



J. Goren, 2004 Fort Lagley National Historic Site of Canada



EXPERIENCES

A WORD FROM THE CEO

Summer for many Canadians means taking time for holidays...getting outdoors and experiencing our magnificent landscape and historical sites, attending special events, or perhaps just slowing down to learn something new. It's particularly the time of year when the work of our dedicated Parks Canada team is on display. This work would not be as innovative and far-reaching, nor would it be possible, if not for the active engagement of our hundreds of stakeholders and partners, and Aboriginal partners.

In this issue, we profile a number of examples of working together that clearly demonstrate how Canadians get a strong sense of connection to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas through meaningful experiences. These examples show Canadians and visitors enjoying these protected places in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.

Our organization continues to evolve to meet the future and to ensure our relevance to Canadians remains strong. We recently added the dimension of citizen "engagement" to how we will measure our Agency performance moving forward. We are committed to more initiatives that help Parks Canada understand what Canadians expect from their protected places and how they are interested in experiencing them. Amidst Canada's changing social values and demographic trends, we continue to find new ways to reach out to Canadians where they live, work and play. We will be inviting further stakeholder and partner dialogue, and sharing more information on these various developments in our ongoing contacts with you, and in future issues of *Experiences*.

I look forward to your feedback and support in the delivery of our most privileged mandate. Have an enjoyable and safe summer season.



Alan Latourelle

Parks Canada's Newsletter – Summer 2008

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NEW PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE MOVES TRAIL MANAGEMENT FORWARD

A recent memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Parks Canada and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is focusing attention on cycling in our national parks. The agreement, which emphasizes trail management, will provide visitors with an array of educational, volunteer and stewardship opportunities.

Mark Schmidt, IMBA Canada director and a trail specialist with years of experience, says his organization is excited about this collaboration. "Both parties will be able to accomplish a lot more. Parks Canada has embraced the IMBA as a leading resource for trails, and we are delighted to share our knowledge."

Creating, enhancing and preserving trails for mountain bikers are key objectives for IMBA Canada, Schmidt adds. "We develop and manage multi-use trails that can be shared by hikers, bikers and horseback riders."

Parks Canada's overarching objective with the agreement is to increase its knowledge about how to build, manage and share trails in protected places so they can be enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired so that today's and tomorrow's generations can enjoy them also.

"Access to internationally recognized trail expertise will help Parks Canada offer amazing experiences in the incredible places we manage," says Ed Jager of Parks Canada's External Relations and Visitor Experience Directorate.

"Recreational trails are important assets and are a key part of the visitor experience," he adds. "This summer we are holding workshops at a number of sites across the country. During the sessions, IMBA staff members pass on the latest trail management trends and methods to our trail crews, who actually put them into practice and build trails. It becomes clear very quickly that IMBA Canada has a great deal of knowledge and expertise." ♦

Sharing the Shore

The BC Ferries Coastal Naturalists Program



Parks Canada, 2007

Porpoises ride your ferry's wake, seals pop their heads up above water, and a pod of orcas "spyhop" to see who's passing by. In the distance, seabirds soar and dive over Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

The BC Ferries Coastal Naturalists Program provides an excellent opportunity for Parks Canada to communicate with a new audience of Canadians. By delivering interpretive programs on ferry sailings between the mainland and Vancouver Island, Parks Canada and BC Ferries are educating commuters on the province's marine and animal life, unique geography and cultural history.

"It's a successful collaboration that's enriching the visitor's experience and providing a more enjoyable time for them," says Andrea Timlick, a marketing manager for BC Ferries. "The response has been extremely positive, and we hope to grow the program for years to come."

The program began in 2006, with naturalists delivering presentations aboard 1,050 sailings between Vancouver Island and the BC mainland. Last summer the program ran from June 21 to Sept. 9 and included 1,300 sailings with more than 130,000 participants. The naturalists who present the 30-minute talks are excited about potential of this summer's program.

The goal of Parks Canada's collaboration with BC Ferries is to focus awareness on Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, the discovery opportunities it offers; the value of marine environments and the Species at Risk program and what people can do to help. ♦

A Parks Canada naturalist delivers a presentation to passengers during a BC Ferry crossing.



New Web Site Highlights Toronto's Co-operative Spirit

The streets and buildings of Canada's biggest city have a million stories. Too often, however, these stories are lost or forgotten in the hustle and bustle of big-city life.

A new Web site, called The National Historic Sites Urban Walks: Toronto (www.pc.gc.ca/toronto) is designed to invite online viewers to experience these stories through a series of walking tours. The tours connect some of the city's historic neighbourhoods with the history of everyday life and the city's colourful stories. The site shows that the threads of Toronto's colourful narratives are intricately woven into the cultural fabric of the nation.

To develop the new site, Parks Canada worked with the National Historic Sites Alliance For Ontario, Ontario Heritage Foundation, Ontario Realty Corporation and Historic Places Initiative, and partnered with the City of Toronto (Toronto Culture – Doors Open Toronto) and consulted with the more than 15 organizations that manage Toronto's national historic sites.

Jane French, project manager for Doors Open Toronto, says the success of the annual celebration of the city's built heritage, which is held one weekend each year, depends on strong partnerships.

"When Parks Canada approached us to partner on the launch of National Historic Sites Urban Walks: Toronto, it seemed like a win for everyone. The Web site provides a new tool for visitors and locals to enhance their urban experience year round. We're looking forward to working with Parks Canada on phase two and seeing this initiative roll out in other Canadian cities."

The National Historic Sites Urban Walks: Toronto Web site reflects the co-operative spirit that built the city. A renewed appreciation of our built heritage helps develop a greater desire to preserve our cultural heritage, so it can be experienced by future generations. ♦

Heritage Conservation

Meeting the Demands of a Changing World



Parks Canada / Rod Steens, 2007

Heritage conservation has evolved from a fabric-based, what-you-see approach to a value-based, what's-important approach. It now includes safeguarding the non-physical associations between people and places, associations that are linked to use, meaning and cultural or spiritual values. Traditional knowledge and language are good examples of these associations.

To meet the many challenges of change, it's essential to have co-operation and agreement among Canada's heritage conservation stakeholders.

Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* provides a framework for this co-operation. Developed in 2003, it sets the standards for heritage conservation practice in Canada, offering results-oriented guidance for sound decision-making about historic places.

Standards and Guidelines was at the heart of many of the decisions made during the recent restoration of a city block of heritage buildings in Saint John, New Brunswick. Built after a great fire roared through the city in 1877, the buildings

CentreBeam Place in Saint John, N.B., one of the first substantial heritage rehabilitation projects to utilize the national *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places*.

exemplify Italianate and Second Empire design styles. Owned by Commercial Properties Limited of Saint John, CentreBeam Place is rejuvenating the city's business district, and is the centerpiece of its uptown development.

"We are all very proud of the CenterBeam Place project," says property manager Jeff Yerxa. "The redevelopment of the heritage buildings has created some of the most interesting and unique Class "A" office space in the city. People have a genuine interest in the historic properties and their architecture."

Standards and Guidelines also recognizes and respects the important link between sustainable development and heritage conservation. By preserving and using old sites, we save energy and resources as well as history, and prolong the enjoyment from these special places for future generations. ♦

PROTECTING NÁÁTS'IHCH'OH

Headwaters of the South Nahanni



Doug Tubb, Parks Canada, 2006

The roar of the South Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories is an ode to nature, a powerful melodic tribute to the spirit of place.

In April 2008, Nááts'ihch'oh (pronounced "Naa tseen ch-o") became Canada's newest national park reserve proposal. Covering one-sixth of the South Nahanni headwaters, the proposal includes key calving grounds for woodland caribou and important habitat for grizzly bears, both species at risk whose survival requires large, intact ecosystems.

Once established, this new national park reserve will help ensure the conservation of a part of the Mackenzie Mountains natural region of Canada. It would also protect the ecological integrity of the area and offer new opportunities for visitors. Parks Canada is working cooperatively and respectfully with the designated Sahtú

organizations (land corporations) established under the land claim agreement to represent the Dene and Métis of the Tulita District.

The South Nahanni River watershed is an incredibly beautiful and ecologically important area. It has long been home to the Dene and Métis, and it is a launching area for adventurous visitors to the wilderness. As they hike, canoe and climb, visitors from the rest of Canada and beyond will have the opportunity to discover the spectacular landscapes and the cultural history of the area.

Nááts'ihch'oh, a reference to the feature also known as Mount Wilson, is a Slavey name that means "pointed like a porcupine quill." The area is culturally and spiritually significant to the Sahtu Dene and Métis people. The national park reserve proposal also includes the

Mount Wilson looms over the Mooseponds near the headwaters of the South Nahanni River.

Broken Skull River and the Little Nahanni River, two other significant canoe routes.

The proposed Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserve would complement the proposed expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve which may encompass most of the balance of the watershed. In 1978, Nahanni National Park Reserve was among the first sites in the world to be granted World Heritage status by the United Nations.

Named for the Naha, a tribe of fierce warriors who mysteriously vanished from the valley, the Nahanni is a dangerous river that commands respect. ♦

Saving York Factory National Historic Site

Between 1684, when it was established by the Hudson's Bay Company, and its closing 273 years later in 1957, York Factory served as a trading post, distribution point and administrative center for a vast network of fur posts throughout the West. In its heyday, there were more than 50 buildings and hundreds of residents at York Factory, but years of erosion, permafrost decay and poor drainage have taken their toll. The buildings on the site are shifting, and drainage issues are obvious in the courtyard of the main depot building.

But things are looking up for this key link in the fur trade between Western Canada and Europe. In 2007, Parks Canada assembled a multidisciplinary team of experts, including historians, engineers, archaeologists and local First Nations, to study the site's soils, permafrost, vegetation, river erosion, drainage and past intervention. Their research work will continue until 2012.

Elders from the local Fox Lake Cree Nation and York Factory First Nation communities, some of whom were born and lived at York Factory before the Hudson's Bay Company closed it in 1957, are key to the success of the project. Through oral history research, they are helping the team understand how the site was maintained in the past.

There were actually three York Factories in the same area over the years. Its current location (York Factory III), near the mouth of Hayes River, was influenced by York Factory I (1684-1715) and York Factory II (1715-88). In 1788, a higher piece of land upstream from York Factory II was chosen, after the river rose more than 32 feet. Erosion along the north bank of the river de-

stroyed York Factory I and York Factory II more than a century ago.

York Factory's importance continues, both as a national historic site and for the area's First Nations, who have strong connections to the site and consider it part of their ancestral home. ♦

York Factory Depot Building, Storehouse and Garden, 1878



Geological Survey of Canada / 91879

Youth Finding the Spirit of Place



Jacques Pleau, 2008

There is a special silence at L'Anse aux Meadows NHS. At this UNESCO World Heritage site, the very air seems to pay vibrant homage to the spirit of the place. This summer, young people from Canada and beyond experienced that phenomenon at many other Canadian UNESCO sites.

As host of the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee meeting in Québec City, July 2–10, Canada welcomed more than 800 international leaders in the fields of cultural and natural heritage. Fifteen Canadian and 15 international youths (18-25) participated in the Youth Forum component organized by Parks Canada and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

Edith Arnoult-Brill, President of Hostelling International presents three youth participants with the Hostelling International Christina Cameron Youth Award. These bursaries will be awarded annually.

“As an involved citizen, I am aware of the huge challenges we are facing today to preserve our world heritage,” observed participant Geneviève Nadeau of Montréal. “It was a privilege to participate in this event, because it allowed me to consider these universal issues with engaged and interested young people from around the world.”

On June 20, the youths arrived in Ottawa and visited the Rideau Canal NHS, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before separating on June 24 into three groups. Two groups went to Alberta, and the third travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador to visit Parks Canada’s UNESCO World Heritage sites. Inspired by these magnificent

places, and using laptops provided by Apple Canada, they then developed presentations for the meeting’s opening ceremonies.

Parks Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency provided funds for youths coming from developing countries, while Canadian Heritage funded the Canadian youths. Hostelling Canada provided three bursaries as awards for the best youth projects.

Through meaningful experiences such as this, young Canadians are developing a strong sense of connection to their national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Protecting these areas leaves them unimpaired so they can be enjoyed by present and future generations. ♦

The National Alliance of Aboriginal National Historic Sites

Creating A Sense of Safety and Trust

“One of the biggest challenges for Aboriginal communities is increasing the management capacity to support Aboriginal national historic sites,” says Linnea Battel, director of the Xá:Ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre in Mission, B.C.

“The National Alliance of Aboriginal National Historic Sites is a perfect forum for Aboriginal cultural sites to explore this issue,” she says. “While all national historic sites have challenges, the Alliance recognizes that the problems and opportunities facing First Nations are unique.”

The recently created Alliance is a community-inspired response that is endorsed and supported by Parks Canada. It provides a forum for Aboriginal leaders to share experiences and find solutions that respect their culture and history.

One example is the challenge of operating a national heritage site on a reserve. Other heritage

sites do not have to manage the special political issues that can develop in that setting.

“The real strength of the Alliance, when compared to some of the other associations that we belong to, is how valuable the networking and the discussions are,” Battel says. “We’ve become closer. The alliance brings us together and provides an ideal opportunity to solve each other’s problems and learn from each other’s experiences.”

“While we were helping establish the B.C. Alliance of National Historic Sites, Aboriginal participants told us they needed a forum for sharing their unique challenges among themselves,” says John McCormick, historic sites resource planner for Parks Canada in Vancouver. “Over the past year, we’ve held meetings with Aboriginal cultural site managers across Canada, and they have been well-attended.”

About 80 Canadian national historic sites specifically commemorate Aboriginal cultural history, and many other national historic

sites and national parks include Aboriginal history in their messages. This broad network provides mutual support for sharing best practices and for strengthening the relationships between Parks Canada staff and the local Aboriginal national historic sites. ♦

A participant at the National Alliance of Aboriginal National Historic Sites Western Canada meeting at Xá:Ytem National Historic Site demonstrates a ceremonial dance to welcome participants.



John McCormick, 2007

For more information :

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