database for comparison is necessary. Monitoring tools like the VIP and the EIMP contribute to effectiveness monitoring for the park.

The amount and type of effectiveness monitoring that is done in any given year is dependent on the type and amount of management actions conducted in the park. During the implementation of this management plan, SLINP will continue to develop a suite of targets that are specific to the objectives in this plan and that complement the expected results of the Parks Canada Agency. Table 4 provides a summary of the measures to monitor the effectiveness in implementing the St. Lawrence Islands National Park key strategies and objectives.

Ecological Integrity

Management actions for ecological integrity will be in priority areas through hyperabundant deer management, invasive species management and prescribed burns. Guidance and measures for these actions will come from the Integrated Vegetation Management Plan, the Hyperabundant Deer Management Plan, the Fire Management Plan, and Species at Risk Recovery Strategies. Public outreach education and stakeholder relations will play a key role in positively influencing the state of the park's ecological integrity.

Visitor Experience

In addition to monitoring the state of visitor experience at the park, the park will monitor the effectiveness of its visitor experience activities and programs.

The effectiveness of the visitor experience offer will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively with the intention of identifying areas in which to improve the quality of visitor experience opportunities. A detailed VIP is conducted every five years to assess visitor satisfaction with various aspects of park facilities, services and programs. The VIP statistics combined with direct feedback through visitor comments and public consultation exercises will provide an assessment of effectiveness. In addition to the national VIP program, SLINP will continue to develop and refine the measures to assess the effectiveness of visitor experience.

The effectiveness of visitor experience activities and programs may be further assessed through:

- The use of feedback mechanisms that ensure Parks Canada's goals are met.
- Custom research may be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of programs when feasible and cost effective.



A winter park experience

Public Outreach Education and External Communications

SLINP will continue to develop a monitoring framework that will measure the effectiveness of its activities and programs in reaching targeted Canadians, and in engaging its stakeholders and partners. To determine the effectiveness of education and outreach actions, the park will focus on whether partners and stakeholders feel they have influenced park management decisions and if target audiences can distinguish between SLINP services and those offered by other agencies in the region.

The effectiveness of public outreach education may be further assessed through:

- The use of feedback mechanisms that ensure that audience learning objectives are achieved and Parks Canada's goals are met.
- Custom research may be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of programs when feasible and cost effective.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park – Effectiveness Monitoring

Table 4

KEY STRATEGY 1	SLINP Measures
<p>Objective 1: Develop a landscape level protected area strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree of community involvement in land stewardship initiatives and the level of environmental awareness. • Maintain forest ecological integrity indicator through hyperabundant deer management, invasive species management and prescribed burns. • The number of ecological integrity condition monitoring measures that remain stable. • The number of management actions implemented from the Integrated Vegetation Management Plan. • The number of positive actions undertaken by the park to recover priority species at risk.
<p>Objective 2: Take a leadership role in the identification of target market needs and the promotion of sustainable tourism principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community sees the park as an active participant and a key player in sustainable tourism planning. • Visitors report that their perception of their experience has been influenced by messaging.
<p>Objective 3: Foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of conservation programs in which residents are participating in the Thousand Islands ecosystem. • The results of the Regional Residents Survey have been integrated into park planning.
<p>Objective 4: Strengthen the involvement of regional residents in the design and development of visitor experience, public outreach education and ecological integrity programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of involvement of target audiences such as regional residents and boaters in park programs.
<p>Objective 5: Demonstrate and communicate a commitment to environmental and cultural sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of sustainable practices incorporated into park management actions. • The needs of Akwesasne and regional residents have been incorporated into cultural resource planning.
KEY STRATEGY 2	SLINP Measures
<p>Objective 1: Better understand our current and potential audiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park takes a market-based approach to visitor experience planning and products.
<p>Objective 2: Strategically focus on our priority markets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor satisfaction remains high and there is an increase in visitation from current and new visitors. • The degree to which visitor needs, interests and expectations have been incorporated into park planning and products.
<p>Objective 3: Establish a relevant national park presence on the mainland and islands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number, diversity and quality of opportunities for individuals to connect to SLINP and share values. • The number of visitors that feel the park is a place worth visiting and returning to.

Table 4

KEY STRATEGY 3	SLINP Measures
<p>Objective 1: Establish mutually rewarding relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community of Akwesasne is involved in projects and programs that meet shared objectives.
<p>Objective 2: Enrich visitor experience and regional residents' awareness of the traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of programs and products with Akwesasne messaging delivered by the park and its community partners to target audiences through in-park and public outreach education programs. • Visitors participate and feel that they learned with programs focusing on Akwesasne messaging.
<p>Objective 3: Share knowledge between SLINP and Akwesasne.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community of Akwesasne feels that we are following Mohawk principles of respect, equity and empowerment and are satisfied with opportunities for involvement.

Stakeholder and Partner Relationships

The level of engagement of partners and stakeholders in the protection and presentation of SLINP will highlight the effectiveness of efforts to involve stakeholders and partners in SLINP activities.

SLINP will continue to develop a monitoring framework that will measure the effectiveness of its activities and programs, especially the extent to which regional residents and key stakeholders connect with the community of Akwesasne.

10.0 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was completed on this management plan in accordance with the cabinet directive on the *Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2004). The directive states that 'Ministers expect the strategic environmental assessment to consider the scope and nature of the likely environmental effects, the need for mitigation to reduce or eliminate adverse effects, and the likely importance of any adverse environmental effects, taking mitigation into account.' The directive further states that 'the environmental considerations should be fully integrated into the analysis of each of the options developed for consideration, and the

decision should incorporate the results of the strategic environmental assessment.' Within the consideration section of the directive, the importance of follow-up is also stated. 'The strategic environmental assessment also should consider the need for follow-up measures to monitor environmental effects of the policy, plan or program. Within Parks Canada, follow-up with respect to the management plan's implementation will be largely achieved through subsequent reporting in State of the Park Reports, and more specifically, through the ecological integrity related indicators and measures.

The SEA considered the overall vision of St. Lawrence Islands National Park (SLINP), three key strategies, 11 goals and 76 management actions. The SEA also considered the 24 actions described for the three management areas. The direction and key actions proposed by SLINP are not likely to result in any unacceptable adverse environmental effects. The proposed strategies and actions are consistent with Parks Canada and Government of Canada policy.

Progress on the implementation of the plan will be tracked by park management and reported internally through annual reporting. The 2004 State of the Park Report indicated that the overall ecological integrity of the Thousand Islands ecosystem and SLINP is fair but in a condition of fragile stability. The implementation of the ecological integrity



Landon Bay lookout (Photo: Lisa Werden)

monitoring program for SLINP will also provide management with a great deal of information to determine whether the actions proposed in this plan are successful in improving the ecological integrity of the park for those indicators and measures requiring improvement, while ensuring the maintenance of ecological integrity for the remaining indicators and measures. For those actions where an individual environmental assessment is required, follow-up as a component of the environmental assessment will help determine if proposed mitigative measures have been successful and allow for adaptive management should unforeseen adverse effects arise.

The cumulative effects resulting from the acquisition of new lands, reduction of human footprint and the replacement of infrastructure with more environmentally sustainable design

methods and materials will create an overall positive effect and improve ecological integrity. The vast majority of proposed actions collectively will enhance the ecological integrity of SLINP; including those associated with management actions to work with others in the greater park ecosystem, learn from working with First Nations communities, develop a Cultural Resource Management Plan, and enhance visitor experience, education and outreach.

Overall, the SEA concluded that the direction proposed in the management plan is consistent with Parks Canada policy and that the majority of the proposed actions will result in positive environmental effects on key components. No adverse residual effects are expected to result, from plan implementation.

Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) Closing

Closing Words:

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own ways.

And now our minds are one.

The Creator:

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greeting and thanks to the Creator.

Now our minds are one.

This is an excerpt from the “Thanksgiving Address” that has ancient roots, dating back over 1,000 years to the formation of the Great Law of Peace by a man called the Peacemaker, and perhaps before that. Today these words are still spoken at the opening and closing of all ceremonial and governmental gatherings held by the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse). The Mohawks of Akwesasne, part of the Haudenosaunee, include St. Lawrence Islands National Park as part of their traditional territory.

Sakarihwahô:ton

Onen ehnôn:we iahêtewawe ne
ieiôhe onsaitewarihwahô:ton. Ne
tsi naho?tên:shon
wetewana?tônion, iah ki
teionkwanikonhrôn:ni toka
nahò:tenk saionkwa?nikônhrhen.
Tsisewaiatâtshon ki ne onen
wakwarihwaientâhkwen ne
entisewatka?we
kanonhwaratônhtshera.

Êhtho niohtônha?k ne
onkwa?nikôn:ra.

Shonkwaia?tison

Onen ehnôn:we
iatitewawennanihâ:rane ne tsi
nôn:we thotatenaktarakwên:ni ne
Shonkwaia?tison. Akwê:kon
ehnôn:we nikiawê:non ne
ka?shatstênhsera. Akwê:kon ne
tahotka?wenhâkie ne tsi nahò:ten ne
ne skên:nen tsi
iaitewanonhtonionhâ:ke
tsinikarî:wes ohontsiâ:ke
teionkwatawên:rie. Iotshennônia?t
ne taiontkahthônion ne
orihwakwê:kon â:ienre?k
shonkwanorônkhwa tsi shê:kon
iotiio?tâkie ne tsinî:iot tsi
shakorihwaientâkwen tsi
naho?tên:shon rôhshon ne tsi
ionhontsiâ:te. Entitewateweiên:ton
ehnôn:we entewatewennaiê:rate ne
ne îsi na?karôn:iati ne kati wahi
entewâtka?we
kanonhwaratônhtshera.

Êhtho niohtônha?k ne
onkwa?nikôn:ra.

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APPENDIX 1

Summary of Planned Actions

KEY STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	Implement	Develop & Implement	Ongoing
Strength through Regional Connection: working together to maintain natural and cultural authenticity.	Objective 1: Develop a landscape level protected area strategy.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to extend the capacity of SLINP to influence the ecological integrity of the park, the region and the Algonquin to Adirondack corridor. 		✓	
	Objective 2: Take a leadership role in the identification of target market needs and the promotion of sustainable tourism principles.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the park as an economic development partner in the region and contribute research results into the sustainable tourism model being developed by the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. 	✓		
	Objective 3: Foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop public outreach education opportunities and visitor experiences to engage residents and visitors and to encourage their support for environmental stewardship. 	✓		
	Objective 4: Strengthen the involvement of regional residents in the design and development of visitor experience, public outreach education and ecological integrity programs.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for regional residents and visitors to learn about and engage in the park’s ecological integrity, visitor experience, and public outreach education programs. 			✓
An Expanded Sense of Place: new landscapes, new markets and new opportunities	Objective 5: Demonstrate and communicate a commitment to environmental and cultural sustainability.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and promote environmentally sensitive practices and technology while fostering a dialogue with residents and visitors to encourage their acceptance of “green” practices. 			✓
	Objective 1: Better understand our current and potential audiences.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a social science strategy to address information gaps related to existing audiences, regional residents and group travelers. 		✓	
	Objective 2: Strategically focus on our priority markets.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an innovative marketing plan for the park, identifying potential audiences and experiences. 		✓	
	Objective 3: Establish a relevant national park presence on the mainland and islands.			
	Mainland Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reposition the visitor experience opportunities from boat access only to an island/mainland experience for regional residents and visitors. 		✓	
	Island Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement two sustainable island service models that will facilitate opportunities that reflect visitor preferences, needs and desires. 		✓	

KEY STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	Implement	Develop & Implement	Ongoing
Bones of the Mother: Aboriginal inclusion	Objective 1: Establish mutually rewarding relationships.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together with the Mohawks of Akwesasne to develop and deliver protection, education and facilitate enriched visitor experience programs. 			✓
	Objective 2: Enrich visitor experience and regional residents awareness of the traditions and history of Aboriginal peoples in the region.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop programming as part of the park visitor experience to build awareness of the culture of the Mohawks of Akwesasne and their contribution to the park. 		✓	
	Objective 3: Share knowledge between SLINP and Akwesasne.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the Mohawk role in the creation of the park. 		✓	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Aboriginal People’s use and attachment in the Thousand Islands region. 	✓		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together to plan and implement the mitigation of hyperabundant deer populations in the park. 			✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together on SAR inventory and recovery. 			✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate traditional Aboriginal knowledge into the park’s ecosystem science program and visitor experience and education program. 			✓
AREA MANAGEMENT APPROACH				
Mainland Properties & Island Properties	Objective 1: Integrate the park s mainland offer.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop facilities and programming appropriate to each of the mainland properties while facilitating a cohesive visitor experience of the three locations. 		✓	
	Objective 2: Facilitate visitor experiences on the islands.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate visitor experiences for the islands that include learning opportunities and facilities and services appropriate to the service model. 		✓	
Main Duck, Yorkshire islands, and Skoryna Nature Reserve	Objective 3: Perform a caretaker role.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a caretaker role for Main Duck and Yorkshire islands and the Skoryna Nature Reserve to protect key heritage resources while promoting visitor appreciation of these properties. 			✓

