



Louis S. St. Laurent
National Historic Site

Review of the Management Plan for the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site

Report on public consultations, June 2015



Introduction

The management plan for the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historical Site is currently under review. Parks Canada therefore gave the public and community stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the development of new orientations regarding the management of the national historic site for the next 10 years. To that end, public consultations were held regarding the review of the management plan for the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site in June and July 2015.

This document represents the proceedings of that consultation and a summary of the opinions expressed by residents, community stakeholders, and representatives of the Municipality of Compton.

Objectives

The consultation had two objectives: first, to announce the long-term vision, key strategies, objectives and targets to be met and, secondly, to gather points of view and comments from the public to help Parks Canada improve and adjust the proposed management plan based on the comments provided.

Consultation process

The national historic site's planning team prepared a "Public Consultation Document" that covered the following points:

- Context and planning
- The importance of the historic site
- The operation of the historic site
- The main achievements since the adoption of the 2007 management plan
- The main issues
- The proposed management approach for the next 10 years
- Vision elements

That document, published in French and English, was published on the historic site's website and distributed to participants in attendance at the consultations.

A statement was published in the local media to launch the consultation process regarding the management plan for the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site and to invite the public to attend the public consultation on June 22. Invitations were also mailed and emailed to community stakeholders and the Municipality of Compton (list attached).

Two consultation meetings were held at the national historic site on June 22, 2015. In addition to the consultation document, a slide show was used to present key elements of the future management plan to those present.

People not in attendance had the opportunity to submit their comments by email until July 13, 2015.

Summary of the main elements discussed during the consultations

Networking and promotion

Participants felt that the site should join with other tourist sites to propose combined activities and to be part of grouped promotional activities. “Agri-gourmet activities” would be a possibility. The site could also host networking activities for the tourism sector in order to present its activities and create professional ties.

One participant mentioned that the image associated with heritage is not always dynamic. Visuals for the sites need to be more dynamic and the heritage addressed indirectly.

Participants noted that the site could make more use of new technology for its promotion and to promote other local tourist sites.

Programming

Participants discussed activities organized by local organizations that could include programming by the historic site, such as the Pioneer Trail, the tour of cemeteries, and the tea route.

The Field Unit Superintendent asked if two annual events at the site would be enough. Participants confirmed that, yes, but there must obviously not be too many. The event programming currently proposed, i.e. Comptonales and the Foire d’antan, would be perfect.

The Field Unit Superintendent also asked participants what they thought of opening the site to private events. The response was yes, but the events must respect a minimal standard compatible with the museal vocation of the site.

Eventual closing of the site

One participant expressed concern about the possibility of the closing the site in the future. The Field Unit Superintendent confirmed that that possibility is not at all in Parks Canada’s plans.

Replacement of trees that are at the end of their life to preserve the cultural landscape of the historic site.

Participants were asked if trees that have been cut down should be replaced. Participants replied that some trees could cause problems in the future and have a negative effect on visitor experience. A vegetation replacement plan should therefore include criteria regarding visitor experience and the conservation of landscape resources.

Opportunity to offer more services to school groups

Participants noted that, to increase the number of visitors, it might be good to examine the possibility of attracting school groups that want to visit the orchards in the area. Day camps could also be considered, but packages would need to be offered that were more fun, in partnerships with other sites of interest in the area.

Community interest in the site

According to one participant, the poor attendance at the consultations would indicate a loss of community interest in the site. The Field Unit Superintendent replied that, in fact, the scope of the site's integration in the community has decreased, but relations remain strong with partners concerned with the holding of events.

Big tent

Participants confirmed that the big tent should be maintained, but replaced with a new one, as the existing one is at the end of its life. Increasing the size of the tent would increase the site's accommodation capacity.

Fence around the historic site

The site is fenced. Some may have the sense that access is limited or that the site is private. It would be good to find strategies to highlight the public vocation of the garden so people use it more.

Reinforce the role of the general store in the programming of the site's brand

For the participants, the general store is truly authentic. In the future, Parks Canada should emphasize this asset to develop the site and create its "brand".

Participants proposed several ideas for promoting the store: offer a costumed greeting, add background music and noise (inside and outside), add characters so people can take pictures in front of the general store, give visitors a small souvenir when they leave, sell items, etc.

Review of the hours of operation

Participants felt that it was necessary to carefully study statistics from days the site is open to see if it would be more profitable for visitors to open on a different schedule from what is currently in effect. A comparison to the tourism association's statistics should also be done.

Conclusion

The consultation exercise was extremely positive and will help Parks Canada improve its approach in managing the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site. The elements discussed will be taken into consideration and adjustments will be made to the strategies and objectives of the future management plan in order to implement certain promising ideas.

The management plan will be finalized in the fall of 2015. The Field Unit Superintendent and the Director General of Parks Canada will then have it approved by the Minister of the Environment. Finally, the management plan will be tabled in the Parliament of Canada.

In closing, Parks Canada would like to sincerely thank all who took part in the consultation exercise regarding the management plan for the Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site for their ideas, their hopes and their vision regarding the future of the historic site.

Carole Loiselle
Field Unit Superintendent
Mauricie and Western Quebec

Appendix

Guest list

- Member of Parliament for Compton-Stanstead: Jean Rousseau, NDP
- Member of the National Assembly for Saint-François: Guy Hardy
- Municipality of Compton: Bernard Vanasse, Mayor
- Municipality of Compton: Jacques Leblond, City Manager

Municipal councillors

- Ward 1, Louis S. St. Laurent: Ms. Solange Masson
- Ward 2, Moe's River: Ms. Nicole Couture
- Ward 3, Cochrane: Mr. Karl Tremblay
- Ward 4, Coaticook River: Mr. François Rodrigue
- Ward 5, Hatley: Mr. René Jubinville
- Ward 6, Pomeroy: Mr. Réjean Mégré

Louis S. St. Laurent Companions

- Esthelle Larouche
- Réal Bérubé
- Andrée Côté
- Gilles Pomerleau
- Suzanne Couture
- Gaétan Gilbert
- France Provencher
- Michèle Lavoie

Tourism

- Tourism Eastern Townships: Joanne Lalumière
- Tourism Eastern Townships: Alain Larouche
- RCM of Coaticook (Compton): Dominick Faucher
- RCM of Coaticook: Sylvie Masse
- Conseil local de développement (local board of development) for Coaticook: Julie Sage, Tourism Advisor; Géraldine Lansiaux, Project Leader
- Comptonales: Sonia Quirion, Executive Manager
- Coaticook Historical Society
- Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke: Jean Therriault
- Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke: Michel Harnois, Executive Director
- Eastern Townships Genealogical Society
- Beaulne Museum
- Auberge des Grands Jardins
- Camping Compton: Aimé Melix
- Covered Bridge Campground: Bernard Houle
- Fromagerie La Station: Simon-Pierre Bolduc, Executive Director
- Verger Le Gros Pierre: Diane Goyette and Gaétan Gilbert
- Le Cinquième Élément
- Xocolatl: Florie Magnan
- Le Bocage: François Dubois