

# Consultation Report

Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site Of  
Canada Draft Management Plan

September 2021



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CONSULTATION REPORT -SAINT-OURS CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA DRAFT  
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# Introduction and Background

## About Parks Canada

The Parks Canada Agency Act requires Parks Canada to prepare a Management Plan for each national historic site (NHS) it administers. The preparation of the Management Plan for the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site, which will replace the 2005 plan, will ensure that Parks Canada fulfills its mandate to protect, present and share Canada's cultural and natural heritage. This exercise also allows the Agency to communicate to Canadians the measurable results it expects to achieve in

the management of the site over a ten-year time frame. More specifically, the purpose of this management tool is to establish long-term priorities by suggesting a vision, strategies, objectives and concrete targets.

The development of this management tool includes active consultation with the stakeholders of the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site. The purpose of this report is to present the results of the consultation activities held in May 2021.



## About the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site

Located in the lower Richelieu region, the Saint-Ours Canal is situated on the territories of the municipalities of Saint-Ours and Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu. This site has been the ancestral territory of the W8banaki (Abénaki) and Kanien:keha'ka (Mohawk) Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. Historically, the Saint-Ours Canal was designated of national historic significance in 1987. Opened to commercial shipping in 1849, the Saint-Ours Canal became a key element along the Richelieu River, which connected the St. Lawrence and Hudson River valleys. The Saint-Ours Canal was used to transport wood and various goods, including agricultural

products from the Richelieu Valley, before becoming a recreational boating waterway and a site of recreational heritage value in the 1970s.

The national historic site stretches along both sides of the Richelieu River and includes some 40 engineering structures and infrastructure, including the lock and Superintendent's house, as well as the Saint-Ours dam, used to regulate the level of the Richelieu River, and the Vianney-Legendre Fishway, which allows several species of fish, including the Copper Redhorse (*Moxostoma hubbs*) to swim up the river.

# Consultation Process

## COVID-19 pandemic context

The public consultation process that involves reviewing a national historic site Management Plan is generally carried out through a public event to which stakeholders are invited. As a result of the global pandemic, Parks Canada has put in place Guidance on Public Engagement and Consultations in the Context of COVID-19 to ensure that consultation activities continue to be safe for the public

and Parks Canada employees and are tailored to the local context and health guidelines in effect. In order to comply with the health measures in effect in Quebec<sup>1</sup>, public participation and consultations using online and remote methods were the preferred means of public consultations on the draft of the Saint-Ours Canal NHS Management Plan.

## Consultation Activities

Despite the pandemic, Parks Canada has put forward different feedback mechanisms regarding the draft Saint-Ours Canal Management Plan, so that all those interested in participating in public consultations have the opportunity to do so. To this end, several activities were

implemented, as described below. In order to facilitate stakeholder participation, Parks Canada set up a website where the content of the draft Management Plan as well as information on the consultation process could be consulted.

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<sup>1</sup> In February 2020, when the public consultation was planned, the southern part of Quebec was at level 4 (red) – maximum alert. It was prohibited to organize activities in public places in level 3 (orange) and level 4 (red) areas.



## Virtual consultation sessions

In order to facilitate discussions and maximize the participation of interested parties, two virtual consultation sessions were held, via the Cisco WebEx Meetings platform. The first session took place by invitation on May 12, 2021, with the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site partners. The second session, open to the public,

was held on May 26, 2021, with site users and citizens in attendance. Each session lasted approximately one and a half hours and included a presentation of the contents of the draft Management Plan and a discussion period with the participants, during which they were able to comment on the elements presented.

## Online Survey

From May 3 to May 31, 2021, a survey on the content of the draft Management Plan was posted on the public consultation website. The purpose of the survey was to

obtain participants' opinions and determine their level of support for the strategies, objectives and targets proposed in the draft Management Plan<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that participants' comments quoted in this report have been corrected as far as grammar, where necessary, without altering their meaning.



# Promotion of Public Consultation Activities

## A local influence

The promotion of public consultation activities was supported by the implementation of various tools to encourage public participation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, a bilingual advertising campaign was implemented via print media, social media and the Web. To this end, a three-minute promotional video was produced in which the Field Unit Superintendent of Quebec Waterways, Mr. John Festarini, personally invited interested parties to comment on the draft Management Plan for the Saint-

Ours Canal National Historic Site. In total, this organic campaign reached over 4,700 people, with 303 interactions and the promotional video being viewed 404 times.

Furthermore, the information contained in this campaign was also relayed to the cities and municipalities concerned by the adoption of the new Management Plan (City of Saint-Ours and Municipality of Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu), so that they could share it directly with their respective citizens.

## Participant Profile

In total, approximately 260 people participated in the virtual public consultation process on the draft Management Plan for Saint-Ours Canal NHS. The details of each activity are presented on the following pages.



## Virtual consultation session's participants

The public consultation sessions to which the partners of the Saint-Ours Canal NHS were invited welcomed nineteen (19) participants from the organizations listed below. Unlike the consultation session with partners, only seven (7) people attended the consultation session with the general public.

- Amis du Canal-de-Saint-Ours
- Camping Québec
- COVABAR<sup>3</sup>
- Richelieu Sailing Squadron
- Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec<sup>4</sup>
- RCM<sup>5</sup> of Pierre-De Saurel
- Municipality of Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu
- Nautisme Québec
- Québec Yachting
- Société historique Pierre-De Saurel
- Sûreté du Québec (Sorel)
- Tourisme Montérégie
- Tourisme Sorel-Tracy
- City of Saint-Ours

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<sup>3</sup> Richelieu River Basin Consultation and Promotion Committee (translated by Parks Canada)

<sup>4</sup> Quebec's Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks

<sup>5</sup> Regional County Municipality

## Online survey's participants

Although the advertising campaign reached over 4,700 people, the online survey was completed by 188 of the 215 participants who had begun it, for a total completion rate of 89%. It is interesting to note that 90% of the respondents were over 35 years of age and that the 18 to 24 year old category represents only 2.5% of the participants, as shown below. It should also be noted that 95% of the participants reside in the Montérégie region and that 80% of them live within a radius of approximately 45 km from the Saint-Ours Canal NHS. Since the online survey represents the most important database for this public consultation, it seems appropriate to present some participant profile highlights.

Most participants visit the Saint-Ours Canal NHS as a family (44%) or as a couple (41%), and a small percentage visit it alone (17%) or with friends (27%). Most participants (71%) visit the site a few times a year, i.e. between one and six visits. A smaller percentage visit it on a more regular basis, i.e. 12% weekly and 10% monthly. Moreover, the three main reasons for visiting the site are to relax and picnic, to enjoy the scenery and lock operations, and to observe wildlife. It is interesting to note that fishing is a particularly popular activity among participants, since 20% of them practise this sport at the Saint-Ours Canal.

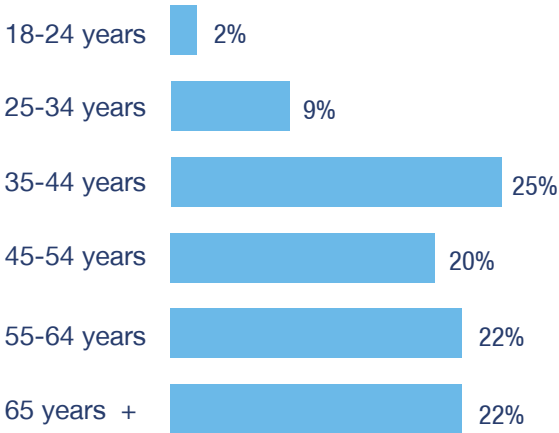
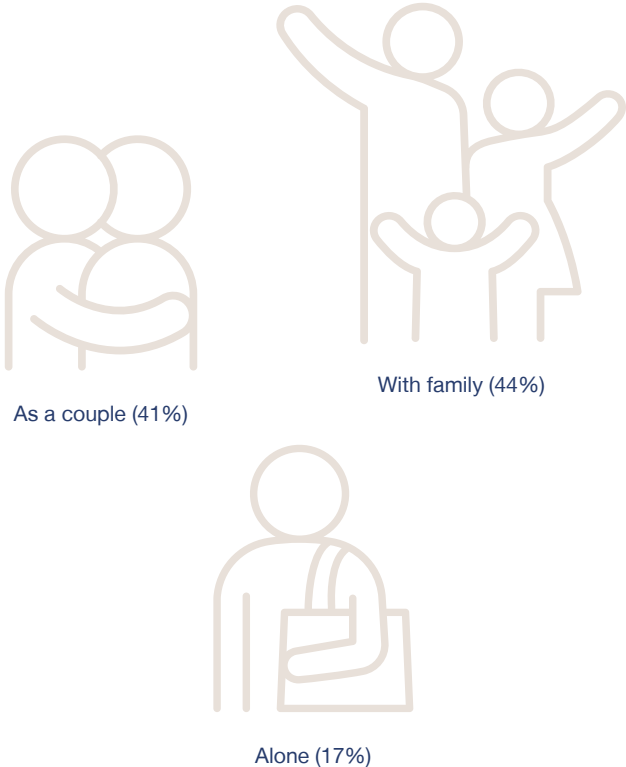


Figure n°1 - Participants' profile





Jean-Pierre Bonin. (2018). Flickr.

## Indigenous Communities' participation

The Management Plan review was an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the W8banaki (Abénaki) Nations of Odanak, Wôlinak and the Kanien:keha'ka (Mohawk) Nation of Kahnawá:ke, for whom the Saint-Ours Canal is situated on their ancestral territories since time immemorial, and for whom the Richelieu River plays an important role.

The Grand Conseil de la Nation W8banaki mentioned its interest in collaborating with Parks Canada to highlight the importance of navigation along the Richelieu River (Massesoliantegw, in the Abenaki language) for the W8banaki Nation and also the importance of involving the Mohawk Nation.

# Result Analysis

## Proposed strategies

The online survey results provided specific data on the level support of the participants regarding the various draft Management Plan strategies, targets and objectives. As

illustrated by the chart above, it is possible to state from the outset that the rate of acceptance to the proposed strategies is positive.

## Strategies

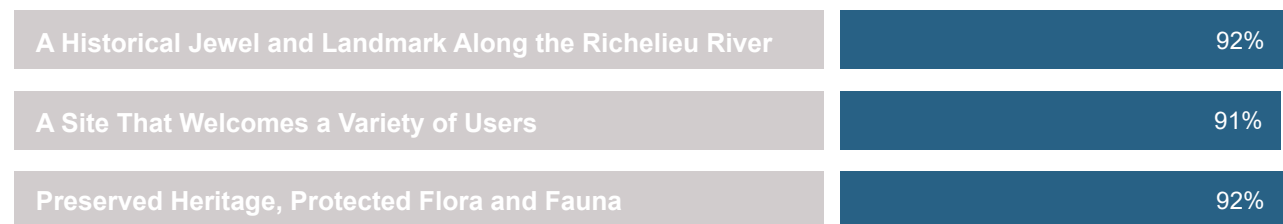


Figure n°2 - Adhésion aux stratégies

## Proposed objectives and targets

In addition to statistical data, the online survey also permitted to collect a significant number of participants' feedback through open-ended questions. In compiling these written comments, it was possible to identify 14 recurring themes, as listed below. To simplify report presentation, these themes have been linked to the

various strategies proposed in the draft Management Plan.

As shown in the attached survey, the participants to the online survey were able to share their level of satisfaction with the suggested elements according to the following six response options:

- Very important
- Important
- Indifferent
- Not important
- Not at all important
- I don't know /I prefer not to answer

In order to facilitate the interpretation of survey results, it was determined that the level of the participants' support for the suggested items would be represented by the sum of responses categorized as «very important» and «important».



# Strategy #1

## A Historical Jewel and Landmark Along the Richelieu River

As shown in Figure 1, online survey participants demonstrated a rate of support ranging from 80% to 94% for most of the targets and objectives of

Strategy #1. Only the target to «carry out a tourist destination positioning study» shows a level of support well below other proposed elements (77%).



Figure n°3 - Support for Strategy #1

## Increase in the Number of Visitors

One of the objectives of Strategy #1 is to increase the number of visitors to the site, which has some regular visitors worried. Indeed, survey participants raised concerns about the negative impacts this could have on both the visitor experience and the natural environment. More specifically, several people noted that the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site area is quite limited in that an increase in the number

of visitors could create conflicts between users, particularly between pedestrians, cyclists, campers and visitors. In addition, current users do not wish for the site to become overcrowded and lose the peaceful aspect for which it is known. Other people questioned the impact that increased fishing activities in the area could have on local wildlife.

### Some of the comments made

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*«The impact of increased attendance is not to be overlooked. As the site is small, there could be significant conflicts among users and significant impacts on the environment.»*

*«As the site is relatively small, it is important not to overload it. The impact of boaters on local wildlife will have to be taken into account.»*

*«It will be necessary to ensure that the place remains peaceful and does not turn it into a «vacation suburb» like the surrounding campsites.»*

All the comments in this report were translated by Parks Canada from French.





## Cultural Resources

Several participants stressed the importance of improving the historical interpretation of the site, which they consider to be unsatisfactory. Among the elements raised, the importance of sharing and highlighting the site's history, the importance of the lock and the contribution of Indigenous communities appear as priority items. In addition, some

participants expressed the desire to have sculptures and works of art on the site to enhance it and to showcase local talent. More specifically, some participants emphasized the relevance of using the Saint-Ours Canal NHS to hold cultural events, such as temporary exhibitions, symposiums, concerts, etc.

### One of the comments made

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*«The Saint-Ours Lock site has been a strategic location on many levels throughout its history. I think it is very important to know this fascinating story.»*

## Showcasing the Site’s Historic Character

Survey participants expressed a strong interest in the historic and heritage components of the site, which they would like to see enhanced. Seventeen participants (9%) mentioned the need to improve the overall visitor experience, in particular through a greater on-site presence of Parks Canada employees. Among the comments gathered, welcoming visitors in a more formal

way was a popular suggestion, as was providing animated activities and holding guided tours. In addition to this aspect, updating and renewing the interpretive panels stand out as an important element to consider. It should be noted that the participants are as interested in the site’s general history as in the history of the dam and the Richelieu River.

### Some of the comments made

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*«I believe that the priority should be the quality of the welcoming experience rather than the infrastructure.»*

*«We need to bring the historic and natural environment aspects of the site back to the forefront, so that our future generations understand the importance of this site to our region.»*

*«Offer guided tours of this place to improve the visit.»*

*«Interpretive signs are outdated and it would be interesting to think about a more interactive way of communicating the information they contain.»*

# Strategy #2

## A Site That Welcomes a Variety of Users

In general, the objectives and targets of Strategy #2 have a high level of support (between 83% and 96%), except for the elements relating to the oTENTik accommodation units, as shown in Figure 2 (70%). Indeed, the comments gathered in the online survey reveal that this is a product that some of the site’s users find intrusive and, above all, that is not of interest to them. More specifically, of the

48 comments made on the subject, 84% were opposed to the presence of oTENTik units, while the remaining 16% showed mild interest. This is reflected in the fact that some participants acknowledge that they have no interest in using this type of accommodation, but recognize the relevance of the oTENTik for other types of users (boaters, visitors, etc.), provided that the recreational offerings are improved.

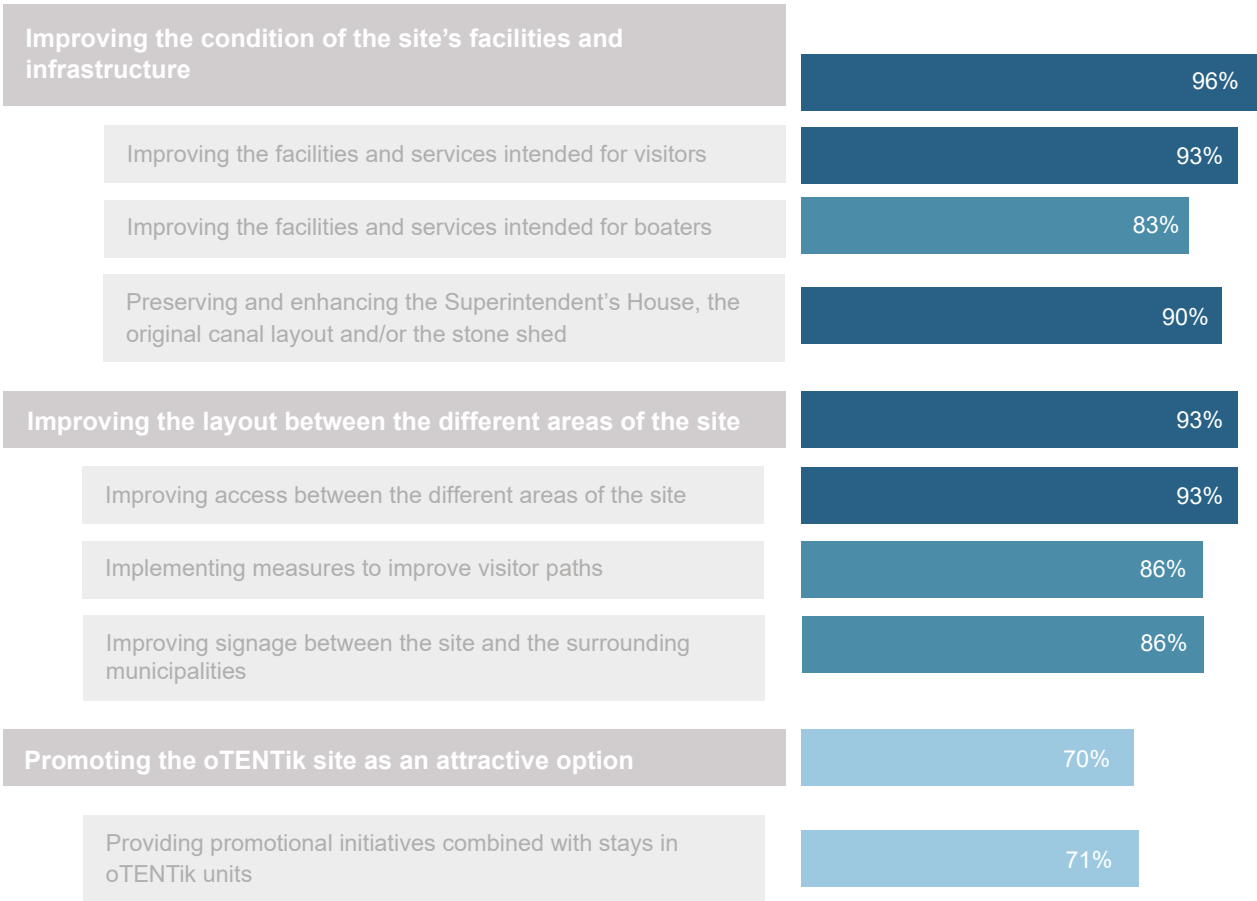


Figure n°4 - Support for Strategy #2



### oTENTik accommodation units

Among the comments made about the oTENTik units, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the large area occupied by these. They point out that this paid camping area leads to the privatization of Darvard Island and discourages visitors to explore the site as a whole. Furthermore, participants stated that oTENTik «spoil the natural aspect of the site» and «reduce its charm.» More broadly, participants also pointed out that such lodging has «no connection to the site’s history.»

On the other hand, participants who had stayed in this accommodation noted that the lack of privacy and tranquility «detracted from the lodging experience.» Since the oTENTik are located close to each

other and the site is shared with all other site users, the setting is not well adapted for this type of use. Moreover, some participants pointed out that the presence of the oTENTik units «creates confusion among day visitors, who appropriate the camping spaces, which creates discomfort and misunderstandings.»

Moreover, survey participants who had never stayed in an oTENTik unit said they were not likely to use these lodgings in the future. There were several reasons for this decision, including the respondents’ age, lack of activities to liven up their children’s stay, and their preference for ready-to-camp.

## Some comments made

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*«It's not an interesting place to camp. The tents take up too much space, which could be used by people to picnic and to gather.»*

*«The oTENTik units take up a lot of space and visitors always seem to disturb the vacationing users. It doesn't make you want to visit the park alone, with family or friends.»*

*«These facilities ruin the site. Not very interesting to camp among the visitors. The place seems to me not at all suitable for camping activities.»*

*«I find that this is not a place designed for these units. When we walk around the site, we feel like we're disturbing the people who use the oTENTik. The site is too small to have these. And the view is not the same .... I don't think it was a good idea to have them on-site.»*

*«The oTENTik units are okay, but there is not much privacy and things to see.»*

*«There are not many activities in the vicinity. This service would be of interest to boaters who stop overnight.»*

## Autonomous Camping

Although the oTENTik accommodation units are not of great interest to the survey participants, some of them do show a desire for autonomous camping on the

site. It is interesting to note that even people who live in the area, or even near the site, would be inclined to use this type of service.

### Some comments made

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*« Please revive autonomous camping experience, I have been dreaming of sleeping there for so long. I live 30 minutes away and hope one day my dream will come true! »*

*«There is a strong demand for ready-to-camp services. So we have to make the site more attractive.»*

*«Allow independent campers to stop for a night. The pandemic will have taught us to take mental breaks and get us off our screens. For that, it is necessary to create new possibilities apart from the ever-rare area camping sites. »*

*«Allow people to camp on platforms using their own tents.»*

*«It would be nice to add sites where people can camp using their own equipment. Also, there could be huts with fire pits where people could warm up in winter.»*

## Site Improvement

Forty-two people (22%) gave their opinion on improving the site. In general, comments vary depending on how different users use the site. Many participants suggested adding a boat launch, additional picnic tables, an all weather shelter, improved trail conditions and reforestation of Darvard Island. More specifically, some citizens of Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu municipality stressed the importance of developing the entrance to the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site on the north shore of the river more adequately. In this regard, the local

population points out the need to improve the signage advertising the site, since it is currently insufficient and not very visible. As for boaters, they stressed the importance of installing electric charging stations on the docks, water supply stations and ashtrays to prevent smokers from throwing their cigarette butts on the ground. Recommendations were also made to expand the parking lot and to secure the guardrails along the lock.

### Some comments made

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*«A boat launch would be useful for the people of Saint-Ours.»*

*«I would suggest better signage, as sometimes you go straight past the site.»*

*«Proceed with the reforestation of the whole site that has been seriously affected by its numerous diseased ash trees.»*

*«Plant different kinds of trees and flowering shrubs to make the area nicer.»*





## Site Maintenance

Site maintenance is also a concern for some users of the Saint-Ours Canal. Sixteen survey participants (9%) mentioned that the lack of site maintenance results in a «neglected look» and a «run-down appearance.» More specifically, the survey comments reveal that the obsolescence of some of the site’s facilities gives the impression that it is «abandoned» and

therefore «unattractive» to visitors and users. In addition to the lack of general maintenance, participants deplored the lack of personnel to carry out specific tasks, such as cleaning fishway windows, repairing the wooden stairs, securing the docks and maintaining the trails. Ultimately, respondents emphasized the need for rejuvenation.

### Some comments made

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*«The buildings in the park all look neglected, even run-down.»*

*«The site is neglected, lacks maintenance staff. The wood is dirty, the steps broken. In short, it looks like the site has been abandoned.»*

*«Clean up the site, lots of bits and pieces lying around near the stairs to the fishway viewing room...»*



## Recreational Activities

The comments reveal that site users recognize the significant recreational development potential of the Saint-Ours Canal. Seventeen participants (7%) expressed the desire to set up activities that would allow users to extend their visit to the site. More specifically, survey participants mentioned the desire to be

able to rent light water crafts (kayaks, paddle boards, pedal boats, etc.) and to be able to take organized boat tours on the Richelieu River. Other issues related to the river were also raised, such as the improvement of fishing sites along the canal. Ultimately, users would like to see more recreational attractions for families.

### Some comments made

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*«Lack of family-friendly attractions»*

*«It's a place that is visited too quickly. It is important to make sure to extend the visitor experience. It is important to make sure that people have choices and that visitors come back.»*

*«Fishing should be taken into consideration as it is very popular in this area and could be greatly improved.»*

*«Improvement of on-site events and activities by working together with the municipalities: kayak departure dock, fishing zones set up in the small bays on the left and right sides of the parking lots on the Saint-Ours side, winter fishing huts for families and young people, a guided tour of the site by a biologist to explain the vegetation, species, etc.»*



## Site Accessibility

Accessibility was the topic that generated the most feedback during the public consultation activities. Indeed, over 64 comments were made in the online survey (34%), while many similar comments were shared during the virtual consultation sessions. In general, accessibility is a combination of several elements, as listed below.

First, access to the site via the Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu entrance is a major issue. Local citizens claim continuous and permanent access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists via the dam. More

specifically, users explain that the irregular dam access schedule, also unpredictable, makes it difficult to plan a visit to the Saint-Ours Canal from the Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu shore. In fact, when the access to the dam is closed, visitors from the north shore of the river must make a long detour to access the site. To remedy this problem, some survey participants even suggested that a shuttle system be introduced to connect the site entrance at Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu with Darvard Island.

More broadly, site users raise the lack of cycling options to access the site. Indeed,

considering the beauty of the surrounding landscape, visitors who live nearby would prefer to use their bicycle to get to the Saint-Ours Canal. Visitors who use their cars are forced to pay parking fees, which discourages them from visiting the site on a more regular basis. Participants in the public consultation process also stressed

the fact that signs announcing the Saint-Ours Canal NHS should be improved, since they are currently inadequate and not optimal. Lastly, the configuration of the site entrance to Saint-Ours from the chemin des Patriotes (Route 133) should be improved in terms of accessibility, since the current geometry is difficult to maneuver.

### Some comments made

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*«The entrances are poorly laid out and most people drive straight past the entrance when they come from Sorel. The sign advertising the NHS is always covered by foliage.»*

*«Access to the site should be available through Saint-Roch-de-Richelieu, the opening hours are too limited.»*

*«There should be a discount for those who live in Saint-Ours and the neighbouring villages. It would invite us to come more often. »*

*«Bringing back free parking would surely attract more people to this location!»*



## Navigation

Survey participants were unequivocal in their support for the preservation of the quality and peacefulness of the site. In this regard, survey participants raised the fact that they would like to see navigation

near the canal better monitored in order to control the negative effects it causes, such as the noise from exhaust pipes and the force of waves causing bank erosion.

### Some comments made

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*«Maritime speed regulations don't seem to be understood by boaters who go too fast on the river. Our shorelines are being put to the test and it seems to me that nautical patrol and lock personnel should put out frequent reminders.»*

*«Boaters should be subject to speed limits to preserve the already severely degraded shorelines, and penalized accordingly.»*

*«Boaters need to be made aware of the corrosive effects of the waves they cause on the shoreline, especially during periods of high water.»*

*«Promote responsible navigation. Not too fast... Not too many waves. Evaluate the ideal transit time between Chambly and Saint-Ours.»*





# Strategy #3

## Preserved Heritage, Protected Flora and Fauna

As illustrated in the chart above, strategy #3 is supported by survey participants, with support ranging from 86% to 95%. This shows that the associated themes,

such as the protection and showcasing of the site’s biodiversity, are significant priorities for Saint-Ours Canal NHS users.



Figure n°5 - Support for Strategy #3

## Protection of Fauna and Flora

Many comments were shared by the participants regarding the protection and showcasing of the biodiversity at the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site. Most comments focused on the need to replace ash trees impacted by the spread of the

Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), an invasive alien species (IAS). More broadly, the importance of collaborating with various community organizations was also raised.

### Some comments made

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*« Get various groups involved in fish monitoring and management and in planting of some sites on the property.»*

*«More durable and better distributed interpretive panels, explaining not only the aquatic fauna and plant cover, but also the bird species in the vicinity.»*

*«Plan to replace ash trees, which appear to be in the majority on the site and possibly affected by the emerald ash borer. This site is magnificent because of its trees, it is imperative to take them into account and preserve them.»*

## Fishing Activities

Several participants in the public consultation activities shared their concerns about fishing activities taking place at the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site. Indeed, it was pointed out

that this activity is generally undertaken without regard to the applicable regulations and laws. Among other things, this activity would have negative effects on aquatic wildlife.

### Some comments made

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*«There should be more monitoring of fishing activity. There are a lot of people who come from other places and fish, either wading or from boats near the locks, and who do not respect fishing regulations. This has given the Saint-Ours locks a VERY bad reputation in recent years.»*

*«Regulate fishing and raise awareness about respecting the area (cigarette butts, coffee cups on the ground, etc.)»*

*«One of the most pressing needs to restore the reputation of this site is to regulate and monitor illegal fishing activities, which has unfortunately made its reputation in recent years.»*

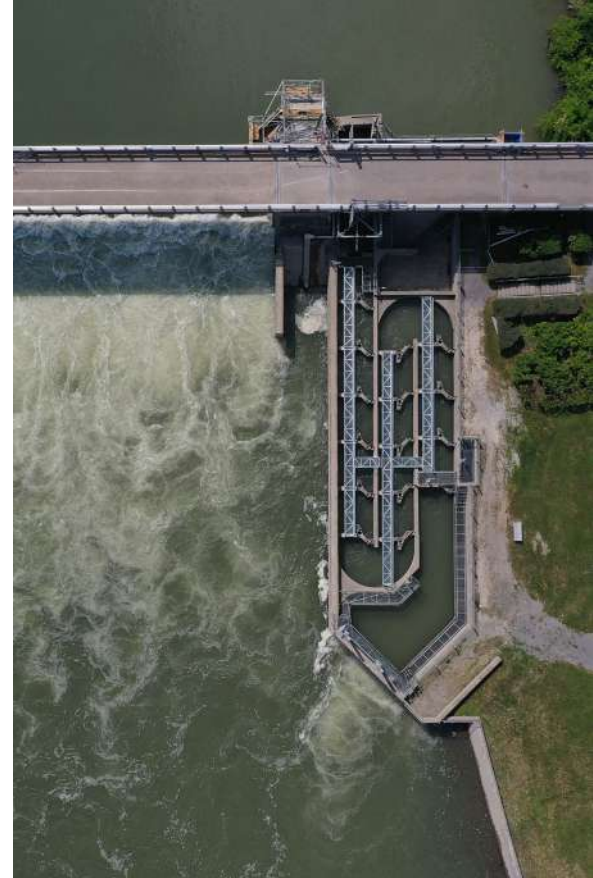


## Vianney-Legendre Fishway

The fishway is a genuine source of pride for the local community. For this reason, participants in public consultation activities emphasized the importance of maintaining and enhancing it.

Comments on this infrastructure mainly concerned the fact that the fishway viewing glass needed to be cleaned more regularly, as its condition did not allow visitors to observe the passage of fish. In addition, the participants stressed the need to improve the educational aspect of the fishway,

either by adding an interpretation centre or by updating the interpretive panels. Moreover, some specialized partners stressed the importance of specifying that the Vianney-Legendre fishway is not only useful for Copper Redhorse spawning, but also for five other aquatic species, including eel, mussel and sturgeon. Ultimately, the local population would like to see this infrastructure become more attractive in terms of improved visiting hours and being able to host school outings.



## Some comments made

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*«Improve the fishway tourism aspect and provide biological interpretation in addition to the signs?»*

*«The fishway is a beacon for conservation, but it is not a destination in itself for visitors. It should be promoted as a Parks Canada conservation success story, not promoted telling people to come to Saint-Ours to see the fishway.»*

*«Clean the glass at the fishway, install panels to direct people and provide information.»*

# Observations

## Observations regarding the draft Management Plan

In summary, the strategies in the draft Management Plan were generally well received by the participants to the public consultation activities. However, the comments made by the participants regarding the content of the draft

Management Plan require that certain elements be reviewed and/or improved. Based on the comments received, the proposed adjustments to the draft Management Plan are as follows:

- Add an objective to enhance the presentation of the historic aspects of the canal (Strategy #1)
- Ensure a better positioning of the site within the existing recreational and tourist routes
- Review the increase in the number of visitors and boaters based on the site's capacity
- Review the approach to the offer and experience of overnight stays on the site
- Focus strategy #3 on the protection of the site's flora and fauna
- Implement awareness-raising activities and tools to manage recreational fishing activities
- Educate boaters on navigation speed near the canal to control negative impacts
- Implement an Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) Management Action Plan
- Promote the Vianney-Legendre Fishway for its multi-species design, including some species at risk.



# Conclusion

The public consultation activities encouraged the participation of approximately 260 people interested in the adoption of a new Management Plan for the Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site. In general, participants demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of the site, as they visit it on a regular basis and/or live nearby. From this perspective, the comments expressed during the consultation activities are particularly useful and relevant to the Management Plan review process.

It is important to note that Parks Canada’s proposed vision has been well received, although some of the targets and objectives have received mixed reviews. The oTENTik accommodation units, the

completion of a tourism positioning study and the increase in the number of visitors are the main elements for which the public has shown less support, because of the negative effects they anticipate regarding the quality of the visitor experience at the Saint-Ours Canal.

Conversely, the themes in which participants showed the most interest were improving site accessibility, renewing and improving the physical features of the site, increasing the cultural and recreational activities, and conserving and showcasing the existing biodiversity. In conclusion, these elements will be considered in the final version of the Management Plan and in its future implementation.



## Next steps

The Management Plan will be reviewed and finalized in light of the comments received during this consultation, and will be presented to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, by

the end of 2021. Once approved, the new Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site Management Plan will be published on the Parks Canada website. The implementation of the vision will be the subject of an ongoing dialogue to report on progress and adjust priorities over time.





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