Draft Management Plan for the Chambly Canal National Historic Site
The Chambly Canal National Historic Site

Located in the heart of the Montérégie, the Chambly Canal connects the cities of Chambly and St.-Jean-sur-Richelieu, passing through Carignan and Richelieu. Historically, the Canal contributed to the economic growth of the city of Chambly and, more particularly, to that of St.-Jean-sur-Richelieu which was the hub of maritime, road and rail transport in the 19th century. The Canal also contains the remains of Fort-Sainte-Thérèse as well as other cultural resources that bear witness to the wealth of its history.

Today, in addition to the nearly twenty-kilometre-long waterway, which allows vessels to bypass the Richelieu River rapids while passing through a diversity of landscapes, the Canal also offers a multifunctional trail located on the old towpath. In 2017, nearly 260,000 people frequented the site and 1,700 boats passed through its locks.

A New Management Plan

The management plan aims to establish long-term priorities for the management and operation of the historic site. This document is developed in consultation with interested groups and individuals.

The last Chambly Canal National Historic Site management plan was published in 2007. Since then, the ongoing transformation of the environment around the Chambly Canal has led Parks Canada to reflect on the means and strategies that will encourage a concerted
management approach for this historic site. Moreover, the recent
discovery, on Fryer Island, of the vestiges of Fort Sainte-Thérèse,
a distinct national historic site located within the limits of the
Chambly Canal National Historic Site, requires the establishment
of specific management guidelines for the coming years to ensure
its conservation and development.

This draft plan proposes a vision, strategies and key objectives
for the next 10 to 15 years. Its implementation will be subject to an
ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to report on the progress made
and to adapt, if necessary, the established priorities.

**Today’s Canal**

Crossing municipal territories with distinct characteristics and
development visions, the management of the Chambly Canal
presents unique challenges. In recent years, the Chambly Canal
clientele has evolved and its expectations have changed, particularly
with respect to the services offered. Thanks to federal investments
of 50 million dollars over five years, in 2015 Parks Canada began
work to improve the condition of infrastructure and buildings of
the Chambly Canal, in addition to maintaining its physical integrity.
However, the preservation of historical elements as well as the
maintenance of the site remain significant challenges.

**Renewal of the Historic Site**

Parks Canada has developed a vision for the renewal of the historic
site. This vision is based on the active participation of organizations,
partners and volunteers to provide services and diversified, quality
activities to make the site a key recreational destination in the
Montérégie region. The Canal also aspires to become a lever of
socio-economic development for the local communities. This vision
also includes the development of the Fort-Sainte-Thérèse National
Historic Site as a distinctive attraction located within the perimeter
of the Chambly Canal.

The strategies and objectives that will contribute to achieving this
vision are summarized below.
Strategy 1

The Chambly Canal: a heritage, surroundings and cultural landscapes to preserve and enhance

The goal of this strategy is to protect and to showcase the built heritage, remarkable surroundings and cultural landscapes of the Chambly Canal. It is intended to ensure that the state of the Canal’s historical components as well as the efforts dedicated to their preservation reflect the importance of this engineering work. The implementation of distinctive installations will promote the characteristics that forge the identity of the Chambly Canal National Historic Site and will contribute to strengthen its reputation as well as that of the Parks Canada network.

These objectives include:

- Improving the condition and integrity of the Canal’s historic infrastructure;
- Identifying and showcasing the poles, sectors and cultural landscapes of the Canal.

Strategy 2

An improved and diversified visitor experience from one end of the Canal to the other

This strategy aims to improve the services and activities available along the Chambly Canal in order to enhance the experience of visitors and recreational boaters. Improving the visitor experience will be supported by the communities surrounding the Canal to ensure a better distribution of services as well as enhanced experiences and activities, to better meet the expectations of different clienteles.

To do so, the following interventions are put forth:

- Developing a concept of destination sites and rest areas along the entire canal;
• Providing the main rest areas with basic services (washrooms, drinking fountains, picnic areas, etc.);
• Improving pedestrian and cyclist access to the site;
• In collaboration with the community, creating new thematic routes (cycling, pedestrian, and nautical) in the surrounding municipalities;
• Updating the historical interpretation activities and tools.

Strategy 3
A source of pride and benefits for the community
This strategy aims to increase the commitment to the Chambly Canal and its ownership by the local community. The establishment of a strategy focused on partnerships, agreements and business opportunities with the community will enhance the attractiveness of the site as regards the visitor experience, create visitor loyalty and generate benefits in the surrounding communities.

The proposed targets are the following:
• Supporting citizen initiatives with regards to the Canal;
• Creating, in collaboration with the municipalities and the local community, an annual signature event;
• Creating dedicated spaces primarily intended for local community activities.
A Targeted Approach for Fort-Sainte-Thérèse

A specific management approach for the Fort-Sainte-Thérèse National Historic Site is put forward because of its location within the limits of the Chambly Canal, as well as the exceptional natural setting of Fryer Island, where the fort is located, the significant commemoration potential of the site and the strong sense of belonging displayed by the local community, especially by its commitment to the development and promotion of the site. The specific approach to the Fort-Sainte-Thérèse National Historic Site, integrated into the management plan of the Chambly Canal
National Historic Site, is intended to make it a distinctive and an accessible site along the canal, as well as a distinct point of interest for visitors and citizens. The strategy to achieve this requires the collaboration of community partners and organizations as well as a concerted vision of development.

The following objectives are part of the strategy:

- Protecting and enhancing the exceptional natural setting of Fryer Island;
- Developing new interpretation activities at Fort Sainte-Thérèse commemorating the site’s history;
- Promoting access to the historic site in collaboration with the organizations, volunteers, as well as the local and business communities.

**Share your Opinion with Us!**

Parks Canada invites interested parties, including visitors, residents of the adjacent municipalities, partners and organizations, to comment on the proposals contained in this draft management plan.

**How to participate?**

1. **By participating in the public meeting:**
   - November 22nd at 7 p.m. at Auberge Harris, located at 576 rue Champlain, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.

2. **By completing the questionnaire:**
   - Online at consultationscanal.ca (until December 3rd).

For any comments or information concerning the review of the draft management plan, please contact us by email at uvnq.communications@pc.gc.ca or by mail at the following address: 1899 boulevard de Périgny, Chambly (Quebec) J3L 4C3.