



**Woodside
National Historic Site**
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Woodside Management Plan Newsletter

You are invited to share your views, opinions and ideas by being a part of the review and renewal of the **Woodside National Historic Site Management Plan**.

The management plan provides a long-term vision and sets out the strategic direction to guide the management of Woodside. It is a forward-looking, fifteen-year document that is publicly reviewed every five years. Signed by the Minister of the Environment and tabled in Parliament, management plans are required for all national parks and national historic sites and are Parks Canada's key accountability documents with Canadians.

The Woodside Management Plan is in need of renewal to take into consideration current challenges and opportunities for conservation, visitor experience and learning. An essential part of the plan review is reaching out to Canadians to help shape the future of Woodside.

Planning Context

Woodside is the boyhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, who was Canada's 10th Prime Minister and Canada's first official citizen. The site is located in Kitchener, Ontario, just an hour away from the Greater Toronto Area, Canada's largest urban area.

The 2001 Management Plan has successfully guided the management of cultural resources and facilitation of visitor experience opportunities at Woodside to help us reach new heights. The new Management Plan will build on past successes and guide the planning priorities of Woodside staff in keeping with Parks Canada's mandate: protecting heritage resources, facilitating opportunities for meaningful visitor experiences, and promoting public appreciation and understanding of Canada's historic and natural heritage.

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.

The Kitchener-Waterloo area is a dynamic place where tradition meets innovation. In 2007, Waterloo was voted the most intelligent city in the world by the Intelligent Community Forum. The region has some of the best universities and colleges in Canada. It is home to the Perimeter Institute, a leader in the field of theoretical physics and science. There is also a thriving arts and culture scene with lectures, opera, pop music, a symphony orchestra and theatre. Youth have access to a wealth of sporting and leisure activities. There are many museums in the area including a new major regional museum, the Waterloo Region Museum.

Over the last two decades, Woodside has maintained its market share in the central Ontario museum and attraction marketplace in the face of an explosion of museums and attractions. If Woodside wants to build upon its success and become more visible and competitive, the site needs to improve its marketing, ensure the visitor experience opportunities meet or exceed expectations, and remain flexible while planning its programming into the future.



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Challenges and Opportunities

The most significant challenge and opportunity for Woodside is to **boost visitor attendance** at the site. Woodside is a key property for Parks Canada and has great potential to be a showcase site for the Agency. Woodside's beautiful grounds can be emphasized as an urban park, attracting field naturalists and other "outdoor-oriented" visitors. The grounds also provide an excellent opportunity to position Woodside as a community gathering place, playing host to new audiences (ethno-cultural festivals, photographers, artists, musicians and others) who may enjoy the grounds on their own terms and take that important first step towards personal connection with Woodside. Woodside's location in the "high-tech triangle" provides opportunities to collaborate with innovative companies to identify and attract potential new audiences through new technologies for an enhanced visitor experience. Strategic marketing will communicate that Woodside offers a wide variety of experiences for visitors.

Tied to the issue of visitation is the question of **site relevance** and looking at new ways to connect with Canadians. One of Woodside's most successful and innovative programmes is the partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada in hosting citizenship ceremonies. These events offer a wonderful opportunity for new Canadians to connect with the boyhood home of the first official Canadian citizen. There is a need to look for other opportunities like this to facilitate experiences that link with the values and interests of new audiences.



Proposed Vision Elements

A vision statement is a passionate, inspirational, and unique picture of the heritage place at its future best. It is the foundation of the management plan. The draft vision elements presented here are a product of visioning exercises conducted within Parks Canada. A complete vision statement will be developed based on consultation with First Nations, partners, key stakeholders, and the public. The intention is for Woodside to be known as a shining example of Parks Canada's vision:

“Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.”

In the year 2026:

Woodside is a catalyst for understanding and experiencing Mackenzie King's Canada and our ever-evolving nation.

- Woodside is a place of inspiration for youth and Canadians of all ages, where the importance of civic involvement, leadership and passion that were so central to the life of Mackenzie King, Canada's first citizen, become relevant and meaningful to the lives of today's citizens.
- Visitors experience and enjoy what daily life was like for Mackenzie King and his family through hands-on activities, exploration of the house and beautiful grounds, and a broad range of educational programs, facilitated by Woodside's passionate and knowledgeable staff, connecting the past to the present.
- Visitors discover how Mackenzie King was influenced by life at Woodside and how that, in turn, influenced the growth of Canada and the social policies that make our nation so unique.

Woodside nurtures an oasis within the city.

- Woodside is a cultural and a natural oasis. Its beautiful 11.5 wooded acres draw visitors wishing to experience an important story in Canadian history and visitors looking to enjoy a variety of activities such as walking, yoga, guided nature walks, learn-to-camp programs and community gardening.
- Woodside will enhance and expand the menu of special events, to encourage people to connect to the site year round.



Woodside is ingrained in the fabric of the community of the Region of Waterloo.

- Woodside was established with community support decades ago and remains a favourite gathering place for community non-profit organizations, the private sector and community leaders. Just as the Woodside Trust came together to save and rebuild Woodside, the community and local leaders will be key in helping the site flourish.
- Woodside's location in the high-tech triangle enables creative partnering opportunities with innovative companies, universities, colleges, community organizations and others who collaborate with the site to support exciting new visitor experience opportunities, educational programs and cultural resource conservation awareness initiatives, all of which strengthen community connections with Woodside.
- The community is fully involved in the ongoing protection of Woodside, and Parks Canada is committed to respecting the community's desire to see this special resource protected and presented into the future.

Woodside is a must-see, must-return-to day trip destination in Southwestern Ontario.

- Woodside provides a broad menu of options for a fun, exciting year-round visitor experience to suit targeted visitor groups, including the local community, their families and friends.
- Indoor and outdoor exhibits, activities and facilities; compelling interpretation; state of the art interactive tools; fascinating stories and special events all make Woodside a premier day trip destination in the highly competitive Southwestern Ontario travel market. Woodside is not just another stop along the road.

Proposed Management Strategies

The purpose of the management strategies is to translate the vision for Woodside into concrete strategic directions while addressing the site's key issues, challenges and opportunities.

1. Creative Partnering and Community Engagement

The purpose of this strategy is to increase Woodside's relevance by engaging with partners and the community to better understand and meet visitor needs and raise Woodside's profile.

2. An Oasis in the City

The purpose of this strategy is to enhance and expand the menu of visitor experience and public outreach education opportunities in order to increase Canadians' sense of personal connection to Woodside, increase visitation throughout the year and attract new markets to the site. Woodside will be positioned as a "must-see" day-trip destination in Southwestern Ontario that encourages visitors to return time and time again.

3. Living History

The purpose of this strategy is to position Woodside as a place of national significance whose importance is conveyed to Canadians in innovative ways that strengthen understanding of Mackenzie King's relevance to Canada's past, present and future.



What happens next?

The views, comments, opinions, and ideas received as a result of the newsletter, public meetings, stakeholder/partner meetings, and meetings with First Nations will be reviewed and analysed. The proposed elements for the park vision will be crafted into an inspiring picture of the desired future of Woodside. The proposed management strategies will be adopted, modified, and/or abandoned in light of public, First Nations', partner, and stakeholder input and comments. These contributions and direction provided by the Parks Canada Corporate Plan will inform the creation of Woodside's new management plan. A draft management plan must be completed for Woodside by December 2011 so that the final management plan will be submitted to the Minister of the Environment for approval in accordance with our deadline of March 2012. Once approved, the plan will be tabled in Parliament. Following this, the management plan will be made publically available.

How to Participate

- Attend our public meeting on September 15, 2011.
- Complete and return a Management Plan Review Comment Form.
- Write or call us with your views, suggestions, ideas, and questions.

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Comments will be collected until October 14, 2011.