



# GROS MORNE

NATIONAL PARK  
OF CANADA

## *Management Plan*





MONTH 2009

# GROS MORNE

NATIONAL PARK  
OF CANADA

*Management Plan*

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## Foreword



Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas offer Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast unique opportunities to experience and understand our wonderful country. They are places of learning, recreation and fun where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada.

From our smallest national park to our most visited national historic site to our largest national marine conservation area, each of these places offers Canadians and visitors unique opportunities to experience Canada. These places of beauty, wonder and learning are valued by Canadians – they are part of our past, our present and our future.

Our Government's goal is to ensure that each of these special places is conserved.

We see a future in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities, and the vitality of our society.

Our Government's vision is to build a culture of heritage conservation in Canada by offering Canadians exceptional opportunities to experience our natural and cultural heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Gros Morne National Park of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Gros Morne National Park of Canada Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim Prentice'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Jim Prentice**  
*Minister of the Environment*



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*



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*Chief Executive Officer*  
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*Field Unit Superintendent*  
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## Executive Summary



Gros Morne Mountain. Parks Canada

The new Management Plan for Gros Morne National Park of Canada sets out a vision for the future that seeks to preserve and strengthen the ecological integrity of the park in a way that integrates ecological, cultural, social, and economic values. The plan supports high-quality meaningful visitor experiences, and public education based on the park's ecological and cultural heritage, and seeks to ensure sustainability of traditional and recreational activities. Some of the key strategies and actions that will be taken during the life of this management plan include:

### **Working With Communities**

Local residents help visitors appreciate the importance of Gros Morne. It is important that Parks Canada continue to build and maintain positive working partnerships with our local communities, communicating goals to community stakeholders and encouraging a culture of conservation among residents that is key to the long-term sustainability of Gros Morne.

### **Strategic Goal**

- Local residents have positive personal connections to the park so they become stewards and understand and appreciate the need to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of Gros Morne.

### **Key Actions**

- Participate in projects of common interest to foster mutual understanding and increased participation in programs and collaborative arrangements.
- Work closely with local communities to offer programs for visitors that enhance their understanding of our shared heritage values.
- Continue to maintain open communications with residents and community leaders in order to better support *Engaging Canadians* objectives and facilitate understanding of Parks Canada's mandate.

### Ecosystem Health

The 2005 *State of the Park Report* (SOPR) for Gros Morne National Park stated that the health of the park is fair but declining. Of particular concern is the continued degradation of the forest ecosystem. Parks Canada's highest priority is ensuring the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity in our national parks. This commitment lies at the heart of Gros Morne's management plan, and is the key to its future.

#### Strategic Goals

- The normal processes, structure and function of the park's terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems will be maintained in, or restored to, a healthy state.
- To engage and involve partners, key stakeholders and the broader public in a dialogue with Parks Canada regarding the ecosystem health in Gros Morne, to gauge public opinion with respect to different management options and to provide opportunities for Canadians to be involved in the protection of Gros Morne.

#### Key Actions

- Raise awareness and understanding of the ecosystem health in Gros Morne National Park and its impact on ecological integrity.
- Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to maintain and restore the ecosystem health of the park.
- Develop interactive visitor programming that promotes an awareness of ecosystem health issues in the park.
- Develop a Citizen Science program that provides opportunities for Canadians to be involved in the research, monitoring and protection of the national park.



Arctic hare. Roger Eddy

### Visitor Experience

In keeping with the global trend toward experiential tourism, Gros Morne encourages meaningful experiences that draw visitors outdoors, into park ecosystems and into local cultures and communities. We seek to provide a menu from which a visitor can select opportunities to meet their needs and interests. These will be developed through a focus on three areas: conducting visitor research, providing information and orientation, and enhancing visitor experience opportunities.

#### Strategic Goal

- Visitors are inspired to connect with Gros Morne's natural places and cultural heritage, creating lasting memories.

#### Key Actions

- Gros Morne will continue to monitor trends in tourism, and undertake research to better understand the values and expectations of our current and potential visitors, in order to better guide investments or make adjustments in programs, services and facilities.
- Offer a choice of high-quality learning experiences based on authentic first-hand connections with the park's ecology and culture.
- In partnership with the tourism industry create a strong sense of the "World Heritage Experience" through the development of products and experiences that are intimately connected with the outstanding UNESCO values of the park.

### Education and Learning

Gros Morne maintains an active interpretation and outreach program that is intended to inform, influence and involve Canadians in the protection of their natural and cultural heritage. A range of quality interpretive programs currently engage Canadian and international visitors in ways that enable them to discover the stories and treasures of Gros Morne's natural and cultural heritage.

**Strategic Goal**

- Visitors to Gros Morne National Park and surrounding area understand and appreciate the park's landscape history, conservation issues, and opportunities for stewardship.

**Key Actions**

- Parks Canada will focus on key audiences in order to achieve long-term results that are in keeping with the *Engaging Canadians* strategy.

**Cultural Resource Protection**

The Gros Morne area has a long and rich human history dating from about 4500 years ago. The protection and celebration of culture provide a powerful opportunity for working with local communities and Aboriginal partners to tell the story of Gros Morne.

**Strategic Goals**

- Cultural resources within Gros Morne National Park will be protected and the associated themes presented.
- Cultural resources will be protected and presented in a way that is meaningful from the local community's and Aboriginal people's perspective and provides for their telling of the story.

**Key Actions**

- Encourage and support local communities in the protection and presentation of their cultural and historic resources.
- Continue to build relationships with the province's four Aboriginal groups (Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Innu and Labrador Métis) to enable them to present their culture and history.
- Increase public appreciation, understanding and respect for cultural heritage through public involvement in the management, protection and presentation of cultural resources.



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## 1.0 Introduction



Tablelands and Bonne Bay. Geoff Hancock

### 1.1 A PARK OF MANY PLACES

National parks are some of Canada's most recognized treasures, each a celebrated part of our nation-wide family of special places. Among our most rewarding and meaningful destinations, each national park is integral to Canada's vision of protecting natural environments that represent the diversity of our land and our people. These are places of renewal and connection, where we experience the wonder and richness of our heritage. When Canadians work together to protect these spaces and build upon our park system, we are doing much more than preserving the integrity of our wild lands – we are preserving the very things that define us as Canadians.

Gros Morne National Park of Canada is set in the Long Range Mountains on the west coast of Newfoundland. The landscape at Gros Morne ranks among the most spectacular and diverse in Canada: towering cliffs and dramatic fjord valleys, glacial lakes, coastal bogs and dunes, and highland plateau. This is a place where Woodland caribou and Arctic hare roam freely over the arctic-alpine barrens and where archaeological evidence has provided a record of human history that goes back almost 4500 years.

Located on the Northern Peninsula (MAP 1), the park encompasses 1805 km<sup>2</sup> of the mountainous and coastal areas characteristic of western Newfoundland. Eight communities lie adjacent to the park, home to a total population of 4000 people (MAP 2). Deer Lake, the regional service centre, lies 37 km to the south.

### 1.2 MANAGEMENT PLANNING AT GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK

A park management plan is a strategic guide, or blueprint, for the future management of a national park. The *Gros Morne National Park Management Plan* constitutes the framework within which subsequent management, detailed planning and implementation will take place over the next 10 to 15 years. It is required by legislation, guided by public consultation, approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, and tabled in Parliament.

Integration of protection, education and memorable experiences is the foundation for our work, while ensuring that we are relevant to and representative of Canadians. The goal of the plan is to direct the long-term management actions and directions for Gros Morne as it protects, presents and provides opportunities for visitors to experience the natural and cultural richness of our region. The plan is prepared in keeping with the *Canada National Parks Act* (2000) and *Parks Canada's Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* (1994).

This will be the second management plan for Gros Morne. The 1984 management plan focused on two key themes: defining specific development obligations flowing from the 1973 *Federal-Provincial Agreement* that established Gros Morne National Park; and



Round table on the Gros Morne management plan. *Sheldon Stone*

defining approaches to managing traditional land uses.

The new management plan for Gros Morne sets out a vision for the future that seeks to preserve and strengthen the ecological integrity of the park in a way that integrates ecological, social, and economic values. The plan supports high-quality, meaningful visitor experiences based on the park's

ecological and cultural heritage and seeks to ensure sustainability of traditional and recreational activities. Parks Canada recognizes the critical importance of engaging the support of others – land managers, adjacent landowners, Aboriginal groups, and local residents – in protecting the shared regional ecosystem.

Extensive public consultations on the management plan have taken place. Management issues and actions were presented for comment at open houses and roundtable discussions with stakeholders representing regional, provincial and national interests. Opportunities to provide feedback on the plan were also provided via the Parks Canada web site. Our stakeholders provided the planning team with valuable insights, and played an important role in shaping the 2008 management plan.





## 2.0 Importance of Gros Morne National Park of Canada to the National Park System



Long Range Highlands. Parks Canada

Parks Canada is responsible to Canadians for administering national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Together these national treasures protect representative elements of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. First created with the establishment of Banff National Park more than 120 years ago, the goal of the national parks system is to represent each of Canada's natural regions.

Established in 1973, Gros Morne National Park of Canada is, according to the *Canada National Parks Act*, dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, and is to be maintained and made use of so as to leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Gros Morne National Park protects for all time the ecological integrity of the Western Newfoundland Highlands natural region and an eastern portion of the St. Lawrence Lowlands natural region. It is the only

national park to represent the Western Newfoundland Highlands and is the largest of any protected area within this natural region. The park's UNESCO World Heritage Site designation recognizes its exceptional natural beauty and outstanding examples of major stages in the earth's geological evolution, illustrated by geological formations found within the park.

Gros Morne is dominated by the Long Range Mountains, which rise abruptly to a plateau with elevations of over 800 m. The park includes 284 km of diverse coastline, a climate influenced by the Gulf of St. Lawrence, unique and varied geology, and dramatic topography shaped by periods of glaciation over the last 2 million years. Together these factors have created a remarkable diversity of habitats and physical features within the park area, including an arctic-alpine environment on the plateau, boreal forest dominated by balsam fir on

the slopes and inland valleys, a large area of serpentine barrens, extensive wetlands, and many significant geological features.

The arctic-alpine plateau is a significant feature of the Western Newfoundland Highlands natural region and is well represented in the park. This extensive area supports numerous rare alpine plants that thrive on the limestone escarpments, serpentine bedrock, wetlands, and snowbed habitats of the plateau. The plateau also supports some of the most southerly populations of rock ptarmigan and Arctic hare, and contains the region's largest and most important calving ground for woodland caribou at Big Level.

One of the most striking habitats and geological features in the Western Newfoundland Highlands natural region is the serpentine barrens. The barrens are well represented by the Tablelands in the southern section of the park. This area is underlain by ultramafic bedrock originating in the Earth's mantle many kilometres below the surface. The major rock type, peridotite, has a high magnesium and iron content which is toxic to many plants and low in other nutrients required by most plants. As a result, the barrens are sparsely vegetated, and the plants that do survive there form a unique botanical community with adaptations to the site's harsh conditions.

The suite of rocks in Gros Morne presents an internationally significant illustration of the process of continental drift on the eastern coast of North America and contributes greatly to the scientific community's knowledge and understanding of plate tectonics. The Tablelands are one of the few places on Earth where a complete cross-section of rocks from the ocean's crust and mantle are well exposed, accessible, and protected within a national park.

Other features of geological significance include outstanding glacial features such as moraines, troughs and raised beaches, and several fossil sites including a section

of cliff at Green Point that has been designated the *Global Stratotype Section and Point* for the boundary between the Cambrian and Ordovician periods of the international geological time scale. The park also includes a diversity of wetlands including bogs, fens, salt marsh, alder swales and wet meadows characteristic of boreal ecosystems adapted to high precipitation and cool summers.

Gros Morne National Park contributes to the protection of the broader regional ecosystem by protecting critical and significant habitat. Western Brook is the region's only scheduled salmon river whose watershed lies completely within a protected area. Woodland caribou, which are characteristic of the region's ecosystem, migrate into the park's Big Level, a preferred area for birthing and rearing their young in spring.

The region is also home to a significant population of the endangered Newfoundland marten. The re-establishment of a functional marten population in the park depends on maintaining sufficient connected forest habitat and preventing accidental snaring and trapping. The Main River, a Canadian Heritage River, flows from the northeastern boundary of the park. The river and its watershed are considered when addressing the connectivity of the park to the regional ecosystem.

Gros Morne belongs to all Canadians. Although Parks Canada has been entrusted with the day-to-day operation of this special place, caring and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of Gros Morne has been the privilege of the park staff in collaboration with community residents, Aboriginal partners and many stakeholders. Working groups such as the Mayor's Forum, the Resident Snowmobile Management Board and Citizen Science projects demonstrate the park's leadership in ensuring the engagement and involvement of Canadians here at Gros Morne.

### 3.0 Planning Context / Current Situation



Lobster Cove Head lighthouse. Sheldon Stone

#### 3.1 HISTORY

The Gros Morne area has been home to humans for about 4500 years. Over the millennia, Maritime Archaic Indians, Groswater and Dorset Palaeo-Eskimos, Recent Indians and Mi'kmaq have inhabited the different coves and headlands. Europeans, mainly French and English, settled this area in the early 1800s. Vikings and Basques visited the area hundreds of years before. Commercial forestry began in the late 1800s, but the cod and other fisheries remained the primary industry of the area.

Land uses that predate the park's establishment include: animal grazing, domestic woodcutting, hunting and trapping. Prior to the establishment of the park numerous exotic species including moose and snowshoe hare were introduced as a food source. Under the *Federal-Provincial Agreement*, traditional harvesting of timber for domestic use and snaring of snowshoe hare continues to be permitted in select management areas of the park, and commercial fishing is supported at eight fish landing and staging areas.

Historically, the higher regions of the Long Range Mountains were remote and largely undisturbed by human use. Prior to the establishment of the park, this area was subject to some hunting, trapping, and berry

picking. In recent years the Long Range has become popular with hikers and snowmobilers. Human use in areas adjacent to the park's eastern boundary is increasing significantly as a result of newly constructed logging roads and snowmobile trails which provide improved access to this formerly remote area of the park. Big game outfitters also continue to expand into the region.

Today, tourism contributes significantly to the economy of the park's eight adjacent communities (Trout River, Woody Point, Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook, Norris Point, Rocky Harbour, Sally's Cove, St. Paul's, and Cow Head). The national park plays an important role in the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. The tourism industry, which has developed around the



Hiker on the Long Range. Michael Burzynski

national park, also plays an important role in the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Resident and non-resident visitors to GMNP during 2004 spent an estimated \$35 million, 15% of total tourism-related spending in the province (estimated at \$800 million). One quarter of the 431,600 non-resident visitors to the province visited the area. With over 120 permanent staff based in Gros Morne, the park is the face of the federal government in the region.

A number of utility corridors and roads serving these communities pass through the park. Highway 430, which runs the length of the park, is the only road access to the Great Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador.



Skiing at Bad Weather Pond. Sheldon Stone

The Trans-Labrador Highway is under construction and will link Southern and Central Labrador with mainland Canada's highway system through Western Labrador. In October 2005, the Trans-Labrador Highway and Route 430 were designated as part of the National Highway System.

### 3.2 SUMMARY OF THE STATE OF THE PARK REPORT

Ensuring the ecological integrity of Gros Morne National Park is a fundamental goal of this management plan. Gros Morne has ecological integrity if all the plants and animals representing its natural ecosystem still thrive, and there is assurance that there will be long-term persistence of those species and the natural processes that shape their habitats.

A *State of the Park Report* for Gros Morne was completed in June 2005. It presented an assessment of the ecological integrity of the park based on current research and monitoring information. The report determined that the health of the park ecosystems is considered fair but declining. The major challenges for the park were listed as: non-native animal and plant species (moose in particular), adjacent land use (loss of connectivity, loss of habitat and increasing number of roads), transportation and communication corridors passing through the park, and park operations.

All ecosystems have to date retained the abiotic and biotic components and biological communities that characterize the St. Lawrence Lowlands and Western Newfoundland Highlands natural regions, and at the landscape scale, the natural processes that define the natural region. The forest ecosystem is the main focus of the park's EI monitoring and restoration program and the key objectives and actions outlined in this plan, once undertaken, should help to maintain or improve the park's ecological health.

Respecting, understanding and facilitating the relationship between Gros Morne and visitors are essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park. A 2002 survey of the effectiveness of exhibits at the Discovery Centre concluded that all exhibit components exceeded 50% in top-box analysis of satisfaction. The exhibits, which present information about national significance, greater landscape change, and ecological stresses, engage 25,000 to 30,000 visitors each year. A further park-wide visitor survey in 2004 indicated that 50% of visitors rate interpretation programs as 5-out-of-5 in importance and 60% rate them as 5-out-of-5 for satisfaction, again meeting or exceeding top-box satisfaction targets. Parks Canada would like to ensure that 50% of park visitors are exposed to a national



Lobster Cove Head campfire. Sheldon Stone

park learning experience. Attendance at park interpretive programs is a long tradition; however, visitors are now also exposed to a broad range of other learning experiences, such as the in-park school program, the Discovery Centre, and the interpretive boat tours (the Western Brook Pond tour carries about 30,000 visitors annually).

Recently available data indicate that Gros Morne is providing positive visitor experiences. A majority of the current visitors to Gros Morne are independent travellers who are looking for outdoor recreational activities and usually spend a few days in the region. There are also a small percentage of tour groups who normally have only a few hours to spend, taking in some sightseeing and specific experiences. Development of relevant learning and engagement opportunities for audiences such as local residents, new Canadians and youth is a part of the parks long-term planning.

Visitor Experience data was obtained through the 2004 park-wide visitor survey. This survey measured numbers of visitors, patterns of use and various indicators of the visitor's trip experience including the importance of a range of facilities in relation to their experience. Ninety-seven percent of those surveyed indicated that their trip to the park met or exceeded their expectations. Over 90% of visitors determined prior to leaving home that they would visit Gros Morne, indicating that the park was a key criterion in their decision to visit the province. All facilities that exceeded 50% top-box in importance also received over 50% in satisfaction with one exception, picnic areas.

### 3.3 PLANNING HISTORY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In the past 10 years there has been a conscious effort to improve how the park engages Canadians. Working groups of park staff and local residents, Aboriginal partners and stakeholders have been formed to deal with both specific issues and general communications and relationships. These proactive consultations and ongoing relationships have provided park managers with needed assistance in managing long-standing issues in Gros Morne such as snowmobile use and the domestic timber harvest. Regular meetings with local mayors, the tourism industry and the province's Aboriginal people have been beneficial to all groups as new ways of working together are forged. Gros Morne strives to be a working example of the Agency's *Engaging Canadians* strategy in all areas of our mandate.

This approach to engaging Canadians in the management of Gros Morne was naturally adopted during the management planning process. This included input from the park's external working groups, one-on-one consultations with various stakeholders and a round-table discussion that included community, Aboriginal, tourism and environmental leaders. Information on the planning process and an invitation to be involved was extended to Canadians across the country through the Parks Canada website.

### 3.4 VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES

Gros Morne National Park will continue to be a place where residents and visitors can participate in activities that help them appreciate and value Canada's natural and cultural heritage. The management plan for Gros Morne encourages visitors and local residents to safely enjoy meaningful experiences in the park, in a manner that respects the integrity of park environments and the sustainability of the Gros Morne region.

The diverse landscape of Gros Morne National Park provides for a wide range of recreational activities within the park, from picnicking, sightseeing, and short frontcountry walks, to more adventurous backcountry hiking, skiing, and sea kayaking. Backcountry hiking and skiing is managed through designated campsites and sign-out procedures, while recreational snowmobiling is managed in accordance with an established management plan that includes designated seasons, areas and numbers for snowmobiling.

To support these recreational activities, the park operates a variety of facilities and services. Among these are five campgrounds, a variety of day-use areas and picnic sites, the area's only indoor swimming pool, three boat-launching and docking facilities, and a system of 19 hiking trails. Groomed cross-country ski trails and backcountry ski huts are provided in partnership with the Gros Morne Co-operating Association and other community organizations. Under a concession arrangement, the private sector provides

sightseeing boat tours into Western Brook Pond and Trout River Pond.

Gros Morne has significant educational value for visitors, people who live in the region, local educators and educational institutions. Gros Morne directly supports local initiatives such as the outdoor education program at Killdevil Camp, outreach programs for local schools, professional development for educators at Teachers Institutes, and learning vacations offered in partnership with travel tour operators. Visitors to Gros Morne are able to explore self-guiding interpretive trails, enjoy exhibits at the Discovery Centre, Broom Point fishing exhibit, and Lobster Cove Head lighthouse, and experience a diverse range of personal interpretation programs delivered by highly knowledgeable and experienced park staff. The park supports and welcomes the expanded involvement of local residents who contribute to the facilitation of meaningful experiences for visitors.

Gros Morne's experiences must extend beyond park visitors and reach out to all Canadians as identified in the *Engaging Canadians* strategy. This plan supports new park initiatives that reach a broader national and international audience. These initiatives include the Artist-in-Residence, Gros Morne Summer Music, and Musician in Residence programs that offer a new forum for learning about and experiencing Gros Morne.

## 4.0 Vision



Trout River Pond. Michael Burzynski

*In Gros Morne time is marked in rock and wood. A hulking drift of continent upends an ocean floor. Stunted sprawls of juniper etch three centuries of rings. Such are the primal prints we seek, the lifelines that we hold.*  
 (Gros Morne Timelines, 2000)

Our communities and our park are one – a vital link in the relationship with the land and our heritage. Together, we enrich visitor experiences with friendly hospitality, tales of folklore and stories from our past. We are the people of Gros Morne. We are of Innu, Inuit, Mi'kmaq, Métis and European descent. We are proud to be Canadians and we welcome the world to our home. Visitors will see the relevance of Gros Morne's heritage through the vibrant expression of our own connection with the culture, the land, and the community we share.

We work in partnership and harmony to build a culture of conservation in Canada – starting in our own backyard. Together, we will set a course for our future and share in the responsibility to get there hand in hand. We will restore Gros Morne's integrity by focusing on improved scientific studies that add to our traditional knowledge of park ecosystems. We will manage the influences that reduce biological diversity or impair ecosystem health, and apply ecosystem-based management principles to all our decision-making. As positive leaders in environmental stewardship we will be a model for other communities, Canada, and the world.

Gros Morne National Park of Canada is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, designated in recognition of its exceptional natural beauty and geological value. Our forest, barrens and wetlands and freshwater, seacoast and

marine landscapes are part of people's lives. We will maintain and celebrate these unique landscapes at locations such as the Old Man at Trout River, the Head at Cow Head, the Tablelands, Big Level and Western Brook Pond.

We are guides to visitors from around the world, opening doors to places of discovery, learning, reflection and recreation in all seasons. As a tourism icon for the province, we recognize our responsibility to continue working confidently with industry in promoting a sustainable region. Through partnerships such as the Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism, the region will become a model for sustainable tourism.

Our visitors are also our neighbours: Aboriginal peoples, new Canadians, seasoned travelers and adventure seekers, young and old, and they have decided to spend their quality time with us. We will, in turn,

provide them with the opportunity to have a meaningful experience. They will experience the winds blowing down from the Long Range, smell the bog of the coastal plains and connect to the cultural landscape through a history that has been shaped for over 4500 years. Our visitors will be touched in ways they can't describe. Through these experiences, visitors from all corners of the world will come to share in the responsibility for protecting Gros Morne National Park for the benefit and enjoyment of all Canadians, and all humanity.

*In Gros Morne time is marked in rock and wood. Snowdrifts the shape of the continents cling to the towering Tablelands. The sapling planted by a boy grows to a memory for his children's children. Such are the lifelines we conceive, the timeless impressions that we hold.*  
(Gros Morne Timelines, 2000)

## 5.0 Key Strategies for Gros Morne National Park



Public consultation in Glenburnie. *Trudy Taylor-Walsh*

Each of these strategies, though defined separately here, are part of a network of ideas, strategies, and actions for management of Gros Morne National Park. Parks Canada takes an integrated approach to achieving objectives of ecological integrity, commemorative integrity, education, and connection to place. These core concepts of Parks Canada's mandate underline the five key strategies for the 2008 Gros Morne National Park Management Plan:

1. Share the leadership with our residents, Aboriginal partners and stakeholders.
2. Improve and restore the health of Gros Morne's forest ecosystem.
3. Develop innovative visitor experiences that are based on research and provided through creative partnerships.
4. Focus our Education and Learning Program on the significance of Gros Morne and the health of its forest ecosystem.
5. Connect with our cultural heritage.

The intent is that strategies and actions undertaken in one area will act in unison with the actions of another.

### 5.1 SHARING THE LEADERSHIP

*"We work in partnership and harmony to build a culture of conservation in Canada, starting in our own backyard. Together, we will set a course for our future and share in the responsibility to get there hand in hand."* (section 4.0 Vision, p.11)

Gros Morne National Park belongs to the people of Canada. All citizens should feel confident they have an opportunity to participate in key decisions that affect their park. This management plan was developed in collaboration with a large group of dedicated community residents, Aboriginal partners, and local, provincial and national stakeholders. Likewise, the successful implementation of this plan will involve continued partnerships and shared leaderships.

Local residents, Aboriginal partners and stakeholders are integral to the success of Gros Morne National Park. Collaborative mechanisms such as the Connectivity Working Group, Mayors' Forum and the Management Planning Round Tables facilitate open communication between staff, partners and stakeholders, and members of the public. It is important that Parks Canada continue to build on the successes of these different collaborative management teams.

#### *Strategic Goals*

- Residents, Aboriginal partners and stakeholders have positive personal connections to the park so they become stewards and understand and appreciate the need to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of Gros Morne.
- Ecological, social and economic systems in the park and regional ecosystems benefit from shared leadership.

### Key Actions

- Make collaborative stewardship initiatives a primary responsibility of park managers.
- Identify opportunities for enhancing service and programs through collaborative stewardship and assign staff to facilitate the involvement of others.
- Place a priority on projects that engage community, Aboriginals, youth and volunteers in working directly with park staff.
- Continue to work with stakeholders on issue-based collaborative management teams.
- Maintain open communications with all partners in order to better support the *Engaging Canadians* objectives and facilitate understanding of Parks Canada's mandate.
- Engage interested stakeholders in monitoring and research projects.
- Develop a training and awareness program that rejuvenates staff, tourism partners and residents with passion for the park's UNESCO World Heritage designation and that inspires them to be ambassadors.

### 5.2 IMPROVING AND RESTORING FOREST HEALTH

Based on an analysis of the park's research and monitoring programs, and on assessments by researchers working in the park, the health of Gros Morne National Park in 2005 is considered to be fair, but declining (TABLE 1). Of particular concern is the continued degradation of the forest ecosystem in the park. This is the single most important ecological challenge within Gros Morne National Park and is a priority for this management plan. Parks Canada's goal in this management plan is to outline a program to maintain or restore the ecological integrity of Gros Morne National Park and to communicate that effort to Canadians.

Gros Morne National Park represents the Western Newfoundland Highlands natural region. The balsam fir forests found on the slopes and valleys of the Long Range Mountains are an important part of this region. The quality of the forest ecosystem is declining as a result of hyper-abundant moose. Moose are restricting the regeneration of balsam fir and hardwood trees and as a result, the park's balsam fir and mixed wood forests are being converted to open areas dominated by grasses and shrubs.

Indicator Ecosystems	Condition and Trend of Ecosystem	Percent of Park Area	Rationale for Rating
Forest	POOR ↓ Deteriorating condition	44	Extreme moose density is affecting regeneration. Decline in forest connectivity outside the park. High percentage of non-native mammals. Loss of Newfoundland wolf, decline of Newfoundland marten and red crossbill.
Barrens	FAIR ↓ Deteriorating condition	35	Declining woodland caribou.
Wetlands	FAIR ↓ Deteriorating condition	11	Decline of woodland caribou. Increase in non-native species.
Freshwater	GOOD ↔ Stable condition	8.8	Healthy invertebrate populations. Concerns about Atlantic salmon, brook trout, and non-native rainbow trout.
Seacoast	FAIR ↑ Improving condition	0.2	Only a few pairs of terns continue to nest in the park. Dunes and coastal forest are recovering from historic grazing, trampling, and human use.
Marine	FAIR ↓ Deteriorating condition	1	Over-exploitation of many species.

**Table 1. The State of Indicator Ecosystems in Gros Morne National Park.** Rising arrow indicates improving condition, falling arrow indicates deteriorating condition, and side-to-side arrow indicates stable condition. (*State of the Park Report, 2005*)

*“We will manage the influences that reduce biological diversity or impair ecosystem health, and apply ecosystem-based management principles to all our decision-making.” (section 4.0 Vision, p.11)*

The ecological integrity of Gros Morne National Park is closely tied to its surrounding landscape and regional or global trends. Many woodland caribou, for example, migrate to habitats far outside the park boundary to find food in winter months or to escape natural disturbances. Small populations of Newfoundland marten inside the park rely on immigration and genetic exchange from marten living in the landscape around the park. Such exchange requires connectivity – or connected habitat – with the greater ecosystem. Activities adjacent to the park, such as industrial and domestic forest harvesting, cabin development, and expanding recreational use, have the effect of isolating ecological communities within the park from the greater ecosystem surrounding the park. Access and utility corridors provide easy access to formerly remote areas, modify the behaviour of native species, and allow invasion of a broad range of non-native plant species.

#### **Strategic Goals**

- The normal processes, structure and function of the park’s forest ecosystem will be maintained in, or restored to, a healthy state.
- Partners, key stakeholders and the broader public will be engaged in a dialogue with Parks Canada regarding the ecosystem health in Gros Morne, to gauge public opinion with respect to different management options and to provide opportunities for Canadians to be involved in the protection of Gros Morne.

#### **Key Actions**

- Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement a forest health plan for the park.
- Develop interactive visitor interpretation programming to raise awareness and understanding of the forest health in Gros Morne National Park and its impact on ecological integrity.
- Facilitate opportunities for visitor involvement in park presentation and protection including: forest restoration projects, moose, Arctic hare and caribou monitoring/research projects and associated volunteer activities.



Western Brook Pond. Sheldon Stone

### 5.3 DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Today's travelers seek to create their own memories through involvement in activities that match their interests and that provide a sense of accomplishment, new knowledge, and an authentic sense of "place". Gros Morne National Park seeks to spark people's imaginations and engage the senses by sharing the park's outstanding UNESCO world heritage values, celebrating its natural conservation and social achievements, and providing access to its unique natural landscapes and beautiful vistas. We aim to challenge the intellect with opportunities that offer insights into the culture and ecology of the park area, facilitate opportunities to contribute to the conservation of natural resources, or go behind the scenes to better understand park conservation and management.

Providing opportunities for visitors to enjoy first-hand experiences is fundamental to Parks Canada's mandate and is essential for long-term public support for this system of protected areas. The heart of this objective is to ensure that our programs are representative of Canada, relevant and engaging to Canadians, and facilitated in a way that visitors can make personal connections with their natural and cultural heritage.

*"Our visitors will be touched in ways they can't describe. Through these experiences, visitors from all corners of the world will come to share in the responsibility for protecting Gros Morne National Park for the benefit and enjoyment of all Canadians, and all humanity." (section 4.0 Vision, p.11)*

In 2004, a park-wide survey was conducted to measure numbers of visitors, patterns of use and various indicators of the trip experience. There is a need to undertake further research to better understand the values and expectations of our current and potential visitors.

During the management planning roundtable, participants were asked what they would encourage a friend to experience while visiting GMNP. The purpose of the question was to understand what places, facilities, services and experiences are considered by our stakeholders to represent the park and



Showy ladyslipper. Michael Burzynski

provide positive experiences. At the same time it would help to identify for park staff what stakeholders and visitors perceive as resources of highest personal value. As the participants provided their answers they shared with each other what was meaningful to them and how they have connected to this special region. These experiences will provide the focus of future visitor experience opportunities until more directed visitor research is complete.

Gros Morne National Park campgrounds have been steadily declining in demand, going from 15,779 camper nights in 2002 to 9,754 camper nights in 2007, representing a 38% reduction. All sites in Gros Morne are unserviced. Nationally, the demand for this level of service in campgrounds is declining. Private campgrounds, located within the eight communities adjacent to the park, have increased from 3 campgrounds with 80 sites to 6 campgrounds with 280 sites in the past 15 years. The private campgrounds offer fully serviced sites and their demand is increasing in line with the current national trend. Demand for private roofed accommodations within the adjacent communities is also increasing.

#### Strategic Goals

- Visitors are inspired to connect with Gros Morne's natural places, cultural heritage, and UNESCO world heritage values, creating lasting memories.
- Ensure that the camping experience offered in Gros Morne is of the highest quality.

**Key Actions**

- Continue to monitor trends in tourism, and undertake research to better understand the values and expectations of our current and potential visitors.
- Explore and develop authentic first-hand visitor experience opportunities by blending science, the arts and local knowledge and culture.
- In partnership with the tourism industry create a strong sense of the “World Heritage Experience” through the development of products and experiences that are intimately connected with the outstanding UNESCO values of the park.
- In partnership with L’Anse aux Meadows NHS and Red Bay NHS position this region as a UNESCO World Heritage destination.
- Improve reception by creating an atmosphere where visitors have a strong sense of having arrived at a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Provide visitors with meaningful information at each stage of their visit, including the full range of available activities in the park, and visitor safety.
- Enable park staff and local tourism operators to share with visitors an understanding of the park’s natural and cultural heritage through improved orientation, training and accreditation programs.
- Assist visitors to make personal connections with local residents, park staff and other visitors.
- Work with others to provide a suite of opportunities and high-quality services throughout the park area that are based on the needs and expectations of Gros Morne’s visitors to enable them to create their own meaningful visitor experience.
- Perform an in-depth market analysis of the camping and roofed accommodation offer in and around the national park to help Parks Canada understand current and future needs.
- Review and evaluate the current campground offer in the context of currently established regional campground and other types of accommodation.

**5.4 EDUCATION AND LEARNING**

*“We are guides to visitors from around the world, opening doors to places of discovery, learning, reflection and recreation in all seasons.”*  
 (section 4.0 Vision, p.11)

**Engaging Canadians**

Ecological integrity depends on informed choices by people whose behavior and decisions influence the future health of ecosystems. Through increased knowledge and understanding, Canadians are encouraged to become actively involved in long-term protection efforts. Park management is committed to maintaining the integrity of the regional ecosystem through partnerships, meaningful learning experiences, and a diverse heritage presentation program. These initiatives play an important role in communicating the need for ecological integrity, enhancing public understanding of key ecological processes and stressors, and building an active constituency of local, regional and national support.

*Moving from Consultation to Involvement: Engaging Canadians in the Western Newfoundland and Labrador Field Unit (2004)* outlines the Western Newfoundland and Labrador Field Unit’s translation of national direction on engaging Canadians. Two strategic issues relate most closely to promoting appreciation and public understanding:

- Nurturing relationships between the park and local communities.
- Focusing resources on learning experiences for target audiences.



*The Gros Morne Project at Green Point. Sheldon Stone*



Tablelands guided walk. Sheldon Stone

Gros Morne maintains an active interpretation and outreach program that is intended to inform, influence and involve Canadians in the protection of their natural and cultural heritage. A range of quality interpretive programs currently engages Canadian and international visitors in ways that enable them to discover the stories and treasures of Gros Morne's natural and cultural heritage. Cultivating understanding through meaningful visitor experiences is fundamental to maintaining and restoring the ecological integrity of park ecosystems, and will therefore be part of the park's ongoing strategy as new partnerships and programs are developed, in line with the key objectives for visitor experience. Initiatives such as the Coleman LeMieux & Compagnie's *The Gros Morne Project*, the "out and about" roving interpretation programs, and the incorporation of Aboriginal first-person stories into summer programs, are just a few examples of the future direction of the interpretation and outreach program. Programs tailored to new audiences, including youth, Aboriginals and New Canadians, will also form part of the offer.

To achieve the broadest reach, the outreach program relies heavily on a variety of partnerships. For student outreach, Parks Canada works with teachers to deliver key messages and raise Parks Canada's profile

within the education system. Through the provincial Department of Education, Parks Canada content is being incorporated into the school curriculum. Students are also being reached through interactive programs such as the annual Teachers Institute. The Teachers Institute helps create awareness among teachers of educational opportunities offered by Parks Canada, and provides them with tools and key messages to help meet their curriculum requirements

To reach a broader Canadian audience, Gros Morne provides park information on the Parks Canada website. In addition, we partner with other groups that provide unique opportunities to reach Canadians through their venues and media. The Artist in Residence program, in collaboration with The Rooms – Art Gallery Division, has brought art inspired by the Gros Morne landscape to national and international audiences. A partnership with CBC has led to the creation of the *Gros Morne Time Lines* website and film. The park's interpretation provides a launching pad for personal exploration and connection with the park. The goal of this program is to provide visitors with direct opportunities to learn, discover, and experience the natural and cultural landscape of Gros Morne National Park and nearby communities.

In keeping with the *Engaging Canadians Strategy*, Gros Morne will expand its focus to encompass the following audiences:

*New Canadians.* As society changes and immigration and urbanization increase, reaching out to audiences across Canada is critical to remaining relevant to Canadian citizens.

*Independent Travelers.* This group accounts for 90% of Gros Morne's visitors, and is the most likely to participate in hiking, boat tours, and other outdoor recreational activities where they can enjoy first-hand, meaningful experiences of the park's natural and cultural features.

*Youth.* As tomorrow's decision makers, youth will benefit from greater understanding of how the environment is affected by their individual and collective actions.

*Tour Groups and Learning Vacationers.* Tour groups account for approximately 6.5% of our visitation. This group generally limits its park experiences to sightseeing from the road and visiting major facilities, typically spending a few hours in the park with some groups spending the night in adjacent communities. More of these group tours are learning vacationers, who are looking for authentic, participatory experiences built around a theme.

### **Parks Canada Messages**

Regardless of the audience targeted, or the vehicle used to reach it, the park consistently strives to communicate elements of Parks Canada's mandate and vision in all messages. Setting this context ensures that messages of ecological and commemorative integrity are effectively communicated.

Four key message areas will be communicated to Canadians, park visitors and stakeholders through high-quality, meaningful learning experiences. These include messages related to Canada's national park system, the national significance of Gros Morne National Park, the conservation issues facing the park, and how our audiences can help maintain or restore the integrity of Gros Morne's ecosystems.

1. *Canada's National Park System* – People will understand that Gros Morne is a national park in a Canada-wide family of national



Interpretation panels at Gros Morne Mountain. Sheldon Stone

parcs, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas administered by Parks Canada on behalf of the people of Canada. They will know that the objective of the national park system is to protect representative natural areas of Canadian significance for all time, and to foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this natural heritage so as to leave it in an unimpaired state for future generations.

2. *The Significance of Gros Morne National Park* – People will know that Gros Morne represents the Western Newfoundland Highlands natural region of Canada, and the eastern portion of the St. Lawrence Lowlands natural region. They will appreciate that Gros Morne is recognized internationally as one of the most significant geological sites in the world. Designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987 for its outstanding natural beauty and geological value, Gros Morne provides a world-class illustration of the massive movements of the earth's crust. People will appreciate that fossil sequences within the park have been designated the *Global Stratotype Section and Point* for the boundary between the Cambrian and Ordovician periods of the international geological time scale.

3. *Conservation Issues Facing Gros Morne* – People will appreciate the role of the park as a protected area within a larger regional ecosystem, the challenges to maintaining the ecological integrity of the park as presented in the *State of the Park Report*, and what is being done to address conservation issues. They will appreciate that the park's challenges include understanding the impact of non-native plant and animal species (over-abundance of moose), protecting the Newfoundland marten (a species at risk), and mitigating impacts from adjacent land use including increased habitat fragmentation and loss of forest connectivity.

4. *What We Can Do to Resolve Conservation Issues and Protect Gros Morne* – People will understand that Parks Canada is the lead steward in the protection of the park, but that success can only be achieved through cooperation and shared stewardship with visitors,



Heather Pond. *Michael Burzynski*

communities, and others, both inside and outside the park. They will understand that by having a personal connection with park environments, joining a Friends organization, or becoming informed about park and local conservation issues they are more likely to become a part of the solution in resolving conservation issues. They will understand the power of participating in education or conservation programs, expressing support for the ecological integrity of the region, or simply adopting the practices of “leave no trace” when hiking or camping.

#### *Strategic Goal*

- Gros Morne will be a place where all people can share their stories, knowledge and concern and that sharing will help build a culture of conservation in the region.

#### *Key Actions*

- Provide support to tour guides for high-quality presentation of the natural and cultural values of the Gros Morne area.
- Develop new enhanced heritage presentation opportunities for learning vacationers.
- Work directly with curriculum consultants to integrate Parks Canada stories and themes into the provincial curriculum and develop resources to support the curriculum.

- Continue to support the Western School District in the delivery of an outdoor education program that reaches students within the area’s broader ecosystem.
- Develop and deliver interpretive and educational programs with local schools and communities that will encourage joint stewardship of the national park.
- Develop self-guiding materials on popular topics to provide increased opportunities for teacher-led visits.
- Redistribute the demand for personal programs to the Discovery Centre and, when appropriate, to other staffed facilities such as Lobster Cove Head and Broom Point.
- Continue to pursue innovative partnerships in order to present the heritage of Gros Morne to our audiences through new voices and perspectives in the future.
- Participate in the development of a community heritage tourism strategy that will outline an approach for planning and delivering in the Gros Morne area.
- Explore new ways to reach youth using technology.
- Support national initiatives to engage youth.

### 5.5 CONNECTING WITH OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Gros Morne area has a long and rich human history dating from about 4500 years ago. Cultural resources include the lighthouse at Lobster Cove Head, the Mudge fishing premises at Broom Point, and a number of archaeological sites and artifacts associated with Maritime Archaic Indians, Dorset and Groswater Palaeo-eskimos, Recent Indians and European settlement of the region. The *State of the Park Report* identified that not all cultural resources within the park have been identified and evaluated; however, those that are currently identified are protected and presented in accordance with Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* (1994). Parks Canada is committed to identifying, protecting and presenting the wide range of cultural resources in its care. Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* governs the administration of cultural resources in national parks and establishes the following principles by which they will be managed: value, public benefit, understanding, respect and integrity.

The protection and celebration of culture provide a powerful opportunity for working with local communities and Aboriginal partners to tell the story of Gros Morne. Some of the area's most significant archaeological resources are located within the communities surrounding the park. The area's cultural heritage includes not only its archaeological resources, but also the folklore and the cultural landscape of resettled communities such as Baker's Brook and Chimney Cove. As we share our passion for this unique heritage and protect and present it to the world, we recognize the profound effect the establishment of the national park has had on the local communities and the contribution the local people have had on the success of Gros Morne.

As a result, Parks Canada will continue to develop partnerships to better understand the pre-contact and historic relationships between people and the environment, to help manage the area's cultural resources, and to ensure that Aboriginal and community voices become an integral part of Parks Canada programs.

Aboriginal partners are a focus for Parks Canada in this Field unit. With our

Aboriginal partners we are exploring how to present the Aboriginal history of this region and the living culture of the Aboriginal communities in the province. This relationship has led to collaboration in the designation and commemoration of Mattie Mitchell as a person of national historic significance, a traveling exhibit about Mi'kmaq history, and the delivery of teacher in-services focused on Aboriginal culture.

#### *Strategic Goals*

- Cultural resources within Gros Morne National Park are protected and the associated themes presented.
- Cultural resources will be protected and presented in a way that is meaningful from the local community's and Aboriginal people's perspective and provides for their telling of the story.

#### *Key Actions*

- Identify cultural resources in the park in consultation with interested parties so that they may be protected and their stories presented to Canadians.
- Encourage and support local communities in the protection and presentation of their cultural and historic resources.
- Continue to build relationships with the province's four Aboriginal groups (Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Innu and Labrador Métis) to enable them to present their culture and history throughout the field unit.
- Foster additional research to develop the themes of Aboriginal history in the field unit.
- Increase public appreciation, understanding and respect for cultural heritage through public involvement in the management, protection and presentation of cultural resources.
- Facilitate research into the cultural heritage (history and living heritage) of the communities with local and other governmental partners and convert that information into new experience opportunities for visitors and residents.
- Work closely with local communities to offer interpretive programs that enhance visitor understanding of our shared heritage values.



## 6.0 Area Management Approach



Caribou on the lowlands. *Sheldon Stone*

Gros Morne National Park – a treasury of boreal ponds, bogs and forest, topped off with a hint of arctic-alpine wonders. The geography of the park, coupled with the services and experiences available throughout the park makes it easy to see three distinct areas for exploration by the visitors and management by park staff: the south side, the central region and the north end. As with the park strategies, these three areas, though defined separately here, are part of a network of ideas, strategies, and actions for management of the entire park.

### 6.1 THE ROAD TO THE TOP OF THE MIDDLE OF THE EARTH, THE SOUTH SIDE

Most visitors travel to the south side of the park via Route 431; this road starts at the community of Wiltondale. Winding its way around Bonne Bay, the road passes through the communities of Glenburnie, Birchy Head and Shoal Brook before reaching the historic town of Woody Point. Travelling from Woody

Point, past the internationally significant Tablelands, visitors are greeted by the fishing community of Trout River at the end of Route 431.

The Tablelands are the most prominent geologic feature in this area of the park and attract geologists and other visitors from around the world. The Tablelands are composed of an igneous rock called peridotite from the upper mantle. The iron in the rock turns rusty as it weathers, giving the barren area tinges of orange, brown mixed with green-coloured serpentine that stand out against the sky. This is one of the few places on earth where the earth's mantle has risen up above the crust and is visible on the surface. A sample of the Mohorovicic Discontinuity, or *moho*, – the transition zone between the earth's crust and mantle—is also visible at this site.

As visitors hike the mantle they can view tiny islands of hardy stunted trees and shrubs, cushion plants and arctic-alpine plants that are able to survive the unusual



Cow Head Peninsula. *Francine Mercier*

mineral composition of the mantle rock that is not conducive to plant growth. Elements such as nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, and calcium, necessary for plant growth, are all uncommon on the Tablelands. In addition, elements such as nickel, magnesium, cobalt, iron and chromium are in high enough abundance that they are toxic to many plants. The resilient plants that cling to the rocks of the Tablelands have adapted to these harsh conditions and are somehow able to survive.

The Discovery Centre, located in Woody Point, is the main interpretive centre for the national park area and the aim is for this facility to become more welcoming to the community. Some of the interpretation at the Discovery Centre is focused on the geology of the Tablelands. Through a combination of personal and non-personal media, visitors are introduced to and encouraged to explore the stories that lie in the natural and cultural environment of this place.

There are a number of cultural and learning activities for visitors to participate in on the south side. There are interpretive walks of the Tablelands on a regular basis, which explain the unique geologic history and associated plants of this area. Trout River Pond, accessed from the town of Trout River, is located adjacent to the Tablelands. The Trout River Pond Boat Tour provides an alternative opportunity for visitors to get up close to the rock of the Tablelands on a guided tour.

There are campgrounds at Trout River and Lomond. Lomond was an historic centre for the forest industry in Western Newfoundland and there are opportunities to visit the site and learn about its history. This site is also becoming the focus of education and visitor opportunities for the park, the province's Aboriginal community and other partners.

There is a landfill site located inside the boundary of the park near the Lomond day-use area. In addition to the site being used by the park, the communities on the south side of the park also rely on the use of the Lomond landfill. The site is managed in cooperation and consultation with the communities on the south side that use the site. The landfill, however, is reaching capacity. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador is in the process of implementing a regional waste management strategy for the island and Parks Canada will continue to work with the communities to facilitate their inclusion as part of this provincial waste management strategy.

There are a variety of trails in the area including the Green Gardens Trail, which takes visitors to the coast, where they can experience the sea stacks and caves eroded from the cliffs of volcanic basalt. A 22 km unmarked backcountry route also provides access to this coastal area for visitors interested in hiking between the communities of Woody Point and Trout River.

Parks Canada's Art in the Park program is based at the Discovery Centre. The Artist in Residence Program for the Park is also based here. There are a number of events which take place in the local communities throughout the summer including Gros Morne

MOOSE. *Anne Marceau*

Summer Music, a series of classical music performances that take place in Woody Point. There is also a writer's festival, "Writers at Woody Point" which is held annually.

The fishing communities in this area provide an opportunity to experience living history and the historic buildings of Woody Point are a cultural point of interest. Trout River has a number of community museum buildings, including an interpretation of the fishing industry in the area, and an interesting geological history.

#### **Public Education Themes**

- *Biodiversity* – Northern limit of many deciduous tree species in the park, plants associated with the Tablelands ecology.
- *Natural Processes* – The exceptional geological and ecological features and associated UNESCO designation.
- *Human History* – Prehistoric sites at Woody Point and contemporary fishing communities with a long history, forest industry at Lomond, and the history of geologic interests in the Tablelands.

#### **Key Actions**

- Improve Aboriginal interpretation through education and visitor experience opportunities at Lomond.
- Find an alternative to the Lomond landfill site that is suitable for the park and the communities in the area.
- Continue to work with the communities to facilitate their inclusion in the province's regional waste management strategy.
- Promote the geological significance of the Tablelands including the park's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Encourage community use of the Discovery Centre.
- Develop marquis programs that bring together the arts, science and communities, and that focus on the ecological integrity and cultural richness of the Gros Morne region.



Newfoundland marten. *Ray Reid*

#### **6.2 FROM THE SEA TO THE SKY, THE CENTRAL AREA**

Starting again at Wiltondale and heading north along Route 430 towards the central portion of the park, visitors travel a stunningly scenic highway with many view-points and interpretation of the surrounding Long Range Mountains, an extension of the Appalachian chain. Here they travel through the northern limit of some of the deciduous tree species that inhabit the park. The route travels around the scenic Eastern Arm of Bonne Bay.

Geographically, the central portion of the park is dominated by Gros Morne Mountain. The mountain is the second highest point on the island of Newfoundland and a hiking trail provides an opportunity for visitors to experience an arctic-alpine-like environment with opportunities to view associated species including Arctic hare, rock ptarmigan and caribou. These species are normally found much further north. The view of the glacially carved Ten Mile Pond is a highlight of this hike for many visitors, which provides an opportunity to get up close to this signifi-

cant feature of the landscape of Gros Morne. Management of the mountain will focus on ensuring the maintenance of ecological integrity, meaningful visitor experiences and visitor safety on the trail in light of increasing use.

The 16-km hike up and around Gros Morne Mountain mountain features high on the priority list for many visitors to the park. This is a sensitive and unique feature of the park and the monitoring program focuses attention on ensuring the ecological sustainability of this well-loved feature. Since the establishment of a monitoring program for the mountain in 2000, there has been an increase in the number of hikers from just over 4000 hikers annually to more than 6000 hikers annually in 2002 and 2003.

There is already an extensive ecological monitoring program in place for Gros Morne Mountain, which includes monitoring Arctic hare, rock ptarmigan and caribou numbers. The trail is closed each spring until the end of June to allow Arctic hare, rock ptarmigan and woodland caribou to rear their young.

Located near the Gros Morne Mountain trailhead is the Mattie Mitchell Trail, which commemorates the life of Mattie Mitchell, a Mi'kmaq guide who has been formally recognized as a person of national historic significance.

There are two source areas where aggregate extraction occurs within the region of the park: Codknox Quarry near the Visitor Reception Centre on Route 430, and Rocky Barachois Pit near the mouth of Rocky Barachois Brook. The *Federal-Provincial Agreement* states, "Aggregate sources which are located within the national park, operated for park uses and contain granular material excess to park needs, will be made available by Parks Canada for provincial and community users, where necessary." These quarries are further discussed in section 10.

The Visitor Reception Centre, located near the town of Rocky Harbour, welcomes visitors to the central area of the park and provides visitors with an opportunity to plan their trip north of the park to the Northern Peninsula and Southern Labrador. The town of Rocky Harbour is a regional service centre and provides visitors with many of the services needed while visiting the park.

Rocky Harbour also hosts Gros Morne Summer Music, and the lighthouse at Lobster Cove Head is a popular cultural aspect of the park's interpretation program. The largest campground in the park is located at Berry Hill just north of Rocky Harbour. The site presents some management challenges in light of the decreasing number of overnight campers at unserviced campsites. Camping in



Logs and firewood on Trout River Pond. Carson Wentzell

the park will undergo a review in light of the changing demographic and resulting changing use levels and styles of the current and predicted future camping public. The Berry Hill Campground area also offers a number of hiking opportunities for all levels including the Bakers Brook Falls trail and the Berry Hill trail, which offers panoramic views of the coastal lowland and surrounding Long Range Mountains.

The adjacent community of Norris Point is located on the shore of Bonne Bay. Memorial University of Newfoundland offers marine biology field courses here, and, in partnership with the co-op, a marine interpretation centre where the ecological significance of Bonne Bay is showcased. Norris Point is a staging area for exploration of the marine components of the park. Located across the bay from Woody Point, Norris Point provides visitors with an exceptional opportunity to view and experience the majesty of the Tablelands against the backdrop of the surrounding landscape of forest and sea.

The *Federal-Provincial Agreement* states that “the traditional rights of fisherpersons to land their catches shall not be disturbed whether they live within the boundaries of the park or not.” The 1983 amendment to the *Federal-Provincial Agreement* established fish landing and staging areas outside the boundaries of the national park. They include: Woody Cove, Little Brook, Baker’s Brook, Lobster Cove, Green Point, Martin’s Point, Gull Marsh, and Western Brook.

These fish landing and staging areas are small parcels of provincially owned land within the confines of the national park. Access to the areas is maintained by Parks Canada. The buildings within these fish staging areas are used by local fisherpersons to store their fishing supplies. There are also some cabins that are used primarily during the fishing season in the summer months. No one lives in the fish staging areas as they are intended to be used solely by fisherpersons during the fishing season.

As long as fisherpersons rely on these areas to land their catches, they will have access to them. When they are no longer needed by fisherpersons, the land will then be transferred to the federal government for

inclusion within the national park. There is a working group in place consisting of fisherpersons working in these areas. These areas are further discussed in section 10.

Green Point offers opportunities to camp in a coastal environment and geologically it is internationally significant as the recognized interface between the Cambrian and Ordovician geologic time periods. Interpreters give tours here throughout the visitor season.

To the north of Green Point, the community of Sally’s Cove offers visitors opportunities to again see commercial fishing activity, a defining aspect of the people and lifestyle of this area. The fishing sheds in this community are popular with photographers. The coastal areas north of Rocky Harbour are a great place to see stunted, windblown trees or tuckamore, a prevalent element of the coastal landscape.

#### **Public Education Themes**

- *Biodiversity* – Alpine tundra plants and animals on the highlands of the Long Range Mountains, large coastal plain with salt marshes.
- *Natural Processes* – Herbivore-carnivore interactions and non-native species.
- *Human History* – Prehistoric sites and contemporary fishing communities with a long history, lighthouse at Lobster Cove Head.

#### **Key Actions**

- Continue to provide meaningful experiences for visitors to Gros Morne Mountain
- Encourage private operators to meet the demand for increased service levels at campgrounds, including the provision of 3-way services for RVs.
- Manage and monitor the use of the Codknock and Rocky Barachois quarries, phase out and then rehabilitate the aggregate quarries when they are no longer required for park purposes.
- Develop a strategy for land use management in the fish staging areas in consultation with users and the provincial government.
- Ensure that the Visitor Reception Centre:



Main River adjacent to Gros Morne National Park. *Francine Mercier*

- Profiles the Newfoundland West and Labrador Field Unit, which consists of two national parks and a number of national historic sites.
- Provides visitors information about opportunities along the Northern Peninsula and Labrador.
- Serves as an orientation centre for Long Range activities and a stage for interpretative programs.
- Provides visitors with a sense of arrival to the region.

### 6.3 COASTAL PLAINS AND THE LONG RANGE, THE NORTH END

Travelling further north, visitors get their first look at the wide coastal plain that leads up to the edge of the Long Range Mountains, a remnant of the glacial periods which carved the signature fjords of Gros Morne. This first becomes visible just south of Sally's Cove and is intermittently evident all the way to Cow Head. The landscape of open ocean and the wide coastal plain leading to the frontal slope of the Long Range Mountains makes for a scenic coastal drive.

A centerpiece of provincial tourism, Western Brook Pond fjord is located in the north section of the park. The Precambrian rock composing the cliffs of Western Brook Pond are formed of 1.25 billion year old rock, the oldest in the park. These cliffs consist primarily of granite, gneiss and schist. The cliffs rise up to 670 m above sea level, encasing Western Brook Pond and draining water from the Long Range highlands above. This drainage contributes little in terms of sediment or organic matter, meaning the water in Western Brook Pond is among the purest in the world.

At Western Brook Pond, a 3-km trail winds over bog and through forests, and takes visitors to the boat tour facilities at the edge of the pond. An interpretive exhibit describes how the fjord was carved through glaciation. The Western Brook Pond trail is the most heavily used in the park, and the boat tour facilities are also in high demand. Here visitors are able to take a tour of the glacially carved fjord. Recent surveys have revealed that Western Brook Pond is one of the top five influences on decisions to visit Gros Morne. Approximately 25,000 visitors

take the boat tour at Western Brook Pond annually.

Carrying capacity has been established for the boat tour on Western Brook Pond. A recently upgraded peat filtration septic system further ensures the maintenance of the ecological integrity of this high use site. The freshwater ecosystem of Gros Morne is considered to be in good condition. Western Brook Pond and the surrounding watershed is the only watershed to be completely inside the boundaries of the national park. The numbers of salmon and trout entering this and other systems in the park are monitored through the use of a salmon fence. Juvenile salmonid surveys are completed regularly as is water quality sampling.

There are a number of trails of varying degrees of difficulty around Western Brook Pond. This trail and boat tour are also the departure area for the Long Range Traverse and the North Rim Traverse. These challenging, multi-day backpacking routes provide the experienced backpacker, possessing orienteering skill, an opportunity to be immersed in the spectacular scenery of the Long Range Mountains.

The Long Range Traverse is the most popular of the backcountry traverses and visitor numbers since 2000 have ranged from a low of 331 annual visitors in 2006 to a high of 504 annual visitors in 2002. Comment cards completed by visitors to the site indicate that

overall, visitors are very satisfied with the experience at the site. The site offers visitors an opportunity to experience true wilderness and associated attributes including solitude and self-reliance in a tundra landscape with views of the famous fjords. This experience allows the visitor to be immersed in the essential elements of the park and provides opportunities to view the native plants and wildlife characteristic of this eco-region with minimum encounters with other parties. There are limits placed on the number of visitors to each of the five designated backcountry campsites along this route in order to ensure that the current positive visitor experience and unique ecological aspects are maintained.

To connect to that which is Gros Morne is really to immerse oneself in the land and sea. Throughout the national park visitors are treated to this experience and the north end offers up its own variety. A short drive north of Sally's Cove is the site of the shipwreck the *S.S. Ethie*, a story of the sea's rage and human triumph. A little further north is the Broom Point Fishing exhibit where an interpretation program provides visitors the opportunity to take a journey back in time and experience the lives of inshore fishermen during the 1960s.

The community of St. Paul's offers a boat tour of St. Paul's Bay. This area provides an opportunity to view seals, ducks and other



Community of Trout River. *Francine Mercier*

wildlife. The islands in St. Paul's Bay are important nesting sites for terns and other bird species. The salt water bay at St. Paul's is also a great place to view sea and shorebirds and a community trail provides access to these areas.

The community of Cow Head is the northernmost community in the park. There is a campground located at Shallow Bay and a sandy beach with opportunities for swimming in the shallow waters. The sand dunes of Shallow Bay are constantly in transition. The wind shifts sand hills, creating new rippled slopes each year. Marram grass, a tenacious plant that grows here, can withstand the cool winters, snow, winds and ocean salt. Islands off the coast of Cow Head also provide nesting sites for terns as well as eiders and gulls. These nest sites, along with those at St. Paul's, are monitored annually and overall, coastal seabird populations in the greater ecosystem appear to be healthy.

The Cow Head Peninsula is rich in geological and archaeological history and a community trail offers access to the peninsula including the unique limestone breccia. The archaeological sites at Cow Head contain artefacts from the Maritime Archaic Indian, Groswater Palaeo-Eskimo, and Recent Indian peoples.

The Gros Morne Theatre Festival, a treasured experience of many visitors, is based in this community. The theatre is another example of the connection between the park and community as many of the themes highlight the cultural heritage of the region.

Although most visitors enter Gros Morne from the south boundary, the completion of the Trans-Labrador highway will affect traffic numbers entering through the north end of the park. As these increase there may be a need to reassess the welcoming at this entrance.

#### **Public Education Themes**

- *Biodiversity* – Plant and animal species associated with the inland bay and salt marshes of St. Paul's and headlands of Cow Head including nesting sites for common eiders and two species of terns.
- *Natural Processes* – The effects of glaciations on the landscape of Gros Morne.
- *Human History* – Prehistoric sites and contemporary fishing communities with a long history, *S.S. Ethie* wreck site.

#### **Key Actions**

- Evaluate the welcoming at the north entrance in light of potential increasing visitor numbers at that entrance as a result of transportation development in Labrador.
- Profile Western Brook Pond as a model for sustainable tourism.
- Diversify the visitor offer at Broom Point to better engage the visitor.
- Work with the communities of Cow Head and St. Paul's to increase demand for visitor opportunities in the North.



## 7.0 Partnerships and Public Engagement



Ceremony at Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse. *Michael Burzynski*

Effectively engaging the public and creating long-term partnerships means working together to determine a strategic direction for the Gros Morne area. It involves moving forward in that direction together and recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for the park rests with the Minister. This section highlights the key values and principles that will guide governance and decision-making at Gros Morne National Park.

### Values

- Open, participatory decision-making.
- Predictable, consistent and fair regulation.
- Competent, accountable management.
- Respect for others.

### Principles

- All actions, initiatives and programs undertaken to realize the Vision are implemented in full accordance with the spirit and requirements of the *Canada National Parks Act* and *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies*.

- Partnership is reciprocal and each partner must be supported.
- Partnerships will reflect cultural diversity.
- Standards are defined, enforced and reviewed so as to ensure the maintenance of ecological integrity.
- Regulation and decision-making are responsive, open, participatory, consistent and equitable.
- Integrity and common sense underlie all decision-making.
- Planning and decision-making are coordinated on a regional basis.
- Shared responsibility to achieve ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability.
- Public participation in decision-making will be guided by the following fundamental practices:
  - Access to clear, timely, relevant, objective and accurate information.
  - Adequate notice and time for public review.
  - Careful consideration of public input.

- Feedback on the nature of comments received and on Parks Canada's response to participants.
- Respect for all interested parties and individual viewpoints.

## 7.1 PARTNERSHIPS

We rely on our stakeholders for assisting in a collaborative approach to problem solving. Stakeholders require a solid knowledge base of understanding in order for them to better assist us in decision-making. Working in collaboration with such groups as the tourism industry, environmental organizations, provincial and municipal governments, Aboriginal groups and local operators helps to improve the ecological integrity of the park and the regional ecosystem.

For many years Gros Morne National Park has worked with adjacent jurisdictions on questions of common concern. More recently, the park has become more involved in regional programs that take a comprehensive look at issues and involve all levels of the organization from technical staff to senior management. These include:

*Gros Morne Co-operating Association:* The Gros Morne Co-operating Association is a non-governmental, non-profit association made up of volunteers dedicated to the promotion and interpretation of the values of national parks. In particular, the Co-op helps to bring the community and the park together.

*Mayors' Forum:* The intent of the forum is improved mutual understanding of each (the park and the eight adjacent communities) other's needs and constraints, and to support each other in achieving common goals within their respective mandates.

*Aboriginal Partners:* Park staff members have developed many initiatives with our Aboriginal partners (Labrador Métis Nation, the Federation of Newfoundland Indians, Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit) that focus on the respectful conservation and presentation of their culture.

*Sustainable Economic Development Partnerships:* Staff at Gros Morne take an active role in partnering with other agencies and organizations to promote local attractions to visiting tourists. These agencies and organizations include:

- Red Ochre Regional Development Board
- Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador
- Federal Joint Council
- Western Destination Marketing Organization
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Parks Canada will continue to take an active role in partnering with forest-specific groups such as the Connectivity Working Group, the Western Newfoundland Model Forest and forestry districts management planning teams to pursue integrated approaches to areas of mutual interest.

Gros Morne National Park formalized its involvement in sustainable tourism in 2004 when Parks Canada, along with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, formally adopted the *Code of Ethics for Sustainable Tourism*.

*Third Parties:* For many years, heritage presentation staff have worked directly with partners in the shared delivery of interpretive boat tours and sea kayaking excursions and held formal training sessions on content and delivery techniques for staff of local businesses. The Artist in Residence program, a partnership activity supported by Parks Canada and the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador, provides an opportunity for professional visual artists to pursue their own work in Gros Morne's remarkable environment.

*Educational Partners:* Gros Morne's educational partners include the Department of Education, school boards and local schools, Killdevil Camp, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, and the College of the North Atlantic. This group represents an important opportunity to integrate Parks Canada's messages into the classrooms of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Kayakers at Shag Cliff. Barrett and MacKay

*Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism:* The Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST) has a mandate to promote and train tourism industry members and other businesses, particularly in Atlantic Canada, toward effective, sustainable tourism practices. Its vision includes being recognized internationally as an innovator and leader in developing capacity for sustainable tourism; reaching a national audience, attracting participants from Atlantic Canada and Canada; and having Gros Morne and Atlantic Canada recognized as destinations committed to the improvement of sustainable tourism practices.

#### **Strategic Goals**

- Maintain open communications with partners in order to better support the *Engaging Canadians* objectives and facilitate understanding of EI objectives, as outlined in the *State of the Park Report*.
- Work with local communities to share expertise and to increase understanding of common goals.
- Work with others in coordinating regional development and visitor use (e.g. tourism strategies, location and type of development, cumulative effects).

- Contribute to an integrated network of protected areas.
- Work with provincial Aboriginal groups to help foster respect for the different cultures of the Aboriginal peoples of this province.

#### **Key Actions**

- Work cooperatively with local communities to ensure the region gains economic benefit while protecting the needs of local residents and the park's ecological integrity.
- Work cooperatively with regional stakeholders in coordinating and promoting sustainable regional land use and development.
- Work co-operatively with the province's Aboriginal peoples and local residents in telling the story of their cultures and the story of Gros Morne.
- Maintain and increase the number of collaborations with stakeholders, partners and local communities on the protection and presentation of natural and cultural resources in the region.
- Increase the number of experience opportunities for visitors to the region through partnerships.
- Participate actively on key coordinating committees established by other agencies

to consider both short-term concerns and long-term strategic goals, such as ecological integrity and tourism.

- Participate in environmental assessments or provincial/regional environmental reviews of projects outside the park that are likely to affect the park's environment.
- Contribute to building a strong and viable regional economy by working co-operatively with the local tourism industry to help build a four-season offer.
- Support the delivery of accurate messages through third parties by providing formal training sessions on content and delivery techniques, including:
  - Resource packages and learning materials;
  - Self-evaluation instruments and formal evaluation/monitoring mechanisms administered by park staff.
- Continue to partner with and support the Gros Morne Cooperating Association in their efforts to:
  - Run special programs and develop theme-related products.
  - Produce and sell interpretive literature.
  - Develop joint educational programs.
  - Promote internship programs and provide scholarships for environmental studies.
  - Ensure ongoing marketing of the Gros Morne area, with particular focus on awareness and use in the off-season.
  - Develop and implement a Waste Disposal Management Strategy in cooperation with local communities.

## 7.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Parks Canada is committed to ongoing public engagement. This engagement takes many forms, and varies in scope from a local level to a broader, more regional level depending on the nature of the decision or initiative under consideration. Various groups and individuals will be invited to provide feedback as Parks Canada begins implementing the directions outlined in this management plan.

### *Strategic Goal*

- Key policy, land use and planning decisions are timely, fair and consistent, and are arrived at in an open and participatory manner.

### *Key Actions*

- Report to and discuss regularly with partners and stakeholders on the implementation of the management plan, and how it relates to the *State of the Park Report* through an annual management planning forum.
- Set up processes for consultation with the public on future issues, and ensure that local stakeholders and Aboriginal partners are involved as early as possible.
- Engage people in decision-making who may be affected by decisions, and those who can provide information or expertise.

## 8.0 Transportation and Public Utilities

### 8.1 TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

The 2004 Visitor Survey listed scenery and sightseeing as the number one reason for visiting Gros Morne. The park's highway network provides an important venue and opportunity to facilitate this visitor experience.

Gros Morne has a 143 km network of highways and access roads. This network provides access to all visitor use facilities and supports the main transportation links for the provincial road network along the Northern Peninsula highway. In October 2005, Route 430 was designated part of the National Highway System. Winter maintenance is provided under a contract with the Provincial Department of Works, Services and Transportation. Parks Canada remains directly responsible for summer maintenance and all secondary roads.

Gros Morne faces several challenges with respect to highway services, including increased heavy transport and visitor traffic, and deterioration due to aging infrastructure. Other issues include limited quarry/gravel material for future reconstruction, increasing maintenance costs, and the identification of salt as a toxic substance.

### 8.2 UTILITIES OVERVIEW

Gros Morne National Park has over 130 km of utility lines, and the park borders eight enclave communities with utility lines of their own. Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power have major corridors, which pass through Gros Morne National Park. A right of way agreement is in place with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and documentation is in the final stages for the signing of a right-of-way agreement with the telephone provider, Aliant.

### Strategic Goals

- The park's highways will provide high-quality coastal driving and sightseeing experiences.
- Utility and transportation corridors help minimize impact on the environment.

### Key Actions

- Use the existing highway corridors and attached infrastructure to facilitate meaningful visitor experiences through sightseeing and vista viewpoints.
- Provide vehicle pull-offs in association with scenic viewpoints, or those with interpretive value, during road upgrading or re-paving projects.
- Develop a salt management plan and implement salt control/reduction measures to meet Environment Canada's regulations for toxic substances.
- Manage roads and utilities within their existing corridors.
- Employ techniques to prevent erosion and reduce the need for aggregate extraction from within the park, including the reuse and recycling of existing roadbed and pavement material.
- Explore and encourage the joint use of corridors, poles and access nodes and explore new ways to reduce their cumulative impact.
- Work with utility companies to reduce the number of access points to corridors along Routes 430 and 431.



## 9.0 Zoning and Wilderness Area Declaration



Looking toward Gros Morne Mountain. *Sheldon Stone*

### 9.1 NATIONAL PARK ZONING SYSTEM

Parks Canada uses a zoning system to classify land and water areas according to protection needs and the opportunities they offer park visitors. These zones ensure a range of visitor opportunities is provided in areas best suited for those activities, while protecting the attributes essential to a memorable visitor experience. The land-use zoning map (MAP 4) illustrates the areas designated in each zone.

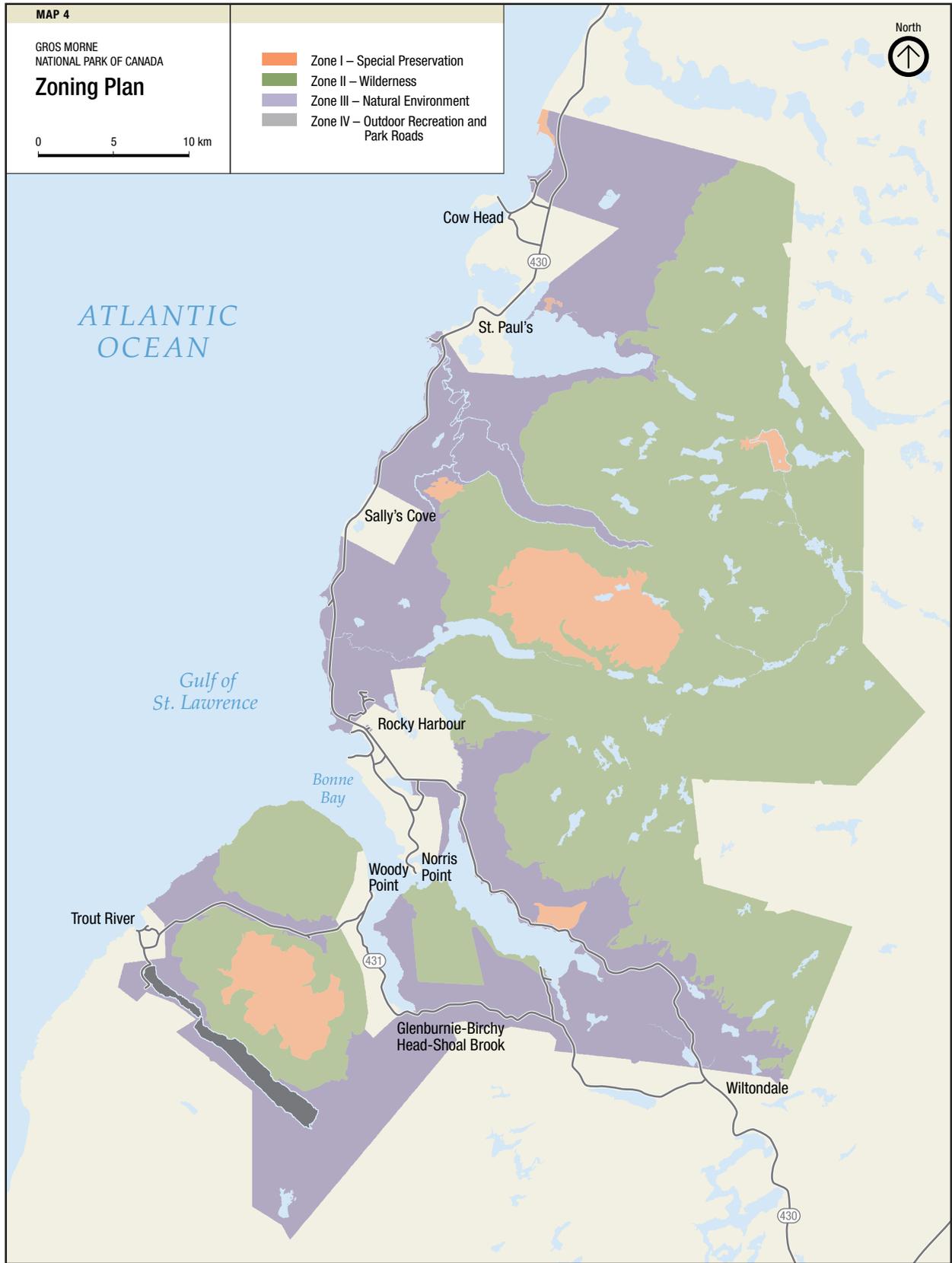
### 9.2 ZONE 1 - SPECIAL PRESERVATION AREAS (7% OF THE PARK)

Zone 1 preserves areas of the park which contain or support unique, threatened or endangered natural or cultural features or are among the best examples of the features that represent a natural region. Preservation is the key consideration. In cases where the fragility

of the area precludes any public access, every effort will be made to provide visitors with off-site programs and exhibits interpreting the special characteristics of the zone. The Zone 1 areas in the park include:

1) *Big Level* – at an elevation of 700 to 800 m, this large arctic-alpine plateau with snowbed habitats supports numerous rare plants, woodland caribou calving grounds, and a number of Arctic hare, rock ptarmigan, horned larks and American pipits.

2) *Frontal Slope Southwest of Western Brook Pond* – supports a rare successional community of white birch scrub-dwarf heath shrub of fire origin, and a rock barren community consisting of plants having arctic-alpine affinities.



3) *Heather Pond (Island Pond)* – the pond’s western shore contains the only eastern North American colony of the rare mountain fern (*Thelypteris quelpaertensis*) and is considered to be one of the most significant botanical sites in the park. The pond is a large, deep, ultra-oligotrophic lake that is low in nutrients and does not support fish but has a relatively high diversity of invertebrates. It is the best example of this type of ecosystem on the park’s alpine plateau.

4) *Killdevil Mountain* – supports a high diversity of uncommon and rare plants, while a community of pioneer heath shrubs and even-aged white birch, both of fire origin, colonizes the talus slopes.

5) *Shallow Bay – Lower Head* – the best example of one of the park’s unique shoreline features, a sandy beach with extensive coastal sand dunes that are preserved in a natural state.

6) *Stearin Island* – a small, sparsely vegetated, and exposed coastal island that is extremely important to the existence of seabirds. The island has been recognized as a traditional nesting area for common terns (*Sterna hirundo*) and Arctic terns (*Sterna paradisae*) as well as a variety of gulls.

7) *St. Paul’s Inlet Salt Marsh* – the park’s largest example of a distinct mixture of temperate and Arctic species.

8) *Summit of the Tablelands* – internationally significant, the unusual geology of this formation is largely responsible for its unique physiographic and botanical characteristics. The area is home to disjunct plant species characteristic of this formation, and contains an outstanding example of string fens, which are the only known nesting area for greater yellowlegs in the park.

### 9.3 ZONE II - WILDERNESS (61% OF THE PARK)

Zone II contains extensive areas that are good representations of the natural region’s mountain plateaus, steep mountain slopes, and lakes, which are conserved in a wilderness state. These areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience, first hand, the

park’s ecosystems and require few, if any, services and facilities. In much of Zone II, visitors have the opportunity to experience remoteness and solitude. Facilities are restricted to short trails, two ski-in cabins, backcountry campsites and a warden patrol cabin. Visitor activities include hiking along the Long Range Traverse and the North Rim Traverse, the Lookout Hills, Tablelands and Stanleyville, the route from Trout River to Woody Point, and backcountry skiing.

The *Alpine Plateau of the Long Range Mountains* is composed of granite and gneiss. Heath-lichen tundra, balsam fir forest and tuckamore are the prominent plant communities. Small ponds and streams are numerous over the area. Rocky rubble is abundant beneath the numerous talus slopes of the fjord lakes and glacially carved valleys.

The *Lomond Peninsula* is a steep-sided rugged area, composed of sedimentary rocks such as limestone, dolomite, shale and sandstone. The plateau supports sedge bogs and fens, as well as balsam fir forest and heath-lichen tundra.

The *Lookout Hills* are a magnificent highland area composed of peridotite, gabbro and granite with precipitous cliffs descending to the waters of Bonne Bay. Forested slopes and expansive sedge fens dominate the plateau.

The *Tablelands* have unique physiographic and botanical characteristics with disjunct plant species characteristic of this formation. This wilderness zone completely surrounds the Zone I area of the same name.

### 9.4 ZONE III - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (31% OF THE PARK)

The Zone III designation is intended to maintain the natural character of specified areas while encouraging the appreciation and enjoyment of natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreational activities requiring minimal services and facilities of a rustic nature. While motorized access may be allowed, it will be controlled.

The park’s Zone III areas include most of the coastal lowlands, which is representative

of the Gulf of St. Lawrence Lowlands natural region; the steep frontal slopes of the Long Range Mountains around Bonne Bay; and the valleys south of Bonne Bay, Southeast Hills, and Western Brook Pond. Visitor facilities within this area include almost all of the park trail system, the boat tour on Western Brook Pond, and groomed cross-country ski trails.

Facilities and activities not consistent with the Zone III designation also occur in this area:

- Utility corridors serving the park area and Northern Peninsula.
- Designated areas for domestic timber harvest and snaring of snowshoe hare.
- Areas for aggregate extraction.
- Lomond sanitary landfill.
- Forest access roads at Trout River and McKenzie's Brook.

#### **9.5 ZONE IV - OUTDOOR RECREATION (1% OF THE PARK)**

Zone IV areas are capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciating and enjoying the park's heritage values. Visitor opportunities and related essential services and facilities will be provided in ways that place minimal impact on the ecological integrity of the park. The defining feature of this zone is direct access by motorized vehicles. Park operations and administration facilities are included in this zone.

In Gros Morne National Park, Zone IV areas include front country facilities, rights-of-way along roads, and Trout River Pond. Zone IV nodes include:

- Campgrounds at Shallow Bay, Green Point, Berry Hill, Lomond, and Trout River.
- Day use facilities at Shallow Bay, Western Brook, Western Brook Pond, Mill Brook, Lomond, McKenzie Brook and Trout River.
- Major interpretive facilities at Broom Point, Lobster Cove Head, and the Visitor Reception Centre near Rocky Harbour.
- The swimming pool at Rocky Harbour; and Killdevil Camp at Lomond.

#### **9.6 WILDERNESS AREA DECLARATION**

As set out in Section 14(1) of the *Canada National Parks Act*, any area of a park that exists in a natural state or that is capable of returning to a natural state, may be designated a wilderness area. In response to the *Report on the Panel on Ecological Integrity in Canada's National Parks*, the minister committed to accelerate the legal designation of wilderness areas and a Wilderness Declaration Action Plan was developed. This action plan identified that declaration of wilderness areas be part of the management planning process.

Declaring a wilderness area within Gros Morne National Park is not being recommended at this time due to commitments made in the *Federal-Provincial Agreement* to permit snowmobiling. Parks Canada will continue to work collaboratively with the snowmobile management board to identify areas for future declaration as wilderness areas.

## 10.0 Administration and Operations



Woody Point waterfront. Sheldon Stone

### 10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Environmental stewardship reduces the impact of our daily activities on the environment. It is concerned with a range of issues from water quality and energy consumption, to chemical use and contaminated sites. It also includes a wide variety of activities from recycling and reducing resource consumption to restoring disturbed landscapes.

The park has a responsibility to take a leadership role by ensuring its own operations meet a high environmental standard, and to work with local communities toward ensuring the environmental quality of the surrounding area.

The Government of Canada is committed to the concept of environmental stewardship. This ensures that every government department or agency meets or exceeds environmental laws and regulations, follows the best environmental practices available, and develops and implements a sound environmental management system.

#### *Strategic Goal*

- Environmental stewardship is fundamental to the operation of all Parks Canada operations.

#### *Key Actions*

- Set an example for local residents, businesses, and park visitors to share responsibility for environmental stewardship.
- Ensure that park operations are “green” by recycling, reusing materials, procuring green products and reducing waste.
- Participate on a regional waste management board.
- Follow the best environmental practices in the operation of all park facilities and provision of all park services.
- Work with the provincial government, Gros Morne Co-op and communities on development of a Solid Waste Management Strategy.



Fish fence at Western Brook. Sheldon Stone

## 10.2 FISH LANDING AND STAGING AREAS

The 1973 *Federal-Provincial Agreement* to establish Gros Morne National Park stated that “the traditional rights of fishermen to land their catches shall not be disturbed whether they live within the boundaries of the proposed National Park or not.” To allow for this activity, eight (8) fish landing and staging areas were established along the coast between Rocky Harbour and St. Paul’s. They are located at Woody Cove, Lobster Cove, Baker’s Brook, Green Point, Little Brook, Martin’s Point, Gull Marsh and Western Brook. In the 1983 Amendment to the *Federal-Provincial Agreement* these areas were excluded from the park boundaries. The agreement went on to say that “the areas would be managed by Parks Canada for as long as they were required for commercial fishing purposes and when they were no longer needed, in consultation with local fishermen and authorities of Newfoundland and Canada, the areas would be included in the park boundaries.” Recently, Parks Canada has identified a number of non-conforming activities that are occurring in the fish staging areas.

### *Strategic Goal*

- Continued use of the fish staging areas for the purposes of landing and staging by commercial fish harvesters as expressed in the *Federal-Provincial Agreement*.

### *Key Actions*

- Work with the provincial government to reinstate guidelines for appropriate land use within the fish staging areas.
- Continue to work with the Fish Staging Area Management Planning Team. The team will make recommendations on the management of the fish staging areas, while maintaining the intent of the *Federal-Provincial Agreement*:
  - For commercial fishing activities only.
  - No cottage use or development shall be permitted.
  - Landowners will retain the right to sell to any private party for commercial fishing use or to the provincial government.

## 10.3 AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

There are two source areas where aggregate extraction occurs within the region of the park: the Codknox Quarry near the Visitor Reception Centre on Route 430, and Rocky Barachois Pit near the mouth of Rocky Barachois Brook. The *Federal-Provincial Agreement* states that, “Aggregate sources which are located within the national park, which are being operated for park uses and which contain granular material excess to park needs, will be made available by Parks Canada for provincial and community users, where necessary.”

The aggregate extraction site at Rocky Barachois is nearly exhausted. Rehabilitation of this site is ongoing and will be completed when the remaining material at the site has been used. The Codknox quarry continues to be a source of materials for Gros Morne.

### *Strategic Goal*

- Manage aggregate use in a way that ensures Gros Morne can continue to rely on this current aggregate source for future park needs.

### *Key Actions*

- Continue to manage the use of the quarries in a sustainable manner and rehabilitate the sites when the resource has been exhausted.

## 11.0 Monitoring



Broom Point. Michael Burzynski

Good park management depends on accurate, timely information on park ecological integrity, visitor experience, and public education. To this end, Parks Canada maintains an active research and monitoring program that seeks to use high-quality science and local and traditional ecological knowledge to assess our effectiveness in these three areas. Research provides understanding of how ecosystems function and how activities are affecting them. Monitoring reports on the status of and trends in ecological health through time, and provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of management actions.

### 11.1. INDICATORS AND MEASURES OF ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

Parks Canada's ecological integrity program is comprised of two principal activities:

1. Using *research and monitoring* to assess and track changes in the ecological state of the park and to report that information to Canadians; and
2. Direct *management actions* and participation in regional partnerships to maintain and restore ecological integrity in the park landscape.

Together these activities allow for a repeated cycle of management intervention in areas of ecological concern followed by or coupled with evaluation of the effectiveness of management actions.



Big Level in winter. Sheldon Stone

The ecological integrity program thus entails two basic forms of monitoring. First, *condition monitoring* is carried out park-wide to track the EI of park ecosystems, identify potential or emerging threats to park EI, and document the state of park EI through time. This provides park managers with relevant and timely information on the state of park EI and identifies important trends in EI, favoring proactive management. Second, when a management action is taken or planned, *management effectiveness monitoring* is carried out to evaluate the degree of management success and measure the consequences of the management action for park EI. Taken together, information from these monitoring activities is used to report our success in maintaining or improving park EI to Canadians. This is achieved via the *State of the Park Report* (SOPR), through integration of current, locally relevant information in interpretation pro-

grams, and through opportunities for park visitors to participate directly in monitoring programs. Providing opportunities for the public to take part in the monitoring program facilitates memorable experiences and fosters a shared sense of responsibility for the ecological health and sustainability of Gros Morne National Park.

As with other parks in the bioregion, we have chosen to use the overall condition of the dominant park ecosystems as EI indicators for Gros Morne National Park. The status and trend of each of these 5 ecosystems will be assessed by integrating information from a small number of ecosystem-specific measures that include factors relating to the biodiversity of the ecosystem, key ecosystem processes, and ecosystem stressors or management actions. Most measures have been chosen and are being monitored following established scientific protocols, though refinements will be made as the monitoring program matures.

The ecological indicators for Gros Morne National Park are:

1. *Forests* (highland conifer, lowland conifer, and lowland mixed forests)
2. *Barrens* (tundra, late snowbeds, lowland and highland rock barrens, talus slopes, limestone cliffs, serpentine barrens and cliffs, and coastal cliffs)
3. *Wetlands* (bogs, fens, and freshwater marshes)
4. *Freshwater* (highland and lowland lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams)
5. *Seacoast* (dunes, rocky shores, littoral zone, and coastal meadows)

Sections 11.1.1–11.1.5 present summaries of the condition-monitoring program for each EI indicator for Gros Morne National Park during the life of this management plan.

**11.1.1 Forest Ecosystem EI Indicator**

This is the most extensive ecosystem in Gros Morne, occupying approximately 44% of the park, and includes productive coniferous and mixed forests in the lowlands as well as scrub and highland coniferous forests. Management of Domestic Timber Harvesting (DTH) is a key responsibility for the park, and success in implementing the DTH management plan is an important measure of management effectiveness. Park forests are under threat, particularly due to colonization by numerous non-native species including moose, red squirrel, red-backed vole and spruce grouse. In particular, over-browsing by hyper-abundant moose has led to widespread disruption of forest regeneration following disturbance, and is likely also causing loss of native plant biodiversity.



Harvesting adjacent to east boundary. *Trudy Taylor-Walsh*

**Forest Ecosystem EI Indicator**

EI Measure	Biodiversity	Process	Management Effectiveness	Description
Forest succession (regeneration)		•		Measures the rate at which forests regenerate following disturbance; affected by over-browsing
Advanced regeneration in mature forests		•		Assessment of the capacity of mature fir forests to regenerate after disturbance; affected by over-browsing
Biodiversity of under-story woody plants	•			Assessment of the biodiversity of understory woody plants in mature forests; affected by over-browsing
Invasive plants in forest ecosystems			•	Monitors the spread of invasive plants as a measure of success in promoting ecologically friendly park use
Domestic timber harvest			•	This measure will report on our success in meeting the Annual Allowable Cut quotas laid out in the DTH plan
Forest bird biodiversity during winter	•			Measure of the health of resident bird communities inhabiting park forests during the critical winter period
Distribution and abundance of forest		•		Measures success in preserving natural (dynamic) forest landscapes, minimizing loss and fragmentation

\* A moose survey is under consideration as part of the monitoring program for this indicator.

### 11.1.2 Barrens (Arctic/Alpine) Ecosystem EI Indicator

Barrens ecosystems are generally restricted to higher elevations in the park, where extremes of climate restrict tree growth, allowing barren ground and Arctic/alpine vegetation communities to develop and persist. Barrens cover 35% of the park and support some of the most southerly breeding populations of Arctic and alpine wildlife and plants in eastern North America including Arctic hare,

rock ptarmigan, tree sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, and a variety of plants including herb willow. These species are important symbols of the ecological features the park was established to protect. This ecosystem also receives considerable use by recreational snowmobilers, and continued health of populations of Arctic and alpine species will be an important measure of success for the park snowmobile management plan.

#### Barrens (Arctic/Alpine) Ecosystem EI Indicator

EI Measure	Biodiversity	Process	Management Effectiveness	Description
Arctic hare population size	•			Populations of this species are restricted to this ecosystem and dependent on its health
Rock ptarmigan population size	•			Populations of this species are restricted to this ecosystem and dependent on its health
Snowbed phenology		•		Change in the persistence of snowbeds during summer will indicate change in a key ecosystem process
Snowbed plant community	•			Snowbed plant communities are important to park biodiversity and are sensitive to climate
Arctic hare stress			•	Stress hormones in hare urine samples (collected from snow) give a measure of the effectiveness of the snowmobile plan in mitigating disturbance to wildlife
Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI)		•		Monitoring NDVI via satellite imagery will provide data on broad-scale changes in barrens vegetation

\* We are currently considering whether or not to include a caribou survey in the monitoring program for this indicator.

### 11.1.3 Wetlands Ecosystem EI Indicator

Gros Morne supports an array of wetland types that account for 11% of the park area; the most extensive wetland types are high

and low elevation bogs, but marshes, fens, riparian corridors, and beaver ponds are also present and important to overall park biodiversity.

#### Wetlands Ecosystem EI Indicator

EI Measure	Biodiversity	Process	Management Effectiveness	Description
Active layer width		•	•	Depth of the lower boundary of the active layer is important to peatland dynamics and is sensitive to climate, vegetation, and compaction by snowmobiles
Pitcher plant leaf morphology		•		Pitcher plant leaf morphology reflects nutrient dynamics in bogs, as influenced by air pollution
Normalized Difference Vegetation Index		•		Monitoring NDVI via satellite imagery will provide information on broad-scale changes in bog vegetation
Snowmobile footprint on wetlands			•	A measure of snowmobile footprint on lowland bogs is under development
Beaver pond inventory		•	•	Damming by beavers is a key ecosystem-building process; number of active ponds will be monitored

**11.1.4 Freshwater Ecosystem EI Indicator**

Freshwater ecosystems in Gros Morne National Park include several large oligotrophic lakes (e.g. Western Brook Pond) and large lowland rivers (e.g. Lomond River), as well as a multitude of smaller lakes, ponds, rivers and streams in the highlands and lowlands. Though surface water occupies only

8.8% of the park, this ecosystem is of disproportionate importance because it is a focal point of visitor experiences (e.g. sport fishing, boating, viewscapes), and also because of the ecosystem services it provides (e.g. clean water, wildlife habitat). The freshwater ecosystems are home to species at risk such as the harlequin duck.

**Freshwater Ecosystem EI Indicator**

El Measure	Biodiversity	Process	Management Effectiveness	Description
Salmonid sea returns to park rivers	•		•	A counting fence will be rotated through 3-5 park rivers to measure sea returns of Atlantic salmon and trout
Stream benthic invertebrates	•	•		Benthic invertebrate communities reflect stream health, and are being monitored via the CABIN protocol
River thermal regime		•		Thermal regimes have a large influence on the health of rivers, and are sensitive to climate change and land use.
River hydrology		•		Amount and variability of flow is important for river ecosystems, and is sensitive to climate and land use
Lake primary productivity		•		Primary production (chl a) is fundamental to ecosystem health, and is sensitive to water quality and land use
Lake water quality		•		Water quality can be affected by land use and human activities, and is fundamental to ecosystem health
Aquatic fragmentation		•	•	Stream crossings are assessed based on potential to impact fish habitat, offering guidance for mitigation
Watershed land use			•	A key role of parks is the protection of watersheds; this measure will provide information for cooperative management efforts with greater ecosystem partners
Ice cover phenology		•		Duration of ice cover affects many aspects of lake ecology and may be sensitive to climate change



Snowmobiling on the Long Range Mountains. Sheldon Stone

### 11.1.5 Coastal Ecosystem EI Indicator

Coastlines account for only 0.2% of park area, but are disproportionately important both as a focal point of visitor experiences

(e.g. viewsapes, interpretation activities) and because they form an interface between terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

#### Coastal Ecosystem EI Indicator

El Measure	Biodiversity	Process	Management Effectiveness	Description
Seabird nest / egg counts	•		•	Monitoring will document trends in breeding populations of common and Arctic terns and eiders.
Marine water quality	•	•		Water quality is being monitored by the Bonne Bay Marine Station (Memorial University).
Sea ice extent		•		Sea ice has important effects on both park climate and the functioning of marine and coastal ecosystems, linking this abiotic factor to many aspects of park EI.
Intertidal communities on rocky shores		•		Intertidal communities are highly diverse and accessible for park visitors, and reflect the health of coastlines.



Green Point. *Francine Mercier*

**11.2 INDICATORS AND MEASURES OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND CONNECTION TO PLACE**

Providing opportunities for visitors to engage in meaningful experiences increases the likelihood of visitors feeling a special connection to place. For some visitors particular sites may, by their very nature, create a special connection to that site. In other instances, visitors may need guidance in understanding or experiencing a place in order to feel more connected. When visitors feel a special bond

with or connection to a park or site, they are more likely to support and encourage its continued protection.

Visitor experience is formally measured through a number of regularly administered social science surveys including visitor surveys. Experience is also measured through the administering of comment cards and other formal and informal methods of visitor feedback.

**Indicators and Measures of Visitor Experience and Connection to Place**

Visitor Experience Indicator	Target	Monitoring Action	Results
Visitors at surveyed locations consider Gros Morne to be meaningful to them and have felt a special connection to the place.	National baseline has not yet been established for this indicator. Establish a baseline by March 2009 for the "percent of visitors at surveyed locations who consider the place is meaningful to them".	Not yet formally assessed – establish baseline. Incorporate formal assessment of connection to place into future visitor surveys.	No current evaluation.
Visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied with their visit to Gros Morne.	85% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied and 50% are very satisfied with their visit.	Continue to work with partners to ensure the expectations of visitors to Gros Morne are met.	The 2004 Visitor Survey indicated that 47% of visitors said their trip exceeded their expectations. 50% indicated that their trip had met their expectations for a total of 97% indicating that their trip met or exceeded their expectations.
Number of visitors to Gros Morne.	Maintain or increase the number of visitors.	Continue to monitor the number of visitors to Gros Morne through surveys and attendance at VRCs and other sites.	The number of visitors to Gros Morne has increased. Of the close to 500,000 visitors to the province annually, more than 150,000 of those visitors chose to visit Gros Morne National Park.
Number of return visitors to Gros Morne.	No target established.	Continue to partner with the provincial government, businesses and other stakeholders on marketing initiatives and continue to monitor numbers of visitors through surveys.	70% of visitors to Gros Morne are first time visitors.
Visitors enjoyed their visit to Gros Morne – they are satisfied with the availability and quality of activities and services.	85% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied with the availability and quality of activities and services.	Continue to monitor the relationship between importance and satisfaction indicators.	In the 2004 survey, services that ranked high in importance also ranked high in satisfaction. Two notable exceptions were picnic areas and campgrounds.

### 11.3 INDICATORS AND MEASURES OF PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING

It is important that visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the variety of heritage places administered by Parks Canada, including the significance of the system of national parks and specifically Gros Morne. It is also important that they

understand the importance of protecting and presenting these places to Canadians and other audiences. This awareness takes place onsite through visitors interacting with staff members as well as through the use of non-personal media such as interpretation panels. Off-site awareness occurs through outreach education and communication.

#### Indicators and Measures of Public Appreciation and Understanding

Public Appreciation and Understanding Indicator	Target	Monitoring Action	Current Status / Results
Participation in interpretation programs.	50% of visitors are engaged in learning activities and those at surveyed locations consider they learned something about the ecological integrity of Gros Morne.	Continue to monitor through visitor surveys and attendance at interpretation events.	The number of visitors engaging with an interpreter is increasing.
Satisfaction with interpretation programs.	40-60% top-box generally illustrates complete satisfaction with a service.	Continue to monitor, through surveys, satisfaction with interpretation programs.	The 2004 survey found that 60% of respondents were "very satisfied" with interpretation programs.
Targeted Canadian audience – schoolteachers and teacher interns – is aware of the national network of national parks.	Schoolteachers are engaged in learning activities and consider they learned something about the ecological integrity of Gros Morne to be communicated to students in the classroom.	Continue to partner with schools and teachers and monitor the effectiveness of this approach to learning.	The Teachers Institute exposes teachers to Parks Canada-related science content through first-hand experiences and highlights Parks Canada as an educational resource.
Targeted Canadian audience – students.	Students are engaged in learning activities and consider they learned something about the ecological integrity of Gros Morne. Continue to work to fully engage local students in learning opportunities.	Continue to partner with the schools in Western Newfoundland and other parts of the island to ensure the continued exposure of students to national park values.	Outdoor education program. At Kildevil Camp – 1000 Newfoundland students. 12,000 students, 1000 parents and 800 teachers. Level 1 biology monitoring.
Targeted Canadian audience – New Canadians.	New Canadians are engaged in learning activities and consider they learned something about the ecological integrity of Gros Morne.	Not yet formally established.	Initial attempts to engage this audience have begun.

## 12.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment



Clouds at Visitor Centre. Geoff Hancock

The *Management Plan* for Gros Morne National Park is a strategic document that guides future decisions and operations for the park through the identification of key actions. A strategic environmental assessment that included consideration of cumulative environmental effects that might possibly result from those key actions was completed. Such an environmental evaluation is required under the 1999 *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*. The objectives of this environmental assessment were as follows:

1. To ensure that the general directions and proposals contained in the plan respect and support the ecological integrity goals and objectives for the national park.
2. To ensure that the plan adequately addresses the multiple stressors and major concerns relating to the cumulative effects which are acting or may in the future act upon the national park
3. To assess the implications of proposals included in the plan, to enhance positive environmental effects and to avoid or mitigate negative effects.
4. To identify any potential trade-offs of valued ecosystem components against proposed human use enhancements and their implications of the overall plan for presentation to decision-makers.

### Determination

The strategic environmental assessment of the *Gros Morne National Park of Canada Management Plan* concludes that:

- The management plan is consistent with Parks Canada legislation and operational policies;
- The proposed objectives and actions strongly support improvements in the ecological integrity of the national park;
- The actions outlined within the plan will not cause significant environmental impacts;
- The cumulative effects of the actions proposed in the management plan will be to move towards improvement in the protection of both natural and cultural resources;
- The management plan actions will ensure the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity while permitting important traditional activities; and
- By virtue of being developed in full consultation with local communities and stakeholders, the plan is in a better position to achieve the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity through the protection of natural resources.

No mitigation to the *Gros Morne National Park of Canada Management Plan* itself is required. However, implementation of the plan will result in some projects and plans that will require environmental assessment to mitigate any potential for negative environmental effects. The following actions proposed in the draft management plan will be exposed to project environmental assessment or strategic environmental assessment, as appropriate.



Rock ptarmigan. Sheldon Stone

### Project Environmental Assessment

- Parks Canada will participate in environmental assessments for regional/provincial projects that are likely to affect the park environment.
- All Parks Canada research projects, as well as those proposed by external researchers, will be exposed to project environmental assessments.
- Monitoring and management-effectiveness monitoring projects will be exposed to environmental assessment.
- Any projects coming out of the management actions that require physical works will be exposed to project-specific environmental assessment.
- Work resulting from the evaluation of trails will be exposed to project environmental assessments.
- All highway construction projects will be exposed to environmental assessment.
- Right-of-way agreements with utility companies and/or other agencies will be exposed to environmental screening.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- Any marketing plan developed in cooperation with *Gros Morne Cooperating Association* will require a strategic environmental assessment.
- A long-term monitoring and reporting plan will be exposed to strategic environmental assessment.
- Before implementation, the Salt Management Plan will require a strategic environmental assessment.

In summary, the strategic direction and key actions in the *Gros Morne National Park of Canada Management Plan* are not likely to have any significant adverse environmental impact. Moreover, if the strategic direction given by the plan is followed and the specific actions outlined in the plan are carried out, the management of Gros Morne National Park of Canada should contribute to the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity into the future.

## 13.0 References

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APPENDIX A:

## Summary of Planned Actions

The management plan provides long-term strategic direction for park managers. It is a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making, and an important reference for sustainable business planning and future management and operations. Implementation of this plan is the responsibility of the Field Unit Superintendent and is dependent on the availability of financial resources.

All necessary central agency and program approvals will be sought as implementation proceeds. Priorities may be reconsidered in response to new circumstances or information, or changing national priorities and decisions. The priorities will be linked directly to the Field Unit’s business plan, the *Corporate Plan* and the *National Parks Action Plan*.

Progress will be determined through annual reporting on business plan performance, and through the *State of the Parks Report*. The public will be provided with an annual update on the implementation of the management plan through an annual management plan review.

The majority of the statements within this management plan provide direction for the ongoing management and operations of Gros Morne National Park. Implementation of this plan will begin immediately. The actions listed below will be the focus of resources in the first five years of the management plan. The implementation of these actions will be directly linked to the Field Unit’s business plan during each subsequent cycle.

Management Strategies	Key Actions
<i>Working with Communities</i>	Participate in projects of common interest to foster mutual understanding and increased participation in programs and collaborative arrangements.
	Work closely with local communities to offer interpretive programs that enhance visitor understanding of our shared heritage values.
	Continue to maintain open communications with residents and community leaders in order to better support the <i>Engaging Canadians</i> objectives and facilitate understanding of Parks Canada’s mandate, as outlined in the <i>State of the Park Report</i> (SOPR).
	Facilitate research into the cultural heritage (history and living heritage) of the communities with local and other governmental partners and convert that information into new experience opportunities for visitors and residents.
<i>Ecosystem Health</i>	Raise awareness and understanding of the forest ecosystem health in Gros Morne National Park and its impact on ecological integrity.
	Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to maintain and restore the forest ecosystem health of the park.
	Develop interactive visitor interpretation programming that promotes an awareness of ecosystem health issues in Gros Morne National Park.
	Facilitate opportunities for visitor involvement in park presentation and protection including: restoration projects, monitoring/research projects and volunteer activities and park clean-ups.

Management Strategies	Key Actions
<i>Visitor Experience</i>	In order to better guide investments or make adjustments in programs, services and facilities, Gros Morne will continue to monitor trends in tourism, and undertake research to better understand the values and expectations of our current and potential visitors.
	We will continue to work closely with key partners to be able to facilitate experiences that will both appeal to the wide range of visitors to Gros Morne and protect the park's ecological integrity.
	Provide visitors with meaningful information at each stage of their visit, including the full range of available activities in the park, and visitor safety.
	Enable park staff and local tourism operators to share with visitors an understanding of the park's natural and cultural heritage through improved orientation, training and accreditation programs.
	Offer a choice of high-quality learning experiences based on authentic first-hand connections with the park's ecology and culture.
	Work with others to provide a suite of opportunities and high-quality services throughout the park area that are based on the needs and expectations of Gros Morne's visitors to enable them to create their own meaningful visitor experience.
	Ensure that visitors see high environmental standards, and can participate in environmentally responsible practices.
	Evaluate changes to existing services, facilities and all future development against the following criteria: maintain and/or restore ecological integrity; public demand for service; containment within existing ecological footprint; wise and efficient use of public funds; and ability to contribute to meaningful visitor experiences, public appreciation and understanding.
	In partnership with the tourism industry create a strong sense of the "World Heritage Experience" through the development of products and experiences that are intimately connected with the outstanding UNESCO values of the park.
	In partnership with L'Anse aux Meadows NHS and Red Bay NHS position this region as a UNESCO World Heritage destination.
<i>Education and Learning</i>	Participate in the development of a community heritage tourism strategy that will outline an approach for planning and delivery in the Gros Morne area.
	Parks Canada will focus on key audiences in order to achieve long-term results that are in keeping with the <i>Engaging Canadians</i> strategy.
	Invite communities and other partners to participate in the protection and presentation of our national park by partnering in communicating key ecological integrity messages.
	Work directly with curriculum consultants to integrate Parks Canada stories and themes into the provincial curriculum and develop resources to support the curriculum.
	Continue to support the Western School District in the delivery of an outdoor education program that reaches students within the area's broader ecosystem.
	Develop and deliver interpretive and educational programs with local schools and communities that will encourage joint stewardship of the national park.
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	Identify all cultural resources in the park in consultation with interested parties so that they may be protected and their stories presented to Canadians.
	Encourage and support local communities in the protection and presentation of their cultural and historic resources.
	Continue to build relationships with the province's four aboriginal groups (Mi'kmaq, Inuit, Innu and Labrador Métis) to enable them to present their culture and history throughout the field unit.
	Increase public appreciation, understanding and respect for cultural heritage through public involvement in the management, protection and presentation of cultural resources.

APPENDIX B:

## Glossary

### *Domestic Timber Harvest*

Harvesting of timber resources in designated areas of Gros Morne National Park in recognition of the continuing needs of local residents to be able to harvest timber for domestic purposes. Included as part of the *Federal-Provincial Agreement*, the activity is managed and controlled under the *Canada National Parks Act* and Regulations.

### *Eligible Residents*

Residents of outlying communities who were adults (at least 19 years of age) living in the park area on or before 13 August 1973 when the *Federal-Provincial Agreement* for Gros Morne National Park was signed, or who are children born to those adults prior to or after August 13, 1973. Eligible residents may participate in the Domestic Timber Harvest.



APPENDIX C:

## Visitor Experience Research Results

The 2004 park-wide survey indicates that Gros Morne is already providing positive visitor experiences. This survey measured numbers of visitors, patterns of use, and various indicators of the trip experience. Though the research did not seek to determine whether visitors had a meaningful experience, or what the components of a meaningful experience are in Gros Morne, the following results provide a snapshot of visitor expectations when deciding to visit the park.

- Scenery was the most important factor in their decision to visit Gros Morne (51%). This was followed by: Western Brook Pond (27%), Hiking/Backpacking (25%), Recommendation of Friends/Family (25%), Wildlife (20%), Camping (18%), National Park designation (15%), UNESCO World Heritage Site designation (13%) and the Tablelands geology (13%).
- The most popular features (rated as “very important” by over 65% of survey respondents) were: visitor centres, hiking trails, short walking trails and roadside lookouts. This was followed by: Campgrounds (59%), Boat tours (57%), Picnic areas (57%), Interpretation programs (50%), 3.5 star accommodations (39%), Museums (31%), Cultural events (24%), Fine dining (23%), Live theatre/music (22%).
- 97% of those surveyed indicated that their trip to the park met or exceeded their expectations.
- All features that exceeded 50% “very important” response also received over 50% “very satisfied” with one exception (picnic areas).

### Memorable Visitor Experiences at Gros Morne National Park (2005)

Visitor Experience (Indicator)	Service / Program / Facility / Location
<i>Connecting to the Natural Beauty</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hike Green Gardens Trail</li> <li>• Hike the coast at Green Point</li> <li>• Stop at roadside pull-offs</li> <li>• Boating on Bonne Bay</li> <li>• Stroll on Shallow Bay beach</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Connection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear stories at the Pioneers Club</li> <li>• Visit the community of Trout River</li> <li>• Meet local residents</li> <li>• Hear local music</li> <li>• Talk to fishermen on the wharf</li> <li>• Learn about Aboriginal connections</li> <li>• Take in the Cow Head Dinner Theatre</li> </ul>
<i>Unique/Exotic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the Tablelands</li> <li>• Take the Western Brook Boat Tour</li> </ul>
<i>Exclusivity/Solitude/Tranquility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand on Gros Morne Mountain at dawn</li> <li>• Lobster Cove Head Lighthouse at sunset</li> <li>• Eastern Point in Trout River at dusk</li> <li>• Lighthouse in Woody Point at dawn</li> <li>• Camp near the ocean</li> <li>• Hike the Long Range Traverse</li> </ul>
<i>Sense of Contribution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help build a trail</li> <li>• Spend a day with a staff person</li> <li>• Participate in Christmas bird count</li> </ul>
<i>Challenge/Adventure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hike the Long Range Traverse</li> <li>• Climb Gros Morne Mountain</li> <li>• Hike to the top of the Tablelands</li> </ul>

(Source: Feedback from stakeholder round table and staff workshop on Memorable Visitor Experiences, 2005 management planning program.)