



## REBUILDING PHASE COMPLETE!

The vistas of Western Brook Pond have long been among the most celebrated scenes in all of Canada and memories of the boat tour stay with the thousands of visitors that experience the pond every year. Parks Canada’s goal with the renewal of the Western Brook Pond area is to have a trail, wharf, and boat house that are safe, sustainable and more accessible, all while protecting this sensitive environment and offering high-quality, meaningful experiences to visitors. The major rebuilding phase of this project, which started in the Fall of 2017, is now complete and the project team is turning their focus to re-vegetation and the addition of visitor experience elements along the trail.

Work that has been completed includes:

- Rebuilding of the trail, including a realignment, lowering of grades, and a hardening of trail surfaces to improve accessibility and sustainability;
- Replacement of the wharf on Western Brook Pond;
- Upgrades to the boathouse, including repairing and replacing the building exterior to protect it from extreme winds;
- Limited removal of material near the boat house to enable boat storage in early fall when water levels are naturally low; and,
- Expansion of the solar-powered washroom facilities and parking lot adjacent to Route 430.

Through this federal infrastructure investment project, Parks Canada is helping to ensure that Western Brook Pond remains a safe, high-quality and accessible experience for generations to come.

We would like to thank our visitors for their patience as we have been working to renew this important visitor area. While the major rebuilding work has been completed, Parks Canada will spend the next several seasons focusing on the re-vegetation along the trail. Multiple experts are helping us to complete the planning and implementation of this re-vegetation work.



*Photo: On May 24, 2019, Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, visited Western Brook Pond to see results of the infrastructure project and to experience a short tour of the fjord.*

## NEXT STEPS FOR THE TRAIL

On May 26, Western Brook Pond trail opened once again to the public for their enjoyment. Visitors will experience significant improvements as compared to last year when the trail was only partially complete. The side slopes of the trail base have been reduced to a 3:1 slope and the finished surface has been narrowed where possible. The final trail surface is a mixture of ¼” or finer gravel that is packed to form a hard tread. This surface is more consistent and comfortable for walking and is suitable for both wheelchairs and bicycles. In areas where the trail is more steep, flat resting areas have been incorporated to improve accessibility. In preparation for re-vegetation, locally sourced soil has been placed along most of the side slopes of the trail.

Starting this summer and continuing over the coming years, Parks Canada will continue to restore and monitor re-vegetation along the trail. Plans are also underway to design and install visitor experience elements such as interpretive panels, rest areas and viewpoints to meet the needs and interests of the broad range of visitors using the trail. This finishing work will not impact visitor access to the trail.



*Photo: Rehabilitation and vegetation work will continue along the sides of the trail for the next several years.*



# MONITORING WESTERN BROOK POND WATERSHED

You may see Parks Canada team members conducting research and monitoring work this summer as you walk along Western Brook Pond Trail, take the boat tour, or visit Western Brook Beach.

As part of the long-term Ecological Integrity monitoring program for Gros Morne National Park, Resource Conservation team members will again deploy data loggers in a tributary of Western Brook and other streams in the park. These data loggers collect hourly temperature and water level readings. Team members will also install a fish counting fence at the mouth of Western Brook which will be visible from Western Brook Beach. This structure will funnel salmon and trout into a holding cage as they enter the river from the ocean. Each day park team members will count the fish and then release them so they can continue their upstream migration to spawn. As a result of Parks Canada’s targeted conservation measures, over the last 35 years the number of salmon returning to the river each summer has increased from 19 individuals to 500-1,000!

In addition, this year a new lake water quality measure will be piloted as part of the Ecological Integrity monitoring program for the park, and will include Western Brook Pond. Sediment samples will also be collected to follow up on past research to reconfirm there is no hydrocarbon contamination in the pond.

Ecological integrity was a key consideration for Western Brook Pond project. A thorough environmental impact assessment was conducted and over 40 measures were put in place to mitigate environmental impacts for project design and rebuilding. As part of this assessment, Resource Conservation team members will continue monitoring areas along the trail, now that the building is complete and re-vegetation efforts will begin, to ensure the ongoing health of adjacent forest and wetland vegetation.



Photo: Parks Canada staff checking a fish fence at Western Brook in 2006. A fish fence is installed on one salmon river in Gros Morne each year. The fish fence will be installed on Western Brook again in 2019.

## PLANNING FOR THE LONGER TERM

Parks Canada team members have been busy since the summer of 2018 planning for the future of Gros Morne National Park. This work has included development of a new Management Plan as well as the first ever *Visitor Experience Strategy* and *Trail Concept Plan* for the park.

Phase one of the management planning process, held in December 2018, included public engagement sessions in Cow Head, Norris Point and Woody Point and in the larger centres of St. John’s and Corner Brook, as well as through an on-line component. Public participation to this important process provided the input necessary for Parks Canada to develop a *What we Heard* document to help in preparing the draft management plan.

To further support this process, in January 2019, Parks Canada held a two-day workshop with over 30 stakeholders including Indigenous and other partners, municipal leaders, tourism operators, artists, and representatives from environmental groups. The focus was to help develop an area-management approach for two iconic locations in Gros Morne—the Tablelands/Trout River Pond area, and the Western Brook Pond watershed. These are the two most visited areas in the park, with significant natural and cultural value, growing visitation and high public interest. The ideas and insights gathered at this workshop informed the development of the draft management plan and will help Parks Canada ensure these areas remain protected for current and future generations.



Photo: On May 8, 2019, Parks Canada met with local and regional stakeholders to discuss the creation of a Trail Concept Plan for Gros Morne National Park.

Phase two consultations for Gros Morne’s management plan then took place in April 2019. Parks Canada received valuable feedback on the draft plan that had been developed over the winter. Public engagement sessions were held in local communities—St. Paul’s, Rocky Harbour, and Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook—and again in St. John’s and Corner Brook. Hundreds of people also completed an online review of the draft management plan. The final version of the new management plan will be presented to the public and scheduled to be tabled in Parliament later in 2019.

To further support park management, in early May, Parks Canada led a trails workshop with local stakeholders to gather input and ideas to develop the *Trails Concept Plan* for all trails in Gros Morne National Park, including Western Brook Pond.

Parks Canada would like to thank everyone who provided their important feedback and contributed their time to develop these plans that will help us protect the ecology of Gros Morne National Park and provide high-quality and meaningful visitor experience for all Canadians, now and into the future.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Canada’s national parks belong to all Canadians, and as always, we want to hear from you if you have questions, comments or ideas you would like to share. You can reach us by telephone at 709-458-2417, come in to one of our facilities and talk to us or leave a comment card, or send an email to [pc.infopngrosmorne-grosmornenpinfo.pc@canada.ca](mailto:pc.infopngrosmorne-grosmornenpinfo.pc@canada.ca). Parks Canada will continue to provide updates on important projects within the park, so stay tuned for more information on our efforts to protect Gros Morne and share the places and stories that make it special.