



CANSO ISLANDS AND GRASSY ISLAND FORT

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES
OF CANADA

Management Plan



DE LA RADE
DE CANCEAU

Échelle au Compas Ligne de 1855



FEBRUARY 2009

CANSO ISLANDS AND GRASSY ISLAND FORT

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES
OF CANADA

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Foreword



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

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

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

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

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

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort National Historic Sites of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of cooperation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan.

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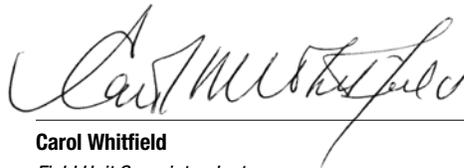
Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

Recommendations

Recommended by:



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Executive Summary

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort National Historic Sites of Canada (NHSC) are commemorated for several reasons. The Canso Islands constituted an important fishing base for the French in the 16th and 17th centuries, and for the British in the first half of the 18th century. The French and the English disputed authority over the area in the first half of the 18th century, and Canso was the scene of several combats between the English and the French and the Mi'kmaq. In 1745, Canso was a staging point for the British and New England expedition led by Sir William Pepperrell and Sir Peter Warren against the French stronghold of Louisbourg.

Situated on the easternmost tip of the mainland of Nova Scotia, Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are approximately 110 km from Antigonish and 340 km east of Halifax. The national historic sites encompass most of the area known historically as Canso Islands, including George, Piscatiqui and Grassy Islands and a number of adjacent smaller islands, and the fort on Grassy Island.

This management plan is the first since the definition of the designated place to include the islands beyond Grassy Island that are now part of Canso Islands NHSC. A *Commemorative Integrity Statement* prepared and approved in 2003 for the two historic sites together guided the management plan review. This management plan has been prepared to direct future activities and decision-making at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC to ensure heritage protection, heritage presentation and meaningful visitor experiences of these places of national significance, and to build public support and understanding of them. Strategic direction is offered for key message delivery and outreach in conjunction with key partners, and for site management to protect heritage resources and values.

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC pose a number of management challenges. Because the national historic sites are located off the main tourist routes in Nova Scotia, visitation levels are very low, although roughly half of visitors take the boat trip to see the *in situ* resources located on Grassy Island. The interpretive displays in the visitor reception centre need updating to reflect the significance of the Canso Islands in the 16th and 17th centuries. Coastal erosion poses a risk to *in situ* resources on Grassy Island. Private owners and the Province of Nova Scotia own the other islands forming Canso Islands NHSC, and Parks Canada must seek to work with landowners to ensure the protection of cultural resources beyond the administered property.

This management plan addresses these management challenges and recognizes opportunities presented by a supportive community. Regional and local stakeholders have a clear interest in the heritage presentation, use and management of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC. The Town of Canso, always supportive of the development and operation of the national historic sites, should continue to be an important partner. Those actions identified as priorities for the first three years following approval of the management plan are listed below.

Heritage Resource Protection

- Gain a better understanding of past and future natural coastal erosion and resultant shorelines, and monitor *in situ* cultural resources, especially the impacts from natural processes such as erosion.
- Manage vegetation on Grassy Island where it obscures the historic landscape and interferes with view planes.

- Use appropriate methods to protect cultural resources at risk, including salvage archaeology in cases where disturbance is inevitable.
- Encourage owners of those parts of the designated place that are not owned by Parks Canada to protect the landscape and cultural resources under their care.

Public Support and Education

- Update exhibits in the visitor reception centre to include appropriate information about the 16th- and 17th-century French presence in this area.
- Seek to work, in partnership with others as appropriate, to communicate nationally significant messages about the national historic sites to target audiences, particularly at other sites and attractions in Nova Scotia as opportunities permit.
- Work with other agencies on new marketing initiatives as the opportunities present themselves.
- Assess the effectiveness of the sites' heritage presentation program in communicating messages of national historic significance, other heritage values and Parks Canada corporate messages.
- Work to strengthen existing collaborative relationships with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, and undertake projects of mutual interest.

Meaningful Visitor Experiences

- Continue to work with the Town of Canso to ensure that an appropriate level of service is provided to visitors and consider the possibility of concessions at the visitor reception centre to provide high quality souvenirs for visitors.
- Encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to improve highways in the area.
- Continue to evaluate and improve signage to ensure that visitors can find the site easily.
- Work with other agencies on new marketing initiatives as the opportunities present themselves, contingent upon availability of financial resources.

Operations and Administration

- Use environmentally-sound practices in the operation and management of the site, as per Parks Canada directives.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort National Historic Sites of Canada (NHSC) commemorate French and English fishing operations in the area, from the 16th century to the mid-18th century, as well as 18th-century conflicts involving the French, English and the Mi'kmaq. In 1745, Canso was the staging point for the British and New England expedition that captured the French stronghold of Louisbourg.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended Canso as a site of national historic significance in 1925. Text for a commemorative plaque, approved in 1927, indicates that the Board interpreted “Canso” in its historical sense to include the area of islands and harbours at the eastern end of the Nova Scotia mainland. In 1962, the Board recommended recognition of one of the most prominent archaeological sites in the Canso area, the fort at Grassy Island, as being of national historic importance and further recommended that the fort be protected from unauthorized excavation; since there was already a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque in Canso relating to this site, it was recommended that further marking should be deferred.

Local interest in the Canso Islands grew in the 1970s, sparked by the sale of Grassy Island to an American buyer. The Province of Nova Scotia subsequently acquired and in 1977 transferred Grassy Island to the Government of Canada (Parks Canada) for development as an historic site. In 1990, Parks Canada opened Grassy Island National Historic Site with the development of a visitor reception centre and erection of interpretive panels on Grassy Island.

In 2001, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended that the site be known as Canso Islands National Historic

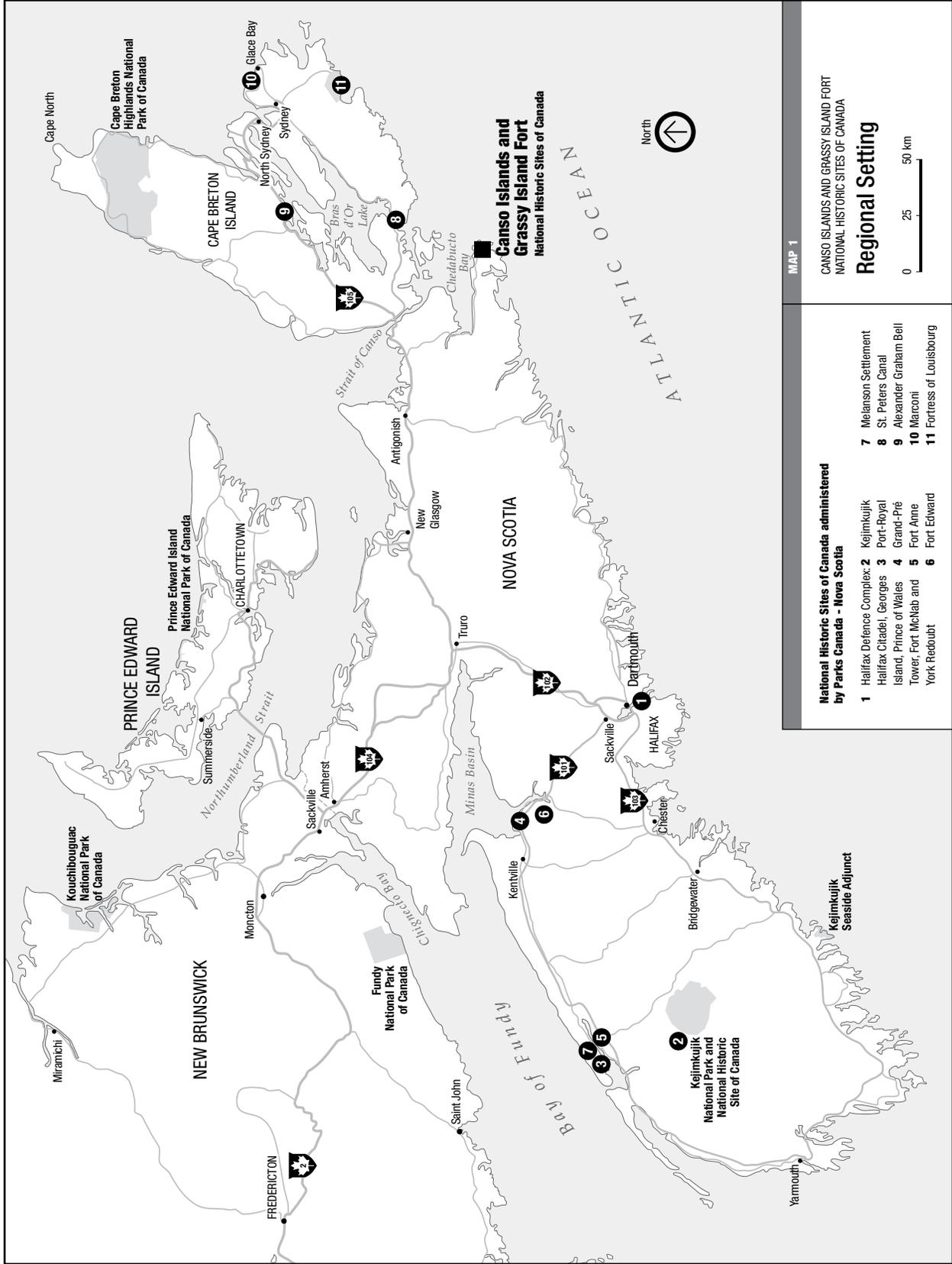
Site of Canada, and include the islands that constituted Canso in its historic sense. The Board also recommended that Grassy Island NHSC be renamed Grassy Island Fort NHSC, recognizing that this was an integral part of Canso Islands NHSC.

This management plan updates the 1983 management plan for Grassy Island NHSC and is the first management plan for both Canso Islands NHSC and Grassy Island Fort NHSC since the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended the definition of the designated place¹ to include other islands at Canso (and the changing of the site's name to Canso Islands NHSC). A management plan for a national historic site provides long-term direction for the conservation and presentation activities necessary to ensure the commemorative integrity of the site. In addition, the management plan helps managers respond to operational needs and partnership opportunities, guiding on-site operations.

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are located adjacent to the Town of Canso (population 1704, 2001 census), at the eastern tip of mainland Nova Scotia in Guysborough County (see MAP 1: Regional Setting). The Town of Canso is situated approximately 110 km east of Antigonish and 340 km east of Halifax. Historically, the fisheries have sustained the Town of Canso. However, in recent years a decline of the fish stocks in Atlantic Canada has led to the virtual closure of the fish plant, the town's main employer. The community has worked hard to develop alternatives to the fishery and regards tourism as part of the answer.

¹Designated place refers to the place designated by the responsible Minister on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as having national historic significance. Designated place has the same meaning as 'historic place'.



The visitor reception centre for the national historic sites is located on the waterfront of the Town of Canso while the islands that constitute Canso Islands NHSC are located just off shore. Of the many islands that are encompassed by Canso Islands NHSC the one closest to the mainland is Grassy Island on which Grassy Island Fort NHSC is located. Although the islands constituting Canso Islands NHSC are largely unoccupied, Canso residents have used and continue to use the islands for hunting and recreation.

Grassy Island contains visible traces of an 18th-century British fort located on the summit of the island and other features of the associated 18th-century settlement. In addition to the visible features, the island contains significant underground traces of numerous buildings and other features from the same period, including cellars, wells, property lines and traces of fish flakes. Evidence of fisherpersons' use of the other islands can be found in the thin soils and surrounding waters.

Other than Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, other heritage attractions in the area include: the Whitman House Museum, which is owned by the Town and operated by the Canso Historical Society as a museum devoted to the 19th- and 20th-century history of Canso; distinctive houses in Canso and nearby Hazel Hill that housed employees of companies that once operated trans-Atlantic underwater communications cables; and the Canso Coastal Barrens Wilderness Area, an 8000 ha area and part of a network of wilderness areas protected by the Province of Nova Scotia.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Canso area was an important rendezvous for European fishermen, explorers and traders. Canso was recognized as the best fishing harbour in Acadia. Marc Lescarbot, Samuel de Champlain's contemporary and author of *The History of New France*, met a Basque fisherman at Whitehaven near Canso in 1607. The Basque captain, Savalet's claims of having made 42 voyages to the area would have meant he had been visiting the area at least as early as the 1560s.

By the beginning of the 17th century, the name Canceau was being applied to the area. Champlain, Pierre Du Gua de Monts, leader of the expedition that attempted to settle on Ile Sainte-Croix, and Lescarbot and his companions encountered fishermen in the Canso area from both St. Malo and the Basque region of France. The Basques had a strong presence in the Canso area, fishing and trading for furs with the Mi'kmaq. Lescarbot's companions spent a month fishing at Canso, using their own vessel, the *Jonas*, prior to their return to France.

In 1611, some Jesuits, including Father Pierre Biard, landed briefly at Canso. In 1620, Father Charles Lallemond was on a ship wrecked on one of the Canso Islands. In the 1630s, Isaac de Razilly built a fortified post at Canso, Fort Saint-Francois, which was the location of the first attempt at revolt in Acadia when one Jean Thomas incited his crew and a band of Mi'kmaq to attack the fort. Razilly put down the rebellion, and had Thomas prosecuted. Although the records are unclear on this point, it is probable that some Europeans were in the area year-round by this time.

At various times Canso was a fishing station for Charles d'Aulnay, Nicolas Denys, Emmanuel Le Borgne and the Compagnie de la peche sedentaire, which established a fishing station on the Canso islands in the 1680s. The population of Canso in 1687-88, apart from the seasonal French fishermen, consisted of thirteen Mi'kmaq men, women and children. By the early 18th century, at least one French (Acadian) family, the Petitpas, resided permanently on the islands.

In 1713, when the British acquired the mainland of Nova Scotia from France, New England fishing interests began to develop a base at Canso. At first both French and English fished here, but in 1718 the New Englanders drove the French out. This action led to several years of sporadic hostilities with the French and the Mi'kmaq, but did not prevent the English from continuing to develop Canso as a substantial fishing and trading centre. Each spring over the next three decades as many as 2500 New Englanders gathered at Canso for the fishery.

Most of the New Englanders who came to Canso to fish and trade were here on a sea-

sonal basis, although some individuals stayed year-round to look after the settlement. In addition to the fishermen and merchants, in 1720 soldiers were stationed at Canso to protect the community. The military remained there until a French force from Louisbourg seized the area in 1744.

The establishment of Halifax in 1749 resulted in a decline in New England interest in Canso. Halifax, along with Salem and Gloucester, Massachusetts, which were growing as fishing centres, contributed to Canso's failure to revive as a major fishing centre in the second half of the 18th century. Development that did take place occurred largely on the mainland, where most local fishermen lived by the early 20th century.

1.4 IMPORTANCE IN THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are part of a wide-ranging program of commemoration, including national historic sites and persons and events of national historic significance. They are part of a family of over 900 national historic sites across Canada. Parks Canada administers more than 150 of these sites, and has contributed to many more through cost-sharing agreements. The stewardship of national historic sites is shared, as various bodies ranging from federal, provincial, and municipal governments to businesses and private citizens own these sites.

Each national historic site has had a nationally significant impact on Canadian history or illustrates a nationally important aspect of the history of Canada. Collectively, national historic sites represent thousands of years of human history and a rich variety of themes, spanning political, economic, intellectual, cultural and social life. Historic sites capture the spirit and house the physical remains of our shared past, serving as powerful symbols of our identity. They are an inheritance of all Canadians, recognized under an act of Parliament.

1.5 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BASIS FOR MANAGEMENT PLANNING

National historic sites in Canada operated by Parks Canada must adhere to national legislation. Parks Canada policy guides the planning, management and operation of the sites. The legislative and policy context described below is common to all national historic sites administered by Parks Canada.

Goal of Management Planning

Management plans for national historic sites are mandated under law as a means to ensure the sites' commemorative integrity, including the application of cultural resource management principles and practice while guiding the provision of appropriate opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of the sites. This management plan presents the direction that will guide Parks Canada and its partners in the protection, presentation and management of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC and their associated resources in order to ensure the commemorative integrity of these national historic sites. Public input is an integral part of the management planning process.

Historic Sites and Monuments Act

The *Historic Sites and Monuments Act* provides the minister responsible for Parks Canada with the legislated mandate to designate "historic places," or to bring them into being. Such designations are usually made on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, a statutory advisory body consisting of members representing all provinces and territories.

Canada National Parks Act

Grassy Island was set aside as a national historic park in 1990, under Part II of the old *National Parks Act* (1967). That *Act* has since been replaced by the *Canada National Parks Act* (2000). The new *Act* provides for setting aside federal lands to commemorate an event of national importance or to preserve an historic landmark or any object of historic, pre-contact or scientific interest of national importance. Once set aside in this manner, *National Historic Parks General Regulations* as well as the *National Historic Parks Wildlife and Domestic Animals Regulations* apply to these sites.

Parks Canada Agency Act

Under the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998), Parks Canada has a responsibility to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites. In accordance with this *Act*, Parks Canada prepares a management plan for every national historic site administered by the Agency. These plans must be tabled in Parliament, and reviewed every five years.

The management plan is prepared with guidance from the *Parks Canada Guide to Management Planning* (2000), and in accordance with Parks Canada's current policy, described in *Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* (1994). Two sets of policy pertain to the management plan for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC: *National Historic Sites Policy* and *Cultural Resource Management Policy*.

National Historic Sites Policy

Canada's system of national historic sites preserves and presents tangible and symbolic aspects of our nation's cultural heritage. The National Historic Sites Policy outlines the objectives of a national program of historical commemoration, provides guidelines for the evaluation of the program including the concept of commemorative integrity, and outlines the roles and responsibilities for the recognition, designation and commemoration of sites, persons and events of national significance.

The Government of Canada's objectives for national historic sites are:

- to foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past through a national program of historical commemoration;
- to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites administered by Parks Canada by protecting and presenting them for the benefit, education and

enjoyment of this and future generations, in a manner that respects the significant and irreplaceable legacy represented by these places and their associated resources; and

- to encourage and support the protection and presentation by others of places of national historic significance that are not administered by Parks Canada.

Cultural Resource Management Policy

To ensure that national historic sites and their associated resources and values are protected and presented appropriately, Parks Canada has developed a *Cultural Resource Management Policy*. Cultural resource management is built around values, practices and activities. The five guiding principles are: value, public benefit, understanding, respect, and integrity. The practice of cultural resource management requires that cultural resources be identified and evaluated, and that their historic value be duly considered in all actions that might affect them. The *Cultural Resource Management Policy* also provides guidance on activities including corporate direction, planning, research, conservation and presentation.

Cultural resource management is an integrated and holistic approach to the management of cultural resources. It applies to all activities that have an impact on cultural resources whether they relate to protection, maintenance, appreciation or use. The five principles of cultural resource management are not mutually exclusive; rather they work most effectively when considered together. Cultural resource management is integral to the successful management of national historic sites, and should be practised by Parks Canada staff and partners in all cooperative or shared management activities.

2.0 Commemorative Integrity

2.1 PARKS CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO COMMEMORATIVE INTEGRITY

Parks Canada's primary responsibility at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC is to ensure the commemorative integrity of these national historic sites. Commemorative integrity describes the health or wholeness of a national historic site. A national historic site possesses commemorative integrity when:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for the site's designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for the site's national historic significance are effectively communicated to the public; and
- the site's heritage values, including those not related to national significance, are respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site.

2.2 COMMEMORATIVE INTEGRITY STATEMENT

A commemorative integrity statement is an elaboration of what is meant by commemorative integrity for a particular national historic site. The commemorative integrity statement provides the benchmark for planning, managing operations, reporting and taking remedial action. The commemorative integrity statement identifies what is commemorated and why, which resources are directly related to the reasons for the site's designation, their value and objectives for their protection, the messages of national significance and objectives for their effective communication, and other heritage values, resources and messages associated with the site.

The commemorative integrity statement enables Parks Canada to specify:

- what is nationally significant about a national historic site, which is expressed in the Statement of Commemorative Intent;
- the cultural resources of the national historic site, as identified in an inventory, that are directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site, what constitutes the value of these cultural resources, and the appropriate physical condition sought;
- the messages about the site's national historic significance to be communicated to the public and how to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication to the public; and
- the national historic site's cultural resources and other heritage values, not directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site, and the conditions under which these resources will be respected, and the site's messages that are not directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication of these messages.

A. Statement of Commemorative Intent

A site's national historic significance is articulated in a statement of commemorative intent. The rationale is contained in recommendations by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to the minister responsible for Parks Canada or is gleaned from minutes of Board meetings.

Canso Islands NHSC Statement of Commemorative Intent

In the case of Canso Islands, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada discussed the possibility of commemorating Canso as a national historic site on a number of occasions

from 1919 to 1925, when the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada concluded that:

“Canso be declared a site of national importance and that further action be deferred for the present.”

The reasons for designation, as identified in the November 2001 *Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Minutes*, are:

- it was an important fishing base that was first developed in the 16th century by the French and subsequently, during the first half of the 18th century by the British when it became the economic mainstay of Nova Scotia and a key centre for the English cod fishery;
- it was a point of contention and the scene of several combats between the British and the French and Mi’kmaq in the first half of the 18th century; and
- it was the staging point for the British and New England expedition led by Sir William Pepperrell and Sir Peter Warren against the French stronghold of Louisbourg in 1745.

Grassy Island Fort NHSC Statement of Commemorative Intent

Grassy Island Fort NHSC was designated a national historic site in 1962. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Minutes do not give reasons for designation but noted that further marking should be deferred since there is already a plaque at Canso relating to the national historic site. In November 2001, the Board stated that Grassy Island Fort NHSC was an integral part of Canso Islands NHSC. Although the three statements do not refer specifically to the fort, it was a vital component of the settlement and consequently its historical importance is implicit in the statements. The reasons for designation of Grassy Island Fort NHSC are the same as those for Canso Islands NHSC.

B. Cultural Resources

Parks Canada defines a cultural resource as a human work or a place that gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning that has been determined to be of historic value. Parks Canada applies the term

cultural resource to a wide range of resources such as cultural landscapes, landscape features, archaeological sites, structures, engineering works, artifacts and associated records. All cultural resources are valued. However, those cultural resources directly linked to commemorative intent (i.e., directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site) are considered to be of national historic significance.

Cultural resources that are not directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site may have value because of their historical, aesthetic or environmental qualities, and for other reasons such as regional or local associations, or provincial, territorial or municipal designations. Resources that do not meet these criteria are exempted from *Cultural Resource Management Policy*, and are managed under other processes and policies.

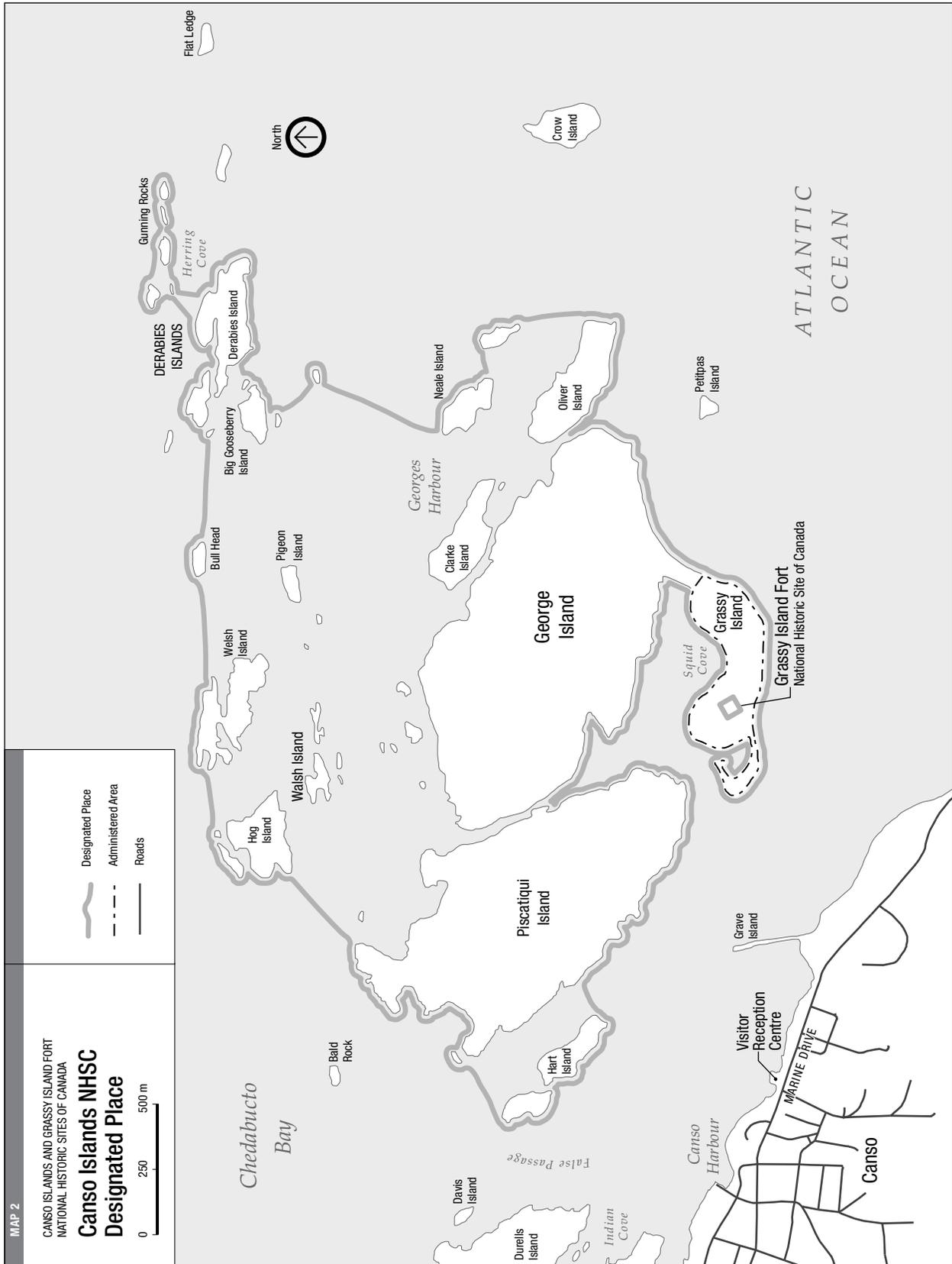
Designated Place

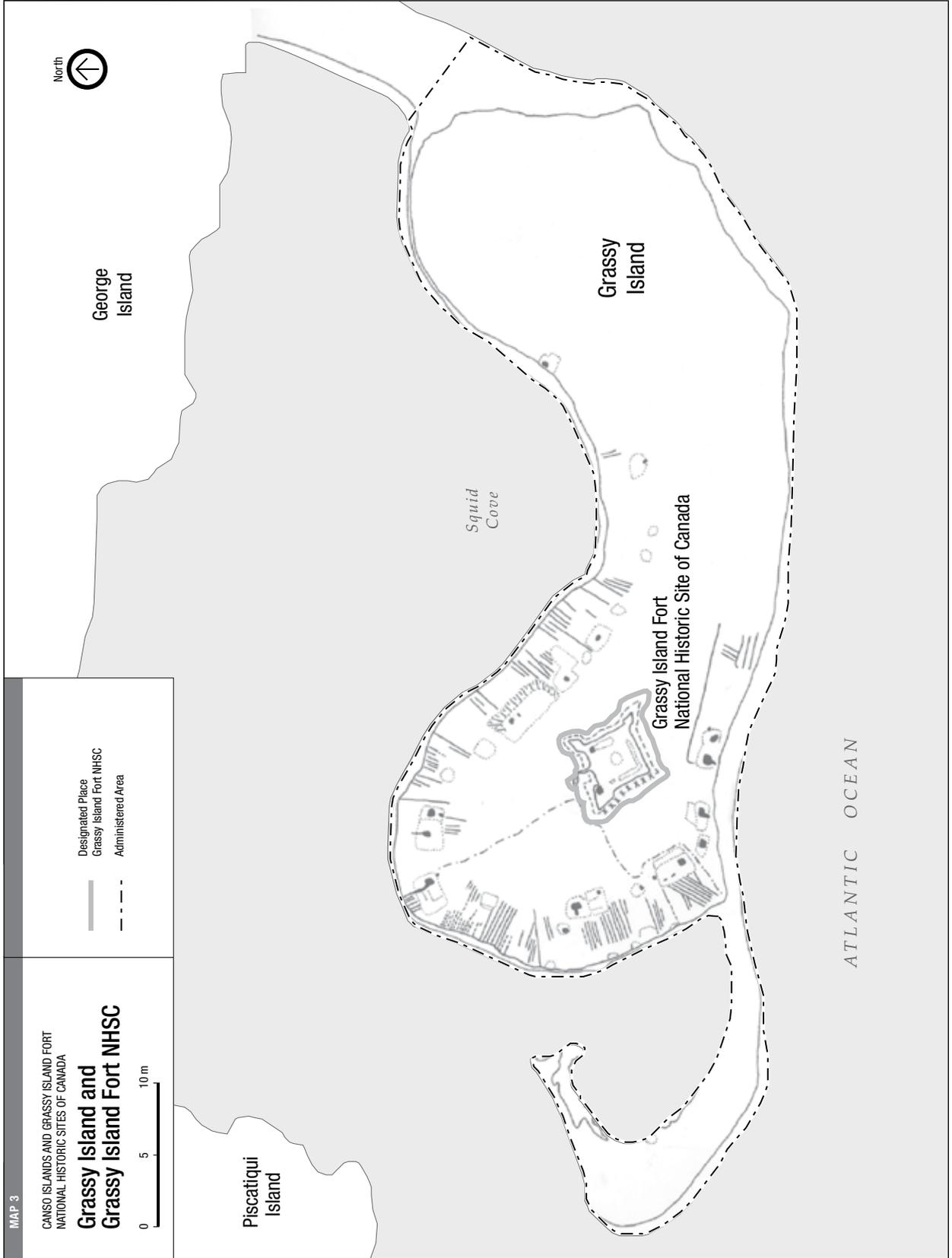
As recommended by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada for commemoration, the designated place for Canso Islands NHSC includes most of the area known historically as Canso Islands, including George, Piscataqui and Grassy Islands as well as the small islands adjacent to them (Hart, Hog, Walsh and others) (see MAP 2: Canso Islands NHSC Designated Place). The Derabie Islands are also included since traditionally they have been considered part of the “Back Islands,” the smaller islands on the outer side of the Canso Islands. The designated place for Canso Islands NHSC includes the islands described above to the low water line but excludes the ocean floor between the islands and the mainland or sections of the mainland itself (see MAP 3: Grassy Island and Grassy Island Fort NHSC).

The designated place for Grassy Island Fort NHSC consists of the area within the footprint of the fort on the summit of Grassy Island, as outlined by the ramparts.

The designated place as a whole is valued because:

- it encompasses the site and remaining below-ground cultural resources of the New England fishing establishment;





- it encompasses areas used by, and remaining below-ground cultural resources of, the Basque and French fishermen in the 16th and 17th centuries;
- view planes from the site represent the historic approaches to the settlement and encompass ship anchorages that were an integral component of the fishing establishment; and
- the designated place for Grassy Island Fort NHSC encompasses the site and remaining below-ground cultural resources of the 1720s fort with modifications made in 1745, including the remains of the 1745 blockhouse.

Landscapes and Landscape Features

Most of the Canso Islands are relatively low-lying rocky islands. Some of them have mixed forest cover while others are little more than rocky outcrops. Grassy Island, a drumlin, is an exception. Cobble beaches form the western tip of Grassy Island and the connection between Grassy and George Islands. French fishermen used these beaches to dry their fish. New England fishermen at Canso preferred raised flakes to dry their catch, and there is no evidence to suggest the beaches were used during the years of the New England fishery. Grassy Island Fort is situated on the top of the small hill at the western end of Grassy Island.

The landscapes and landscape features are valued because:

- the low scrub landscape of Grassy Island reflects the use of the site by fishermen and shore workers during the first half of the 18th century;
- the cobble beaches represent tangible evidence of the French fishery and provide information on its methodology; and
- the cleared land around Grassy Island Fort illustrates the fort's role in the defence of the settlement.

Archaeological Features

Archaeological excavations and surveys have established the presence of archaeological remains of the 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century fishing stations both on Grassy Island and on many of the other islands in the designated

place. Several features on the islands represent the period of the French occupation of the area. One small feature located on the bank overlooking the cobble beach at the west end of Grassy Island may represent a shelter occupied by shore workers tending the curing fish on the beaches below. Another feature located at the east end of George Island, north of Petitpas Head, represents the fishing establishments of the Admiral's Harbour, as the most favoured location was known, and the fishing establishment of Claude Petitpas, an Acadian merchant active in the Canso area from 1716 to 1720.

Most of the archaeological features within the designated place are those of the New England fishing establishment of 1720-1744. On Grassy Island, these remains consist of approximately nineteen properties that contained residences, outbuildings and fish flakes. Associated with this settlement are the remains of three fortifications: a small redoubt constructed on the cobble beach at the west end of the island in 1720, a larger fortification constructed on the hill overlooking the islands and approaches in 1723-24 (Grassy Island Fort NHSC), and a blockhouse constructed within the old fort in 1745 by New England troops preparing for their siege of Louisbourg. A cemetery associated with the settlement was located at the top of the bluff at the southeast end of the island (adjacent to the cobble beach that joins Grassy Island to George Island). Directly facing the Atlantic Ocean, the cemetery is subject to erosion.

Grassy Island Fort NHSC includes the archaeological remains of the ramparts, unidentified buildings (including barracks and storehouses), a magazine and a well. A slightly elevated area in the middle of the parade square represents the remains of the blockhouse constructed by New England troops in 1745.

The archaeological features are valued because:

- they represent tangible evidence of the French and British fisheries and their methodology;
- they provide a clear picture of 18th-century military and civilian life on Grassy Island;

- they provide evidence of the struggle between British and French forces in the 1744 destruction of the settlement;
- the unexcavated resources represent a potential for increasing knowledge and understanding of the period;
- the remains of the military structures on Grassy Island provide evidence of the importance placed on the fishery by the British imperial government;
- the remains of military structures provide evidence of the strategic importance of the site as a dividing point between the French and British empires; and
- the remains of military structures are significant for their role in the first siege of Louisbourg (1745).

Historic Objects

The artifact collection consists of approximately 100 000 items, more than 95 percent of which relate to the era of the New England fishery. The collection consists of a wide range of ceramics, glass, bone, building hardware, personal belongings, and fishing supplies, as well as some that relate to the military presence on Grassy Island. Three of these items can be directly associated with French use of the area in the 17th century. The historic objects are valued because:

- they testify to trade links between Canso, New England and Europe;
- they provide information on the lifestyle of British colonial merchant and military households;
- they provide a rare glimpse of a New England fishing outpost and military station during a specific period of the British colonial era in Nova Scotia; and
- artifacts associated with French occupation provide a tangible link to the early French fishery.

The cultural resources (designated place, landscapes and landscape features, archaeological sites and objects) are not impaired or under threat when:

- the cultural resources and their associated values are respected;
- management decisions are based on adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles

and practices of the *Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Policy*;

- the cultural resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from natural processes, for example, erosion and decay, both within and outside of the site;
- the cultural resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired or threatened from human activities within and outside of the site; and
- the historic values of the resources are communicated to visitors and the general public.

C. Messages of National Historic Significance

The following messages are essential for an understanding of the reasons for the national significance of Canso Islands NHSC and Grassy Island Fort NHSC.

- Basque and French fishermen came to the Canso area in the mid 16th century and French fishermen continued to use the cobble beaches to dry the fish caught on the nearby banks throughout the 17th century.
- By the end of the 17th century, New England merchants travelled to Canso to conduct trade with their French counterparts and developed a fishing base at Canso following the transfer of mainland Nova Scotia to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.
- The years between approximately 1723 and 1740 represented the high point of the New England fishery at Canso and during these years, the area was the economic centre of Nova Scotia with cod transported to Europe and the West Indies.
- The Canso islands were strategically located for access to the fertile fisheries of the offshore banks.
- The Canso islands formed a frontier between the British in mainland Nova Scotia and the French in Ile Royale.
- The Mi'kmaq participated in raids on the New England fishing establishment in the 1720s.
- Grassy Island Fort was the principal defensive work for the New England fishing establishment between 1723 and 1744.
- Following the outbreak of war between England and France in 1744, a military

force from Louisbourg attacked and burned the settlement at Canso. The following year, Grassy Island was used for training for the combined British and New England force led by Sir William Pepperrell and Sir Peter Warren before their capture of Louisbourg.

- Canso Islands NHSC and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are national historic sites designated by the Government of Canada as sites of importance to all Canadians for historical reasons.

D. Other Heritage Values

Other physical cultural resources associated with the national historic sites have historic value, but are not directly associated with the reasons for the national historic significance of the sites. These other cultural resources include a pre-contact Aboriginal site and nine associated artifacts, and unexcavated remains related to post-1745 period throughout the designated place of Canso Islands NHSC, especially on the north shore of Georges Island and approximately 100 related artifacts. The following messages are related to these other resources.

- Aboriginal people used the area of Canso Islands NHSC before the arrival of Europeans.
- In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Mi'kmaq visited the Canso Islands to fish, primarily for swordfish, and trade with the local inhabitants of the area.
- The fishery continued to be an important industry at Canso throughout the 19th and much of the 20th centuries.
- Canso was the site of a cable station operated by the Western Union Company in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- Canso Islands NHSC and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are members of Canada's family of national historic sites.
- The site has thematic association with many other national and provincial historic sites in the Atlantic provinces that commemorate the history of the fishery and the conflict between the English and the French and Mi'kmaq in the 18th century, including Louisbourg, St. Peters, Fort Beauséjour–Fort Cumberland and Fort Edward NHSC.

2.3 COMMEMORATIVE INTEGRITY STATEMENT AS A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The overall objective of this management plan is to provide direction to managers of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC for the next decade, to ensure the commemorative integrity of these national historic sites. The commemorative integrity statement must play a fundamental role in the selection and choice of appropriate management actions. The commemorative integrity statement for the national historic sites serves as the benchmark of commemorative integrity, providing information about where value lies for the designated place and the cultural resources of the national historic sites and providing guidance on the appropriate messages to convey the national significance of the sites. Accordingly, the commemorative integrity statement objectives for designated place and for cultural resources of national significance have framed the strategic decision-making in the management plan for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC.

While the commemorative integrity statement objectives ensure the protection, knowledge, understanding and respect for the designated place and cultural resources, the commemorative integrity statement does not prescribe particular actions. Actions have been selected that seek to achieve the commemorative integrity statement objectives and address the cultural resource management principles of value, benefit, integrity, respect and understanding. Proposed activities seek to ensure that the cultural resources are not impaired or threatened and that messages about the sites' national historic significance are conveyed. Activities that compromise the commemorative integrity of the sites or that do not follow cultural resource management principles are not permitted.

3.0 Vision

In the next fifteen years, Canso Islands and Grassy Island National Historic Sites of Canada will have maintained and enhanced the heritage values for which they were commemorated. The nationally significant resources found at the sites and the historic objects stored in other places will continue to be protected and presented to the public. The role of the sites in the Canadian family of national historic sites will be well appreciated by visitors, thanks to strong partnerships and collaborative efforts with regional stakeholders. These improvements will result in more visits and increased visitor satisfaction with the sites, and visitors will regard Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort National Historic Sites of Canada as integral to a visitor experience in Nova Scotia.

In order to achieve this vision, this management plan provides specific strategies and actions to:

- ensure the commemorative integrity of Canso Islands and Grassy Island NHSC;
- increase awareness of the national historic sites;
- influence audiences in order to develop a greater understanding of the national historic sites and the values they represent;
- involve audiences in order to generate more support for Parks Canada programs in Nova Scotia and elsewhere;
- manage the national historic sites while respecting their natural values;
- ensure adequate facilities and services are offered to meet current visitor demand;
- increase visitation and facilitate access to the national historic sites; and
- improve partnerships and regional collaboration.

4.0 Ensuring Heritage Protection

Ensuring the commemorative integrity of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC entails protecting the cultural resources of national historic significance and other heritage values, communicating messages of national historic significance, protecting other heritage resources, communicating messages not directly related to the reasons for designation, and respecting the cultural resources in all decisions made for the sites. Heritage protection is the first element of ensuring commemorative integrity.

The cultural resources of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC consist of the designated place, landscapes and landscape features, archaeological features, and historic objects. Site staff monitor the resources generally, and Parks Canada cultural resource management specialists undertake an annual site inspection of the condition of *in situ* resources. Any threats to resources are addressed in a timely fashion.

A number of artifacts from the historic object collection are included in the interpretive display at the visitor reception centre on the Canso waterfront. However, most are stored in a facility at the Atlantic Service Centre, Parks Canada, in Halifax. In addition, approximately 200 artifacts were excavated during the survey of the other islands in 2001 and according to provincial law are owned by the Province of Nova Scotia. These artifacts are currently stored as part of the Canso Islands NHSC artifact collection at the Atlantic Service Centre and information about the collection is maintained in an electronic catalogue.

Situation Analysis:

An evaluation of the sites' commemorative integrity undertaken in 2003 confirms that coastal erosion is a long-term threat to some of the archaeological features at Grassy

Island, but not an immediate cause for concern. Features threatened by erosion have been excavated and some remedial conservation has been done.

Alder growth on Grassy Island threatens to change the appearance of the historic landscape, to hide cultural resources and interfere with view planes from the island. Vegetation management should be undertaken to ensure commemorative integrity is not impaired. More knowledge of coastal erosion at Grassy Island would assist with planning for cultural resource protection; Parks Canada is working with the Geological Survey of Canada to increase knowledge of coastal processes as they relate to the designated place.

An archaeological survey of the other islands in the designated place was undertaken in September 2001. Limited testing located a number of sites containing artifacts of the period of the New England fishery, principally along the shoreline of George and Piscataqui Islands, confirming historic plans that show fishing establishments in these areas. Tests on other islands revealed 18th-century material, including brick, window glass and ceramics, again reflecting historical documentation about fishing establishments on the smaller islands.

Parks Canada does not anticipate acquiring any additional property within the designated place, as there are no financial resources to manage a significant additional amount of property. However, if significant cultural resources clearly related to the reasons for designation of Canso Islands NHSC are found on the other islands and appear to be under threat, and if the threat can best be dealt with through acquisition, Parks Canada will consider that course of action.

Goal:

To continue to ensure commemorative integrity of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, through ensuring respect and protection for the designated place, the *in situ* cultural resources, historic objects and the landscapes.

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- continue to protect below-ground cultural resources by leaving them *in situ*;
- support appropriate academic archaeological research on sites such as the Petitpas site;
- work with the Geological Survey of Canada to explore and gain a better understanding of past and future natural coastal erosion and resultant shorelines;
- monitor *in situ* cultural resources, especially the impacts from natural processes such as erosion;
- manage vegetation on Grassy Island where it obscures the historic landscape and interferes with view planes;
- use appropriate methods to protect cultural resources at risk, including salvage archaeology in cases where disturbance is inevitable;
- continue to protect historic objects through ongoing management of collections, and continue to use these objects for on-site heritage presentation and outreach, as appropriate; and
- encourage owners of those parts of the designated place that are not owned by Parks Canada to protect the landscape and cultural resources under their care.

5.0 Ensuring Public Education and Support

Parks Canada endeavours to communicate with Canadians about its activities for three purposes: to raise awareness of the system of national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas; to foster understanding and enjoyment of individual heritage places; and to strengthen emotional connections to and a sense of ownership of heritage places as important symbols of Canada. Ensuring the commemorative integrity of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC requires effective communication of the reasons why the sites are considered of national historic significance. Audiences for these messages include on-site visitors, other audiences (including virtual visitors), and stakeholders, or those with an interest in the mandate, policies and actions of Parks Canada, including non-governmental organizations, industry, public sector, the media and interested individuals.

Ensuring a national historic site's commemorative integrity requires the effective communication to the public of the national historic significance of the site. Effective communication enhances awareness and greater understanding of the values of a national historic site. In addition to the messages related to the national significance of the sites, a number of other messages communicate an awareness and appreciation of the heritage value of persons, events and activities associated with Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC. These heritage values are not directly linked to the reasons for the designation of the sites or to the sites' commemorative intent. Nevertheless, these messages may be communicated to the public. (See CHAPTER 2.0 - *Commemorative Integrity* for messages of national historic significance and other messages). The effectiveness of communication efforts can be assessed against the broad learning objectives of the sites' heritage

presentation program. The objectives relate to the reasons for the national significance of the sites. The reasons for the national historic significance of these sites are effectively communicated when:

- the overall heritage presentation program conveys the reasons for the national historic significance, including the cultural resources of national significance, and other heritage values of the sites;
- as many people as possible (visitors and other audiences) who experience the heritage presentation program for the sites understand the national importance of this place to the history of Canada;
- as many people as possible (visitors and other audiences) who experience the heritage presentation program for the sites understand that the in situ resources of Canso Islands NHSC reflect the French and English fishing establishments that existed in this area; and
- as many people as possible (visitors and other audiences) who experience the heritage presentation program for the sites understand that the sites' story reflects French and English involvement in this part of North America in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries.

5.1 ON-SITE HERITAGE PRESENTATION

The heritage presentation program at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC consists of exhibits and an audiovisual presentation at the visitor reception centre, and outdoor interpretive panels on Grassy Island. The exhibits in the visitor reception centre provide an overview of the early history of European interest in the Canso area, with an emphasis on the 18th-century New England settlement at Canso. The interpretive panels on Grassy Island explain to visitors the role

of the island in the history of the 18th-century settlement. The panels provide information about the archaeological resources found on the island and the activities and lives of the 18th-century residents, merchants, soldiers, and fishery workers. One panel addresses the 17th-century French fishery. Visitors can either tour the island on their own or accompanied by a guide when one is available.

Situation Analysis:

The heritage presentation program offer in the visitor reception centre is effective, although the interpretive panels are somewhat dated. A major shortcoming of the visitor reception centre exhibits is that they do not make clear the significance of French fishing and trade in the Canso area in the 16th and 17th centuries.

In 1999, Parks Canada surveyed visitors on the success of heritage presentation at the site when the designated place had not yet been expanded beyond Grassy Island (*Grassy Island NHS Visitor Satisfaction Survey, 1999*). At that time, heritage presentation efforts rated highly for their communication of the harsh living conditions of a lowly soldier, the remains of merchant dwellings, and the richness of the Canso fishery. Respondents also understood the role the Canso area played in 18th-century rivalry between France and Britain.

Public consultation during this management plan review echoed suggestions voiced during the development of the previous management plan; namely, that reconstruction of historic structures that once existed on Grassy Island would be an effective heritage presentation approach. Reconstruction of buildings on Grassy Island is not an interpretive approach that will be used by Parks Canada, particularly because of the lack of information available to accurately reconstruct buildings. However, enough information may be available to recreate fish flakes on which the New Englanders dried fish.

A. Audiences

Audiences for the on-site presentation program for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC have been identified through an analysis of existing visitor use, and through consultation with various stakeholders.

The *Grassy Island NHS Visitor Satisfaction Survey, 1999* provides a useful demographic profile of visitors to the site: 10 percent of surveyed visitors came from the local area; 23 percent came from elsewhere in Nova Scotia; 16 percent came from elsewhere in Canada; and 46 percent came from the United States and other countries. Seventy-six per cent of respondents were visiting the national historic site for the first time.

The following groups visit Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC now or may be expected to visit in the future:

Family Groups: Family groups are considered adults with children 16 years old and younger. The *1999 Visitor Satisfaction Survey* indicated that approximately one-third of visitors were in family groups. This is a significant proportion of the visitors to Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, although not high compared with other national historic sites.

Independent Adult Travellers: Compared with other historic sites, Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC experience a relatively high level of visitation among young adults 17 to 34 years (31 percent), while seniors represented only 5 percent of the visitors in 1999 (*1999 Visitor Satisfaction Survey*). Sixty-three percent of visitors surveyed in 1999 were adults between the ages of 17 and 64.

Special Event Participants: Special events in Canso, such as the annual Stan Rogers Folk Festival, attract visitors to the community but have limited spin-off benefits in visitation to Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC.

Commercial Groups: Few conventional bus tour groups visit the site, given its distance from the main travelways of Nova Scotia.

Recreational Users: Canso has potential as a destination for bird watching. Demand for interpretive programming or services by this group may be lower than for other users, but the potential of recreational users should not be overlooked.

Goal:

To provide a high quality of interpretive programming and services at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC to an expanded range of audiences

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- update exhibits in the visitor reception centre to include appropriate information about the 16th - and 17th -century French presence in this area;
- assess the effectiveness of the sites' heritage presentation program in communicating messages of national historic significance, other heritage values and Parks Canada corporate messages; and
- investigate the feasibility of reconstructing flakes on Grassy Island as an interpretive device, with consideration given to the potential impacts on archaeological resources.

5.2 PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A range of materials and media offer Canadians opportunities to learn about Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC. Several issues of the Parks Canada Research Bulletin describe historical and archaeological research that has been undertaken in association with the national historic sites. In addition, Grassy Island and the community of Canso have been the subject of numerous scholarly and popular articles or papers.

Outreach and marketing opportunities for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC include references in the Province of Nova Scotia's primary tourist guide (the *Nova Scotia Doers' & Dreamers' Travel Guide*); the Parks Canada Web site which has historical information, images and links to related Web sites; and a well-regarded educational kit for use by teachers in schools.

Situation Analysis:

Opportunities for non-visitors to learn about Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are somewhat limited. The Parks Canada Web site for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC should be improved.

Aside from the Province of Nova Scotia's tourist guide, other publications do not have a widespread reach. Although the educational kit has been well received in schools in the area, the number of school trips to the site has declined, likely due in part to fewer available funds for such school trips than in the past. The educational kit and other non-personal programming should be further promoted in area schools. Public input during the course of this management plan review indicated that stakeholders felt that the Grassy Island educational kit could be better employed to promote the national historic sites and improve awareness of the sites, among educators and students.

Fort Anne NHSC and Fortress of Louisbourg NHSC have thematic links to Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC. Interpretive programming at Fortress of Louisbourg NHSC tells the interlinked stories of French and English fishing interests and imperial rivalries in Nova Scotia.

Goal:

To communicate messages on the national significance of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC in order to increase the non-visiting Canadian public's understanding of the sites' national historic significance and other heritage values.

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- develop opportunities for the non-visiting public to learn about Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC through the use of new and traditional media including improving the Web site; and
- seek to work in partnership with others, as appropriate, to communicate messages on the sites' national significance to target audiences, particularly at other sites and attractions in Nova Scotia, as opportunities permit.

5.3 ONGOING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

From their commemoration as national historic sites, Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC have had an outstanding record of community involvement and support from various agencies. Parks Canada has employed many local people over the years on archaeological projects. The initial development of Grassy Island NHSC was possible due to cooperation and support from the Town of Canso, the Strait of Canso Industrial Development Authority and the Canso Historical Society. The Town aided Parks Canada in obtaining the land on which the visitor reception centre is located. The Canso Historical Society provided space for an interim exhibit in the Whitman House Museum while the visitor reception centre was being built, and the Strait of Canso Industrial Development Authority provided some of the funding required for development of the site.

Situation Analysis:

This kind of cooperation continues to the present day. The Town of Canso provides staff for the site and the boat service to Grassy Island through a service agreement with Parks Canada.

The Town of Canso, the Municipality of Guysborough County, the Canso Peninsula Marketing Association, and the Antigonish-Eastern Shore Tourism Association are all interested in working with Parks Canada on future plans for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC; the site is regarded as a major tourist attraction for this part of Guysborough County.

Ongoing development of partnerships and collaborative opportunities will provide opportunities for Parks Canada to inform and influence opinion of Canadians about these national historic sites and to involve them in Parks Canada's efforts to protect and present these sites.

Parks Canada has a duty to consult with Aboriginal Peoples regarding matters that may affect asserted Aboriginal or Treaty rights. Parks Canada also places a high priority on developing mutually beneficial rela-

tionships with Aboriginal People. To these ends, Parks Canada entered into a process of consultation on this management plan with representatives of the thirteen Mi'kmaq First Nations in Nova Scotia. Parks Canada also consulted with the Native Council of Nova Scotia.

The main issues raised during these consultations were Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge, and the role of Mi'kmaq on advisory committees. These consultations provided a good opportunity to share information and build on the collaborative relationship that exists between Parks Canada and the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

Goal:

To work with partners to ensure the continued role of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC as a tourism attraction and cultural resource in this part of Nova Scotia.

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- work with partners to develop and deliver improved interpretive programs and services for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, to assist Parks Canada to fulfil its responsibility to ensure the commemorative integrity of these national historic sites;
- work with and encourage owners of property that is part of the designated place of Canso Islands NHSC, but not owned by Parks Canada, to inventory, protect and monitor cultural resources throughout the designated place;
- work cooperatively with partners and other stakeholders generally to improve awareness about the stories of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, and to link the national historic sites with related sites (e.g., Fortress of Louisbourg NHSC);
- seek to work in partnership with others, as appropriate, to communicate messages on the sites' national significance to target audiences, particularly at other sites and attractions in Nova Scotia, as opportunities permit;

- continue to develop and improve relationships with various organizations and groups, such as the Mi'kmaw community, local heritage organizations, local landowners, the Town of Canso, and the Municipality of Guysborough;
- work with representatives of the Mi'kmaq communities to identify and carry out Mi'kmaw Ecological Knowledge studies as considered mutually appropriate;
- share archaeological information with the Mi'kmaq, identify research gaps and carry out additional archaeological surveys, as considered mutually appropriate;
- identify opportunities for Mi'kmaq involvement on advisory committees related to the national historic site;
- work with other agencies on new marketing initiatives as the opportunities present themselves, contingent upon availability of financial resources; and
- encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to improve highways in the area.

6.0 Ensuring Meaningful Visitor Experiences

Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC offer distinctive experiences for visitors. Visitors can make use of the facilities and services in the visitor reception centre on the mainland in the Town of Canso and may choose to visit Grassy Island, travelling by boat to where the in situ cultural resources are located.

The visitor reception centre provides orientation and information services, as well as heritage presentation in the form of an audio-visual presentation and exhibits. Services at the visitor reception centre include washrooms, seating, a water fountain, information and the point of departure for the boat ride to Grassy Island. On Grassy Island itself, facilities include two unisex privies, a shelter and a boat dock, walking trails, archaeological features and interpretive panels.

Visitation to the site averages fewer than 2000 people per year. Current levels of visitation render it prohibitively expensive to administer the collection of fees so donations by visitors are encouraged.

Situation Analysis:

The *Grassy Island NHS Visitor Satisfaction Survey, 1999* indicated that for about three-quarters of respondents it was a first visit, and for approximately one-third of respondents it was an unplanned stop. Respondents expressed some dissatisfaction with directional signage to the visitor reception centre and on Grassy Island. Although respondents indicated that they were pleased with the boat service and tour of the island, fewer than half indicated a willingness to pay an additional fee for the service.

The visitor satisfaction survey indicated that respondents were very pleased with the staff at the visitor reception centre. Respondents gave staff very high marks for friendliness/courtesy and helpfulness. Scores for presentation skills were also high, representing an above-average degree of satisfaction with the staff in this aspect of their duties.

Public input during this management plan review indicated a strong interest in replacing the visitor reception centre's tower, which lent an architectural distinctiveness to the facility but which was taken down due to a design flaw which was threatening the integrity of the main structure. It was felt that the visitor reception centre needs a motif to attract the attention of visitors approaching the building from Union Street.

Public input indicated a desire for street signage indicating to visitors their approach to the visitor reception centre. Parks Canada has taken steps to address concerns about the lack of road signs through installing signs under the Agency's national identity programme.

Goal:

To provide opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, and associated services and facilities to offer opportunities for Canadians to learn about and enjoy the sites. The provision of services will be compatible with the cultural values and sense of place of the national historic sites and will consider other facilities offered in the closest communities.

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- improve the visibility and profile of the sites to visitors, through investigating the development and installation of a motif at the visitor reception centre, in keeping with the messages of national historic significance associated with the sites;
- consider the possibility of concessions at the visitor reception centre to provide high-quality souvenirs for visitors;
- given the high level of satisfaction with staff and services at the site, continue to work with the Town of Canso to ensure that an appropriate level of service is provided to visitors;
- work with the Town of Canso and other agencies in the area to encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to improve road links to Canso; and
- continue to evaluate and improve signage to ensure that visitors can find the sites easily.

7.0 Operations, Administration and Natural Resource Management

Parks Canada owns Grassy Island and a property on the mainland in the Town of Canso, which are administered through a service delivery agreement with the Town of Canso. The Town hires staff to administer the national historic sites and to provide heritage presentation and boat services. The rest of the designated place of Canso Islands NHSC is owned and administered by private owners and the Province of Nova Scotia.

No ecological inventory of Grassy Island, the property administered by Parks Canada, has been undertaken, and no similar inventory of the other islands under private ownership is known to have been prepared. Once extensively forested, Grassy Island has been subject to many years of tree-cutting and grazing, leaving the island with a few scattered spruce trees, extensive alder growth, coarse grasses, blueberry bushes, raspberry canes and cranberry plants. Some gooseberry bushes on the island may have survived from the gardens of 18th-century residents. As a result of an apparent absence of predators other than birds, Grassy Island supports a fairly large vole population. A small number of deer live primarily on the other islands but occasionally venture onto Grassy Island. Avid birdwatchers consider the area as an ecologically rich environment. Aside from the immediate shoreline, the other islands within the designated place are covered with a dense, almost impenetrable growth of conifers.

Situation Analysis:

The current operation, administration and natural resource management of the administered property is satisfactory. The boat crew is trained for transporting the public and for handling petroleum. There are no particular public safety risks associated with the Parks

Canada administered property; however, a public safety assessment for planning purposes merits being conducted.

While managers have a good appreciation of the natural values of Grassy Island, an ecological inventory has not been undertaken to identify any species at risk present on the property.

The site is vulnerable to off shore accidents or polluting activities such as an oil spill, which could impair shoreline archaeological features. To this end, Parks Canada should ensure that the emergency response plan for the historic site is up to date.

Goal:

To ensure the sound and environmentally responsible operation and administration of the property administered by Parks Canada at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC.

Management Direction:

Parks Canada will:

- use environmentally sound practices in the operation and management of the sites, as per Parks Canada directives;
- prepare an ecological inventory of the property administered by Parks Canada to identify if there are any species at risk, inform management decisions and provide baseline information for environmental assessments or in the event of environmental incidents;
- conduct a public safety assessment of the property that Parks Canada administers; and
- keep current the environmental emergency response plan for the national historic sites that addresses emergency response, pollution prevention, and fuel handling and storage.

8.0 Environmental Assessment

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impact of its actions on ecosystems, cultural resources and commemorative integrity. The “*Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan, and Program Proposals*” prepared by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, requires an environmental assessment of all plans and policies submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a minister for approval, including management plans for national historic sites.

Accordingly, a strategic environmental assessment of the goals, programs, guidelines and projects outlined in this management plan was carried out on a near final draft of the plan. The objectives of the environmental assessment were:

- to ensure that the strategic directions, objectives, and specific proposals contained within the plan respect and support the commemorative integrity goals and objectives for the national historic sites;
- to ensure that the plan adequately addresses concerns threatening the cultural resources at the national historic sites;
- to assess the implications of proposals included in the plan to ensure that they enhance positive effects on cultural and natural resources and avoid or mitigate potentially negative effects; and
- to identify the implications of any potential trade-offs of commemorative and/or ecological values against proposed human use enhancements.

The assessment included evaluation of cumulative effects on cultural and natural resources from all proposals. It also considered at a strategic level, the full range of potential effects on the cultural and natural resources of the national historic sites, both from ongoing operations and proposed projects.

The challenges facing Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are recognized in the direction and initiatives outlined in the management plan. Opportunities for public review during the planning process were provided in 2003. Public views and comments, including concerns regarding cultural resources, are reflected in the management plan.

The management plan proposes several management actions that could result in adverse environmental effects. However, it is expected that these impacts can be mitigated once they are examined more closely during project-specific environmental assessments. The following initiatives may be subject to project-specific environmental assessments.

- Vegetation management for viewscales on Grassy Island.
- Reconstruction of fish flakes on Grassy Island.

A number of changes were made to the draft management plan for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC as a result of the strategic environmental assessment, as follows.

- A commitment was added to prepare an ecological inventory of the Parks Canada administered property for species at risk and other rare flora and fauna (CHAPTER 7.0 - *Operations, Administration and Natural Resource Management*).
- A commitment was added to conduct a public safety assessment of the Parks Canada administered property (CHAPTER 7.0 - *Operations, Administration and Natural Resource Management*).
- A commitment was added to keep current an environmental emergency response plan that deals with emergency response, pollution prevention, and fuel handling and storage (CHAPTER 7.0 - *Operations, Administration and Natural Resource Management*).

- A commitment was added to manage vegetation on the property administered by Parks Canada (CHAPTER 4.0 - *Ensuring Heritage Protection*).
- A commitment was added to explore and understand past and future natural coastal erosion and resultant shorelines, in partnership with the Geological Survey of Canada (CHAPTER 4.0 - *Ensuring Heritage Protection*).

With these measures, the strategic direction and specific actions outlined in the management plan are not likely to have any significant adverse effects on cultural and/or natural resources. If the strategic direction is

followed and the specific actions are carried out, the management plan will have a positive effect on the cultural resources, and commemorative integrity of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, and result in positive socio-economic benefits.

Relevant federal environmental policies, including those of Parks Canada, were considered in a policy review. The proposed strategic directions outlined in the management plan are consistent with these policies. Implementation of the management direction and the specific actions that are proposed should result in improved commemorative integrity at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC.

9.0 Implementation Strategy

The actions proposed in this management plan for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are implemented through the Field Unit's sustainable business plan. While the management plan is envisioned as a strategic guide with a life span of ten to fifteen years (reviewed every five years), the annual business plan offers a picture of five years at a time. The sustainable business plan identifies those actions of the management plan that will be realized within the next five years, and their timing and cost. Any changes to the five-year forecast are captured by the review and update of the sustainable business plan.

Implementation of this management plan is the responsibility of the Cape Breton Field Unit Superintendent. The Field Unit Superintendent's three primary accountabilities at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC are:

1. Ensuring commemorative integrity;
2. Improving service to clients; and
3. Making wise and efficient use of public funds.

Implementation of the actions proposed for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC in this management plan depends on the availability of financial resources.

New management initiatives are distinguished from on-going management direction. New initiatives are prioritized, identifying those initiatives that will be achieved within the first three years following management plan approval (specifying those that are contingent upon financial resources being available, particularly for site development), and those initiatives that will be achieved in future years of the life of the management plan. These priorities may be reconsidered in response to new circumstances or information, or changing national priorities and decisions. No priority has been assigned to initiatives beyond this broad phasing. Further prioritizing will occur during the course of Field Unit business planning.

Progress on the management plan implementation will be communicated through annual reporting on sustainable business plan performance. The management plan will also be subject to periodic review, and can be amended to reflect changing circumstances. The public will be consulted about major changes.

Service Line	Action	Timeline Following Management Plan Approval	
		First Three Years	Future Year Priorities
<i>Service Line 2: Conserving Heritage Resources</i>	Continue to protect below-ground cultural resources by leaving them <i>in situ</i> .	•	
	Support appropriate academic archaeological research on sites such as the Petitpas site.	•	
	Work with the Geological Survey of Canada to explore and gain a better understanding of past and future natural coastal erosion and resultant shorelines.	•	•
	Monitor <i>in situ</i> cultural resources, especially the impacts from natural processes such as erosion.	•	•
	Manage vegetation on Grassy Island where it obscures the historic landscape and interferes with view planes.	•	•
	Use appropriate methods to protect cultural resources at risk, including salvage archaeology in cases where disturbance is inevitable.	•	•
	Continue to protect historic objects through ongoing management of collections, and continue to use these objects for on-site heritage presentation and outreach, as appropriate.	•	•
	Encourage owners of those parts of the designated place that are not owned by Parks Canada to protect the landscape and cultural resources under their care.	•	
<i>Service Line 3: Promote Public Appreciation and Understanding</i>	Update exhibits in the visitor reception centre to include appropriate information about the 16 th - and 17 th -century French presence in this area.	•	•
	Assess the effectiveness of the sites' heritage presentation program in communicating messages of national historic significance, other heritage values and Parks Canada corporate messages.	•	
	Investigate the feasibility of reconstructing flakes on Grassy Island as an interpretive device, with consideration given to the potential impacts on archaeological resources.		•
	Work with partners to develop and deliver improved interpretive programs and services for Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, to assist Parks Canada to fulfil its responsibility to ensure the commemorative integrity of these national historic sites.	•	•
	Work with and encourage owners of property that is part of the designated place of Canso Islands NHSC, but not owned by Parks Canada, to inventory, protect and monitor cultural resources throughout the designated place.	•	•
	Work cooperatively with partners and other stakeholders generally to improve awareness about and the stories of Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, and to link the national historic sites with related sites (e.g., Fortress of Louisbourg NHSC).	•	•
	Seek to work in partnership with others, as appropriate, to communicate messages on the sites' national significance to target audiences, particularly at other sites and attractions in Nova Scotia, as opportunities permit.	•	•

Service Line	Action	Timeline Following Management Plan Approval	
		First Three Years	Future Year Priorities
<i>Service Line 3: Promote Public Appreciation and Understanding</i>	Develop opportunities for the non-visiting public to learn about Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC through the use of new and traditional media including improving the Web site.	•	
	Continue to develop and improve relationships with various organizations and groups, such as the Mi'kmaq community, local heritage organizations, local landowners, the Town of Canso, and the Municipality of Guysborough.	•	•
	Work with representatives of the Mi'kmaq communities to identify and carry out Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge studies as considered mutually appropriate.	•	
	Share archaeological information with the Mi'kmaq, identify research gaps and carry out additional archaeological surveys, as considered mutually appropriate.	•	
	Identify opportunities for Mi'kmaq involvement on advisory committees related to the national historic site.	•	
	Work with other agencies on new marketing initiatives as the opportunities present themselves, contingent upon availability of financial resources.	•	
<i>Service Line 4: Quality Visitor Experience</i>	Improve the visibility and profile of the sites to visitors, through investigating the development and installation of a motif at the visitor reception centre, in keeping with the messages of national historic significance associated with the sites.	•	
	Consider the possibility of concessions at the visitor reception centre to provide high-quality souvenirs for visitors.	•	•
	Continue to work with the Town of Canso to ensure that an appropriate level of service is provided to visitors.	•	•
	Encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to improve highways in the area.	•	
	Continue to evaluate and improve signage to ensure that visitors can find the site easily.	•	•
<i>Service Line 7: Management of Parks Canada</i>	Prepare an ecological inventory of the property administered by Parks Canada to identify if there are any species at risk, inform management decisions and provide baseline information for environmental assessments or in the event of environmental incidents.		•
	Conduct a public safety assessment of the property the Agency administers.		•
	Keep current the environmental emergency response plan for the national historic sites that addresses emergency response, pollution prevention, and fuel handling and storage.	•	•
	Use environmentally sound practices in the operation and management of the sites, as per Parks Canada directives.	•	•

APPENDIX 1

List of Management Planning Team Members

The following individuals participated in the development of this management plan as part of the core management planning team:

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APPENDIX 2

Selected References

- Ferguson, Robert. *Grassy Island: Archaeological Investigations of a Nova Scotia Fishing Community*. Research Bulletin, Manuscript Report No. 124, 1980.
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- Parks Canada. *Grassy Island National Historic Park Management Plan*. 1983.
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- . *Engaging Canadians: Parks Canada's Strategy for External Communications*. Unpublished report, 2001.
- . *Canso Islands Survey Preliminary Report*. Unpublished report, 2002.
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APPENDIX 3

Inventory and Evaluation of Cultural Resources

Description	Evaluation	Comments
<i>Designated Place (Canso Islands)</i>	Level I	Consists of most of the area known historically as Canso Islands, including George, Piscatiqui and Grassy Islands as well as the small islands adjacent to them (Hart, Hog, Walsh and others).
<i>Designated Place (Grassy Island Fort)</i>	Level I	Base of the earthworks of the Fort.
<i>Landscapes and Landscape Features</i>	Level I	Cobble beaches at the western tip of Grassy Island and at the connection between Grassy and George Islands, used by the French fishermen to dry the fish caught on the nearby banks.
<i>Archaeological Features</i>	Level I	<p>Excavated and unexcavated archaeological remains of 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century fishing stations.</p> <p>Two known sites representing the period of the French occupation of the area.</p> <p>One small site overlooking the cobble beach at the west end of Grassy Island that may have been a shelter for shore workers.</p> <p>Another site located at the east end of George Island, north of Petitpas Head represents the fishing establishment of the Acadian merchant, Claude Petitpas (active in area 1716–22).</p> <p>The majority of archaeological remains on Grassy Island are those of the New England fishing establishment of the period 1720–44: approximately 19 properties with residences, outbuildings and fish flakes. Associated with this settlement are the remains of three fortifications and a cemetery.</p>
	Level II	<p>A small pre-contact Aboriginal site located on the bank overlooking the cobble beach at the west end of Grassy Island, likely a seasonal camp.</p> <p>Unexcavated archaeological remains relating to post-1745 period exist in a number of places throughout the designated place, primarily along the north shore of George Island.</p>
<i>Artifact Collection</i>	Level I	<p>Approximately 100,000 artifacts, nearly all of which (more than 95%) relate to the era of the New England fishery.</p> <p>Includes ceramics, glass, bone, building hardware, personal belongings, armament and fishing supplies.</p> <p>Three items that can be directly associated with French use of the area in the 17th century.</p>
	Level II	<p>Nine pre-contact Aboriginal artifacts.</p> <p>Approximately 100 artifacts relating to the occupation of the site following 1745.</p>

APPENDIX 4

Summary of Commemorative Integrity Evaluation Conclusions

This is a summary of key aspects of a *Commemorative Integrity Evaluation* conducted at Canso Islands and Grassy Island Fort NHSC in August 2003. The extent to which the objectives in the CIS or other direction from CRM Policy are being met are indicated with the Red/Yellow/Green rating scale.

- Green** Good, effective, or not currently impaired. Any deficiencies are not a threat to the commemorative integrity of the site.
- Yellow** Fair, acceptable, or minor to moderate impairment or threat. Requires improvement.
- Red** Poor, ineffective, seriously impaired or a significant attribute missing.

Resource Condition		
Resource	Rating	Comments
<i>Archaeological Features</i>	Yellow	The cemetery on Grassy Island is subject to erosion. Control is not practical. Erosion is addressed by monitoring, recording and salvage.
	Yellow	Archaeological features associated with Grassy Island Fort NHSC.
	Green	Vegetation is addressed by selective control.
<i>Communications Program</i>	Yellow	The French period (16 th and 17 th centuries) is under-represented.
	Green	The 18 th century history of the sites is well communicated.
<i>Objects</i>	Green	Some objects are used in exhibits at the visitor reception centre. The rest are in secure storage in a facility in Halifax.
<i>Designated Place</i>	Green	In the case of both Canso Islands NHSC and Grassy Island Fort NHSC, the designated place rated well.
<i>Landscape Features</i>	Green	Landscape features related to the reasons for designation for both sites rated well.