Kitwanga Fort
National Historic Site
of Canada

Management Plan
Ta’awdzep
Kitwanga Fort
National Historic Sites
of Canada

Management Plan

May 2005
Canada's national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas represent the soul of our country. They are a central part of who we are and what we are. They are places of beauty and wonder and heritage. Each tells its own story. Together, they connect Canadians to our roots, to our future and to each other.

We see a future in which each of the national historic sites of Canada, whether federally owned or not, enjoys sound commemorative health, and in which our system of sites evolves as our country evolves. Our national historic sites will be places for all Canadians to experience and learn from. They will help our communities to be vibrant and creative, and contribute to our efforts to revitalize Canada’s cities. Together, we will hold these places in trust for this and future generations, while ensuring they contribute to Canada’s sustainable economy and environmental health.

Our vision is also for each of Canada’s unique terrestrial and marine regions to be represented by at least one national park or national marine conservation area, for all national parks to be in sound ecological health, for all NMCAs to promote the ecologically sustainable use of our marine resources in a way that harmonizes conservation practices with human activities, and for both national parks and NMCAs to be places for all Canadians to experience and enjoy.

These principles form the foundation of the new management plan for Fort Kitwanga National Historic Site of Canada. May I offer my appreciation to the vast range of thoughtful Canadians who helped develop this plan. I am especially grateful to our very dedicated team from Parks Canada and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated such good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In that same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Fort Kitwanga National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

Stéphane Dion
Minister of the Environment
RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan has been recommended for approval by:

Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada

Ernie Gladstone
Field Unit Superintendent
Gwai Haanas, Parks Canada
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada preserves Battle Hill (T’a’awdzep) and adjacent lands that served as a defensive fortification of the Gitwangak First Nation during the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Gitwangak oral history, the defensive fortifications were constructed by the legendary warrior chief Nekt. The battle hill fortification contained five cedar-planked longhouses, constructed on the summit of a hill and enclosed by a palisade. Longhouse structures were built atop deep pits, providing hiding places and escape routes in the event of attack. Archaeological research suggests that the site was occupied for at least a century when, around 1835, it was burned and abandoned. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended Kitwanga Fort for designation as a national historic site in 1971. The Minister acted on these recommendations, designating Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada the very same year. The designation was expanded in 1981 to recognize the national historic significance of the Gitwangak Totem poles that are, themselves, a record of Battle Hill and the history of the Gitwangak First Nation.

Commemorative Intent

Commemorative intent speaks to what is nationally significant about a national historic site. Kitwanga Fort was designated a national historic site to commemorate the significance of the presence of an eighteenth century Gitwangak hill top fort (T’a’awdzep) and, for the site’s association with legends which recall the epic battles of the warrior Nekt who fought to gain control of the network of lucrative trading trails from the Nass to the Kitimat Rivers.

Current Situation

Following the site’s designation in 1971, extensive archaeological research was conducted during the mid and late 1970s. This research enabled Parks Canada to establish a thorough record of the cultural resources and natural features of the site. Building upon this research, the site’s first management plan was prepared and approved in 1981, charting a broad vision to protect the site’s cultural resources and to establish heritage presentation media and visitor services commensurate with the site’s remote location. Following the development of the plan, Parks Canada embarked on initiatives to protect the site’s in situ resources (resources located in their original position) and to provide a moderate level of on-site services to visitors, including self interpretive displays, staircases to and from Battle Hill, parking, and waste receptacles.

This, the site’s second management plan, provided Parks Canada, the Gitwangak First Nation and members of the public the opportunity to review and subsequently renew focus to the resource protection, heritage presentation and visitor service needs at the site. Accordingly, the management plan contains proposed actions that seek to ensure that the site’s cultural resources are adequately protected and appropriately presented. More specifically, the plan provides direction
for the inventory, evaluation, monitoring and conservation of cultural and natural resources. In addition, the management plan seeks to advance the site’s visitor experience, through the renewal of on-site heritage presentation media, the development of outreach programming, and enhanced awareness of the national historic site through regional tourism and marketing initiatives.

As managers of the national historic site, Parks Canada will work in consultation with the Gitwangak First Nation to ensure the protection of the site’s cultural resources and the effective presentation of the site’s messages of national significance. All strategic goals, management objectives and actions outlined in this management plan are in keeping with the strategic goals, operational policies, and management priorities of the Parks Canada Agency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This revised management plan for Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada establishes the long-range direction for the historic site, and has been prepared in the context of Parks Canada’s current policy and program direction. This plan has been developed to ensure commemorative integrity of this national historic site, as well as responding to operational and business planning needs for the site.

Public involvement is the cornerstone of Parks Canada’s policy, planning and management practices. Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada is fortunate to have benefited from the input and assistance of the Gitwangak First Nation, residents of the community of Kitwanga and other interested stakeholders from the northwest region of British Columbia.

This management plan was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of Parks Canada staff from the Gwaii Haanas Field Unit and Western Canada Service Centre, including Ernie Gladstone, Maggie Stronge, Heather Dudoward, Marvin Pearson, Dennis Madsen, Scott Parker, Lyle Dick, Alain Comeau, Daryl Fedje, Alice Gavin, Steve Oates and Nicholas Irving. The contributions of the Chiefs, Councillors and Gitwangak First Nation community in supporting the Parks Canada team in this endeavour are greatly appreciated.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) recommended the designation of Kitwanga Fort as a site of national historic significance in 1971. This designation noted the site’s history as a prominent fortified site (Ta’awdzep) as well as its association to renowned totem poles in the First Nations village of Kitwanga. Acting on the HSMBC’s advice, and a private landowner’s offer to sell the land to the Federal Government, the Minister acted promptly, establishing Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada the very same year.

Subsequent to the site’s designation, Dr. George MacDonald (formerly with the Canadian Museum of Civilization) supervised an extensive archaeological research program in the late 1970’s, while companion ethnographic research projects were carried out with Elders of the Gitwangak Nation. This field research established an extensive knowledge base about the fortified village and related sites, and the associated history of the Gitwangak people who lived at the site.

Building upon this research, Parks Canada staff prepared a detailed management plan in 1981 to provide direction for the protection and commemoration of the site’s cultural resources. Central to the plan was the recognized need to protect the physical features and in situ resources of battle hill. The plan also contained proposals to remove and, if necessary, reverse the impacts of any/all contemporary intrusions on site. The plan proposed the reconstruction of built features of the hill top fort. These proposals were subsequently deemed to be inappropriate as reconstruction posed a direct threat to the site’s remaining in situ resources and was no longer viewed as the best means of commemorating its historic significance. This, the site’s second management plan provides strategic direction to guide the on-going conservation and presentation needs of the site.

1.2 Site Location and Geographical Context

Kitwanga Fort NHSC is located adjacent to the Kitwanga River, about five kilometres north of the village of Kitwanga (Gitwangak), now the principal community of the Gitwangak First Nation. The community is located on the Skeena River approximately 80 kilometres north-east of Terrace and about 160 kilometres east of Prince Rupert.

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The 7.3-hectare site consists of a steep-sided mound, known as “battle hill” on which the fortified village of Ta’awdzep was constructed, and adjacent lands on which cultural resources directly connected to the occupation of the fortified site have been identified. The hill, the most visible cultural resource, is oval-shaped with a flat top, heights ranging from 15-20 metres from the foot of the hill to the summit plateau. Ta’awdzep was ideally located for defensive purposes, as it was close to fresh water from the Kitwanga River and it possessed excellent van-
tages of the Skeena valley to the north and south. The site was also strategically located immediately adjacent to the Kitwankul Trail, also known as the “grease trail” for its role as a trade and transportation route for oolichan grease and other important foodstuffs for many First Nations in northern British Columbia.

1.3 Historical Context

According to Gitwangak oral history, the warrior chief Nekt built Ta’awdzep. Nekt’s mother had been a high-ranking Gitksan woman who had been captured by the Haida and married to a Haida Chief. Following the birth of her third son, Nekt’s mother beheaded her Haida husband and fled to the mainland with her son, settling in the Skeena region. Nekt was raised among the Gitksan and upon reaching adulthood, joined several families of Gitwangak descendance to settle in the small village named Gungaak (raven), several kilometres from where the fort would later be established. Adorned with his distinctive slate and bearskin armour and “strike-only-once club”, Nekt established a reputation as a fierce warrior, raiding settlements along the Skeena River and the Pacific coast, eventually constructing Ta’awdzep as a defensive stronghold. Nekt and the other Gitwangak members continued to live in the principal village site of Gungaak, retreating to the protection of the fort’s palisades when the threat warranted doing so.

Archaeological research suggests that the fort originates to the early 1700s and that it was used for approximately one hundred years before it was burned and abandoned during a raid in 1835. In its day the fortified village contained five cedar plank longhouses, constructed on the top of the hill and enclosed by a palisade. The houses were built on deep pits providing hiding places and escape routes in the event of attack. Spiked logs were suspended around the perimeter of the fort, to be released upon approaching warriors as they attempted to ascend the hill’s lower slope.

The historical importance of the fortified village came to the awareness of western researchers through the work of ethnographers who interviewed Gitwangak Elders between the 1920s and the 1970s. Through these collaborations, stories emerged of the legendary warrior chief Nekt, and the history and significance of the fortified village site. Subsequent to the loss of the Ta’awdzep, the residents of Gungaak established a settlement at the site of the present village of Kitwanga, along the banks of the Skeena River. Gitwangak chiefs erected a series of poles to commemorate their Gitwangak ancestors and history. Several of these poles document stories associated with Nekt and the history of Ta’awdzep and Gungaak.

1.4 Parks Canada and the Gitwangak First Nation

Parks Canada respects the significance of the site to the Gitwangak. As property owner and manager, Parks Canada recognizes the importance of working in close association with the Gitwangak to ensure that any, and all, resource protection activities, heritage presentation initiatives and site maintenance projects are respectful of the Gitwangak people and their history.

1.5 Legislative and Policy Basis for National Historic Site Planning

National historic sites are designated by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and are subject to national legislation governing their protection and management. 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 site’s 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 site. This management plan presents the direction that will guide Parks Canada and its partners in the protection, presentation and management of Kitwanga Fort and its associated resources in order to ensure the commemorative integrity of this national historic site.

Historic Sites and Monuments Act

The Historic Sites and Monuments Act provides the Minister responsible for Parks Canada the legislated mandate to designate “historic places,” or to bring them into being. Such designations are usually made on the recom-
to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites, persons and events of national significance.

**Canada National Parks Act**

Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada is legally considered a “national historic site” as referred to under section 42 of the Canada National Parks Act (2000), formerly Part II of the National Parks Act (1967). The new Act provides for setting aside federal lands to commemorate an event of national importance, or to preserve a 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 Park Wildlife and Domestic Animals Regulations apply to these sites.

**Parks Canada Agency Act**

Under the Parks Canada Agency Act (1998), Parks Canada has a mandated responsibility for ensuring the commemorative integrity of national historic sites. This Act requires that every national historic site administered by the Agency prepare a management plan, to be tabled in Parliament, and that the plan be reviewed every subsequent 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 National Historic Sites Policy and Cultural Resource Management Policy (detailed below).

**National Historic Sites Policy**

Canada’s system of national historic sites preserve and present 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, 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**

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 their protection, maintenance, appreciation or use. 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 affect them. The five principles of cultural resource management (value, public benefit, understanding, respect, and integrity) are not mutually exclusive; rather they work most effectively when considered collectively. Cultural resource management is integral to the successful management of the national historic site, and should be practiced by Parks Canada staff and partners in all cooperative or shared management activities.

1.6 **Management Planning and Public Consultation**

Throughout the management plan review, the planning team has sought to provide opportunities for the Gitwangak First Nation, concerned individuals, local citizens’ groups, non-government organizations and representatives from all levels of government to share their concerns and ideas. Community meetings and open houses have been conducted throughout the management plan review in Kitwanga and Terrace, BC. Further, the planning team has prepared three newsletters at key stages of the management plan review: initiation of the plan review, the development of management proposals, and the review of the draft plan. Newsletters were circulated to all residents within the Kitwanga vicinity, interested stakeholders outside the local area, and to local organizations in the communities of Terrace and Smithers.

Parks Canada recognizes the inherent values of working with, and responding to, the ideas and concerns shared by all Canadians. This management plan illustrates our ongoing commitment to Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site as well and its role in the system of national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas. Parks Canada staff recognizes that effective communication is an on-going process. Accordingly, staff will continue to work with the Gitwangak Band Council and Kitwanga community residents to ensure that the
2.0 A PLACE OF NATIONAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Importance of the Site in the National Historic Site System

Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada is part of a family of over 900 sites nation-wide, of which Parks Canada administers 153 and has contributed to many more through cost-sharing agreements. The stewardship of these valuable historic resources is shared, as these places are variously owned and operated by federal, provincial and municipal governments, by businesses and by private citizens. Each site has had a nationally significant impact on Canadian history or illustrates a nationally important aspect of the history of Canada. National historic sites exemplify 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 national identity, an inheritance of all Canadians recognized under an act of Parliament.

2.2 Parks Canada’s Commitment to Commemorative Integrity

The concept of commemorative integrity was introduced in the 1990 State of the Parks Report, as a framework for evaluating the health of national historic sites. To help understand the term it is useful to look at the two words “commemorative” and “integrity”. Commemorative refers to the reasons for which the site was recognized as being of national historic significance. Integrity refers to wholeness. Commemorative integrity reflects the realization of the commemorative intent of the site and ensures that the reasons for designation are respected in any, and all, actions associated with the site. A site is said to possess commemorative integrity when the following are achieved:

- the resources directly related to the reasons for designation as a national historic site are not impaired or under threat;
- the reasons for designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public; and
- the site’s heritage values (including those not related to designation as a national historic site) are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

2.3 Statement of Commemorative Intent

Each site’s national historic significance is articulated in a Statement of Commemorative Intent. These statements expressly state what is recognized as being of historic significance based upon minutes and the various recommendations made by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) to the Minister. In the case of Kitwanga Fort, the HSMBC recommended the designation of the site in 1971, prompting the acquisition of the property upon which the fortified village (Ta’awdzep) T. Poworoznik, Parks Canada

In 1985 and 1989, the HSMBC approved plaque texts that detail the historic significance of Kitwanga Fort and the Totem Poles of Gitwangak (See Appendix A for complete plaque
Kitwanga Fort was designated a national historic site in 1971 because of:

- the presence of an eighteenth century Gitwangak hill top fort (Ta’awdzep); and
- the association with legends which recall the epic battles of the warrior Nekt who fought to gain control of the network of lucrative trading trails from the Nass to the Kitimat Rivers.

2.4 Link to the Commemorative Integrity Statement

A Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS) is a detailed elaboration of what is meant by commemorative integrity for a particular national historic site. The CIS is developed around the identification of the site’s commemorative values, reflecting both the physical (tangible) and/or symbolic (intangible) attributes. The CIS enables Parks Canada to specify:

- the national significance of the site, as expressed in the Statement of Commemorative Intent;
- the cultural resources of the site that are integral to the site’s designation (Level I resources) and the appropriate physical condition sought for their care and presentation;
- the nationally significant messages that are to be communicated to the public; and how to best evaluate the effectiveness of their communication; and
- the site’s Level II cultural resources (i.e. values not directly related to the national historic significance of the site), other heritage values, and associated level II messages.

Kitwanga Fort’s CIS was prepared and approved in 2000. Parks Canada staff and Hereditary Chiefs and Councilors from the Gitwangak Band Council convened a CIS workshop to discuss the history of the battle hill site (Ta’awdzep) and the Gitwangak Poles, Gitwangak oral history, and other elements surrounding the commemoration, protection and presentation of the site. The CIS document developed subsequent to these meetings provides the most definitive direction to the cultural and historical values of the site. It underscores all management directions included in this management plan.

2.5 Summary of the Commemorative Integrity Statement

The following summary of the Kitwanga Fort CIS describes the key resources and values integral to the site’s commemoration, with specific attention paid to the three elements of commemorative integrity: resource protection, heritage presentation and other heritage values.

2.5.1 Resource Protection

Parks Canada defines a cultural resource as a human work or place that gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning. The term cultural resource applies to a wide range of resources including cultural landscapes, landscape features, archaeological sites, built structures, cultural artefacts and historical records. Though all cultural resources are valued, distinctions are made between two classes of cultural resource. **Level I** cultural resources are those that are directly associated to the reasons for the site’s designation and that specifically belong to the site. These resources are valued for both physical and associative attributes, together forming the basis of their historic value. Resources categorized as **Level II** are not directly associated to the commemorative intent of the site but may have value for their association to the historical period, geographic region and/or associated events. Level II resources are specifically addressed by the third element of commemorative integrity: **Other Heritage Values**.

**Designated Place (Level I Cultural Resource)**

Designated place refers to the place recognized by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, as found within the recommendations submitted by the HSMBC with respect to the “marking or commemoration of historic places.” The Historic Sites and Monuments Act defines **historic place** as “a site, building or other place of national historic interest or significance, and includes buildings or structures that are of national interest by reasons of age or architectural design.” For reasons of clarity, Parks Canada uses the term “designated place” to signify the “historic place.”
Figure 2: Designated Place
The approved HSMBC recommendations of 1971 and 1981 provide the basis for the delineation of the designated place. Accordingly, the designated place is recognized as the area that was once encompassed by the fortified village (Ta’awdzep), and other natural and cultural resources in the immediate vicinity directly associated with the history of its use and occupation as a fortified village. These include the cultural resources of Kitwanga Fort, including the physical remains of former longhouses, the palisade and defensive works on the summit of the hill; the hill itself, a natural feature adapted for use as a defensive work through infill and planting; and the “puberty pits”, food cache pits and other in situ archaeological values in the immediate vicinity that relate directly to the fortified village’s period of occupation. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the approximate boundaries of the designated place.

Collectively, the natural and built features of the designated place and its views comprise a significant cultural landscape. Battle Hill itself, cleared of vegetation as it would have been in the 18th and 19th centuries, remains a commanding feature. The undeveloped character of the hill and the surrounding lands enhance the sense of place, maintaining the visual landscape as it appeared during its period of occupation.

The physical and associative values of the designated place include:

- the site provides an example of a fortified village whose natural and cultural features contributed to a remarkable spirit of place;
- the site’s direct association to the Kitwanga River and the former Kitwankul Trail that ran beside it, connecting the history of the stories of Nekt and his epic battles to control trade along the Skeena and Nass Rivers; and
- the site possesses extensive evidence of past human history, including the archaeological and cultural resources of the fortified site and the oral traditions that document the legends and historical associations of Nekt and the Gitwangak people as they relate to this place.

**In Situ Archaeological Resources (Level I Cultural Resource)**

Extensive archaeological work carried out during the 1970s identified a considerable number of surviving in situ archaeological resources. Field research staff combined the physical evidence of the site’s archaeological resources with an analysis of Gitwangak oral history to produce a series of reports on the history of the site during the period of occupation. The Level 1 archaeological resources are defining features of the site; their physical and associative values include:

- the structural remains of the former longhouses, including evidence of their rectangular form, location and orientation on the hill’s summit plateau, and sub-surface pits for food storage and for escape routes in the event of attack;
- the remains of the former hill-top fortification, which provides evidence of the size of the community that found refuge in the fortified village and its social organization;
- the fact that this archaeological site corroborates the oral tradition- two different, yet complementary lines of knowledge converge at this site;

**Moveable Cultural Resources (Level I Cultural Resources)**

Level I moveable cultural resources include archaeological materials that were collected through fieldwork during the 1970s. The collection includes an assortment of archaeological field notes, photographs and slides of the excavations and a number of associated artifacts. These resources have been catalogued and are safely housed in Parks Canada archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Moveable cultural resources are valued for their direct association to the history of the site during the commemorated period: as a defensive stronghold and for its role in regional trade. Further, the resources provide information on the occupation and evolution of the site.

**Oral History Recordings (Level I Cultural Resources)**

Extensive ethnographic research was conducted within the Skeena and Nass River regions of Northwestern British Columbia during the early part of the 20th century. Marius Barbeau and William Beynon, two key researchers during this period, worked closely with local Elders to document their stories and key elements of the region’s history. A second series of recordings was developed by George MacDonald and his research team in the 1970s in connection with efforts to have the site recognized by the HSMBC.

The value of the oral history recordings lies in their documentation of the history of the fort site during its period
of occupation, and as a direct link between the history of the fort and the cultural traditions of the Gitwangak. In this regard, the original recordings are regarded as an irreplaceable cultural resource.

**Gitwangak Poles (Level I Cultural Resources)**

Between 1840 and 1942, a series of monumental poles were carved and erected within the present village of Kitwanga. Though the poles were never carved nor situated at Ta’awdzep or Gungaak village sites, they mark historical events, people and key elements of Gitwangak oral history. The Gitwangak poles were added to the site’s commemoration in 1981, though they remain the sole property of the Gitwangak First Nation.

The nationally significant values of the Gitwangak Poles relate to their documentation of efforts by the Gitwangak people to commemorate the memory of their ancestors, and specifically Nekt and the history of Ta’awdzep, through the stories conveyed in their symbolic forms. Most of the key events in Nekt’s life are portrayed on the poles, such as his acquisition of his grizzly-bear suit of armour, his war club “strike-only-once”, his flying frog helmet, the thunderbird crest he captured from Kitimat Village, the trap door to Ta’awdzep, and stories of his enemies.

There are two Level I messages associated with the site’s designation. The site is recognized for:

- The presence of an eighteenth century Gitwangak hill top fort (Ta’awdzep).
- The association with legends which recall the epic battles of the warrior Nekt who fought to gain control of the network of lucrative trading trails from the Nass to the Kitimat Rivers.

**2.5.2 Heritage Presentation - Nationally Significant Messages**

The second element of commemorative integrity pertains to the effective communication of the messages of national historic significance. Such communication is fundamental to CI as it is critical that all site visitors, whether visiting in person or by way of off-site media, appreciate the reasons for which the site was designated. The nationally significant messages flow directly from the Statement of Commemorative Intent (subsection 2.3), recognizing the features and/or events of national significance. Contextual messages serve to provide further detail(s) to these primary messages. Specific to Kitwanga Fort, there

**2.5.3 Other Heritage Values**

Beyond the Level I values associated to the site, there are a number of Level II resources that are significant and important, yet not directly related to the reasons for the site’s designation. These heritage values include a number of Level II cultural resources and complementary messages.

**Level II Cultural Resources**

The site’s cultural resource collection includes a number of cultural artefacts that date to periods following the site’s construction and habitation during the 18th and early 19th centuries. These resources include a Gitwangak Owl Headdress, circa. 1880 (on loan to Museum of Northern British Columbia) and a number of cultural objects and artefacts collected by the Canadian Museum of Civilization relating to the history of the Gitwangak following.
their occupation of the fort. These resources are detailed in Joanne MacDonald’s book *Gitwangak Village Life: A Museum Collection* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1984).

Though little, if any, physical evidence remains, the Kitwankul Trail is itself seen as an important cultural resource for its role as a trade and transportation link between the coastal and interior regions. The trail, which formerly followed the banks of the Kitwanga River beside the site, is closely connected to the stories of Nekt and his efforts to control the First Nations along this route.

**Level II Messages**

There are a number of important secondary messages associated with the site, but unrelated to the site’s reasons for commemoration. The Level II, or complementary messages, focus attention on the role that Gitwangak Elders played in preserving the memory of the site through oral tradition. Level II messages also draw attention to the cultural significance of the Gitwangak poles and their association to the monumental poles at Kitwankul National Historic Site of Canada. Messages also detail the history of the Gitwangak following their departure from the fortified village site, accounting the sweeping changes that resulted through disease epidemics and with the arrival of European settlers to the region. Finally, level II messages draw attention to the site’s ties to others within the Parks Canada family of national historic sites devoted to the commemoration of the history of Aboriginal peoples.
3.0 CURRENT CONTEXT AND FUTURE DIRECTION

3.1 Vision, Strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions

This section outlines the vision and the key strategic goals, objectives and actions that will be taken to enhance Kitwanga Fort NHSC. A vision statement describes the long-term strategic direction for the national historic site, expressing the desired state of the site 15 years into the future. Strategic goals draw recognition to the leading management priorities, as directed by Parks Canada Agency legislation, policies and management guidelines. Objectives describe the desired outcomes for the protection, presentation and management of the national historic site. Actions are seen as the substantive means through which the management objectives, and ultimately, the strategic goals will be met. In sum, the vision, strategic goals, objective and actions proposed by this revised management plan collectively seek:

- to ensure the commemorative integrity of the site;
- to enhance understanding and appreciation of the site’s history and national significance;
- to manage the site while respecting its natural resources and surroundings; and
- to improve partnerships and regional collaborations.

3.2 Vision for the Site

The following vision statement describes what the national historic site will be like in 15 years.

In the next fifteen years, the heritage values and resources for which Kitwanga Fort was designated will have been maintained and enhanced. All of the nationally significant resources on-site, and the historic objects and information stored in other locations, will be suitably protected and presented. The history of Ta’awdzep will be presented in an engaging and respectful manner. Site visitors will leave with an enhanced appreciation for the significance of Ta’awdzep and the important roles that it played during its period of occupation during the 18th and 19th centuries. The history of Ta’awdzep will be effectively communicated to visitors: those who visit the site first-hand as well as those who experience the site through the Parks Canada Agency Internet website or through other means of off-site programming. The national historic site will be a source of pride to the Gitwangak First Nation as well as non-First Nations members of the local community of Kitwanga.

3.3 Commemorative Integrity

Ensuring the commemorative integrity of Kitwanga Fort will be accomplished through the protection of the site’s cultural resources of national historic significance, the communication of the messages of national historic significance, the protection and presentation of level II heritage values, and through care and respect in all decisions that affect the site.

3.3.1 Resource Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ensure that the resources that symbolize or represent the national historic significance of Kitwanga Fort are not impaired or under threat.</td>
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</table>
The first element of commemorative integrity requires that Parks Canada ensure that the site’s Level I cultural resources are not impaired or under threat. In 2002, Parks Canada conducted an evaluation of the state of commemorative integrity at the site for corporate monitoring and reporting purposes, concluding that the site’s cultural resources were given an overall “fair” rating. The objectives and actions for the ongoing protection of the site’s resources of national significance are seen as the means of ensuring and enhancing the protection of the designated place, in situ archaeological resources, movable cultural resources, oral history recordings, and the Gitwangak Poles.

**Designated Place**

The designated place remains in an undeveloped state, enabling visitors to experience the site in its natural setting. The lone contemporary feature, a staircase on the western slope of Battle Hill, serves to minimize erosion caused by foot traffic up and down the steep slopes. A small viewing platform at the top of the staircase offers excellent views of the site, the Kitwanga River and the Skeena River Valley to the north and south of the site. Vegetation on the slopes of battle hill and the lowlands immediately below the slope is periodically thinned to maintain the character of the historical landscape. Vegetation has been allowed to re-establish on the terraces adjacent to the Kitwanga River, stabilizing the terraces from fluvial erosion and concealing the location of old puberty pits, food caches and in situ archaeological resources.

Of importance to maintaining the designated place is the encouragement of compatible land uses on the property to the south of the site. Further, on-going assessment and protection is required to ensure that the natural and cultural resources of the designated place are suitably protected in perpetuity.

**Objectives**

- to maintain, in an unimpaired state, the open character of the historical landscape surrounding Battle Hill as well as the viewscapes to and from the summit of Battle Hill;
- to ensure that the natural and cultural resources of the designated place are not lost, impaired or threatened by natural processes, most notably the effects of erosion or through human actions within or outside the site; and
- to ensure all decisions concerning the protection and maintenance of the designated place are based upon adequate and sound information and are made in accordance with the principles and practices of the CRM policy.

**Action**

- develop and implement a monitoring program to ensure protection of the cultural landscape, most notably viewscapes and the open character of the designated place.

**In Situ Archaeological Resources**

In situ archaeological resources are dispersed around the administered site, with the majority located within the designated place: on the summit of Battle Hill and on the terraces that surround the base of the hill. The site’s in situ archaeological resources are reported as being largely stable and, overall, in “fair” condition as there have been limited disturbances to the site. Erosion and visitor traffic must be closely monitored and managed to protect subsurface artifacts and the shallow depressions that mark the remains of the palisade, former longhouses, defensive works and food cache pits.

**Objectives**

- to identify and document all in situ archaeological resources;
- to identify any, and all, stressors to the site’s in situ archaeological resources (natural and human induced); and
- to develop a strategy to mitigate the effects of erosion and human induced threats to the protection of the site’s in situ archaeological resources.

**Action**

- develop a full inventory of the site’s in situ archaeological resources, including the locations of all known in situ resources, their depths, the degree of intactness, and what they indicate.

**Moveable Cultural Resources**

The collection of cultural resources dating to the period of occupation is relatively small due to the fact that virtually all of the built structures and associated resources were lost to the fire that marked the end of the fort’s era as a defensive stronghold. Structural remains of the fort and other resources directly associated to the site remain in situ. Of the cultural resources that do exist, the major-
ity were identified through archaeological survey work and excavations conducted in the 1970s and the early 1990s. These resources, housed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization’s archives, include field notes, photographs, and slides of excavation work conducted at the site. Another small collection of artifacts is stored in Parks Canada archives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Objective
- to ensure that all moveable cultural resources associated with the site have been inventoried, evaluated and protected.

Action
- compile an inventory and evaluate the condition of moveable cultural resources located in the Parks Canada and Canadian Museum of Civilization archives.

Oral History Recordings

The oral history recordings, most of which were recorded on reel-to-reel tapes, have yet to be copied and transcribed. A leading priority of this management plan is to see that these recordings are duplicated, transcribed, protected and monitored according to current conservation standards. Such work is required to ensure the protection of the tapes as well as the knowledge they contain for future generations. An on-going objective will be to work with members of the Gitwangak First Nation to more fully integrate elements of Gitwangak oral history into interpretive materials and displays at the site, and off-site interpretive media.

Objective
- to ensure that the oral history recordings are duplicated, transcribed, and are being protected according to accepted conservation standards.

Action
- devise and implement a strategy to duplicate, transcribe, and monitor the condition of the original oral history recordings.

Gitwangak Poles

A cultural resource management issue for the site is the status of the Gitwangak poles. The poles at Kitwanga, owned by families of the Gitwangak First Nation, were added to the designation for Kitwanga Fort in 1981 when they were recognized by the Minister as historical artifacts relating to the national historic site. With this designation, the poles are recognized as level one cultural resources associated with the site. Parks Canada will encourage and support the owners of these nationally significant resources. It is envisioned that during the life of this management plan, Parks Canada may be called upon to provide advice in the development of monitoring regimes to assist in reviewing the physical condition of the poles. The provision of timely advice could help ensure that these resources are not impaired or under threat.

Objective
- to support the Gitwangak First Nation to ensure that the Gitwangak Poles are suitably protected and presented.

Action
- Offer technical advice towards the development of a conservation strategy for the protection of the Gitwangak Poles.

3.3.2 Heritage Presentation

Strategic Goal
To ensure that the reasons for the national significance of Kitwanga Fort and its role in Canadian history are effectively communicated to the public.

The second element of commemorative integrity pertains to the communication of the site’s messages of national historic significance. These messages form the basis of the site’s heritage presentation media, focusing attention to the significance of Battle Hill (Ta’awdzep) and the site’s association with legends that recall the exploits of the warrior Nekt. It is essential that visitors to the site understand not only the individual messages, but should also appreciate the impact of the history of this site on the Skeena-Nass region of Northwestern British Columbia as well as the significance of First Nations peoples in the development of Canada as a nation.

Figure 3: Current Means of Interpretation
Effective communication of messages of national significance also implies that the messages are based on research, knowledge, and awareness and sensitivity to historiography regarding the elements of commemoration. It also suggests that presentation is balanced. This means that various perspectives on the events associated with the site are communicated. Moreover, the individual components of the story should not be treated in isolation, but rather should be integrated into the presentation of the site as a whole.

Interpretive media at Kitwanga Fort NHSC have begun to show the signs of aging. Parks Canada staff recognize the need to renew on-site interpretive media within the next few years to ensure that the historic significance of the site is effectively communicated on an on-going basis. Given the remote location of the site, Parks Canada staff will explore opportunities of expanding the heritage presentation service offer via the site’s internet website, enabling the national significance of the site to be shared to visitors who access the site through the internet. The following objectives and actions seek to address heritage presentation needs in an innovative manner that ensures effective communication of the historic significance of the site.

Objectives

- to ensure that heritage presentation media effectively conveys the reasons for designation;
- to ensure that elements of Gitwangak history are accurately and appropriately presented; and
- to recognize the site’s inclusion in the system of National Historic Sites, National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas administered by the Parks Canada Agency.

Actions

- conduct an assessment of existing on-site and off-site heritage presentation media, with attention to current strengths, weaknesses and emerging heritage presentation programming needs;
- develop a heritage presentation strategy responding to the identified needs for on and off-site heritage presentation programming, including the renewal of the self guided interpretive trail, visitor brochure and Parks Canada website; and
- explore opportunities to more fully commemorate the stories and history associated with the Gitwangak peoples, Ta’awdzep and the Gitwangak Poles.

3.3.3 Other Heritage Values

Strategic Goal

To ensure that Kitwanga Fort’s heritage values (including those not related to designation as a national historic site) are respected by all whose decisions or actions affect the site.

There are a number of Level II cultural resources and messages associated with the site. Though these cultural resources may not possess a direct association to the events and resources for which the site was commemorated, they are recognized as important cultural resources and supporting messages and will be provided a degree of protection and presentation. These other messages serve to draw attention to the site’s association to other national historic sites that recognize the national historic significance of First Nations and aboriginal peoples as well as the site’s inclusion in the system of national historic sites.

Objectives

- to ensure that the Level II cultural resources and their associated values are not lost, impaired, or threatened from human actions and/or natural processes, within or outside of the site;
- to ensure that the management of Level II cultural resources abides to the principles and practices of the Parks Canada Cultural Resource Management Policy; and
- to ensure the effective communication of other messages associated with the site.

Actions

- inventory and evaluate all Level II cultural resources that are stored within Parks Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilization archives; and
- integrate other messages into future on-site and off-site heritage presentation materials, with particular attention to the history and significance of the Kitwankul Trail, the significance of aboriginal peoples in Canadian history and the site’s inclusion in the system of national historic sites that span the nation.
3.4 Protection and Management of Natural Resources

Strategic Goal
To protect the site’s natural resources in accordance with Parks Canada’s commitment to environmental stewardship while ensuring the protection and presentation of the resources and messages of national significance.

Kitwanga Fort’s natural landscape served an important role in the historical use of the site for strategic defensive purposes. Likewise, the natural resources and landscape features form an integral part of the current landscape as a national historic site. As an environmental steward, Parks Canada values these features for their associations to the historic landscape as well as for their role in protecting the natural features of the 7.3-hectare property.

A floristic inventory of the site was conducted in 2002 to survey the site for the occurrence of any listed species at risk and any other rare plants. This inventory also functioned to assess and record all vertebrate sightings, to document occurrences and precise locations of unlisted rare plants and, to investigate the identity and status of a plant species reported to possess intoxicating properties reputedly planted on the site during its occupancy as a fortified village. The field report summary noted that site vegetation was characteristic of a typical early to mid-successional landscape, noting the mix of deciduous and coniferous tree species, open meadow lands, native grasses, and shrub dominated plant communities on the slopes of battle hill. Researchers concluded that the present landscape has retained characteristics of the historical landscape, including a number of native food plant and grass species as well as features of the open landscape that characterized the site. Plant inventory work failed to locate evidence of any of the seven taxa cited as species at risk within the region.

The Floristic Inventory of Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site: Species at Risk, Ethnobotany, and Considerations for Historical Ecosystem Restoration (Burton 2002) has served to advance Parks Canada’s understanding of the natural resource values associated with the site. This field research has also served to identify several additional vegetation management priorities for the ongoing management of the site’s natural resources.

Objective
- to account for natural and cultural resource values including viewscapes and open features characteristic of the historic landscape.

Action
- develop and implement a landscape management plan.

3.5 Visitor Services

Strategic Goal
To provide quality services attuned to the character and location of the site.

The site’s first management plan, developed in 1981, focused visitor service activities to the development of the self-guided interpretive stations, the development of trail systems, and the construction of the two staircases: one leading to and from the parking lot on the upper terrace and the other running up and down the steep slopes of Battle Hill. The issue of on-site interpretation was examined in detail through the 1981 plan development process, concluding that the site’s remote location and seasonal visitation failed to warrant the construction of more extensive visitor services, nor the provision of full time or seasonal staffing. Though administered by Parks Canada, certain operational and maintenance activities (garbage disposal, maintenance, and select projects) have been met by a long-standing contract with the Gitwangak Band Council.

A number of small upgrade and maintenance projects have been completed within the last several years. These include:

- Highway Signage Upgrades: new highway signage has been installed at strategic locations on highway 16 (Prince Rupert-Prince George) and on highway 37 (Stewart-Cassiar);
- Site Signage: a new site sign has been prepared and will be installed in conjunction with the upgrades to the site’s interpretive panels. Property markers have been erected to more clearly identify the boundaries that delineate the administrated property on the north and south sides of the Kitwanga River;
- Interpretive Panels: Repairs have been made to ensure that signage is sufficient for the short-term until new interpretive panels are constructed and installed;
- Stairways: repairs have been made to enhance the structural integrity of the staircases. A resting area/viewing platform has also been constructed part way down the main staircase accessing the lower site. A similar feature will be considered for the Battle Hill staircase to prevent visitors from walking upon the summit plateau of the hill. All staircases will require replacement within the next ten to fifteen years;
• **Battle Hill Trails:** informal trails have been closed and covered with deciduous vegetation in an effort to stop unwanted foot traffic over sensitive areas of the site. Signage directing people to the staircases has also had a positive impact in deterring people from scrambling up/down the slopes of Battle Hill;

• **Vegetation:** the Gitwangak Band was contracted to complete a small vegetation removal project on site. Deciduous vegetation was felled on the west-facing slope immediately below the parking lot to improve views to Battle Hill. The on-going management of site vegetation and viewscapes will need to be addressed.

Visitor services offered at the site are commensurate with the site’s remote location and modest level of on-site visitation. At the present time, on-site visitor services include a series of interpretive panels, walking trails to Battle Hill and the Kitwanga River, and parking facilities. The undeveloped character of the site provides wonderful wildlife viewing opportunities.

Parks Canada recognizes the need to further enhance visitor services in accordance with the site’s character as a self-interpreted day-use site. In addition, there are altogether new opportunities to enhance visitor services accessible through the site’s Internet website. With the emergence of web based educational tools, enhanced audio/video capabilities and interactive media, Kitwanga Fort’s internet website may prove to be one of the most effective means of accessing a broader Canadian and international audience. Parks Canada staff are eager to establish a better understanding of visitor target groups, service expectations and visitor satisfaction with on and off-site services. Visitor surveys and monitoring will be enhanced in the interests of establishing a better understanding of visitor service expectations. Parks Canada’s Visitor Information Program (VIP) will assist in this review.

**Objectives**

- to provide services that respect commemorative integrity and reflect visitor service needs for a remote, self interpreted, site; and
- to provide information and awareness of the site to all visitor market segments.

**Actions**

- conduct an assessment of the physical condition of site infrastructure and develop a strategy for ongoing maintenance;
- complete a visitor assessment survey to identify heritage presentation and visitor service needs for on-site visitors as well as those who access the site through the Parks Canada internet portal; and
- ensure public safety concerns have been considered and addressed.

### 3.6 Site Administration

**Strategic Goal**

To enhance the national historic site’s reputation as an important cultural heritage attraction within the Northwest coast region of British Columbia.

Though Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site is remote and receives limited seasonal visitation, it is an important visitor attraction in this area of British Columbia. Coupled with the growth of First Nations cultural attractions in the area and the natural splendour of the Coast Mountains, the site is positioned to capitalize on increased tourist visitation in the years ahead. The site is one of thirteen national historic sites managed by the Gwaii Haanas Field Unit, many of which commemorate nationally significant elements of First Nations history and culture within the region (SGaang Gwaii, Skedans, T’aanuu, Haina, Kiusta, Yan, Metlakatla Pass, Kitselas Canyon, Kitwancool, and Kitwanga Fort).

Marketing and tourism initiatives will require the examination of site, community, regional, provincial and national scale needs. Principal amongst these is the need to work in partnership with the Gitwangak Band Council to ensure that any Parks Canada marketing initiatives are respectful of, and compatible with, the Gitwangak’s interests in developing independent cultural heritage attractions. To this end, there may be future opportunities to develop marketing plans in concert with the Gitwangak. Parks Canada staff will also consult with tourism sector representatives to identify means of promoting Kitwanga Fort in conjunction with other regional tourist attractions; most notably First Nations sites of tourist interest.

**Objectives**

- to improve awareness of the site and the experience it offers area visitors; and
- to improve Parks Canada’s knowledge about site and area tourist demographics, and about their use of, and satisfaction with, the site.

**Actions**

- enhance exposure of the site through national and field unit marketing strategies;
- review presentation of the site in existing tourism publications and establish a mailing list for contact and information updates; and
- monitor levels of visitation, and visitor satisfaction with, the national historic site.
4.0 ONGOING PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Site Management, Planning and Decision-making

Strategic Goal

To ensure site operations, land-use and planning decisions are made in a timely and fair manner, are consistent with Parks Canada policy in their approach and are arrived at in an open and participatory manner.

Parks Canada is firmly committed to establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with all interested stakeholders. This management plan review has served to provide opportunities to engage a broader stakeholder demographic, including First Nations, regional and provincial levels of government, local citizen’s groups, non-government organizations and interested and concerned individuals in planning and prioritizing management activities for the site. In particular, suggestions from the Gitwangak Band Council and the Kitwanga Community Association have served to identify the key management priorities that form the basis of this management plan.

Given that the site commemorates the history of the Gitwangak peoples, Parks Canada recognizes and appreciates the need to consult with members of the Gitwangak First Nation to ensure that their cultural history is accurately and respectfully commemorated. In some cases, specific stories and/or elements of Gitwangak history will not be publicly featured in site media in respect for the privacy of the immediate family and/or the Gitwangak First Nation as a whole.

The use of western place names was raised as a concern by several members of the Gitwangak First Nation. Members of the First Nation community expressed that they would like to see traditional Gitwangak names and titles used when, and wherever, possible. Parks Canada staff appreciates the importance of this issue to the First Nation and will address this matter with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Objectives

• to ensure that site planning and decision-making is conducted in an open and inclusive manner; and
• to ensure that Gitwangak First Nation’s history associated with the national historic site is accurately and respectfully commemorated.

Actions

• conduct an annual meeting with members of the Gitwangak Band Administration to review site maintenance needs;
• review heritage presentation materials and content with members of the Gitwangak First Nation to ensure its accuracy; and
• explore the possibility of amending the site title to reflect the traditional Gitwangak place name.
5.0 SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan underwent an environmental assessment review in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Process for Policy and Program Proposals Cabinet directive. Screening was conducted early in the review to ensure the environmental effects of plan initiatives were considered before irrevocable decisions were made. This provided an opportunity to adjust the draft plan if required. The potential for management plan proposals generating adverse environmental effects was assessed. Implementation of management plan initiatives will increase the level of cultural resource protection and commemorative integrity at Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada. Proposed key actions are consistent with Parks Canada Policy and the Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada Commemorative Integrity Statement.

There is limited development at the site at the present time (parking lot, stairway, trails, interpretive panels and signs). These will be maintained or replaced as necessary. These activities are not expected to result in any direct loss of habitat or significant loss of habitat function. No new facilities are proposed in the management plan. Consequently the undeveloped character of the majority of the site will be maintained. Portions of the Kitwanga Fort NHS natural ecosystem have been significantly modified from natural conditions. These cultural landscapes and viewscapes are important elements of the designated place at the site. Despite a lengthy history of human use, natural features with significant habitat value are present. The management plan proposes key actions to protect and manage these resources. Species at risk surveys conducted at the site for birds and plants found no species listed by the Committee on Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) or the Conservation Data Centre (CDC). If in the future rare species are discovered at Kitwanga Fort NHSC, management efforts should be undertaken to secure these species.

Site maintenance and visitor use may result in establishment or expansion of non-native plant populations. A plant survey conducted in 2002 identified 38 exotic species on the historic site property. Past vegetation control practices at Battle Hill and other locations at the site are partially responsible for the present weed problems. These considerations should be addressed during landscape management plan development and implementation. Vegetation management and other activities at the historic site have the potential to introduce new exotic species or expand existing populations. Possible sources include transport of plant seeds or vegetative material from use of contaminated building materials, items of personal clothing (boots) or equipment. Viewscape maintenance will trigger the CEAA. Parks Canada will consider the findings of a CEAA screening prior to deciding on a course of action to approve, modify or abandon these activities. The key challenge at Kitwanga Fort NHSC will be to maintain historically accurate open viewscapes without encouraging weed growth.

The potential for cumulative environmental effects is low. Implementation of proposed key actions will not result in alienation of currently undeveloped lands. Levels of visitation are not expected to increase significantly in response to marketing and outreach initiatives. Key actions proposed in the revised management plan are expected to result in a positive cumulative benefit for commemorative integrity, a neutral cumulative benefit for ecological integrity, and a positive net socio-economic benefit. All actions proposed in the management plan are consistent with Parks Canada Policy and federal legislation. Adequate public participation occurred during the management planning review process.

Many proposals described in the management plan are strategic. It is not possible to fully evaluate the environmental effect of these initiatives at this point in time. Individual development projects will undergo environmental assessment screening pursuant to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) once project planning and design are sufficiently well advanced. The Parks Canada Agency is a Responsible Authority under the CEAA. The Agency will not undertake any project prior to preparing an environmental assessment pursuant to the CEAA and deciding on a course of action based on the results of the assessment.

The overall intent of the Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan is to maintain existing uses and facilities, maintain traditional viewscapes that are his-
torically accurate, and to more actively engage the Gitwangak First Nation in aspects of site management. Key actions in this area include contracted site maintenance by the Gitwangak Band Council, oral history documentation, and accurate aboriginal history content for all interpretive messaging. Many key actions focus on relationship building and enhancement between Parks Canada and the Gitwangak First Nation. Increased knowledge and understanding of past and present First Nations activities in the area is expected to result. Some actions may generate employment and economic benefits for local and regional businesses. Positive social impacts are expected for the Gitwangak First Nation from increased involvement with the site, and interpretive materials that more accurately portray their past and present role in the area.
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 Plan Implementation and Accountability

The strategic objectives and actions proposed by this management plan for Kitwanga Fort National Historic Site of Canada will be implemented through the Gwaii Haanas Field Unit’s annual business plan. While the focus of a management plan is to act as a strategic guide with a lifespan of ten to fifteen years (reviewed every five years), the annual business planning process will be used to identify the specific projects to be initiated within the subsequent three-year timeframe. The business plan identifies which actions from the management plan will be realized during the ensuing three-year period, specifying their timing and accounting for all associated costs. Any changes to the three-year forecast are captured by the annual business plan review process.

Implementation of this management plan is the responsibility of the Gwaii Haanas Field Unit Superintendent. The Field Unit Superintendent’s three primary accountabilities are:

- ensuring commemorative integrity;
- improving service to clients; and
- making wise and efficient use of funds.

Achieving the goals, objectives and strategic actions detailed in this management plan will depend on the reallocation of resources within the Field Unit. The Field Unit is aware that it will bear full fiscal responsibility for the implementation of the plan.

6.2 Priorities

Priority actions are identified and presented according to Business Plan service lines in the chart that follows. Emphasis has been placed on those activities expected to...
occur during the first three years (i.e. the next business plan phase), but other activities to be pursued during the span of this management plan have been identified as well. No direct priority has been assigned to activities beyond identifying in which business plan period they will occur. Further prioritizing will occur through Field Unit business planning.

*Planning Periods:
1st Period: Within three years of Plan Approval
2nd Period: Future year priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Plan Service Line</th>
<th>Priority Action</th>
<th>Planning Periods*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Service Line 2: Heritage Resource Protection | Develop and implement a monitoring program to ensure protection of the cultural landscape, most notably viewscapes and the open character of the designated place.  
Develop a full inventory of the site’s in situ archaeological resources, including the locations of all known in situ resources, their depths, the degree of intactness, and what they indicate.  
Compile an inventory and evaluate the condition of moveable cultural resources located in the Parks Canada and Canadian Museum of Civilization archives.  
Devise and implement a strategy to duplicate, transcribe, and monitor the condition of the original oral history recordings.  
Offer technical advice towards the development of a conservation strategy for the protection of the Gitwangak Poles.  
Inventory and evaluate all Level II cultural resources that are stored within Parks Canada and the Canadian Museum of Civilization archives.  
Develop and implement a landscape management plan. | 1st   2nd       |
| Service Line 3: Heritage Presentation | Conduct an assessment of existing on-site and off-site heritage presentation media, with attention to current strengths, weaknesses and emerging heritage presentation programming needs.  
Develop a heritage presentation strategy responding to the identified needs for on and off-site heritage presentation programming, including the renewal of the self guided interpretive trail, visitor brochure and Parks Canada.  
Explore opportunities to more fully commemorate the stories and history associated with the Gitwangak People, Ta’awdzep and the Gitwangak Poles.  
Integrate other messages into future on-site and off-site heritage presentation materials, with particular attention paid to the history and significance of the Kitwankul Trail, the significance of aboriginal peoples in Canadian history and the site’s association to the system of national historic sites that span the nation. | 1st   2nd       |
| Service Line 4: Visitor Services | Conduct an assessment of the physical condition of site infrastructure and develop a strategy for ongoing maintenance.  
Complete a visitor assessment survey to identify heritage presentation and visitor service needs for on-site visitors as well as those who access the site through the Parks Canada internet portal.  
Ensure that all public safety concerns have been considered and addressed. | 1st   2nd       |
| Service Line 7: Mgmt. of Parks Canada | Enhance exposure of the site through national and field unit marketing strategies.  
Review presentation of the site in existing tourism publications and establish a mailing list for contact and information updates.  
Monitor levels of visitation, and visitor satisfaction with, the national historic site.  
Conduct an annual meeting with members of the Gitwangak Band Administration to review site maintenance needs.  
Review heritage presentation materials and content with members of the Gitwangak First Nation to ensure its accuracy.  
Explore the possibility of amending the site title to reflect the traditional Gitwangak place name. | 1st   2nd       |
6.3 Reporting

Progress on the management plan implementation will be communicated through annual reporting on business plan performance and through the State of Protected Heritage Areas Report that is updated every several years. As well, progress will be reported to members of the public through Field Unit newsletters and by way of the site’s internet website. The management plan will also be subject to periodic review, and can be amended to reflect changing Parks Canada Agency and Field Unit priorities. The public will be consulted concerning any major changes.
APPENDIX “A”

HSMBC Approved Plaque Text (1985)

KITWANGA FORT

During the eighteenth century a hill top fort belonging to the Gitwangak tribe occupied this site. Known as Ta’awdzep’ in the local Gitksan language, this fort is rich in legends which recall the epic battles of the warrior Nekt who fought to gain control of the network of lucrative trading trails from the Nass to the Kitimat Rivers. Five clan houses stood within a palisade defended with spiked rolling logs. The fort was abandoned as indefensible once firearms were introduced to the area in 1835. The Gitwangak people then moved to their present village nearby.

HSMBC Approved Plaque Text (1989)

TOTEM POLES OF GITWANGAK

Following their move from Kitwanga Fort to this village about 1835, members of the Frog-Raven (Ganada), Eagle (Laxskik) and Wolf (Laxgibu) clans commemorated their history in a series of carved house poles. The Fireweed (Gisgast) clan joined the village later. Totem poles continued to be erected at potlatches in this village in spite of federal anti-potlach laws, 1874-1954. Although the remaining poles have been moved several times to protect them from floods, they represent the oldest collection to be found in their original village context anywhere in British Columbia.
APPENDIX “B”

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CEAA

CEAA stands for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (1995), which sets out responsibilities and procedures for the environmental assessment of projects involving the federal government. The Act ensures environmental effects of projects receive careful consideration before the responsible authority takes action.

Commemoration

Ministerial recognition of the national significance of specific events and places by acquisition or by agreement, or by another means deemed appropriate within the Minister’s authority for purposes of protecting and presenting heritage places and resources, erection of a plaque or monument.

Commemorative Integrity Statement

The Commemorative Integrity Statement (CIS) is a document which describes the reasons for a site’s national historic significance. In essence, the CIS provides a benchmark for planning, managing, reporting and initiating remedial projects in national historic sites. The CIS is approved by the Director General of the National Historic Sites Directorate.

Commemorative Intent

Commemorative intent refers to the reasons for a site’s designation as a national historic site, as determined by the ministerially-approved recommendations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Conservation

Conservation represents a process that encompasses activities that are aimed at safeguarding a cultural resource to retain its historic value and extend its physical life. Conservation principles and treatments can be placed on a continuum that runs from low to high intervention; that is, from maintenance activities to modification of a cultural resource.

COSEWIC

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. COSEWIC produces the official list of Canadian endangered species. The committee tracks many Phyla including vertebrate and invertebrate animals, vascular and non-vascular plants.

Cultural Landscape

A cultural landscape is any geographic area that has been modified, influenced, or given special cultural meaning by people.

Cultural Resource

A cultural resource is a human work or a place which gives evidence of human activity or has spiritual or cultural meaning, and which as been determined to have historic value.

Cultural Resource Management

Cultural Resource Management encompasses practices for the conservation and presentation of cultural resources, founded on principles and carried out in practice that integrates professional, technical, and administrative activities so that the historic value of cultural resources is taken into account in actions that might affect them. For Parks Canada, cultural resource management encompasses the presentation and use, as well as the conservation of cultural resources.

Designated Place

Refers to the place designated by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Information on what constitutes the designated place for a particular historic site is drawn from the minutes of the HSMBC.

Guiding Principles and Operating Policies

Parks Canada’s Guiding Principles and Operational Policies is a document that gives direction to both present programs and future initiatives of Parks Canada. The document explains how the federal government, within the context of Parliamentary approvals, carries out its national programs of natural and cultural heritage recognition and protection as assigned to the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Heritage Tourism

An immersion in the natural history, human heritage, the arts and philosophy, and the institutions of another region or country that creates understanding, awareness and support for the nation’s heritage.
Level I Cultural Resource

A Level I cultural resource is a designation given to a cultural resource which conveys national historic significance.

Level II Cultural Resource

A Level II cultural resource is a designation given to a cultural resource that is not of national historic significance, but still has historic value.

National Historic Site of Canada

Any place declared to be of national historic significance by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Viewscape

Is a line-of-sight from a specific location to a landscape or a portion of it. A viewshed refers to a sequence of views or panorama from a given vantage point.