



LINEAR MOUNDS

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
OF CANADA

Management Plan



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Linear Mounds

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

Management Plan

October 2007

Foreword



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

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

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

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

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

These values form the foundation of the new management plan for Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada. I offer my appreciation to the many thoughtful Canadians who helped to develop this plan, particularly to our dedicated team from Parks Canada, and to all those local organizations and individuals who have demonstrated their good will, hard work, spirit of co-operation and extraordinary sense of stewardship.

In this same spirit of partnership and responsibility, I am pleased to approve the Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan.

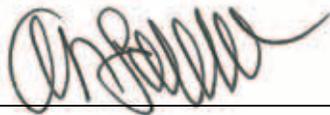
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Baird". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Baird
Minister of the Environment

Recommendation Statement

Linear mounds national historic site of canada Management Plan

Recommended for approval by:



Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



Dawn Bronson
Field Unit Superintendent, Manitoba

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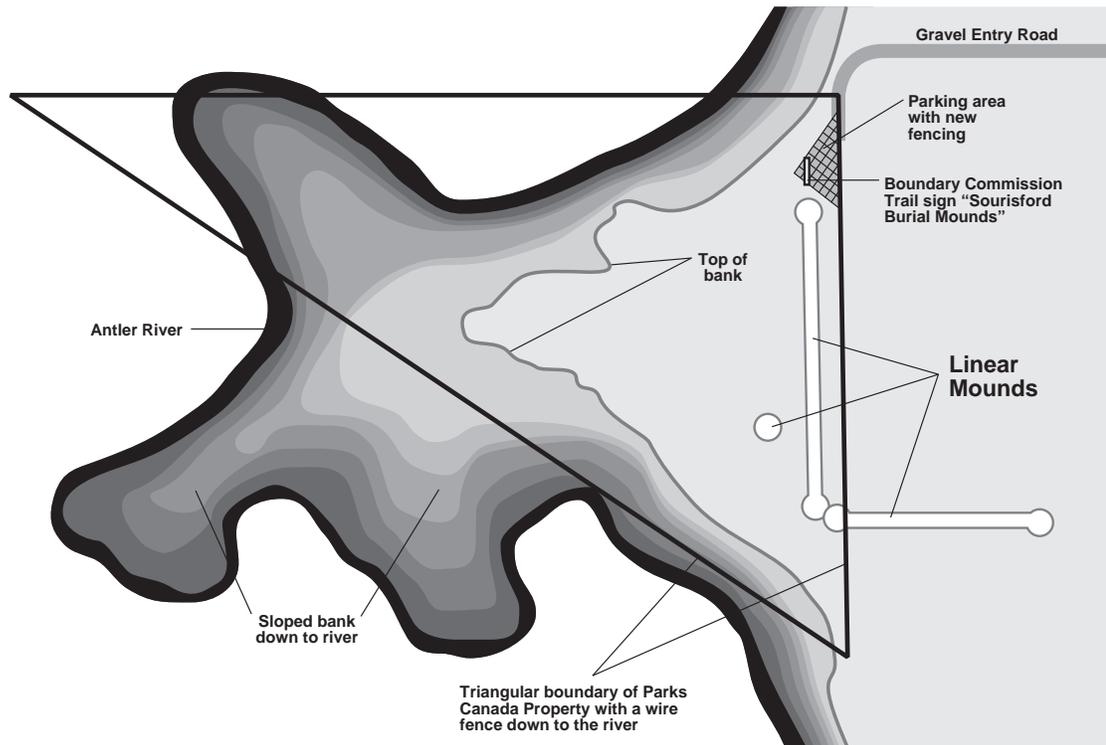
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1 Introduction

Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada was designated by the Minister on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), in 1973. These burial mounds lie on the plain above the Antler River valley in southwest Manitoba. The mounds consist of two low earthen embankments almost 200 metres in length, each terminating in circular mounds. One feature aligns north-south, while the other lies east-west, and extends beyond Parks Canada's property into an adjoining field. In addition to the two linear mounds an elliptical mound also occurs on the site and all three are identified on the map below.

The Mounds are attributed to the pre-contact people and are referred to by archaeologists as belonging to the Devils Lake-Sourisford Burial Complex.

The Mounds are broadly dated between AD 900 and 1400 (Syms 1979). Very few artifacts have been found at Linear Mounds, however, several artifacts have been



found at other mound sites in the region. These include; small pottery mortuary vessels, incised stone tablets and tubular stone pipes. They also include artifacts fashioned from exotic raw materials such as native copper (probably from Lake Superior), and marine shell from the Gulf of Mexico.

Linear Mounds is one of the best-preserved examples of the mound-building phenomenon in Canada and is part of the largest mound complex in North America.

This is true despite the ravages of time, early relic collectors and many years of active farm cultivation.

Administratively, Linear Mounds is the responsibility of the Manitoba Field Unit headquartered in Winnipeg. It is a non-operational site having no on-site staff and no visitor services. As a result there has been no dedicated operational budget. However, this status does not diminish Parks Canada's obligation to protect the site, communicate its importance and to engage others in achieving these objectives while respecting the spiritual nature of the site. This management plan describes the long-term vision for the protection, presentation and use of this important, yet potentially vulnerable place.

1.1 National Historic Sites of Canada

Linear Mounds belongs to a nation-wide network of protected heritage areas, which include National Parks, National Marine Conservation Areas and National Historic Sites.¹ National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas are established as representative examples of distinctive land and marine environments while Canada's National Historic sites are commemorated because they represent thousands of years of human history and hundreds of years of nation building. These special places are part of the inheritance of all Canadians and are recognized under law as being of national importance to the history of our country. Parks Canada has several very important roles; both as guardians and as storytellers for these special places. These roles are defined in the following objectives for National Historic Sites:²

- foster knowledge and appreciation of Canada's past through a national program of historical commemoration;

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

1.2 Commemorative Integrity

Commemorative Integrity is the corner-stone of Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy. It is a values-based concept created by Parks Canada to evaluate and manage National Historic Sites. It is used to report to Parliament and the Canadian public on their condition. A National Historic Site has commemorative integrity when:

- 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;
- the site's heritage values are respected in all decisions and actions affecting the site.

The values of a national historic site that relate to the reasons for its designation constitute its commemorative intent. This describes the specific reason a place has been deemed to be nationally significant. The commemorative intent for a national historic site comes directly from

¹ 154 of the more than 900 National Historic Sites are administered by Parks Canada. Linear Mounds NHSC is one of them. The remainder are administered by other federal departments, provinces or territories, or are privately owned.

² Parks Canada National Historic Sites Policy

the recommendations of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which are approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

1.3 Management Planning

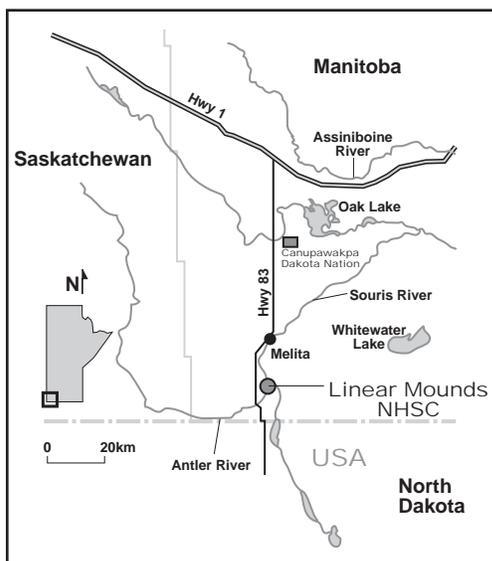
Parks Canada has the responsibility, mandated under the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998), to ensure the commemorative integrity of national historic sites under its administration. One tool to achieve this goal is that all national historic sites administered by Parks Canada are required to prepare management plans. Once prepared, management plans are tabled in Parliament by the Minister of the Environment and are subject to review every five years.

A management plan constitutes the local expression of the general policies of Parks Canada. This plan is the first management plan for Linear Mounds and will meet that requirement. The plan outlines the long-term direction for the development, operations and management of the site. The goal of the management plan is to ensure the commemorative integrity, while guiding appropriate opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of the national historic site.

Through the course of this planning program, Parks Canada staff has met with representatives of the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation and local municipal representatives, so that we may begin to gain a better understanding of their interests. An ongoing dialogue with these partners and stakeholders will be central to the implementation of this plan.

2 Current Situation

2.1 Planning Context



Linear Mounds is located in the southwestern corner of Manitoba, approximately 17 km south of the town of Melita in the Rural Municipality of Arthur. Agriculture is the backbone of the regional economy with the town of Melita serving as the key service center to the surrounding communities. Given its national historic site status, Melita community leaders have expressed to Parks Canada their desire to develop Linear Mounds as a regional tourism destination to boost the local economy.

The closest First Nation community to Linear Mounds is Canupawakpa Dakota Nation situated approximately 40 km north of Melita. The Canupawakpa Dakota Nation is dedicated to the preservation and continuation of Dakota culture. Community leaders emphasize teaching children about their culture and great efforts have been made to retain their language.

Mounds associated with The Devils Lake Sourisford Burial Complex are distributed along the fringe of the northern plains. They extend from southeastern North Dakota through southern Manitoba

to southeastern Saskatchewan. Leigh Syms³ has identified over 200 probable mounds in southern Manitoba with roughly 70 of these mounds located in the Sourisford area of southwestern Manitoba. The location of this burial complex as well as the nature of the recoveries, suggests the individuals responsible for their construction were primary bison hunters influenced by Mississippian expansion during the period of AD. 900 - 1400.

Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada occupies a small triangular portion of a quarter section measuring 16 hectares. The property was acquired by Parks Canada in 1978-9. At the time of the designation, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada did not state the reasons for National Significance. For the purposes of this planning program, the following proposed statement of commemorative intent will be used keeping in mind that it may change depending on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada:

The site contains some of the best-preserved examples of Aboriginal Mounds of the Devils Lake-Sourisford Burial Complex that exist in Canada. It was built and used between AD 900 and 1400.

Parks Canada has managed Linear Mounds as a land reserve, treating it as a sensitive site, easily threatened, and of sacred significance to First Nations. In essence Linear Mounds is a non-operational site without visitor services, facilities or promotion and is monitored on a periodic basis. This lack of development was a conscious decision intending to minimize the threat of artifact theft at this rural and isolated site.

Through the development of this management plan, Parks Canada has initiated a working relationship with the Canupawakpa

Dakota Nation as well as local municipal representatives, in order to collaborate on interpreting the site in a respectful and appropriate manner.

2.2 Heritage Resources

The main mounds are two low earthen embankments each almost 200 metres in length, and terminating in circular mounds at either end. They are situated on a promontory overlooking the Antler River. One feature aligns north south, while the other lies east west, and extends beyond Parks property into an adjoining field. An elliptical mound also occurs on the property. The mounds are scarred by traces of relic hunting, and of archaeological investigations conducted in 1907, 1913 and 1914



Early excavation of a mound similar to Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada

by the Royal Ontario Museum and the National Museum of Canada. Recoveries include human remains and are currently stored at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In addition, cultural artifacts including a number of Bison bones are also included in these repositories. Other material has been removed by collectors since the mid 1800's and has been scattered and lost. There have been no excavations at the site since the early 1900's.

³ Leigh Syms is a highly regarded Manitoba Archaeologist who specializes in researching Aboriginal mounds.

EXAMPLES OF ARTIFACTS FOUND IN SIMILAR MOUNDS NEAR MELITA



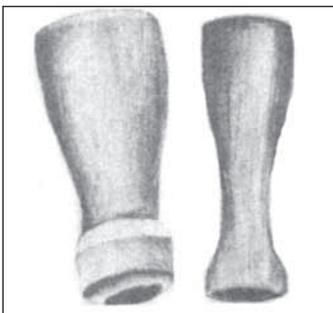
Incised spiral pottery vessel

- Miniature pottery vessels with tabs on the rim and with decorative elements such as deeply incised spiral grooves encircling the body from base to neck, incised animals and birds.



Incised stone tablet

- Incised stone tablets.



Tubular stone pipes

- Tubular stone pipes, beads and other objects fashioned from exotic raw materials such as catlinite and native copper.



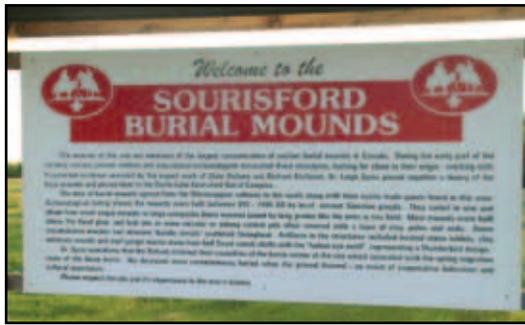
Gorget marine shell

- Marine shell ornamental collars known as gorgets from the south Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico. On many gorgets appear faces with a weeping or forked eye motif.
- Bison bones, including crania and carcasses buried in sub-mound pits.

In 1994 reports indicated that cattle grazing on the property were impacting the mounds. Parks Canada initiated a systematic monitoring program to determine if the site had deteriorated. In 2003 and 2004 non-intrusive ground penetrating radar surveys were conducted to enhance our understanding of these burial mounds.

2.3 Heritage Presentation

The degree of interpretation and outreach related to this site has been minimal. Parks Canada has managed the site as a protected land preserve and has been hesitant to interpret without understanding the local aboriginal perspective. Interpretation is limited to an exhibit sign installed on site in 1999 by local community members and messages provided to visitors at the museums in Melita and Boisevein.



2.4 Visitor Services and Facilities

Because Linear Mounds is a place of burial, Parks Canada has not developed visitor services or facilities. In the 1990's, the municipality built a road providing easier access to the site. In 1999, community representatives



Periodic monitoring is undertaken to assess disturbance and deterioration

moved the boundary fence of Parks Canada's property to create a parking area. In addition, representatives of the community also installed a wooden kiosk to support the interpretive panel, (pictured above). Recently, community representatives posted direction signage, (also pictured above) at all of the major crossroads.

2.5 Administration and Operation

Linear Mounds is administered by Parks Canada under the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. The site is managed by the Manitoba Field Unit office in Winnipeg and a monitoring strategy was developed and implemented for the site in 1994. This includes a visual inspection by walking the entire site as well as a photographic comparative analysis of the mound features using fixed points of reference, to determine if changes are occurring. Parks Canada previously had a small contract with an adjacent landowner for minor annual maintenance, however, in recent years this has been discontinued.

2.6 Partnership and Community Involvement

Parks Canada recognizes that building partnerships and involving local communities in the protection and presentation of National Historic Sites is the most effective way of ensuring that the

sites are cared for and preserved for future generations. In Melita and the surrounding area there has been interest in promoting and developing tourism at the site. Parks Canada's past decision to operate the site as a land reserve has frustrated local stakeholders and undermined Parks Canada's relationship with them.

Parks Canada has initiated discussions with the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation seeking advice on interpreting the site in a sensitive manner. This planning program will result in Parks Canada developing an ongoing dialogue with both local stakeholders and the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation to achieve the protection and presentation goals of this plan.

3 Vision

This vision describes the long-term direction for Linear Mounds. It will focus and guide the planning, management and operation while fostering cooperation among those who will use, enjoy and care for the site.

- All actions at Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada respect the relationship that First Nations have with the site, especially their views concerning its sacred nature.
- The site continues to be a place of contemplation, self-discovery, education and reflection unencumbered by significant infrastructure that would alter its tranquil and natural setting.
- All educational initiatives are developed in partnership with First Nations and stakeholders to aid the public in understanding and appreciating its significance and its relationship to the broad and rich heritage in the region.
- Stakeholders are involved in actions, such as the annual monitoring and maintenance program.



Circular terminus at the south end of one of the Linear Mounds

4 Management Plan

Parks Canada will ensure the commemorative integrity of the site by protecting all of the resources of Linear Mounds NHSC, developing appropriate communication media and ensuring that all activities respect the special nature of the site.

4.1 Resource Protection

Strategic Goal: The resources that embody the national historic significance of Linear Mounds are not threatened or impaired.

Parks Canada will collaborate with partners and stakeholders to identify site values and to ensure these values are not under threat. This will involve ensuring that future decisions are based upon a sufficient level of knowledge about the site.

Actions

- A draft statement of commemorative intent and a definition of the designated place will be developed and submitted to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.
- Respecting the commemorative intent, a values statement will be developed with First Nations and stakeholders describing the designated place, the reasons for designation and appropriate means of recognition.
- First Nations will be consulted for advice on the appropriate treatment of the cultural resources.
- A full understanding of past archaeological work and an inventory of all resources removed from the site will be completed.
- An inventory of in-situ cultural resources, including Traditional Knowledge, will be developed.
- Continue the annual site-monitoring program.

4.2 Heritage Presentation

Strategic Goal: The reasons for Linear Mounds NHSC designation as a place of national significance are communicated effectively.

Heritage presentation will be low key and respectful of the spiritual nature of the site as understood by the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation. This will provide opportunities for visitors to experience the site in a non-intrusive manner.

Actions:

- The Canupawakpa Dakota Nation and local stakeholders will be consulted on the development of appropriate site messages as well as the means of communicating those messages.
- Parks Canada will partner with the local museums and/or schools to develop modest off-site interpretation for use by First Nation and local community members and visitors.

4.3 Visitor Services and Facilities

The site will remain non-operational but the current facilities developed by local stakeholders will be adapted to meet both Parks Canada's requirements and Aboriginal concerns.

Actions:

- Parks Canada will work with the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation and local stakeholders to develop orientation information, such as signage, and a website, while respecting the nature of the site.

4.4 Site Management and Operations

The site will continue to be administered from the Field Unit office in Winnipeg as a non-operational National Historic Site under the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*.

Actions:

- Basic site maintenance will be carried out as required.
- Proposed projects and activities at Linear Mounds NHSC will be assessed as required by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and as directed by the strategic environmental assessment of this management plan.

4.5 Partnerships and Stakeholders' Involvement

- *Strategic Goal: A meaningful and long-term relationship with a local First Nations will contribute to management decisions for Linear Mounds. Interested partners, stakeholders and Parks Canada will work together in safeguarding the values of the site while presenting site messages to all Canadians.*

Parks Canada is currently collaborating with the nearby Canupawakpa Dakota Nation to achieve a long-term mutually beneficial management strategy for Linear Mounds NHSC. In addition, Parks Canada is consulting with local stakeholders who have an interest in promoting heritage in the Melita area.

Actions:

- Many of the actions identified in the above bullets; *resource protection, heritage presentation, visitor services and facilities and site management and operations* will provide the opportunity to achieve this goal.

5 Environmental Assessment Decision Statement

As guided by The Cabinet Directive on *The Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (2004)*, a strategic environmental assessment was completed for Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan. Both positive and negative effects were evaluated.

Positive effects included: improved visitor experience, improved heritage presentation and the creation and fostering of relationships with First Nations and local stakeholders. Improved communication and strong involvement by First Nations and local stakeholders is especially positive, as there is currently little to no dialogue. The management plan seeks to encourage participation and then be adaptive, as well as ensure that all parties are involved early in shaping the future vision for interpretation and protection of the site. To this end, a meeting was held on October 26 and 27, 2006 to initiate dialogue between the Canupawakpa-Dakota First Nation, local stakeholders, including representatives from the Rural Municipality of Arthur and Parks Canada.

Some minor negative effects were identified. With the improved heritage presentation and communiqué, visitor use has the potential to increase. As a result, the current relatively undisturbed natural state of the site may be subject to minor effects including vegetation destruction and wildlife disturbance. Although it is unlikely that visitor use will elevate to a stage that will result in

irreversible negative effects, mitigations have been recommended in the strategic environmental assessment as to how to minimize these effects.

Some project level environmental assessment as directed by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* may be required once the current locally installed facilities are reviewed to ensure they meet Parks Canada operational and environmental standards. At this time there is not sufficient detail to indicate where those project level assessments may be.

Overall the strategic environmental assessment found that the Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan will have many positive effects that will ultimately result in the enhancement of commemorative integrity. Some minor negative environmental effects may occur. However taking into account the recommended mitigation stated in the strategic environmental assessment, no important negative environmental effects will remain.

6 Implementation and Evaluation

This management plan provides long-term strategic direction for managing Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada. Implementation of this management plan is the responsibility of the Manitoba Field Unit Superintendent through the annual Field Unit business planning cycle. The business plan identifies those actions of the management plan that will be realized within a five-year period. Any changes to the five-year forecast are captured by the annual review and updating of the business plan. Implementation of the strategies and actions may be reconsidered in response to new circumstances or information, or changing national priorities and decisions.

Progress on management plan implementation will be communicated through annual reporting and the Parks Canada State of the Protected Heritage Areas report. The management plan will also be subject to periodic review (at least every 5 years), and can be amended to reflect changing circumstances. The public will be consulted about major changes.