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# National Historical Recognition Program Update on Parks Canada Projects

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## First World War Internment Exhibit Project Overview

The project involves the construction of a self contained exhibit building that presents the story of Canada's First World War Internment Operations.

The exhibit building will be located immediately west of the Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada (near the current picnic tables). The project will also involve the construction of an interpretive pathway including exhibit panels, new outdoor signage, and site landscaping.

The new exhibit building will incorporate design elements evocative of the buildings that

were located at the former internment camp that existed at the Cave and Basin in 1915 to 1917.

It is anticipated that the construction will be delivered in 2 phases: Phase I-Site services, building and landscaping. Phase II-Exhibits and signage.

The immediate site area will be closed during construction, but the Sundance trail in front of the site will remain open.

The project will open in the spring of 2012.

**Project Lead –**  
Steve Malins

For any questions or comments please contact  
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### Why A Newsletter?

The newsletter was started as a way to keep key stakeholders up to date on important milestones with the project and also to keep you informed of what is going on.

We hope to put out an issue as each phase of the project continues.

## Message from the Superintendent

On April 3, 2008 Treasury Board approved \$34 million in funding to implement the Community Heritage Recognition Program (CHRP) and the National Historical Recognition Program (NHRP). Under the terms of the NHRP, Parks Canada Agency has received \$3.3 million from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to tell the story of First World War Internment in Canada including the story of internment in Banff National Park.

The Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada will be the location where a major public exhibit will be developed to tell this national story. A building will be designed and constructed to house self guiding exhibit that focus on the story of national internment operations. In addition, educational products will be created to reach targeted audiences.

A smaller exhibit is being created for Fort Henry National Historic Site of Canada in Kingston and interpretive panels are being added to the Citadel National Historic Site of Canada in Halifax-two other locations where internment occurred during the First World War.

This NHRP initiative represents the culmination of years of advocacy on the part of stakeholder groups to gain recognition for this episode in the history of Canada.

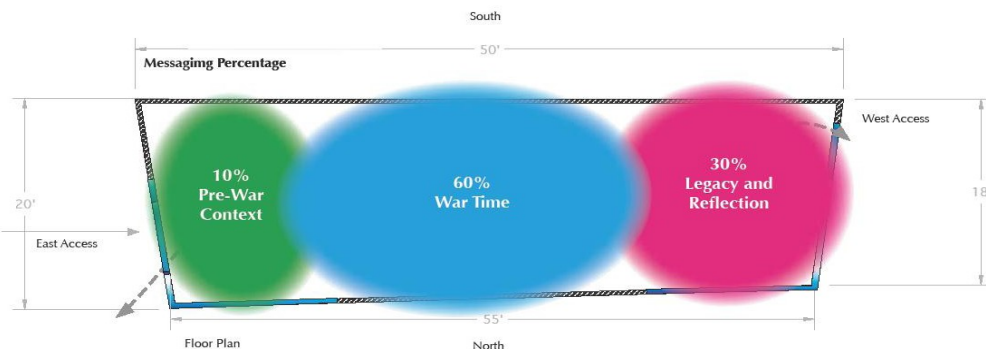
Parks Canada's new exhibits will bring this little known story to Canadians through the work of a core design team and you will receive updates on their achievements as this project progresses.

From Kevin Van Tighem  
Superintendent, Banff National Park

## Exhibit: Banff National Park/Interpretive Design Concepts

On March 20th, Parks Canada presented interpretive design and architectural concepts for the future First World War Internment exhibition to various stakeholders.

Situated along the current Sundance Trail, the First World War Internment exhibition building will be completed as a separate project during the Renewal of the Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada.



The current concept reflects a new facility measuring approximately 100 square meters.

On the inside, visitors will encounter a variety of learning opportunities ranging from voices, sounds, and other ambient audio, to images and text, anecdotal accounts and subtle suggestions of life in an internment camp bunkhouse. Visitors will wander through a walkway that will offer new messages and experiences at each turn. The exhibition may include a diorama-like creation of rudimentary furnishings and objects, providing insights of life within an internment camp during the First World War. Additionally, key messages and images could be embedded into the building's exterior surfaces, allowing for an additional layer of interpretive information. Interpretive messaging will take advantage of the grounds adjacent to the new building with tasteful signage and way finding.

### Focus Group Results

Parks Canada conducted four focus groups with 8 to 10 participants per group on February 1 and 2, 2010, in Calgary. Focus groups are discussion groups lead by a trained moderator that allows Parks Canada to explore various concepts, and allows participants to provide in-depth, rich detail in their own words on the topic at hand.

Two groups were conducted with visitors familiar with Banff National Park (Banff NP) and two were conducted with new Canadians. Those participating in the new Canadians groups immigrated from all over the world, including Asia, South America, Africa, and Europe, and had immigrated to Canada between two months prior to the groups up to living in Canada for eight or nine years. *Please note that the results from focus groups cannot be extrapolated to the larger population, nor considered representative of these populations.*

While most participants said they are interested in learning more about Canadian history, and in particular wartime history, participants were not well informed about the First World War and Canada's involvement and all of the

countries or empires involved in the war. Almost all participants were unaware of internment operations in Canada during the First World War, and many were unaware of what the term "internment" meant. While there was little awareness about the First World War, participants were very interested to learn more about the history in general.

New Canadians, in particular, were very interested in the story of internment operations as they. Like the families from Eastern Europe at the time of First World War, they have come to Canada for a better life and employment opportunities.

Participants were very clear that telling this story, it should be told respectfully, but should not be hidden or filtered in any way, as the whole truth should be told out of respect for the descendents of all involved. Participants suggested the exhibit should include different perspectives of the federal government, Canadian public, guards, internees, and internees' families. While participants said it was important to include the facts, they would also like to learn about personal stories and to feel the emotion of this compelling story.

Many suggested including the following in this exhibit:

- Experience real-life of time, such as through the recreation of barracks and / or internment camp, re-enactments, costumed interpreters as guards or internees, role-playing as visitor in being treated as internee, voices, sounds, music, or guards' voices, dioramas, such as beds, clothing, food, guided-tours, or staff on hand for questions
- Information / documents / artefacts.
- Photos, short films, documentary video, AV, interviews with internees, if still alive, or descendents
- Posters, news clippings
- Able to leave reflections, thoughts, comments, via comment card, guest book, post-it notes, blog / website, and have space to reflect
- List of internees

## Potential Visitor Experience

The last few months have been a very productive with focus groups and community consultations, on the subject of the potential visitor experience for the Banff internment exhibit.

One of our goals was to get feedback on what a visit to the exhibit might instil in our visitors. When developing exhibits, we try to articulate this by identifying *educational outcomes* for the visitor experience; that is, what will a visitor be able to do (describe, identify, articulate) after a visit that they couldn't before?

Currently, these are the outcomes that we have identified. We always welcome further feedback.

### Educational Outcomes

After a visit to the Internment Exhibit, visitors should be able to:

- Identify this site as the location of an internment camp during the First World War. Describe it as

one of a number of sites across the country.

- Describe the internees as mostly recently arrived immigrants from countries Canada was at war with.
- Describe in general terms the national and global forces in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that led to this national internment program.
- Describe some aspects of daily life in these camps.
- Describe the role of internees' labour in constructing Canada's national parks.
- Describe the affected communities' role in building Canada after the war, and the effect of this internment on the individuals interned, and their communities.
- Make their own connections

between the internment camp story and issues surrounding civil liberties, tolerance, and belonging in Canadian society today.

These educational outcomes complement our national performance expectations for all of our historic sites, which are:

- On average, 85 % of visitors at surveyed locations consider the place meaningful to them. On average, 90% of visitors at surveyed locations are satisfied, and on average, 50% at surveyed locations are very satisfied, with their visit.
- On average, 85% of visitors at surveyed locations consider that they learned about the cultural heritage of the place.
- On average, 90% of visitors at surveyed locations enjoyed their visit.

## Overview of Historical Themes

The main themes reflected the history of the internment and its context, as well as the objectives of the NHRP and the principles set out in Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy.

The four main themes are:

- *Patterns of Prejudice in Canada*
- *Wartime Measures and Limits to Freedom*
- *Legacy and Reflections*
- *Building Canada*

These four themes have informed the development of the narrative storyline which addresses through contextual messages the history of internment in Canada during the First World War.

A narrative storyline will also be broken down into chapters:

- *Canada Transformed*
- *Canada Goes to War*
- *Internment of Enemy Aliens*
- *Building National Parks with Internees' Labour*
- *The War Unfolds*
- *Reflections and Legacy*

The contributions to building Canada of the affected communities, and especially of those interned, are enumerated in numerous ways in the storyline. The stories of internees will be used to illuminate both the themes and messages and will be an important vehicle for connecting with visitors.

At this stage of planning, it is important to understand that as the project progresses there will be different degrees of emphasis assigned to the themes and to each of the chapters in the narrative storyline.



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### Bringing You Canada's Natural and Historic Treasures

### Birthplace of Canada's National Parks Project Time Line

- April 6 2010** Public Information Session Cave and Basin National Historic Site
- June 2010** Environmental Assessment
- June 2010** Parking Lot Development Starts
- June/July 2010** ADB Consultation Meeting
- July 1 2010** Public Open House Cave and Basin National Historic Site
- Summer 2010** Cave and Basin National Historic Site Closes
- Fall 2010** Bathing Pavilion Deconstruction Starts (contingent on approvals)
- May 2012** Grand Re Opening!

This project involves a major redevelopment of Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada. The main objective for this project is to improve visitor experience as well as strengthen protection of the cultural and natural resources at the Cave and Basin National Historic Site of Canada.

Specific Elements of the Project include;

- Improvements to the pathway from parking lot and forecourt area in front of the Bathing Pavilion including new outdoor interpretive media, and better disabled access.
- Upgrades to the Service Road including a turnaround for emergency vehicles and a vehicle drop off area.
- Rehabilitation of Belvederes and entry points.
- Rehabilitation to the 1914 Bathing Pavilion including removal of the existing second floor exhibit area, and development of a new story hall on the main level celebrating the National Park System.
- Redevelopment of the existing pool deck with a water feature, programming spaces for four seasons and possible skating surface.

Project will start during the summer of 2010 with deconstruction of the interior spaces within the Bathing Pavilion and finish with a grand opening by Spring 2012

**At the March 20th meeting we asked some questions during our round table discussions. If you were not able to attend the meeting we would still appreciate your feedback.**

1. What do you think a visitor should remember about the First World War Internment Camp Exhibit?
2. What is the best way for a visitor to learn about the internment stories?
3. What are the most important aspects of this story to preserve? Why?

Please email your feedback and comments to [patricia.hubbard@pc.gc.ca](mailto:patricia.hubbard@pc.gc.ca)

### First World War Internment Exhibit Project Timeline

#### 2010-2011

- Environmental Assessment
- Content Development
- Building Design

#### 2011-2012

- Construction;  
Building,  
Exhibit  
Landscape

#### Spring 2012

- Grand Opening!

### Fort Henry National Historic Site of Canada is moving forward with an exhibit on First World War Internments.

Fort Henry NHS was used as an internment centre three times during its history, during the 1837 Rebellion, the First World War WWI and the Second World War. During the latter period, German Prisoners of War painted a mural in one of the casemates and this room will eventually be used to house the exhibit. The exhibit will showcase numerous objects from all three periods in two showcases. An illuminated display unit will give visitors an overview of the exhibit. The centrepiece of the exhibit will be an interactive, touch screen display that will allow visitors to open digital files of photographs, layouts of the Fort, historic documents and interviews from the Fort Henry collection. Initially, the exhibit will be housed in a nearby casemate until the Second World War mural is conserved, when the displays will be moved to that room."