



Fort St. James

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2013



Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan

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Chief Executive Officer's Foreword



Canada's national historic sites are part of a century-strong Parks Canada network that includes national parks and national marine conservation areas. These treasured places provide Canadians and visitors from around the world with unique opportunities to experience and embrace our wonderful country and its rich historic and natural heritage. They represent the very best that Canada has to offer, and it is through these special places that we are all deeply connected to what it means to be Canadian.

While protecting Canada's nationally-significant cultural heritage and recounting the stories of men and women who helped shape our nation and values, these sites contribute to national and regional economic growth, exciting new opportunities for Aboriginal people and rural areas, and the development a culture of heritage conservation.

We will offer Canadians exceptional opportunities to build personal connections with their cultural heritage, by nurturing partnerships with citizens across Canada, understanding and exceeding the expectations of a changing population and implementing sustainable approaches and methods.

As we plan for the years to come, we can encourage lasting connections to our heritage and promote our protected places to be enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations. Through discovery and learning, we will inspire our children to become the next generation of guardians and promoters of our heritage.

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Fort St. James National Historic Site. 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 stewardship, I am pleased to approve the *Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Latourelle', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
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Recommendations



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Executive Summary

Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada, with the largest collection of original fur trade buildings in Canada, its remarkable view out over beautiful Stuart Lake, and authentic, entertaining execution of a day in the summer of 1896, is one of Canada's premiere fur trading posts.

Attracting both local and international guests, it contributes to a diversified economy and provides community leadership in celebrating and protecting the cultural heritage of Fort St. James. The site offers one of the best opportunities to connect northern British Columbia residents to their nationally significant heritage and to provide them with a Parks Canada experience.

This management plan replaces the site's first management plan approved in 2002 and is a requirement under the *Parks Canada Agency Act*. It describes the context within which the site operates and how the site is currently managed.

More importantly, the plan sets out a vision for the future. Four key strategies will direct Parks Canada's future efforts to achieve this vision and its mandate to protect cultural resources, facilitate enjoyable visitor experiences and foster public appreciation and understanding:

- 1. Getting the word out**
- 2. A place to visit again and again**
- 3. Growing with partners**
- 4. Authentic resources, authentic experiences**

A series of actions are proposed to realize the outcomes described in the key strategies. Targets, based on national and local performance measures, will allow Parks Canada to measure progress in implementing the plan. Through a program of monitoring and evaluation, Parks Canada will collect the data required to report back on plan implementation, to demonstrate that the site has retained its commemorative integrity and to ensure positive visitor experiences.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that the plan is not likely to engender any adverse environmental effects and, moreover, is expected to achieve the desired results for commemorative integrity, visitor experience and education at Fort St. James National Historic Site.

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1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada is responsible for managing a national system of protected heritage places, including national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada is one of 167 places of national historic significance administered directly by Parks Canada.

Parks Canada's mandate has remained essentially unchanged over the past eighty years:

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

1.1 Legislative Framework

The *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* and *Parks Canada Agency Act* form the legislative framework for national historic sites. The former provides for the designation of nationally significant historic places; the latter details the administrative structure.

1.2 An Updated Plan for Fort St. James

A management plan is the guiding policy document for a national historic site. It describes how Parks Canada intends to achieve its mandate over the next 15 years and provides a framework for decision-making. It is also the main public accountability document for a site, developed in consultation with interested Canadians and Aboriginal groups.

This plan is the site's second management plan. The first management plan was approved in 2002 and focused primarily on the conservation of cultural resources. This plan builds on that foundation, but has been updated to reflect changing circumstances, new Agency priorities and progress in plan implementation over the last decade.

1.2.1 Management Plan Review Process

The process to review the management plan for Fort St. James National Historic Site began in the summer of 2011. Several analytical pieces influenced the scope of the review, including the *State of the Site Report* (2008), two visitor surveys (conducted in 2005 and 2010) and a Visitor Experience Assessment in 2007. The *State of the Site Report* assessed the condition of commemorative integrity, visitor experience, and public appreciation and understanding at the site. State of the Site reports also identify emerging issues that current policy frameworks do not adequately address.

A program of public participation for the management plan review took place in the fall of 2011 and winter of 2012. Parks Canada produced two newsletters, held two public open houses and conducted bilateral meetings with several groups regarding the plan.

2.0 Importance of the Site

Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada is located in north-central British Columbia (see Figure 1), along the southern shore of Stuart Lake, between the Nak'azdli Reserve and downtown Fort St. James (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. Fort St. James National Historic Site regional setting

2.1 National Significance

The national historic site commemorates the role of the present-day site and the former posts on Stuart Lake (1806-1952):

- In the fur trade of the Pacific Slope;
- As an important centre of trade and cooperation with the First Nations of the Pacific Slope;
- As the chief trading post in north-central British Columbia and the administration centre of the district of New Caledonia;
- As an important link in transportation and communications in northern British Columbia.

Notably, the site contains the largest group of original, in situ wooden buildings representing the fur trade in Canada. The Fish Cache and Fur Warehouse are nationally significant examples of west-coast-region fur-trade structures. Several nationally significant people are associated with the site, including Simon Fraser, James Douglas, Father Morice and Chief Kw'eh.

2.2 Regional Importance

The site is part of a larger cultural landscape, which includes many associated heritage resources, such as Chief Kw'eh's grave, the Church of Our Lady of Good Hope and Father Morice's print shop, the fur trade burial ground and the expansive view of Stuart Lake. Fort St. James National Historic Site is the only nationally significant historic place in the District of Fort St. James.

Fort St. James National Historic Site is strongly linked to other thematically related sites, particularly those located along the transportation routes used to supply this and other fur-trade posts, such as Fort George, Fort Fraser and Fort McLeod, during the period of commemorative significance.

Numerous historical trails converge at Fort St. James, including the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail (or Duzcho Trail) between Fort Fraser and Fort McLeod, the New Caledonia fur-trade canoe-brigade route along the Stuart River, and the trail between Noonla and Fort St. James, which is part of the Omineca Trail. The Duzcho Trail was also one of many pre-contact trails in the area. The Nyan Wheti was another important pre-contact trading route and grease trail that connects Fort St. James to Fraser Lake.

The national historic site is the strongest visitor attraction in the immediate area, and as such, contributes to the tourism sector in the District of Fort St. James. It also plays a leadership role in the stewardship and celebration of Fort St. James' cultural heritage.

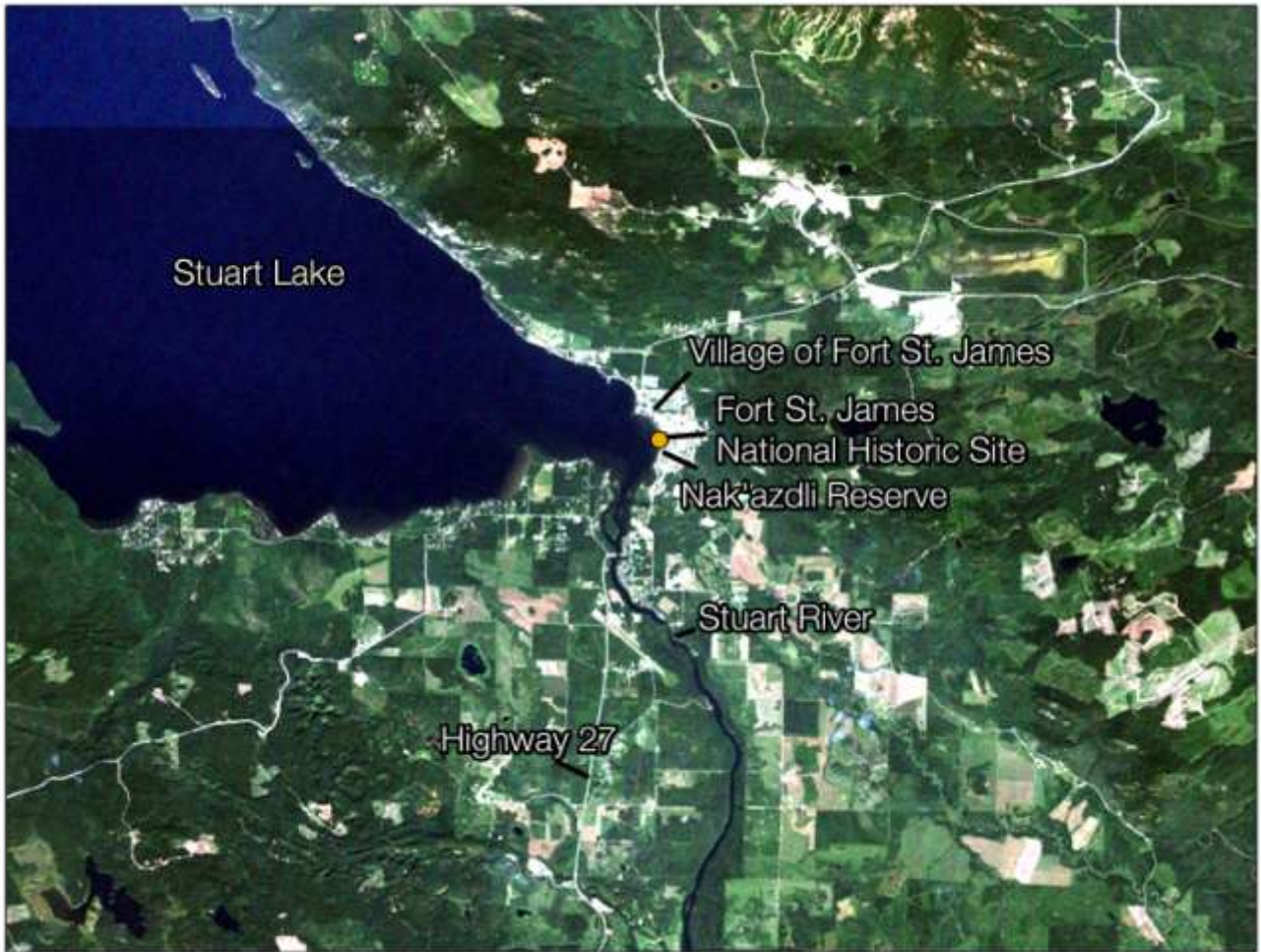


Figure 2. Fort St. James National Historic Site local setting

3.0 Planning Context

3.1 Planning History

Fort St. James was founded in 1806 by Simon Fraser and John Stuart as a North West Company fur trading post. Located on Stuart Lake, in the heart of Carrier territory, the post opened up an important new fur trading area for the company and influenced the course of history in British Columbia.

The fort was declared a national historic site in 1948, but operated as a trading post until 1952. Local preservation efforts prompted the governments of British Columbia and Canada to enter into an agreement in 1969 to undertake a joint development programme to preserve, restore and interpret the post.

Extensive historical research, an archaeological programme and architectural studies were undertaken in the early 1970s and laid the foundation for subsequent restoration work. The site was opened to the public in 1977 and by 1982 most of the restoration and reconstruction were completed. The site's period restoration benefitted from a multi-disciplinary approach, extensive research and sound preservation principles, and is considered an important example of the evolution of cultural resource management at Parks Canada.

In 1983, the administration and control of the property was transferred to the Government of Canada. Annual visitation grew steadily through the 1970s and 1980s, to about 20,000 visitors per year by the 1990s.

3.2 Current Situation

3.2.1 Regional Context

Fort St. James National Historic Site is located within the Municipal District of Fort St. James, which occupies a patchwork of 22 km² of land to the north and west of Stuart Lake. The main industry in the area is forestry, followed by mining and agriculture. The total population of Fort St. James, including the Municipal District, rural areas and First Nation reserves is about 4,700.

There has been strong interest over the past decade in promoting tourism as part of a diversified economy. While the national historic site is the key cultural and international attraction in the district, nature-based activities such as hunting and fishing provide a strong year round draw to the area.

A number of provincial and municipal government documents¹ provide policy direction and recommendations aimed at developing the tourism sector of the local economy. The tourism potential of the area is well-recognized, however limited visitor infrastructure and services are a barrier to growth in this sector.

The site is an important interface between Parks Canada and northern British Columbia residents. Nearby centres, such as Vanderhoof, Burns Lake, Fort Fraser and Mackenzie, are sources of potential visitors to the site and organizations that have goals in common with Parks Canada for cultural heritage protection and presentation, and economic development.

Prince George, the main service centre for northern British Columbia, is only 150 km away. With a stable population of 66 000, a university campus, and major attractions like the Exploration Place Museum and Science Centre, Prince George is an increasingly metropolitan and ethnically diverse city.

Aboriginal Partners

The site enjoys a close working relationship with the Nak'azdli First Nation. The nation has approximately 1 700 members, who live both on- and off-reserve. The main reserve is located just south of the site.



An Elders Advisory Group was initiated in 2001 and provides valuable advice on site management. An internship program with the Nak'azdli First Nation has benefitted both the site and program participants. A hide tanning shed, built in 2005, is used as a cultural demonstration area. Special events, such as a week-long National Aboriginal Day program for schools and Salmon Day, highlight Aboriginal culture. Collaborative work has resulted in the nomination and designation of Chief Kw'eh as a person of national historic significance and the development of a new exhibit that conveys the importance of Carrier history at the site.

¹ The *Fort St. James Land and Resource Management Plan* (1999) and the *Fort St. James Municipal District Community Tourism Development Plan* (2007) are two examples.

The new exhibit also relates the Métis history of the site, thanks to a new relationship with the New Caledonia Métis Association. A successful Métis Day was held for the first time in 2011.

Community Involvement

The Friends of Fort St. James have played a pivotal role over the years by organizing events and programs and developing publications that complement Parks Canada's work. Other fruitful working relationships have been established with Northern British Columbia Tourism, BC Parks, which manages three provincial parks in the area, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and numerous community organizations in Prince George.

3.2.2 Established Management Direction

The execution of Parks Canada's mandate at a national historic site requires action on three fronts: the protection of heritage resources (especially Level 1 cultural resources), the facilitation of outstanding visitor experiences, and the promotion of public appreciation and understanding. This section describes how Parks Canada's mandate is currently implemented at the site, and provides context for subsequent sections that articulate the new strategic priorities for the site.

Heritage Resource Protection

Ensuring the commemorative integrity of the site is a key management priority. The site's five historic buildings and several reconstructed buildings are regularly monitored and steps are taken to address any potential threats or deterioration. Maintenance manuals provide guidance on acceptable building conservation practices. An Asset Management System contains a description of the site's built assets—both historic and contemporary—and their condition. It is used to prioritize asset maintenance and/or cyclical replacement.

A Historic Landscape Conservation Maintenance Management Plan sets out how the historic grounds, landscape resources such as viewsapes and vegetation, and future development at the site will be managed.

An important part of Parks Canada's mandate involves protecting the health and wholeness, or **commemorative integrity**, of a national historic site. This means preserving the site's cultural resources, communicating its heritage values and national significance, and ensuring that the site's heritage values are respected in all decisions and actions that affect the site.

Parks Canada retains security services to patrol the site and participates in community programs that aim to reduce vandalism and crime.



Figure 3. Fort St. James National Historic Site

Historians, conservators, archaeologists and site employees work together to ensure that cultural resources are properly cared for. The site has a large collection of curatorial and archaeological objects. The maintenance of up-to-date inventories, condition reports and furnishing plans ensures that the deterioration or loss of cultural objects is prevented or mitigated. An *Archaeological Resource Description and Analysis* summarizes current knowledge of the archaeology of the site and provides guidance regarding the management of archaeological resources.

The site employs a program of historical research to fill in research gaps and support the development of new interpretive products. Knowledge of the history of the site continues to grow, and efforts to present a more accurate and detailed portrait of the role of Aboriginal people at the post are evident in the new visitor centre exhibit installed in 2012.

Visitor Experience

Recently Parks Canada has renewed its emphasis on visitor experience. By offering enjoyable opportunities that respond to visitors' expectations, desires and needs, Parks Canada hopes to facilitate deep personal connections to Canada's heritage places and remain relevant to Canadians.

In response to declining attendance, the renewed focus on visitor experience and the results of visitor surveys, a number of new programs and events have been introduced at the site. Immersion in living history is at the heart of the Fort St. James experience—visitors entering the historic grounds step back in time to the summer of 1896. A three-part menu of visitor opportunities now supplements the living history experience and has rejuvenated the visitor offer.

A *Heritage Presentation Plan* guides site interpretation and although the focus is on the summer of 1896, storytelling at the site covers the site's entire period of commemoration (1806-1952). An ongoing dialogue with other historic sites that interpret similar themes is generating new ideas in interpretation. Annual evaluations of interpretive programs and periodic visitor surveys ensure that programs are delivering key messages in a meaningful and effective way, and successfully connecting visitors to the site.

Contemporary buildings, like the Visitor Centre and Old Fort Café, play an important role in supporting the visitor experience. In addition to housing the exhibits that relate the history of the site, the visitor centre contains washrooms and a gift shop that showcases local Carrier handicrafts and theatre. The College of New Caledonia provides

Menu of Visitor Opportunities

Daily adventures are repeating programs that take place daily or several times weekly. Visitors can depend on being able to participate in these programs when they visit the site. For example, at the First Nations Demonstration Area, visitors can watch or participate in traditional activities, like hide tanning and moccasin making.

Special events are scheduled events designed to draw large numbers of visitors to the site by emphasizing a particular aspect of the site's history. For example, Salmon Day highlights the importance of salmon to early Fort St. James. Heritage Days spans two days in August and draws attention to aboriginal and settlement life.

Authentic opportunities are specialized activities or programs that are offered on demand. For example, visitors can now stay overnight and eat their evening and morning meals in the Officer's House. High tea is served in its dining room on Sundays.

chefs from its cooking program to operate the Old Fort Café; its regionally-inspired food has become an integral part of the visitor experience.

Education Outreach

The site has an active school program that caters to a large number of school groups, primarily from Grades 4 and 5. The site has held professional development sessions for teachers and continues to refine school programs.

Increased outreach programming at regional events and venues (e.g. nearby campgrounds) has increased the site's profile. Parks Canada also offers industry familiarization tours of the site to acquaint tourism industry employees with the site's visitor offer.

The site's website is an important aspect of site management, assisting visitors with trip planning and reaching Canadians who are not able to visit the site. Keeping the website current and engaging will continue to be a high priority.

3.2.3 Key Challenges

Four main challenges were identified at the outset of the plan review.

Visitor Numbers

Although visitor surveys reveal that visitor satisfaction with the site is high, there has been a steady decline in visitor numbers over the past 15 years. Visitor numbers in the late 1990s approached 20 000; by 2009, numbers had dropped to 9 600.

Visitor numbers rebounded over the next two years to reach 12 200 in 2012; this increase in attendance coincided with increased promotional efforts regionally. British Columbians now make up the majority of the visitors to the site, a change from the late 1990's, when European visitors outnumbered Canadian visitors. Regional visitors are a key market for the site. Parks Canada's challenge is to make the Fort St. James National Historic Site more relevant to northern British Columbians and to encourage a larger number of them to connect with their heritage. There is also an opportunity to increase the number of international visitors to the site.

Supporting Facilities

The Visitor Centre will likely need major renovations in the next five to ten years, including replacement of the heating and ventilation system and washroom renovations. Although a new building might respond better to visitor and employee needs by, for example, improving the sense of arrival to the site and showcasing the view of the lake, current Parks Canada funding levels and priorities will not permit major

re-capitalization of the Visitor Centre in the next five years.

A major issue identified at the outset of the management plan review—the visitor centre’s outdated non-personal media—has been addressed through the redesign of the exhibits in 2012.

Although the café is an important asset, it is not equipped to serve large numbers of people or to operate year round. In the absence of an infusion of new capital funding, its size and location are not likely to change.

Tramway

Although the historic buildings are generally in good condition, an important contemporary structure—the tramway—is in poor condition and cannot be used by visitors. The tramway, a reconstruction of the original structure linking the General Warehouse to Stuart Lake, would be an excellent vehicle for interpreting the importance of waterways to the site’s history and deserves to play a greater role in the visitor’s experience.

Main Pathway

Shoreline erosion has been a longstanding concern at the site. Wave action from Stuart Lake causes the steep slope that runs from the historic grounds to the beach to slump and the pathway to heave and buckle in spots. Fears that shoreline erosion might be contributing to slope instability and that buildings at the top of the slope might eventually slide into the lake has been put to rest through monitoring, which will continue periodically. Loitering along the pathway occasionally detracts from the visitor experience and contributes to other issues (e.g. littering, fire risk).



4.0 Vision Statement

The vision statement for Fort St. James National Historic Site provides a foundation for the management plan. It illuminates the character and heritage values of this site, as it describes a future desired state, to be achieved in the next 15 to 20 years with the participation and stewardship of Canadians:

Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada, known locally as the Historic Park, is the largest group of original, in situ wooden buildings representing the fur trade in Canada. The site, once the administrative centre of New Caledonia, is now the focal point of a strong heritage and recreational tourism industry in north-central British Columbia, attracting 20 000 visitors every year from across the country and around the world.

A welcoming Visitor Centre sets the stage for the visit with its modern and interactive exhibits, through which visitors learn about the fur trade while having fun. The striking view down spectacular Stuart Lake greets guests as they leave the visitor centre to walk down the lake shore path, reading the interpretive panels en route. As they climb the stairway at the flagpole, visitors enter 1896 to a flurry of activity—to hear the sounds of roosters crowing, sheep baaing, wood being split, smell the horses and cows, watch the wood smoke curling from the historic buildings, and taste locally-grown and regionally-inspired food. Costumed interpreters bring the people who lived and worked at the post to life. The stage is now set to host a wide variety of hands-on authentic activities, special events, regular programs, and even ways to have your own piece of the site for the summer.

Area residents feel a sense of ownership and a desire to be actively involved in the presentation and care of the site. The Friends of Fort St. James National Historic Site, the Elders' Advisory Group, and the New Caledonia Métis Association are a key part of the site's operation, providing advice, ideas and many volunteers throughout the summer to help with programs and special events.

Visitors, volunteers, partners and employees understand and value the reasons for the site's national significance. Conscientious stewardship of buildings, artefacts and other historic resources ensures that its commemorative integrity is protected for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

Discover the history and learn about the struggles of the fur traders and Aboriginal people as they worked, lived, loved, and died together between 1806 and 1952 on the southern shore of Stuart Lake.

5.0 Key Strategies

Key strategies signal where resources will be focused to achieve the vision outlined in the previous section. Each strategy is further defined by a set of short- and long-term objectives that provide a more specific desired description of outcomes or results. Four key strategies have been identified for Fort St. James NHS:

1. Getting the word out
2. A place to visit again and again
3. Growing with partners
4. Authentic resources, authentic experiences

Section 7.0 outlines an implementation strategy to achieve the objectives described under each key strategy.



Key Strategy 1: Getting the word out

This strategy emphasizes the importance of active, targeted promotion and outreach education to increase awareness of the site's unique attributes and visitor offer.

Objective 1: Expanded marketing efforts reach local, regional and specialized markets.

- 1a. The site is a key attraction for regional visitors from Vanderhoof, Prince George, and beyond.
- 1b. Residents of Fort St. James visit the site regularly—it is where they bring friends and family.
- 1c. More international visitors, both independent travellers and group tours, include the site in their itineraries.
- 1d. Knowledge of visitor segments (e.g. origins, motivations, interests) increases and is used to reach a larger number of potential visitors.
- 1e. The site is marketed in combination with other key attractions in north central British Columbia. Parks Canada works closely with Northern British Columbia Tourism and other tourism organizations to ensure that marketing strategies are aligned and promotional efforts well-coordinated.

Objective 2: A user-friendly, dynamic website orients future visitors to the site and gives non-visitors a sense of what it is all about. Future visitors find all the information they need to plan their trip to the site; those who will not be visiting the site discover a wealth of information about the site's fur trading and Aboriginal history. Social media are used regularly to engage local audiences.

Objective 3: Outreach programming (e.g. campground programs, participation in regional events) increases awareness of the site and the reasons for its national significance among local and regional residents.

Objective 4: Parks Canada actively promotes the development of local and regional tourism infrastructure, particularly in the community of Fort St. James.

Targets:

- Attendance increases by 5% per year.
- Visitors report increased satisfaction with site information prior to arrival.
- Increased number of website "hits".

Key Strategy 2: A place to visit again and again

The sum total of the site's facilities, services, programs and infrastructure meet the needs and expectations of today's visitors, encouraging repeat visitation by local residents and regional visitors and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Objective 1: The site's engaging living history offer is complemented by a menu of daily adventures, special events and authentic opportunities that encourage repeat visitation by Fort St. James residents and residents of nearby communities. Visitors cite their interaction with Parks Canada interpreters and other employees as the most memorable part of their experience.

Objective 2: Supporting facilities, such as the Visitor Centre, restaurant and gift shop, reinforce the heritage values of the site and provide high quality services and products.

- 2a. The visitor centre has been upgraded within existing capital budgets. It continues to provide a basic orientation to the site, and an overview of the entire period of commemoration (1806-1952). Visitors enjoy its modern and interactive exhibits.
- 2b. The Old Fort Café continues to offer affordable, regionally-inspired food.
- 2c. The gift shop features unique handicrafts that reflect the Carrier and Métis culture and other products related to the cultural heritage of the site.

Objective 3: School groups look forward to visiting the site every year. Programming has expanded to reach all grades that have curriculum links to the site, from elementary to high school. Strong relationships with school organizations ensure that programs are relevant to educators and fit with curriculum.

Objective 4: The main pathway through the site provides a welcoming transition from the visitor centre to the historic grounds. The pathway is a vibrant, well-used asset frequented by visitors, who enjoy increased interpretation and programming, and by community members seeking a waterfront stroll or a safe and convenient route between the village of Fort St. James and the Nak'azdli Reserve.

Targets:

- On average, 90% of visitors enjoyed their visit.
- On average, 85% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned about the cultural heritage of the place.
- On average, 85% of visitors consider the site meaningful to them.
- Repeat visitation increases by 10% over the baseline from the 2010 visitor survey.
- A multi-year agreement for the operation of the Old Fort Café is in place.



Key Strategy 3: Growing with partners

This strategy focuses on strengthening existing relationships and nurturing relationships with new partners.

Objective 1: Aboriginal involvement at the site continues to grow, facilitating the incorporation of Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives into the protection and presentation of the site.

- 1a. The Elders' Advisory Council of the Nak'azdli First Nation continues to provide valuable advice and assistance with site management and programming.
- 1b. The New Caledonia Métis Association continues to support the development of exhibits and events related to Métis history and culture.
- 1c. Parks Canada actively involves and works with other Aboriginal communities and organizations that express an interest in how the site is managed and presented.

Objective 2: A range of meaningful volunteer opportunities, from tasks that require only a few hours commitment to projects that require a greater degree of dedication, encourage more local and regional residents to become involved with the site.

- 2a. The Friends of Fort St. James continue to actively support special events and learning activities. The organization has grown in number and includes citizens from the greater region (e.g. Vanderhoof, Prince George).
- 2b. New initiatives, like the historic site's garden plots, draw community members to the site and involve them in non-traditional ways.

Objective 3: Parks Canada has established new partnerships, agreements and collaborations, both formal and informal, with:

- The travel industry and tourism attractions, to develop new packages, programs and services based on the cultural and natural heritage of Fort St. James.
- The owners or stewards of other sites of historic significance within the broader Fort St. James area, to present and protect cultural resources related to the site.
- Academic institutions and other organizations (e.g. government agencies), to better understand and communicate the cultural and natural history of the site and its cultural landscape.
- Other heritage institutions and cultural organizations, to share and display cultural resources.

Targets:

- Volunteer numbers increase 10%.
- The number of events and initiatives involving Aboriginal people is maintained or increased.
- The number of formal or informal partnerships or collaborations is maintained or increased.



Key Strategy 4: Authentic resources, authentic experiences

Buildings, artefacts, site grounds and other historic resources are used to their full potential. Best practices, from regular maintenance to periodic conservation, ensure that they retain their commemorative integrity or heritage value. The site's resources are respected by all those who visit the site and visitors leave enthused by the important role that this site and the people connected to it played in our nation's history.

Objective 1: Visitors discover an amazing collection of well-preserved buildings from the fur trade era. Reconstructed buildings (e.g. Interpreter's House) and structures (e.g. tramway) help visitors imagine what the site was like in 1896.

Objective 2: Archaeological and cultural objects are in good condition—stored under environmental and security conditions that are appropriate for their historic value. They are used in the best way possible to present the site's history; reproductions are used where historic objects are too valuable to handle or are not available.

Objective 3: Visitors leave the site with a clear understanding of its national significance through their interaction with heritage interpreters and non-personal media.

Objective 4: Knowledge about the site's role in the area and regional material culture continues to expand, and is used to present more relevant and specific information, particularly about Aboriginal people, women and ethno-cultural communities. Local knowledge and historical research have contributed to this process.

Objective 5: The view of Stuart Lake and other aspects of the site's cultural landscape (e.g. vegetation, archaeological resources) are protected. Parks Canada engages with the municipality and the district to ensure that surrounding land uses respect the site's character and cultural landscape.

Objective 6: Archaeological investigations are undertaken as opportunities present themselves and specific interests are identified. Archaeological data is used to manage archaeological resources and guide future development.

Objective 7: The site is managed so that environmental impacts are minimized. Innovative approaches employing environmentally sound technologies and practices are encouraged.

Targets:

- Maintain 90% of historic objects in good or fair condition.
- Maintain or improve the condition of all Level I buildings on the site.
- There is no appreciable deterioration or loss of critical components of the site's cultural landscape features including land patterns, landforms, spatial organization, vegetation, viewsapes, circulation, water features, built features and archaeological resources.
- An increased percentage of visitors are able to correctly identify the reasons for the site's national significance.



6.0 Monitoring

Parks Canada uses a variety of tools to determine whether or not a national historic site is achieving the desired results outlined in the management plan. A *State of the Site Report* translates monitoring results into an assessment of the condition cultural resource protection, visitor experience, and public appreciation and understanding.

A national performance management framework guides the national measurement of results for the system of national historic places. Many of the targets contained within that framework have been incorporated into this management plan and will be reported on in the next *State of the Site Report* for Fort St. James National Historic Site.

Cyclical assessments of the condition of contemporary assets and cultural resources (both buildings and artefacts) feed into the *State of the Site Report*, as do periodic inventories of curatorial and archaeological collections.

Visitor experience, including satisfaction with the site's programs, facilities and services, overall enjoyment and connection with the site, is evaluated through periodic visitor surveys. Data from these surveys also assist Parks Canada in evaluating what visitors have learned during their visit. New programs, events, products and interpretive techniques are regularly evaluated and refined to ensure that they respond to the needs and interests of visitors and Parks Canada's objectives for visitor learning.

Limited data are available to quantify the condition of public appreciation and understanding, which includes outreach programming, and stakeholder and partner engagement. Several targets are proposed in this plan to fill this gap. Data related to the targets will be collected while this plan is implemented and the results will be reported in the next *State of the Site Report*.

7.0 Implementation Strategy

| Key Strategy 1: Getting the word out | | |
|--|---|--|
| Actions | Implementation Period | |
| | Short-term (within next 5 years) | Long-term (5 to 10 years) |
| Objective 1: Expanded marketing efforts reach local, regional and international markets. | | |
| 1. Develop a marketing plan for the site. | √ | |
| 2. Learn more about the site's share of different market segments using techniques such as PRIZM. | √ | |
| 3. Determine the site's share of the bus tour market and increase understanding of motor coach regional travel habits. | √ | |
| 4. Market the site cooperatively with other heritage tourism attractions, and through regional branding initiatives (e.g. the Golden Raven cultural branding project). | √ | |
| 5. Participate in key trade shows and Destination Marketing Organization events. | √ | |
| Objective 2: A user-friendly, dynamic website orients future visitors to the site and gives non-visitors a sense of what it is all about. | | |
| 1. Use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to connect volunteers to the site and promote events. | √ | √ |

| Key Strategy 2: A place to visit again and again | | |
|--|---|--|
| Actions | Implementation Period | |
| | Short-term (within next 5 years) | Long-term (5 to 10 years) |
| Objective 1: The site's engaging living history offer is complemented by a menu of a menu of daily adventures, special events and authentic opportunities that encourage repeat visitation by Fort St. James residents and residents of nearby communities. | | |
| 1. Update the <i>Heritage Presentation Plan</i> . Include a <i>Master Interpretive Plan</i> to guide personal interpretation at the site. | √ | |
| 2. Continue to provide overnight accommodation at the site through the Officer's House and group camping. | √ | √ |
| 3. Develop programs, events or products that tie the history and ecology of the lake into the site. For example, investigate working with partners to offer boat tours of the lake as part of a future event. | √ | √ |
| Objective 2: Supporting facilities, such as the Visitor Centre, restaurant and gift shop, reinforce the heritage values of the site and provide high quality services and products. | | |
| 1. Develop additional content (e.g. books or displays for attached resource room, video map) for new exhibit. | √ | |
| 2. Continue to work with the Elders Society to sell Carrier aboriginal handicrafts in the gift shop. | √ | √ |
| 3. Work with Métis people to provide Métis handicrafts in the gift shop. | √ | √ |

| Key Strategy 2: A place to visit again and again | | |
|---|---|--|
| Action | Implementation Period | |
| | Short-term (within next 5 years) | Long-term (5 to 10 years) |
| Objective 3: School groups look forward to visiting the site every year. Programming has expanded to reach all grades, from elementary to high school, with curriculum links to the site. Strong relationships with school organizations ensure that programs are relevant to educators and fit with curriculum. | | |
| 1. Work with schools and educators to develop a program with links to junior high and high school curricula. | ✓ | |
| Objective 4: The main pathway through the site provides a welcoming transition from the visitor centre to the historic grounds. The pathway is a vibrant, well-used asset frequented by visitors, who enjoy increased interpretation and programming, and by community members seeking a waterfront stroll or a safe and convenient route between the village of Fort St. James and the Nak'azdli Reserve. | | |
| 1. Work with the community of Fort St. James and Nak'azdli First Nation to develop a vision for the pathway and actions to move towards the vision. | ✓ | |
| 2. Increase programming along the main pathway and the lakeshore. Link the pathway to the refurbished tramway. | | ✓ |

| Key Strategy 3: Growing with partners | | |
|---|---|--|
| Action | Implementation Period | |
| | Short-term (within next 5 years) | Long-term (5 to 10 years) |
| Objective 1. Aboriginal involvement at the site continues to grow, facilitating the incorporation of Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives into the protection and presentation of the site. | | |
| 1. Complete the new Visitor Centre exhibit in collaboration with the New Caledonia Métis Association and the Nak'azdli Elders. | √ | |
| 2. Explore the development of the Hide Tanning Shed as a Cultural Exchange Centre (e.g. a community workshop for crafting). | √ | |
| Objective 2. A range of meaningful volunteer opportunities, from tasks that require only a few hours commitment to projects that require a greater degree of dedication, encourage more Fort St. James residents to become involved with the site. | | |
| 1. Develop a formalized volunteer program, with both short- and long-term opportunities. | √ | |
| Objective 3. Parks Canada has established new partnerships, agreements and collaborations with the travel industry and tourism attractions, the owners or stewards of other sites of historic significance, academic institutions, and other heritage institutions and cultural organizations. | | |
| 1. Work with other regional museums to develop one or more cultural heritage packages. | √ | √ |

| Key Strategy 4: Authentic resources, authentic experiences | | |
|--|---|--|
| Action | Implementation Period | |
| | Short-term (within next 5 years) | Long-term (5 to 10 years) |
| Objective 1: Visitors discover an amazing collection of well-preserved buildings from the fur trade era. Reconstructed buildings (e.g. Interpreter’s House) and structures (e.g. tramway) help visitors imagine what the site was like in 1896. | | |
| 1. Take steps to protect bottom logs of fur trade structures from rot. | √ | √ |
| 2. Monitor the sprinkler system and replace if necessary. | √ | √ |
| 3. Complete heritage recording of the Officer’s House. | √ | |
| 4. Periodically survey the location of the Fur Warehouse with respect to the shoreline. | | √ |
| 5. Update maintenance manuals for buildings and landscape features. | √ | |
| 6. Repair all or part of the tramway. Develop personal or non-personal interpretation (i.e. panels) to better integrate this reconstruction into the site. | √ | √ |
| 7. Work with other levels of government to ensure that the site is identified in community wildfire protection plans. Review site wildfire protection measures and participate in community FireSmart programs. | √ | |
| Objective 7: The site is managed so that environmental impacts are minimized. Innovative approaches employing environmentally sound technologies and practices are encouraged. | | |
| 1. Review environmental management practices in the following areas and make improvements where required: water and energy conservation; use of hazardous materials; waste reduction; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and environmental purchasing. | √ | |

8.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada conducted a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of this management plan in accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2004). The SEA considered how to avoid or reduce potentially adverse environmental effects and enhance positive environmental effects.

The implementation of the plan's key strategies will result in positive environmental effects. Increased awareness of the site's unique attributes and visitor offer through marketing improvements and enhanced outreach programming will lead to greater understanding of, attachment to, and support for Fort St. James National Historic Site. Actions that improve the quality of the facilities, services, programs and infrastructure will provide visitors with a meaningful connection to the site and encourage repeat visitation.

Initiatives to preserve the site's cultural landscape will enhance protection of heritage resources, address priorities identified in the 2008 *State of the Site Report*, such as the slumping shoreline trail, and strengthen commemorative integrity.

Several actions focus on enhancing partnerships with local Aboriginal and Métis groups and the community of Fort St. James. This will provide additional opportunities for involvement with the site to the benefit of all parties.

Ecological and cultural resources and management issues at the site are well understood. Actions in this plan are not likely to result in unacceptable environmental effects. The monitoring program described in Section 6.0 is intended to identify any adverse effects in a timely and methodical manner. Data or findings that suggest that an adverse effect is occurring will trigger a management response.

The site management plan will be implemented over the next 10 to 15 years. Some of the initiatives described in the plan are conceptual in nature and further planning and public involvement will be required. Project-level environmental assessments will be conducted in accordance with applicable legislation and policies.

In conclusion, this management plan is expected to achieve the desired results for commemorative integrity, visitor experience and education at Fort St. James National Historic Site. With the implementation of mitigations identified in the SEA and future project specific environmental assessments, adverse residual and cumulative effects as a result of the management plan are not expected to be significant.

9.0 Glossary

Archaeological Site: A place or area where tangible evidence of human activity of historical, cultural or scientific interest is or was located in situ on, below or above the ground, or lands underwater. The identification, recovery and understanding of this evidence can be achieved using archaeological research methods.

Commemorative Integrity: Refers to the health and wholeness of a national historic site. A national historic site may be said to possess commemorative integrity when: the resources that symbolize or represent its importance are not impaired or under threat, the reasons for its national significance are effectively communicated to the public; and when the heritage values of the site are respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site.

Cultural Landscape: Any geographical area that has been modified, influenced, or given special cultural meaning by people.

Cultural Resource: A human work or place which gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning, and which has been determined to have historic value. This term is applicable to the whole and the parts that make up the whole. The term may be applied to a wide range of resources, including, but not limited to, cultural landscapes and landscape features, archaeological sites, structures, engineering works and artifacts.

Level I Cultural Resource: A resource which is directly related to the reasons for the designation as a national historic site, as stated by the HSMBC.

Level II Cultural Resource: A resource which has historic value, but is not of national historic importance. This value can be related to historical, aesthetic or environmental qualities; regional or local association; or provincial, territorial or municipal designations.

Living History: The recreation of enough aspects of a particular point in time to give visitors the sense of stepping back in time and experiencing the scene. This is accomplished using historic objects, original buildings, costumed interpretation and period demonstrations to tell the stories of the people who used these objects or buildings. Interpretation is geared towards helping the visitor create a vivid, memorable image of important aspects of the landscape, characters, events and cultural resources, not on re-creating a set period in time, perfect in all its details.

Visitor Experience: The sum total of a visitor's personal interaction with heritage places and/or people that awakens their senses, affects their emotions, stimulates their mind and leaves them with a sense of attachment to these places.

Visitor Offer: The sum total of the facilities, programs, services and infrastructure at a site that support the visitor experience.