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Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse

National Historic Site of Canada

Management
Statement

2019



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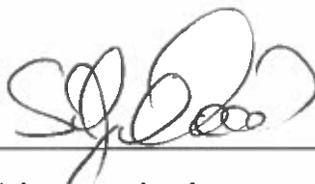
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Mathieu Dupuis, Parks Canada*

Recommendations

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Context :

Parks Canada manages one of the biggest and finest networks of protected historical sites in the world. Parks Canada is responsible for protecting and promoting these sites, so that current and future generations can benefit from them. This management statement describes Parks Canada's management approach and objectives for the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada.

The Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada is located in Rimouski, the largest urban centre in Bas-Saint-Laurent, 300 kilometres downstream of Quebec City. The historic site is very well known in the region where its iconic role contributes to Rimouski's identity. The lighthouse is located close to the Museum of the Empress of Ireland and the Onondaga submarine, two other local tourist attractions belonging to the Site Historique Maritime de la Pointe-au-Père.

The location of the Pointe-au-Père lighthouse was designated a national historic site in 1974, due to its historical role as a major centre for pilot services, and because it was a major beacon for navigation in the Gulf and St. Lawrence River. In 1990, the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office designated the concrete lighthouse (the third lighthouse to be built on the site) a classified building, and the foghorn building a recognized building. A Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque commemorating the Pointe-au-Père lighthouse was placed at the site in 1982. Another plaque commemorating the pilots of the St. Lawrence was unveiled in 2002.

Thanks to its unique location, where internal waters meet the open sea, the Pointe-au-Père lighthouse station has long been one of the most important navigational aid centres in Canada. The site has been home to four lighthouses, in operation from 1859 to 1997. The third lighthouse, an octagonal white tower supported by flying buttresses, and the skeleton tower (fourth lighthouse) still form the landscape of the site today. A service hub for sailors, the site once comprised a lighthouse, a pilot station, a wireless telegraph office (Marconi), a hydrographic service, and even a medical inspection service for ships (1923 to 1937). Pointe-au-Père was also known as a pinnacle of innovation; several experiments were carried out at the site aiming to improve the efficiency of audible navigation signals and the site was used as a testing ground before said systems were implemented in other Canadian lighthouse stations. The station also bore witness to the shipwreck of the Empress of Ireland in 1914, the greatest maritime tragedy in Canadian history.

The site is open to the public from mid-June to mid-October. Small guided tours take visitors to the top of the lighthouse, visitors can also visit the various buildings on their own. Since 2015, the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada attracts 25,000 visitors per year on average. The number of visitors increases slightly year on year, partly due to the renewal of the visitor offer at the Site Historique Maritime de la Pointe-au-Père, next to the lighthouse.

The lighthouse station buildings were given a facelift in 2017, during which time Parks Canada carried out significant restoration work on the lighthouse's exterior, the lightkeeper's house, the assistant lightkeeper's house, and the foghorn building. The permanent exhibition established in the lightkeeper's house in 1992 had to be dismantled in 2014 due to its age. From 2014 to 2017, the lightkeeper's house housed a temporary photograph exhibition underlining 50 years of underwater archaeology at Parks Canada. Since 2018, the building has housed the temporary exhibition *Beacons Burning Bright!* produced by the Musée Maritime du Québec. This exhibition will run until 2021.

Management Approach:

Since 1982, the hospitality, interpretation and maintenance services of the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada have been carried out by the Site Historique Maritime de la Pointe-au-Père (previously called the Musée de la Mer), as established by an operating agreement. In the short-term, Parks Canada intends to continue this existing management approach while evaluating the various avenues for the long-term management and development of the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada.

Furthermore, Parks Canada and the Site Historique Maritime de la Pointe-au-Père signed a partnership agreement in 2011 to strengthen and develop the ties joining the two parties. This agreement — separate from the operating agreement — was renewed in 2016 and remains in force until 2021.

Management Objectives:

Resource Preservation: Parks Canada protects the cultural resources located in its heritage sites, in accordance with the *Cultural Resource Management Policy* and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. The measures taken to reflect this include the monitoring of cultural resources and the documentation of any interventions carried out at the site. The objective of the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada is to continue pursuing these cultural resource preservation efforts in order to maintain the condition and stability of the site for current and future generations. The efforts include the continuous monitoring of the historic site's cultural resources, to ensure that said resources and their associated historic value are not lost, damaged or threatened by natural processes such as erosion or deterioration, or by human activities.

Public Understanding and Appreciation: Parks Canada aims to improve the sharing of the heritage value of the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada and to effectively communicate the reasons for its commemoration. The heritage value of the lighthouse station continues to be shared with the public through guided tours of the lighthouse, external educational activities and through the historic national site's website. Discussions were undertaken regarding the required renewal of the historic site's overall visitor offer (including the renewal of the permanent exhibition), in anticipation of enabling visitors to appreciate and recognize the importance of the lighthouse station, to understand the crucial role it has played in Canada's maritime past, and to appreciate the value of the buildings and resources protected by Parks Canada.

Establishing Relationships with Local and Regional Partners: The national historic site aims to consolidate ties with its current partners and seize opportunities to create new partnerships in order to be further integrated into the community of Rimouski. This collaboration encourages the dynamic sharing of expertise and skills, and gives the historic site the opportunity to create long-lasting ties with the community. The historic site aims to collaborate with the regional tourist industry to increase the site's notoriety, establish itself as a leader for the protection of cultural heritage, and participate in the development of local and regional social and cultural life, amongst other things.

Site Maintenance: Significant renovations were carried out in 2017, but unfortunately not all buildings were restored. Parks Canada will continue its effort to ensure the longevity of the national historic site's infrastructure. Site maintenance will be undertaken in a way that respects the heritage value, presents a positive image to the public and upholds Parks Canada's reputation.

Links:

PARKS CANADA. Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, 2010, 300 pages.

PARKS CANADA. Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan, 2007, 54 pages.

PARKS CANADA. Cultural Resource Management Policy, March 2013, 30 pages.