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Working Together: Our Stories

Best Practices and Lessons Learned
in Aboriginal Engagement





Parks Canada wishes to acknowledge and thank the many Aboriginal partners and communities that it is fortunate to work with for their generous contribution and collaboration.

First photo:

Métis Interpreter Bev Weber explaining traditional Métis art to Jaylyn Anderson (4 yrs old). Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site of Canada (© Parks Canada)

Second photo:

Qapik Attagutsiak being interviewed by her daughter, Parks Canada staff Kataisee Attagutsiak. Workshop on Places of Ecological and Cultural Significance for Sirmilik National Park of Canada, Borden Peninsula, Nunavut. (© Parks Canada / Micheline Manseau)

Third photo:

Craig Benoit of Miawpukek First Nation explains the defining features of Boreal Felt Lichen to Terra Nova National Park of Canada staff Janet Feltham and Prince Edward Island National Park of Canada staff Kirby Tulk. (© Parks Canada / Robin Tulk)

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Message from Alan Latourelle

Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada Agency

One hundred years ago, in 1911, Parks Canada was born. When you think about it, that's a very short time in the history of this country. Parks Canada was born out of a dream shared by a few people who wanted to create an organisation that would help protect, for generations to come, the rich heritage of the many people who inhabit this land. It was created to help protect the natural beauty of this country, our most precious gems, to be enjoyed for generations to come in ways that leave them unimpaired.

One hundred years later, that dream has become a reality and it is Canada's gift to the world. Parks Canada protects and presents some of the world's biggest and most beautiful national parks and national park reserves. Our national historic sites present the history of this land and its people in magical historic settings and our marine conservation areas connect us from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Arctic to the Great Lakes.

As we look back on what has been accomplished, we have many reasons to be proud. We have come a long way as an organisation. In the beginning, parks were established without much consultation with the public, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. However, we have learned from the past. Today, we cannot imagine creating a new park, site or marine conservation area without the support and collaboration of the public, especially Aboriginal peoples. In the past few decades, we have strived to build meaningful relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to ensure a more holistic stewardship of the land that include the cultural values and knowledge of its people. We have learned that by working together we can respect our differences and strengthen our common values. This, in itself, is the definition of true partnerships.

Today, Parks Canada is recognized as an international leader in working with Aboriginal communities. Although our relationships are

always evolving, we can still celebrate our many accomplishments. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you why I'm grateful and give thanks to the many people who have trusted us enough to share this vision with us.

I would like to acknowledge my many predecessors, in particular Tom Lee, who was Chief Executive Officer for Parks Canada from 1998 to 2002. As a Parks Canada staff member, I had the privilege of working with Mr. Lee and experiencing first hand his commitment to working with Aboriginal peoples in a respectful manner. In 1999, Mr. Lee created the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat. The Secretariat is instrumental in supporting and providing opportunities for Aboriginal partners to meaningfully engage with Parks Canada.

I appreciate the support and knowledge that I am fortunate to receive from the people who are members of the Aboriginal Consultative Committee; people such as Elder Stewart King from Wasauksing First Nation who was gracious enough to present us with inspirational words and teachings found in the next pages. I am grateful for all the other members who take time out to meet with me and who engage with me in frank and open discussions that help us grow as an Agency.

I welcome the involvement of the many people we work with in Aboriginal communities all across Canada. Your wisdom, your knowledge and your willingness to help us respectfully manage these treasured places is one of the greatest gifts you could give to future generations.

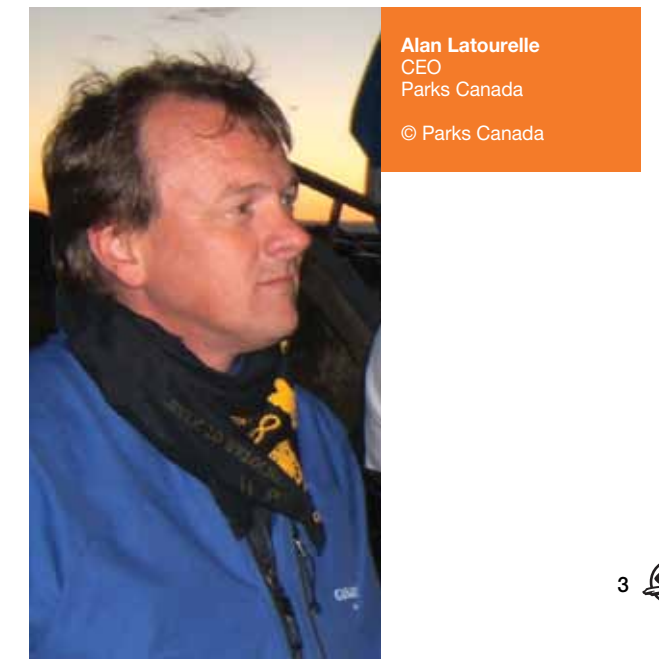
I value the work that our staff does, every day, with Aboriginal peoples. This document and the stories that are highlighted here reflect the engagement

and the vision we have as an Agency. Our staff is committed to include and work with Aboriginal communities. It's only natural. Most of our national parks are in very remote areas where the closest community is quite often an Aboriginal community. I recognize that our Aboriginal team members have demonstrated their trust in Parks Canada's mandate in a manner that far exceeds our expectations. I am proud to be able to say that over 8% of our staff is Aboriginal, making us an employer of choice for Aboriginal peoples in the public service. Every day, you help us build bridges, with your colleagues and with Aboriginal communities.

These are **your** stories. These are **our** stories.

They are real. They are inspiring.

Thank you!



Alan Latourelle
CEO
Parks Canada
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Message from Elder Stewart King

Wasauksing First Nation and member of Parks Canada's
Aboriginal Consultative Committee

Travelling along a newly constructed stretch of highway, fresh graffiti obstructs, desecrates and defaces miles of rock cuts blasted into ancient Laurentian shields. The clear, green waters of the Georgian Bay, once considered safe for drinking, bears a warning today against doing so. In spite of this, it is being pumped into massive intake systems for use by industry and an ever-increasing population. A genuine concern for all the waters and genuine care for remaining land and natural resources are needed desperately in North America today.

Turtle Island as it is known by the original inhabitants of this land is considered Sacred and remains a sanctuary and a place of affinity for all natural people. Our Creation story tells of our connection to this land, to the plant life and to all living things. Our original instructions tell us that we must take care of all things placed here for us and that they would provide for us during our lifetime. Our people were given a very specific language to communicate with all living things both physically and spiritually.

The natural boundaries of Turtle Island were carefully chosen and planned by Creator as is evidenced once you become aware of the many different Aboriginal peoples and cultures around you. Their connection of being one with the land remains unchanged in over a millennium for there is no other place that they would rather choose to live. Their hunting and fishing skills are an integral part of who they are; the medicine plants mastered over time immemorial has served in place of medical doctors and hospitals. The understanding, wisdom and teachings of the Elders have carried them through the ages and through many difficult times. The countless rivers, streams and lakes have served them well for many purposes for all time.

The Aboriginal perspective of the land may be defined by seven distinct regions incorporating the different linguistic stocks of our people: the cold icy regions, the high places, the coastal salt water regions, the grassy plains, the living wetlands, the great lakes and forest regions and the hot desert

places. The artificial lines and boundaries drawn on a many maps today have no place in our culture along with the names, labels and titles placed on Turtle Island and its original inhabitants.

Life in the cold icy regions has necessitated distinct changes in the diet and life skills of our northern brothers. We admire the natural beauty of the countless birdlife, the magnificent polar bear, the narwhal and beluga whales swimming in turquoise waters; clear, cold fresh waters free of organic debris flowing down on rocky shores. We admire the hunting skills of people in hot, desert regions without the use of guns; the planting of melons and citrus fruits for many, many generations where they are now being told that it is impossible. Springtime in early March captures the beauty and wonder of this land with the vast, wide open blue skies, warm desert sands, sunshine and the scent of cactus flowers wafting in light breezes.

To witness the dizzying heights of the snow covered mountain peaks, ice and rock glaciers developing agelessly, continually; longhorn sheep, bears and antelope grazing on grassy, sunlit and wind-swept hills. We admire the boating and fishing skills adopted by our people of the coastal salt waters; design of boats modified to excel in unpredictable and hazardous waters; knowledge of dangerous tides, sneaker waves, currents, undertows, ice conditions and underwater predators; those hunters that harvest buffalo and caribou with intimate knowledge in the layout of the land and are able to harvest and utilize all medicine plants. We wonder at the incredible, spectacular northern lights.

We have seen the green, algae covered swamps, wetlands inhabited by alligators, snakes, mosquitoes and we know, as great lakes people, that we could not

survive there. The great lakes and forest regions give us the balance of four beautiful seasons; a time of harvest and a time of gathering along with a genuine sense of gratitude for all the blessings of the Creator. We have seen plains and ruts of wagon roads on this land so loved by our Métis brothers and sisters. Gun pits have been dug into the sand for use as fortifications. Machine guns of an early age have sprayed countless bullets that are embedded into the ancient logs of old buildings. It tells of a history in the earlier times of this land that must be heard.

If we are to consider ourselves as the true caretakers of this land, it is necessary that we live and understand our own culture, history, language and traditional values. The teaching of our Elders must be sought after and honoured. Those with the intimate knowledge and ways of our people and land must be honoured and woven into the very fabric of our lives.

The hope, the vitality and the contemporary views of our youth are sought after and needed so that we can move forward in this joint effort.

Stewart King
(Aka Zhengos, Megizi odoodem)
Wasauksing First Nation
Member of Parks
Canada's Aboriginal
Consultative Committee
Parry Sound, Ontario

©Kaitlin King



Introduction

More than a million people identified themselves as Aboriginal in Canada's 2006 census. They live in urban, rural and remote places, as well as on reserves across the country. They speak 50 distinct Aboriginal languages and each of them have their own histories, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Parks Canada works in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and a wide variety of Aboriginal groups throughout the country, to protect and present special places where Canadians can connect and enjoy, in ways that leave them unimpaired, for future generations.

However, that has not always been the case. Aboriginal peoples were excluded when Canada's first national parks were created. When *Banff National Park of Canada* was established in 1885, Stoney Indians who had travelled and hunted in the area for centuries were kept out of the park. Aboriginal peoples were not involved when seven national parks were established in the early twentieth century, mostly in southern Canada. And

traditional hunting and gathering was prohibited in these parks.

Over the past decades, Parks Canada has come to recognize that effectively managing national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas means working in cooperation with partners; particularly those who have a unique perspective stemming from, in some cases, more than 50 generations of land stewardship. Today, the Agency works with more than 300 Aboriginal groups to maintain, protect and present our 42 national parks, more than 167 national historic sites, including 9 historic canals and 10 world heritage sites, and 4 marine conservation areas.

In 1922, *Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada* became northern Canada's first national park, established to protect Wood Bison from extinction. Unlike southern parks, it was acknowledged that Aboriginal peoples' traditional activities would not negatively

affect Wood Bison and that prohibiting these activities would have a negative impact on the traditional customs and way of life of Aboriginal peoples. Consequently, hunting and trapping continued under a permit system and a Hunters and Trappers Association was formed to set permit limits on an annual basis. It was the first time that Parks Canada involved Aboriginal peoples in a decision regarding the management of a park. It was also the beginning of a legacy of cooperative management that is now prevalent throughout the northern Parks Canada system.

As land claims negotiations took place with northern Aboriginal peoples, it became evident that opportunities existed for a shared vision of resource protection that allowed hunting, trapping and other cultural activities to continue as part of a modern day treaty. Following the 1984 Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, Parks Canada began negotiations to establish parks that included a provision for cooperative management boards. The term "cooperative" meant the signatory Aboriginal groups would have an opportunity to participate in making decisions related to the planning and operation of the proposed park.

As well, a 1974 amendment to the *Canada National Parks Act* allowed national parks to be established under a "reserve" status. This meant that sections of land would be set aside as park reserves and managed as national parks until land claims pertaining to that land were resolved. This has been an effective tool for forging strong relationships with Aboriginal peoples and protecting lands from development by third parties during land claim negotiations.



Fort Temiscamingue
National Historic Site
of Canada

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Including the voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in the planning and management of heritage areas is now a common practice within Parks Canada. Advisory bodies range from informal structures that provide ad hoc advice, to ones that are set out in formal agreements such as cooperative management boards established through park establishment agreements. These bodies have equal Aboriginal and government representation; provide advice to the minister on cultural matters and other issues of importance to Aboriginal partners; provide input into park, site or national marine conservation area management plans; and, operate by consensus.

Parks Canada sees the need to develop a framework to engage Aboriginal peoples in planning and managing national heritage areas by means of formal relationships with Aboriginal partners. This means Aboriginal peoples have an opportunity to offer their perspectives when the management planning process begins – not at the end as part of broad public consultations. This promotes the engagement of Aboriginal communities by allowing their perspectives to influence and identify key issues, challenges and opportunities to be considered in management plans.

In 1999, Parks Canada established the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat (AAS) to provide overall leadership with respect to building meaningful relationships with Aboriginal peoples. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, the AAS specific priorities include supporting relationship building with Aboriginal partners, promoting economic development and tourism opportunities, supporting

commemoration and presentation of Aboriginal themes and encouraging Aboriginal employment throughout the organization.

The AAS is also the secretariat for the Chief Executive Officer's 12-member Aboriginal Consultative Committee (ACC). Established in 2000 to create meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal leaders who have a direct association with heritage places that Parks Canada administers, the committee meets three times a year to provide ongoing advice and guidance to the Agency. The committee provides open and frank dialogue between Parks Canada's leadership and Aboriginal partners on a wide range of issues.



Members of the Aboriginal Consultative Committee in Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve. First row: Reg Sylliboy (AAS). Second row: Dwayne Blackbird (Kseeekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, Manitoba), Chief Vern Jacks (Tseycum First Nation, British Columbia), Nathalie Gagnon (AAS), Elder Stewart King (Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario), Michel Boivin (Director, Quebec Service Centre), Chief Jean-Charles Piétacho (Innu First Nation of Ekuanitshit, Quebec), Diane Strand (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, Yukon), Alan Latourelle (CEO), Rita Mestokosho (Innu First Nation of Ekuanitshit, Quebec), Peter Rudyck (Métis nation, Saskatchewan), Pam Ward (Metepenagias Mi'kmaq Nation, New Brunswick), Cristina Martinez (Field Unit Superintendent, Mingan Archipelago NPR, Quebec)

Other federal departments recognize it as an innovative way to share information and seek input from Aboriginal peoples.

The Agency also supports the Aboriginal Working Group (AWG), a national committee of employees who advise the Agency on all aspects of Aboriginal employment. It also created the Aboriginal Leadership Development Program (ALDP), a national four-year program where Aboriginal employees gather annually to learn skills ranging from management principles to communications and community interaction based on Aboriginal values. The goal is to develop a cadre of Aboriginal leaders within Parks Canada – a knowledgeable, skilled network of individuals in a variety of functions and levels in the organization. The program's fundamental goal is full-time, long-term retention of Aboriginal leaders in the Agency through skills development and personal learning plans.

In an effort to highlight Aboriginal peoples' and Parks Canada's achievements, the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat has prepared this compendium to share some of our best practices in working together to deliver Parks Canada's program activities and strategic outcomes. This document celebrates the many people who make relationships work. It celebrates the exemplary roles and values all of us can assume in our day to day dealing with each other, as partners and as people who share this land and who want to ensure its protection for future generations. We hope these stories will inspire new ideas and lead to new partnering opportunities.



Aboriginal Leadership Development Program participants, Class of 2011: Shirley Oldfield, Heritage Presenter (Motherwell Homestead NHS, Saskatchewan), Les Campbell, Patrolman (Mt Revelstoke and Glacier NP, Alberta), Penny McIsaac, Interpretation (Gros Morne NP, Newfoundland and Labrador), Katie Ellsworth, Resource Conservation (St Lawrence Islands NP, Ontario), Leah Huber (Visitor Experience, Elk Island NP, Alberta), Christine Bentley, Patrolman (Gwaii Haanas NPR and Haida Heritage Site, British Columbia), Laurie Cherneski, Park Warden (Pukaskwa NP, Ontario), Laura Peterson, Cultural Resource Management Advisor (Wood Buffalo NP, Northwest Territories), Derek Burton, Information Technology (Riding Mountain NP, Manitoba), Tyrone Mulrooney, Resource Conservation Tech (Terra Nova NP, Newfoundland and Labrador), Grant Sikkes, Visitor Experience (Jasper NP, Alberta)

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Chapter 1 – Connecting With Aboriginal Partners

In February 2008, Parks Canada CEO Alan Latourelle confirmed the Agency's desire to continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal peoples by developing a framework that engages Aboriginal communities in the planning and management of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Parks Canada has also made a commitment to continue establishing formal relationships with Aboriginal partners throughout the organization. These relationships will represent a broad spectrum of collaborative structures as each one is guided by the specific cultural and legal context of their community.

Recently, greater collaboration has helped lessened the alienation Aboriginal peoples often felt when the first parks or national historic sites were created without their presence. New parks such as the *Tornqat Mountains National Park of Canada*, new marine conservation areas such as *Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site of Canada*, and new national

historic sites such as *Sahoyúé-šehdacho National Historic Site of Canada* were created in collaboration with Aboriginal communities who requested that these lands be set aside for protection. This led to the creation of a number of national protected area reserves where land claims are still being negotiated and where Aboriginal involvement will help create the landscape.

“ I remember as a child how beautiful, strong and refreshing it was, the feeling of living beside the lake. My family knew how to travel the land in any season and how to read the weather to have a safe journey. For the Anishinaabe, the land is where we grew up, where we experienced a sense of belonging - it was our home. Although it is a national park, Pukaskwa is still a home to us”.
— Collette Goodchild, Elder, Pic River First Nation

Healing and Reconciliation

At *Jasper National Park of Canada*, Aboriginal peoples had noticeably been absent from the landscape since the park's creation in 1907. Not permitted to carry out a traditional lifestyle, they were forced to leave the park, bringing with them their stories, their cultural traditions and their intimate knowledge of the area. It has taken over a century for Parks Canada and Aboriginal peoples to come to terms with that history of dispossession and to take steps to reconcile with the past. For some, reconciliation has required formal ceremonies, sweat lodges, songs, offerings and prayers of forgiveness that have allowed both the park and the communities to join together again. For others, renewed trust has developed from the **Jasper Aboriginal Forum**¹ created in a spirit of healing and reconciliation. The forum is helping to reintegrate dialogue, sharing and gathering of all Indigenous peoples with past links to the park.



Healing Ceremony – Jasper National Park of Canada and Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation. First Row - L-R : Theodore Kyme, Bernice Bull, Ruth Mustus, Julian Kootenay, Phyllis Mustus, Sherrill Meropoulis, Greg Fenton, Elisabeth Kootenay, Mike Dillon. Second Row - L-R : Gladys Kyme, Percy Potts, Orlando Alexis, Arthur Bruno, Sophie Bruno, Tammy Many Grey Horses, Kelton Mustus, Howard Mustus jr, Mariah Thunder, Don Kootenay. Third Row - L-R : Howard Mustus sr, Gilbert Potts, Janet Adams. On Top: Lyndon Agina

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Shauna Strand (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation) and Elder Lena Johnson (Kluane First Nation) working on hide, Megan McConnell (Champagne and Aishihik First Nation) in background

©Champagne and Aishihik First Nations

In the Yukon's *Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada*, the Southern Tutchone people were effectively pushed out when the area was turned into a game sanctuary in 1943.

While the hunting and trapping ban was lifted for Aboriginal peoples in 1976, many stayed away out of fear of reprisal. It took until 1993 for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and 2003 for the Kluane First Nation, to be allowed to resume traditional harvesting. While signed agreements provide the legal framework for cultural reintegration, decades of alienation require additional efforts. **Healing Broken Connections**² is a multi-year project organized with both of these First Nations to encourage reconnection to their traditionally used territories through the participation of elders and youth in culture camps and science camps. It supported their efforts to collect, stabilize and store their knowledge about the park and use it to improve the park's management and ecological integrity. Having First Nation partners who are willing and keen to work



with and support *Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada* has resulted in unprecedented levels of involvement and cooperation.

“In years to come we will look back on the early years of implementing our Land Claim Agreements and amid the struggles and growing pains, we will also smile upon the triumphs and the foundations that were laid with a sense of pride and achievement. When co management of our lands is the “norm”, when culture and traditional history is an essential and integral part of land management, when our people have walked every part of this Park again, we will look back at Healing Broken Connections and be filled with the awesome power of Kluane because the most important parts of reconnecting with our lands; the human element, the relationships, the stewardship and the respect for our land and its living creatures will have been championed by projects like this.” — *Chief and Council of Kluane First Nation*

Parks Canada and the Mi’kmaq communities of Prince Edward Island have fostered closer ties since hiring a **Manager of Joint Projects, Mi’kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island (MCPEI) – Parks Canada**.³ Communications

* There are multiple spellings of the word Mi’kmaq in English, depending on geographical location and type of orthography. However, all are considered to be of the same Nation. For the purpose of this publication, and to respect regional differences, we have kept the original spelling with which the community identifies.

had already improved significantly after the Mi’kmaq Confederacy of PEI was formed in 2002 as a Tribal Council for PEI’s two Mi’kmaq* First Nations. MCPEI proposed to hire a co-managed and co-funded project manager to advance cooperation towards mutual goals. The manager, hired in 2005, working from the MCPEI offices, has played a pivotal role in building a positive, active relationship to ensure the proper management and presentation of land and sites with current or historical Mi’kmaq importance.

Sharing Aboriginal Stories and Cultures

In Saskatchewan, *Batoche National Historic Site of Canada*, which includes remnants of a village, farmland and the 1885 battleground, is considered the heart and soul of the Métis Nation and a symbol of hope, renewal and reconnection for all Métis people. However, the Métis had largely dissociated from Batoche after it became an historic site in 1923. Its federal administration seemed distant to the community. **The Batoche National Historic Site and Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) Partnership**⁴ now has staff collaborating with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and GDI (a Saskatchewan organization assisting in Métis training, education and employment) to restore ties. Since 1996, they have worked together to hire unemployed or under-employed Métis to provide them with training in heritage presentation and asset management. Staff and GDI Publishing have

enhanced the site’s programming since 2005 with several cultural events. A “living history” in Albert Caron’s home gives visitors a chance to hear Métis stories and learn some of the Michif language from elders. The “Métis Women’s History of Resistance and Survival: Stories of Tourond’s coulee / Fish Creek and Batoche” is a community storytelling sharing circle and recording that honours the forgotten and untold stories of Métis women and children.

Raj Anderson playing the fiddle at the Church in Batoche National Historic Site of Canada

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In *Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada*, the **Nuu-chah-nulth Working Group**⁵ came about in September 2006 when the park reserve began a four-year project to reconstruct the 1948 Wickaninnish Interpretive Centre. The centre has spectacular views of Wickaninnish Beach and the Pacific Ocean, but its static and dated exhibits no longer met visitor expectations or park objectives. Through consultation with Aboriginal partners it became evident that there was an opportunity to share Nuu-chah-nulth culture and heritage, and build relationships with the First Nations linked to



Members of the Nuu-chah-nulth Working Group on the steps of the new Longhouse Exhibit Barbara Touchie, Ucluelet First Nations, Benson Nookemis, Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Steve Tatoosh, Hupacasah First Nations, Barney Williams Jr., Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, C. Anne Robinson, Tseshah First Nations.

© Parks Canada / Crystal Bolduc

the park. The working group has representatives from nine First Nations, along with the Nuu-chah-nulth Language Group and the Nuu-chah-nulth Cultural Centre. By sharing family connections and stories, the group is ensuring their heritage will be presented for future generations.

“As we work through difficult or sensitive items, it only serves to strengthen our commitment to presenting our Nations in a manner that dignifies our people through our joint endeavor.” — *Ida Mills, Ditidaht Elder*

At *St Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada*, surveys clearly indicated that visitors wanted more information about its Aboriginal connections. But it was impractical for members

of the Akwesasne nation to commute for three to four hours daily to be at the park. To establish a permanent Haudenosaunee presence, staff collaborated with the Kanienkehaka (Mohawks) of Akwesasne to create **Eastern Ontario Voices of Akwesasne**.⁶ The co-managed video project has Akwesasne community members sharing stories of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people, their culture and traditions, and their connection to the park, including Aboriginal knowledge of animals, plants and black-ash baskets. The compelling stories are available on interactive screens at the park's visitor centre and within the Akwesasne community and firmly places the Haudenosaunee as a living culture in the viewers' minds. The community of Akwesasne has also been using the video to showcase their culture to various groups well beyond the original intent of the project.

Cesi Mitchell, one of the participants of the Voices of Akwesasne project.

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In 1999, staff at *Georgian Bay Islands National Park of Canada* reached out to Elders for guidance on a planned project on Aboriginal commemoration and gravestone restoration. What started as a simple project evolved into the Cultural Advisory Committee, formed in August 1999, now known as the **Cultural Advisory Circle, Georgian Bay Islands National Park**.⁷ Meeting quarterly, the group has been helpful with every aspect of the park's development, cultural resource management and integration of Aboriginal issues and knowledge. Circle Elders, grandparents and community members represent the Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Georgian Bay Métis Council, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Wahta Mohawk Territory, and Wasauksing First Nation. By sharing "The Story of Fairy Lake" and other teachings for guided hikes, archaeological projects and heritage presentations, they are re-establishing the landscape's indigenous links. A day program for grade four Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal Youth Day are held every year to support an archaeology project. Various other ceremonies such as feasts and pipe ceremonies to honour ancestors have also been held by the circle members.

“All First Nations have a connection to the earth, the air, the water and all the creations that dwell here. We are endowed with a responsibility to protect and maintain the environment and the life forms that inhabit this earth for seven generations.” — *Chief Louise Hillier and Band Council, Caldwell First Nation*



Members of the Cultural Advisory Circle. Front Row, L-R: Beausoleil First Nation Chief Roland Monague with Community Eagle Staff, Jenn McCallum, Julia Montgomery, Melanie Desjardins, Field Unit Superintendent Kim St. Clair. Middle Row, L-R: Hector Copegog, Mary Jane King, Gloria King, Sheryl Smith, Ontario Service Centre, Charles Leon King. Last row, L-R: Prabir Roy, Shaun McKenzie, Victoria Evans, Shawn Corbiere, Tim Sweeting, Brian Charles, GBINP Superintendent, Gary McMillan, Scott Sutton.

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Cultural Expressions on the Land

On the Labrador Peninsula, **Gatherings in a Timeless Place: kANGIDLUASUK Base Camp**⁸ has created a unique opportunity since 2006 to experience Inuit life. The *Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada* was created with the consent of Northern Quebec Inuit and Labrador Inuit through their respective land claim agreements and presented as the "Inuit's gift to all Canadians." To ensure new and better ways of increasing Inuit presence in the park and to support summer operational programs, the Inuit managed Base Camp located just outside the park's southern boundary welcomes the young and old of Inuit families, along with researchers and visitors to explore the park through the lenses of both Inuit culture and science. Participants connect

to the mountains as an Inuit homeland through the storytelling of Inuit companions and guides. A typical day at the Base Camp sees elders sharing their knowledge of the land with scientists, park managers, tourists and youth. Operating from late July through August, the camp provides accommodations, meals, guides, polar bear monitors and a staging area for trips into the park. The camp helps with the logistical challenges and costs of maintaining a meaningful Inuit presence in the park as the nearest community is almost 100 kilometres away. The Nunatsiavut Government, the Makivik Corporation and the Cooperative Management Board for the *Torngat Mountains National Park* helped to make the project happen and continue to support the base camp and its operation. The research station completed by the Nunatsiavut government will improve services to researchers.



Inuit on the land in Torngat Mountain National Park of Canada. L-R: Sarah Pasha Annanack, Molly Emudluk, Minnie Unatweenuk, Susie Morgan, Jacko Merkuratsuk, Sarah Unatweenuk, Tommy Unatweenuk

© Parks Canada

“ I think the park will once again be home to Inuit and that our attachment to the area, felt by so many of us, will once again be real, something we will experience and pass on to our children.”

— Leroy Metcalfe

The Labrador Leadership Program – Aboriginal Youth in National Parks and National Historic Sites⁹ gives 19 to 30 year old Inuit a chance to explore career and educational opportunities related to national parks and historic sites. Participants learn about resource conservation, heritage presentation, warden responsibilities and visitor services. A successful partnership with Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador and the Quebec Labrador Foundation has led to a Green Team Program to increase work experiences and opportunities for Aboriginal youth in Labrador. It gives youth the chance to develop leadership skills in connection with the development of *Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada* and the proposed Mealy Mountain National Park.

While Harry Hays looks on, Jacko Merkuratsuk shows his son Jimmy how to fish

© Parks Canada



Labrador Leadership Program Participants. L-R 1st row: Fred Butt, Sybilla Bennett, 2nd row: Sara Rumbolt, Ashley Lawless, Nicole Parsons, Andy Miller - Parks Victoria exchange staff.

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Funding has been provided through Nunatukavut (former Labrador Métis Nation), the Nunatsiavut Government and the Grenfell Association (a foundation that funds selected Labrador projects).

Going forward

The New Brunswick First Nations Advisory Committee¹⁰ is the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada. The committee was formed in October 2010 with the Assembly of First Nations chiefs in New Brunswick, *Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada* and *Fundy National Park of Canada*. Its formation coincided with final consultations for updating *Fundy National Park's* management plan. Five representatives from 14 of the 15 Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqiyik First Nation communities of New Brunswick are on board, along with five Parks Canada representatives. The committee will ensure that the interests of the Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqiyik are considered in the management of all New Brunswick's national parks and national historic sites.

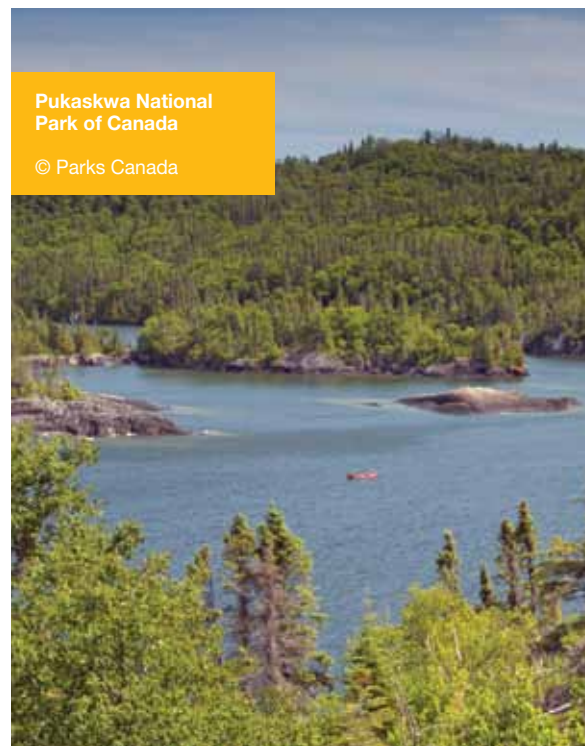


Members of the New Brunswick First Nations Advisory Committee: Terry Richardson (Pabineau First Nation), Blair Parly (Fundy National Park of Canada), Chief Joe Knockwood (Fort Folly First Nation), Yves Bossé (Atlantic Service Centre), Stuart Gilby (Legal counsel for Assembly of First Nations' Chiefs in New Brunswick Inc.), Larry Perley (Tobique First Nation), Chief Stewart Paul (Tobique First Nation), Donna Augustine (Elsipogtog First Nation), Gordon LaBillois (Eel River Bar First Nation), Danielle Richard (Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada).

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Pukaskwa National Park of Canada

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Lessons learned

- 1. Seek Partnerships.** Each partnership achieves more results and greater impact by pooling ideas, resources, insights and efforts than is possible by working alone. Partnerships can also extend a project's outreach to more groups of people.
- 2. Connect at Different Levels.** It's essential to establish personal relationships with various members of a community in addition to its leadership in order to build trust and mutual respect.
- 3. Be Realistic.** Ensure goals and timelines are reasonable and take available human resources into account. Working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders, for example, requires significant consultation with a community, which takes commitment, time and effort.
- 4. Incorporate Aboriginal World Views.** The relationship established between the Cultural Advisory Circle and Georgian Bay Islands National Park of Canada, for example, is nurtured by the principles of the Seven Grandfather teachings. The Circle is seen as an example on how to develop mutually-beneficial relationships throughout Parks Canada.
- 5. Be Patient.** Allow enough time for relationships to become established. Collaborative projects need adequate time to establish trust and create a solid foundation for working together, especially if ties were severed or damaged in the past. A solid relationship built over time not only helps avoid differences that might arise but is usually the best resource for resolving them also.



6. **Write Down Everything.** Having a written and signed agreement helps to resolve potential differences. It also helps to maintain the relationship and its customary practices when leadership changes on the part of either party.
7. **Ask For Early Input.** If you produce a video, an exhibit or a management plan, involve people at the beginning and show the work-in-progress to community members. After seeing how their contribution can enhance the project, more people will be willing to participate in the project.
8. **Get Legal Advice.** Make sure that any written agreements in no way affects land claims or other assertions of traditional rights.
9. **Set Up Tent.** In some places, such as remote parks for example, culture and science camps provide the highest level of participation for the lowest cost. They are a proven way to reintegrate Aboriginal peoples, young and old, to traditionally used lands.
10. **Make History.** Document all your projects from start to finish so there are photographs, tape recordings and reference notes for the benefit of future generations.
11. **Have a Picnic.** Holding gatherings on the land within a park removes both real and perceived barriers associated with formal meetings and their structures. Outdoor events also tend to attract more participants.
12. **Welcome and Involve Aboriginal Children and Youth.** In most Aboriginal communities, culture and stories are transmitted to children and youth during community events. Be aware and open to Aboriginal children and youth taking part in activities, even some related to more formal processes.

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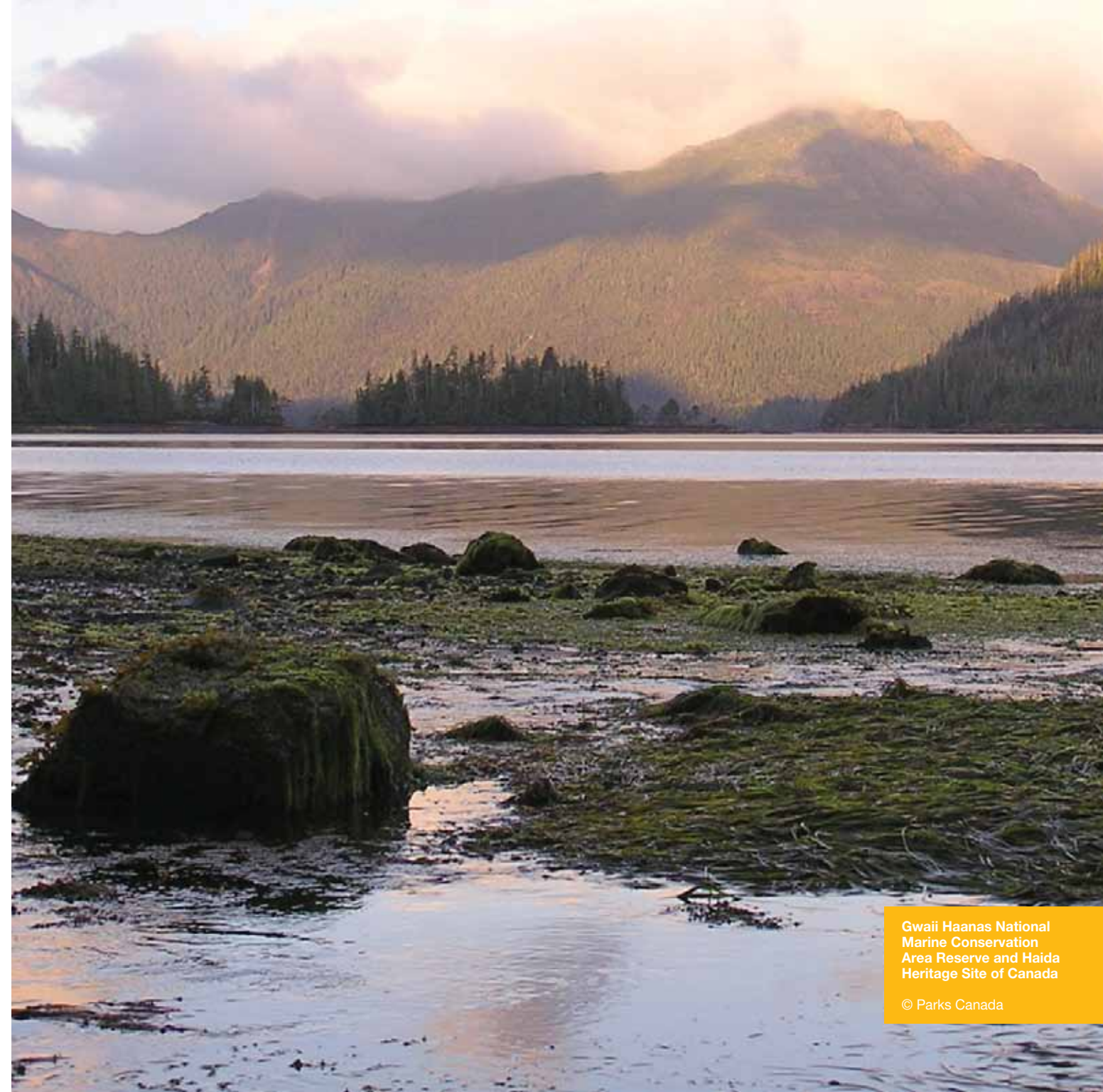
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Chapter 2 - Working Together to Protect Our Heritage

At **What is Valued: A Forum for the discussion of conservation issues concerning First Nations totem poles**,¹ held in Alert Bay, British Columbia, in 2004, a Stanford University representative pulled aside a forum organizer. “I don’t think you know what you have done here,” she whispered. Fearing the worst, and imagining that sensitivities had unwittingly been inflamed, the organizer asked her what she meant. “I have just had a 20-minute conversation with Beau Dick,” she enthused referring to the accomplished Tsawatainuk First Nation carver. “To put that into perspective, that’s like having a personal interview with Vincent Van Gogh were he still alive!”

Her awe underlines how putting together the right people in the right mix benefits everyone. The impetus for this forum came from a number of conversations, over a period of several years, with owners and managers of national historic sites. When discussing the state of totem poles or wooden remains and various current wood conservation practices,

conversations would always start with “wouldn’t it be nice if...” So, when Parks Canada and Aboriginal communities planned for this forum, it was decided to have an equal number of Aboriginal representatives and conservation professionals to prevent museum specialists from dominating the conversation. An environment of trust and respect enabled all participants to engage in intense and productive

U’mista Cultural Centre pole storage shed

© Canadian Conservation Institute / Michael Harrington



discussions on varying techniques and cultural perspectives on appropriate intervention for conservation purposes. The emotional pain occasionally revealed in association with some past conservation attempts made everyone more aware of how projects should be approached. Since then, three subsequent forums have been held, the last two organised by Canadian Conservation Institute, further demonstrating the power of partnerships and bringing together the right people and organisations.

The **House Lake Cemetery Re-conditioning Project**² at *Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada* is an example of how a project can bring together generations. This Dene ancestral cemetery was in use up to around 1925, just before the park’s creation. Members of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) were concerned about the poor state of the cemetery. They were also interested in locating all historic settlements and associated cemeteries in the area, especially while there is still living memory of these places amongst community members. The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation’s proposal to document burial sites and historic settlements, and do maintenance work to restore the cemetery, emphasized Dene youth and elder involvement. The ancestral stories that elders shared as everyone worked together with park staff to remove vegetation and identify gravesites created a greater bond among all of the participants. The project removed some of the alienation the community felt by reconnecting young and old to the park through historic preservation and oral history. It has also significantly expanded the park’s awareness of the landscape’s past, which enriches visitor experiences.



Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation representatives Henry Marcel and Morgan Voyageur (in forefront) documenting a gravesite

© Parks Canada

Sharing Our Knowledge

Responding to calls for assistance can often turn into benefits for parks. **The Medicinal Plants Trail project in collaboration with Fort Folly First Nation**³ was initiated after Fort Folly First Nation asked *Fundy National Park* for help to design a medicinal plants walking trail with interpretive panels on the community’s land. Discussions led to working together on a panel design that could also be reproduced and adopted for a trail within *Fundy National Park of Canada*. On the Acadian coast, the **Migmag Cedar Trail**⁴ in *Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada* is a blend of both Migmag values and knowledge and Parks Canada’s commitment to protect and present natural and cultural heritage for all time. The project was done in collaboration with Elders from Elsipogtog First Nation. A Migmag community member recorded in Migmag, French and English the audio components that are accessible on four of the seven solar powered trail



panels. A native artist provided the artwork on two of the trail panels. On October 5, 2005, more than 120 people from Elsipogtog First Nation, park staff and representatives from surrounding communities came together to celebrate the official opening of the Migmag Cedar Trail.



Recipients of the 2006 Chief Executive Officer's Awards of Excellence for the Migmag Cedar Trail Project in the category of Engaging Partners. From L-R: Jacolyn Daniluck (Parks Canada), Jennifer Stevens (Parks Canada), Alan Latourelle, CEO (Parks Canada), Franklin Levi (Elsipogtog First Nation), Adela Levi (Elsipogtog First Nation) and Pierrette Robichaud (Parks Canada)

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Sometimes it works the other way around. At *Terra Nova National Park of Canada*, the **Erioderma Inventory Project**⁵ has resulted in Parks Canada benefitting from the expertise that members of the Miawpukek First Nation have developed in identifying rare Boreal Felt Lichen. *Erioderma pedicellatum*, commonly known as Boreal Felt Lichen, was at one time found in Norway, Sweden and Atlantic Canada. However, it is now such a rare species that it is believed Newfoundland may hold 99% of the world's population and be its' last

hope for survival. Since staff of the Miawpukek First Nation Natural Resources Department knew how to identify and locate the lichen, and staff at *Terra Nova National Park of Canada* didn't have that expertise, they worked together to set up a "lichen locating blitz". The four-day expedition found a total of eight specimens in the park and familiarized park staff with the endangered species and its likely habitat.

The **Nunavut Ecological Theme Project – Using Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Knowledge) in Management, Research and Monitoring**⁶ is enabling Parks Canada to improve its monitoring and comprehension of remote national parks. Nunavut national parks are vast landscapes where learning, monitoring and reporting for ecological

Miawpukek First Nation and *Terra Nova National Park of Canada* staff do an assessment of possible locations of Boreal Felt Lichen (L-R Patrick Jeddore, Kirby Tulk, Ross Collier, Greg Jeddore, Craig Benoit, Andy Joe).

© Parks Canada / Robin Tulk



integrity present a number of unique challenges. The knowledge of local Inuit communities is filling important gaps regarding the region's ecology and helping staff and researchers gain a better understanding of a changing

environment. Elders, students, hunters and trappers, as well as Parks Canada staff, took part in this 5-year project. Focusing mostly on sea ice, the project documented a variety of ice conditions and gained expert advice from elders and hunters on approaches to conservation, safety and management practices while on the land. The project also included research into Inuit and scientific knowledges of arctic animals such as the arctic fox, the red fox and the snow geese. It also created opportunities for Inuit youth to become more knowledgeable and engaged in park activities, which increases the chances of their future involvement as employees or volunteers.

In 2010, the members of the project were awarded the Chief Executive Officer Awards of Excellence in the "Engaging Partners" category: "Your extraordinary contribution as an engaging partner through the Inuit Knowledge Project, which promotes traditional knowledge and science, your leadership and your commitment are greatly valued and appreciated."
— Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada

Jobie Panipakoochoo waiting at a seal hole. Workshop on the ecology of snow geese and arctic foxes, Bylot Island, Nunavut.

© Parks Canada / Micheline Manseau



Elders participating in a workshop on access and preservation of Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada, North Pole River. L-R: Robert Tatty, Honore Aglukka, Pie Sanertanut, Annie Tatty, Paul Sanertanut, David Tukurdjuk.

© Parks Canada / Micheline Manseau

Working Around Obstacles

Traditional Knowledge Sharing and Partnership Development with Nakoda First Nations and Banff National Park of Canada 2002-2010⁷ shows the possibilities of true collaboration even when there appears to be major obstacles in forming a partnership. The preparation of the environmental assessment required for the Indian Days revival - one of Canada's oldest documented Aboriginal festivals - made it clear that regardless of where matters stood with treaty negotiations, there were numerous mutual benefits to prompt Parks Canada and the Stoney Nakoda to work together. The Memorandum of Understanding signed as a result of discussions firmed the commitment by all Chiefs and Council of Nakoda First Nations and Parks Canada to become better acquainted, to learn each other's ways and to incorporate Aboriginal and scientific knowledges in wildlife and landscape management.



Since then, members of the Nakoda First Nations and Parks Canada staff have shared many kilometres on horseback and nights spent under the stars near campfires on backcountry trails to follow the paths known to the Stoney Nakoda. More than a few pipe ceremonies, sweat lodges, cultural demonstrations, family camps and social gatherings have happened, resulting in a sharing of knowledge, sage advice and direction on wildlife management and animal behaviour, as well as long term historical perspective on the landscape that forms *Banff National Park of Canada*. Opportunities are now being sought to employ Nakoda people at the park.



Riding down Mosquito Creek in Banff National Park of Canada. Back row, L-R: Lance Abraham, Charlie Abraham, Watson Kaquitts, Chief Clifford Poucette, Hank Snow, Avery Abraham. Front row, L-R: Kyle Abraham, O'Riley Abraham, Chad Kaquitts, Clifford Poucette Jr.

© Parks Canada / Dennis Herman

“As one of our Stoney Authors has stated “these mountains are our sacred places”. We looked forward to a new beginning with Banff National Park.” — *Hank Snow, Councillor for the Wesley Band Nakoda First Nations*



An echo of the past (Indian Days) blooms again during the public portion of the **Stoney Nakoda family camp 2010** on the old traditional Indian Grounds in Banff National Park of Canada

© Parks Canada / Dennis Herman

A request by local Aboriginal communities to engage in specialized park activities led to the **Elk Island Park Bison Handling Workshop**.⁸ Since 1907, *Elk Island National Park of Canada*

has played a major role in the conservation of both plains bison and wood bison as some of the world’s last plains bison were brought to the park and the species began its recovery from the brink of extinction. During the park’s history, Elk Island has successfully provided a total of 855 wood bison, 1014 plains bison, and 4633 elk to conservation initiatives benefiting the species. Relocations have been made in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Yukon Territory. Internationally, the Park has supported the relocation of elk to Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. In 2006, 30 wood bison were sent to Russia, and in 2008, 54 were transferred to Alaska. In March of 2011, 30 more wood bison were transferred to Lenskie Stolby Nature Park in the Republic of Sakha, Russia. In 1992, Parks Canada entered

into a Memorandum of Understanding with Tribal Chiefs Ventures Inc., representing six First Nations in the region. This resulted in the park providing 30 wood bison to be boarded on Whitefish Lake First Nation land with the understanding that as the herd grew, the offspring would be shared with member communities. During the one-day workshop that was held, a staff member’s presentation covered the park’s history, best practices for bison handling and disease management. The group later travelled to the bison handling facility where the bison transfer process was described in detail. Response to the workshop was overwhelmingly positive and there was a keen interest for other such opportunities.



Members of the Bison Handling Workshop. Front row, L-R: Delinda Ryerson (Elk Island National Park of Canada), Caitlin Elm (student). Middle row, L-R: Bruce Chisholm (Canadian Food Inspection Agency), Henry Gladue (Beaver Lake First Nation), Horace Patenaude (Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement), Kelly Phillips (Canadian Food Inspection Agency), Norm Cool (Elk Island National Park of Canada), Leona Cryer (Whitefish Lake First Nation), Shelley Essauance, NPFU, Elmer Ghostkeeper (Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement), Glean Auger (Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement), Archie Handel, (Elk Island National Park of Canada). Back row, L-R: Peter Tremblay (Beaver Lake First Nation), John Ritchie (Kikino Métis Settlement), Bruce Arcan (Tribal Chiefs Venture Inc.)

“ It is important to look at the spirituality and culture of the bison. It was part of North America culture for thousands of years. It is only right that they come home”. — *Elder Elmer Ghostkeeper, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement*



Wood Bison in Elk Island National Park of Canada

© Parks Canada / John Warden

Remaining Supportive

The **Stock Assessment and Restoration of the Atlantic Salmon in the Richibucto River**⁹ illustrates what can happen if everyone keeps an open mind. Elsipogtog First Nation has always disputed how the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) calculated fish stocks in its decision to close the region’s fishery. Initiating a complete reassessment by their own trained Fishery Study Team in 2004, the community approached *Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada* for logistical and scientific assistance. For three years, salmon were captured and studied

to measure the state of the health of the salmon populations in the Richibucto River along with a restoration scheme using Aboriginal knowledge and scientific protocols. When assessment funds ran out, park management included the salmon project in its *Action on the Ground* program and extended the project's life until 2013. Management recognized the potential long-term benefits to future visitors of the salmon project's collection of brood stock to restore the population. This project also demonstrates that science and Aboriginal knowledges are not antagonistic but rather complementary and can both be used for conservation efforts.

Staff from Elsipogtog First Nation and Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada are catching brood stock to be transferred to the Miramichi Hatchery for spawning

© Parks Canada



Local involvement can be pivotal in addressing ecological concerns. The **Recovery of Endangered Species in Fundy National Park in Partnership with the Fort Folly First Nation**¹⁰ is urgently working to protect what remains of the Inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon. Historically

exceeding 40,000, for unknown reasons the population is now fewer than 200 genetically distinct wild salmon. Fort Folly First Nation has only 106 residents but the community has been of tremendous help to *Fundy National Park of Canada* and Department of Fisheries and Oceans. They are a



Joe Clair, Elsipogtog First Nation, Traditional Ecological Knowledge Advisor for the project, shows a traditional fishing ground on the Richibucto River

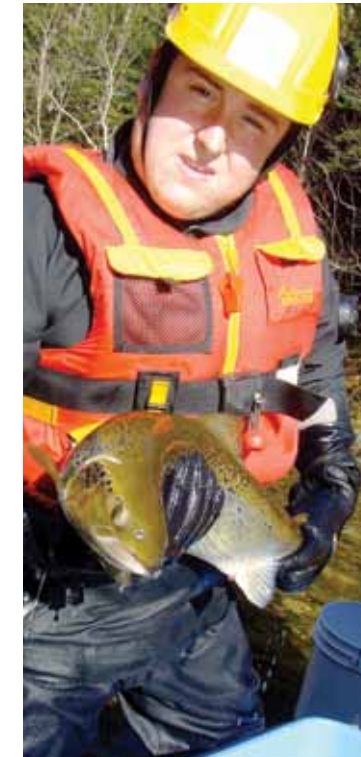
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member of the Recovery Team that conducted recovery experiments using the best-known technology for establishing and maintaining living gene banks. The

program is also helping tag fish with acoustic or satellite telemetry to determine what happens to the salmon in the ocean. Because of their cultural and economic importance, the loss of the Atlantic salmon would be devastating to the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik and the Passamaquoddy peoples. The project has created a synergy and an understanding between Aboriginal groups and Parks Canada, resulting in a program that far exceeds what either group would be capable of doing on their own.

Scaling Up Successes

The same group is also part of a larger initiative that demonstrates the potential for expanding a project's scope once a successful framework has been established. The *Parks Canada Atlantic Service Centre* is collaborating with various Aboriginal communities, federal departments and conservation agencies towards **Ensuring the Future of American Eel in Atlantic Canada**.¹¹ In addition to being a vital indicator of a freshwater ecosystem's health, eels — or *Katew* as they are known by Aboriginal peoples — were used as an important food source, medicinal ingredient and for ceremonial purposes. Today, *Katew* is also economically important as a fishery. First Nation partners are combining Aboriginal knowledge and field data to inform park management decisions about this species of



Kalin Aucoin of the Fort Folly First Nation and member of the Fort Folly Habitat Recovery Program holding an IBoF salmon for release in the Pointe Wolfe River in Fundy National Park of Canada. Kalin told members of the Team that this was one of the best days of his life.

© Parks Canada / B.Pavey



Howard Augustine cooking an eel

©NSMDC / Nelson Cloud

concern. Started in 2008 with *Fundy National Park of Canada*, *Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada*, and *Cape Breton Highlands National Park of Canada*, the project was expanded in 2010 to include all seven national parks in Atlantic Canada. Uniting efforts and resources in a multi-park framework is increasing efficiencies in determining the status of *Katew* in Atlantic Canada's national parks.

Nah?ą Dehé Traditional Harvesting Protocols¹² at *Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada* exemplifies how establishing a structure and good rapport before concerns arise can facilitate better and faster resolutions. When Nahanni Butte community members noticed that not everyone who harvested plants and animals in the park was following appropriate Aboriginal cultural methods

and showing the necessary respect to animals and the lands and waters upon which they depend, they expressed their concerns through the Nah?q Dehé Consensus Team. This co-operative management team set up for the park had been created in 2000 with three Parks Canada members, four Dehcho First Nations representatives and two Nahanni Butte spokespeople. The team agreed to assist the community of Nahanni Butte in preparing a publication to help spread the word about Aboriginal harvesting protocols. The workshops and pamphlet - *Nah?q Dehé K'éodii – Taking Care of Nah?q Dehé* - created in consultation with the Consensus Team, are based on the Dene principles of sharing and respect and have made the protocols very clear to ensure people's safety, protect the park's ecology, respect wildlife and maintain resources for future generations.

Elder Elsie Marcellais of Nahanni Butte instructs youth on preparation of a Moose hide

© Parks Canada / D. Tate



Always Consulting

The **White-Tailed Deer Herd Reduction and Sustainable Plant Harvest**¹³ in *St Lawrence Island National Park of Canada* demonstrates

how the harvesting expertise of an Aboriginal community can help to restore ecological balance. Excessive browsing by an overabundant deer population was causing plants important to the Kanienkehaka (Mohawks) of Akwesasne to almost disappear. Consultations with the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and local residents led to support for the Mohawk reducing the herd by a total of 59 deer over three years, with the meat being used for the community's traditional winter ceremony. As a result, many rare plants are rebounding along with species that haven't been seen in decades.

Establishing informal and formal cooperative programs for wildlife management is often difficult as there are few established forums to allow this type of communication and consultation. In some cases, it can also be a challenge for Aboriginal communities to establish joint management goals and objectives between themselves and Parks Canada. In *Riding Mountain National Park of Canada*, the **First Nation Wildlife Council**¹⁴ was created to help support communication and consultation between 7 First Nations surrounding the park and Parks Canada. It also encourages Aboriginal knowledge transfer and capacity building within the 7 First Nations and supports best practices in wildlife population management. There are currently multiple wildlife management issues within the region, including wildlife disease monitoring and management such as Ungulate TB transmission. Under the leadership of the First Nation Wildlife Council, a historic herd reduction was done involving First Nations from Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation and Rolling River First Nation. For the first time, the herd reduction was done not via helicopter but through ground removal.



Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation and Rolling River First Nation Wildlife Technicians. Back row, L-R: Jamie Bone, Alvin Anderson, Lyndon Bone, Harry Bone, Bernard Bone, Ken Kingdon (Project Manager), William Bone, Ernest Blackbird (project officer, Parks Canada), Preston Gaywish, Kenny Pearce. Front row, L-R: Richard Bone, Tim Bone, Ryan Bone

© Boh Kubrakovich / Ark Productions

Consultation is usually the key to establishing an effective force through a consensus-building approach. The **Peace-Athabasca Delta Ecological Monitoring Program (PADEMP)**¹⁵ initiated by *Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada* started out with park staff meeting with representatives of all 11 of the park's Aboriginal community partners in 2008 to gauge interest in monitoring one of the world's largest freshwater deltas for signs of stress from industrial development. The delta, which lies within the Mackenzie River watershed and is currently undergoing considerable industrial development, has long been recognized as an extremely productive ecosystem, supporting a diverse range of terrestrial and aquatic species. It has been recognized as a wetland of international importance under the United Nations RAMSAR designation and the delta contributed to the recognition of *Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada* as a World Heritage Site since 80% of the

Wood Buffalo Park Staff, local Aboriginal elders and representatives, and science advisors from Alberta Environment, World Wildlife Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Environment Canada, University of Alberta, Government of the Northwest Territories, of the Peace-Athabasca Delta Ecological Monitoring Program share stories and information during a field trip to Egg Lake.

© Parks Canada



delta lakes and wetlands are within the park boundaries. Within two years, the membership expanded to include a total of 17 Aboriginal communities, conservation groups and federal and provincial government agencies. They meet regularly and have developed a consensus based approach to identifying goals and conducting work. The program and its working committees are accomplishing research much faster than Parks Canada could do alone.

Welcoming Suggestions

The **Investigation and Remediation of Stokes Point, Former Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line Site**¹⁶ shows how simply being approachable can result in environmental improvements. *Ivvavik National Park of Canada* was formed in 1984 and has the distinction of being the first national park created from a modern Aboriginal Land Claim. When



Parks Canada established the park, the landscape had already been used extensively, and over the years no detailed investigation of contaminants left behind was ever conducted. Past clean-up effort at Stokes Point had always been piecemeal, making it unsafe for people and animals. The project was initiated following concerns that were raised by Aboriginal residents of Aklavik, the Aklavik Community Corporation, and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation regarding the contamination brought on by abandoned old garage, warehouses, petroleum, oil and lubricant storage facilities and other highly toxic contaminants such as PCBs. Parks Canada and the Inuvialuit worked together to investigate the site and to clean up contaminated soil and debris, making Stokes Point healthier for

Aklavik's Andrew Gordon Jr. looks out across the Stokes Point cleanup worksite from the bridge of the John Wurmlinger

© Parks Canada / P. Fleg



wildlife and the continued subsistence of Inuvialuit. It made this project the largest contaminated site cleanup project undertaken by the Agency. Local and Aboriginal knowledges were also important to this project; information gathered from eight Inuvialuit

Elders was combined with scientific knowledge to help design the investigation and make sure that “no stone was left unturned”. 95% of the economic benefits from the clean-up went to Inuvialuit companies and workforce through a competitive national tendering process.

Appreciating the value of differing opinions is part of the approach towards the **Aboriginal Consultation on Fire Management Plan**¹⁷ Fire management by Aboriginal peoples has a long history North America. Aboriginal people's cultural connection to the land and their practices of fire management has shaped the landscape all across this continent. For decades, in *Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada*, Traditional Users of the park (hunters and trappers) have been employed as fire fighters. Aboriginal harvesters protect their interests and park staff benefit from having employees who share their Aboriginal knowledge and values with respect to fire management. “Fire Control”, as it was called in the park's early years, has evolved into the current Fire Management Program, the largest in Parks Canada in terms of resources and operational activities. As the “interim” Fire Management Plan dates back to 1989 and decades of fire data has been accumulated, it is time to develop a new Fire Management Plan. The consultations with 11 Aboriginal groups are expected to generate significant discussion. It is hoped they will give the park a better understanding of the ecological, social and economic implications of letting an area burn as opposed to suppressing flames.



The community of Aklavik celebrates the successful cleanup of legacy contamination at Stokes Point with a feast and drum dance held in January 2011. Drum dancers from the Aklavik Drummers and Dancers: front row - Ally Gordon & Mary Gordon, back row - David James Gordon & Skylar Storr

© Parks Canada / D. Ross

Lessons Learned

1. **Pay A Visit.** You are more likely to develop a rapport faster with people if you take the time to get to know people in their own environment, where they are more likely to be comfortable speaking with you and can show examples of what they mean.
2. **Take Your Time.** Building meaningful relationships and trust cannot be rushed. Hurrying efforts or creating false deadlines can delay success.
3. **Keep An Open Mind.** A notion that seems unfounded might simply need time to be proven right or might just be the spark for discussing further ideas. Two seemingly different viewpoints or cultural practices can come together in the spirit of respect and a desire to understand each other, as seen in the pole conservation workshop.
4. **Brainstorm.** Many of the best projects start off by people saying, “Wouldn't it be nice if...”

5. **Create Synergy.** Talking with various stakeholders will likely generate broader interest, support and participation and ultimately, results.
6. **Encourage Stewardship.** Making people aware of their stake in a project forges their long-term connection to it and its successful outcome.
7. **Bank On It.** Investigate the possibilities of participants leveraging different financial mechanisms to fund a co-operative effort. Be mindful that sharing the cost of a project also means sharing the decisions.
8. **Know When To Let Go.** Although Parks Canada initiated the forum on pole conservation, the Canadian Conservation Institute took charge of organizing the last two events, dedicating financial and human resources to their success.

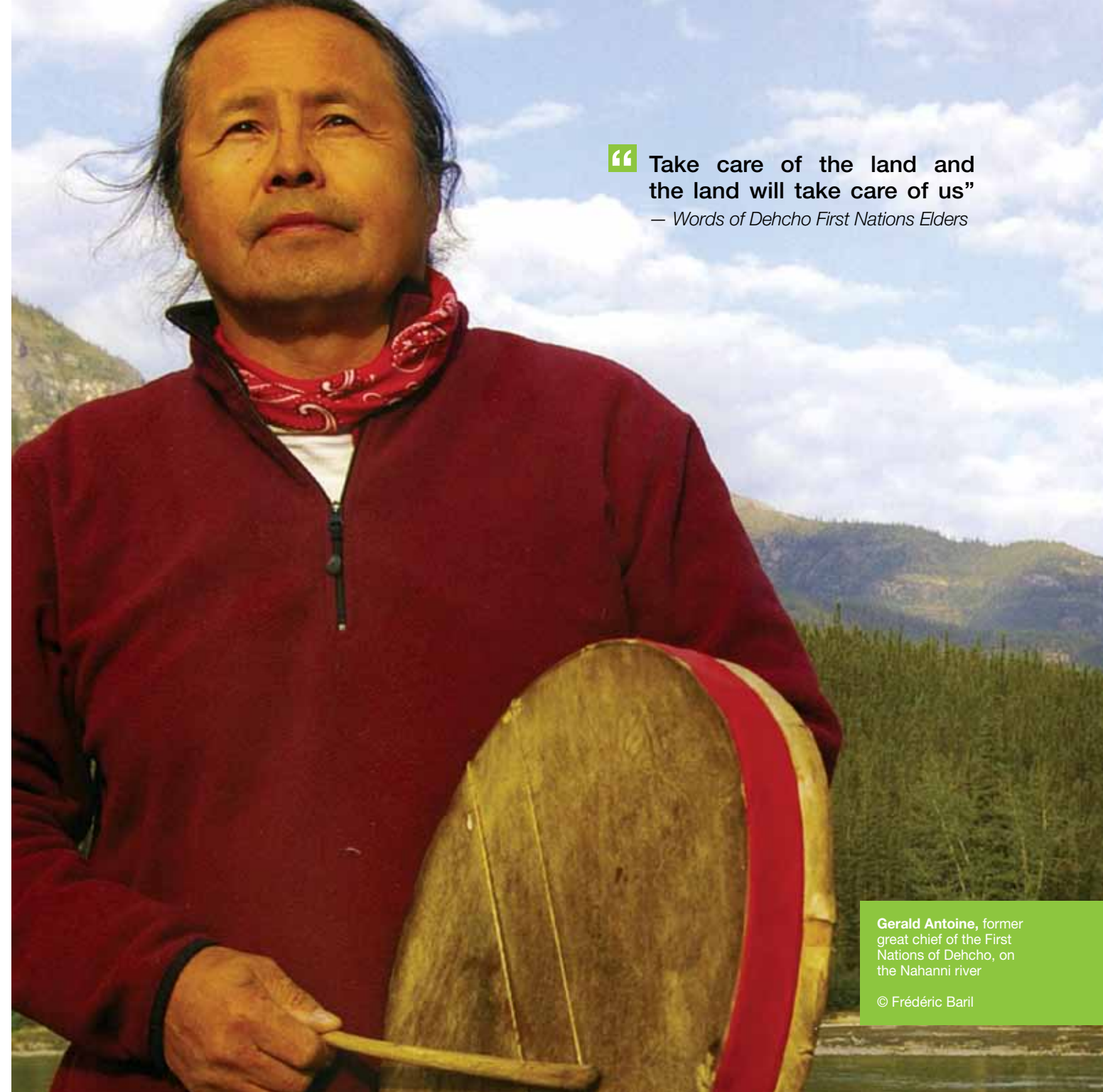


Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada

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- 6 Dr. Micheline Manseau, Ecosystem Scientist, Western and Northern Canada Service Centre, Tel: (204) 983-8885, E-mail: Micheline.Manseau@pc.gc.ca, or Gary Mouland, Resource Conservation Manager, Tel: (867) 975-4762, E-mail: Gary.Mouland@pc.gc.ca. Other publications from the Project are also available on the web under the “Publications” tab <http://lecol-ck.ca/index.php?pid=48> and under the Inuit Knowledge/Literature and documents tab <http://lecol-ck.ca/index.php?pid=126>
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“ Take care of the land and the land will take care of us”
 — Words of Dehcho First Nations Elders

Gerald Antoine, former great chief of the First Nations of Dehcho, on the Nahanni river

© Frédéric Baril

Chapter 3 - Presenting Our Special Places Together

Creating Awareness Through Languages

Many Canadians would be surprised to learn that more than 50 distinct Aboriginal languages exist in Canada. Parks Canada is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to convey the importance of Aboriginal languages and their inherent place in Canada's national parks, national historic sites and marine conservation areas.

Translation of the Parks Canada Charter into Aboriginal Languages¹ acknowledges that more than half of the land managed by Parks Canada derives from land claim settlements made with Aboriginal groups who share an interest with Parks Canada to protect this natural and cultural heritage. Conveying the values and principles of Parks Canada's Charter in Aboriginal languages is a respectful way of promoting engagement of Aboriginal peoples. Parks Canada initially discussed the project with the 12 Aboriginal leaders of its Aboriginal

Consultative Committee. Subsequent surveys with Field Units identified languages to include. Working closely with Aboriginal communities, the *Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat* then contracted local language experts to translate the charter into more than 24 languages. This was not an easy task as it became apparent that simple translation would not be



Parks Canada Charter in Dakota
© Parks Canada

culturally appropriate. In fact, quite a few of the words used in the Charter refer to concepts either not found in Aboriginal languages, or concepts that cannot be translated into simple words. Translators soon realised that the Charter needed to be adapted to Aboriginal languages. The printed and, on request, audio versions distributed to Aboriginal communities have helped establish a better understanding of shared values and the need to work together to protect and enhance heritage landscapes.

The Ktunaxa translation done for the **Kootenae House National Historic Site Interpretive Panels**² is building public appreciation for the First Nations heritage of this site as an important fur-trading post with the Ktunaxa Nation. The panels include a map showing the routes explored by fur-trader David Thompson and expand on the role of his First Nation guides. A message outline and the design ideas presented to Ktunaxa elders for approval prompted several elders to share historical knowledge. Before the panels were made in 2009, the content was sent to the Ktunaxa Nation



Interpretive panels at Kootenae House National Historic Site
© Parks Canada

Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector for review, comment and translation.

The **Parks Canada Pictograph Project**³ in the *Lake Louise*, *Yoho* and *Banff* national parks is helping to preserve messages literally fading from the landscape. High-resolution digital photography

is used to create a permanent record of these sacred First Nation sites. Interviews with elders are

Pictograph site in Twin Bays south along Kootenay Lake, B.C.

© Parks Canada / Brad Himour



providing cultural context. Elders from the Piikani, Stoney Nakoda (Chiniki), Kinbasket and Ktunaxa First Nation communities have been shown digitally enhanced images of pictograph sites to comment on their meaning and physical nature. The raw digital images were enhanced using Dstretch software which brings out pigment residues often invisible to the naked eye. Being invited to speak for their own cultural traditions encouraged the elders to participate in this project. Their insight complements recordings describing the digital images that will be part of an inventory kept by Parks Canada and First Nation communities. Cultural resource specialists at Parks



Canada not only seek to protect cultural heritage by ensuring that they remain healthy and whole but also find ways of presenting and celebrating cultural histories. The project has given Parks Canada a better understanding of First Nation concerns regarding site management and preservation. It is also fostering public appreciation for the sacredness of these sites and support for their preservation.

A number of residents at Mallorytown Landing were upset after *St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada* removed the beach to re-vegetate the shoreline. The beach had been closed more often than open in the past years due to high coliform bacteria count. To facilitate a new generation of experiences at the landing, staff worked with Akwesasne and regional residents to create **Words Before All Else Rocks**⁴ project. *Ohenten Kariwatekekwen* (The Words That Come Before All Else), also known as the *Thanksgiving Address*, is at the core of the Haudenosaunee view of the universe. Each gathering begins with this greeting that acknowledges and gives thanks to all the elements of creation. Each meeting closes with similar words. Symbols representing the 18 elements were illustrated and carved onto rocks throughout the site at Mallorytown Landing and assembled together with their corresponding symbols into a final carving on a rock of contemplation jutting into the bay. The words are in Mohawk, English and French. Visitors search for the rocks with their 18 symbols, culminating in the complete thanksgiving address. An interpretive panel entitled *Instructions from Mother Earth* accompanies the final carved rock. The panel describes the context for the thanksgiving address, teachings from the natural world and the notion



The Words That Come Before All Else, Mallorytown Landing, St Lawrence National Park
© Parks Canada

of respectful co-existence. The site also has panels telling the stories of surrounding residents' stewardship contributions. The Akwesasne community has been deeply moved by the inclusion of their language on the rocks. Many people have said it makes them feel welcome in their traditional territory.

Oral History

Oral history's importance has been the driver in the **Preparation of the 2008 Submission Report to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada on Catherine Beaulieu Bouvier Lamoureux (ca. 1836-1918)**.⁵ Memories of the earliest Métis women from the Mackenzie Basin have largely been lost. It is testimony to Catherine Beaulieu's significance to northern society – especially the Deh Cho First Nations and the

Métis – that some of her life can still be compiled from distant memories, oral traditions and some documentation. Her Dene and French-Canadian upbringing enabled her to serve as intermediary among the Dene, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the Oblate missionaries. Her candidacy as a person of national historic significance is an example of best practices when it comes to recognizing individuals – notably women – who have largely been overlooked by documented history.

The Board raised questions regarding the methodology used to collect and evaluate the information presented to them in 2002. It opted to consider a resubmission after demographic reports and the process for documenting the oral history were reviewed by the Cultural Communities Committee and subsequently by the Board. A supplementary report was tabled in 2005 on the subject of oral histories,

and the Board reaffirmed its practice of giving oral tradition due weight in its considerations. Guiding principles, including a methodological approach for the use of oral history, were accepted in 2006. A new report was subsequently prepared on Catherine Beaulieu that included oral accounts from the Fort Providence area in the Northwest Territories, as well as additional primary and secondary research from HBC and Oblate documents, and early Oblate published writings. Considering oral tradition when it is relevant, useful and reliable, on a case-by-case basis, acknowledges the fact that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis histories are often not found in standard history books. And oral histories – if properly collected – can be of tremendous value.

The Plaque Commemoration Ceremony with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada: Abernaki War Chief, Nescambouit⁶ has built public appreciation and support for Aboriginal leaders. The Abernaki community had asked the Board to pay tribute to Nescambouit, an Abernaki chief revered for his bravery, war-strategizing and negotiating skills in dealing with the French and the British. His dedication and perseverance helped to maintain the autonomy and integrity of Abernaki territory. A plaque unveiling organized with *La Mauricie National Park of Canada* and the community took place during a powwow marking the 350th anniversary of Odanak, Quebec, in June 2010. Richard O'Bomsawin, chief of the Odanak Band Council and Nicole O'Bomsawin, a community historian, gave a presentation about Nescambouit. A chant honouring the war chief ended the ceremony.



Valérie Therrien, External Relations Manager, La Mauricie National Park and Réjean O'Bomsawin, Counsellor, Conseil de la Nation des Abénakis d'Odanak, during the unveiling of the plaque
© Parks Canada

Reaching Students at School

The Calendar That Won't Stay on the Wall!⁷ has broadened awareness about species at risk within Aboriginal communities in Atlantic Canada. Designed for high-school students and their families, the calendar featured Aboriginal language in conveying some of the information concerning species relevant to Aboriginal peoples within the region. It also contained significant dates regarding Aboriginal peoples and events. Recipients appreciated its Aboriginal art. They also liked having the first edition based on the Mi'kmaq lunar cycle (March 2007-February 2008) and the second on the Inuit calendar (March 2009-February 2010).

To ensure the calendar had the right elements, its planning involved the region's Aboriginal communities, Parks Canada's *Atlantic Service Centre* (Aboriginal Initiatives Section), and the Species-at-Risk Interdepartmental Committee of Atlantic Canada (Parks Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

Cover of the *Species at Risk Calendar*, Based on the Mi'kmaq Lunar Cycle

© Parks Canada



A teaching guide produced with education specialists from Parks Canada, Environment Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Education suggested various activities for species awareness and recovery. The distribution beyond Aboriginal communities in Atlantic Canada (including Labrador) and the Gaspé Peninsula to all Atlantic Canada high schools broadened awareness and support.

In British Columbia, the **Species at Risk in Schools Project**⁸ has raised awareness of the Species at Risk Act in two very important West Coast First Nation languages: Hul'q'umi'num' and SENĆOŦEN. The purpose was to encourage students to appreciate culturally significant animals and plants so they would act in ways to prevent them from becoming extinct. The presentations were designed and delivered by Hul'q'umi'num' and SENĆOŦEN speakers with an interpreter from *Gulf Island National Park Reserve of Canada*. Consultations for program development were held with the Hul'q'umi'num' Treaty Group / Parks Canada Agency Consultative

Hul'q'umi'num' Elder Philomena Pagaduan and Parks Canada Interpreter Athena George share stories in the schools about threatened plants and animals.

© School District 79



Committee, which consists of six Coast Salish First Nations, and subsequently the Saanich Indian School Board. With activities and length tailored to age groups, the program included stories, games, a large poster, a set of information cards and show-and-tell segments to introduce a featured animal or plant and its name in Hul'q'umi'num' or SENĆOŦEN, as well as elders or Parks Canada staff as guest speakers. A closing activity focused on positive actions students could take for species recovery in their own community. A total of 2000 English and 400 French posters were distributed in schools. Close to 2,500 students and teachers took part in these school programs. They are now aware of species that are at risk and of the presence of the Hul'q'umi'num' and the SENĆOŦEN peoples who have lived in this area for a very long time.

“ I liked the story of the Creator that explained why First Nations treat nature like family. The presentation really taught me a lot about how I can help the environment.” — Alisha, Grade 7 Student, Bayside Middle School

Helping to Re-Connect

Treaty Payments and Education Program⁹ at the *Forks National Historic Site of Canada* provides an opportunity for Parks Canada to welcome First Nation people from communities in Manitoba and Northern Ontario to this historic site in Winnipeg to receive their treaty annuity. Treaties are important to the history of Manitoba as well as to *The Forks National Historic Site of Canada*. The Peguis / Selkirk Agreement of 1817 was made at The Forks

and the first of the numbered treaties in Western Canada, Treaty No. 1, was signed a short distance north at *Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site of Canada*. The Forks was a place where Aboriginal people seasonally camped, traded and gathered for at least 6,000 years and they have continued a spiritual, historic and economic link with the site over time.

The program draws thousands of First Nation people who might not otherwise visit a site administered by Parks Canada. Many feel a special connection to the place where 6,500 to 8,000 recipients can personally collect their \$5.00 annuity. They are welcomed by opening ceremonies that include a blessing by elders. A few days prior, Parks Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada staff present an information and training session to government employees who will pay treaty, as well as to local tenants and neighbours. A display provides the opportunity to learn about the Aboriginal history of The Forks, treaty payments and the commitment by Parks Canada to relate the story of Treaty No. 1.



Setting up the Payment tables

© Parks Canada

York Factory National Historic Site of Canada, located eight kilometres from the mouth of Hudson Bay on Hayes River, was a Hudson Bay Company (HBC) trading post at the centre of the fur trade for 200 years. It was known as “Kichewaskahikun” or the Great House by the Cree, many of whom lived and worked there as tradesmen, tripmen and labourers. When its massive Depot doors that had seen decades of trade goods pass through were closed for the last time in 1957, the Cree who still lived there relocated to York Landing, Bird, Shamattawa and Churchill in northern Manitoba. In 2006, York Factory First Nation and the Fox Lake Cree Nation (also York Factory descendants) approached Parks Canada about organizing a biannual homecoming at York Factory National Historic Site of Canada. The **York Factory Heritage Gatherings**¹⁰ in 2008 and 2010 gave Aboriginal partners an opportunity to reconnect with a place that has strong ties to their cultural heritage and established a setting for elders to pass along the connection to this important place to the next generation of York Factory descendants - their children and grandchildren. Parks Canada learned about the historical operations of York Factory from the oral histories and recollections of the elders who were returning to the site for the first time in years. New interpretive signage focussing on the role of the Cree at York Factory was added to the site.

Welcoming Visitors Together

Location will also be part of the success of the **Renewal & Re-location of the Kluane National Park & Reserve Visitor Centre to the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations**

Cultural Centre.¹¹ Plans were being made in 2007 for re-capitalization of the *Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada* visitor centre as the 1980 exhibits have deteriorated considerably and the stories in the centre no longer reflect current messages and management practices. A year later, the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations invited Parks Canada to re-locate the centre within the new Cultural Centre they were planning. The location will be more visible to highway traffic, which positions the park to attract more visitors. As a key tenant, Parks Canada is contributing towards the Cultural Centre through a 40-year pre-paid lease. Both the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation are working with Parks Canada on the renewal of exhibits and audio-visual products for the new visitor centre’s scheduled opening in the spring of 2012. Champagne & Aishihik First Nations organised a job fair for their citizens for the major construction to be done to ensure economic benefits for their communities.



Building site for Champagne & Aishihik First Nations Cultural Centre

© Parks Canada

Sometimes, the best of intentions take time to come to life. When Parks Canada created the *Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada* in 1984, promises were made to the Innu community of Ekuanitshit that a welcoming centre would be built in their community. Twenty-five years later, the centre is finally becoming a reality. Inspired by Aboriginal longhouses, the architectural concept for the **Construction of the Maison de la culture innue in Ekuanitshit**¹² was developed in spring 2009. It will be built at the edge of the community of Ekuanitshit as a visitor centre, to pass on knowledge and promote the Innu language and the close ties that link the community of Ekuanitshit to the *Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada*. Members of the Ekuanitshit First Nation, from youths to elders, have been involved since the project’s inception and will continue to do so. Elders were consulted about the centre’s location and local Innu artists will create works of art that are already incorporated in the concept of the longhouse. This

Members of the Conseil des Innus d’Ekuanitshit (left to right): Joachim Selma, Entreprises Shanamas, Vincent Napish, Counsellor, Rita Mestokosho, Counsellor and member of Parks Canada’s Aboriginal Consultative Committee, Jean-Charles Piétacho, Chief, Isabelle Napess, Counsellor and Bernard Lafontaine, Vice-Chief.

© L.Boudreau / Conseil des Innus d’Ekuanitshit

approach promotes a sense of ownership. The Maison de la culture innue d’Ekuanitshit will address the cultural needs of Innus in an intergenerational meeting place while offering tourists a glimpse into the world of the Innu of Ekuanitshit from yesterday to today.

“ The Innu community has such a strong connection to the islands. But when you’re on the islands, you don’t see it. This cultural centre is a way of showing that. This centre is for our children. And it is not just a project or a building. It is a dream.”

— Rita Mestokosho, Councillor, Conseil des Innus d’Ekuanitshit and member of Parks Canada’s Aboriginal Consultative Committee

Port au Choix National Historic Site of Canada’s rich Aboriginal heritage dates back more than 5000 years. It commemorates, among others, an ancient burial ground belonging to the Maritime Archaic Tradition and a Palaeoeskimo living site dating back 2000 years. Port au Choix consulted the province’s Aboriginal groups when it developed a **Landscape Visitor Experience Plan**.¹³ Representatives from Aboriginal groups and local stakeholders attended two workshops and provided feedback in person and in writing. This helped the site develop meaningful visitor experiences, and gave Aboriginal groups a greater appreciation for the site and an opportunity to participate in how it’s presented and protected. The site’s “Landscape Visitor Experience Plan” was completed in October 2009. It presents an array of engaging experiences to help visitors make a personal connection to the site. During the



summer of 2010, fund from Canada's Economic Action Plan was used to complete infrastructure projects including: *The Dorset Doorway*, *The Gathering Circle*, *Landscape Sculptures*, and *The Phillip's Garden program Shelter*. Together, Parks Canada and Aboriginal groups developed a product that will help Canadians appreciate and understand the rich Aboriginal heritage at *Port au Choix National Historic Site of Canada* and the need to protect it for generations to come.



Sealskin Sculpture
© Parks Canada

On February 25, 2011, a blanket ceremony, drumming and a delicious salmon and bannock banquet marked the birth of *Šxwimelə Gifts*,¹⁴ which means “store” in Halq'eméylem, at *Fort Langley National Historic Site of Canada's* Visitor Centre. The new shop is managed by members of the Kwantlen First Nation, located across a narrow channel of the Fraser River from the site. In Fort Langley, ties with the Kwantlen stretch back to the fort's operation between 1827 and the 1880s, when the Kwantlen were the key trading partners at this Hudson's Bay Company post. During the blanket ceremony,



Kwantlen First Nation performing a cleansing ceremony at Fort Langley's Visitor Centre
© Parks Canada / Nancy Hildebrand

Kwantlen Elders pinned colourful blankets on the *Šxwimelə* staff—primarily Aboriginal youth and elders—to symbolize them taking on the responsibility for the store on behalf of the nation. Kwantlen youth will have the opportunity to learn about their culture and how to run a business alongside their elders. Blankets were also presented to dignitaries including the local mayors and site managers, in appreciation of the honour of welcoming the Kwantlen at the site.

“This is huge for the community. It's our first economic venture. We see it as giving birth to a ‘baby’, and being able to nurture what this ‘baby’ will look like.” — *Kwantlen spokesperson Brenda Fernie*

Telling the Stories

Benson Island, in *Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada* in the Broken Group islands archipelago, was where the Tseshahht people lived year-round for several millennia. According to

Tseshahht oral tradition, the creation event of the first Tseshahht man and woman took place on C'issaa (Benson Island). In spring 2009, Benson Island was permanently closed to overnight campers to protect this culturally significant area. *Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada* and Tseshahht First Nation worked together to develop an interpretive display for the **Benson Island Memorial Project**¹⁵ to tell the story of the area and acknowledge its cultural and historical significance. This project would enhance visitors' experience on the island and help recognize the importance of the Tseshahht presence. The interpretive display included a carved House Post with a viewing platform and two interpretive panels. Well-known Tseshahht carver Gordon Dick carved the post from a red cedar log that the Robinson family donated in honour of their relative Wilfred Robinson, a Tseshahht elder who was instrumental in archaeological digs conducted on Benson Island. The panels, written in Nuu-chah-nulth, French and English, tell the creation

Tseshahht members and Pacific Rim National Park Reserve Public Safety staff transporting the House Post from the boat to the final resting place

© Parks Canada / Pete Clarkson



story of the Tseshahht people and the cultural history of the C'issaa. Now, visitors walk through a bank of tall trees to discover a cedar walkway leading to a house post in a meadow.

“It took so many people who were strong and never gave up. The things that have happened through the years, it is hard to believe, but we can't give up. There's lots to do yet.” — *Grand Chief Bert Mack, Toquaht Nation*



Panel depicting the story of the Anishinabe Clan System and the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers
© Parks Canada

In an effort to better incorporate the Anishinabe (Algonquin) people and their story along the Rideau Corridor and build stronger relationships with them, *Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada* is working with the Omàmiwinini Pimàdjowin Cultural Centre to develop museum interpretive panels that share the story of the Anishinabe people, their culture and religious beliefs. **The Algonquin Museum panel exhibits for the Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada and**

Omàmiwininì Pimàdjowin Cultural Centre, Golden Lake Ontario¹⁶ will tell the story of the Anishinabe Clan System and the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers. These interpretive exhibits will be displayed at the Rideau Canal Museum, Parks Canada Interpretive outreach trailer and at the Omàmiwininì Pimàdjowin Cultural Centre on the Pikwakanagan Algonquin Reserve. This project, along with previous ones since 2007, helped change the relationship with the Anishinabe people of Ontario from one of misunderstanding and mistrust to one of mutual trust where Parks Canada is asked by the Anishinabe to help facilitate relationships between other federal and provincial departments.

Contrary to popular belief, the Beothuk were not the last Aboriginal people to inhabit Newfoundland. At the time of European contact, the Mi'kmaq territory included Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and some parts of New Brunswick, Gaspé and southern Newfoundland. The Mi'kmaq Ocean going canoe provided the principle mode of travelling this vast territory. Today, some 10,000 people of Mi'kmaq ancestry still live in Newfoundland: the Miawpukek First Nation of Conne River is the only recognized reserve. Since Parks Canada and Miawpukek First Nation both believe that the best way to present Aboriginal history and culture is through first person interpretation and hands-on demonstrations, they worked in partnership for the **Construction of a Traditional Mi'kmaw Birch Bark Canoe**¹⁷ in *Gros Morne National Park of Canada*. Three Miawpukek First Nation residents, including a youth, spent six weeks in the park demonstrating how to build the canoe using traditional tools, materials and construction methods. The canoe was named Mattio

after Mattie Mitchell, a Mi'kmaq hunter, guide and prospector, who was recognized in 2005 as a person of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The Federation of Newfoundland Indians contributed the wages of two of its members to deliver on-site interpretation. The canoe was presented to *Gros Morne National Park of Canada* on National Aboriginal Day 2007.



Presentation ceremony, left to right: Billy Joe (Canoe Builder, Miawpukek First Nation), Sylverter Joe (Youth Canoe Builder, Miawpukek First Nation), Maggie John, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Parks Canada, Chief Misel Joe, Miawpukek First Nation and member of Parks Canada's Aboriginal Consultative Committee, Donny Benoit (Canoe Builder, Miawpukek First Nation)

© Parks Canada

Building on the success of this project, Chief Misel Joe from the Miawpukek First Nation and member of Parks Canada's Aboriginal Consultative Committee asked two other residents of his community to return to *Gros Morne National Park of Canada* for 14 weeks for the **Construction of the Mi'kmaw Caribou Hide Canoe**.¹⁸ He believed that this would help the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq keep their history, culture,

Inuit artist **Lena Onalik** with **Alan Latourelle**, Parks Canada's Chief Executive Officer

© Parks Canada



traditions and language alive while giving visitors to the park an appreciation and understanding of the rich history of the Mi'kmaq people. Mi'kmaq and Parks Canada staff provided on-site interpretation. Projects and events at the park have encouraged local people to explore their Aboriginal ancestry.

As part of the seven-week *Port au Choix National Historic Site "Artist in Residence"*¹⁹ pilot project, accomplished Inuk artist, drummer and throat singer Lena Onalik of Nunatsiavut greeted visitors and talked about the drum she used and made a presentation that included singing, drumming and throat singing. She also demonstrated how to make earrings from porcupine quills and displayed them. Lena's art and stories helped visitors connect to the national historic site through a genuine, memorable experience and presented Canada's rich Aboriginal culture.

Living the Cultures

Sometimes, bridging the gap between cultures only needs a sunny day and a chance to share a cultural experience. During Parks Day in July 2010, a dance troupe of eight dancers and five drummers from the Attikamekw First Nation were invited to offer a **Presentation of a traditional Aboriginal dance for the 40th anniversary celebrations**²⁰ of *La Mauricie National Park of Canada*. Visitors received free admission to the park that day and the dance troupe invited them to participate in the dances. Members of the dance troupe also explained the various dances and the origins of their regalia.

In Manitoba, Treaty No. 1 was signed with the Anishnaabe and Muskego Cree (Saulteaux and Swampy Cree) First Nations of southern Manitoba on August 3, 1871. It became the forerunner of the numbered treaties of Western Canada that opened the door for large-scale settlement by the Europeans. During the August long weekend, a two-day **Commemoration of the Signing of Treaty No. 1, August 3**²¹ is held at *Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site of Canada*. To take advantage of the August long weekend, Monday focuses on cultural activities including craft demonstrations, traditional dancing, traditional singing and drumming, contemporary singing, dancing and musical performances. August 3rd features ceremonies and a series of guest lectures on treaties and their impact in partnership with the Treaty Relations Commission for Manitoba (TRCM). The days have led to increased visitation, improved knowledge of First Nations and the importance and impact of Treaty No. 1 to First Nations and non-First Nations beneficiaries.

Lessons learned

- 1. Find the Right Opportunities.** Researching Aboriginal candidates for consideration by the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada, for example, adds to the overall knowledge of the country's history makers and their connection to a location. Finding out about a site's Aboriginal history can help you to come up with ideas to connect with its past.
- 2. Ask for Ideas.** Don't be afraid to approach the representatives of a community or association for suggestions regarding greater Aboriginal involvement. Encourage others to suggest "I wish..." and "If only..." scenarios to spark discussions. Consulting with all the identified key Aboriginal partners from the outset will garner insight, expertise and consensus for a successful project.
- 3. Be Flexible.** If key Aboriginal partners, such as the elders within a community, are unavailable immediately, propose a later date that works for everyone. Look at softening a deadline if it results in a project being more inclusive and successful.
- 4. Identify Shared Values and Goals.** Finding mutual goals and values often leads to action plans of mutual interest. Establish clear objectives, purpose, and articulate expectations with Aboriginal partners to be able to wade through possible conflicting agendas and priorities.
- 5. Think Outside the Box.** Incorporate traditional Aboriginal ways of viewing and interpreting the world within mainstream types of communication, such as the Mi'kmaq lunar cycle and Inuit March-to-February year in a modern calendar.
- 6. Don't Get Discouraged.** Just because a project does not initially meet with approval doesn't mean it won't be approved once more people understand its importance or additional criteria is met.
- 7. Build Trust – Build Projects.** Once trust is built, time is needed for ideas to fully evolve including many site visits and conversations during a span of a couple of years. In turn, working successfully on projects enhances relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
- 8. Be a Bridge Builder.** Including Aboriginal employee in projects and meeting with communities help to build trust and deal with the communities from their own cultural values. Recognizing and acting upon the strengths that each partner brings to the relationship builds further trust for future successful collaborations. When contracting to develop a plan that has Aboriginal content, hire a contractor who has experience consulting with Aboriginal groups.
- 9. Share Stories.** Provide opportunities for Aboriginal partners to ensure their stories are reflected in public programming. It demonstrates a commitment to working with them and providing an opportunity to have them tell their stories outside the community. It can also help foster a better understanding of a region's Aboriginal history.
- 10. Acknowledge Successes.** True success is the result of working with and learning from each other, young and old.

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Conclusion

Parks Canada values the unique partnerships it has created with Aboriginal peoples in the last decades. Working closely with these Aboriginal partners help us make better decisions on how to protect, present and connect with our natural and cultural environments. Working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to manage national parks, national historic sites and marine conservation areas to present Aboriginal cultures also greatly enriches visitor experiences in our heritage places.

Throughout the country, new relationships are being forged and old ones are being celebrated. Cooperative management with Aboriginal peoples has become a common practice within Parks Canada and members of these committees work jointly with us to make important decisions related to the planning and operation of the park. These relationships lead us to greater collaboration and understanding of our mutual interests, helping us to work on specific projects that bring about reconciliation and reconnection.

Protecting our heritage

Aboriginal peoples are unique partners in the protection of natural and cultural resources; from ways to conserve totem poles in British Columbia and species of fish in Atlantic Canada to removing vegetation and identifying gravesites in an ancestral cemetery in northern Alberta. Everyone has something

Winter lights at Elk Island National Park of Canada

© Parks Canada / Alan Dyer



to contribute, whether it's knowledge of medicinal plants in Atlantic Canada, expertise to harvest White-Tailed Deer to help restore ecological balance in Ontario, Inuit Knowledge that improves Parks Canada's monitoring and understanding of vast and remote Nunavut parks amid a changing environment, or oral history that can contribute to the acknowledgment of the importance of an historic Aboriginal figure.

“Parks space are almost always situated in a place that was special to the Aboriginal peoples and while learning in a classroom has its merits nothing can replace experiential learning in a place that is/was special to not just Aboriginal people but, all the people of Canada. To see Elders, Youth and those between interacting, learning and teaching side by side with Parks left me an unforgettable image and hope for the future of our special places.” — Fred Johnstone, Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon

Enhancing education and visitor experience

Presenting the cultures of Aboriginal peoples to some 22 million visitors to Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas each year greatly enhances visitor experiences. Opportunities to share the stories and cultures of Aboriginal peoples take many



Base Camp at night in Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada

© Parks Canada / Caitlyn Baikie

forms including exhibits, interpretive panels and hands-on experiences. At the kANGID-LUASUK Base Camp in

Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada on the Labrador Peninsula and during the *Port au Choix National Historic Site of Canada's* Artist in Residence pilot project, visitors had a chance to connect with the Inuit cultures through the stories the people shared. In *York Factory National Historic Site of Canada*, the Cree are reconnecting with a place that has strong ties to their heritage and past, and in the *Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada*, a twenty-five year old dream of creating a welcome centre where young and old can come together is finally coming true.

This sharing helps keep First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, traditions and languages alive while giving parks visitors an appreciation and understanding of their rich history. Partnerships are rewarding and they allow us to share our collective knowledge, experience, strengths and resources. But the first step toward working together is to build





Métis sash. Batoche National Historic Site of Canada.

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relationships based on mutual respect and trust. That takes time, patience, flexibility and an open mind to new ideas and possibilities.

Involving Aboriginal groups at the beginning of any process give all involved an opportunity to participate in how a site is presented and protected and how stories are told. Aboriginal peoples will feel more engaged with Parks Canada and the desire to be involved will continue to grow over time.

Working successfully together helps strengthen relationships which, in turn, strengthen Parks Canada and its ability to preserve, protect and present its sites for Canadians and international visitors for generations to come.

Canada's 42 National Parks, 167 National Historic Sites and 4 National Marine Conservation Areas

National Park	National Historic Site	National Marine Conservation Area		
<p>Newfoundland and Labrador</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Torngat Mountains Hopedale Mission Red Bay L'Anse aux Meadows Port au Choix Gros Morne Terra Nova Ryan Premises Hawthorne Cottage Signal Hill Cape Spear Lighthouse Castle Hill 	<p>New Brunswick</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Kouchibouguac Fort Gaspareaux Monument-Lefebvre Fort Beauséjour–Fort Cumberland La Coupe Dry Dock Fundy Carleton Martello Tower St. Andrews Blockhouse Beaubears Island Shipbuilding Boishébert <p>Quebec</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Forillon Mingan Archipelago (Reserve) Battle of the Restigouche Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park Fort Témiscamingue Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial Lévis Forts Montmorency Park 57-63 St. Louis Street Cartier-Brébeuf Fortifications of Québec Maillou House Québec Garrison Club Saint-Louis Forts and Châteaux La Mauricie Forges du Saint-Maurice Louis S. St. Laurent Saint-Ours Canal Louis-Joseph Papineau Sir George-Étienne Cartier Chambly Canal Fort Chambly Fort Ste. Thérèse Fort Lennox Lachine Canal The Fur Trade at Lachine Sir Wilfrid Laurier Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal Battle of the Châteauguay Coteau-du-Lac Carillon Barracks Carillon Canal Manoir Papineau 	<p>Ontario</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Glengarry Cairn Sir John Johnson House Inverarden House Laurier House Rideau Canal Merrickville Blockhouse Battle of the Windmill Fort Wellington St. Lawrence Islands Bellevue House Fort Henry Kingston Fortifications Murney Tower Shoal Tower Carrying Place of the Bay of Quinte Peterborough Lift Lock Trent–Severn Waterway Mnjikaning Fish Weirs Bethune Memorial House Georgian Bay Islands Saint-Louis Mission Battlefield of Fort George Butler's Barracks Fort George Fort Mississauga Mississauga Point Lighthouse Navy Island Ridgeway Battlefield Battle of Cook's Mills Queenston Heights HMCS <i>Haida</i> Woodside Point Clark Lighthouse Southwold Earthworks Battle Hill Point Pelee Bois Blanc Island Lighthouse and Blockhouse Fort Malden Bruce Peninsula Fathom Five National Marine Park Fort St. Joseph Sault Ste. Marie Canal Pukaskwa Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area 	<p>Manitoba</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> York Factory Wapusk Prince of Wales Fort Lower Fort Garry St. Andrew's Rectory Forts Rouge, Garry and Gibraltar Riel House The Forks Linear Mounds Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex Riding Mountain <p>Saskatchewan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Livingstone Fort Pelly Motherwell Homestead Fort Espérance Grasslands Cypress Hills Massacre Fort Walsh Battle of Tourond's Coulee / Fish Creek Batoche Prince Albert Fort Battleford Frenchman Butte <p>Alberta</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Frog Lake Elk Island Waterton Lakes First Oil Well in Western Canada Bar U Ranch Banff Park Museum Cave and Basin Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station Abbot Pass Refuge Cabin Banff Rocky Mountain House Howse Pass Skoki Ski Lodge Athabasca Pass Jasper Park Information Centre Jasper House Yellowhead Pass Jasper Wood Buffalo 	<p>British Columbia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yoho Rogers Pass Mount Revelstoke Glacier Kicking Horse Pass Twin Falls Tea House Kootenay Kootenae House Stanley Park Gulf of Georgia Cannery Fort Langley Gulf Islands (Reserve) Fisgard Lighthouse Fort Rodd Hill Pacific Rim (Reserve) Fort St. James Gitwankak Battle Hill Nan Sdins Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site Chilkoot Trail <p>Yukon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> S.S. <i>Klondike</i> Kluane (National Park and Reserve) Dawson Historical Complex Dredge No. 4 Former Territorial Court House S.S. <i>Keno</i> Vuntut Ivavik <p>Northwest Territories</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Aulavik Tuktut Nogait Saoyú-?ehdacho Nahanni (Reserve) Wood Buffalo <p>Nunavut</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ukkusiksalik Auyuittuq Sirmilik Quttinirpaaq



- National Park
Parc national
- National Historic Site
Lieu historique national
- National Marine Conservation Area
Aire marine nationale de conservation