



Louis S. St. Laurent  
National Historic Site

# Management Plan

2016



Parks Canada  
Parcs Canada

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# Louis S. St. Laurent

## National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

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MANAGEMENT PLAN – LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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*Bottom image: Stéphane LaFrance, Parks Canada*

## Foreword



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

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

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

This new management plan for Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site of Canada supports this vision.

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

National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are a priority for the Government of Canada.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of co-operation.

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

**Catherine McKenna**

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



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*

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## Executive Summary

The Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site is located at 6790 Louis S. St. Laurent Route (Highway 147), in Compton, Quebec, approximately 20 km southeast of the city of Sherbrooke. The site boasts a collection of buildings and works, including the house in which Louis S. St. Laurent was born and grew up and the general store that belonged to his father. The historic site houses a unique collection of ethnological objects, most of which belonged to the St. Laurent family.

Two key strategies are presented to guide the historic site's management over the next ten years.

**Key Strategy #1:** An important place for the community and the vitality of the regional tourism offering

This strategy focuses on collaboration and integration possibilities within the region's tourism offering. It also involves increasing opportunities for third parties to use the site in order to hold events and activities.

The strategy has the following objectives:

- Further integrate the historic site in the development dynamic of the region's tourism.
- Diversify the opportunities for visitor experiences in collaboration with other partners.
- Increase the number of visitors to the historic site.

**Key Strategy #2:** A visitor experience based on authenticity

This strategy involves continuing with efforts to conserve the site's cultural resources in order to keep it in good condition and to offer an authentic visitor experience. The goal is also to showcase the general store in order to attract more visitors. Finally, more will be done to present political figure Louis S. St. Laurent, mainly by incorporating his gravesite into the tour itinerary.

The strategy has the following objectives:

- Protect the authentic cultural resources and keep them in good condition.
- Focus on the general store as one of the historic site's main attractions.
- Enhance the national historic site's connection to the commemoration of Prime Minister Louis S. St. Laurent.





## Table of Contents

Recommandations .....	v
Executive Summary .....	vii
1.0 Introduction .....	1
2.0 The Significance of Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site .....	2
3.0 Planning Context.....	4
4.0 Vision .....	6
5.0 Key Strategies .....	7
6.0 Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	9

### **Maps**

Map 1: Regional Setting.....	2
Map 2: Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site .....	3



## 1.0 Introduction

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

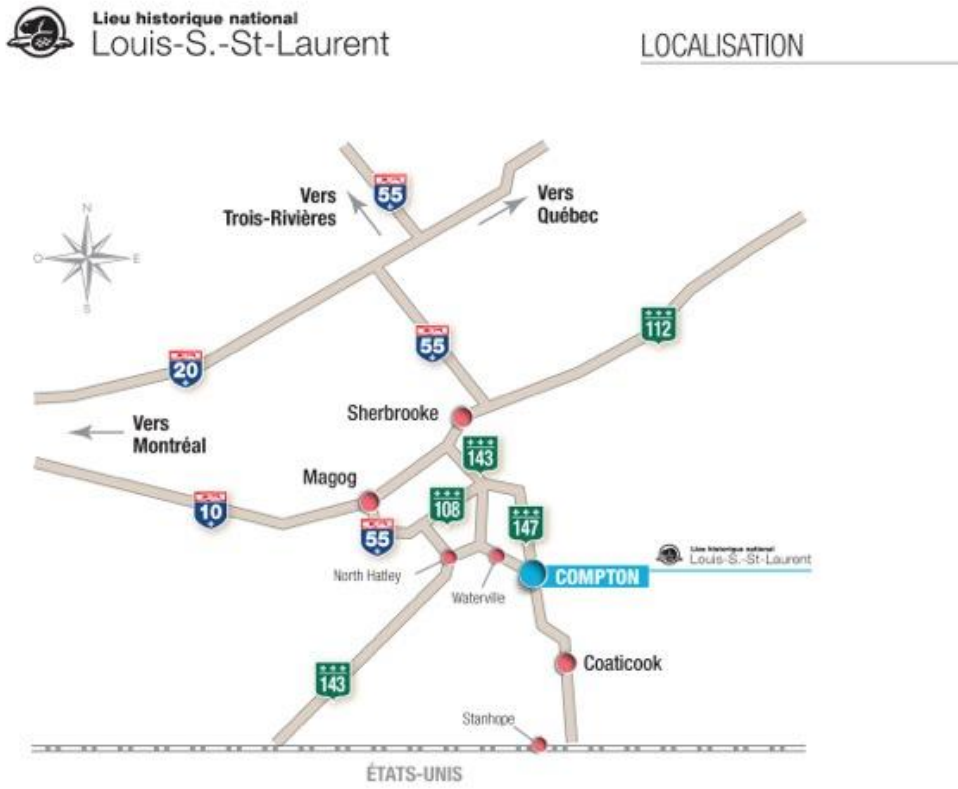
*Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

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

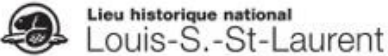
The local and regional community participated in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

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

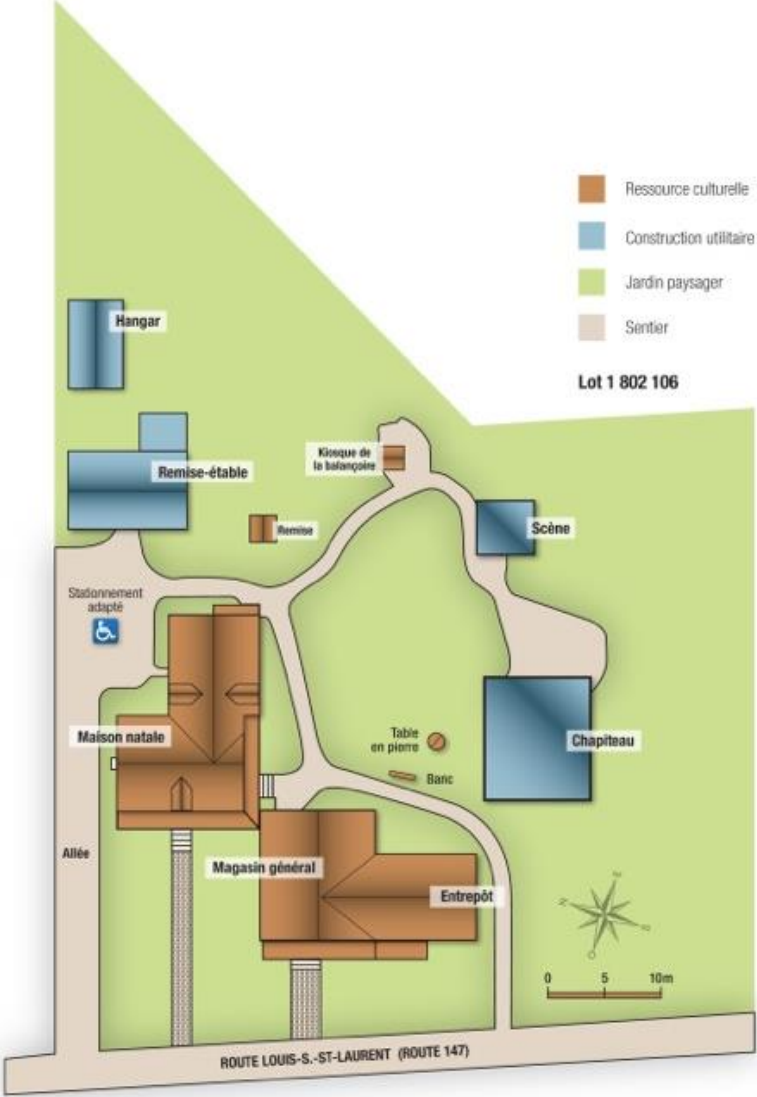
Map 1: Regional Setting



Map 2: Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site



Organisation des espaces extérieurs  
PROPRIÉTÉ ST-LAURENT



## 2.0 Significance of Louis S. St. Laurent National National Historic Site

The Louis S. St. Laurent property was designated a national historic site in 1974. The reasons for designating it a national historic site are as follows:

- The property commemorates Louis S. St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada.
- It commemorates the social history of the Eastern Townships.

The St. Laurent family house and general store are heritage buildings recognized by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO).

The ethnological collection, which consists of almost 5,800 artifacts, is representative of the presence of the St. Laurent family on their Compton property between 1881 and 1971. Another part of the collection focuses more specifically on Louis S. St. Laurent's profession and political career. Some of the artifacts are typical of what would have been found in a general store at the beginning of the 20th century and depict what life would have been like in the Eastern Townships during that period.

### 3.0 Planning Context

To plan the future of the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site, we have taken into consideration general trends that will influence the historic site in the coming years as well as views expressed by stakeholders and the general public.

#### Relationships with Local partners and Stakeholders

Several partners are involved in the historic site's protection and presentation. The goal of the cooperating association "Les Compagnons du lieu historique Louis-S.-St-Laurent" is to establish ties between the site and the community. It provides the clientele with activities that showcase the site's heritage.

The Eastern Townships region is the 3rd most popular tourist area in Quebec. It has a well-developed network of hotels, inns and bed and breakfasts, and it is a location renowned for its quality vacation getaways.

The regional tourism association for the Eastern Townships and the regional county municipality (RCM) of Coaticook bring together tourism industry stakeholders who work together to increase the visibility of the region's tourist attractions in Quebec, Canadian and US markets. The RCM has a willingness to promote and develop the cultural and heritage component as a complement to a tourism offering that is focused on the region's rural, natural and agritourism character.

Over the past few years, tourism stakeholders and the national historic site have collaborated many times to organize public events such as the "Comptonales" and the "music concerts in the St. Laurent garden".

As an important tourist attraction for the community, the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site must uphold its commitment to work in collaboration with community stakeholders. Holding special events relies on maintaining current partnerships and establishing new agreements.

#### Legal and Operational Context

The national historic site opened its doors to the public in the summer of 1982. To date, the conservation and development of the St. Laurent property have been carried out in the spirit of the previous management plans, the last of which has been ongoing since 2007. Most of the actions listed in these plans have been carried out.

The site is open to the public from late June to late September. Visitors can come discover the site's history and the reason for its designation by visiting the exhibits at the general store and house as well as by watching a multimedia show on the significant events in the life and career of Louis S. St. Laurent. The historic site's website as well as an interpretive panel and sound recordings in the general store present the history of the Eastern Townships. This aspect of the designation is also conveyed thanks to the site's involvement in jointly organized activities, including the "Townships Trail" (Eastern Township heritage route) and the "Country Fair".

Furthermore, the historic site is subject to the National Historic Sites of Canada Order. The *National Historic Parks General Regulations* as well as the *National Historic Parks Wildlife and Domestic Animals Regulations* are in effect within the site's boundaries.



## 4.0 Vision

At the centre of Compton village activity and regional events, the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site is a site where programs are offered in collaboration with community stakeholders and partners.

The Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site is an important part of the regional tourism's discovery circuit. With the quality of its visitor experience, its authenticity, the well-preserved state of its buildings and collection and its beautiful scenery, this historic site has become well known and has the capacity of generating a sense of attachment among visitors. Visitor numbers are increasing with the holding of private and public events being held at the site, which also contributes to the vitality of the local and regional tourism sector.

The general store occasionally returns to its original vocation, allowing visitors to relive the effervescence that existed there back in the early 20th century. It is an important element in positioning the historic site within the region.

Finally, the site is a choice location for visitors interested in Canada's modern social history, told through the life and work of one of its illustrious prime ministers.

## 5.0 Key Strategies

The strategic orientation of the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site takes the form of two key strategies each with corresponding objectives and targets. The objectives under the two proposed key strategies are mutually supportive. They will allow the historic site to increase its visibility and become better appreciated by Canadians, strengthen its ties with the community and keep its heritage resources in good condition. For each objective, there are one or more targets to easily measure the management plan's achievements.

**KEY STRATEGY #1: AN IMPORTANT PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND THE VITALITY OF THE REGIONAL TOURISM OFFERING**

This strategy stresses the development of a variety of visitor experiences by mobilizing the stakeholders, partners and community. The aim is to increase the opportunities for third parties to use the site to hold events and activities.

Parks Canada would like to see the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site become an important component in the vitality of the region's tourism sector by maintaining, if not enhancing, the privileged relationship it has with those who work in the region's tourism industry. Efforts will be made to strengthen the site's integration with the tourism offering and circuits and with the region's tourism promotion strategies.

Objective 1.1: The historic site is integrated in the development dynamic of the region's tourism sector.

**Target:**

- The historic site will participate annually in the region's promotional strategy.

Objective 1.2: Visitor experience opportunities organized with the community are diversified

**Targets:**

- The historic site will annually host two events or varied visitor experiences organized in collaboration with community partners.
- The historic site is part of a visitor circuit for tourism groups.

Objective 1.3: The number of visitors to the historic site is increasing

**Target:**

- Between now and 2025, the site's attendance will have increased by 10% compared to the 2014 reference year (7,556 visitors).

**KEY STRATEGY #2: A VISITOR EXPERIENCE BASED ON AUTHENTICITY**

This strategy involves providing an authentic visitor experience. It means pursuing cultural resource conservation efforts to keep the site in good condition. Its aim is also to showcase the general store in order to attract more visitors. Finally, the connection visitors can have with Louis S. St. Laurent himself will be enhanced, mainly by incorporating his gravesite into the tour itinerary.

Objective 2.1: The cultural resources and landscape are kept in good condition.

**Targets:**

- Proper conservation of the buildings and collection is continuously ensured.
- By 2025, a landscaping plan with the purpose of preserving the historic site's cultural landscape and promoting visitor experience is implemented.

Objective 2.2: The general store is once again the focal point for visitors.

**Targets:**

- Starting in 2016, activities related to the theme of the general store, such as the sale of period artifacts, will be implemented.
- By 2025, the general store will be the main brand image for the historic site in external relations and promotional activities.

Objective 2.3: The site's authenticity is enhanced by its close link with Louis S. St. Laurent himself.

**Targets:**

- The prime minister's gravesite is incorporated into the national historic site's tour itinerary.
- Prime Minister St. Laurent's achievements will be highlighted during the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

## 6.0 Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the effects of its management measures on ecosystems and on cultural resources. The *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*, prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, requires that a strategic environmental assessment be conducted for all plans and policies considered as having a positive or negative environmental effect and that are submitted to Cabinet or to a minister for approval.

A strategic environmental assessment was conducted for this management plan. The following is a summary of it.

In accordance with the directive, this strategic environmental assessment was aimed at identifying strategic considerations at a general and conceptual level, rather than assessing in detail the individual actions proposed in the plan. The process for assessing or analysing impacts on Parks Canada's cultural resources will be applied following the management plan's approval, once the strategies have been implemented.

The key strategies, objectives and targets identified in the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site Management Plan include general priorities that might slightly affect the natural resources, cultural resources or objectives related to the visitor experience.

The strategic environmental assessment identified the resources that could potentially be affected and listed mitigation measures and strategies to ensure that all potential impacts are addressed. These include:

- Recommendations for managing the butternut trees, the only species at risk on the site;
- Guidelines for undertaking construction projects during periods of the year when nesting migratory birds are less likely to be affected;
- Precautions for determining the presence or absence of bat roosts before undertaking construction projects on older buildings.

Positive effects are anticipated following the implementation of the management plan, such as:

- Enhanced protection of cultural resources;
- Improved visitor experience.

Generally, the orientation of the management plan will have a positive net effect, particularly if the mitigation measures identified in the strategic environmental assessment are taken into account. It is not expected that the management plan will cause any adverse cumulative effects.