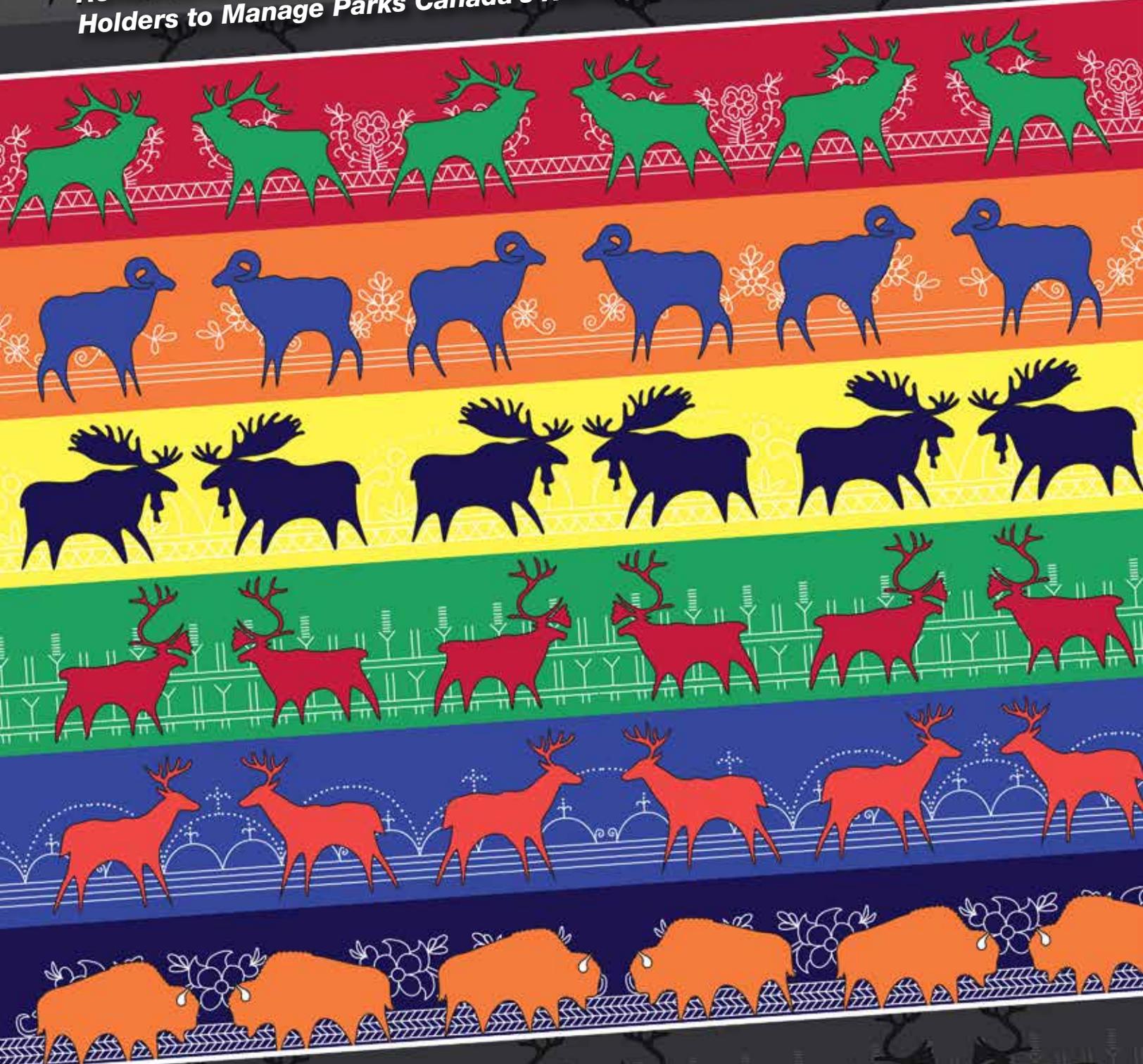
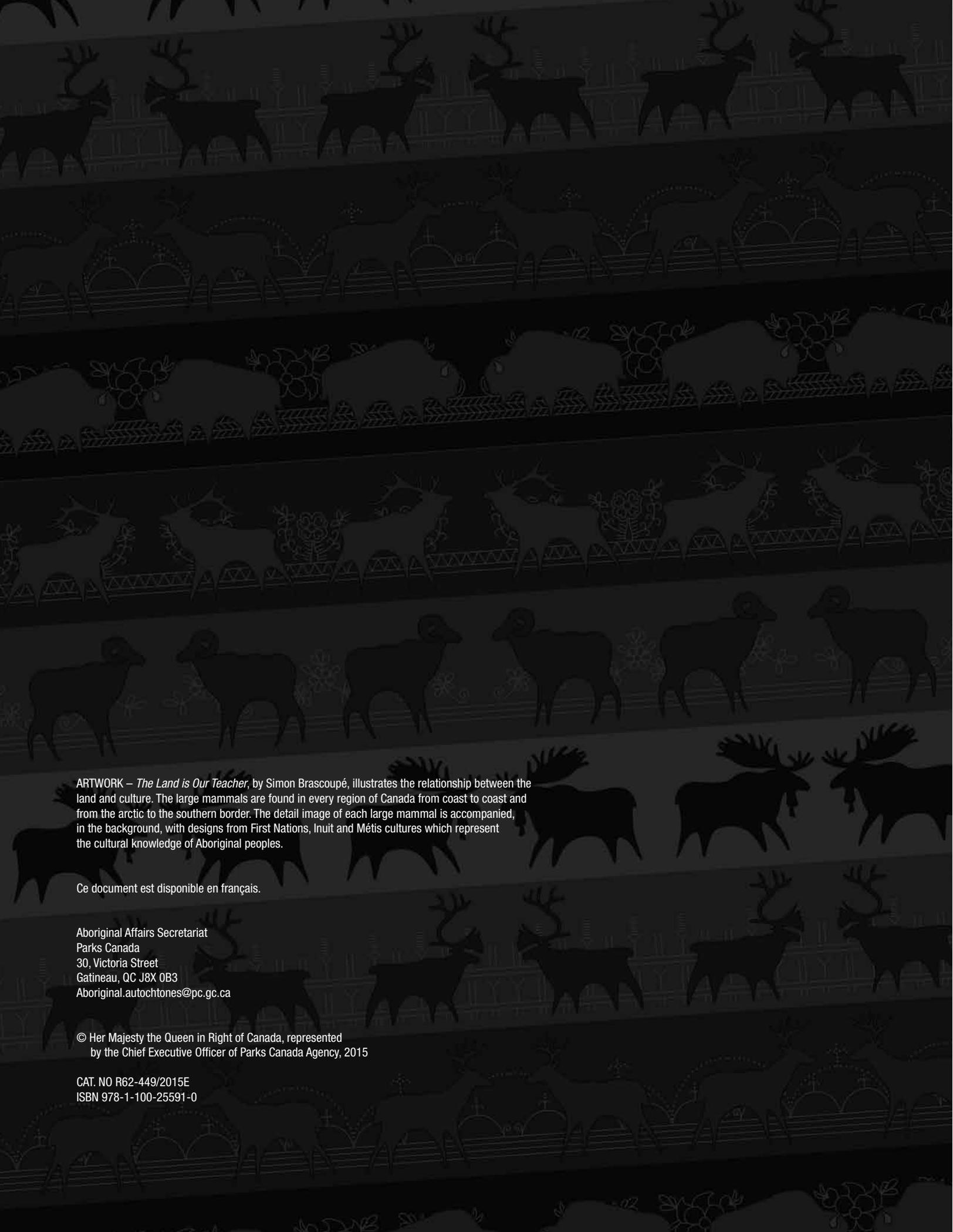




The Land is Our Teacher

Reflections and Stories on Working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to Manage Parks Canada's Heritage Places





ARTWORK – *The Land is Our Teacher*, by Simon Brascoupé, illustrates the relationship between the land and culture. The large mammals are found in every region of Canada from coast to coast and from the arctic to the southern border. The detail image of each large mammal is accompanied, in the background, with designs from First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures which represent the cultural knowledge of Aboriginal peoples.

Ce document est disponible en français.

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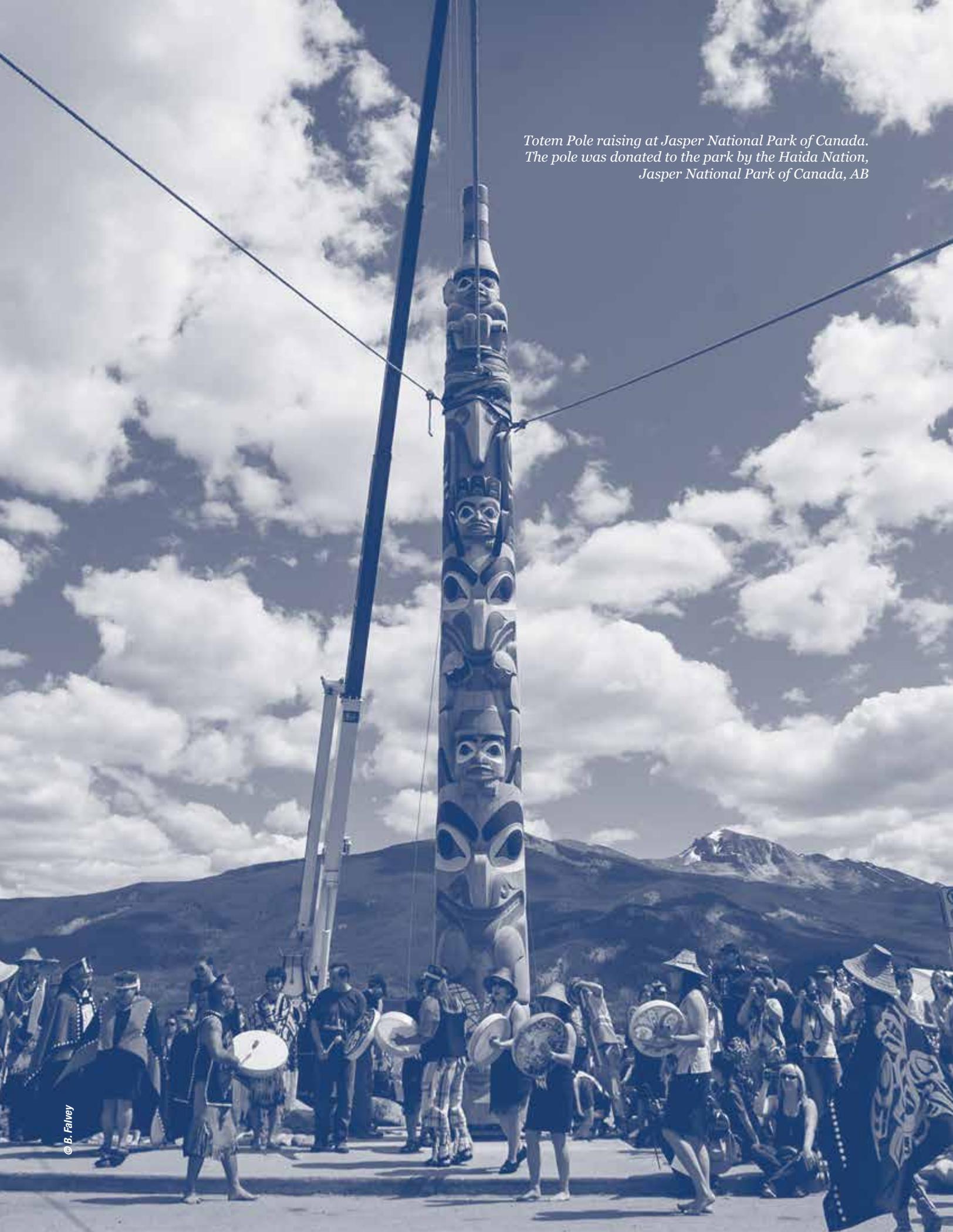
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Table of Contents

Preface	1
A. Introduction	2
B. How It Used to Be	5
a) Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge: Is a Definition Really Necessary?	6
b) The Myth of the Pristine Wilderness	6
C. How It Is Now – Stories on working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders	10
a) Establishing Protected Heritage Places	12
i. Establishing a Cultural Landscape – Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site	12
ii. Exploring the role of a National Park in a community’s development – Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve	15
iii. Connecting to the mountains as an Inuit homeland – Torngat Mountains National Park	18
b) Connection to the Landscape	21
i. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit at its best – Finding the lost Franklin Expedition ship HMS <i>Erebus</i>	21
ii. Haida Gwaii Watchmen Project – Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site	25
iii. Preserving Métis culture through women’s Traditional Knowledge – Batoche National Historic Site	27
iv. Pilot Project in Gaining Experience in the Participation of the Development of the Management Plan – Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve	29
v. Voices of Akwesasne project – Thousand Island National Park	31
c) Continuation of Traditional Activities	34
i. Healing Broken Connections Project – Kluane National Park and Reserve	34
ii. The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Knowledge) Projects – Nunavut National Parks	37
iii. Calling all Drums Pow Wow and Métis Heritage Camping – Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site	40
iv. Atlantic Canada Eel Project – Kouchibouguac, Fundy and other Maritime national parks	42
D. How It Could Be	44
a) Partners in Protecting Heritage Places	45
b) Best Practices for Working With Aboriginal Knowledge Holders	49
c) Best Practices for including Traditional Knowledge in Heritage Place Management and Resource Conservation	56
Conclusion	59
Biography	60

*Totem Pole raising at Jasper National Park of Canada.
The pole was donated to the park by the Haida Nation,
Jasper National Park of Canada, AB*



Preface

As Parks Canada’s Chief Executive Officer, I have the privilege of working with a team of dedicated people in protecting and representing our country’s most treasured heritage places. In carrying out our responsibilities and our mandate, we work in collaboration with a number of partners, including Aboriginal peoples.

We have decided to celebrate our special collaboration with Aboriginal partners with reflections and stories that describe how we work with Aboriginal peoples to meet our vision and to demonstrate our organisation’s national and international leadership in the management of protected heritage areas.

The concept and nature of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) at Parks Canada has evolved over time. Like most western-based organisations, we first looked at the knowledge based on the ecology (Traditional Ecological Knowledge — TEK) of the places we manage and did not realize the cultural and spiritual connections it also integrated. Even though we had a strong record of working in partnerships with Aboriginal peoples on oral history projects, we could count the very limited and isolated projects where Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge was seen as an important and integral part of our research commitments.

In the years since, Parks Canada has been building and maintaining stronger relationships with Aboriginal peoples. As we learn from one another, we have come to realise that Traditional Ecological Knowledge is a limited concept. We’ve also learned that “including” Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in our management practices is as elusive an endeavour as trying to master the various definitions and applications of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.



Alan Latourelle listens to an interpreter at the Traditional Huron Site in Wendake, QC

We have been fortunate to have established many of our heritage places with the support of Aboriginal groups. These new heritage places did not come with a “how-to” manual. What they did come with was even more important — the collaboration of Aboriginal partners who strive to help us understand the ecological, cultural and spiritual significance of these special places.

Our understanding and our view on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge has shifted. We understand that, to better manage these special places for all Canadians, we must work with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders who hold the cultural, ecological and spiritual connections to these places. We realize that Aboriginal Knowledge Holders must play an important role in identifying the ways and circumstances in which their knowledge will be applied in heritage place management.

By strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal partners and including Aboriginal Knowledge Holders in our projects, we become better stewards of these special places, now and for future generations.

Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada Agency

A. Introduction

Mi'kmaq boat in Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada, NS



In the past few decades, Parks Canada has been innovating to find ways to strengthen its relationships with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada.

There is going to come a day, and that day is probably now, that the park will not run without First Nation support.

— Parks Canada Team Member



As one of the major land and water managers for the government of Canada, Parks Canada works with over 300 Aboriginal communities across Canada. Aboriginal communities are often Parks Canada's closest neighbors and natural partners since most heritage places¹ are located in remote areas. In fact, over 50 percent of the current area contained within Canada's national heritage place system has been preserved as a result of Aboriginal peoples² putting aside lands through a land claim process for the creation of a heritage place. Consequently, of the lands Parks Canada manages, over 65 percent are through some form of formal or informal relationship with one or more Aboriginal partners.

In the past few decades, Parks Canada has been innovating to find ways to strengthen its relationships with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada. For example, in 1999, Parks Canada set up an Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat dedicated to helping build strong relationships with Aboriginal peoples and Parks Canada. The Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat provides national leadership, direction and support within the Agency on matters relating to its continually evolving relationships with Aboriginal peoples. Additionally, Parks Canada established an Aboriginal Consultative Committee, in 2002, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer.

The members, Elders, Chiefs, and community leaders, provide unfettered advice and guidance to Parks Canada senior management on various issues pertaining to heritage place conservation

This document is part of a series of tools that have been developed by Parks Canada's Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat.

Along with various clarification bulletins, we invite you to read other tools including such documents as: *Working Together: Our stories — Best Practices and Lessons Learned in Aboriginal Engagement (2011)*, *Best Practices in the Use of Aboriginal Languages at Parks Canada (2013)*, *A Handbook for Parks Canada Employees on Consulting and Accommodation with Aboriginal Peoples (2014)*, *Aboriginal Peoples Open Door Program (2014)*, *Our Shared Learning: Building Effective Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples (2014)*, *Promising Pathways: Strengthening Engagement and Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples in Parks Canada Heritage Places (2014)*.

For more information, visit
www.pc.gc.ca/eng/agen/aa/saa-aas.aspx



and presentation. Individual parks and historic sites have also been making a concerted effort to develop genuine and mutually beneficial working relationships with their Aboriginal neighbors through multiple and diverse conservation, education, visitor experience and employment initiatives.

¹ Parks Canada's heritage places include national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas.

² In this document, Aboriginal peoples refer to First Nations (Indians), Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada as defined in *The Constitution Act (1982)*. Reference to "Indigenous peoples" means Indigenous peoples of the world.

In a hundred years from now, our national parks might be the only place left where traditional activities are still occurring. It really shines a light on the role that Parks Canada can play; there are actually going to be places where we protect the traditional economy and we manage them in order to make sure that harvesting activities can continue. That is so different from where we were twenty or fifty years ago.

— Parks Canada Team Member



In the past three decades, Parks Canada has worked hard to repair broken relationships with Aboriginal communities and is committed to leading the way forward in terms of working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders. Parks Canada recognizes that Aboriginal peoples' understanding of the environment, years of practical experience living in local places and observing natural processes and generations of collective wisdom can greatly enhance the Agency's understanding of heritage places. The knowledge possessed by Aboriginal Knowledge Holders helps to better manage heritage places and this can only be achieved through effective and empowering relationships.

The future of the Parks Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples is promising and hopeful. The Agency would like to celebrate and honour these relationships by sharing success stories through the voices of team members and Aboriginal partners so others may learn and Parks Canada may continue to enhance these relationships.

The stories found in this publication draw from the experience Parks Canada team members have had in successfully managing heritage places and in developing programs and initiatives in collaboration with Aboriginal partners. They are designed to stimulate ideas through reflections, quotes, practical examples of practice and lessons learned, as well as to demonstrate best practices in establishing and maintaining partnerships. The document also provides a collection of selected case studies that celebrate experiences and successes that will help us to better understand challenges and lessons learned in working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders and communities in a Parks Canada context.

This publication has been designed to celebrate those relationships and help Parks Canada to continue to strengthen its approach to working effectively and meaningfully with Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Holders. What has been accomplished so far is remarkable; however, when looked at as a continuum, Parks Canada is at the beginning of a transformative journey.

B. How It Used to Be

Children assemble a teepee with a guide-interpreter in Grasslands National Park of Canada, SK



© K. Hogarth

Concepts of traditional knowledge are simple and complex, accessible and mysterious, tangible and intangible.



Traditional Knowledge is how we live every aspect of our lives; it's in our language, our culture, our spirituality. To talk about these separately would not do justice or respect the grass roots teaching we received from grandmothers and grandfathers who have left us. It's [Traditional Knowledge] here to stay. We can work together but no one can change us.

— Aboriginal Partner



a) Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge: Is a Definition Really Necessary?

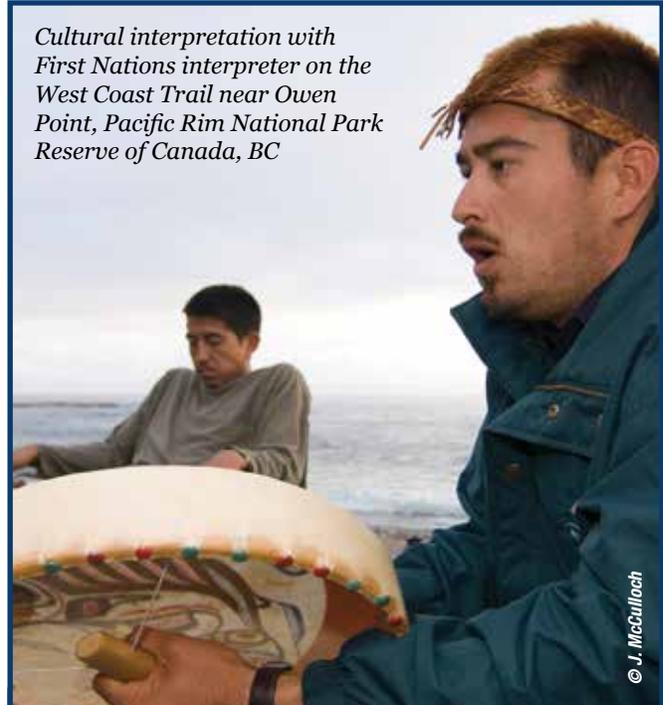
Concepts of traditional knowledge are simple and complex, accessible and mysterious, tangible and intangible. While the perfect definition of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge may have a certain appeal for some people, a definition is not necessary for Parks Canada to move forward on integrating traditional knowledge into parks management. Instead, “*focus should be placed on the **relationships** necessary to work with ... holders rather than to reinvent appropriate definitions.*” (Langdon 2003: p.7)

Parks Canada believes that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge rests with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders and that integrating this knowledge into Parks Canada operations and decision-making is first and foremost a process of building relationships and working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders. Use of the word **traditional** in this instance is not intended to imply **something old**, but to describe something as **belonging to a tradition**; Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is dynamic, living and adaptive.

b) The Myth of the Pristine Wilderness

Historically, heritage places were seen as pristine landscapes, untouched by humans, which needed to be protected from extensive development. Humans were thought to be a negative influence on the landscape and the idea that humans had, for thousands of years, managed the landscape was not seen as an added value. Environmental thinking often ignored or overlooked Aboriginal people's special relationships to the land and their unique roles in conservation. This had a negative impact on Aboriginal communities, as it was completely opposite to their

Cultural interpretation with First Nations interpreter on the West Coast Trail near Owen Point, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve of Canada, BC



5 Things National Parks are (Paul Kopas 2007):

- 1) Symbolic institutions, producing and reflecting ideology
- 2) Instruments of economic development
- 3) Instruments of environmental policy
- 4) Human landscapes, places where people live in the environment
- 5) Heritage artifacts

world view. The result is that some heritage places are now unhealthy because of the removal of Aboriginal peoples who had managed their territories sustainably for thousands of years.

The creation of protected areas has been a central element in conservation and preservation efforts since the beginning of the 19th century. From their inception, heritage places were thought of as areas of land managed for the benefit of future generations but to the exclusion of residents, including the Aboriginal communities who lived on or made use of the resources in the region (Colchester 2004). Canada's system of heritage places actually reflects a century of changing ideas about the natural environment and initially, Canada's national parks were about giving government control over natural amenities and about the spectacle of wilderness (Kopas 2007, pp.1).

Within this larger cultural narrative, it is vital to recognize that "wilderness" is a relative term and it perpetuates a Judo-Christian view that there is a dichotomy between humans and nature. Aboriginal peoples tend to see the world through a different lens and include humans and their reciprocal relationships with land, plants, and animals, the Creator and all of Creation in their conceptualizations of the environment (Whyte 2013: p.4).

From a historical perspective, there are several examples of national parks being established where Aboriginal peoples were forcefully removed from their homes and were forbidden from carrying out traditional activities in these areas. As a result, this practice had detrimental economic, cultural, social and spiritual impact on Aboriginal communities

and has been a cause of long-standing conflict between Aboriginal peoples and Parks Canada.

By the 1980s and 1990s, there began to be an acknowledgement and acceptance of human presence in the environment (Kopas 2007: p.1). It was understood that humans had always been part of the natural world as active managers of the ecosystem and that the health of heritage places was dependent on the role human beings play in the natural cycle of life.

In 2000, the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks, which held extensive consultations with Aboriginal peoples, recognized that in order to bridge the existing ideological and cultural gaps between Aboriginal peoples and Parks Canada, priority should be given to the return of traditional activities in heritage places, such as the harvesting of plants and animals, supported by a strong cultural conservation ethic based on shared values. *"Human habitation throughout Canada long predates the creation of national parks. The naturalized knowledge, and traditional uses, culture and values of Aboriginal peoples were once as much a part of the ecosystems as water, vegetation, landscape or wildlife. Until recently, national parks' creation and ongoing activities have largely ignored the Aboriginal human aspect of park ecology. As a result, naturalized knowledge and values are now generally lacking in national parks. This ignorance of naturalized knowledge has contributed to the decline of ecological integrity in many parks."* (Parks Canada 2000)

I was working with one of the elders to learn my own language because, to truly understand the depth of what the elders were trying to share with me, I needed to understand the knowledge system, not just simple translation. At one point we talked about "wild" or "wilderness" in the Parks Canada context and the elders sat together for a day and a half and they were talking and talking and they could not find a word in our language for "wild" and "wilderness", there was only home. It was just an "ah-ha" moment for us who got to listen to the deliberations and understand — "oh, that's how they view the world."

— Parks Canada Team Member



For Aboriginal peoples, nature and culture are intertwined where, in the history of Parks Canada, its nature and Aboriginal or even local cultures were never part of the dialogue. Now, we include the point of view of Aboriginal peoples, such as the place names, as we realise it's all interlinked.

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



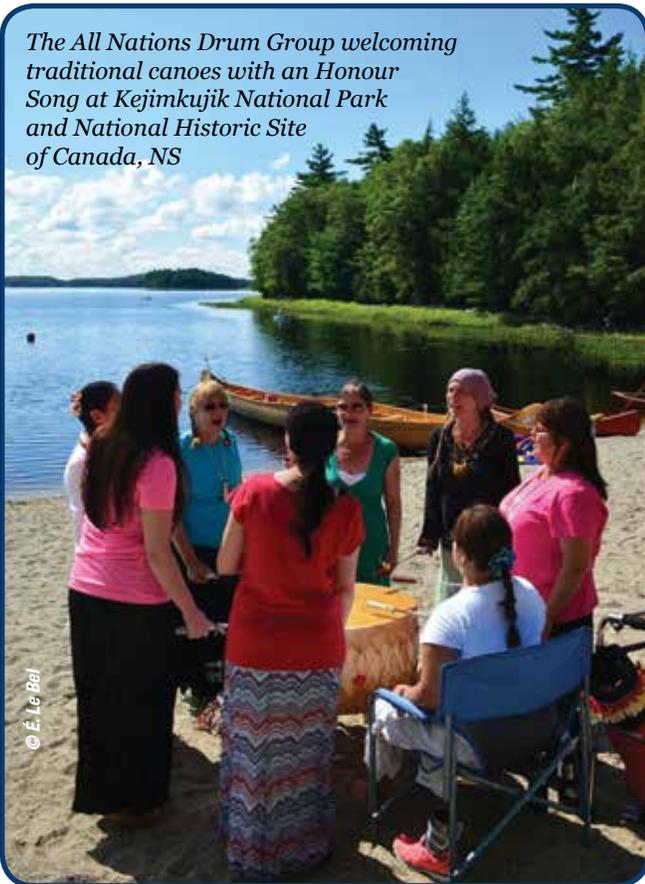
Today, a number of global organizations — including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank — are increasingly linking global sustainability to a greater awareness of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples. More attention is now being given to respecting cultural values as an essential source of biodiversity and to the need to include Indigenous and local communities in management decisions affecting them (WCPA 2004: p.1).

Parks Canada has been at the forefront of a worldwide shift in favor of including Aboriginal peoples' voices in policy development and involvement in heritage areas (Kopas 2007: p. 121). In this climate of increasing recognition, respect and appreciation, Parks Canada continues to lead the way forward in developing practices and strategies for working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to protect places of both ecological and cultural importance.

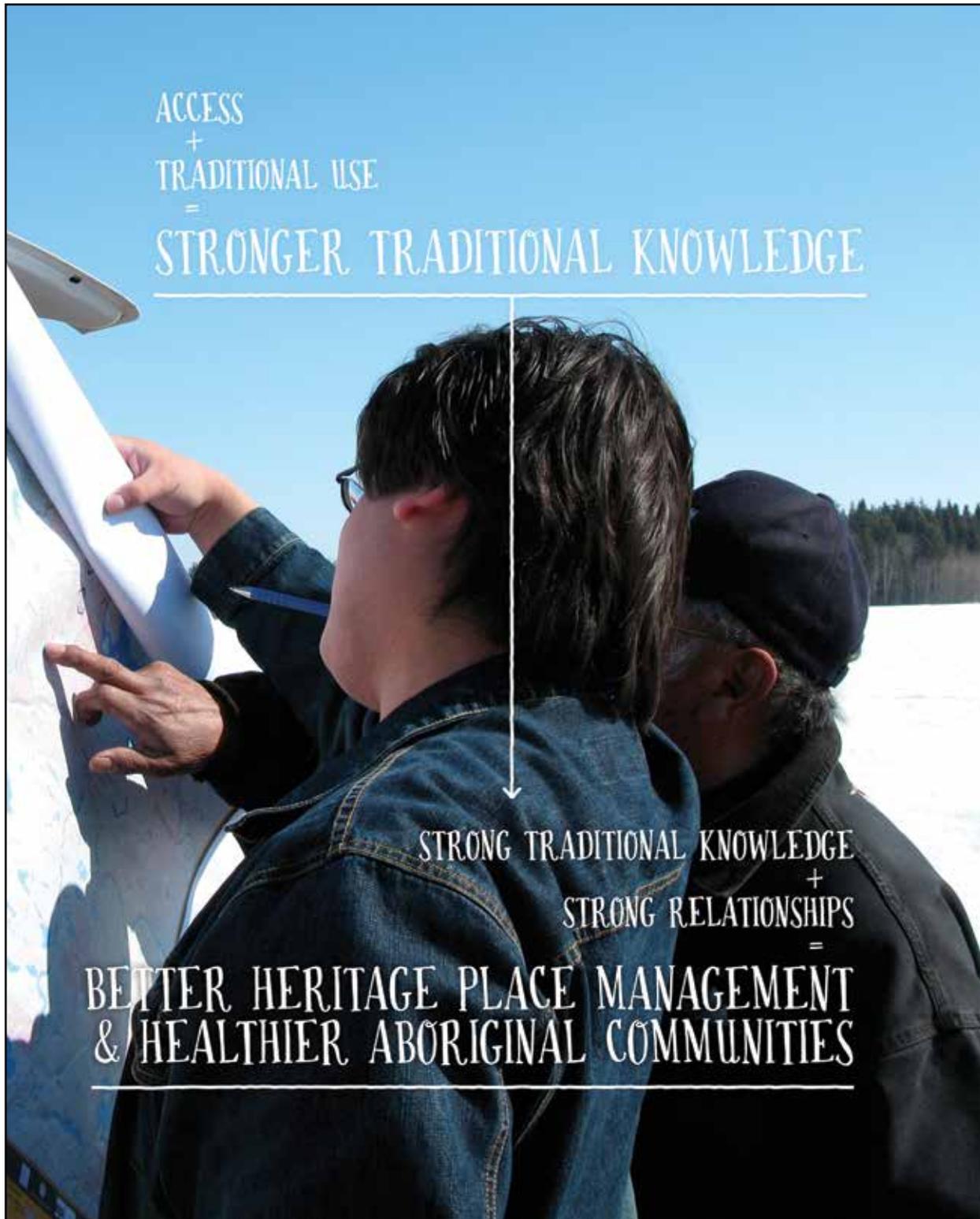
Heritage places are now established with the collaboration of Aboriginal communities as Parks Canada and Aboriginal communities find common ground in their shared concern for maintaining the integrity of the environment and the health of biological and cultural resources for future generations.

Parks Canada is working towards a new model of collaborative conservation: a model that respects the rights and knowledge systems of Aboriginal peoples by providing new opportunities to cooperatively manage these heritage places, incorporating Aboriginal history and cultures into management practices and educating the Canadian and international public about the important role Aboriginal peoples have played historically, and continue to play, in making Canada the beautiful land that it is today and into the future.

The All Nations Drum Group welcoming traditional canoes with an Honour Song at Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada, NS



Path Forward for Engaging Aboriginal Knowledge Holders³



³ *Promising Pathways: Strengthening engagement and relationships with Aboriginal peoples in Parks Canada's heritage places, A Resource Guide*, Parks Canada (2014)

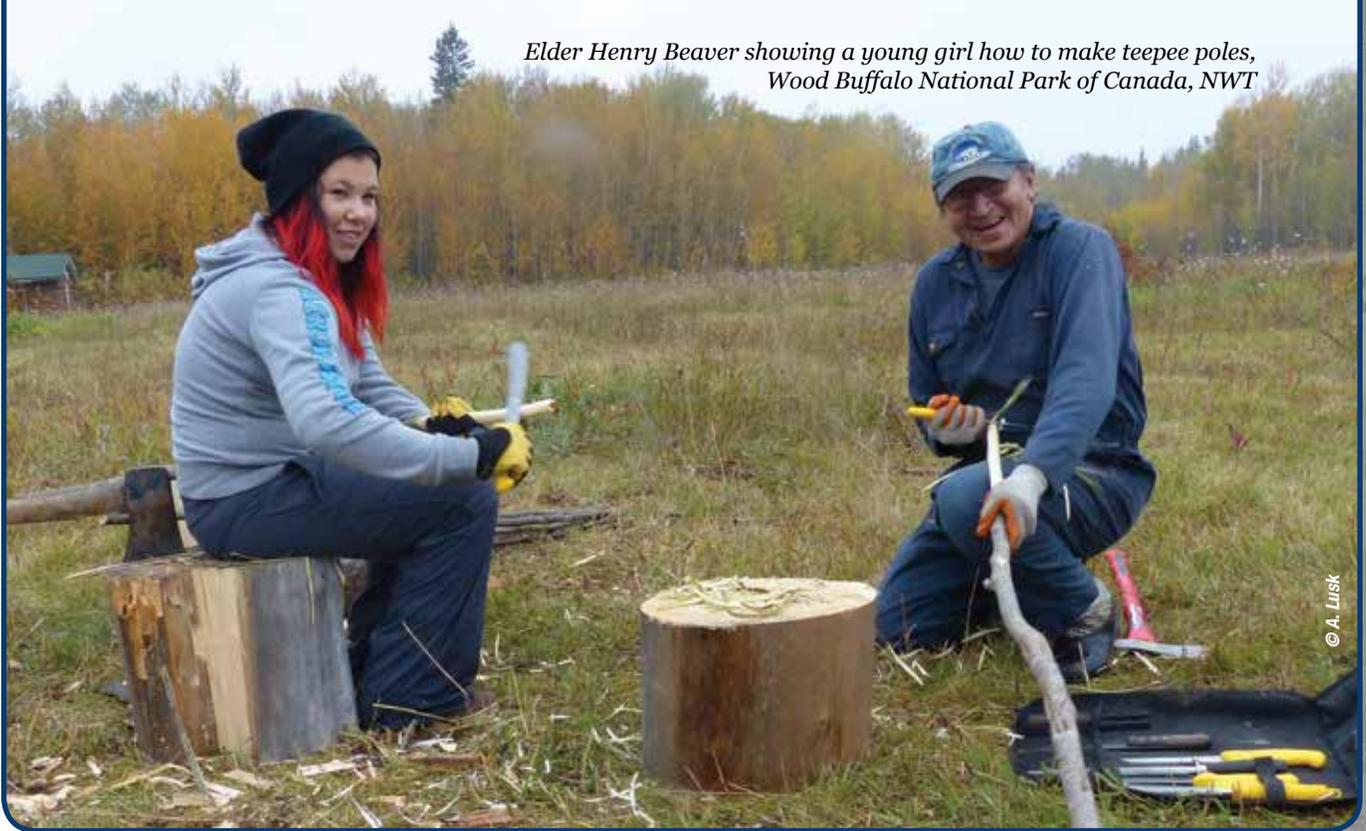
C. How It Is Now —

Stories on working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders

*Demonstration of canoe making behind Men's House,
Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada, BC*



We become better stewards by creating the conditions that enable Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to inform decisions that affect our heritage places.



First Nations, Inuit and Métis decision-making relies on knowledge that has been known and proven authentic for hundreds, if not thousands of years. This knowledge can be found embedded in stories, songs, hunting, trapping and gatherings practices, as well as ceremonies. Good indicators for the future health of a community is the creation of new stories and songs and the continued practice of ceremonies and traditional activities on the land.

The following stories give us indicators that we are making meaningful progress in Parks Canada heritage places:

- Stories are being told by elders to youth.
- Aboriginal peoples are finding employment.
- First Nations see their future because of concrete community development.
- Inuit youth work with visiting scientists, artists and visitors.
- First Nations, Inuit and Métis have a place to tell their stories and share their culture.
- First Nation youth show pride in their culture.
- Aboriginal communities develop capacity at various levels.
- First Nations communities catalogue medicinal plants and stories.

- By bringing back traditional activities, First Nations communities heal from being disconnected from their lands.
- For the first time, Inuit and scientists share the same concerns regarding caribou population counts.
- Métis culture and history is shared with First Nations and visitors.
- First Nations and scientists study the American Eel as a species at risk.

The following stories identified best practices in developing trust and creating healthy relationships when working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders. They demonstrate how Parks Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have built on the successes and lessons learned to achieve concrete and positive results that will help guide future relationships. This has been achieved through a holistic approach to planning which incorporate not just the physical and intellectual (mental) aspects of life but also the emotion and spiritual.

These outcomes are a partial answer to the question: *how do we become better stewards of the land?* ***We become better stewards by creating the conditions that enable Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to inform decisions that affect our heritage places.***

a) Establishing Protected Heritage Places

i. Establishing a Cultural Landscape — Saoyú-ʔehdacho National Historic Site of Canada, Northwest Territories

Background:

Saoyú-ʔehdacho National Historic Site of Canada (pronounced saw-you-eh-da-cho) is a large cultural landscape made up of two peninsulas, located south of the tree line in the Northwest Territories. The two peninsulas, Saoyú and ʔehdacho, reach into Great Bear Lake from the west and south. Saoyú-ʔehdacho was designated a national historic site of Canada in 1997 because its cultural values, expressed through the interrelationship between the landscape, oral histories, graves and cultural resources — such as trails and cabins — help to explain and contribute to an understanding of the origin, spiritual values, lifestyle, and land use of the Sahtúgot’íne.



Two girls scrape hair off a moose hide during a camp at Saoyú-ʔehdacho National Historic Site of Canada, NWT

Saoyú-ʔehdacho National Historic Site of Canada is recognized as a cultural landscape within Parks Canada’s system of heritage places. What is unique about Saoyú-ʔehdacho is that the landscape values of the national historic sites are protected, meaning the significant natural resources of the region are protected for their heritage value. In a cultural landscape, “the idea is that the landscape is kept intact because the culture is being preserved by that intact land. It is done for the perpetuation of culture.” (Parks Canada Team Member)

The Sahtúgot’íne (Bear Lake People) believe that all the land is sacred and that Saoyú-ʔehdacho is a sacred place of particular significance. It has therefore been identified as a place that is fundamental to the transmission of Sahtúgot’íne culture (CIS, 1999): “The Sahtúgot’íne have used Saoyú-ʔehdacho since time immemorial. These are two of the most sacred places in the entire Sahtú region. Moreover, it is through these types of places, and the stories associated with them, that the elders pass on the culture and “traditional knowledge” of

They wanted the land protected for cultural reasons. However, a national historic site doesn't have the same land protection as a national park. So the whole idea was put through a process which we have in the NWT called the Protected Area Strategy. It's a multi-stakeholder process between the First Nations, the territorial government, the federal government, industry, and other advocacy groups who came together and agreed to a process for establishing protected areas in the NWT.

— Parks Canada Team Member



the Sahtúgot'ıneę — its history, cosmology, spiritual values, law, ethics, land use, and traditional life-styles.” (CIS 2.1 pg 9)

The process of establishing a cultural landscape started when the community first seriously engaged with Parks Canada to establish a historic site. The Sahtúgot'ıneę built a case for the site and developed a commemorative integrity statement and other visioning documents. A large amount of stories were cataloged and collected during this time. Many stories were again documented when the community and Parks Canada were engaged in the Northwest Territories (NWT) Protected Areas Strategy working group process. This traditional knowledge was used when compiling the various required assessments needed for the candidate protected area working group to create its final recommendation report.

By establishing a protected cultural landscape the community hoped to enable intergenerational transmission of Délıneę Sahoyúé and ʔehdacho Traditional Knowledge and important cultural values. For the Sahtúgot'ıneę Sahoyúé and ʔehdacho are places of “*teaching and learning*”.

Parks Canada supports an annual traditional knowledge camp in which youth participate and help to document cultural learning activities including elders telling stories, making things from caribou, drying fish, gathering and preparing traditional foods and medicines, and conducting spiritual ceremonies and celebrations such as the fire teaching and the first kill ceremony.

Management:

The Délıneę Land Corporation, the Délıneę Renewable Resources Council, and the federal government as represented by the minister of the Environment for the purpose of the Parks Canada Agency signed a commemorative integrity statement which describes the place, its resources, values, objectives and messages. The Sahtúgot'ıneę and the Federal and Territorial Governments have been working since the mid- 1990s on the long-term protection and cooperative management of Saoyú and ʔehdacho: Saoyú and ʔehdacho are identified as heritage places in the Sahtú Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (1993), and that Agreement further establishes their ownership as 20% Sahtú lands and 80% Crown lands (Nesbitt, 2005: 2). It describes how the parties will preserve, protect and present the heritage of Saoyú-ʔehdacho, contribute to the well-being of the community of Délıneę, and support cultural practice. The Agreement outlines the cooperative relationship between the three parties with respect to Saoyú-ʔehdacho. It describes the composition and role of the six-member cooperative management board, key guiding principles for the site and ways in which the goals and objectives of the site will be met. An important and powerful aspect of this Agreement is the commitment of all parties to work by consensus.



I would say that these camps and activities are currently the primary means of preserving the commemorative integrity of the site. We're not protecting the architecture of a Fort or anything of that nature. There is an active dynamism within culture, so it is a little more ethereal in that way. I think those camps and these events are ways of doing that.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Parks Canada also occasionally supports an annual spiritual gathering in which people from surrounding communities gather in Déḻnę communities to share stories, teachings, knowledge, and healing.

With the establishment of a national historic site the community of Déḻnę has seen this as an opportunity to share aspects of Sahtúgot'íne culture to visitors and Canadians at large. There is also a desire in the community to see a sustainable tourism based economy and the establishment of a national historic site is seen as a means to help achieve this goal.

There is a keen interest to raise public and visitor awareness of Sahtúgot'íne's relationship to the land. During the process of establishing this historic site, the Déḻnę communities and Parks Canada were engaged in collecting and cataloguing culturally

meaningful stories told by community members and Déḻnę elders that were documented in print, audio and video format. A first step in sharing these stories came in 2012 when a select number of stories were published to the national historic site website in both official languages as well as the Sahtúgot'íne dialect. These stories offer Canadians and international visitors a rare chance to better understand the Sahtúgot'íne culture, spiritual values, lifestyle and land use. Although the project is still in the early phase of development, it is hoped that it will spark interest in cultural understanding and may even lead to future visitation to Déḻnę and Saoyú-?ehdacho National Historic Site. Parks Canada is also currently working with Déḻnę and territorial partners to further develop initial tourism offerings.

You can see why it's attractive to Aboriginal communities to have a national park reserve or a national historic site included in a land claim process because this can actually protect places of cultural interest and areas where they have harvested for centuries. And this continues with the creation of the national park reserve or national historic site: it actually creates a circumstance where a heritage place is a very positive element of a claim process.

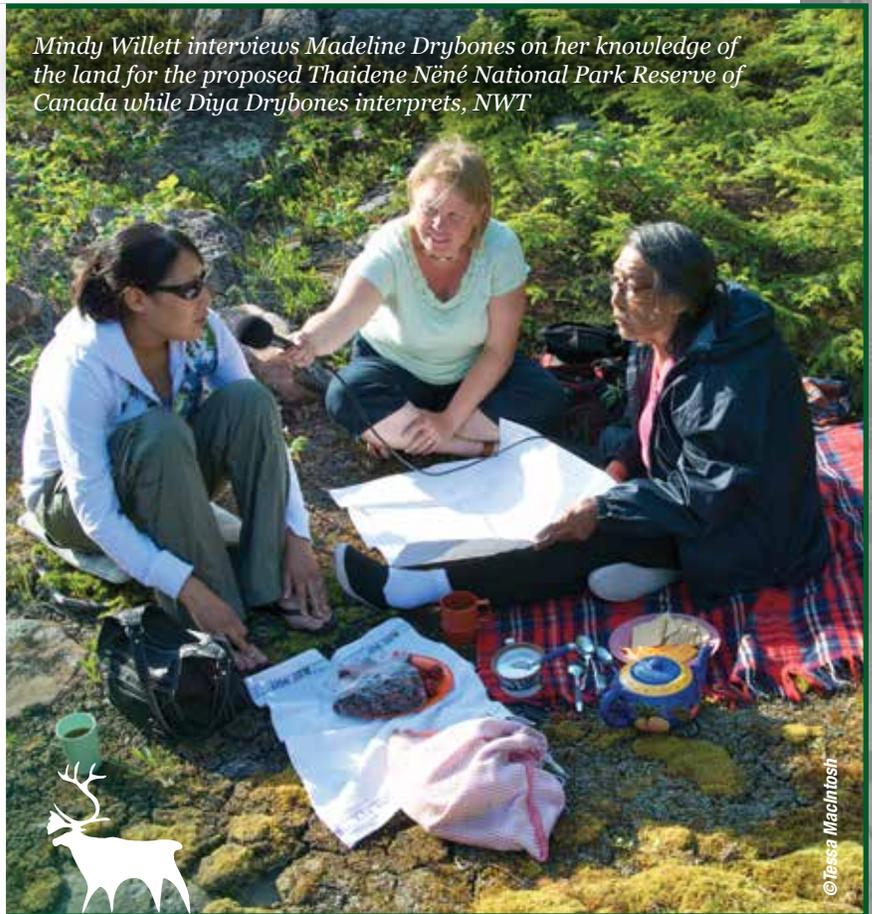
— Parks Canada Team Member



ii. Exploring the Role of a National Park in a Community’s Development — Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve Proposal, Northwest Territories

Background:

The deep, clear waters of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake and rolling boreal forest and tundra surrounding it form Thaidene Nënë, the “Land of the Ancestors”: an expanse of over 33,000 square kilometers, and the heart of the homeland of the Łutsël K’e Denesoline people in the Northwest Territories. Thaidene Nënë spans the transition zone from boreal forest to tundra and includes smaller lakes connected by rivers with rapids and waterfalls. It also includes the East Arm of Great Slave Lake, which contains spectacular cliffs and islands, and some of the deepest freshwater in North America. This still-intact ecosystem features prime habitat for healthy wildlife populations, including moose, muskoxen, wolves, bear, wolverine, many species of birds and fish, and some of the last free-ranging herds of migratory barren ground caribou.



Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve is in the process of being established in the Northwest Territories, in consultation with local Aboriginal groups. The objective of local Aboriginal groups for the establishment of this park reserve is to help diversify the local economy by creating sustainable livelihoods and new tourism opportunities while securing the land, water and Dene way of life for future generations. This includes providing significant and long lasting local employment for local First Nation and Métis communities. Employment positions will include visitor interpretation, site management, and fire management.

Some years ago, the communities noticed that diamond mines were being developed in the area and they were wary of the cultural and social impacts the mines were having on their communities and their traditional way of life; young people were leaving their communities to pursue careers, leaving behind the elderly and the very young. Aboriginal leaders felt that the situation was not sustainable. Eventually, the Łutsël K’e Dene First Nation approached Parks Canada to re-invigorate a process that had been largely shelved in the mid-80s to protect the lands around the East Arm of Great Slave Lake in the hopes of developing long-term, sustainable jobs by diversifying their economy and protecting the land. The proposal to establish a new park reserve generated positive energy both at the local and international level.

The Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation has spent quite a bit of time on the (Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve) proposal and has received funding from the government of Northwest Territories to develop tourism development studies and business plans to show their community that these are the types of jobs to pursue. Parks Canada continues to help fund the Nihatni Dene program, and, once the national park reserve is operational, will look to contracting with local Aboriginal communities for the required goods and services required by Parks Canada for operating a national park. So local communities are now engaging in business development and registering with Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses (PSAB): looking at a bigger picture.

— Parks Canada Team Member



The development of Thaidene Nënë as a national park reserve will contribute to the lives of Northerners by protecting environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development, as well as improving and devolving governance. With regards to capital investment and maintenance of the park, Parks Canada will need to purchase associated goods and services from suppliers in the local communities. It is anticipated that the park reserve will also provide tourism opportunities for both the local communities, including Łutsël K'e, and the region

as a whole including Yellowknife, NWT. New tourism opportunities will support and complement existing economic activities such as trapping and will maintain ecological integrity by protecting the area.

This is an exciting time for both Parks Canada and its Aboriginal partners, as considerable progress has been made toward the establishment of Thaidene Nënë as a national park reserve. For now, Parks Canada has been supporting capacity through contributing to community initiatives in support of the establishment of the national park reserve. For example, the Nihatni Dene program is a multi-year, multi-party program that engages elders and youth in environmental monitoring. It also provides opportunities for these Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation community members to share knowledge of their role on the land and stories with visitors. The program supports intergenerational knowledge transmission: the elders share their land-based knowledge with the youth, while the youth share their technological knowledge with the elders. The youth have a blog and they post their experiences about being part of the program on Facebook. In turn, they also share their reports with the elders. Together they develop personal and professional capacity.

Management:

The Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) and Parks Canada are advancing an initiative to foster ecological integrity and cultural continuity by permanently protecting this critical ecological and cultural landscape. The Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) and Parks Canada initiated a *Draft for protecting Thaidene Nënë* in November 2013. Separately, both the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation are working with Parks Canada to determine shared governance, management and operational responsibilities. In the future, the Łutsël K'e Dene First Nation, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Parks Canada will work to refine a vision and boundaries for Thaidene Nënë to meet a range of ecological, cultural and visitation objectives.



Storytelling with Lutsël K'e Elder Pierre Catholique (deceased) and Pete and Kohlman Enzoe, proposed Thaidene Nënë National Park Reserve of Canada, NWT



We tried to figure out how we could contribute to boosting community capacity prior to the park establishment, and one of the ideas was a Nihatni Dene elder youth partnership, based on the Haida Watchman program. The idea was to get folks out on the land to gain experience in environmental monitoring while sharing traditional knowledge about the environment. There are a couple of patrol boats and the elders and the youth go out together in these boats and they do water and fish monitoring and sampling. They are also doing some visitors engagement, so that they can get a sense of what they (the visitors) are experiencing, and pass on stories of the land that they (the Lutsël K'e Denesoline) have. This way, they are also gaining experience on the visitor experience side of things.

— Parks Canada Team Member



iii. Connecting to the Mountains as an Inuit Homeland — Torngat Mountains National Park of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador

Inuit elders Tivi and Willie Etok visiting their childhood homes in Nachvak Fjord, Torngat Mountain National Park of Canada, NFL

© H. Wittenborn



Background:

From the Inuktitut word *Torngat*, meaning “place of spirits,” the Torngat Mountains have been home to Inuit and their ancestors for thousands of years. There are hundreds of archaeological sites in the park, some dating back almost 7,000 years. There is evidence of occupation by the Maritime Archaic Indians, Pre-Dorset and Dorset Paleo-Eskimos and the Thule culture that merged into modern day Inuit. The spectacular wilderness of this National Park comprises 9,700 km² of the Northern Labrador Mountains natural region. The park extends from Saglek Fjord in the south, including all islands and islets, to the very northern tip of Labrador and from the provincial boundary with Quebec in the west to the iceberg-choked waters of the Labrador Sea in the east. The mountain peaks along the border with Quebec are the highest in mainland Canada east of the Rockies and are dotted with remnant glaciers. Polar bears hunt seals along the coast and both the Torngat Mountains and George River caribou herds cross paths as they migrate to and from their calving grounds. Today, Inuit continue to use this area for hunting, fishing and travelling throughout the year. Recognizing and honoring Inuit knowledge and the special historical and cultural relationship between Inuit and the land is a part of the living legacy of this National Park.

That direct experience, speaking with elders and being on the land doing the gathering and hunting activities with people who have more experience in that area, as well as knowing some of the stories and the lore, works extremely well in teaching young people respect for their own culture, for themselves, as well as for the beauty and the strength of the land.

— Inuk member of the Cooperative Management Board



On the Labrador Peninsula, the kANGIDLUASUK Base Camp, which means Gatherings in a Timeless Place, has created a unique opportunity to experience Inuit life. To ensure new and better ways of increasing Inuit presence in the park and to support summer operational programs, the Inuit managed base camp located just outside the park's southern boundary welcomes the young and old of Inuit families, along with researchers and visitors to explore the park through the lenses of both Inuit culture and science. Participants connect to the mountains as an Inuit homeland through the storytelling of Inuit companions and guides. A typical day at the base camp sees elders sharing their knowledge of the land with scientists, park managers, tourists and youth.

With the establishment of the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station, Parks Canada, the Environmental Sciences Group, and the Nunatsiavut Government piloted an outreach initiative to provide opportunities for Inuit youth to work alongside scientists, to engage with local Inuit leaders, elders and international visitors and to experience the Torngat Mountains as a shared Inuit homeland. The student program evolved from a two-person informal program to a formalized four-week summer camp where ten (10) students from Inuit communities went to the park to learn about Traditional Inuit Knowledge and take part in research and visitor experience initiatives.

For example, Inuit youth and elders have been engaged in research related to global warming, monitoring glaciers, water levels, shrub growth and managing and monitoring wildlife such as ringed seals. By having youth work with elders

Management:

The Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve was formally established when the legislation giving effect to the *Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement* was enacted on December 1, 2005. The National Park Reserve became the Torngat Mountains National Park when the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* came into legal effect on July 10, 2008. The Parks Impact and Benefit Agreement (PIBA) formalizes the ongoing relationship between Parks Canada and the Labrador Inuit. The PIBA ensures that the National Park will highlight Labrador Inuit's unique relationship with the land and ecosystems and includes provisions that allow Inuit to continue traditional activities such as land and resource uses. It also establishes a framework for the cooperative management of the park. The board has seven members who advise the federal Minister of Environment on all matters related to park management. Parks Canada, Makivik Corporation and the Nunatsiavut Government each appoint two members and there is an independent chair jointly appointed by all three parties.

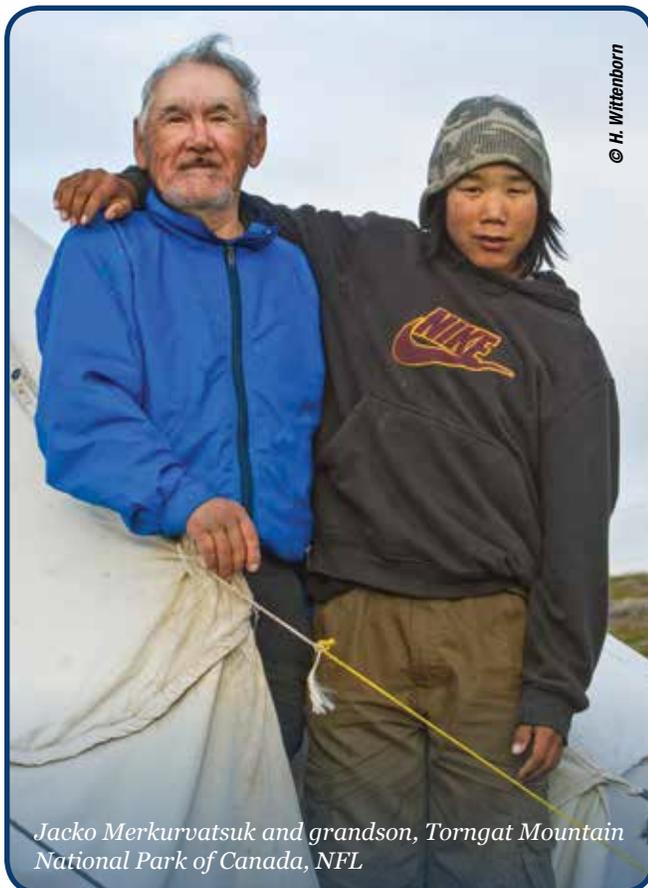


and researchers, Inuit believe this will encourage Inuit knowledge to be transmitted to the younger generation and also help the research process.

Youth and elders are also engaged in visitor experiences by sharing their personal stories with visitors. Through cultural programming, visitors get an opportunity to take part in Inuit games and competitions and help to harvest and prepare traditional Inuit foods. Because the story of the park is an Inuit story, what is important is not only

Visitors will come because of the pictures of the landscapes and the icebergs they see on the Internet. But when they leave, that's not what they are impressed with; they're very impressed by their interaction with Inuit youth and elders and they're glad to have been able to make friends. A lot of them continue to converse with the elders through e-mail and Facebook which is pretty awesome. They go away teary-eyed because of the connections they made with the Inuit culture.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Jacko Merkurvatsuk and grandson, Torngat Mountain National Park of Canada, NFL

the landscape, but also the human interaction with the land — ensuring that the elders are there to connect with the land also helps youth and Parks Canada team members understand how Inuit life was and still is. Visitors gain an authentic cultural experience that is holistic because the program incorporates both historic and contemporary perspectives. Through the elders, visitors get information on what life used to be like on the land and through the youth, visitors get information about what life is like now.

There is no permanent infrastructure in the park, but the Torngat Mountains National Park visitor centre encourages people to go out and use the land the same way Inuit did in the summer, on foot — Inuit believe that walking and being on the land can be very healing.

The Torngat Mountains Base Camp project is exciting because at its core is the willingness to heal the legacy of past administrative policies which were detrimental to the way of life of Inuit. In the 1950s, it was both federal and provincial government policy to have Inuit moved off of their traditional territory to centralized locations. The base camp initiative is about reconnecting the elders to the land and connecting the youth to their ancestral land and to their elders.

Inuit have traditionally been walkers as well as marine travellers. The way the youth and the elders experience the land is by walking and visiting sacred areas, visiting areas of special cultural interest, as well as travelling by boat to sites of interest. As they are doing that, the elders explain where the communities or the clans once lived and how they lived their lives and what Inuit learned about the animals and hunting and gathering as well.

— Inuk member of the Cooperative Management Board



b) Connection to the Landscapes

i. Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit at its best – Finding the lost Franklin Expedition ship HMS *Erebus*

Louie Kamoookak (left) discusses the Franklin Expedition with Dr. Doug Stenton (middle), Director of Heritage, Government of Nunavut, and Ryan Harris, Senior Underwater Archaeologist, Parks Canada, at Gjoa Haven, NU



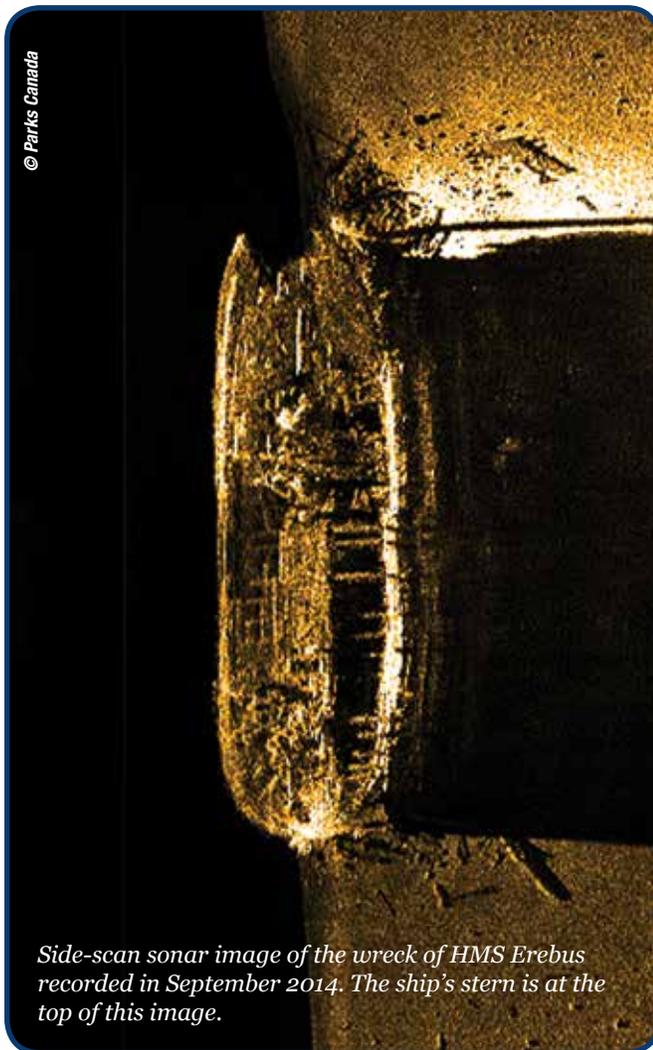
© J. Moore

In August 2008, the governments of Canada and Nunavut launched a multi-year expedition to search for the wrecks of HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, the two Royal Navy ships of Sir John Franklin’s 1845 expedition in search of a Northwest Passage. Franklin and the 128 officers and seamen under his command entered the eastern Arctic through Lancaster Sound on a voyage that was expected to last up to three years. The ships carried ample provisions and equipment to overwinter at least twice as they sought the last link in the elusive, ice-choked passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. After over two years, however, there was no news from the expedition and it was feared that something had gone terribly

wrong. While authorities in England were unaware of what had happened and launched a series of massive rescue and search missions, the Inuit had witnessed the expedition come to a disastrous conclusion around 1848 in the vicinity of what is now King William Island, Nunavut.

In 1850, Royal Navy searchers found that Franklin had overwintered at Beechey Island (at the southwest corner of Devon Island), but found no information as to where he headed next. Four years later in 1854, Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) searcher Dr. John Rae learned from Inuit at Pelly Bay and Repulse Bay, Nunavut, that, around 1848, some 40 white men were seen on

the western shore of King William Island heading southwards, apparently after their ships had become trapped by ice. The Inuit later reported that the bodies of 30 or so men were found farther south near the mouth of the Back River on the mainland coast. Rae carefully recorded these stories and bartered for Franklin Expedition objects that the Inuit had collected.



Side-scan sonar image of the wreck of HMS Erebus recorded in September 2014. The ship's stern is at the top of this image.

More detailed evidence of what had happened came in 1859 when an expedition led by Captain Francis Leopold McClintock found a note in a cairn on the northwest corner of King William Island. This document explained that the ships had become beset nearby in 1846, that Franklin had died in June 1847 and that, in April 1848, the surviving 105 crew members had deserted the ships and were making an overland retreat to the nearest HBC post, hundreds of miles to the south. McClintock found many traces of this retreat, including the bodies of crew members who died during the trek. He learned from meetings with Inuit that one of the ships had later been wrecked on the west coast of King William Island and that the other had been wrecked in a place called “*Ook-joo-lik*”.

While the evidence McClintock’s had gathered confirmed the fate of the expedition, the exact locations of the ships remained a mystery. Charles Francis Hall, an American publisher, was next to take up the search and seek out more evidence. Spending years in the Arctic travelling and living among the Inuit, he gathered invaluable Inuit histories through interpreters that were part of his team. In 1869, he learned that the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck was in fact located off the western shore of the Adelaide Peninsula on a seal hunting ground; *Ook-joo-lik* means as “there are bearded seals there”. Although he did not travel there himself, he collected specific information from Inuit informants that the wreck was located northeast of O’Reilly Island. One informant, an Inuk named In-nook-poo-zhe-jook, pointed out the location of the wreck on an Admiralty chart and even drew his own map of the wreck location, later reproduced in Hall’s published expedition account. Hall learned that an Inuk had found the ship afloat in the ice one spring, that there was evidence of the crew members having left the ship and that the Inuit had later gone on board and salvaged as many items as they could before it sank. They had even found the body of a crew member inside.

“From the outset, the objective was to use both Inuit oral history and Canada’s best technology to search for the shipwrecks.”

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada





© Billy Etouangat

Mathew Nauyuq, Park patrol officer at work in Auyuittuq National Park

“Gathering into an igloo my interpreters Joe [Ebierbing] and Jack with In-nook-poo-zhee-jook, and putting before the last-named native McClintock’s chart, he readily pointed out the place where the Franklin ship sank. It was very near O’Reilly Island, a little eastward of the north end of said island, between it and Wilmot and Campton Bay. A native of the island first saw the ship when sealing; it was far off to seaward, beset in the ice.” (Hall, 1879)

The last major nineteenth-century contribution to the story came from an 1878-1880 expedition led by Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka, an American cavalry officer who believed the Franklin expedition’s records could still be found. He and his party lived off the land, Inuit-style, in the King William Island region. With the aid of interpreters he collected invaluable testimony about the expedition and, importantly for us, information about the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck. He was told that it was sunk off what he deduced was Grant Point, at the northwest tip of the Adelaide Peninsula.

Although interest in the fate of the Franklin Expedition and its ships did not abate, it would be over eighty years before the search for the wreck was resumed. In the 1960s, researchers began to search for the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck. Of the two wrecks reported by the Inuit, the clues for the King William Island wreck were less precise and seemed to be in an inaccessible area normally obscured by multi-year ice. Searches for the wreck were conducted by a range of groups in the 1960s and 1970s using shoreline and diving searches in the frigid waters.

The quest for the wreck was taken up by Canadian researcher and explorer David C. Woodman who published an important book in 1992 called *Unravelling the Franklin Mystery: Inuit Testimony*. This exhaustive study was a reappraisal and compilation of the Inuit evidence and is an important reference work. Woodman spent years, beginning in the 1990s, searching for the wreck firsthand often using search methods deployed from the ice in spring time and drawing on partners that included local Inuit team members. His repeated searches did not result in a wreck discovery.

It was in the early 1990s that Parks Canada's Underwater Archaeology Team became involved in the search for the shipwrecks. In 1997, it took part in a major search for the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck that involved a range of government and non-government partners, including David Woodman and Gjoa Haven researcher Louie Kamookak, who resides in the community closest to the proposed search area. Following this unsuccessful search, Parks Canada worked closely with Kamookak, who shared his traditional knowledge about regional place names and the Franklin expedition that he had gathered from elders.

The initial partners included Inuit Knowledge Holders, Louie Kamookak, Parks Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Canadian Hydrographic Service and the Government of Nunavut. Parks Canada took the lead in the shipwreck search while Government of Nunavut archaeologists, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Stenton, carried out parallel land-based archaeological surveys. A key component of this work was to search former Inuit habitation sites, in search of artifacts from the ship or shipwreck. While project partnerships grew and evolved during the project, reliance on Inuit knowledge has been a constant — Parks Canada and the government of Nunavut regularly consulted with Kamookak and other residents at Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay. Yet as the partners embarked on this journey of discovery and exploration, Latourelle stated that, *“little did we know that ... this somewhat modest initiative would grow into the largest “Team Canada” Arctic search program Canada has ever put together.”*

The team completed six years of meticulous side-scan sonar searching for the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck and, despite weeks of laborious work to cover as much seafloor as possible, it never gave up on the belief that the Inuit oral history testimony was accurate. This paid off during the seventh search season, in 2014, on an island in the search area, Government of Nunavut team members found two artefacts from the *Ook-joo-lik* wreck that had been cached on an island by some unknown Inuk. This discovery immediately caused the Parks Canada marine

search to shift closer to the find spot and the wreck of HMS *Erebus* was located soon after, northeast of O'Reilly Island, near to where In-nook-poo-zhe-jook told Hall it had sunk.

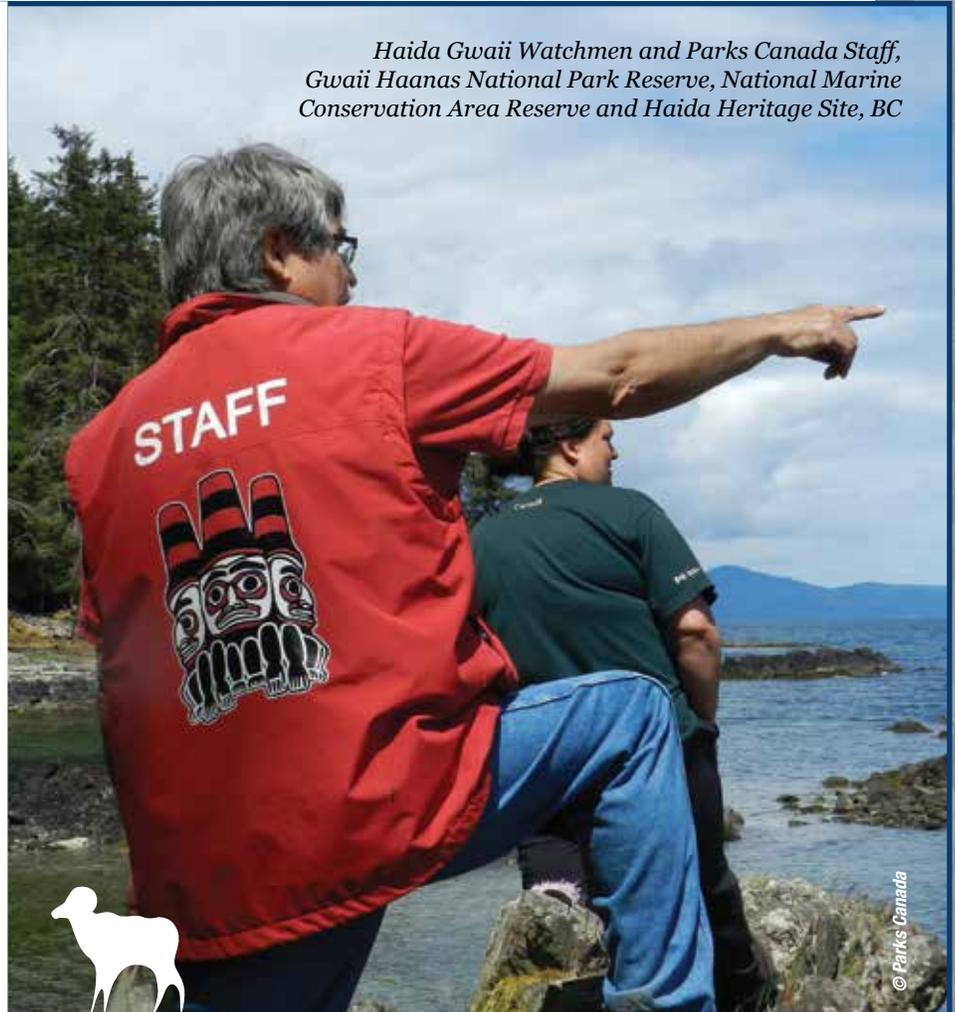
Inuit traditional knowledge outlined the search area, the archaeological technology and methods employed underwater and on land supplied the tools needed to make a thorough scientific search and the final discovery of the cached artefacts helped point to the wreck. Traditional knowledge passed down through generations had come full circle almost 170 years after Inuit witnessed the disastrous and tragic end to the Franklin expedition. After the find, Stenton stated that the *“Inuit have shared their knowledge of events surrounding the fate of the 1845 Franklin expedition”*. David Woodman added that, without traditional knowledge, the search would have been wholly impractical since *“We wouldn't know where to look, and we never would have found the ship. No one would have bothered to look, because the area was just so large.”* Kamookak, pleased that the veracity of traditional knowledge and the fruits of his research had been reinforced by the discovery said, *“I am very happy,” that “this proves oral history is strong with the Inuit and it puts Inuit on the map, for the world”* (*Nunatsiaq News*, September 12, 2014).

Parks Canada and its partners will continue to search for HMS *Terror*, which the Inuit testimony tells us was lost off the west coast of King William Island. While this search will use a slightly different suite of remote-sensing tools used to find HMS *Erebus*, it will be guided with the same longstanding conviction that the Inuit testimony is correct. As for the planned future study of the *Erebus*, we must wonder what secrets lie within this wreck that, someday, might tell us about Inuit salvaging of the ship and its contents.

ii. Haida Gwaii Watchmen Project — Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site of Canada, British Columbia

Background:

Gwaii Haanas is peppered with islands and islets, bays and inlets, tidal pools and beaches. Pacific temperate rainforest sweeps from sea level up the slopes of the San Christoval Mountains, which form the backbone of Gwaii Haanas. Within Gwaii Haanas's marine realm there is an extraordinary diversity of ecological features, habitat and creatures. Under the waters of the Hecate Strait lie the contours of a former tundra-like plain, with meandering rivers, lakes and beach terraces - a landscape drowned when sea levels rose after the last ice age. Archaeological evidence of human habitation on these islands dates back over 12,500 years and generations of Haida have been and still are nourished by the rich abundance of Haida Gwaii.



Haida Gwaii Watchmen and Parks Canada Staff, Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, BC

© Parks Canada

In 1981, prior to Gwaii Haanas being designated a Haida Heritage Site and a National Park Reserve, the Skidegate Band Council and the Haida Nation responded to concerns about potential vandalism and other damages to old Haida village sites by initiating the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program. This program began with one or two volunteers who used their own boats to travel to these sites where they would camp for the summer season. These volunteers acted as

guardians for sites at K'uuna (Skedans), T'aanuu (Tanu), SGAang Gwaii (Anthony Island/Ninstints), Hlk'yah (Windy Bay), Burnaby Narrows, and Gandle K'in (Hotspring Island), protecting their natural and cultural heritage.

At the same time, they presented visitors with a firsthand introduction to Haida culture by exposing them to Haida life by sharing their knowledge of the environment as well as stories, songs, and dances associated with the sites. The Haida Gwaii Watchmen also protected these sensitive sites by educating visitors about the

I did not know too much about my culture until I went down there and I had the opportunity to work with one of my elders.

– Member of the Haida Gwaii Watchmen



natural and cultural heritage of Gwaii Haanas and how to travel without leaving traces of their passage (www.coastalguardianwatchmen.ca).

Today, the Haida Gwaii Watchmen have their own management structure administered by the band council and are funded by Parks Canada. From May to October, the program provides seasonal employment for Haida men and women as young as 78 and as old as 16. Parks Canada provides funds and maintenance

Management:

In 1985, under the authority of the Haida Constitution, the South Moresby area was designated a Haida Heritage Site. Then in 1988, in response to public lobby, the governments of British Columbia and Canada signed the South Moresby Agreement, designating the area as a National Park Reserve in recognition of its notable natural and cultural heritage. This was followed in 1993 by the *Gwaii Haanas Agreement*, setting out the terms of a cooperative management between the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada. The Archipelago Management Board was set up of an equal number of representatives from the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada and operates on a consensus basis. In the agreement, the two parties strongly agreed on the need to protect the region natural cultural marine treasures, but also recognized their differing views on ownership of the area. The agreement is now seen as a model of cooperative management for how parties who have differing viewpoints on sovereignty, title and land ownership can work together. In 2010, the Gwaii Haanas marine area was officially designated a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. An integrated land and sea management plan is expected to be completed by 2015 with input from partners, stakeholders and the general public.



for cabins and boats to lend the Haida support for their Watchman Project, enabling the Haida Watchman and Parks Canada to support joint management goals to protect and conserve the area.



The carved figures crowning the monumental poles stood sentinel over the village. The three carved watchmen form the symbol adopted by the Haida for the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program. Legend says that the role of the Watchmen was to alert its owner to the approach of an enemy or any other happenings he or she should be aware of.

The Haida Nation has developed a five-week prerequisite course to train the watchmen by partnering with the Northwest Community College. The course, which incorporates Haida Traditional Knowledge, historical knowledge and political context into its design, is an accredited course; credits can be transferred to other institutions if the participant wishes it. It is believed that this has stimulated a growing interest in the younger generation to become watchmen. The course contributes to intergenerational knowledge transmission by drawing together people who are dedicated to learning their Haida culture and those knowledge holders who want to share that culture.

iii. Preserving Métis Culture through Women’s Traditional Knowledge – Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, Saskatchewan



A costumed interpreter playing the violin on the veranda among other performers, Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, SK

© K. Hogarth

Background:

Batoche was declared a National Historic Site in 1923. The initial focus of the historic site was to commemorate the 1885 armed conflict between the Canadian government and the Métis provisional government. The historic site also commemorates the history of the Métis community of Batoche, home of Métis culture and heritage. Surviving portions of the Carlton Trail and river-lot system and the roles of First Nations in the Northwest Resistance are also commemorated. The historic site displays the remains of the village of Batoche on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, where several buildings have been restored, depicting the lifestyles of the Métis between 1860 and 1900 — the trails they walked and travelled, their homes, their church and the Battle of Batoche. The landscape is generally rolling land, containing numerous depressions and brush-filled areas. Trembling aspen is the dominant tree species with some balsam, poplar, birch and dogwood (red willow) growing near the river. Vegetation used for healing and ceremonial purposes of long ago can still be found along the system of hiking trails.

At Batoche National Historic Site of Canada team members provide cultural programming and they educate the public on Métis culture and history. this has been so welcomed by visitors that the historic site now hosts numerous school visits, meetings, conferences, weddings and daily visitors. For example, Batoche offers experiential tours in which visitors learn about the battle of Batoche. Visitors can also live like the Métis did a hundred years ago, feed chickens, pump water, garden and eat traditional foods, such as bannock. Since

2005, Parks Canada team members and *Friends of Batoche* have partnered with the *Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI)* to enhance the historic site’s cultural programming. The GDI promotes the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and distribution of those materials and through the design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services. One part of GDI’s mandate is to develop and publish cultural, literary and educational resources related to Métis

life and world view. Since 1980, they have produced more than 160 resources in print, audio, visual and multi-media formats with the collaboration of Métis Knowledge Holders.

Recently, Batoche National Historic Site and Gabriel Dumont Institute, in collaboration with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, have worked on preserving Métis culture through women's history, stories and knowledge. The "*Métis Women's History of Resistance and Survival: Stories of Tourond's coulee / Fish Creek and Batoche*" is a community storytelling sharing circle and recording that honors the forgotten and untold stories of Métis women and children. The program was initiated at a community event attended by Parks Canada team members and Métis community participants. During this event, Métis Elders indicated that they wanted more participation in the development and presentation of cultural programming and events at the historic site.

Management:

The Batoche National Historic Site management plan was developed with the participation of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and, on November 8th 1998, the government of Canada and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan signed an agreement for the shared management of Batoche National Historic Site of Canada. The Batoche National Historic Site Shared Management Board ensures the active involvement of both parties in the operations of the site and the fundamental shared commitment to ensure the commemorative integrity of Batoche.



The approach is innovative as it recognizes that there are both divergent and complementary viewpoints of history and that these various perspectives should be honored and shared with visitors. The initiative emphasizes how Métis women have been crucial in the history and survival of the Métis. Past historians often focused on the roles and accomplishments of men, often forgetting and rendering invisible the important role women held. First Nation and Métis women played a major role in the transmission of culture, including within the fur trade, which was the main economy of many Métis communities. Including the important role played by Métis women in the stories broadens the perspectives to include and emphasize that women, children, and men comprised a community which thrived on kinship, the support of neighbours, the land, and the trade and commerce within the community.

The project has also paved the way for further developments on site. Batoche is currently working on telling the larger community story on the landscape with new exhibits and programs. A key part of the work has been to consult with the community and Elders to make sure a broad story, including the perspectives of Métis women are told.

Through community storytelling, the history of Métis women comes alive and supplements the stories of cultural resistance of the Métis. The collaboration between Batoche National Historic Site and the *Gabriel Dumont* Institute helps enhance the story and gives voice to Métis women's traditional knowledge.

iv. Pilot Project in Gaining Experience in the Participation of the Development of the Management Plan – Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada, Quebec



Parks Canada team members and Innu partners on the land at Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada, QC

Background:

Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve is located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, between Anticosti Island and Quebec's Middle North Shore. An isolated land mass measuring approximately 100 km squared, it is comprised of twenty-some islands and 1,000 or so islets that are strung out over more than 150 km from Ile aux Perroquets in the west, to Rivere Aguanish in the east. The territory, the Mingan Archipelago, became a national park reserve in 1984. There is an abundance of life in this strange half-world: plants of variegated hues and shapes, seabirds gathered in colonies and seals, dolphins and whales swarming the blue vastness in which the islands bathe. Human occupation of the Mingan Archipelago goes back at least 2000 years. The first inhabitants, groups of Aboriginal peoples, were attracted by the marine resources of this part of the Gulf and among other things gathered mollusks, fished salmon and hunted seal. Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve offers visitors activities including hiking, camping and bird watching, as well as several cultural activities. There are close to 24 km of hiking trails distributed over four different islands.

We know that the Innu have come in the park for thousands of years and now, with the kind of agreement we have negotiated, with the treaty, it will be easier to share how and when they do their traditional activities.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Team members at the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve have been working hard over the past decade to improve relations and create capacity with neighboring Innu communities. Parks Canada contributed funds to develop the Maison de la culture Innu and will have offices in the centre. The Maison de la Culture is located in the community of Ekuanishit and is a centre where Innu culture and language are showcased. Visitors to the centre will experience authentic and exciting activities provided by a community willing to show its everyday culture.

The park reserve has also been supporting youth employment and education. Innu youth have worked on maintenance crews and have been involved in conservation work in the field. This has enabled Parks Canada to provide training in various sectors. The park reserve has worked to strengthen relations with the Nutashkuan Innu following the negotiation of a Land Claim Agreement and have also set up an Aboriginal Affairs Liaison Officer position with the park reserve.

Although Mingan National Park Reserve has been working collaboratively with neighboring Innu communities for a few years now, the park recognizes the need to keep improving relations by continuing to build trust and by seeing that past promises are fulfilled and cooperative agreements are finalized.

A Comprehensive Land Claim process is ongoing with one of the two Innu communities. In order to help advance the land claim process and create capacity in the community, Parks Canada and the Innu of Natashquan have entered into an agreement which is seen by both parties as the first step to setting up a cooperative management agreement. Within the new management plan, Parks Canada proposes to create an Aboriginal management board with the

Mamuitunmak Nuttashkuan Tribal Council (MNTC) and the Nutashkuan Innu who will advise the park reserve on specific management issues.

Parks Canada team members developed and maintained privileged links with the Nutashkuan First Nation, ensuring its full involvement in revising the management plan for the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve of Canada. This consultation process was successfully completed and now serves as a model for other land-management planning projects with Aboriginal communities across the country.

The park reserve also recently applied and received funding targeted for the economic development of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This will enable the park reserve to support the Innu communities in tourism, including to target the cruise line industry. Seeking community input at the initial stages of program development and having them participate in strategic planning has been an excellent way to bring this park reserve closer to the Innu communities.

The project is seen as one of the most innovative examples of how to engage with Aboriginal Knowledge Holder and the team members received the *2014 CEO Awards of Excellence* for their work. The team was recognized for their extraordinary contribution in engaging Aboriginal partners in order to study a specific decision-making process during consultations with the Innu community of Nutashkuan. The team was also recognized with the *2014 Public Service Award of Excellence* for developing an effective consultation process with a First Nation community.

v. **Voices of Akwesasne Project — Thousand Island National Park, Ontario**



Visitors taking part in a dancing circle during an Aboriginal ceremony, Thousand Islands National Park of Canada, ON

© Parks Canada

Background:

Thousand Islands National Park consists of several ecologically important mainland properties and more than 20 islands between Kingston and Brockville, Ontario. Glaciers retreated 10,000 years ago, scraping sediments and exposing the rounded knobs of an ancient mountain chain. When the St. Lawrence River flooded the area on its path to the Atlantic Ocean, 1000 hilltops became the 1000 Islands. Thousand Islands National Park was established in 1904, the first Canadian national park east of the Rocky Mountains. It began with a small piece of waterfront property granted to the federal government by the Mallory family with the stipulation that it be used for park purposes. Nine federally owned islands in the St. Lawrence River were added and recreational facilities were installed. Over the years, islands and land parcels were annexed. Today, the park comprises more than 20 islands and about 90 islets scattered between Main Duck Island and Brockville, as well as mainland properties at Mallorytown Landing, Landon Bay, Jones Creek and Larue Mills Creek. The Visitor Centre at Mallorytown Landing provides an introduction to the park with a hiking trail, interpretive programs, exhibits, and activities for the whole family.

Hunters from Akwesasne take the meat home and they are part of the naming ceremony in January. We are at a place now where a lot of things that you see make sense in terms of acknowledging peoples' traditions. Working together — it is not about an historical relationship, it is about a contemporary relationship.

— Parks Canada Team Member



We really wanted to make sure we were not appropriating people's stories and contemporary attachments to the landscape. So they (Mohawks) were able to tell those stories themselves and regardless of whether we had summer students or special events, there would always be a physical presence via video.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Thousand Islands National Park is located on the shores of the Great Lakes, which is also the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. Aboriginal presence in this area reaches as far back as 7,000 years, just after the last ice age. The park has more First Nations artifacts attesting to Aboriginal use of the landscape than any other heritage place in Parks Canada's system.

The area has long been regarded as sacred and a special meeting place by First Nations peoples because of its natural bounty and beauty. At Thousand Island National Park, the First Nations people deliver a profound stewardship message, based on respect and responsibility for the land.

Visitors and local residents learn about historical and contemporary use of the landscape, including traditional place names and plant use from the Mohawks of Akwesasne. Resource management practices, visitor experience and educational programs are enriched through the integration

of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, promoting an awareness of the traditions and history of the First Nations peoples in the region.

The park is a community partner that links the efforts of many towards managing the landscape in a sustainable manner and is a catalyst for collaborative work between governments, organizations and communities. Over the past three years, the park and the Mohawks of Akwesasne have made concerted efforts to establish a respectful and productive relationship. For example, the park and the communities come together annually to help manage deer reduction.

The *Voices of Akwesasne Project* is an initiative the park worked on with Elders and community members to catalogue medicinal plants and stories. The project began in 2008 and took a few years to film. The project helped create videos and tools in order to ensure that Mohawk Traditional Knowledge would be transferred to the youth of the community and used as a teacher's resource to deliver education to youth in regional schools.

Working with Principles:

Thousand Islands National Park is committed to working with First Nations communities in the region in a meaningful way by using the Mohawk principles of **respect**, **equity** and **empowerment** in order to establish mutually beneficial relationships. The park and the regional community were honored in the summer of 2007 with a traditional Haudenosaunee Smoky Fire ceremony that formalized the park's relationship with the Mohawks of Akwesasne.



The community itself decided who would be on the list to be interviewed. The video presents a diversity of stories from the different perspectives of people in the community, including stories about the yellow turtle, stories about how to make black ash baskets, stories about traditional and contemporary plant use and oral histories about contact with Europeans.



Ceci Mitchell, a Voices of Akwesasne project participant and Elder.

The stories are important because embedded in them is the knowledge of the community. In this way, the *Voices of Akwesasne* project presents an Aboriginal perspective of connection to the landscape that is not just historical but also contemporary. This collaborative endeavor further cemented strong relations with the community of Akwesasne. Parks Canada team members believe the project changed how the park is seen by the community.

The park continues to work toward documenting Mohawk knowledge and integrating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge into the park ecosystem science program, visitor experience and public outreach education programs. Over 70,000 visitors come to the park annually and, in a recent visitor experience survey conducted by the park, 83% of respondents stated they wished to learn more about First Nations connection to and uses of the landscape.

We had such an outpouring of support from the community and we were getting calls: Are you okay? Do you need some help? What can we do?

— Parks Canada Team Member



c) Continuation of Traditional Activities

i. Healing Broken Connections Project – Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada, Yukon



Background:

Kluane National Park and Reserve of Canada covers an area of 21,980 square kilometers. It is a land of precipitous high mountains, immense ice fields and lush valleys that yield a diverse array of plant and wildlife species and provides for a host of outdoor activities. Kluane National Park and Reserve is also home to Mount Logan (5959 m/19,545 ft), Canada's highest peak. The impressive natural landscape of Kluane is part of the traditional territory of the Southern Tutchone people represented in the Kluane region by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation. Since time immemorial, the Southern Tutchone people have lived throughout the area that is now Kluane National Park and Reserve. Over thousands of years, dän (the people) have developed effective methods for living in this land of extremes. The Southern Tutchone people once lived a traditional harvesting lifestyle, travelling great distances, in order to take advantage of seasonal abundances of wildlife and plants throughout their traditional territory. This lifestyle required developing a superior skill set of hunting and travelling techniques in an area of harsh climatic and geographic variations. The accuracy and depth of the Southern Tutchone language was key to the survival of the dän. Place names and the stories associated with them were a source of critical knowledge; they identified where resources could be found, referred to past events, and described the terrain in a way that a traveler would have knowledge of a place without having been there before.

In Kluane, the Southern Tutchone people were pushed out when the area was turned into a game sanctuary in 1943. While the hunting and trapping ban was lifted in 1976, many First Nations still stayed away for fear of reprisal. It took until 1993 for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and until 2003 for the Kluane First Nation, to resume traditional harvesting. This separation caused their special bond with those lands to break, resulting in cultural and personal losses that have affected five generations.

As a result of not being able to use the park, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge of the land and resources and the people's history in this area could not be passed on through community members. Unfortunately, the exclusion of First Nations from the park had negative consequences not only on their culture, but also on the park's ecological health.

The *Healing Broken Connections Project* was a multi-year project organized in collaboration with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane First Nation to encourage reconnection to their traditionally used territories by having elders and youth take part in culture camps and science camps. The program also tried to understand how Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge could be accommodated in landscape decision-making. The project developed protocols for decision-making, identified indicators of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and measured the use of ATK in decision-making.

The *Healing Broken Connections Project* demonstrated how healing might be facilitated through creative and culturally meaningful activities. For instance, during the course of the project, Kluane First Nation held a forgiveness ceremony on the Northern end of the park. This

type of traditional ceremony had not been held for over a hundred years. Recently, the Kluane First Nation also gifted the park with a song about being welcomed back into their traditional territory. The song was commissioned to Diyet Van Lieshout, of Kluane First Nation, who wrote and performed it during the opening of the centre. It is now showcased at the new Da Kų Cultural Centre ("Our House" in Southern Tutchone). The cultural centre acts as a focal point for visitors to the community of Haines Junction and the Kluane region and is also home to the government of Yukon and Parks Canada visitor information centres.

Now, the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge that arises out of the Southern Tutchone relationship to the land contributes to the maintenance of ecological integrity and to the modern day management of the park. With the implementation of their land claim the Kluane National Park Management Board was set up and First Nation communities have reasserted their right to carry out traditional activities in the park and the surrounding Kluane Game Sanctuary lands. While signed agreements provide the legal framework for cultural reintegration, decades of alienation required additional efforts.

This cultural reintegration helped ensure that the First Nations' traditional knowledge of the region is recognized and carried forth into the future. The project was more than just holding culture camps, it helped reintroduce families to the area where their ancestors had once lived and get them to feel comfortable doing so. *Healing Broken Connections Project* has been both a healing process for both Parks Canada and local First Nations, facilitating moving towards rebuilding trust and a sense of connection to place. The project was successful because the First Nations

Healing Broken Connections Project helped establish trust with a whole host of players and Parks Canada and helped us move forward on some other big projects.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Backpackers in Away Chu Valley.



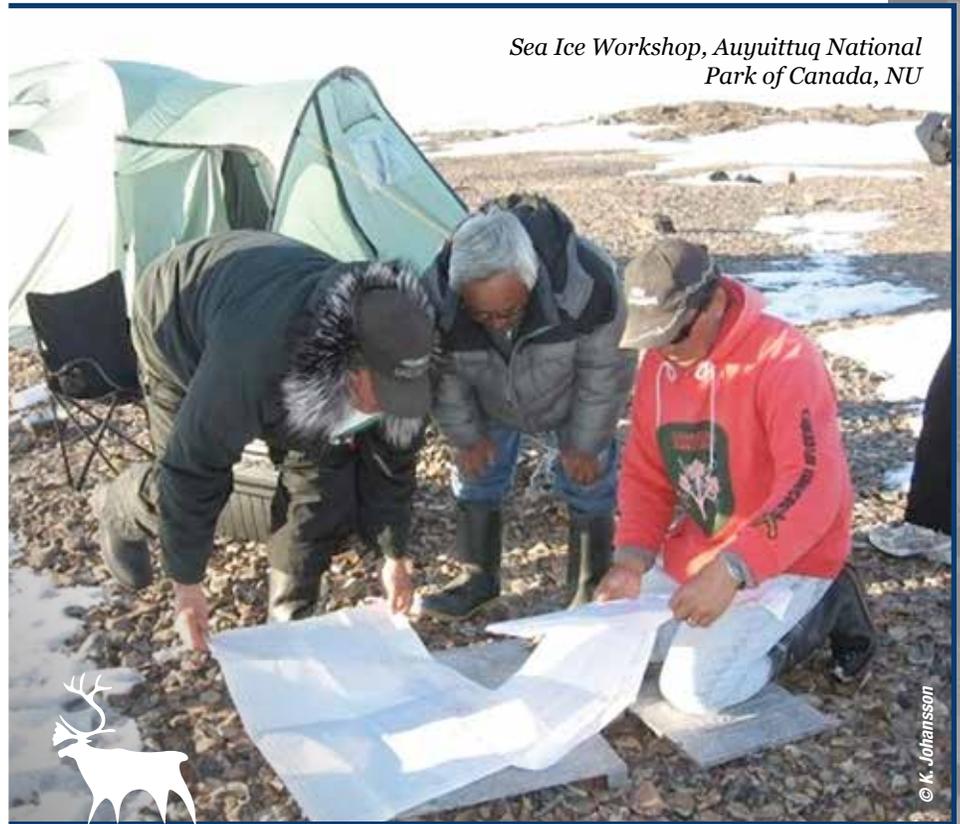
involved took on a leadership role in hiring staff, managing finances and directing the project, goals and outcomes.

Kluane National Park and Reserve is continuing to build stronger relationships with First Nations, ensuring that cultural reintegration is actively supported, that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and cultural resources are protected and that training, employment and economic opportunities for both First Nations are pursued by building on the work *Healing Broken Connections Project* has done.

For instance, the management plan states that “the process that began through the *Healing Broken Connections Project* will continue and a strong First Nation presence in the park will enhance the visitor experience, ecological integrity, and cultural heritage of the park. Parks Canada will continue to work with the Kluane First Nation, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the Kluane National Park Management Board, to share in the effective and enduring cooperative management of the park, based on strong mutual respect and a shared understanding of respective responsibilities”.

ii. The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Knowledge) Projects — Auyuittuq, Sirmilik and Ukkusiksalik National Parks, Nunavut

For detailed information on the Inuit Knowledge Project visit <http://www.lecol-ck.ca/ik/>. The site contains details about the specific research projects carried out under the umbrella of the Inuit Knowledge Project, including community-based work as well as on-the-land or on-the-ice workshops. There are support tools such as a community research guide, an online customized database and links to maps, photos, publications, theses, northern organizations and research licensing agencies. There is also a series of podcasts available in English and Inuktitut summarizing the main project results.



Sea Ice Workshop, Auyuittuq National Park of Canada, NU

The *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Project* was set up to build capacity for cross-cultural dialogue among Nunavut national park team members, researchers and Inuit community members. The communities involved with this project are Naujit (Repulse Bay) on the west coast of Hudson Bay, Ikpiarjuk and Mittimatalik (Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet) on the north end of Baffin Island and Pangnirtung and Qikiqtarjuaq on the southeast coast of Baffin Island.

The *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Project* was carried out with the help and support of a large number of people, including elders, youth, community researchers, translators, parks team members and university researchers. The project encompassed various projects that aimed for a greater use of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in the management, research and monitoring of Nunavut national parks — a commitment under the

Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the *Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement* negotiated for each park. In addition, the project aimed to increase the capacity of Parks Canada staff and communities adjacent to these parks to engage in collaborative research and decision-making, while gaining greater awareness of Inuit knowledge, skills, expertise and perspectives.

Individual projects included Inuit knowledge of the environment and, in particular, of sea ice in the regions around the three parks, expert advice from elders and hunters on areas of ecological importance, distribution and change in wildlife populations, Inuit perspectives on conservation, safety practices and ecosystem management and youth perspectives on protected areas.

Although there was this desire of bringing Inuit Knowledge to decision making, the Inuit members of the Joint Park Management Committees were not very well supported. Compared to science and the number of biologists that were present to inform the management team, we did not have the parallel for the Inuit. We needed more and I thought it was important to find ways to have something similar to the science where projects that were funded would actually work on ATK and support management decisions.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Following a participatory research study design, the first step towards developing the Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit Project was to establish community based working groups in each community neighbouring the parks. From initial discussions, it was decided that there would be no decisions made or projects developed until these working groups were established; this took the better part of a year.

The Inuit Knowledge working groups are made up of elders, youth and hunter representatives, who meet four to six times a year to advise and guide the various research projects. The Inuit Knowledge working groups also invite local experts on a regular basis who can assist with specific projects and help review final project results.

The working group meetings were not like board meetings – there was no strict structure. Rather, they were knowledge meetings in which the team used the talking circle approach to facilitate dialogue.

The *Inuit Knowledge Project* has promoted in-depth thinking on how to use both Inuit knowledge and science to develop a better understanding of Arctic systems. Further, the project has developed processes and protocols that will enhance the quality of Inuit knowledge documentation and assist in Parks Canada's applications of this knowledge. This will serve as an important model of how to promote respect for different knowledge systems through open dialogue and opportunities to meaningfully inform management decisions. And clearly, the most significant results of the project have been the creation of stronger relationships with the Inuit communities and knowledge holders and creating a place where meaningful discussions can happen.

We really wanted to empower people in their roles and responsibilities and to make it clear how much their contribution to these places was important and will remain important...the conservation of these parks will not be successful without their involvement. I think that we have made a big contribution in getting people from the different communities feel like this is their place again, to regain ownership.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Building an igloo in Alda Lake area, Ukkusiksalik National Park of Canada, NU



© L. Narraway

Parks Participating in the Project:

Auyuittuq National Park of Canada was established in 1976. Auyuittuq — an Inuktitut word meaning “land that never melts” — protects 19,089 km² of glacier-scoured terrain. Located in the eastern Arctic on southern Baffin Island, the park includes the highest peaks of the Canadian Shield, the Penny Ice Cap, marine shorelines along coastal fiords and Akshayuk Pass, a traditional travel corridor used by the Inuit for thousands of years.

Sirmilik National Park represents the Northern Eastern Arctic Lowlands Natural Region and portions of the Lancaster Sound Marine Region. Sirmilik National Park was established in 2001. Located on the northern tip of Baffin Island near Lancaster Sound, Sirmilik protects 22,252 km² representing the Eastern Arctic Lowlands and Northern Davis natural regions.

Ukkusiksalik National Park is located just west of the Arctic Circle and the community of Repulse Bay. The park surrounds Wager Bay, a 100 km long saltwater inlet on the northwest coast of Hudson Bay in Nunavut. Declared a national park on August 23, 2003, Ukkusiksalik became Canada’s 41st national park. Named after the soapstone found within its boundaries, the park includes 20 500 km² of eskers, mudflats, cliffs, rolling tundra banks and unique coastal regions. While Inuit do hunt in the region, the parkland is uninhabited. Inuit had lived in the area from 1000 AD through to the 1960s and the Hudson’s Bay Company had a trading post there from 1925-1947. Over 500 archaeological sites have been identified in the park, including such features as fox traps, tent rings and food caches. The park protects a representative sample of the Central Tundra Natural Region.

iii. Calling All Drums Pow Wow and Métis Heritage Camping: A Métis Welcome — Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, Alberta



Learning Métis traditional games at Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site of Canada, AB

Background:

In 1799, the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies set up rival posts at the end of the fur trade line on the North Saskatchewan River. Competition for trade was fierce at Rocky Mountain House and during its 76-year history, nine different Aboriginal cultures came to trade.

The Rocky Mountain House commemorative intent statement declares: “Rocky Mountain House is of national historic significance because of its role in the historic fur trade; its association with David Thompson and explorations toward the westward; and its relationship with the Blackfoot peoples (Nitsitapii) particularly the Peigan (Piikaani).” Parks Canada archaeologists have unearthed thousands of artifacts on site. Selections of archaeological artifacts are on display at the visitor centre.

Trade existed on this continent long before Europeans arrived. First Nations of the North American plains had a vast trade network stretching north, south, east and west. Trade was part of their way of life and the First Nations and the Métis brought furs and pemmican at Rocky Mountain House. First Nations who came to trade were: Ktunaxa (Kootenay, Kootenai, Kutenai), Piikani (Peigan), Kainai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), Tsuu T’ina (Sarcee, Sarsi), Atsina (Fall, Waterfall, Rock, Gros Ventre, Big Belly, A’aninen), Nakoda (Stoney, Assiniboine), Nehiyawak (Cree).

The Calling All Drums Pow Wow and Heritage Camping projects are both very important to Métis and First Nation communities around Rocky Mountain House. They provide unique ways to showcase, preserve, and share the cultures and way of life of Métis and First Nations peoples. Heritage Camping allows the visitor to walk in the footsteps of the ancestors, it's a very hands on experience. The pow wow gives people the opportunity to connect with the culture by being spectators, volunteering or taking part in the ceremony. But, what's most important is that these projects foster cooperation, relationship building, and understanding for Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples.

— Parks Canada Team Member



At Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, Parks Canada protects the archaeological remains of four trading posts while presenting the site's history. Visitors can participate in educational and interpretive programming and learn about the fur trade, as well as take part in First Nations and Métis cultural programming.

The historic site's commemorative integrity statement indicated that a number of Aboriginal communities have significant ties and history related to the place. However, except for the Métis Local 845, the historic site had very limited contacts with other Aboriginal groups. To initiate these relationships, Parks Canada invited the Métis local 845 and the Métis Nation of Alberta Association Region 3 to form a working group to engage with multiple Aboriginal communities. The groups agreed to act as ambassadors and guides to bridge the cultures in order to offer a more pluralistic visitor experience and education programming at the historic site.

An inclusive approach is taken, with First Nation and Métis peoples recognizing their long and close association with the historic site. There is a spirit of cooperation between First Nation and Métis peoples, the local community, regional attractions, local governments, neighbouring landowners and the gas plant operators to ensure the historic site's commemorative integrity is well preserved and presented to visitors.

The historic site team members held a forum with Métis community members who had been involved at the site and representatives discussed the communities' interest in the historic site and what they wanted to see happen with the cultural programming.

Two programs were subsequently developed: the Calling All Drums Pow Wow and the Métis Heritage Camping. Heritage camping began as part of a Métis reconciliation project in 2010 and has been rolling out since then. The objective was to develop an authentic, culturally rich, professionally presented and sustainable Métis camping experience for visitors along the banks of the North Saskatchewan River.

Through a partnership with Métis Local 845, the historic site now operates nine walk-in tenting sites and a tipi camping experience. Métis interpreters located at the trading tent share their cultures' history. Some of the activities visitors can take part in are period camping, making dream catchers, playing traditional games and drums, cooking bannock, making pemmican and scraping bison hide.

Events like the pow wow and other cultural programming help to break down barriers and foster a better understanding of each other's cultures. The programming has helped revitalize First Nation and Métis cultural practices on the site and has also received a lot of positive feedback from visitors.

iv. Atlantic Canada Eel Project — Kouchibouguac and Fundy National Parks of Canada, New Brunswick

Background:

The Canadian Eel Working Group (2007) identified the need for better data regarding the fundamental ecology and demographics of eels, particularly in the Atlantic Region, since no baseline data existed. In many National Parks, the American eel is an indicator of freshwater ecosystem health and, through its catadromous life history, its health may also be indicative of conditions in the wider marine environment.

Additionally, the Eel is a culturally and historically significant species for many First Nations groups in Canada. Because of their close ties with the land, they are more likely than any other group to be affected by the potential loss of species like the American eel. It could also have great impact on the cultural and economic well-being of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy peoples of the Atlantic Region.

Learning about the importance of the Atlantic Eel from a Micmac interpreter at Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada, NB



Across its system of heritage places, Parks Canada works with Aboriginal partners on a wide variety of species at risk projects. A leading example of First Nations Knowledge Holders and Parks Canada scientists working together towards species protection and conservation is the *Atlantic Canada Eel Project*. For example, in New Brunswick,

Kouchibouguac and Fundy National Parks have collaborated with Mi'kmaq First Nations and Acadian communities to include their perspectives on the American Eel in species at risk assessment and monitoring and to incorporate these communities' Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and local knowledge of the eel in educational programs for youth.

The Mi'kmaq and the Acadian classes came for a visit and we went to see an eel fisherman lift his net and there were almost 100 eels in the net. There were a lot of eels in the boat so the kids got a chance to touch the eels and see them wiggling. When we got back to the school, we had an eel tasting with the kids. A lot of them had never tasted eels. Probably all of their parents and great-grandparents had eaten eels before.

— Parks Canada Team Member



We really want to be more involved with more Aboriginal communities surrounding our national parks. Now that we understand how important this species is culturally and traditionally, we may be able to find a way to bridge gaps and build a strong relationship. We will develop trust and respect and mutual understanding from the fact that what we all want to do is what is best for this animal.

— Parks Canada Team Member



The aim of these programs is to foster a sense of connection among participants to the Atlantic national parks, to the American eel as well as to gain a deeper appreciation for and understanding of Mi'kmaq culture through experiential learning and active participation in citizen science programs.

Members of the *Atlantic Canada Eel Project* worked for two years to collect scientific data and video footage in order to document and present the natural, historic and cultural importance of the Eel from both First Nation and Acadian perspectives.

The Eel project is a great example of national parks collaborating with First Nations and local communities to promote education and restoration efforts towards a species. Different Atlantic national parks tested various trapping techniques and shared best practices and lessons learned with other national parks involved in the project.

The *American Eel Project* has served as a template on how we can work with Aboriginal communities to recognize Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in a way that helps inform the *Species at Risk Act*, and the Atlantic Aboriginal Protection of Species Committee, a group that involves members from New Brunswick Nova Scotia and PEI.

The **objectives** of the Eel project are as follows:

1. Gain a better understanding of the biology of eels in rivers, including habitat, distribution and life history through a combination of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) and scientific study, thereby providing needed baseline data;
2. Increase the strength of partnerships with Aboriginal communities and enabling them to aid in both the ATK and the scientific data collection and;
3. Increase public knowledge of this extraordinary species, using their fascinating life history to entice Canadians to take ownership of eels and help collect scientific data.

Parks Canada also produced information packages and an edukit in order to educate the Canadian public on the ecological and cultural significance of the American eel. The edukit contains written material about the eels, copies of the videos, a stuffed eel, a puppet and materials that show the life cycle of the eels and how they are now affected by specific parasites. The edukits are used in various Mi'kmaq and Acadian schools and communities to help support discussions on the importance of the eel to community members.

D. How It Could Be

Young visitors perform military exercises with toy guns under the command of an interpreter in period costume, Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, SK



© K. Hogarth



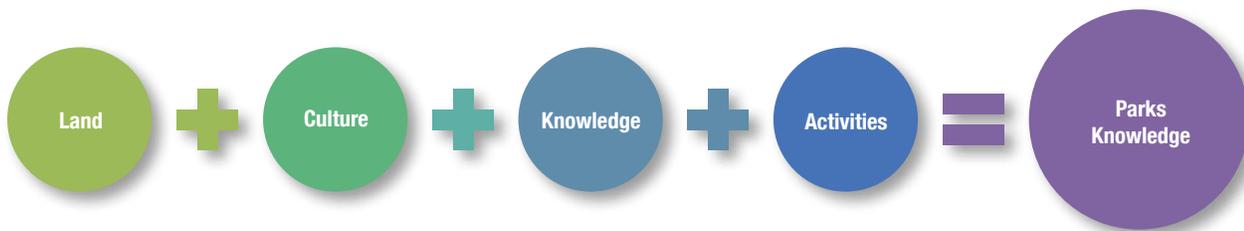
In most cases, knowledge of landscape, history, particular animals, fish and plants is held not by one person but by the entire community.

Where we really need to be is in a relationship that trusts enough that we can take the views and advice of Aboriginal peoples who have traditionally used these lands and we give that advice weight so that it meaningfully affects how we manage. You can do that without actually transferring ATK and that to me is a sign that the relationship is a trusting relationship. We do not have to own the information; we simply need to be in a relationship that is strong enough.

– Parks Canada Team Member



a) Partners in protecting heritage places



Principles to Follow when Working with Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Holders

Partnership: Working collaboratively in heritage place planning, management, and operations.

Accessible: Encouraging access to traditional lands and traditional activities.

Respectful: Building mutual respect, trust and understanding.

Knowledge-Based: Honouring and incorporating traditional knowledge.

Supportive: Supporting Aboriginal partners' community interests.

Undertaking traditional activities is the platform on which traditional knowledge is contextualised and shared. If we don't allow for that, we don't respect the knowledge system and how it operates. I have come to the conclusion that if we really want to respect ATK, we have to allow the activities that operate the system, and that is reconnecting people to traditionally used lands.

– Parks Canada Team Member

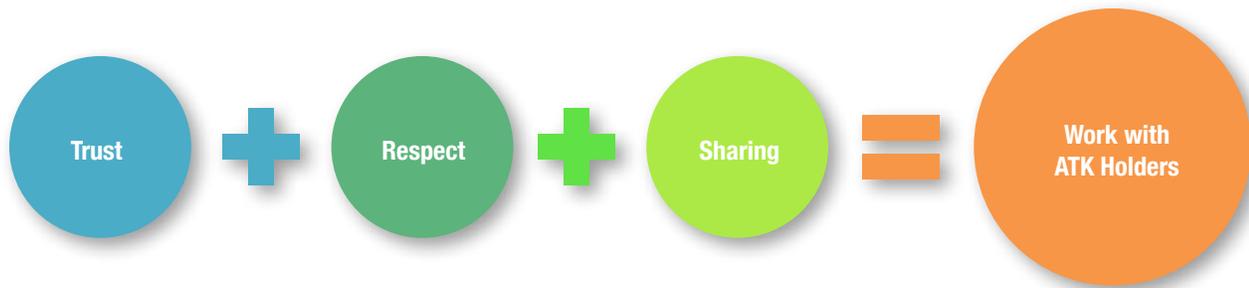


Objectives to Keep in Mind when Working with Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Holders

Any project that is using ATK in Parks management, collaborative conservation, education and outreach activities should remember to apply the following objectives:

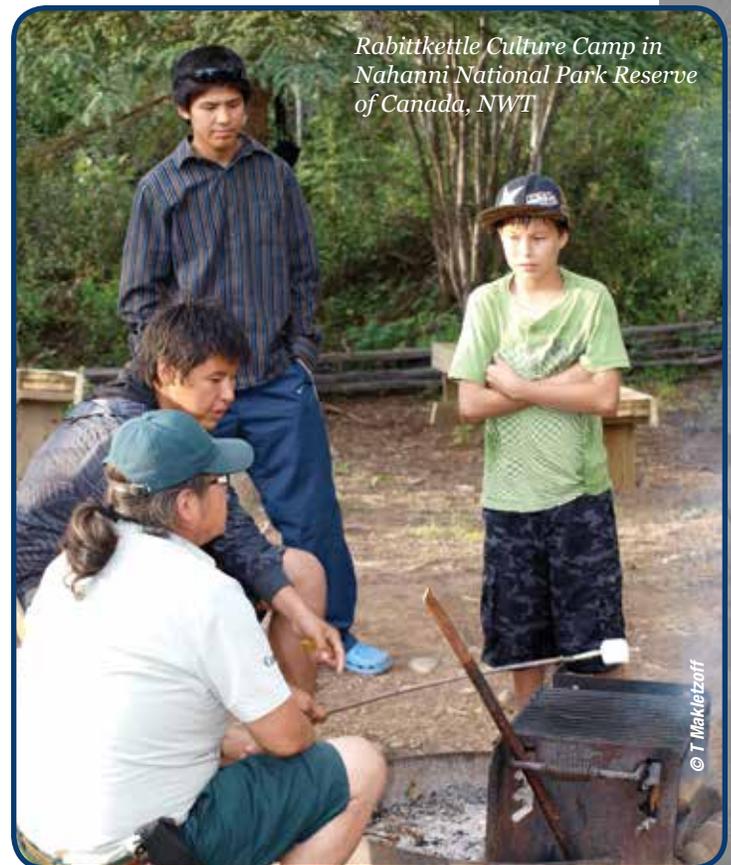
- 1. Educate oneself on a community's Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge or Research Protocols and follow them accordingly.** Many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities have outlined research protocols to protect themselves from knowledge appropriation and misuse. These protocols should be followed and respected. Becoming familiar with a community's research protocols will also help researchers and managers to become more knowledgeable about a community's priorities for the future.
- 2. Respect that Aboriginal Knowledge is culturally and geographically contextual.** Robin Wall Kimmerer (Kimmerer 2002: 433) argues, "*TEK exists in a particular cultural and ecological context and should be presented in relation to that intellectual tradition.*" It is important to recognize that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is culturally distinct and emerges from long-term interaction with a specific ecosystem and environment. Therefore, every community's and every person's knowledge base will differ. Projects should reflect local communities' own understandings of ATK.
- 3. Understand that involving Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in projects is a relationship building exercise and not a Knowledge gathering and documenting exercise.** Parks Canada's management practices vary and Aboriginal Knowledge Holders like to maintain varying degrees of control in project design and implementation. In most cases, Aboriginal Knowledge Holders should retain control over their own knowledge and how it is used in project design and delivery.
- 4. Understand that Aboriginal Knowledge Holders have a right to restrict and abstain from knowledge sharing.** Aboriginal peoples often feel that their knowledge has in the past been appropriated by others in ways that fail to benefit the Aboriginal peoples concerned. If a community is unwilling to share spiritual, cultural or ecological information, their wishes need to be respected. For example, the Innu community in Ekuanitshit (Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve) have their own traditional pharmacy where they house Traditional Knowledge and Traditional medicine. The pharmacy is not open to the public and is kept for members of the community only.
- 5. Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is a Holistic Collective Knowledge.** In most cases, knowledge of landscape, history, particular animals, fish and plants is held not by one person but by the entire community. However, someone might also hold knowledge of large mammals and another person knowledge of fish and river systems. There is also women's and men's knowledge, ceremonial knowledge and specific family knowledge and responsibilities.
- 6. Recognize that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is part of a larger knowledge system that must be kept alive and healthy.** In order to protect and conserve traditional knowledge, projects should be designed in a way that supports the larger knowledge system. This means fostering opportunities for Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to engage in traditional activities on their territory, hold traditional ceremonies and also foster opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transmission like hosting and facilitating youth/elder culture camps.

Working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders



Parks Canada promotes the broad participation of Aboriginal peoples in diverse areas related to planning and managing heritage places. The various approaches to cooperative management in different provinces and territories reflect the local histories, community cultures and different legal circumstances.

In many cases, Land Claims Agreements have provided the legal framework for cooperative management boards and agreements. With regard to cooperatively managed heritage places, Parks Canada policy states that, “in areas subject to existing Aboriginal or treaty rights or to comprehensive land claims by Aboriginal peoples, the terms and conditions of parks establishment will include provision for continuation of renewable resource harvesting activities, and the nature and extent of Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in park planning and management.”



From a legal, perspective you have numbered treaty and non-number treaty, treaty of friendship and no treaty, modern treaties and land claims. It’s just different everywhere; therefore, the expectations are different, the cultures are different and you have to bring a local reality to any type of relationship building.

— Parks Canada Team Member



As an agency, we are working on the relationship while there is still, in several cases, some big legal issues that are being resolved by Canada and the First Nation at the treaty or land claim table. We have to work our way through that, but the approach we have taken is less “let’s wait for the land claim to be resolved” and more “let’s build a relationship and there are a lot of things we can do together respectfully.”

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer Parks Canada



In addition to the cooperative management boards with many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities that Parks Canada has established, the Agency also uses various forms of working agreements to facilitate the sharing of knowledge with many different Aboriginal communities across the country. Working agreements have proven to be useful mechanisms for establishing and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders and for integrating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge into heritage places management. Agreements to work cooperatively may take the following form:

i. **Temporary working groups** may be assembled to engage the community prior to the development of a heritage area, to develop a specific project, to seek input on mandates and objectives, etc.

ii. **Memorandums of understanding** are bilateral or multilateral agreements between two or more parties. They express a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are a great way to come together and share opinions about heritage place management and projects and to get communities and Parks Canada on the same page. They are also a useful mechanism to maintain a sense of accountability towards Aboriginal partners.

iii. **Terms of Reference** are formal contracts that outline the impacts of the project, the commitment and responsibilities of both parties and how the associated Aboriginal community will share in the benefits of the operation through employment and economic development. They are also a formal and more legal way of maintaining a sense of responsibility and accountability towards Aboriginal partners.

You need people who know what they are doing. You need people with a good education, but you also need people with good personal suitability, because you have to realize that you are dealing with people who, in some ways, have substantive issues with the government. You can’t take things personally; they are going to get angry at you... but you can’t give up, you have to keep going because that’s what shows your commitment.

— Parks Canada Team Member

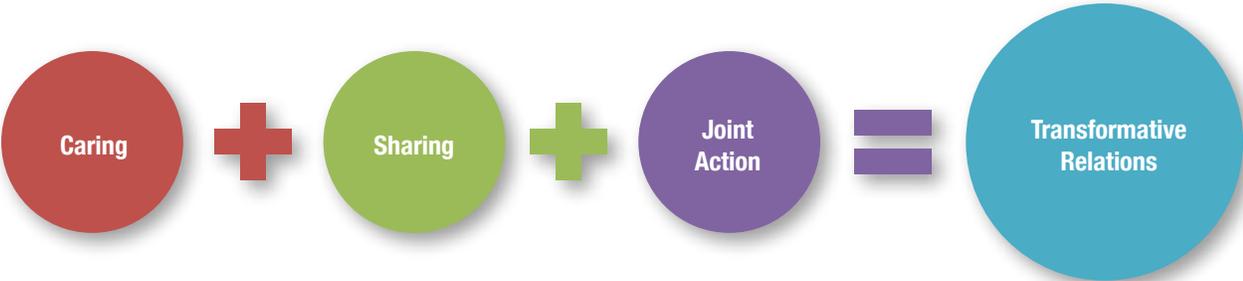


b) Best Practices for working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders

The following best practices are a reflection of where Parks Canada and Aboriginal peoples are on the continuum of relationship building. In the paper, *Two Paths One Direction* (Langdon, Prosper and Gagnon 2010: p. 231), the authors conclude that Parks Canada came a long way in 30 years to develop working relationships in a positive and respectful manner with Aboriginal peoples. Partly, it was driven by legal precedents,

but more importantly, it was the desire to work together toward common goals. These best practices are the result of Parks Canada’s goal to become a leader in cooperative management and innovative working relationship approaches.

While remarkable and innovative, the journey has just begun.



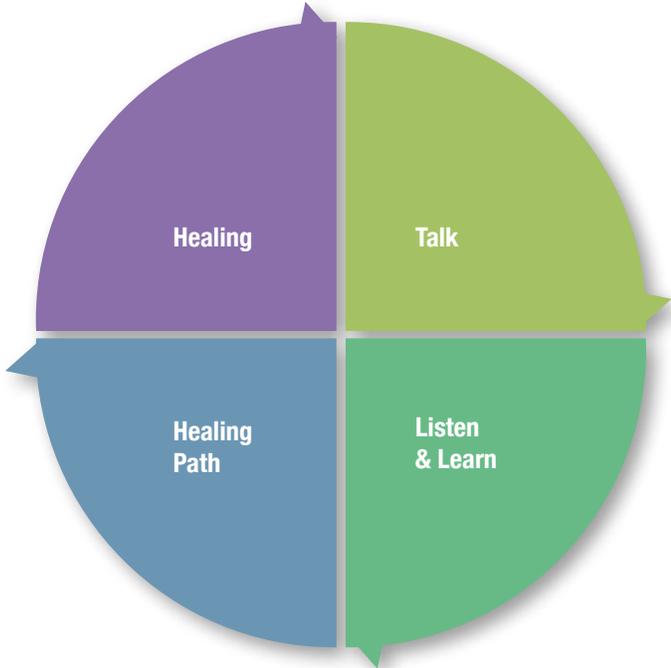
Heal Broken Relationships

The first and most important step to working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders is to develop relationships built on trust. In certain cases, this task might be especially difficult, especially in areas where trust has been broken or damaged by past actions. In these cases, a process of healing is needed to facilitate two-way communication and understanding between Parks Canada and Aboriginal peoples. Patiently and respectfully listening to people’s grievances, concerns and anger is an important first step to building relationships.

Healing begins with talking, then listening and then learning. Many Aboriginal peoples say they are on a healing path, but are not yet healed, as healing is a continuous quest to find a balance in life – therefore, it is not an end point or destination but an ongoing journey.

Transformative Relations

Patience and understanding demonstrates acknowledgement of the past and a commitment to work together in the future. In certain cases healing from past historic events might require additional organized and targeted efforts. Various examples illustrate how song, stories and ceremonies can be vehicles for healing.



We had an Aboriginal cultural awareness training last fall and we had members of different communities come in to talk to us. At that sit down there was a lot of talking and a lot of listening and I think that was huge in strengthening the relationship with First Nations communities. From that, we put into development a sweat lodge, as it was something that was an interest on our side as well as theirs to strengthen this relationship. I am pretty excited to officially open this lodge in the park and have the ceremony take place. I have heard it is a very special and spiritual experience and that is how you get to learn about the different cultures around you.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Cultural Awareness Training With Team Members

In order to develop respectful relationships, you first need to know the person or community with which you want to engage. In cases where relationships do not already exist or if they are not strong, the need to better understand one another is critical. In this case, Parks Canada team members have been known to be very open about their lack of knowledge and understanding of local Aboriginal protocols, culture, spirituality and history.

In the past decade, Parks Canada has held several Aboriginal cultural awareness workshops. Various local and regional sessions on Aboriginal culture were offered in cooperation with regional Aboriginal organizations that specialized in cultural and adult education training. Building awareness among team members about Aboriginal cultures, spirituality and values is vital for equipping team members with the knowledge and sensitivity required to respectfully engage with Aboriginal communities. Cultural awareness initiatives can also be a great team building and relationship building exercise.



Members of Parks Canada's Aboriginal Consultative Committee listen to an interpreter at the Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site of Canada, QC

Inform yourself and seek to understand Aboriginal Rights

Parks Canada's actions in policy development, operations and management need to consider the potential impact on Aboriginal rights, including modern treaty rights, historic treaty rights or asserted Aboriginal rights. Effort should be made to inform yourself of relevant and current claims, rights, assertions, obligations, relevant constitutional provisions, legislation and administrative practices affecting rights and claims. Cooperative management agreements and Memorandums of Understanding should be based on a common recognition and respect for each heritage place and Aboriginal groups' particular cultural and legal circumstance.

Respectfully Engage the Community and Acknowledge Diversity

Each and every Aboriginal community has their own special relationship to the land and they possess unique values, beliefs, customs, practices and livelihoods. This relationship is often based on the idea that the **land is their teacher**. It is important to respect the local, regional and national diversity of Aboriginal peoples.

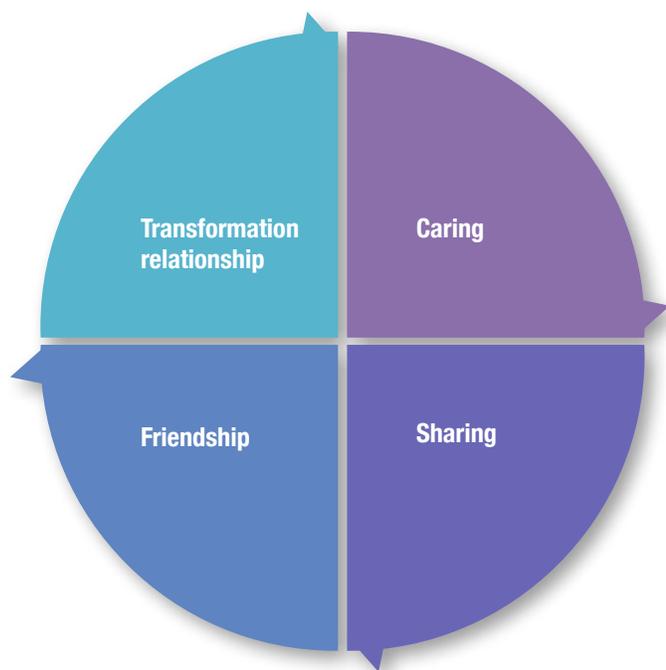
It's important to develop an understanding of the land and Aboriginal connection to the land, especially in the initial phases of heritage place establishment or program development, by engaging the community to gain insight into their socio-political circumstance, as well as their needs and priorities.

Engaging the community can involve a blend of traditional approaches and more personalized ones. For instance, Parks Canada team members might wish to identify and engage with representatives of Aboriginal community organizations at the earliest stages of program development. This might involve conducting public hearings, focus groups and/or meetings. Many Parks Canada team members found personalized approaches especially helpful in getting to know community members, sharing information about Parks Canada and establishing mutually respectful relations. Establishing personal relations requires going into the community and spending time getting to know both the land and the people.

Parks Canada team members have found it helpful to go for tea or coffee in local cafés to speak to people and attend communities' social events, like gatherings and pow wows in order to

know the community and become known to it. It is important to not only work with recognized established governing bodies like bands and tribal councils and Métis local groups but also to engage more widely with members of the community. Effort should be taken to ensure diverse perspectives are considered — for instance the input of Elders, youth, hunters, trappers, men and women should be solicited. Sometimes this process might involve establishing new groups or advisory bodies that can help guide a specific project.

These strategies focus on building trust Engagement strategies that utilize approaches that focus on relationship building show that you care. Caring can lead to sharing and professional friendships. Relationships are the glue to achieving results. Caring has the power to transform relationships.



I spent a week on the land with the Chiefs and Elders before we even decided if we wanted to work together to create a park. When Aboriginal peoples feel comfortable, they will come to the heritage place, but our first step is to be out there.

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



It is easy for us to underestimate the powers of reconnecting to culture and the number of social indexes that are going to be affected by simply creating an opportunity to reconnect and to share that with other Canadians with pride. We were in Red Bank First Nation in New Brunswick for the opening of a cultural centre. The cultural centre looks at prehistory all the way to the present and, for me, it was profound when the Grand Chief said that this was the first time the youth in his community were proud of who they are.

— Parks Canada Team Member



Develop Community Driven Approaches

In the past, heritage places have been set up without the engagement or support of the communities who were traditionally connected to the area and who made use of the area's resources. Engagement should take place well in advance of establishing a heritage place.

Prior to and during the initial planning stages of the process, Aboriginal partners should be actively involved in helping establish management arrangements. These agreements should address the need for shared objectives and management priorities. Management strategies should reflect Aboriginal communities' values, culture and priorities, while learning from the experiences of other similar circumstances. Long-term objectives should be grounded in an appreciation of the historical, social and cultural complexities of any given community. Empowering qualified community members to take on leadership roles in parks management and project development should also be fostered.

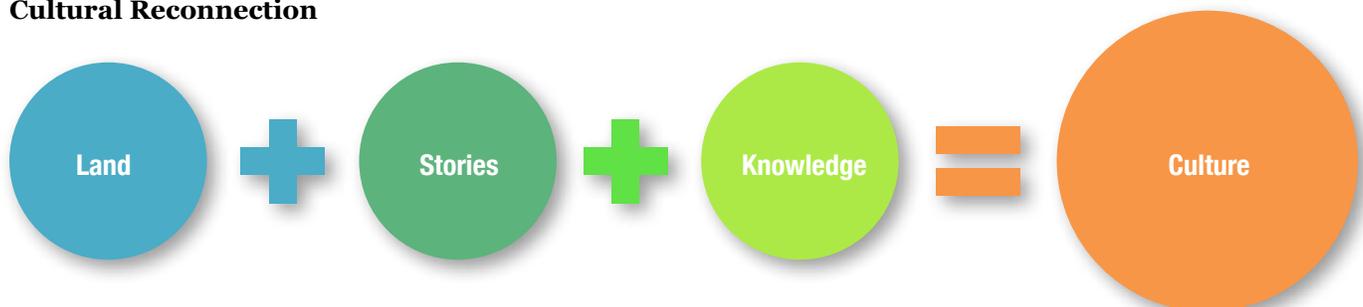
Re/Connect to Nature and Culture

Re/connecting people to the land also fosters relationships, since Aboriginal peoples often have deep spiritual and cultural connections to these lands and disrupting this profound connection can have negative consequences. Not only has the land provided sustenance for Aboriginal peoples throughout the centuries, contributing to healthy livelihoods, but also culture comes from the land through practices and ceremonies. Re/connecting Aboriginal communities to heritage places therefore encourages Aboriginal peoples to reconnect to their culture.

This can have unexpected social and health benefits. There are numerous studies that have documented connections between Aboriginal peoples having a strong sense of cultural identity and improving health conditions, which are supported by the notion that culture and the healing power of the land are treatments.

It is important to understand that Aboriginal peoples' relationship to the land is sacred, fundamental and holistic. This is reflected in teachings such as "we are only as healthy as the environment" and "the land is our teacher".

Cultural Reconnection



Maintain Healthy Relationships

Time, patience, trust, dedication, accountability, openness and consistency are critical to establishing and maintaining strong relations.

- 1. Develop Working Principles Together:** Genuine partnerships must be built on basic principles that are understood by both parties. This enables moving forward with shared vision. Having communities help to define these principles contributes to building trust and establishing a shared vision.
- 2. Maintain Clear Lines of Communication:** Establish effective mechanisms for open dialogue, the redress of grievances and transparent exchanges of information between Aboriginal peoples, communities and Parks Canada team members. Strategic plans, visioning statements, formal agreements and memorandums of understanding can be used to ensure consistency in communication and can provide some recognition of Aboriginal interests within heritage places.
- 3. Maintain Transparency:** Healthy relationships require being open and honest about objectives, procedures and limitations.
- 4. Be Accountable:** Parks Canada team members need to be respectful of the commitments they make to Aboriginal partners on behalf of the Agency.

Having clearly demarcated lines of responsibility can promote accountability in working partnerships.

- 5. Work to Enhance Staff Retention:** The main challenge Parks Canada employees identified in maintaining strong and healthy relationships with Aboriginal partners was the turnover of people, both at Parks Canada and in the Aboriginal communities. Parks Canada has made efforts to enhance staff retention by promoting flexible work arrangements, by hiring more Aboriginal employees and by working with local cooperative management boards to address long-term employment strategies.

Additionally, keeping a paper trail by documenting lines of communication, promises and goals is a key way to ensure consistency during times of change.

Facilitate Opportunities for Intergenerational Learning

In many Aboriginal communities, concerns are being expressed about the declining interest of youth in land-based activities and the resulting loss of community traditions. Also, as more and more elders are passing on, the knowledge and practice of certain communities are in grave peril of being lost forever.

Be frank about what is possible and what is not. I have been in a lot of situations with Chiefs and Elders where, if I cannot make the commitment and deliver on it, I'm very frank about it, because part of having a relationship is delivering, both of us, on what we say we're going to do.

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



We get 22 million personal visits a year, which provides opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to share their culture. We are doing that differently at different locations. In some places, it is Aboriginal peoples that work for us, in other places it is local communities that we partner with who are using Parks Canada as the gathering place to communicate and showcase their culture.

— Alan Latourelle, Chief Executive Officer, Parks Canada



Parks Canada can enable and facilitate a reconnection to culture by facilitating intergenerational learning activities, thereby strengthening the continuance of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

Facilitate Educational Opportunities for the Canadian Public

Parks Canada team members know that when visitors come to their heritage places, they are in a receptive learning mode. Canadians want to learn about and support Aboriginal peoples' history, traditional stewardship responsibilities and cultural and spiritual commitment to conservation. Canadians and international visitors have also demonstrated a strong interest in knowing more about Aboriginal peoples' history, cultures and spiritual practices.

Interpretation and educational outreach programs can deliver important messages to the public concerning Aboriginal use of land, while emphasizing ecological integrity and the cultural conservation ethics of Aboriginal peoples. This can help Aboriginal communities gain increased social recognition, correct historical misconceptions and foster greater understanding on the important roles Aboriginal peoples have played and continue to play in Canada's history. Various Aboriginal communities have also expressed a desire to share their knowledge and educate the public about their history and culture.

Support the Community by Using Community Services and Resources

Using community services is a great way to support the local capacities of Aboriginal communities and also helps Parks Canada to fulfil its mandate. Often, the development of a heritage place will contribute to capital investment, infrastructure development and maintenance.

Parks Canada takes a capacity based approach to working with Aboriginal communities to enhance their existing programming, particularly in relation to the maintenance of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. For example, find out what individuals and communities are already doing to manage their environments, resources and cultures, and match that with programs and priorities of the protected heritage area, thus providing support to enhance what is already working.

Support Authentic Aboriginal Tourism

Promoting authentic Aboriginal tourism is an excellent way Parks Canada can help support Aboriginal peoples benefitting from their Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. The development of heritage places should help provide new tourism opportunities for both the community and the region as a whole. New tourism opportunities support and complement existing economic activities and maintain the ecological integrity of national parks and the cultural integrity of historic sites by helping to diversify the local economy.

Employ Aboriginal Team Members

Currently, more than 8% of Parks Canada staff are First Nation, Inuit or Métis. These employees are found in all functional fields of work, from Vice President or Field Unit Superintendent to Resource Conservation, Finance, Administration or Human Resources. Certain cooperative management agreements Parks Canada has with Aboriginal communities contain specific employment provisions. Employing Aboriginal staff holds many benefits for both Parks Canada and Aboriginal communities. Parks Canada can provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities and help to diversify local economies. In turn, Aboriginal employees bring insight, particularly of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge to Agency projects.

Create Opportunities for Capacity Development

Although Parks Canada already successfully employs many Aboriginal peoples, there is always room for improvement. In Aboriginal communities, there is a need to develop capacity by encouraging and facilitating opportunities for young people to learn skills and pursue formal and informal educational opportunities. There is also a need to develop the capacity of already existing Parks Canada team members so that Aboriginal employees can occupy the range of positions available in the Agency. For both scenarios, Parks Canada recognizes these are opportunities for continued focus and development.

What is the Benefit of Having You as an Aboriginal Employee?

What I do is provide support for staff to gain some of the work skills and education that they need to work with and liaise with people from the Aboriginal communities.

I think that the benefit of the position is that it shows the communities that the park is going to put its money where its mouth is, so to speak; we have a position that is on the management team, it directly talks to and engages with the communities. It really is the first thing we can do to keep a good relationship with the community.

I think that there are deeply added benefits to having me here as a local Aboriginal person and I think there are added benefits of having a local family with Aboriginal ties to the community... that gives me more access to some of my conversations in the community about the park, good or bad, and it gives me an opportunity to hear the people.

— Various Parks Canada Team Members



Many Aboriginal team members working for Parks Canada have the opportunity to gain transferable skills, move around the organization and learn from holding diverse positions. There are a lot of examples where Aboriginal team members start as summer students, gradually moving into progressively responsible positions.

We need to go to communities and start inputting dreams in kids' minds to get them to have big dreams, to let them know they can do anything they want. A lot of these kids don't have dreams; they don't see anything for themselves beyond their community. It is no accident that my grade 10 biology teacher brought us up to Riding Mountain National Park. I actually remember one of the interpreters who is still employed here. He gave us a talk, I think it was about elk or moose. I had never even considered working for the park but after that, the park was on my mind. I was thinking it would be nice to get a summer job and it just ended up happening that way.

– Parks Canada Team Member



c) Best Practices for Including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Heritage Place Management and Resource Conservation

As stated previously, mainstream culture has only recently begun to appreciate Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge as a legitimate and sophisticated knowledge system in its own right. In the past, traditional academic-based models of heritage place planning and management in Canada provided little opportunity to access the benefits of Aboriginal peoples' Traditional Knowledge. Now, academics, agency, scientists and policy makers are increasingly seeking Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge as a potential source of ideas for emerging models of eco-management, conservation biology, and eco-restoration (Kimmerer 2002, p. 12) along with historical and cultural concepts, to help present heritage places. Parks Canada has adopted a holistic approach to including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in activities in which the focus is on building relationships and empowering communities, rather than purely collecting and documenting data. Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is increasingly playing a larger role in heritage place management, collaborative conservation initiatives, educational programs and outreach initiatives.

Parks Canada prefers to use the term Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) over Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). In doing so, Parks Canada fosters a holistic understanding of Aboriginal Knowledge systems because ATK encompasses more wholly the historical, cultural, linguistic and the ecological components of knowledge.

Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Holistic Model



Choosing not to categorize Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a separate element, rather than as a component of Traditional Knowledge, implies that Aboriginal Knowledge of the environment should not be separated from wider socio-political and cultural considerations. This approach might be productive in serving to discourage external researchers from approaching TEK as a body of “factual knowledge,” which may be extracted from local environments and taken from rightful knowledge holders.

It is not about collecting Aboriginal Knowledge; it's about working with knowledge holders. You cannot really appropriate yourself of other person's knowledge or culture. What you can do is facilitate the exchange of knowledge among knowledge holders.

— Parks Canada Team Member



People like the concept of Traditional Ecological Knowledge because they think that they can still have a management prerogative over the information they gained. Once you start talking about Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and you introduce the concept of culture, you quickly realise you cannot manage it (culture). You cannot include traditional knowledge unless it is your own culture. So it brings a different perspective to the relationship; you need to work with the people who are the holders of this knowledge.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Historically, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge was often de-contextualized and measured against science and not afforded the same recognition or validity. It was portrayed as superstition, deriving from primitive societies, despite the fact that it is its own time-tested science. Aboriginal communities hold a wealth of observational data about ecosystems. In 1987, the Bruntland Commission published *Our Common Future* which stated that Indigenous peoples can offer mainstream society many lessons in the management of resources in complex forest, mountain and dry land ecosystems.

Another Parks Canada team member commented that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge is like watching a movie, while science is like looking at a series of pictures over time. In some of its work, Parks Canada has adopted an approach recognized widely as “Two-Eyed Seeing” developed by Mi’kmaq elder Albert Marshall, which gives equal consideration and appreciation to academic research and Aboriginal forms of knowledge.



An interpreter in period costume shares stories with young visitors in front of the fireplace in the Cooperage at Fort Langley National Historic Site of Canada, BC

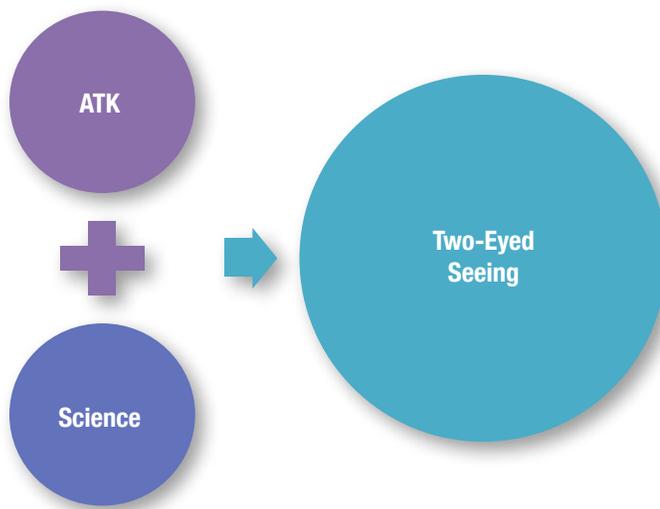
© Michael Boland Photography

I think what you're finding now is more and more of our scientists are starting to understand that the stories are going to corroborate their findings, because ATK is also stemmed into a scientific base when you look at it. Science is about developing a theory and evaluating your theory through observation. Well, ATK is exactly about observation, but thousands of years of observation.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Two Eyed Seeing Model (Marshall)



Parks Canada team members recognize that there are many parallels between ATK and science. Robin Wall Kimmerer (Kimmerer 2002, p. 12) explains that both bodies of thought are 1) based on empirical observation, 2) involve detailed empirical data, 3) hold predictive power and 4) are formed in a particular cultural context. Yet many team members also recognized distinct differences between ATK and academic research and identified ways in which ATK can serve to enhance scientific disciplines.

The fact that Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge teaches people to have appreciation, respect and humility for nature encourages personal connections to our protected heritage places. Traditional knowledge is based on actions such as harvesting techniques; medicinal and technological use of plants; protocol/philosophy of respect of ancestral rules of stewardship of land and resources which are tied to the close origins Aboriginal peoples have with ancestral lands.

Jo (Micmac Elder) was telling me stories about how the salmon were reacting at full moon and that full moon is the only time where you cannot predict how the salmon will react. They go all over the place, they go berserk, and they don't react the same way. But after the full moon, they go back to their migrating pattern and we can catch them. The first year, we had two traps on the full moon during that fall and there were no salmon. And then after the full moon we got salmon.

– Parks Canada Team Member



Conclusion

In Canada, many Aboriginal peoples' creation stories and teachings say that at the beginning, everything was given a name, its own story and original instruction. This created order and described the connection and interconnection between nature, culture, spirituality and the physical.

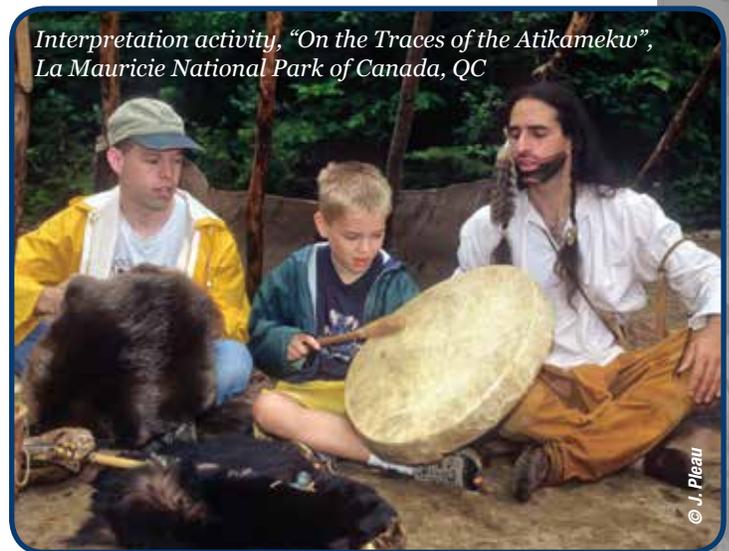
Parks Canada is at a crossroads: never in the history of the Agency has it been more important to count on the continued support from partners and stakeholders, in particular Aboriginal partners. Parks Canada recognizes that in order to be the best steward of the heritage places it has been entrusted with, it must count on conservation initiatives that include knowledge from various sources.

In the past three decades, the Agency has worked with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders to include them, their views and knowledge in managing heritage places through the continuance of their ecological, cultural and spiritual practices. Thanks to various projects such as the ones presented here, Parks Canada is on the path to enhance relationships with Aboriginal communities and demonstrate its commitment to leading the way forward in terms of working with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders.

Parks Canada is working towards an improved model of collaborative conservation that values and respects Aboriginal peoples' knowledge systems, and provides new opportunities for cooperative management of these lands. Incorporating Aboriginal history and culture into its management policies and educating the Canadian public and international visitors about the important role Aboriginal peoples have played historically and continue to play in the stewardship

of these heritage places, demonstrates that both parties care deeply about developing genuine, meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships.

The direct involvement of Aboriginal peoples and organizations are the founding blocks that cement the relationship between Parks Canada and Aboriginal peoples that is changing the culture of heritage places management.



Interpretation activity, "On the Traces of the Atikamekw", La Mauricie National Park of Canada, QC

For Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge to remain a strong and vibrant part of Aboriginal teachings, Aboriginal peoples must have **access** to places where they can continue to **practice traditional activities** and **transmit their knowledge** to the younger generation and to Parks Canada team members. The Agency is confident that **stronger relationships** will lead to **better heritage place management and to healthier Aboriginal communities**.

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Métis fiddler at the Hudson's Bay Company post. Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site of Canada, MN



