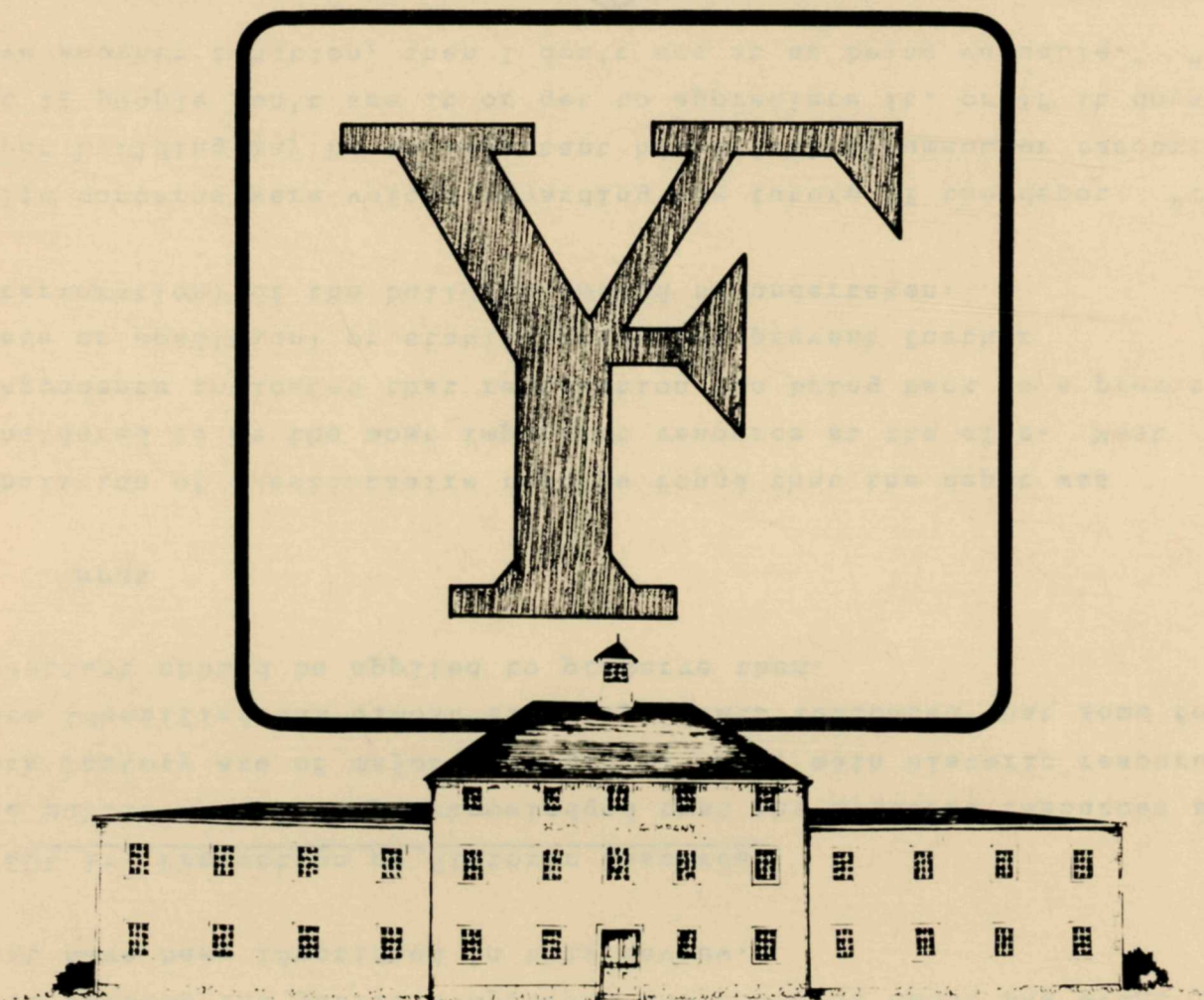




York Factory

INTRODUCTION

Parks Canada is in the process of developing a Management Plan for York Factory National Historic Site. The Plan is a broad set of guidelines that Parks Canada will use to develop, manage and operate the site, as well as to protect and preserve the historic resources. The Management Planning Process for York Factory consists of the

following three stages:

- 1) Information Exchange and Collection
Spring 1984
- 2) Plan Alternatives
Winter 1984/85
- 3) Management Plan
Summer 1985

As part of Stage 1 requirements, Newsletter #1 (Sept. 83) presented the themes for York Factory and provided information on the planning issues identified. Newsletter #2 (Feb. 84) was an update on the progression of Stage 1 of the Planning Process.

The public comments on the planning issues were gathered through a series of public meetings, questionnaires, briefs and letters in the fall of 1983. The planning team reviewed all comments. Newsletter #3 will outline the public's opinions and concerns about the eight issues that have been identified in this review.

ISSUE 1: Protection of Historic Resources

The public has clearly acknowledged that the historic resources at York Factory are of major importance. Four main historic resources were identified and almost all respondents indicated that some form of treatment should be applied to preserve them.

1) Depot

Tabulation of questionnaire results found that the depot was considered to be the most important resource at the site. Most respondents indicated that restoration (to bring back to a previous state or condition) or stabilization (to prevent further deterioration) of the building should be undertaken.

Valid concerns were voiced regarding the future of the depot. "The Depot building may be an important historical monument or resource, but if people don't see it or get to appreciate it, or if it doesn't have another function, then I don't see it as being valuable." "The

Depot building is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished with a pit-saw and broad axe."

2) Cemetery

The Cemetery was ranked second in importance as a historical resource. Again, most respondents saw restoration or stabilization as a possible alternative. Please see Issue 7 for a more detailed review of the topic.

3) Archaeological Resources

The archaeological resources were ranked third in importance. Salvaging of the remains was indicated as a desirable form of action. Many comments indicated immediate attention should be given to the portion of the site near the riverbank, those areas suffering disruption due to erosion, as well as areas of the site that might be disturbed by any future construction. There was also this comment regarding the archaeological artifacts currently in the care of Parks Canada: "there should be a continuation and necessary expansion of the present conservation and curation of the artifact collection."

Another concern expressed by the public was the lack of published research findings regarding York Factory. It was suggested that this information be made more available in the future.

4) Powder Magazine

The public generally felt that the powder magazine should be low in priority in terms of the "more important things" to be done at the site. The opinion was that it should be maintained or "stablized" and there should be an interpretive brochure produced on it.

Questionnaire results identified fifteen other resources (of varying importance) at the York Factory site. These included such structures as: the church foundations, the library and the drydock...

ISSUE 2: Riverbank Erosion

Questionnaire results show that 93.4% of respondents agree that erosion of the riverbank is a matter of concern and an effort should be made to retard the erosion process. The public felt this was necessary to adequately protect many historic resources, (e.g.; the icehouse, artifacts along the riverbank...).

Some suggestions made by the public regarding ways to slow down the erosion rate included a breakwater system, securing the bank by means of riprapping, increasing drainage systems and discontinuing the use of the foot path along the river bank.

ISSUE 3: Regional Integration and Planning

Of those people responding to the questionnaire, most felt that respect of the native lifestyle was the most important concern in regional integration and planning. Input from public meetings, briefs, and letters, indicated three major concerns:

- 1) employment opportunities for local natives,
"Parks Canada is not employing Native people."
- 2) land settlement claims,
"The York Landing Band is interested in 1200 acres in the York Factory area as a resource space for hunting, fishing and trapping."
- 3) hunting rights.
"The people at York Landing say the general area near York Factory is their hunting grounds."

Many people indicated that York Factory might play an important tourism role in the north and could result in economic benefits for the local people.

ISSUE 4: Interpretation

Due to the remote location of York Factory, the planning team has identified the need for both off-site and on-site interpretation.

YORK FACTORY

ON-SITE: The majority of the people felt that on-site interpretation was a requirement. The more popular means suggested were brochures, visual aids and exhibits with York Factory artifacts, along with self-guided and guided tours.

OFF-SITE: Ninety two percent of questionnaire respondents felt that off-site interpretation was also required for York Factory. Suggestions for off-site interpretation included audio-visual shows, exhibits, publications and brochures. Among those off-site locations suggested were Winnipeg (Museum of Man and Nature), Churchill, Gillam and Lower Fort Garry.

ISSUE 5: Park Boundaries

The York Factory Planning team has identified two instances where boundary changes might be proposed for the site. In the first instance, areas where relevant historic resources have been identified would be considered as additions to York Factory. Secondly, Parks Canada may consider acquiring more land to accommodate any new park facilities. There is overwhelming support by the public for the first suggestion - of acquiring adjacent areas containing historic resources and considerable support for the second suggestion of expansion of York Factory facilities.

ISSUE 6: Site Management

The public viewed site management as having a direct relationship to protection of the historical resources addressed in Issue 1. Other important considerations included a boardwalk, the possibility of native employment, and visitor safety (fire protection and prevention).

An important factor in the future management plan for York Factory will be to ensure that any proposed development causes as little damage as possible to the area. "Development of the site as a tourist attraction must take into consideration the fragility of the natural environment and the archaeological resource base."

ISSUE 7: Cemetery

The cemetery was also reviewed in Issue 1. Further considerations include:

- 1) a brochure as the most appropriate means of interpreting the site, "Investigate the lives of the people in the cemetery and write a brochure."
- 2) the resolution of any potential health hazard, "The burials should be considered as an important source of information regardless of whether or not the pathogens have survived."
- 3) visitor access to the cemetery. (There was an even split in the public opinion between those for and against access to this area.)

ISSUE 8: Visitor Service and Facilities

Two areas were examined under this issue, existing facilities and additional facilities.

EXISTING FACILITIES: The floating dock was considered adequate for the present needs although one respondent commented that it would be expensive to maintain. The public identified the need for upgrading of the primitive campsite, with proper sanitation facilities being installed. Another suggestion was that the radio service should be improved.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES: General opinion saw the need for some type of emergency shelter, food and other provisions to be on hand. The public supported additional facilities, if, in fact, visitor use increased. Some suggestions for this area were provision of accommodations, rest areas, and food service.

YORK FACTORY

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The first phase of the Planning Program is now complete. The second stage of this process is the development of Plan Alternatives. The Plan Alternatives will present three or four different ways York Factory can be managed. Newsletter #4 will present these alternatives and will be distributed before the second round of public meetings are held. These meetings are planned for the winter of 1985, and will provide an opportunity for the public to respond to the alternatives.

Parks Canada would like to thank all those who participated in this stage of the York Factory Planning Process and would like to encourage their continued involvement.



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1885–1985:

100 years of Heritage Conservation

Canada's first national park was established in 1885 at Banff, Alberta. Today there are national parks and national historic parks in every province and territory. The National Parks Centennial is an occasion to renew our commitment to preserve examples of our heritage unimpaired for the benefit of all Canadians.