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Newsletter No.3

PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN THE PREPARATION OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GRAND-PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK JANUARY, 1984

- Decisions and Actions
- Summary of Public Comments



March, 1984

PUBLIC CONSULTATION
IN THE PREPARATION OF A
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
GRAND-PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

In early January, 1984, as a step in preparing a Management Plan for Grand-Pré National Historic Park, Parks Canada distributed newsletter No. 2 describing the proposed concept for the park and asked for public comments. Four separate open houses were held in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick at the end of January, 1984 to discuss the proposals with the public.

The purpose of this newsletter No. 3 is to:

- A) Report on the decisions and actions Parks Canada was able to take immediately in response to public comments.
- B) Provide a summary of public comments on the proposed concept as outlined in newsletter No. 2.
- C) Provide a summary of public comments on other issues related to the operation of the park.

A) DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

1. All public comments on the proposed concept outlined in newsletter No. 2 will be carefully studied and, where possible, incorporated into the final Management Plan to be recommended for the Minister's approval.
2. There may be a need for further public consultation if significant changes to the proposed concept are recommended by the planning team as a result of public comments.
3. Parks Canada will finalize the Management Plan as soon as possible and then seek the Minister's approval so that more detailed planning can commence. Thereafter, funds will be sought for plan implementation via the Cabinet Committee on Social Development.

4. The recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, outlined in newsletter No. 2, concerning additional commemoration of the New England Planters elsewhere in the Grand-Pré area will be acted upon. A site selection study has been launched and public consultation in the local area will be undertaken shortly including such communities as Hortonville, Grand-Pré, Wolfville, Port Williams, Starr's Point and Kentville. This consultation will be held during the months of March, April and May, 1984.

5. Parks Canada will honour the contract entered into with la Société Nationale l'Assomption in 1956 when the memorial church and property were purchased for National Historic Park purposes. In order to help achieve this, the following actions/decisions are highlighted:
 - the park Management Plan will reflect the approved themes and objectives related to Acadian history as outlined in newsletter No. 2;
 - all park guides will be bilingual by the 1985 visitor season, and all visitors will continue to be served in the official language of their choice;
 - clause (2) of the 1956 contract, recognizing the purpose of the park, will be publicly displayed at Grand-Pré National Historic Park;
 - interim changes to the exhibits in the memorial church are under active consideration, consistent with the future development for Grand-Pré National Historic Park and with plans for commemoration of the New England Planters elsewhere in the local area.

6. Steps are being taken to ensure the quality of park guide interpretation service at Grand-Pré National Historic Park including extended guide training and orientation in cooperation with outside Acadian expertise.

7. Acadian groups have expressed a desire to become more directly involved in the park by means of a cooperating association. The Regional Director of Parks Canada has extended an invitation to meet with

La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse to pursue this suggestion and its relation to the sales outlet and special events in the park.

8. *As stated in the proposed concept, the gift shop will become an interpretive sales outlet serving and supporting park themes and objectives. The current concession agreement expires in October, 1984. A successful submission for operation of the sales outlet in 1985 and future years, whether from the private sector or from a non-profit group, must demonstrate the intention and capability to support park themes and objectives related to the Acadian history of the park.*
9. *For the 1984 season, steps are being taken in the context of the current concession agreement, to make items sold in the gift shop more relevant to the purpose and character of the park.*
10. *The proposal was made by several Acadian groups that there be a consultative committee for those national historic parks/sites related to Acadian themes. This proposal has been accepted in principle and draft terms of reference are being prepared for discussion with interested groups and individuals across the Maritime Provinces.*

B) COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED CONCEPT FOR
GRAND-PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK:

This section contains a summary of the comments received from the public as a result of the distribution of the newsletter to individuals and organizations across the country and participation at the open houses.

1. Themes and Objectives

- The revised themes as presented were supported; comments indicated that people were pleased to see the revision and that many saw it as a normal corrective measure that would re-establish the original purpose of the park.
- Many comments expressed a disappointment in the lack of any concrete evidence to demonstrate the revised themes and objectives, in particular inside the memorial church. Comments showed that the public expected some immediate results in the park following the first public discussions which were held in March 1982.
- An Acadian group from Moncton suggested the use of "Grand Dérangement" instead of "Expulsion" to refer to the complete story of the deportation of the Acadians from the Maritimes from 1755 to 1763.
- Several comments from the local and Acadian communities indicated an interest in seeing the contemporary Acadian culture represented in the park.

2. Site Selection Study for Commemoration of Pre-Loyalists (Planters)

- Many people whose roots were tied to the Planters indicated that they were in favour of a study to find a suitable site in the local area to commemorate the Planters in addition to the plaque at Horton Landing. They wanted the displays, when removed from the memorial church, to be shown in a suitable setting.
- Comments from residents in the Grand-Pré area strongly suggested the use of the word "Planters" instead of "Pre-Loyalists" to refer to the farmers from New England who resettled the Acadian dykelands.

- Some specific suggestions as to where this commemoration could take place were also received such as the Old Kings Courthouse Heritage Museum and the Planter Barracks at Starr's Point.
- Comments from members of the Acadian community indicated that they supported any appropriate location outside of the park.

3. The Proposed Concept

- Comments expressed at all open houses and through the various briefs gave strong support to the concept in general. Many compliments as to "work well-done" were also passed on to the planning team.
- Comments from a group of Acadians from the Moncton area recommended a different walking circuit and some changes to the content and order of exhibits in comparison to the proposals the planning team put forward in the development concept shown on the map on page 4 of newsletter No. 2. A map illustrating this alternative concept as suggested by this group is attached.

4. Interpretation

- Comments provided a large number of very specific suggestions as to how the various concept proposals could be presented to park visitors. These suggestions were mainly examples of visual material that could be used such as maps and genealogical charts.
- Some comments suggested an audio-visual interpretation of the Acadian history before reaching the memorial church.
- Some local people appeared concerned about making a national historic park into a "shrine" which might not welcome people of other cultural backgrounds. It was suggested that a factual interpretation of the expulsion would be necessary.
- Other comments requested further public consultation when detailed interpretive planning is initiated.
- A few comments mentioned a desire to have costumed guides on site.

- Animation was not seen by some as an appropriate way for interpreting the pre-expulsion Acadian lifestyle.

5. Visitor Services Area

- A couple of comments recommended improving the architectural style of the gift shop and administration building complex.
- The safety of the road crossing was of concern to some people.
- Suggestions as to what the interpretive sales outlet should sell to the visitors were also recorded. These included books, records, arts and crafts, souvenirs, publications and general information representing the Acadian culture in keeping with the park themes. People also felt that this would be a very effective way of showing to the visitors that the Acadian culture is still alive and well in the Maritimes, i.e., the material sold would come from various Acadian communities.
- A restaurant where Acadian style food would be served was felt by some to be an essential part of the park experience.
- Many Acadians pointed out that Grand-Pré National Historic Park was of interest to almost 3 million Acadians in North America.

6. Orientation Exhibit

- A couple of comments recorded at the open house in Grand-Pré suggested a reception centre with audio-visual material (slides and films) to orientate the visitors to their tour of the park and to the various stories being told.

7. Pedestrian Walkway

- Some comments indicated objection to the indirect way of bringing visitors to the memorial church, the major feature of the tour, while others suggested a circular route, along the same line as the one proposed by the Acadian group from Moncton.

- Comments repeated the need for paths with a smoother surface for the safety and convenience of all visitors.

8. Pavilion

- A couple of comments recommended an expanded facility including change rooms to enable it to be more effectively used as a stage for various events and shows.
- A comment expressed concern over the possibility that the pavilion could become an on-going cultural centre with too much activity taking place.
- Comments suggested different locations for the pavilion: in the south-west corner of the ornamental gardens (near the blacksmith shop) instead of its proposed north-east location, and in the south-east corner of the gardens (near the Grand-Pré road railway crossing and the ponds).

9. Herbin Exhibit

- Comments from an Acadian group suggested that Herbin be commemorated at the stone cross and that the role played by Acadians who erected the church, the statue of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption and the deportation cross be commemorated by a plaque outside the memorial church. This was in contrast to Parks Canada's proposal to combine both in one location.

10. Evangeline Exhibit

- A comment supported the idea of relocating the Longfellow monument near the Evangeline statue.
- An Acadian group (see the attached map) proposed leaving the Longfellow monument at its present location and using the Evangeline exhibit as an introduction to Hébert's statue.

11. Memorial Church

- Many comments supported the creation of a commemorative atmosphere for the interpretation of the expulsion story.
- Comments suggested specific techniques and objects that could be used to meet this purpose such as the stained glass window, reproduction of paintings on the expulsion, Winslow's proclamation, facts and figures relating to the event.
- Comments also indicated the need for further public consultation and co-operation with Acadian specialists in producing and implementing the interpretive plan for the church.
- Comments called for the removal of the non-Acadian material on display inside the church.
- Everyone was in favour of having the displays that detract from a commemorative atmosphere removed as soon as possible.

12. Audio-Visual Theatre

- A comment suggested that the structure should be suitable for year-round presentations.
- There was a recommendation that the theatre be built near the entrance (possibly at the site of the pavilion) instead of the location proposed (past the church behind the orchard).
- An Acadian group suggested that the theatre be located near the memorial church. They suggested also that it be used for all the park themes and stories, not just for the interpretation of the first major theme, the pre-expulsion Acadian lifestyle, as proposed in the development concept.

13. Western Section of the Park

- Several comments suggested an actual representation of dyke building in its various phases and a working model.

- Comments indicated an interest in seeing Acadian agriculture portrayed in the area near the blacksmith shop.
- It was suggested many times that Acadian buildings be reconstructed in this area of the park, because of their potential for reflecting the culture and lifestyle of Acadians in the Minas Basin prior to the expulsion. Others felt that there was not sufficient information to enable this to take place.
- Some disapproved of any interpretive use of the western section of the park, in particular animation, as it was not seen as fitting with the overall setting of the park. They also questioned the presence of the blacksmith shop.

14. Acadian Survival Exhibit

- It was pointed out that the interpretation should be oriented more towards the return of the Acadians to Nova Scotia rather than to all the Maritime Provinces.

15. Old Willow Trees

- Comments indicated a need to determine the age of these trees, ensure their longest possible life and propagation in the park.

16. Stained Glass Window

- Most comments received this possible project with much enthusiasm and indicated the need for it to be of a high artistic quality.
- A couple of comments questioned the appropriateness, from an historical point of view, of installing a stained glass window above the entrance of the memorial church.

17. Deportation Cross

- Comments gave strong support to the provision of access to the deportation cross.

- Comments from local residents pointed out cattle/visitor-related safety problems with the proposed walking trail.
- Some comments suggested solutions to the safety problems such as a "cattle guard" or "Texas gate". Others proposed an alternative access route and transportation mode such as from Horton Landing and by automobile with parking lot provided.

18. Plan Implementation

- Some people identified as an important information gap the fact that no schedule for the implementation of the proposals contained in the concept had been prepared. They felt that a tentative schedule should at least have been proposed. They also thought that the various projects should be prioritized as to their starting date.

All the detailed public comments on the proposed development concept outlined in newsletter No. 2 will be analyzed by the planning team and, where possible, incorporated into the final Management Plan to be recommended for the Minister's approval.

C) COMMENTS ON OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THE OPERATION OF GRAND-PRÉ NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK:

1. Terms and Conditions of Contract

Acadian groups have used the terms and conditions set out in a contract signed between "La Société Nationale l'Assomption" and the Government of Canada in 1956 as the basis for their requests. Many groups have alleged that Parks Canada has not fully honoured this contract in the past, especially as it relates to the following issues:

- a) That all guides employed at Grand-Pré National Historic Park be fully bilingual;
- b) That the Acadian character of the park be re-established, i.e., that all exhibits or articles relating to the Planters and Loyalists be removed from the park as soon as possible; and
- c) That a strictly bilingual appearance of the park, including the sales outlet, be established and maintained.

2. Interpretation of the Acadian History at Grand-Pré National Historic Park

Many people commented that the information provided by the guides at Grand-Pré National Historic Park was not always accurate and objective. Acadians felt that improperly trained guides were not presenting the historic reality of the park. Some remarked that too much emphasis was placed on the fictitious story of "Evangeline" by Longfellow. It was also recommended that guides have some knowledge about the Acadians of today. A need was also expressed for a more balanced and accurate interpretation.

3. Sales Outlet - Cooperating Association

Most groups who presented briefs as well as many individuals who attended the open houses asked Parks Canada to reconsider its recent decision not to grant the operation of the park sales outlet to a cooperating association made up of Acadian people. Many arguments supporting the Acadians' request were presented to Parks Canada.

4. Acadian Consultative Committee

It was recommended that an Acadian consultative committee be established which would advise Parks Canada on issues regarding the development and interpretation of Acadian-related national historic parks and sites.

5. Employment of Acadians in Key Parks Canada Positions

Acadians expressed that in order for them to be heard and have their views considered, there was a need for Acadians to hold key positions within Parks Canada's Atlantic Regional Office.

Other Comments and Recommendations

- a) It was recommended that Parks Canada establish a separate administration responsible for the interpretation of the Acadian history and for the development of Acadian historic parks and sites. It was recommended that this separate administration be composed of people with French as their first language and with an in-depth knowledge of Acadian history.
- b) One individual questioned the destruction approximately ten years ago, of an old Acadian house, believed to be circa 1765, and which had been relocated to the park by a former park superintendent.
- c) One organization commented that the exhibits displayed at the Survival of the Acadians National Historic Site had over-emphasized the Acadians of New Brunswick, contained inaccuracies and lacked information on Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Acadians.
- d) It was recommended that the Acadian flag be flown at the park during 1984, as this marks the one hundredth anniversary of the flag.

The second round of open houses to discuss the proposed concept for Grand-Pré National Historic Park was a real success. Many people attended and generally stayed over a considerable period of time; constructive discussions held in a congenial atmosphere proved to be a learning experience for all and produced some very positive results.

In addition to the many individuals, several groups were represented at the Grand-Pré session: the Women's Institute, the Wolfville Historical Society, the Wolfville Chamber of Commerce, and the "Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse" (Halifax).

Five Acadian organizations presented briefs during the open house at Saulnierville: the "Centre acadien de l'Université Sainte-Anne" (Church Point, Nova Scotia), the Clare Regional Committee of the "Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse" (F.A.N.E.), the Argyle Regional Committee of F.A.N.E., the "Société Historique Acadienne de Pubnico-Ouest", and the "Réveil de Pombcoup" (Pubnico-Ouest).

The "Société Nationale des Acadiens", representing all Acadians in the Maritime Provinces was among three associations which organized a press conference in Moncton just prior to the open house. The other two groups were the F.A.N.E. and the "Association des Sociétés Historiques Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse". The former two organizations also presented briefs at the open house, thus adding to a brief prepared by a group of Acadians from the Moncton area and a couple of briefs presented by interested individuals.

Finally, four briefs were presented in Cheticamp at an open house delayed by a Cape Breton Island blizzard. The following Acadian organizations were represented: the Cheticamp Regional Committee of the F.A.N.E., the Richmond Regional Committee of the F.A.N.E., the "Association des Sociétés Historiques Acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse", and the "Société St-Pierre".

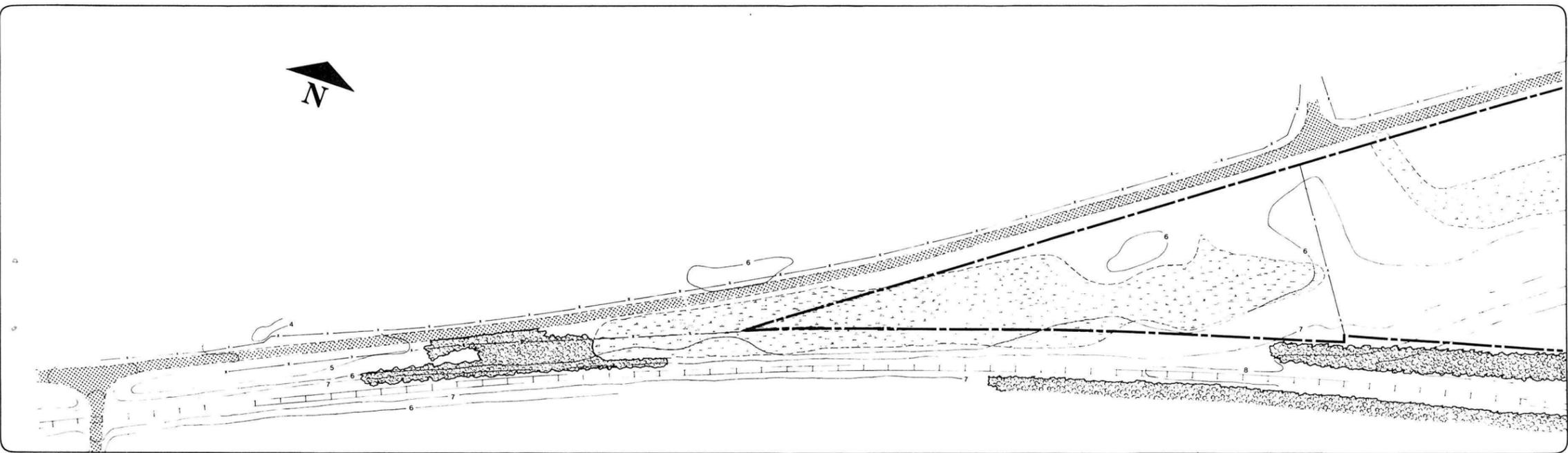
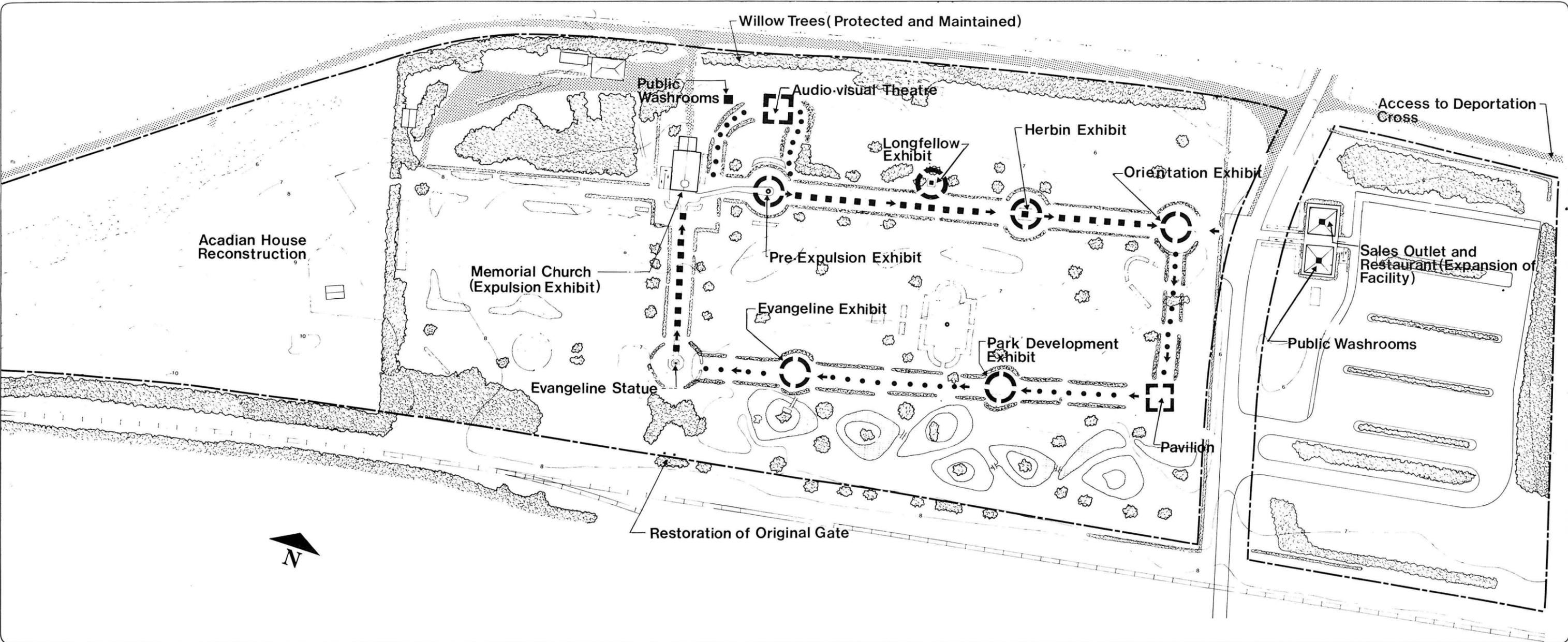
Parks Canada is most grateful to all the people who took the time and made the effort to participate in this phase of the management planning process.

All public comments are being carefully analyzed by the planning team.

You may be contacted again if substantial changes to the proposed concept are recommended by the planning team as a result of this analysis. Otherwise, you can expect to see the final Management Plan early next year.

A complete record of all public comments received will be available in both English and French in the near future. Anyone wishing to receive a copy should write to:

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GRAND-PRÉ

National Historic Park

An Alternative to Parks Canada's Proposed Development Concept as Suggested by a Group of Acadians from the Moncton Area



On Site Exhibit



New Structure



New Path



Upgraded Existing Path

Map Identifies only those suggestions referenced in written submission


Parks Canada



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