

2023

# Grand-Pré

National Historic Site of Canada

Part of a UNESCO  
World Heritage Site

Management Plan



Parks  
Canada

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Canada

Canada



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National Historic Site of Canada

**Management Plan**

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GRAND-PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2023.

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#### Note to readers

The health and safety of visitors, employees and all Canadians are of the utmost importance. Parks Canada is following the advice and guidance of public health experts to limit the spread of COVID-19 while allowing Canadians to experience Canada's natural and cultural heritage.

Parks Canada acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic may have unforeseeable impacts on the *Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*. Parks Canada will inform Indigenous peoples, partners, stakeholders and the public of any such impacts through its annual implementation update on the implementation of this plan.

For more information about the management plan or about  
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## Foreword



From coast to coast to coast, national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas are a source of shared pride for Canadians. They reflect Canada's natural and cultural heritage and tell stories of who we are, including the historic and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples.

These cherished places are a priority for the Government of Canada. We are committed to protecting natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

At the same time, we continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities to ensure that more Canadians can experience these iconic destinations and learn about history, culture and the environment.

In collaboration with Indigenous communities and key partners, Parks Canada conserves and protects national historic sites and national parks; enables people to discover and connect with history and nature; and helps sustain the economic value of these places for local and regional communities.

This new management plan for Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed by a dedicated team at Parks Canada through extensive consultation and input from Indigenous partners, other partners and stakeholders, local communities, as well as visitors past and present. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of cooperation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the *Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*.

**Steven Guilbeault**

*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada*



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*



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Ron Hallman  
*President & Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada*



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## Executive Summary

Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada is located in Nova Scotia, 85 kilometres northwest of Halifax, on the Minas Basin, an inlet of the Bay of Fundy. When the first European settlers, the Acadians, arrived in the region around 1680, they were welcomed by the Mi'kmaq, who had been living, hunting, and fishing in the area for millennia. Ingenious efforts to build a system of diking and draining resulted in the conversion of several thousand acres of marshlands into land suitable for agriculture. The local Acadian settlers established farms, orchards and villages on the surrounding hillsides and the community of Grand-Pré grew rapidly. In 1755, British forces began what was to become known as the “Grand Dérangement.” The entirety of the Acadian population was affected. Over the next eight years, out of a total population of over 14,000, more than 10,000 Acadians were dispersed throughout the Anglo-American colonies, England and France. The approximately 4,000 remaining were forced to flee, hide or were imprisoned. The fertile lands left behind were granted to New England settlers.

Today, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a place of remembrance where Acadians come to commemorate their collective experience and celebrate their resilience and identity. Covering an area of 26.57 hectares, the site is home to important monuments associated with Acadians, including the Memorial Church, an Acadian cemetery, the statue of Evangeline (inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem), and Victorian gardens. Grand-Pré National Historic Site is also part of a unique cultural landscape, recognized by UNESCO in 2012 for its outstanding universal value: the Landscape of Grand Pré World Heritage Site. In addition to Grand-Pré National Historic Site, lands, marshes, a series of dikes, and Cape Blomidon, a significant Mi'kmaq landscape feature can be appreciated from the Landscape of Grand Pré View Park, located on a nearby hilltop.

This management plan highlights this international recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, while reaffirming Grand-Pré National Historic Site's role as a place of identity and gathering for local and regional communities. The proposed management direction for the next ten years includes a vision based on the shared values and perspectives of Acadians, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, and local communities. Three key strategies are presented for achieving this vision, which includes more specific and measurable objectives and targets.

### **Key Strategy 1: An attractive, world-class historic site**

This strategy includes objectives to ensure that the heritage value of the site and its components are well protected and to reaffirm its role as a gateway to discovering the Landscape of Grand Pré World Heritage Site. It also aims to improve and enhance services, facilities, and activities for visitors, from near and far, and increase the site's profile for the benefit of the entire region.

### **Key Strategy 2: A place of remembrance for the Acadian community and a place of learning for all**

This strategy focuses on commemorating and presenting the history of the Acadian people and honouring their resilience, while addressing and highlighting the multiple historical perspectives of Grand-Pré, such as the Mi'kmaq cultural heritage as well as the lesser-known facets of history. Through this strategy, the historic site lends itself to reflection on the impacts of colonialism, and more broadly the forced migration of peoples, themes that remain relevant in today's world.

### **Key Strategy 3: Mi'kmaq, partners and collaborators working in synergy towards a shared vision**

Grand-Pré National Historic Site is fortunate to have valuable partners whose engagement enriches the service offer and activities for visitors. In addition, Parks Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and aims to make Grand-Pré National Historic Site an inclusive place where the Mi'kmaq can tell their stories and share their culture, heritage, and traditions. Through this third strategy, Grand-Pré National Historic Site seeks to foster lasting relationships and cohesion with its different partners to strengthen the position of the site in the region's communities and tourism industry.



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## 1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada administers one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national historic site, national park, national marine conservation area and heritage canal administered by Parks Canada supports its vision.

*Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by Parks Canada. The *Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of its mandate.

The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, Acadian and local partners, stakeholders, partners as well as the Canadian public were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Grand-Pré National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually, in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and Acadian partners, on progress towards achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement and, where appropriate, consultation, on the management of Grand-Pré National Historic Site in years to come.

## 2.0 Significance of Grand-Pré National Historic Site

Grand-Pré National Historic Site is located in Nova Scotia, 85 kilometres northwest of the city of Halifax, on the unceded traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq. The site was already used and landscaped as a historic park before being designated in 1982 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to commemorate the Deportation of the Acadians in 1755. The site bears witness to the Acadian way of life between 1682 and 1755 and its enduring importance to Acadians around the world, for whom it has become a symbol of resilience.

For millennia, before the arrival of European settlers in northeastern North America, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia lived, hunted and fished in the area where Grand-Pré National Historic Site is located, known as Mi'kma'ki. The Acadians were the first European settlers to arrive in the region and established the community of Grand-Pré around the 1680s. The Acadians were welcomed by the Mi'kmaq, with whom they formed trade and other social alliances. Faced with the highest tides in the world at the Bay of Fundy, the Acadians of Grand-Pré worked hard and resourcefully to settle in the area. By adopting a system of diking and draining practiced in western France, these pioneers converted several thousand acres of marshlands into land suitable for agriculture. The agricultural fertility of the land brought prosperity to the local settler communities and allowed them to establish farms, orchards and villages on the surrounding hillsides. The village and the population of Grand-Pré grew rapidly as a result. At the time of the Deportation of the Acadians by the British in 1755, on the eve of the Seven Years War, approximately 2,000 Acadians were living in Grand-Pré. Frustrated with the neutrality of Acadians who refused to swear an unconditional oath of allegiance to the Crown, British forces began what became known as the "Grand Dérangement." The entirety of the Acadian population was affected. Over the next eight years, out of a total population of over 14,000, more than 10,000 Acadians were dispersed throughout the Anglo-

American colonies, England and France. The approximately 4,000 remaining were forced to flee, hide or were imprisoned. After their forced migration, the homes and barns of the Acadians of Grand-Pré were burned by the British, and their lands were granted to New England settlers (known as the New England Planters) who continued to use them for agricultural purposes while preserving the structures and infrastructure built by the Acadians.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie*, was published in 1847. The poem about the love story of two fictional characters, Evangeline and Gabriel, separated by the Deportation, was a resounding success. This poem helped to raise awareness around the world about the tragic history of the Acadians and promoted the revival of Acadian culture and the village of Grand-Pré. Evangeline thus became a symbol of the perseverance of the Acadian people in the face of adversity. Memorials, buildings and a garden were later erected on the site of the former village as a symbolic way for the descendants who had been expelled in 1755 to reclaim the Grand-Pré area.

Today, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a place of remembrance where Acadians from around the world come to commemorate their collective experience and celebrate their identity. Covering an area of 26.57 hectares, the site is home to important monuments associated with Acadians, including some valuable cultural resources such as the Memorial Church, an Acadian cemetery, the statue of Evangeline (inspired by Longfellow's epic poem), an old blacksmith's shop, the Herbin Cross, a well, and Victorian gardens as well as a collection of objects and works of art. Important archaeological resources testifying to the Acadian settlement, and the continuous and ancestral occupation by the Mi'kmaq, can also still be found on site.

Parks Canada also administers a small piece of property not far from the national historic site, along the Gaspereau River, known as Horton Landing. The Gaspereau River was a key travel way within the Mi'kmaq local and regional economic and cultural landscape. This 0.81 hectare plot of land is used by Parks Canada to represent the location where Acadians were gathered onto longboats and forced to embark before being transferred to larger ships bound for the British colonies established between Massachusetts and Georgia. The Horton Landing site includes a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque, commemorating the English Planters, interpretive panels, and a cross commemorating the Acadian Deportation.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site is part of a unique cultural landscape, recognized by UNESCO in 2012 for its outstanding universal value. The reasons for inscribing the Landscape of Grand Pré as a World Heritage Site are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- “The cultural landscape *bears exceptional testimony to a traditional farming settlement created in the 17th century by the Acadians in a coastal zone with tides that are among the highest in the world.*”
- And because “*Grand Pré is the iconic place of remembrance of the Acadian diaspora, dispersed by the Grand Dérangement, in the second half of the 18th century. Its polder landscape and archaeological remains are testimony to the values of a culture of pioneers able to create their own territory, whilst living in harmony with the native Mi'kmaq people.*”

The Landscape of Grand Pré as recognized by UNESCO covers 13 square kilometres and encompasses, in addition to Grand-Pré National Historic Site, lands, marshes and a series of dikes that can be appreciated from the Landscape of Grand Pré View Park, located at the top of Old Post Road. The management requirements of the UNESCO inscribed area, including the buffer zone, encompass a diverse and significant Mi'kmaq cultural landscape, including the birthplace of Kluskap (Cape Blomidon). The Landscape of Grand Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site is managed by a not-for-profit corporation composed of eight member organizations representing the main stakeholders in protecting, preserving, presenting and promoting the World Heritage Site. Parks Canada is a member of this corporation, along with Mi'kmaq representatives, local communities, Acadian stakeholders, the Grand Pré Marsh Body Incorporated, the Municipality of the County of Kings, and the Nova Scotia government. This involvement

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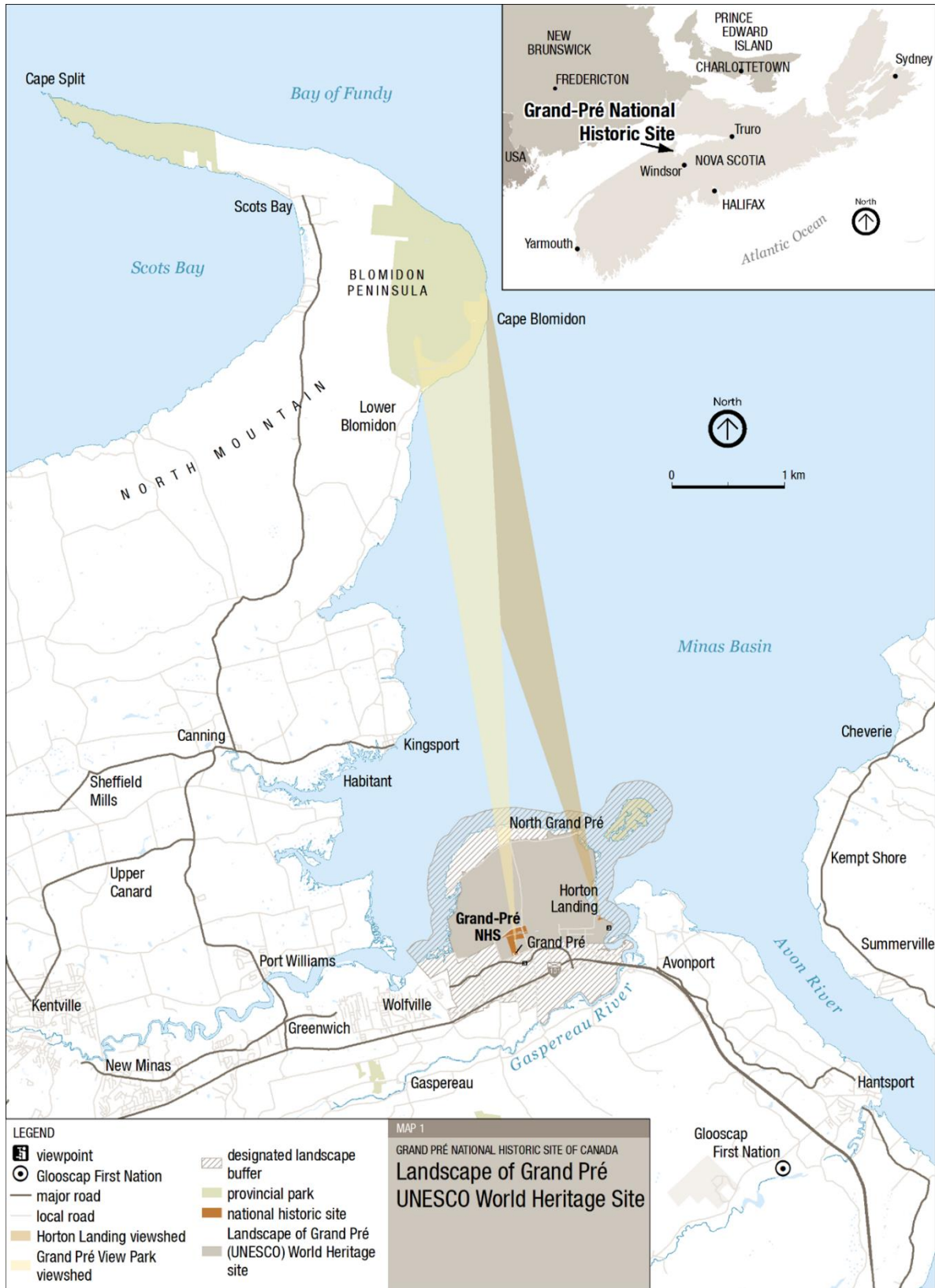
<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from Decision: 36 COM 8B.27 of the 36th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee

is crucial since the Grand-Pré National Historic Site, with its reception infrastructure, has served as the main gateway to discovering Grand-Pré's larger cultural landscape since 2012.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site is also part of a third designation, the "Grand-Pré Rural Historic District." This designation by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1995 refers to the thousands of acres of cultivated marshlands and hilly land, redivided into townships in the British method after the Deportation of the Acadians, in preparation for the arrival of New England Planters. The distinctive rural landscape comprising the neighbouring villages of Grand Pré, North Grand Pré and Hortonville is a testament to Acadians' and Planters' evolving agricultural traditions. A plaque related to this designation is located near the Parks Canada visitor reception centre.

Since opening in 1961 as a historic park, and its subsequent designation as a national historic site of Canada in 1982, many events and cultural activities, such as Acadian Days, the Congrès mondial acadien (2004), commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Deportation (2005), as well as Grand Pré 2017 – A celebration of peace and friendship between Mi'kmaq and Acadians (2017), have been held at Grand-Pré National Historic Site, cementing its importance as a gathering place for the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq. For the benefit of its visitors, in addition to its historical monuments, the site includes a large reception centre with a permanent exhibit, multimedia presentations, a theatre with film projection capabilities, a gift shop and washroom facilities. During the operational season, which runs from mid-May to mid-October, a wide variety of thematic programs and guided tours are offered to visitors. Eight oTENTik units were also installed on the site in 2020, adding an accommodation component to the services offered to visitors who want a unique immersive experience at Grand-Pré National Historic Site. Many visitors come to Grand-Pré National Historic Site simply to stroll or picnic, admiring the meticulously tended, century-old Victorian gardens and French willows and taking in the beauty of the evocative cultural landscape.

Map 1: Landscape of Grand Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site





Map 2: Regional Setting



Map 3: Grand-Pré National Historic Site



### 3.0 Planning Context

Located in the Nova Scotia portion of Mi'kma'ki, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is administered by Parks Canada's Northern New Brunswick Field Unit, maximizing the site's thematic connections with several other sites managed by the field unit, such as Fort Beauséjour – Fort Cumberland, Fort Gaspareaux, Monument-Lefebvre and Beaubassin National Historic Sites and Boishébert National Historic Site.

#### Visitor Experience

With nearly 40,000 visitors in 2019, Grand-Pré National Historic Site has seen more than a 40 percent increase in visitation since 2015. The current boom in the agro-tourism industry (vineyards, cider mills, cycling) and in population growth in Annapolis region, where the site is located, is creating a very favourable context for the site. Collaborative and promotional initiatives with tourism partners in the province have also contributed to this increase in visitation.<sup>2</sup> The site attracts primarily Canadian visitors (70 percent), with 18 percent of visitors from the United States. The *2019 Visitor Information Program* revealed that 14 percent of visitors were of Acadian descent and were drawn to the site to learn more about their roots and heritage. Visitor satisfaction surveys show that visitors greatly enjoy their visit to the site, largely due to the variety of available thematic programs and guided tours and the high quality service offer.

Under the Federal Infrastructure Investment Program (2015–2020), the site has undergone significant improvements that are also reflected in the visitor experience. The site's former maintenance building was replaced by a new purpose-built structure that is more suitable for operational needs and also better integrated into the site's cultural landscape. Thanks to \$737,000 in federal funding, the iconic Memorial Church has also undergone major restoration work on its frame, front, masonry and fire protection system (sprinklers); restoration work was also carried out on the Evangeline statue pedestal, the Herbin cross, and the bust of Henry W. Longfellow.

Eight oTENTik accommodation units were also installed on the site in 2020, adding a new component to the visitor offer. The introduction of an overnight component is intended to extend the visitors' stay on site and encourage them to create meaningful connections to the stories of Grand-Pré. The unique offer also aims to attract a growing number of cyclists using the Harvest Moon Trail, a new 110-kilometre linear trail that begins at the site and winds through the scenic Annapolis Valley. The installation of the oTENTik units was guided by the concern to not alter possible archaeological resources and to reduce the impact on the landscape of the historic site, and was discussed in advance with the region's tourism partners. Now that it is in place, Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue and active communications with Mi'kmaq, Acadian and local community stakeholders in particular, regarding the operation of the oTENTik units as well as other site-development initiatives. Plans are underway to also develop and install accommodation structures to represent the Mi'kmaw heritage of the area.

#### Partners and Neighbouring Communities

The visitor experience benefits greatly from valued partners since many of these activities (including managing the gift shop) are offered by partners who are committed to bringing Acadian culture to life in the Grand-Pré region. Among the main partners who support Parks Canada in its mandate at Grand-Pré National Historic Site are the Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated (UNESCO), the Société Promotion Grand-Pré, the Société Nationale de l'Acadie, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Les Amis de Grand-Pré, the Musée acadien de l'Université de Moncton and Grand-Pré Marsh Body Incorporated (representing current farmers, some of whom trace their ancestry back to the New England Planters, settlers who were granted the Acadian lands after 1755). In the management of the historic site, Parks Canada must engage and collaborate with all these different partners. There is both a need and

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<sup>2</sup>The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the opening of several Parks Canada sites in 2020 and 2021, resulting in changes to the pattern and levels of visitation to Grand-Pré National Historic Site during those two years.

opportunity to include Mi'kmaw-led initiatives and offerings previously under-considered and underrepresented at the site. Currently, a significant focus is being put on Mi'kmaw cultural tourism, and it is undergoing considerable development. In this regard, Grand-Pré National Historic Site can be an important place to support and promote in these offerings. In return this will contribute to raising the site's profile.

In addition, Parks Canada organizes annual open house<sup>3</sup> events to encourage increased engagement with local communities and share the site's achievements and upcoming projects with all partners and stakeholders. A newsletter produced and distributed by Parks Canada has added to efforts to keep local communities informed. In-person engagement with local Mi'kmaw communities has and will continue to contribute both to this engagement and partnership activity, as well as to meaningful consultation and understanding.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site representatives have taken part in numerous promotional activities and regional cultural events in cooperation with Tourism Nova Scotia and the national historic sites under the Parks Canada Mainland Nova Scotia Field Unit. Over the years, the historic site has engaged in promotional activities provided by the Commission du tourisme acadien du Canada Atlantique and has remained an active member of this organization. The result of all these efforts is a greater number of contacts and increased traffic on social media, coinciding with an increase in visitation.

### **Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory**

Grand-Pré National Historic Site also has as key contributors various organizations and communities representing the Mi'kmaw Nation of Nova Scotia: Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, and Glooscap First Nation. The Mi'kmaq's millennia-long presence in the larger region and territory of Grand-Pré, designated as the Sipekne'katik district in the Mi'kma'ki territory, has been confirmed by traditional, archaeological, and ethnographic sources as well as ongoing use and occupancy. Traditionally, the Mi'kmaq fished and harvested a wide range of resources in and around Grand-Pré, in its natural state prior to colonization, and ongoing to this very day. Since the area was also a good place to trade, reports indicate that when the first Europeans arrived in the area in the 17th century, they found willing trading partners among the Mi'kmaq. The Grand-Pré and Gaspereau River area is part of a riverine and coastal travel network that linked the Mi'kmaq with the other Indigenous Nations throughout North America, facilitating trade and communication. French settlers purposely chose locations close to Mi'kmaw communities and travel ways in order to make use of these established networks. They developed trade and political relationships with the Mi'kmaq that benefitted French settlers from the earliest period to the alliances of the mid-18th century and after. Parks Canada's management of Grand-Pré National Historic Site recognizes the Peace and Friendship Treaties that were signed in the 18th century. This series of treaties and agreements was intended to establish friendly relations between the Wabanaki nations (including the Mi'kmaq) and the British. Today, negotiations on the implementation of treaty and Indigenous rights and to self-determination are ongoing in Nova Scotia between the Government of Canada, Nova Scotia and the Mi'kmaq. It is with the spirit and intent of these negotiations that this management plan has been developed.

Since the reasons for Grand-Pré's designation as a national historic site of Canada were initially based primarily on the history and way of life of the Acadians in the region in the 18th century, Mi'kmaq perspectives were not included in the presentation of the site until very recently and only minimally, thus far. However, in 2017, Grand-Pré National Historic Site celebrated the cultures of the Mi'kmaq and Acadians, focusing on the long-standing peace and friendship between these peoples. Subsequent editions of the Landscape of Cultures Festival in 2018 and 2019 have also helped to strengthen ties between the site and local communities, especially the Glooscap First Nation.

The involvement of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia at the site is, therefore, relatively recent and consists mainly of collaboration on special events and festivals. Increasingly, representatives of the Mi'kmaq

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<sup>3</sup>Open house events were not held in 2020 and 2021 due to health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in 2022.

Nation are being invited to participate in the management and stewardship of the site. They are working with Parks Canada to find ways to honour and respect the Mi'kmaq's ongoing, unique and important relationship with these unceded lands since time immemorial. Opportunities exist to hear and celebrate Mi'kmaq voices and to further integrate Mi'kmaq history and culture into visitor programming, archaeological projects and site operations. Chief among these will be to begin the process of revisiting and adding to the commemorative integrity statement to amend the gaps and challenges of this culturally, politically, and economically important landscape at the heart of Mi'kma'ki and the Mi'kmaq people. These opportunities are encouraged by the new *Framework for History and Commemoration*, adopted by Parks Canada in 2019, which fosters an interpretation of history that goes beyond thinking about the origin of a historic place designation. This framework document proposes a more inclusive, accessible, and engaging approach to public history that reflects 21st century Canada. This initiative also supports the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action number 79 through increased inclusion of Indigenous peoples' history, voices and perspectives in sites managed by Parks Canada. Grand-Pré National Historic Site is therefore working with other Parks Canada sites in Nova Scotia to implement this framework and align efforts and approaches in relation to Mi'kmaq Nation engagement and collaboration.

### **Commemoration and Presentation of the Site**

Grand-Pré National Historic Site has three distinct designations: it is a National Historic Site of Canada, it is part of a rural historic district, and it is at the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, not to mention its shared geography with a Mi'kmaq cultural landscape with cultural, spiritual, economic and political significance. The designated national historic site is only a small portion (about 4 percent) of the larger protected lands and landscapes included in the UNESCO designation at Grand-Pré, but it is currently the primary destination for visitors to experience this internationally renowned landscape. Since the UNESCO recognition in 2012, expectations are understandably high for the future, giving rise to a need to increase, among stakeholders and the public as well, understanding of these multiple overlapping designations and the role of Parks Canada at Grand-Pré.

The very notion of a protected cultural landscape can be difficult to grasp. Protecting this landscape can be complex, especially in the absence of resources and tools to clearly define its main components and their heritage values. A recent initiative to deepen historical knowledge about the site was launched as a major research program led by archaeologist Jonathan Fowler of Saint Mary's University, Halifax. This program has made important advances in mapping the archaeological resources of the site. Among recent discoveries, the pre-Deportation Acadian cemetery has been accurately mapped and approximately 289 graves have been identified. The exact location of the Saint-Charles-des-Mines church remains to be confirmed, although some promising archaeological indicators have surfaced during these excavations. These advances provide a better understanding of the Acadian cultural landscape of 1755 and the lives of the families who lived there. The Mi'kmaq cultural landscape has not yet received comparable consideration, though it is most certainly necessary and can be achieved in the same spirit of mutual respect and benefit that the Mi'kmaq alliance with Acadians has enjoyed since the earliest days of Acadian arrival to this place.

However, the enhancement and protection of this cultural landscape cannot be done without considering climate change and its impacts, such as rising sea levels and the increased recurrence and intensity of storms. Future changes are likely to affect the greater landscape of Grand-Pré, located very close to sea level, and thus the national historic site. This greater landscape contains important natural features: the Minas Basin region is home to a suite of well-known and highly significant migration sites for shorebirds, particularly semipalmated plovers, and is recognized as a bird area of global importance. The presence of critical habitat for the eastern meadowlark and the bobolink, two federally protected species of birds under the *Species at Risk Act*, within the national historic site, also highlights the importance of the site for the protection of natural resources.

At the same time, the full potential of the UNESCO inscription of Grand-Pré has yet to be fully explored, offering new opportunities to enhance and promote the site. A project led by Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated is currently underway to develop a visitor experience concept and feasibility study for the

Landscape of Grand Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site. This study aims to identify the best approaches for communicating the outstanding universal value of the landscape to visitors to the region.

## 4.0 Development of the Management Plan

Parks Canada conducted an extensive engagement and consultation process with a wide range of groups, including community partners, Acadian partners, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, residents of surrounding communities, visitors, youth, and the general public, to learn about their interests or concerns regarding Grand-Pré National Historic Site and to provide them with an opportunity to contribute to the directions that will guide its future management. This approach was carried out in two phases.

### **Phase 1: Engagement with key Acadian and community partners and Mi'kmaq (2021)**

Before beginning to write a first draft of the management plan, Grand-Pré National Historic Site wanted to initiate a conversation about the current and future management of the site by inviting the Mi'kmaq, key Acadian and community partners, and organizations with an interest in Grand-Pré to a series of discussions and interviews. In order to comply with COVID-19 health measures in place in the spring of 2021, these interviews were conducted virtually and in subgroups. Participants spoke on behalf of the Acadian community<sup>4</sup>, the Mi'kmaq Nation of Nova Scotia as represented by Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn, Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated and surrounding communities. A total of four meetings were held and the main ideas expressed by participants were the value of the site to Acadians, the historical and ongoing relationship of the Mi'kmaq to both their territory and the Acadians, the importance of partnerships, archaeology and historical interpretation, target audiences and the UNESCO designation. The ideas and discussions that came out of these meetings fuelled thought on the future management plan and had a major influence on the directions proposed in it.

### **Phase 2: Formal consultations with Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, Acadian partners, stakeholders, staff, and the general public (Spring-Summer 2022)**

Phase two provided partners, stakeholders, and the general public with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft management plan. Virtual consultation sessions were held in spring 2022 with representatives of various Acadian organizations and the Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated. These sessions served as a strong sounding board for the preliminary plan prior to full public consultation.

Over 8,700 households across Nova Scotia's Kings County within the Annapolis Valley region received a newsletter designed to communicate news of the public consultation period and present opportunities to review the draft management plan and provide feedback. One such opportunity was an open house held at Grand-Pré National Historic Site on July 12, 2022. People who attended this in-person meeting had the opportunity to provide Parks Canada with feedback on the management plan. Four stations were set up as part of the open house, one for discussing the vision and one for each of the three key strategies.

A summary of the draft management plan and an online comment card were made available to the public on the Parks Canada Grand-Pré National Historic Site website and the Consulting with Canadians website, providing Canadians across the country with the means to participate in the consultation. Details on how to participate in the consultation were promoted through local and regional media outlets and social media platforms. A total of four social media posts and one social media paid advertisement promoting the draft management plan and public consultation helped the Parks Canada team reach 18,664 people during an eight-week period. Paid advertisements also appeared in local newspapers and posters promoting the open house were put up in various locations near Grand-Pré National Historic Site. In all, 49 Canadians submitted online comment cards and provided invaluable feedback that helped inform the final version of the management plan.

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<sup>4</sup>The Société Promotion Grand-Pré, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the Société Nationale de l'Acadie, Les Amis de Grand-Pré.

In late June, Parks Canada welcomed comments on the draft plan from Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office, leading to the scheduling of a follow-up in-person meeting in early September and a virtual meeting in October. Finally, Grand-Pré National Historic Site staff played a key role in shaping the final management plan by sharing their intimate knowledge of the site, in all its facets and complexities, and helping fine tune the vision, the key strategies, objectives, and the targets found in the draft plan during a special consultation session held in early September 2022.

## 5.0 Vision

The vision described below represents the aspirations for Grand-Pré National Historic Site for the next 15 to 20 years. This vision is based on the shared values and perspectives of Acadians, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, local communities and Canadians. It expresses the desired future for the site and aims to inspire Mi'kmaq and stakeholders in their interventions in relation to the historic site. The vision for Grand-Pré National Historic Site highlights its international recognition as a treasured UNESCO World Heritage Site while reaffirming its role as a place of identity and gathering for local and regional communities.

Located on unceded Mi'kmaw territory and in view of the birthplace of Kluskap, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a place where the centuries-old relationship between the Mi'kmaq and Acadian peoples is fully acknowledged, shared and celebrated.

A strong Acadian symbol, a place of celebration and remembrance, Grand-Pré National Historic Site celebrates the culture, pride and resilience of the Acadian people. For some, it is also a place of reflection, even of pilgrimage. Acadians from the diaspora visit Grand-Pré National Historic Site to reconnect to their roots or to learn about their heritage.

Grand-Pré offers opportunities for reconciliation and reconnection with the Mi'kmaw allies who helped Acadians establish their own heartland in this part of Mi'kma'ki. Grand-Pré serves as a place to celebrate the existence and character of this shared heritage.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a place where research and learning advance to the benefit of all and where healing from historic injury occurs, revealing a bright future of respect, compassion and growth. This leaves the visitor wanting to visit more national historic sites linked to the Acadian Odyssey and Mi'kmaw cultural heritage.

A gateway to a world-renowned heritage site, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a flagship site for the discovery of a unique, respected and authentic cultural landscape. In collaboration with the Landscape of Grand Pré UNESCO World Heritage Site, the national historic site invites visitors to contemplate the landscape and the memorial gardens, while highlighting the region's complex and overlapping cultural and natural historical values and characters, and its pioneering agricultural side. As a renewed tourism destination, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is recognized as a must-see in the Annapolis Valley and is part of the region's tourism boom.

Grand-Pré is an inclusive place promoting closer ties and meetings between different cultures. Welcoming people of all ages, cultures, religions, genders and abilities, it is a place for artistic expression and gathering for nearby communities. The active participation of Mi'kmaq, Acadians and local communities, as well as partners and stakeholders fosters a sense of pride and attachment to this unique place that invites visitors on a poetic journey where myth meets reality.

## 6.0 Key Strategies

The following three key strategies describe the broad management approaches for managing the national historic site over the next ten years to ultimately achieve the vision outlined above. They take into consideration the main challenges of the site as well as trends and opportunities on the horizon.

Each of these key strategies has more specific objectives and associated targets to measure progress in future years. Decisions on how to reach the objectives and targets identified in this plan are supported by ongoing work planning and investment planning and must be feasible within the historic site's existing financial and human resources. Over the plan's ten-year timeframe, this approach allows for flexibility to account for available resources, evolving priorities and emerging opportunities. Unless indicated otherwise, all targets are intended to be achieved within the ten-year implementation period of this plan.

An annual review of the implementation of the plan will be conducted to report on results achieved and to engage with Mi'kmaq communities and groups, Acadians and other local communities, partners, stakeholders and the general public.

### **Key Strategy 1: An attractive, world-class historic site**

UNESCO's 2012 recognition of the exceptional heritage value of the Landscape of Grand Pré has further enhanced the pride of Acadians, local and Mi'kmaw communities and all Canadians in Grand-Pré National Historic Site, which is a prominent symbol of this unique landscape. This designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is the result of ongoing engagement with the community and its stakeholders who, with the support of Parks Canada, prepared and supported the UNESCO nomination of the Landscape of Grand Pré. The pride associated with this international recognition is naturally accompanied by high expectations of Grand-Pré National Historic Site in terms of protecting its cultural resources, enhancing Mi'kmaw perspectives and values, facilitating memorable visitor experiences and ensuring the quality of site facilities. Parks Canada must implement best practices in these areas if the site is to be a world-class tourism destination and attract visitors from near and far. The Landscape of Grand Pré View Park provides the public with an additional opportunity to learn more about Grand-Pré and other lands included in the World Heritage Site. This first strategy therefore includes objectives and targets to ensure that the heritage value of the site and its components are maintained and to reaffirm its role as a gateway to discovering the Landscape of Grand Pré World Heritage Site. It also aims to improve and enhance services and activities for visitors and thus increase its profile and allure for the benefit of the entire region in this part of Mi'kma'ki.

**Objective 1.1:** Recognition and awareness of Grand-Pré National Historic Site are enhanced and visitor numbers increase.

#### Targets

- The total number of visitors entering the site will reach 50,000 by 2026.
- The percentage of visitors for whom Grand-Pré Historic Site is the primary reason for travel increases to 15 percent in the next visitor survey (base year 2019).
- The number of visits to the Grand-Pré National Historic Site website increases by ten percent by 2028.

**Objective 1.2:** The value of the cultural landscape and the Mi'kmaw cultural heritage at Grand-Pré National Historic Site is better understood, protected and communicated to the public, contributing to maintaining the outstanding universal value of the UNESCO cultural landscape.

#### Targets

- The condition of landscapes and landscape features remains rated as "good" in the next State of the Site Assessment.
- A strategy to ensure the sustainability of the Victorian gardens and Acadian cemetery is established by 2029, and their significance is highlighted more prominently.



- The accurate boundary of the former Acadian church is identified and marked on the site by 2026.
- New collaborations in research, inventory and conservation of cultural resources are established by 2025 most notably with the Mi'kmaq.
- The effects of climate change on the site and on the protection of its cultural and natural resources are studied at the landscape level with relevant partners, and by 2031, mitigation strategies are identified.

**Objective 1.3:** Visitors are increasingly encouraged to extend their stay at Grand-Pré National Historic Site through a well-established accommodation experience.

Targets

- By 2025, over 1,000 visitors will have stayed in the oTENTik accommodation units.
- By 2031, visitors will have access to enhanced services, activities and facilities to make their oTENTik stay more enjoyable.
- A Mi'kmaw accommodation experience is developed in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq and implemented by 2026.

**Objective 1.4:** Facilities at Grand-Pré National Historic Site are in good condition, more inclusive, more accessible, and greener so that visitors feel comfortable and welcome regardless of age, background, gender, beliefs or ability.

Targets

- The condition of built assets remains rated as “good” in the next state of the site assessment, including the condition of the Memorial Church, a classified Federal Heritage Building.
- By 2028, concrete actions are being taken at the site that results in a reduction of its ecological footprint and greenhouse gas emissions from its operations.
- The percentage of visitors expressing satisfaction with the condition of the site’s facilities (including accessibility and inclusiveness) remains above 95 percent in the next state of the site assessment.
- Beginning in 2024, future infrastructure projects are designed, and existing infrastructures are assessed, to improve wherever possible barrier-free accessibility to meet the objectives of the *Accessible Canada Act*.

**Objective 1.5:** Renewed, enriched and inclusive activities and experiences that attract new types of visitors are offered at the national historic site by Parks Canada and through sustainable collaborations with the Acadian community, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, the Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated, and tourism partners.

Targets

- The percentage of visitors saying they enjoyed their visit remains above 90 percent in the next state of the site assessment (baseline year 2019).
- New partnerships are formed with Acadian partners, as well as with local and Mi'kmaw communities to develop value-added programs and services by 2025 while supporting Acadian, regional and Mi'kmaw cultural tourism strategies and opportunities.
- By 2027, the site receives more visitors from the “young adults,” “families with young children” and “active people” (cyclists) market segments.

**Key Strategy 2: A place of remembrance for the Acadian community and a place of learning for all**

Located in traditional and unceded Mi'kmaw territory as a heartland of Mi'kmaw culture bearing witness to the birthplace of Kluskap, Grand-Pré National Historic Site has become an iconic location steeped in identity for the Acadian community. It celebrates the deep attachment that Acadians around the world still feel today towards this region, which is the heart of their ancestral homeland and the symbol of the

ties that unite them. The significance of the site also engages other communities, all Canadians, and visitors from around the world to reflect on and learn from the tragedy of an entire community, as well as the lessons learned at that time. Key Strategy 2 therefore focuses on commemorating and presenting the history of the Acadian people and honouring their resilience. This presentation of history must also address and highlight the multiple historical perspectives of Grand-Pré. A concerted emphasis on Mi'kmaw cultural heritage and landscape, Acadians and Planters, as well as the lesser-known facets of history, including the history of enslavement in the colonial world and its historical expression in this place will ensure visitors have access to a fair and complete interpretation, developed according to the principles set out in the Parks Canada *Framework for History and Commemoration*. The site lends itself to stimulating collaborations and discussions around telling the region's history with the goal of enriching this narrative and fostering the reconciliation of different perspectives. This solidifies the fundamental role played by Grand-Pré National Historic Site in reflecting on and learning about the history of the impacts of colonialism on all peoples, including the Deportation of the Acadians, but also more broadly about the forced migration and immigration of peoples, which continue to represent current themes that remain relevant in today's world.

**Objective 2.1:** Through renewed and enriched activities and experiences, Acadians and other visitors with a personal connection to Grand-Pré will rediscover Grand-Pré National Historic Site as an iconic place of remembrance.

#### Targets

- In the next visitor survey, the percentage of visitors reporting Acadian descent increases by 5 percent (base year 2019).
- In the next visitor survey, the proportion of visitors reporting indigenous identity will be measured.
- The percentage of repeat visitors (not first-time visitors to the site) increases to 25 percent in the next visitor survey (base year 2019).
- By 2024, major events are held at Grand-Pré Historic Site (e.g., Congrès mondial acadien in 2024) and attract visitors of Acadian descent.
- Parks Canada continues to support (through resources and capacity) events organized by partners promoting Acadian culture.
- By 2027, experiences at the national historic site present the multiple historical perspectives of Grand-Pré (Mi'kmaw, Acadian, Planters), and visitors' understanding of these perspectives increases.

**Objective 2.2:** The significance of Grand-Pré National Historic Site is better understood and becomes more meaningful to visitors.

#### Targets

- The percentage of visitors who consider the site to be meaningful to them rises to 85 percent in the next visitor survey.
- The percentage of visitors who say they have a better understanding of the site's contribution to Canadian history as a result of their visit remains above 90 percent in the next visitor survey.

**Objective 2.3:** Grand-Pré National Historic Site participates in the promotion of an integrated network of Acadian historic sites and Mi'kmaw cultural and heritage sites.

#### Targets

- By 2025, the promotional and awareness tools for Parks Canada's Acadian-themed sites are renewed, and a new tourist itinerary linking these sites is developed.
- A cross-promotional campaign is conducted by 2026 in collaboration with other Parks Canada-managed sites in Nova Scotia and tourism partners in the region.
- By 2026, Grand-Pré National Historic Site is meaningfully included and supportive of Mi'kmaw cultural tourism.

### **Key Strategy 3: Mi'kmaq, partners and collaborators working in synergy towards a shared vision**

For many years, Grand-Pré National Historic Site has been fortunate to have valuable partners, such as the Société Promotion Grand-Pré and Les Amis de Grand-Pré, who support it in the various aspects of its mandate, including facilitating visitor experience, presenting interpretative activities, accessing genealogical resources and managing the gift shop. In addition, Parks Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to respecting any future agreements signed during the management plan implementation period. Agreements with the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia will be implemented in a timely manner and will continue to build on the Indigenous-Crown relationship. Grand-Pré National Historic Site is a place where the Mi'kmaq can tell their stories and share their culture, heritage and traditions in their own voice.

Collaboration with Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated in presenting the UNESCO World Heritage Site is an example of a partnership that is essential to the presentation of the historic site and the greater landscape surrounding it. The engagement of these different partners at the national historic site enriches the offer of services and activities for visitors, which is reflected in the high level of visitor satisfaction with the variety of activities available and the friendliness of staff.

Coordinating with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, the Acadian groups and all of these partners is therefore a management priority for the historic site in a context where many have a role to play in presenting the history of Grand-Pré. Greater cohesion will not only optimize visitor experience but will also foster lasting relationships based on mutual trust.

Through this third key strategy, Grand-Pré National Historic Site also seeks to foster greater engagement with adjacent communities. This notably includes increasing their awareness of and attachment to the site, as well as strengthening the position of the site in the region's communities and tourism industry. Opportunities exist to diversify the use of the site by neighbouring communities.

**Objective 3.1:** Closer relations with the Mi'kmaq and Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia continue to be fostered, strengthened, and reflected in mutually beneficial initiatives in the spirit of new agreements.

#### Targets

- By 2028, visitors' experiences offered at the historic site will include increased participation of Mi'kmaw communities in sharing their stories, history and culture.
- Beginning in 2023, Mi'kmaw partners will be consulted in advance of any archaeological research projects at the national historic site and will be invited to collaborate so that their expertise and knowledge can be incorporated.
- Other opportunities for economic benefits to the Mi'kmaq at Grand-Pré are being explored throughout the implementation of this plan.
- Upon tabling of the management plan in Parliament, Parks Canada, in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, will initiate the process of revising and improving the Commemorative Integrity Statement for Grand-Pré National Historic Site.

**Objective 3.2:** Strategic partnerships are well defined and nurtured in a way that supports the Grand-Pré National Historic Site vision and offer of services.

#### Targets

- Annual strategic meetings with partners with an interest in the site are held, beginning in 2023.
- Memoranda of Understanding with the Société Promotion Grand-Pré and Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated are reviewed and renewed by 2026, and better reflect the reality of operations at the site. Discussions will continue with Les Amis de Grand-Pré for the potential development of a memorandum of understanding when required for collaborative projects.
- The various regional communities are involved in developing programs and tools to present their historical perspectives (Mi'kmaq, Acadian, Planters).

- Parks Canada supports initiatives related to the Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism Network and Strategy by offering Mi'kmaw cultural experiences at Grand-Pré National Historic Site.

**Objective 3.3:** Better understanding and cohesion among groups with interests in Grand-Pré National Historic Site leads to greater consistency in its management and in the protection of the site's values.

#### Targets

- Communication strategies are developed by 2025 to effectively communicate the various designations at Grand-Pré national historic site to the public and various stakeholders.
- The national historic site continues to participate on the Landscape of Grand Pré Incorporated board of directors.

**Objective 3.4:** The various local and regional communities and organizations are engaged with the Grand-Pré Historic Site and make it a popular venue for community and cultural events and gatherings.

#### Targets

- Annually, at least one open house is held by Parks Canada to share the latest accomplishments at the site and future projects with stakeholders.
- A minimum of one gathering or event organized by residents or groups from the surrounding communities takes place annually at Grand-Pré National Historic Site.

## 7.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment

The purpose of a strategic environmental assessment is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals, to support environmentally sound decision-making. In accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2010), a strategic environmental assessment was conducted on the *Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*.

Many positive effects will occur as a result of the implementation of the plan, for example: it will allow the site to become better known and appreciated by Canadians, to strengthen its links with local communities, Acadians and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, and to maintain its heritage resources in good condition. In addition, the effects of climate change on the protection of cultural and natural resources will be identified and studied and the value of landscape cultural resources will be better understood, protected and communicated to the public. The biggest positive effect of this plan will be increasing the level of cultural resource protection and commemorative integrity at Grand-Pré National Historic Site. The management plan will help connect Canadians with nature contributing to the implementation of the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*.

Objectives and targets identified in the management plan that could potentially result in negative environmental effects include the increase in the number of visitors and accommodation stays. However, these effects can be minimized by following existing guidelines and conducting impact assessments for projects, including any new facility, activity or event, as well as for infrastructure maintenance and cultural resource conservation projects. Operations at the site are required to mitigate impacts on climate according to Greening Government requirements in support of the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*.

Comments from the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, Acadian partners, local stakeholders and the public were incorporated into the strategic environmental assessment and management plan, as appropriate.

There are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the management plan. Future projects affecting the site will be assessed individually under the *Impact Assessment Act* or any successor legislation, as necessary.