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Fort Wellington

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2018



2018

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Fort Wellington National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan, 2018.

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Foreword



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

Recommended by:

Daniel Watson
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada



Katherine Patterson
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Executive Summary

Fort Wellington National Historic Site is located in Prescott, Ontario, a town of 4,200 situated along the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Kingston and hosts over 12,000 visitors per year. The Fort Wellington site includes two distinct parcels of land upon which the fort sits north of County Road 2, and open space south of County Road 2 bordered by the St. Lawrence River.

Fort Wellington has a strong relationship with the Town of Prescott. Prescott refers to itself as the “Fort Town”. The Community Arena, the Waterfront Trail, the Cenotaph, and community events such as Loyalist Days all operate through cooperation between the town and Parks Canada. This cooperation is the foundation for a number of key strategies and objectives discussed during the public consultations for this management plan.

The three key strategies for the 10 year management plan cycle focuses on the following:

Key Strategy 1: Strengthening the public’s connection to Fort Wellington

This strategy will improve the visitor experience opportunities for a diverse target market at Fort Wellington by renewing the focus on the importance of the fort and the connection with the St. Lawrence River. The site will achieve increased visitation by developing and implementing a strategic promotion plan and working closely with key tourism partners.

Key Strategy 2: Protecting the Fortifications

This strategy will improve conservation of historic landscapes and view scapes and rehabilitation of cultural assets. Wooden elements of the fortifications deteriorate quickly and are a major area of concern to the community.

Key Strategy 3: Gathering the community

As an important tourist attraction in the community of Prescott and the surrounding region, Fort Wellington plays a role in bringing people together. In this strategy we aim to continue a positive and collaborative relationship with Indigenous peoples and the local community.

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	iii
Recommendations	v
Executive Summary	vii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Significance of Fort Wellington National Historic Site.....	4
3.0 Planning Context	5
4.0 Vision	6
5.0 Key Strategies	7
6.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment	10
Maps	
Map 1: Regional Setting	2
Map 2: Fort Wellington 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:

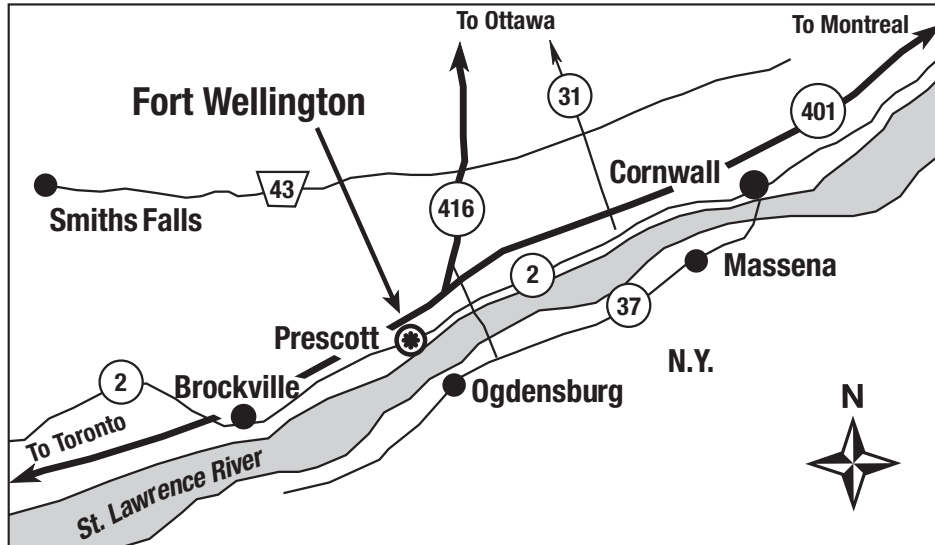
Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by the Agency. The *Fort Wellington 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.

Local Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and partners were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Fort Wellington 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.

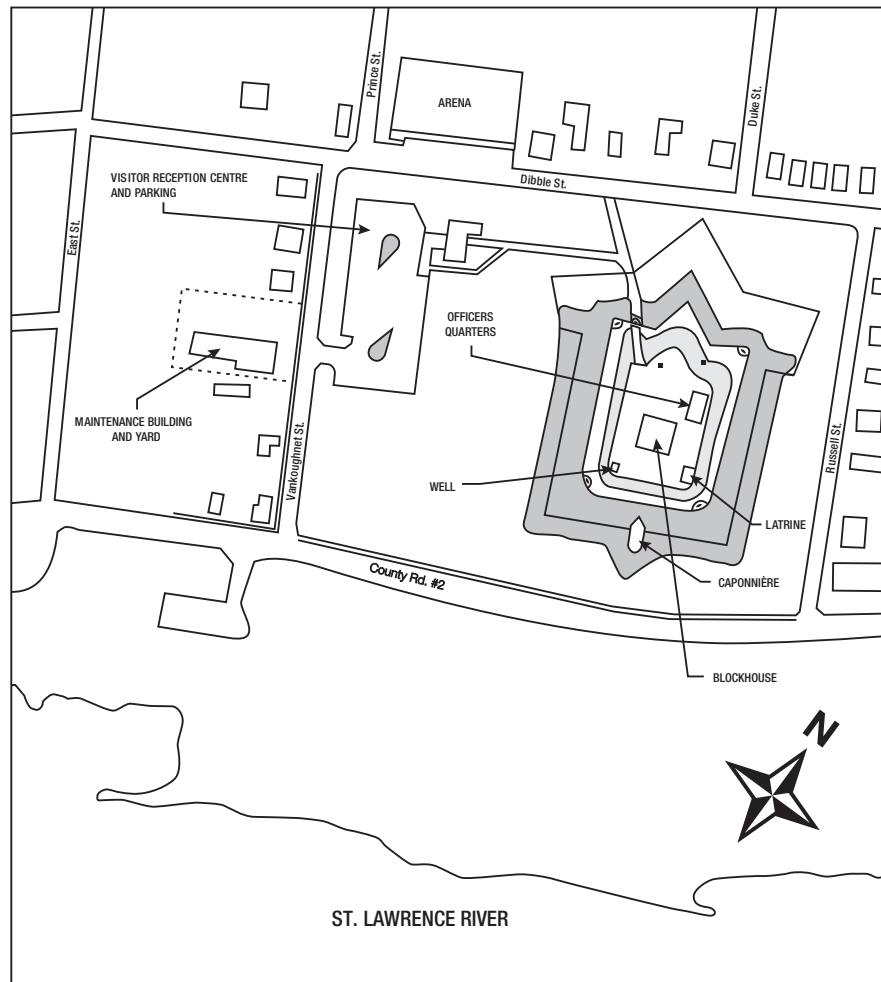
This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of Fort Wellington National Historic Site in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

Map 1: Regional Setting



Fort Wellington is located on the 401 and 416 corridor between Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. The close proximity of the Northern United States, with 60 million people, within an 8 hour drive places Fort Wellington in an excellent national and international location.

Map 2: Fort Wellington National Historic Site



Fort Wellington is located in Prescott, Ontario, a town of 4200 situated along the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Kingston. Fort Wellington includes two distinct parcels of land: a 5.1 hectare parcel upon which the fort sits surrounded by residential homes, open space, and recreational lands north of County Road 2; and to the south, 11.3 hectares of open space between County Road 2 and the St. Lawrence River.

2.0 Significance of Fort Wellington National Historic Site

Fort Wellington was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1925 due to its historical significance: It was the main post for the defence of the communication line between Montreal and Kingston during the War of 1812.

At this place in 1813, troops assembled for the attack on and the defeat of the forces at Ogdensburg, New York. When rebellion threatened Upper Canada, the fort again assumed an important defensive role; it was the assembly point for the troops that repelled the invasion at Windmill Point, November 1838.

3.0 Planning Context

Fort Wellington is located in the heart of Prescott and its location on the border between the United States and Canada made Prescott a prime location for the defense of Canada.

One consequence of the American Revolution was the emergence of a hostile country to the south of Great Britain's Canadian colonies. In the event of war the colony of Upper Canada was at particular risk along the St. Lawrence River from Montreal to Kingston. The river route, vital for the transportation of goods and people to and from the Great Lakes area, was easily cut off because much of the southern shore of the river was in American possession.

For the United States, the conquest of the neighboring British colonies was a piece of business left over from the revolutionary war. While relations between Britain and the Americans were tense in the years immediately following American independence, the tensions did not lead to war until 1812.

Today, that same prime location between Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, within eight hours driving distance of 60 million Americans, positions Fort Wellington in an optimum catchment area with enviable market potential.

The site is open to the public from Victoria Day weekend to Thanksgiving. Visitors can learn about the history of the site and the reasons for its commemoration by visiting exhibits in the visitor reception centre, as well as through personalized interpretive programming. According to a Visitor Information Survey conducted in 2012, 90% of visitors rated their visit to the site as a very positive experience. A 2015 State of Site Assessment noted three key issues to be considered during the management plan review:

- 1) cultural resources require improvements especially the wooden components of historic earthworks;
- 2) the visitation trend needs to be sustained and visitor experiences improved; and
- 3) land use planning files require collaboration with the Town of Prescott.

The site staff has a good working relationship with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. Planning actively involves community members, artisans, and elders in exhibit design and messaging.

New enhanced and innovative programs have been developed and implemented over the past few years. These include Fire the Cannon experience, high profile events that commemorate significant Canadian anniversaries, Fort Kids, Guided Tours and new self-discovery options.

4.0 Vision

In 2033 we envision that...

Fort Wellington immerses its visitors in stories of war and peace, rebellion and cooperation, as seen from the perspectives of Indigenous people, Canadians and Americans who lived and traded along the river. New Canadians and younger generations find relevance in lessons learned and the evolving understanding of transcendent themes.

This compelling site is a place that resonates with people, deepening their understanding of the significance and relevance of the War of 1812, and the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837-38. Through the abiding nature of its strategic location, the fort and the river connect them to the greater stories of the formation of Canada.

The fort's authentic heritage character and dynamic programming make it a key heritage attraction in the St. Lawrence River corridor, drawing visitors of all ages from local communities, across Canada, and around the world.

The ability of the fort to draw and congregate those with a passion for commemoration, remembrance and ceremony means that it has become a centre of excellence for encampments, historical demonstrations and knowledge exchange.

Fort Wellington is recognized as a symbol of local pride, a contributor to the local economy and a treasured community gathering place. The public, stakeholders and key partners actively support the conservation and stewardship of this national historic site.

5.0 Key Strategies

Key Strategy 1

Strengthening the public's connection to Fort Wellington

This strategy will improve the visitor experience opportunities for a diverse target market at Fort Wellington by renewing the focus on the importance of the fort and the connection with the St. Lawrence River. The site will achieve increased visitation by developing and implementing a strategic promotion plan in collaboration, where appropriate, with key tourism partners.

OBJECTIVE 1.1:

- Exhibits, programming and visitor experience opportunities resonate with key target markets.

TARGETS:

- There is a 10 percent increase in visitation by 2022.
- Ninety percent of visitors are satisfied with their visit.
- There is an increasing trend in unplanned and repeat visitation.

OBJECTIVE 1.2:

- Visitors gain an appreciation of the significance of Fort Wellington and its role in building our nation by participating in a variety of visitor experiences.

TARGETS:

- There is an increase in the number and variety of immersive programs and special events that animate the site.
- Within three years of plan approval new visitor experiences aimed at non-traditional markets will be in place.
- Program review and refresh will occur at least every fifth year.

OBJECTIVE 1.3:

- Fort Wellington is recognized as a key destination and an anchor attraction in the eastern Ontario tourism region.

TARGETS:

- A promotion plan will be developed to formalise relationships with key tourism partners.
- Fort Wellington is profiled in regional tourism marketing and media on a consistent basis.
- Fort Wellington is increasingly cross promoted in partner media.

Key Strategy 2 Protecting the Fortifications

This strategy will improve conservation of historic landscapes and view scapes and rehabilitation of cultural assets. Wooden elements of the fortifications deteriorate quickly and are a major area of concern to the community.

OBJECTIVE 2.1:

- Cultural resources and heritage assets are conserved and significant view scapes are protected.

TARGETS:

- Cultural resources, heritage assets and historical characteristics of the landscape are rated as “good” in the next State of the Site assessment.
- Full rehabilitation of the wooden defensive elements of the fort are completed within five years.

OBJECTIVE 2.2:

- Conservation activities such as an artefact conservation plan create opportunities for visitor experience, public appreciation and understanding.

TARGETS:

- The archaeological artefacts in Parks Canada storage are assessed.
- Based on the archaeological assessment key artefacts are returned to the site to enhance the visitor experience.

OBJECTIVE 2.3:

- Cultural assets are identified to determine condition, history, classification and future strategic investment needs.

TARGET:

- A ten year cultural asset plan is developed and initiated by 2020.

Key Strategy 3 Gathering the community

As an important tourist attraction in the community of Prescott and the surrounding region, Fort Wellington plays a role in bringing people together. In this strategy, Parks Canada will continue a positive and collaborative relationship with Indigenous peoples and the local community.

OBJECTIVE 3.1:

- Parks Canada takes a collaborative approach to maintaining and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples in order to reflect Indigenous peoples perspectives at Fort Wellington.

TARGETS:

- Indigenous peoples report having meaningful engagement with Parks Canada staff.
- Opportunities are explored to develop Indigenous peoples training and programming for visitor experience staff at the fort.
- Opportunities are explored with local Indigenous communities to develop programming that enhances the visitor offer.

OBJECTIVE 3.2:

- The fort is a treasured community gathering place and contributor to the local economy.

TARGETS:

- Volunteer opportunities that animate the site and support engagement of the community are developed.
- Opportunities are explored for Fort Wellington to be used as a venue for local economic development initiatives, and a wide range of community activities.

OBJECTIVE 3.3:

- Land use planning files are resolved with cooperation and positive outcomes for the Town of Prescott and Parks Canada.

TARGET:

- Annual meeting(s) between Parks Canada and community of Prescott are held.

6.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) was conducted for the Fort Wellington National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan pursuant to the 2010 “*Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*” (CEA Agency/Privy Council Office 2010). SEAs provide an opportunity to identify the broad and unintended impacts of proposed management actions resulting from a proposed policy, plan or program, including the cumulative environmental effects of multiple activities. Strategic SEAs also inform the subsequent assessment of related projects and are initiated early in the planning process to ensure that environmental effects are fully considered.

Following the SEA, it was determined that implementation of the proposed key strategies included in the plan are not anticipated to have any negative impacts on natural resources. No negative effects are predicted for Cultural Resources or Visitor Experience objectives, while some likely positive effects were identified for these components. Indirect effects to health and socio-economic conditions and the current use of lands and resources for traditional purposes by Indigenous Canadians were also considered in the SEA, and no negative effects are predicted.

There are some projects that may be pursued in the future as a result of the implementation of the plan, and those projects will be assessed individually using the Parks Canada Environmental Impact Analysis process as an additional mechanism to prevent adverse environmental effects to the valued components of Fort Wellington National Historic Site of Canada. The plan, as proposed, will not contribute to important negative environmental effects. Benefits include improved protection of cultural resources, enhanced public understanding of the site’s national significance, direct community involvement and, consequently, greater public support for Fort Wellington National Historic Site of Canada.