



Parks
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Fort St. James National Historic Site Management Plan Review

Newsletter #1

Summer 2011



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Introduction

Parks Canada is embarking on a review of the management plan for Fort St. James National Historic Site. The management plan is a road map that sets out how Parks Canada will achieve its mandate at the site over the next 10 to 15 years. The management plan is reviewed every five years.

The current management plan for the site was approved in 2002. Most of the 90-odd actions in the plan have been implemented. It is outdated and no longer addresses the main challenges facing the site. With the participation of Canadians, Parks Canada is developing a new management plan for completion by Spring 2012.

How to be Involved?

This fall and winter, Parks Canada will offer a variety of ways to participate in the management plan review. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved, and offer your ideas and feedback. It's your heritage!!

Timelines

Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2012
<i>On our way...</i>	<i>Gathering input to draft a new plan</i>	<i>Reviewing the draft plan</i>
We are gathering and analyzing information, and communicating timelines, opportunities for involvement and the management planning process.	We will be discussing a vision for the site, challenges and opportunities.	We will be sharing the draft plan to see if we got it right.

The new plan will contain:

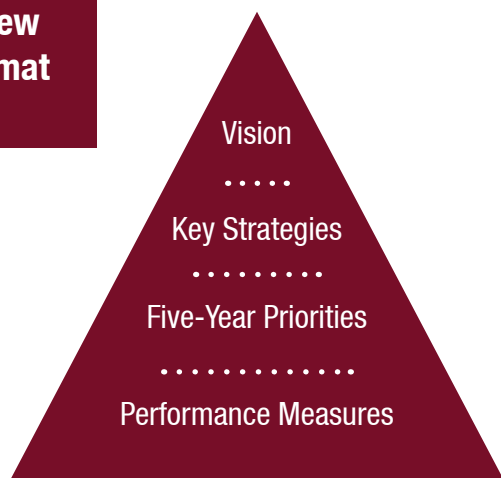
A **vision** for Fort St. James NHS that showcases what is unique about the site and reflects the aspirations of visitors, residents, Aboriginal people, and other Canadians for its future.

Key strategies, broad policy statements that describe how Parks Canada will protect commemorative integrity, improve visitor experience, and increase public understanding and engagement at the site.

Five-year priorities, actions to achieve the key strategies.

A suite of **performance measures** to evaluate the effectiveness of our actions.

A New Format





Fast Facts

- Largest group of original, in situ wooden buildings representing the fur trade in Canada
- Founded by the NorthWest Company in 1806 and operated as a trading post until 1952
- 11,500 visitors in 2010
- 16 employees
- Annual budget of \$640,000
- Key partnerships with several groups
- Open from the May long weekend to the end of September

Fort St. James National Historic Site is part of a national system of 949 places of national historic significance. Of these, 167 are administered directly by Parks Canada. Parks Canada's mandate is to, on behalf of the people of Canada, protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

A Vision for the Future



What is your vision for Fort St. James?
Share your thoughts with us by filling out the questionnaire on the last page of this newsletter. Or come to our fall community event on September 24 and talk to Parks Canada staff in person.

Strengths and Challenges

Cultural Resources

Major challenges to the commemorative integrity of the site have been addressed since the previous plan was written. Rotten logs in several buildings have been repaired. Heritage recording has been carried out. Historic assets, from buildings to collections, are in good condition overall.

Reaching their Potential

Two areas of the site do not currently meet their full potential. A reconstructed tramway juts into the lake and helps visitors imagine what it was like when schooners and steamers docked at the post. However, it is in poor condition and needs to be repaired before it can be used by visitors again.

The main pathway from the visitor centre to the historic grounds could play a stronger role in welcoming and orienting visitors to the site. It is also an important link between the Nak'azdli Reserve and the community of Fort St. James.



Strengths and Challenges

Attendance

Attracting new visitors to the site is a major challenge. In 1999, the site received almost 18,000 visitors, the majority of them from Europe. Ten years later, visitor numbers had dropped to 9,600, despite surveys showing a high level of visitor satisfaction. Parks Canada has set a target to increase visitation by 5% per year. The site increased regional marketing efforts last year and was rewarded with a 19% jump in numbers, to 11,500 visitors. The majority of visitors to the site in 2010 were from British Columbia.

Working with Others

Aboriginal involvement in the site has increased considerably over the past decade through, for example, the establishment of an Elders' Advisory Group, the nomination of Chief Kw'eh as a person of national historic significance and work with the New Caledonia Métis Association to develop new Métis displays for the visitor centre. Membership in the Friends of Fort St. James is about 150 strong. We would like to continue to strengthen these relationships and increase the involvement of Fort St. James residents in the site.

Refreshing the Visitor Experience

The opportunity to step into the summer of 1896 and experience what life was like for the people who lived and worked at the post is at the heart of the Fort St. James experience. Over the past few years, the site has added to its "living history" programming with new programs and special events, such as the First Nations Demonstration Area and Salmon Day—a celebration of the importance of salmon to early Fort St. James. The Murray House has been transformed into a bed and breakfast. Groups can camp overnight on-site. The aim is to make Fort St. James NHS a place that visitors come to over and over again, throughout the summer.

Get Involved



Open House

Interested in finding out more about the management plan review?

Come to the Old Fashioned Community Picnic FREE DAY.

When?
Where?
What?

Saturday, September 24th, 2011
Fort St. James National Historic Site
Free Beef Dips, fun old fashioned activities all day. A special appreciation day for our friends and visitors where admission is free for every one. Parks Canada employees will also be on hand to discuss the management plan review with participants.



Your Thoughts: Questionnaire

Fort St. James National Historic Site Management Plan Review

This summer we will be gathering and analyzing information that will feed into the management planning process. We welcome your thoughts on the future of Fort St. James NHS. Please fill out this questionnaire and return it to us by:

- dropping it off in person at the Visitor Centre of the Fort St. James NHS
- mailing it to: Fort St. James National Historic Site
P.O. Box 1148
Fort St. James, BC
VoJ 1P0
- scanning and e-mailing it to: amber.stewart@pc.gc.ca
- faxing it to: (250) 996-8566

1. What would your visit to Fort St. James National Historic Site look like in an ideal future? What strengths should we build on? What can be improved?

2. How can we increase the site's volunteer base and strengthen existing relationships?

3. How can we better integrate the tramway and the pathway into the visitor experience?

4. Other comments

For more information on the management plan review or to add your name to our mailing list for further updates, please contact:

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