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Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2020



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Parks Canada
SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2020

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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 Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan. Parks Canada will inform Indigenous 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
SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site of Canada
170, Sainte-Anne Street
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue (Quebec) H9X 1N1
Phone: 514-457-5546 / 1-888-773-8888

Email: pc.infocanalqc.pc@canada.ca
<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/qc/annedebellevue>

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Foreword



Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas belong to all Canadians and offer truly Canadian experiences.

These special places make up one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and cultural heritage areas in the world.

The Government is committed to preserving our natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places and contributing to the recovery of species-at-risk. At the same time, we must continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities so that more Canadians can experience Parks Canada places and learn about our environment, history and culture.

This new management plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed through extensive consultation and input from various people and organizations, including Indigenous peoples, local and regional residents, visitors and the dedicated team at Parks Canada.

National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are a priority for the Government of Canada. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of co-operation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

Jonathan Wilkinson

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

Recommendations

Recommended by:

Ron Hallman
President & Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada

Andrew Campbell
Senior Vice-President, Operations
Parks Canada

Lauren Small
Director
Quebec Waterways
Parks Canada

Executive Summary

Located at the westernmost point of the Island of Montréal, along the Ottawa River, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal was designated as a site of national historic significance in 1987. Long before the canal was built, the Ottawa River was exploited as a main transportation and trade corridor by Indigenous communities, since time immemorial. From the 17th century, and for two centuries, the Ottawa River was the main route for the fur trade in the country. Opened in 1843 for commercial purposes, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal is an important part of the waterway system that links the cities of Québec and Montréal (Québec) to the cities of Ottawa and Kingston (Ontario).

Until the first decades of the 20th century, the canal was used mainly for the transportation of wood. The canal was subsequently used to transport sand and gravel to Montréal, and to supply the Ottawa River region with oil and coal. Used exclusively for recreational purposes since 1964, the canal provides access to a network of waterways that extend over thousands of kilometres across the continent.

Today, the canal is a recipient of the benefits derived from the recreation and tourism industry of the adjacent Old Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. The diversity of the heritage components of the site, such as the relics of the first canal, the upstream and downstream jetties, the Becker Channel and the entrance caissons contribute to the richness and identity of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site, one of the five historic canals managed by Parks Canada in Quebec. Public infrastructure, owned by third parties, also crosses the site and represents a challenge for its operation, development and use. In 2019, more than 125,000 people visited the site and more than 5,500 boats passed through the lock, making it the busiest of the Quebec canals managed by Parks Canada.

Major investments have been made since 2015 to upgrade the condition of the infrastructure and buildings of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal and to maintain its physical integrity. Totalling approximately \$14.5 million, these investments are planned until 2021 as part of unprecedented funding through the Federal Infrastructure Investment Program.

This management plan replaces the 2005 plan and reflects the vision for the site for the next decade. While many goals from that plan have been achieved, such as conducting a study of the site's archaeological potential and a design concept to improve the development and functionality of spaces, others are in progress, such as the conservation and maintenance of certain buildings and engineering structures.

The vision for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site suggests improving knowledge and tools to mitigate the impacts of recurring flooding, promoting the canal as a must-see destination and meeting place where strollers, cyclists, tourists and boaters converge and, lastly, reflecting the sense of place in its layout and the presentation of its landscape and heritage components. Three (3) key strategies will support the vision for managing the site over the next decade:

Strategy 1: A Site More Resilient to Flood Impacts

This strategy is intended to improve understanding of the effects of recurrent flooding on the national historic site's infrastructure, particularly to mitigate potential negative impacts on the site's sustainability and commemorative integrity. It also aims to improve the condition of the site's facilities and infrastructure, including flood-affected areas, particularly to maintain an enjoyable experience for visitors and boaters. The objectives that support this strategy are as follows:

- **Objective 1.1:** The effects of flooding on the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal site are better documented and monitored
- **Objective 1.2:** The condition of the site's facilities and infrastructure improves

Strategy 2: The Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal - A Must-See Destination and Meeting Place

This strategy aims to take advantage of the strategic location of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal, in an urban environment, to make it a must-see destination and meeting place. The improvement in the number and quality of its access to water in an urban context will allow the canal to remain a popular attraction with visitors, while the diversification of services offered, in partnership with the community, will enable it to contribute to recreational tourism development in the area. This strategy also aims to ensure that the canal continues to stand out among boaters as a destination of choice on the Ottawa River. Three (3) objectives support this strategy:

- **Objective 2.1:** The Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal is appreciated by visitors for its unique access to water
- **Objective 2.2:** The site contributes to the regional recreational tourism offer
- **Objective 2.3:** The canal stands out as a stopover along the waterway between Montréal and Ottawa

Strategy 3: A Layout and Visitor Experience that Expresses the Essence of the Site

This strategy aims to ensure that the layout of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal showcases its history and cultural landscape. Improving the site's layout will also enable a variety of users to develop a sense of ownership to the site according to their respective needs. Lastly, better protection of the wildlife and natural elements of the site by implementing awareness and promotional tools, in collaboration with the community, also contributes to visitor appreciation of these aspects. The objectives are as follows:

- **Objective 3.1:** New tools and a redesigned layout enrich visitors' understanding of the site's history
- **Objective 3.2:** The site's amenities and service offer are optimized to better meet the needs of a diverse clientele
- **Objective 3.3:** The site's natural environment is better appreciated by visitors

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1.0 Introduction

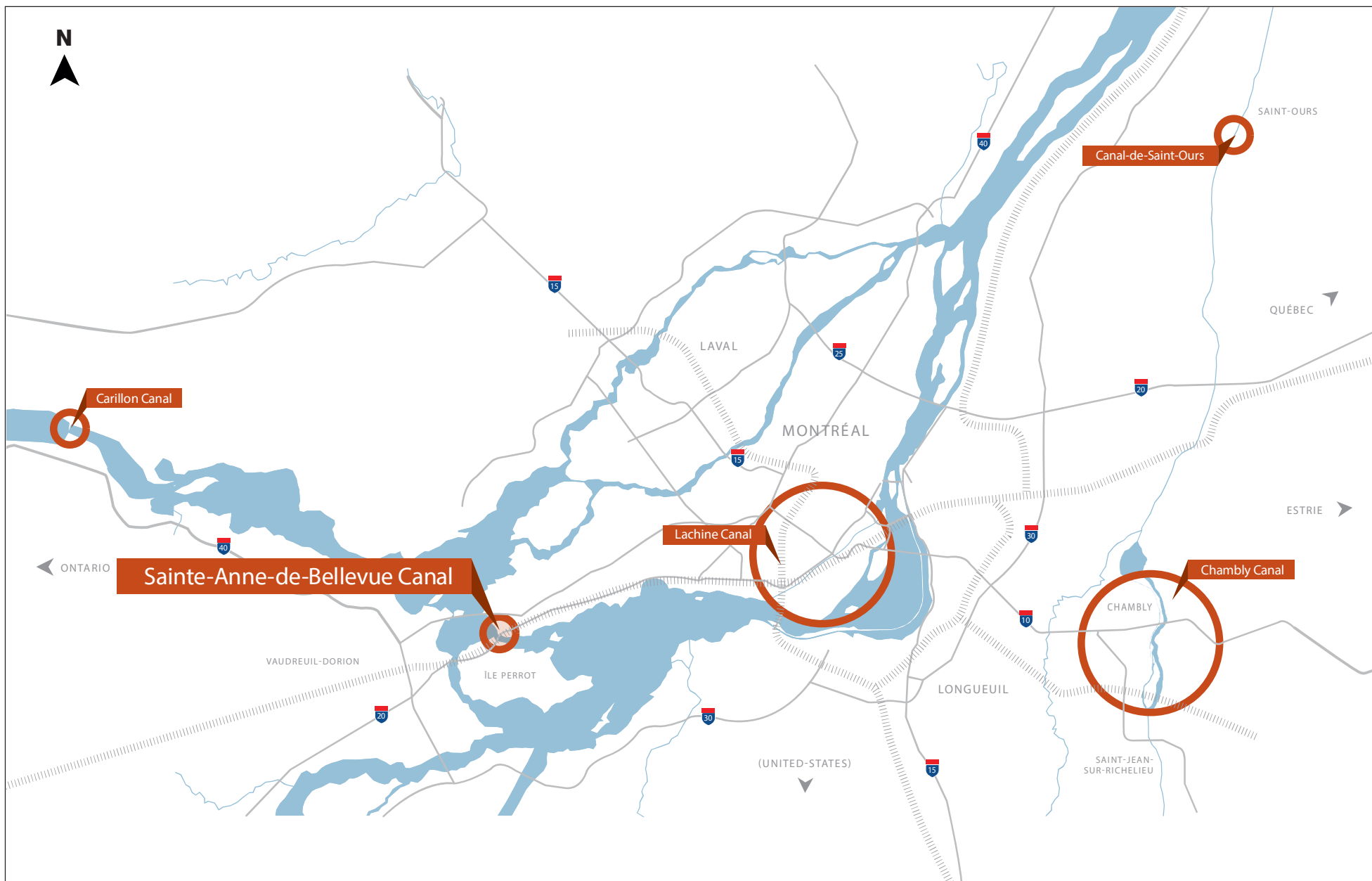
Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive networks of protected natural and historic sites in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's 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 each national historic site administered by the Agency. The Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal 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 the Agency's mandate.

Stakeholders, partners and 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 the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward 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 on the management of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site in years to come.



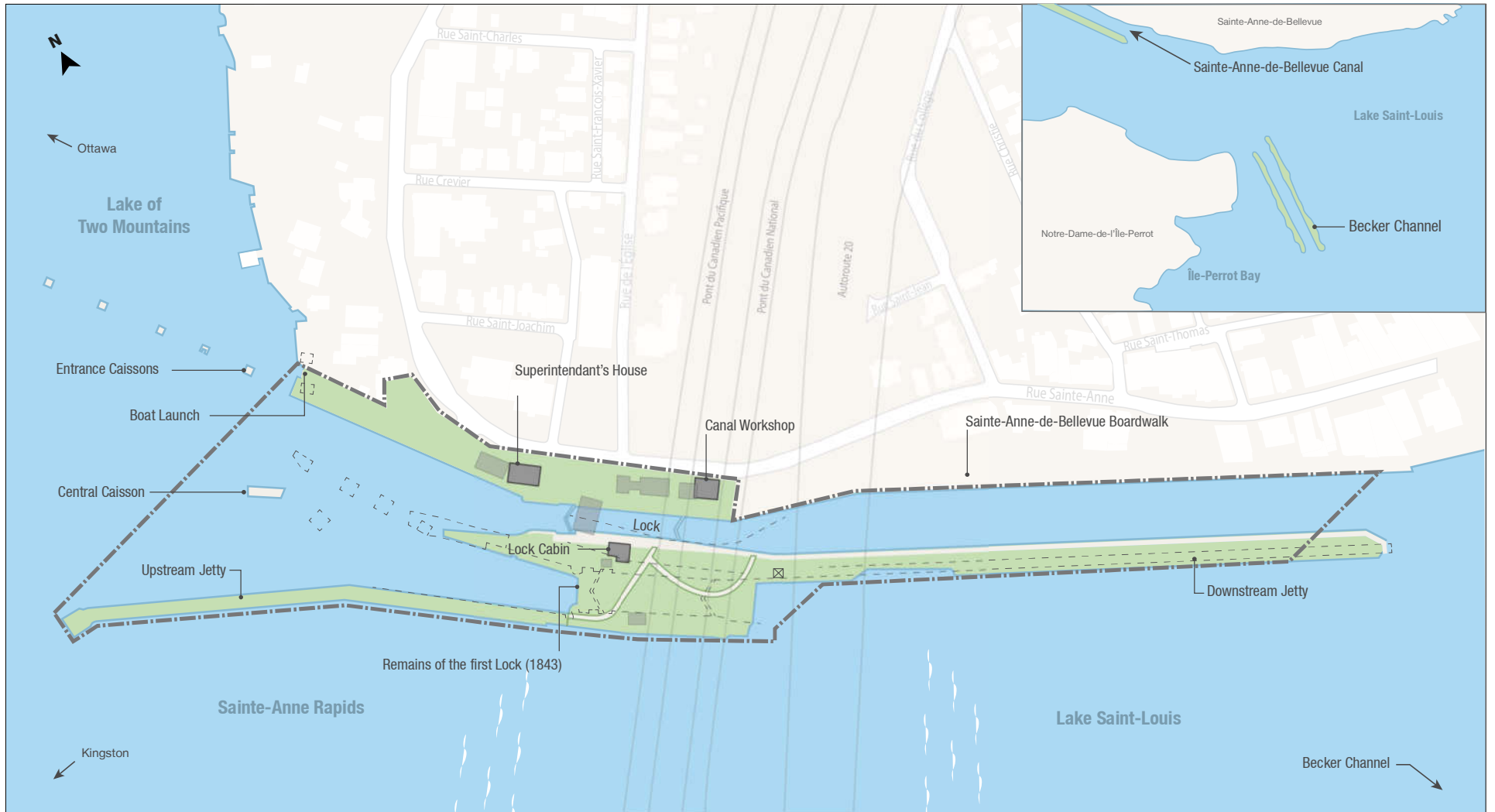
REGION QUÉBEC WATERWAYS

 PARKS CANADA'S HISTORIC CANALS (QUÉBEC)

0 5 10 15km 2020

REGIONAL SETTING

MAP 1 OF 2



MUNICIPALITIES	SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE NOTRE-DAME-DE-L'ÎLE-PERROT	PARKS CANADA BRIDGE	EXISTING BUILDING FORMER BUILDING	LIMIT LAYOUT OF THE FIRST CANAL	PYLON		2020	SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE MAP 2 OF 2
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2.0 Significance of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site

Long before the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal was built, the Ottawa River was exploited as a main transportation and trade corridor by Indigenous communities, since time immemorial. From the 17th century, and for two centuries, the Ottawa River was the main route for the fur trade in the country. The *coureurs des bois* and *voyageurs*, together with different Indigenous communities, used it successively, acting as intermediaries between French merchants, then British merchants, and the fur-producing nations in the northern and Great Lakes regions. Opened to navigation in 1843 for commercial purposes, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal took on its role in the network of canals linking the cities of Québec and Montréal (Québec) to the cities of Kingston and Ottawa (Ontario), through the St. Lawrence River network (Outaouais, Rideau and Cataraqui) as well as the Ottawa River canals. With the regulation of the St. Lawrence River canals, in 1848, the Montréal-Bytown-Kingston route lost its significance and as a result, the triangular trade declined.

As a gateway to the Ottawa River canal network, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal contributed to making the Ottawa River the pivotal point of the lumber industry in North America. Transported by barges and steamboats, the timber transited through the canal to Québec City, toward Europe, as well as to the United States, via the Richelieu River canals. Until the first decades of the 20th century, the canal was used mainly for the transportation of wood. The canal was subsequently used to transport sand and gravel to Montréal and to supply the Ottawa River region with oil and coal. Used exclusively for recreational purposes since 1964, the canal provides access to a network of waterways that extend over thousands of kilometres across the continent.

In 1987, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) recommended that the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal be designated as a national historic site. The landscape of the Canal and its features are considered to be of national historic significance. In addition to these features, the site includes a number of heritage components that contribute to its identity, such as the relics of the first canal, the downstream and upstream jetties, the Becker Channel and the entrance caissons.

The national historic site, with an area of approximately 0.04 square kilometres, consists of some twenty engineering and infrastructure works including its lock and waterway, which is approximately 500 metres long. Public infrastructure owned by third parties also crosses the site, including two railway bridges (Canadian National and Canadian Pacific), a power line (Hydro-Québec) and a highway bridge (Québec's Ministère des Transports), and this infrastructure represents several challenges for the operation, development and use of the site.

Adjacent to the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue historic sector, a very popular destination, the Canal is a recipient of the benefits derived from a great recreation and tourism industry. Visitors take advantage of the Canal site, on the banks of the Ottawa River, for a leisurely stroll, to enjoy a picnic or to watch the pleasure crafts and the lock operations. The area adjacent to the Canal is also enhanced by the presence of a boardwalk, with restaurants, terraces and boutiques, as well as by the activities offered by the City of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. Recreational boaters passing through the lock can enjoy the region's many attractions, while taking advantage of the site's overnight mooring services. In 2019, nearly 125,000 people visited the site, and over 5,500 boats passed through the lock, making the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal the busiest lock managed by Parks Canada in Quebec.

3.0 Planning Context

The last management plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site was approved by the Minister and tabled in Parliament in 2005. It suggested various strategic directions to achieve objectives related to the conservation and presentation of the landscape, cultural and natural resources, communication of messages of national significance and heritage values, visitation, landscaping, management of the site and co-operation with partners and stakeholders.

Some of the objectives identified in the 2005 plan have been achieved, notably, conducting a study of the archaeological potential of the site, developing a design concept to improve the development and functionality of outdoor areas, and showcasing the remains of the first lock. Other objectives are in progress, including the conservation and maintenance of certain buildings and engineering projects.

Investments representing \$14.5 million, under the Federal Infrastructure Investment Program, which includes some major deferred maintenance projects, are underway until 2021. To this end, the walls of the upstream jetty and the upstream part of the lock both have already undergone work, while the lock and the land will undergo work over the next year. Several other assets will need attention to ensure they remain operational and meet safety requirements. In addition, spring floods – including 100-year recurrence floods of spring 2017 and 2019 – have also had a significant impact on the condition of infrastructure and accelerated the deterioration of some of the site’s assets. The upstream and downstream jetties, as well as the parts adjacent to the river, are particularly affected by annual flooding. The increased recurrence of spring floods also has an impact on visitors and boaters, causing the closure of some areas of the site as well as delays in opening the site to recreational boating. Finally, environmental issues related to the presence of shoals are also having an impact on the site’s activities and intake capacity.

Parks Canada works closely with the City of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, participates in the city’s Tourism Development Committee, and partners with a cruise ship company. The overlapping of numerous facilities and infrastructure on the canal site, which are owned by third parties (Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, Québec’s Ministère des Transports, Hydro-Québec, the Canadian Coast Guard, Environment and Climate Change Canada), confirms the need to work closely with these partners in order to take into consideration the issues and constraints of each infrastructure. With regard to the Indigenous communities in the Greater Montréal Metropolitan Area, although steps have been recently taken with these communities, there is currently no partnership or engagement strategy. Historical themes related to the site of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal, including the “route of the voyageurs” and the fur trade in the 17th and 18th centuries, are an opportunity to include Indigenous peoples in the commemoration of the site and to tell an inclusive story of the site.

The recurrence of flooding, the strategic location of the site, as well as understanding of the site’s rich history, are the main issues that have led Parks Canada to revisit the means and strategies that can foster a concerted management approach for the national historic site. The 10-year management plan review is an opportunity to address these priorities, and to identify a strategic direction.

4.0 Vision

The following vision expresses the desired outcome for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site, from now to 2030.

The waterways managed by Parks Canada were once vital links for transportation and economic activity in Canada. Today, they continue to sustain this tradition in many Canadian communities by contributing to their socio-economic development. Parks Canada will work in partnership with others to transform the canals, on both the water and the land, into vibrant and lively sites, fostering recreation, tourism and economic development, while preserving the natural, historic and cultural environment for future generations.

Improving knowledge and tools to mitigate the impacts of recurring flooding contributes to preserving the integrity of the operational and heritage components of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site. In addition, the site's facilities and infrastructure, being better protected, are improved, thereby ensuring their sustainability for both visitors and boaters.

Located at the junction of several transportation routes, the canal is a true meeting place where strollers, cyclists, tourists and boaters converge. The site, strategically located at the westernmost point of the Island of Montréal, provides visitors and locals with a unique access to water in an urban context. In partnership with the community, the diversification of services offered allows the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal to contribute to the vitality of recreational tourism in the area. The quality of the services and activities in the area continues to make the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal a must-see destination of choice for boaters along the Ottawa River.

The canal's identity is reflected in the presentation of its layout and of its landscape and heritage components, which help visitors to better understand and to connect with the site. Thanks to renewed interpretive tools adapted to new technologies, visitors learn more about the role of Indigenous communities, the Ottawa River and the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal in the history of the Greater Montreal area. Lastly, the site's fauna and flora components, showcased by awareness and promotional tools, are better appreciated by visitors, who take advantage of their presence on the site to learn more about them.

5.0 Key Strategies

The three (3) key strategies presented below will guide the management of the site for the next decade. Specific objectives and targets are suggested for each of these key strategies in order to measure, over the coming years, the progress toward the desired the vision. Unless otherwise indicated, these objectives are expected to be achieved within the plan's implementation phase.

Key Strategy 1 : A Site More Resilient to Flood Impacts

This strategy is intended to improve understanding of the vulnerability of the national historic site to recurrent flooding – especially in the context of climate change –in order to mitigate the negative impacts on the sustainability of the site's infrastructure and commemorative integrity. It also aims to improve the condition of the site's facilities and infrastructure, including areas damaged by recurring flooding, to maintain an enjoyable experience for visitors and boaters.

Objective 1.1: The effects of flooding on the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal site are better documented and monitored

Targets

- By 2021, temporary measures are put in place to ensure visitor safety and service continuity (i.e. access to the site, navigation season, etc.) at the site.
- By 2022, flood impacts on the integrity of site components (i.e. infrastructure, shoreline, etc.) are studied.
- By 2026, adaptation and mitigation measures implemented to reduce flood impacts on site components.

Objective 1.2: The condition of the site's facilities and infrastructure is improved

Targets

- By 2022, at least one (1) sector of the site, damaged by the 2019 spring flood (i.e. upstream jetty, downstream jetty, central island, etc.), undergoes redevelopment work.
- By 2030, the condition of the canal's engineering projects evaluated as "poor" in the 2018 State of Site Assessment improves.

Key Strategy 2 : The Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal - A Must-See Destination and a Meeting Place

This strategy aims to take advantage of the strategic location of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal, in an urban environment, to make it a must-see destination and meeting place. The improvement of the number and quality of its points of access to water in an urban context will allow the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal to remain a popular attraction with visitors. In partnership with the community, the diversification of services offered will allow the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal to contribute to the vitality of regional recreational tourism. Finally, this strategy also aims to ensure that the canal continues to stand out among boaters as a destination of choice on the Ottawa River.

Objective 2.1: The Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal is appreciated by visitors for its unique access to water

Targets

- By 2026, water access points (i.e. public docks, launch ramps for non-motorized boats, observation and relaxation platforms, etc.) will increase.
- By 2027, the number of visitors increases by 1% annually.
- By 2028, in collaboration with the community, at least one (1) activity focusing on promoting water access is implemented.

Objective 2.2: The site contributes to the regional recreational tourism offer

Targets

- By 2023, a common strategy for recreational tourism is developed in collaboration with the City of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and community partners.
- By 2026, the site's programming is enhanced by the addition of at least one (1) annual cultural activity, developed in partnership with the community.

- By 2027, in collaboration with community partners, at least one (1) temporary or permanent artistic installation (i.e. urban art, architectural lighting, dynamic installations, Indigenous initiatives, etc.) is implemented.

Objective 2.3: The canal stands out as a stopover along the waterway between Montréal and Ottawa

Targets

- By 2024, the number of spaces available for overnight mooring (upstream and downstream) increases by 10%.
- By 2025, the number of boats passing through the lock increases by 1% annually.
- By 2025, the number of moorings increase by 2% annually.
- By 2026, the proportion of recreational boaters from Ontario increases by 2%.

Key Strategy 3 : A Layout and Visitor Experience that Expresses the Essence of the Site

This strategy aims to ensure that the layout of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal better showcases its history and cultural landscape. The goal is to improve visitors' understanding of the canal's history, thereby contributing to their attachment to the site. Improving the site's layout will also enable a variety of users to develop a sense of ownership to the site according to their respective needs. Lastly, this strategy proposes better protection of the wildlife and natural elements of the site, particularly by implementing awareness and promotional tools, in collaboration with the community, also contributing to visitor appreciation of these aspects.

Objective 3.1: New tools and a redesigned site layout improve visitors' understanding of the site's history

Targets

- By 2022, the cultural landscape features of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site are identified.
- By 2025, existing interpretive tools are renewed to better promote the history of the site, including better integration of different stories, voices and points of view.
- By 2029, the main heritage components of the site (i.e. layout of the current canal, layout of the first canal, upstream and downstream jetties, archaeological remains, etc.) are showcased or are under rehabilitation work.
- By 2030, the percentage of visitors who feel they have learned about the cultural heritage of the national historic site increases.

Objective 3.2: The site's amenities and service offer are optimized to better meet the needs of a diverse clientele

Targets

- By 2024, initiatives promoting a connection between the canal and Old Sainte-Anne (i.e. accessibility, functionality, thematic paths, complementary activities, etc.) are implemented.
- By 2026, the services provided to visitors and boaters (i.e. picnic and relaxation areas, self-service BBQ, electrical outlets for moorings, etc.) are improved.
- By 2027, at least one (1) activity or initiative targeting youth, families and new Canadians is implemented.
- By 2028, the level of visitor satisfaction regarding to availability of services increases by 10%.

Objective 3.3: The site's natural environment is better appreciated by visitors

Targets

- By 2023, in collaboration with the scientific community (i.e. universities, research centres, etc.), the site's wildlife and flora are identified.
- By 2024, in collaboration with the community, new tools to raise awareness and showcase the site's natural environment are developed.

6.0 Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impacts of management actions on ecosystems and on cultural resources. The *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, requires a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of all plans and policies submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a Minister for approval deemed to have important positive or negative environmental effects.

A strategic environmental assessment was undertaken on this management plan, and the management direction found within has been adjusted to respond to findings. The following is a summary of the environmental assessment:

The scope of the assessment covered the area within the boundaries of the historic site and the administrated area, for a period of ten years. In addition to the cultural resources, noteworthy environmental components of the site include the urban green space and the aquatic environment. The aquatic habitat of the site is in fact artificial, and presents no specific characteristics. However, it is located close to a rich bio-diverse environment such as aquatic habitats and wetlands occupied by fish species of importance for sport fishing and numerous species with protected status.

The strategies in the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site Management Plan will allow the site to be better known to and appreciated by Canadians, strengthen its ties to the community and maintain its heritage resources in good condition. The implementation of measures to achieve the objectives set in the management plan should help increase the level of protection of the cultural resources and the commemorative integrity of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site.

Some strategies or targets identified in the management plan are likely to result in adverse environmental effects. These include the increase of access to water and the redevelopment of some structures near the waterway. The SEA has helped to identify possible environmental effects on wildlife or aquatic habitats near the site. However, these effects can be mitigated by following existing guidelines, planning an appropriate initial design for the environment, and conducting impact assessments for projects when required.

In February 2020, Parks Canada held consultation activities on its draft management plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal, which included a summary of the draft of the SEA. Public concerns have been incorporated into the plan.

This plan supports the goals of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, that consist of "Effective Action on Climate Change" and "Connecting Canadians with Nature." There are no significant adverse environmental impacts anticipated from the implementation of the management plan.