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# Chignecto Isthmus

National Historic Sites of Canada

Fort Beauséjour—Fort Cumberland, Beaubassin,  
Fort Lawrence and Fort Gaspereaux

**Management Plan**

2018



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CHIGNECTO ISTHMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2018.

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**For more information about the management plan or about the  
CHIGNECTO ISTHMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OF CANADA**

Fort Beauséjour – Fort Cumberland National Historic Site of Canada  
111 Fort Beauséjour Road  
Aulac NB E4L 2W5  
Tel: 506-364-5080  
Email: fort.beausejour@pc.gc.ca  
[www.pc.gc.ca/beausejour](http://www.pc.gc.ca/beausejour)

Beaubassin and Fort Lawrence National Historic Sites of Canada  
Fort Lawrence Rd  
Fort Lawrence NS B4H 3Y5  
Tel: 506-364-5080  
Email: fort.beausejour@pc.gc.ca  
[www.pc.gc.ca/fr/lhn-nhs/ns/beaubassin](http://www.pc.gc.ca/fr/lhn-nhs/ns/beaubassin)

Fort Gaspereaux National Historic Site of Canada  
Fort Moncton Road,  
Port Elgin NB E4M 2Y6  
Tel: 506-364-5080  
Email: fort.beausejour@pc.gc.ca

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*Top from left to right: Nigel Fearon. Chris Reardon. Chris Reardon*

*Bottom: Nigel Fearon*

## FOREWORD



Canada's national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas belong to all Canadians and offer truly Canadian experiences.

These special places make up one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and cultural heritage areas in the world.

The Government is committed to preserving our natural and cultural heritage, expanding the system of protected places and contributing to the recovery of species-at-risk. At the same time, we must continue to offer new and innovative visitor and outreach programs and activities so that more Canadians can experience Parks Canada places and learn about our environment, history and culture.

This new management plan for Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites of Canada supports this vision.

Management plans are developed through extensive consultation and input from various people and organizations, including Indigenous peoples, local and regional residents, visitors and the dedicated team at Parks Canada.

National parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas are a priority for the Government of Canada. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this plan for their commitment and spirit of co-operation.

As the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, I applaud this collaborative effort and I am pleased to approve the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan.

**Catherine McKenna**  
*Minister of Environment and Climate Change and  
Minister responsible for Parks Canada*



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*

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Daniel Watson  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Parks Canada*

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Géraldine Arsenault  
*Field Unit Superintendent*  
*Northern New Brunswick Field Unit*  
*Parks Canada*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chignecto Isthmus is the natural land bridge that connects New Brunswick to mainland Nova Scotia. A Mi'kmaw community and trade hub existed in the region long before it became an area of strategic interest for competing European powers. Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland, Fort Gaspareaux and Fort Lawrence National Historic Sites (NHS) were mainly designated because they depict the 18th century conflicts between France and Britain and the later struggle for North America. Beaubassin NHS was designated because it was the location of an important Acadian settlement. Parks Canada also recognizes and values the Indigenous stories, which are an integral part of the history and present-day importance of these sites.

Today, visitors can learn about the rich history of these national historic sites by visiting the forts, landscapes, exhibits and museum. Over the past decade, visitor attendance to the sites has significantly decreased. Some threats also affect their archeological resources and historic landscapes. Nonetheless, with the help of local stakeholders, partners and Indigenous nations, Parks Canada is well positioned to address these issues and to enhance the state of the Chignecto's National Historic Sites.

The new management plan aims to make the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites four must-see destinations presenting the region's fascinating history. Three key strategies are presented in the plan to achieve this:

- 1.0 Establishing the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites as linked, "must-see" attractions in the region

This strategy seeks to take advantage of the close proximity of the sites and their thematic links to develop a joint, mutually supportive approach for their promotion and for the renewal of visitor experiences. It is anticipated that this will result in an increase in visitation and awareness of the sites, as well as a more integrated and extensive presentation of their history.

- 2.0 Increasing collaboration with people who value the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites.

This strategy focuses on building relationships and new approaches so Indigenous peoples can tell their own stories and so local stakeholders can help contribute to the sites' protection and to the presentation of programs.

- 3.0 Improving the management, protection and presentation of the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites' cultural and natural resources.

The third strategy aims to mitigate threats to ensure the continued protection of cultural and natural resources of the sites through best management practices. As a result, it is expected that the commemorative integrity of the sites will be enhanced.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and those national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency'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.*

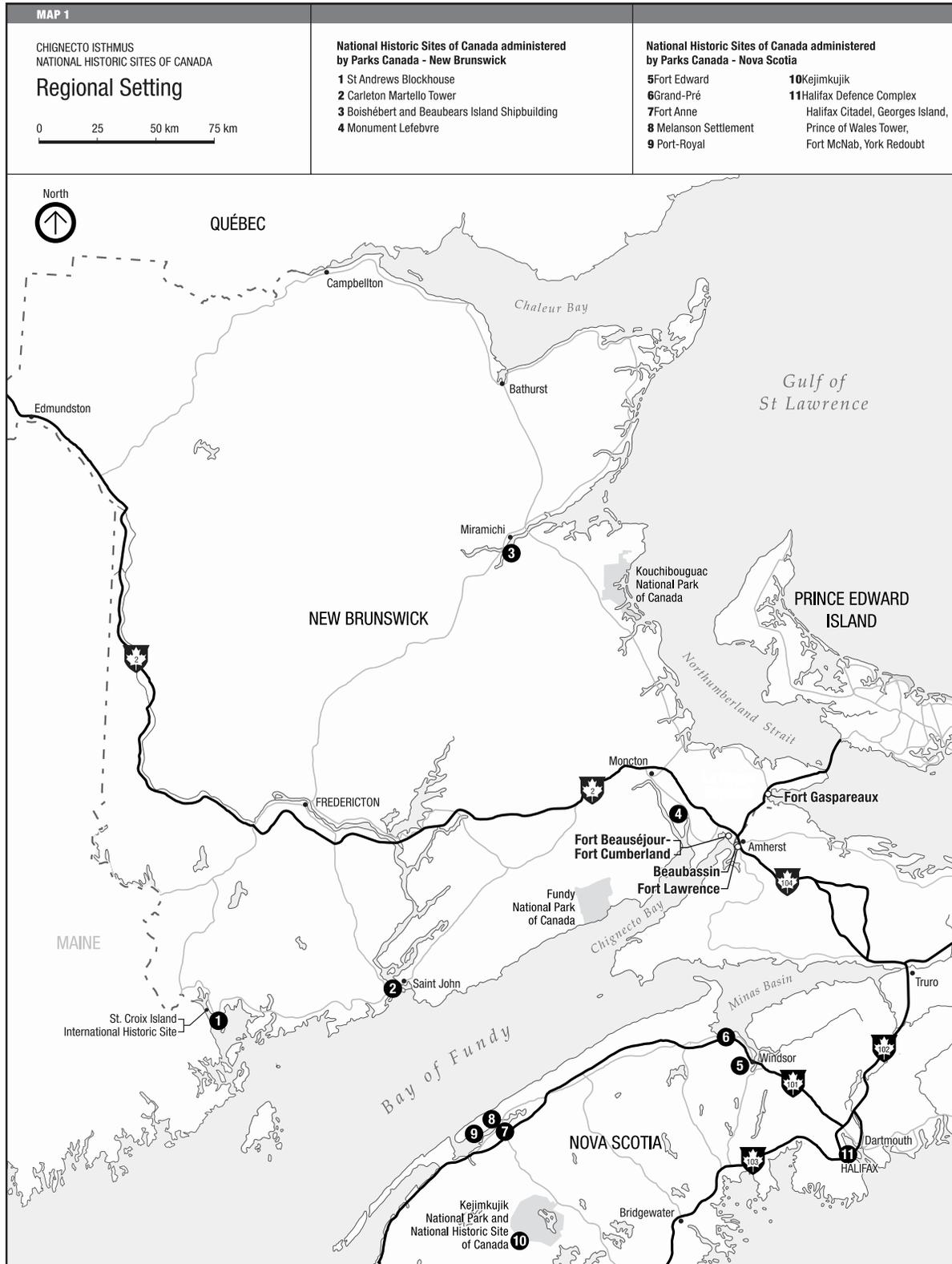
The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by the Agency. The *Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the Minister responsible for Parks Canada and tabled in Parliament, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

The Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan addresses four separate national historic sites: Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland, Beaubassin, Fort Lawrence, and Fort Gaspareaux. This joint approach to planning is based on the historical and thematic link between these sites as well as their geographic proximity on the Isthmus of Chignecto.

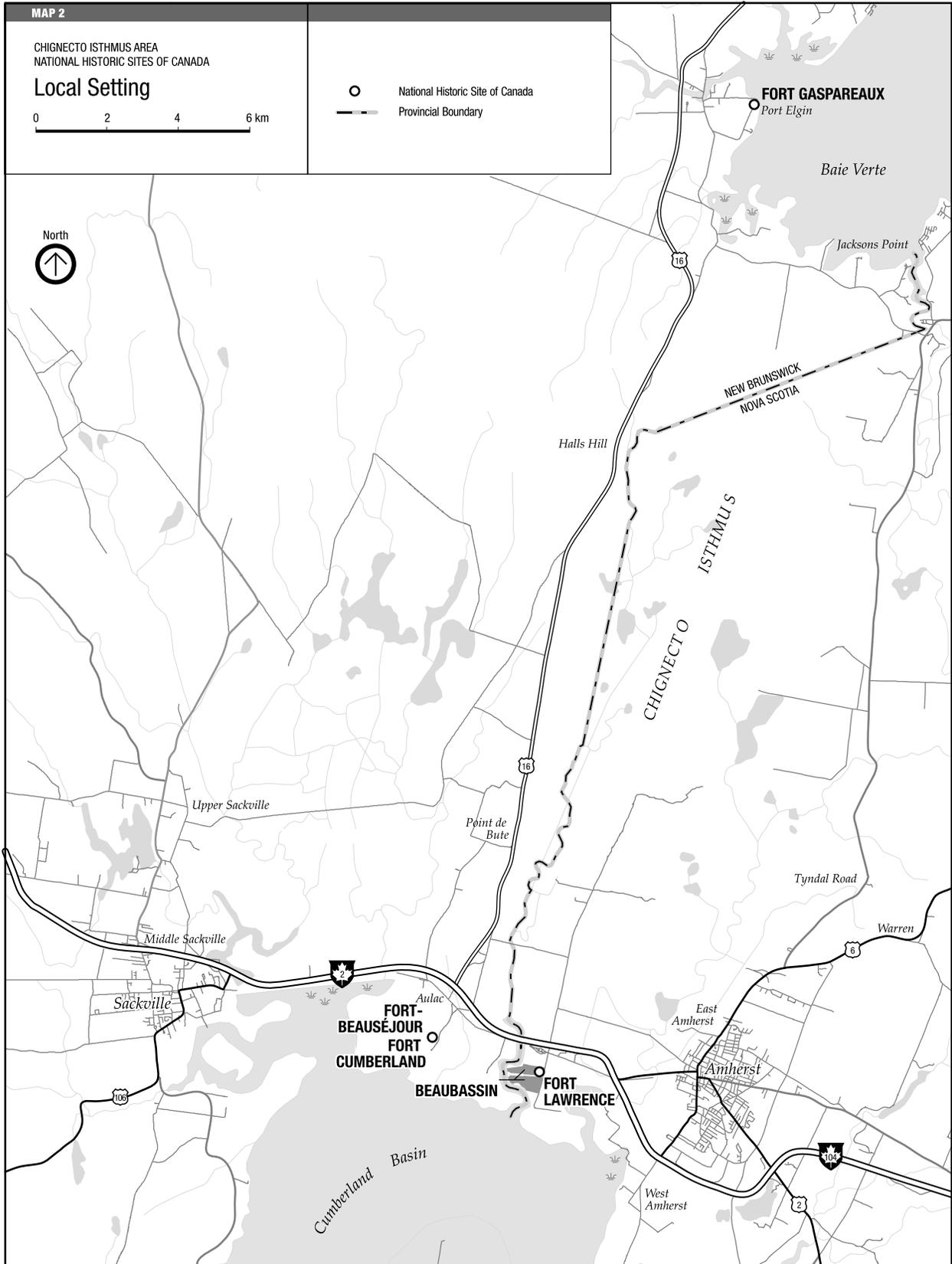
Indigenous peoples, partners, stakeholders and the public were involved in the preparation of the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic sites. The plan sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan, to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites in years to come.

Map 1: Regional Setting



Map 2: Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland, Beaubassin, Fort Lawrence and Fort Gaspareaux



## 2.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF CHIGNECTO ISTHMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES

The four national historic sites addressed in this Management Plan which are historically and thematically linked are situated in the *Sikniktewaq* district of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. This region was already an important traditional trade and travel hub for the Mi'kmaq prior to the establishment of the European settlements and forts.

Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland National Historic Site (designated in 1920), which lies within the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve, is of significant national importance because of the role it played in the protection of the strategic interests of the Isthmus of Chignecto during the mid-18th century Anglo-French struggle to control North America. Acadians were assembled at the Fort for deportation from 1755 to 1762, and the Fort was later used to disperse a military thrust into Nova Scotia in 1776, during the American Revolution.

Beaubassin National Historic Site (designated in 2005) is nationally significant for being the location of a major Acadian settlement on the Isthmus of Chignecto which played a pivotal role in the 17th and 18th century geopolitical struggle between the British and French empires.

Fort Lawrence National Historic Site (designated in 1923), which lies within the Beaubassin National Historic Site boundaries, is nationally significant for being built by British troops for the defence of the Isthmus of Chignecto and abandoned in 1756, after the capture of Fort Beauséjour in 1755.

Fort Gaspareaux National Historic Site (designated in 1920), renamed Fort Monckton when it became British after the fall of Fort Beauséjour, is nationally significant based on its role in the struggle between France and Britain for North America in the 1750s.

## 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

Planning for the future of national historic sites must take into consideration the state of the sites, issues and opportunities affecting the sites, and relationships with key partners and stakeholders and their interests. The following were some of the considerations that informed the development of this management plan.

The last tabled management plan for Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland National Historic Site (which included Fort Gaspareaux) dates back to 1997. A thorough review and development of a new management plan, including developing a vision and new strategies, are required under the *Parks Canada Agency Act*.

Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland National Historic Site experienced a decrease in visitation between 2010 and 2014 of 25% during the operational months of July and August. The site became self-guided and its operational season was reduced in 2012. The strategic geographic location and presence of a strong and passionate stakeholder base provide opportunities to increase visitors and visitor experiences.

Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland National Historic Site's archaeological resources and landscape features are threatened within the forest and the densely vegetated landscape zones, and lack interpretation in the context of the British period. Moreover, Fort Gaspareaux National Historic Site's in situ resources are threatened due to erosion and

storm surges, incremental vegetation growth, “artifact scavenging” and vandalism. There are opportunities to reduce threats to cultural resources through the development of appropriate monitoring and management tools and programs.

Finally, the region has a rich Indigenous history which is only conveyed to a limited extent by the current interpretation tools. There is an opportunity to share the history of the Indigenous peoples in the Chignecto Isthmus region, which will help build a stronger relationship with and between communities, diversify the visitor offer at the sites, and reach new audiences.

## 4.0 VISION

This aspirational vision set out below describes the desired future state of the four Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites, looking ahead 15 to 20 years.

*As visitors from across Canada and beyond marvel at the breathtaking landscape of the Chignecto Isthmus and its vast expanse of dykelands, they are captivated by four must-see destinations offering an array of meaningful experiences and learning opportunities.*

*Located within Mi'kmaki, the ancestral and unceded lands of the Mi'kmaw people, Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland is recognized as the gateway for a journey of inspired discovery to the thematically-linked sites of Beaubassin, Fort Lawrence, and Fort Gaspereaux. Engaging interpretive experiences immerse an increasing number of visitors in the region's fascinating history. As they explore the sites, they are moved by the stories linked to the Indigenous strategic trade pathways and pre-colonial hub of activity, the thriving Acadian settlements, and mounting rivalry between the British and French empires to control North America.*

*Active involvement of Indigenous peoples, communities, partners and stakeholders foster a sense of pride and personal connection to these special places. Careful management of the sites' cultural and natural resources ensure their continued protection and presentation as part of Parks Canada's national network of Canadian treasures.*

## 5.0 KEY STRATEGIES

Key strategies are broad management approaches that will direct management activities over the next 10 years, working toward achieving the vision for the national historic sites. Each key strategy has corresponding objectives and targets. The targets are designed to measure the success in achieving objectives over the implementation period.

**Key Strategy 1: Establishing the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites as linked, “must-see” attractions in the region.**

This strategy focuses on attracting audiences to the four national historic sites. The sites benefit from strategic locations along the TransCanada Highway which provide important opportunities to reach out to potential visitors. Their close proximity and thematic links allows for a joint approach to promotion and the development of a holistic, mutually-supportive and meaningful visitor experience, with Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland acting as the gateway.

The strategy seeks to:

- Increase visitation;
- Diversify markets and increase target markets;
- Renew and diversify experiences and respond to changing expectations of visitors;
- Raise awareness of the national historic sites.

**Objective 1.1:** Visitation to the national historic sites has increased.

**Targets**

1. By 2025, annual paid visitation at Fort Beauséjour-Fort Cumberland has increased by 21% (total of 1,250 visitor increase) through increased promotion efforts and renewed on-site experiences developed in conjunction with partners and stakeholders.
2. By 2025, visitation by young families and young adults (urban youth and millennials) has increased by 10%, and visitation of Indigenous peoples has also increased by the same percentage.

**Objective 1.2:** New integrated and culturally balanced visitor experiences presenting varied historical understandings are provided at the national historic sites.

**Targets**

1. By 2021, all four national historic sites are historically and thematically linked through a variety of experiences.
2. By 2021, the history of the Indigenous land use and occupancy and the history of the British period in the region have been expanded upon to create a better balance at the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites.
3. By 2021, at least one major event in collaboration with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party is held annually at one of the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites.

**Objective 1.3:** Awareness of the national historic sites has increased.

**Targets**

1. There are at least four positive media requests or coverage per year of one or more of the national historic sites.
2. By 2021, visits to the national historic sites’ web pages has increased by 20%.

**Key Strategy 2: Increasing collaboration with people who value the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites.**

This strategy focuses on building relationships with Indigenous peoples, local organizations and people who value the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites. The sites benefit from a passionate stakeholder base whose engagement can help foster support for the continued protection of the sites while broadening the visitor offer and reaching new audiences.

The strategy seeks to:

- Increase the role and presence of Indigenous peoples; and foster approaches / opportunities where Indigenous peoples can tell their own stories at the national historic sites;
- Strengthen partnerships with other local communities and stakeholders.

**Objective 2.1:** Indigenous involvement and presence on the national historic sites has increased.

**Targets**

1. By 2020, at least one Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Canada and a local Indigenous partner is established addressing collaboration on events, presentation and research at one or more of the national historic sites.
2. By 2020, at least one annual event celebrating Indigenous heritage is held at a national historic site, in partnership with Indigenous partners where the stories are developed and presented in collaboration with, and by, Indigenous peoples.
3. With the recognition of existing gaps regarding the knowledge of Indigenous history and culture in the greater region including Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites, Parks Canada will work with Indigenous peoples and other partners towards the development of an Indigenous Knowledge Study over the span of this management plan's implementation.

**Objective 2.2:** Strong partnerships are established with local communities, interest groups and stakeholders.

**Targets**

1. At least one stakeholder information-exchange meeting is held annually and co-hosted by Parks Canada and local Indigenous peoples.
2. By 2025, two new partnerships facilitating the development and presentation of programs, events and research have been established.

Key Strategy 3: Improving the management, protection and presentation of the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites' cultural and natural resources.

This strategy focuses on various tools and programs that are available to mitigate threats and ensure the protection of cultural and natural resources (commemorative integrity) of the sites for future generations.

The strategy seeks to:

- Improve the condition of cultural resources; and
- Encourage the development of updated tools and programs to ensure appropriate management of cultural and natural resources.

**Objective 3.1:** The condition of cultural resources is improved.

Target

1. By 2025, 100% of cultural resource assets are in fair to good condition.

**Objective 3.2:** Tools and programs are developed to ensure the continued best management of cultural and natural resources.

Targets

1. By 2023, all four national historic sites have Commemorative Integrity Statements that will include Indigenous perspectives.
2. By 2023, best management practices have been adopted for vegetation management and the management of natural and cultural resources. The documentation and implementation of Indigenous principles of Netukulimk (preservation/conservation) and Etuaptmumk (Two Eyed Seeing) is commenced in resource planning and management.

## 6.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with *The Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (2010)*, a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is conducted on all management plans. The purpose of SEA is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals to support environmentally-sound decision making. Individual projects undertaken to implement management statement objectives at the site will be evaluated separately to determine if a project-level impact assessment is required under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012*, or successor legislation.

The scope of the assessment included the area within the boundary of the four historic sites. The time frame considered was ten years from the date of anticipated plan coming into effect. In addition to the cultural resources, environmental components of note at the sites include: use of habitat features by migratory birds for nesting and presence or potential presence of several species of concern:

Fort Beauséjour and Fort Cumberland National Historic Site:

- Short-eared owl
- Potentially one or more bat species listed as endangered on Schedule 1 of SARA.

Beaubassin National Historic Site:

- Three species of concern listed as threatened by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), but not listed under SARA (Species at Risk Act): the bobolink, the eastern meadowlark, and the barn swallow.

There are strategies and objectives identified in the management plan that could potentially result in negative environmental effects. In particular, the objectives and targets related to the increasing visitation and site use for events can increase the damage to cultural resources. The strategy “Improving the management, protection and presentation of the Chignecto Isthmus National Historic Sites cultural and natural resources” may have indirect adverse effects. For example, physical work with machinery will be needed to do some wall repairs and vegetation will be cut to maintain and improve the condition of cultural resources. In general, potential adverse effects may include damage to cultural resources such as buildings or other structures and landscape features, an increased risk of collection or vandalism of archaeological resources, damage to natural resources through trampling, increased water use requirements and waste output. Other possible negative effects are on species that use vegetation to hide their nests from predators. However, these effects can be minimized through maintenance and continued assessment of buildings and other resources of cultural importance, guiding visitors use through signage or programming, and managing visitor use in sensitive areas. Potential effects from projects related to conservation and protection of cultural resources can be minimized by following existing guidelines, and conducting project-level impact assessments when necessary.

The public and Indigenous peoples were consulted on the management plan and a summary of this SEA in February and March 2016. Official letters were sent to the 15 First Nation communities in New Brunswick, the 13 First Nation communities in Nova Scotia, KMKNO (*Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office*, representing Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia) and MTI (*Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn incorporated*, representing Mi'kmaw communities in New Brunswick). No concerns were raised about the SEA. The elements discussed were taken into consideration in making adjustments to the strategies and objectives of the proposed management plan. Through this

consultation, many operational suggestions, not included under the current format of the management plan, were brought forward. These suggestions and ideas will be considered, at the site level by managers when planning for the operational seasons

The Plan supports the 2016-2019 *Federal Sustainable Development Strategies* of the 12<sup>th</sup> goal: “Connecting Canadians with Nature”. There are no significant negative environmental effects anticipated from implementation of the management plan.