Our Heritage — Historic Places

Heritage Strategy for British Columbia

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
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This strategy researched and prepared by

Heritage Branch
The Fraser Canyon: A cultural landscape that reflects our heritage of First Nations, mining, and transportation.
Young participants at the 2008 National Heritage Fair visit the BC Legislature.
MESSAGE FROM MINISTER THOMSON

Our Heritage, Historic Places is the government’s response to the need for a provincial heritage strategy. Our heritage, both historic and contemporary, illustrates the diversity of cultures and regions that can be found across the province, and epitomizes what it means to be British Columbian. Our historic places - including buildings, streets, neighbourhoods, and cultural landscapes - tell the stories of who we are as families, communities and as a society.

For me, this story includes serving as a Director of the Kelowna Museum for many years, and having our family farm house on the Kelowna Heritage Register as a recognized Century Farm. In fact, the wooden table that stands in the kitchen of our farm house is one that my grandfather made. I am sure many British Columbians can share similar stories of the impact that heritage has had on their lives.

By including heritage as a core value in how we manage resources and the land base, we can realize growth in the economy, build a greater sense of pride, and instill an even stronger identity for British Columbia. Success depends on the collaboration of governments at all levels, along with community groups and organizations, First Nations and businesses.

I am pleased to introduce this forward-looking strategy that strives to make our heritage of historic places a vibrant part of British Columbia. I am also confident that this strategy will lead to more attractive and sustainable towns, cities and rural areas, as much as it will provide for exemplary stewardship of our land base and offer world-class experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Steve Thomson
The Honourable Steve Thomson
Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
OVERVIEW OF THE HERITAGE STRATEGY

**Vision**

*British Columbia’s heritage and historic places are honoured, and their contribution to community identity, economic health, and environmental stewardship is fully realized by this and future generations.*

**Goals**

- **GOAL**
  - British Columbia’s Identity is Strengthened and Renewed Through Heritage Conservation
- **GOAL**
  - Environmental Stewardship Through Heritage Conservation
- **GOAL**
  - Economic Diversity and Durability Through Heritage Conservation

**Strategies**

- Create opportunities to celebrate our heritage
- Model good stewardship of historic places
- Facilitate the development of the heritage tourism sector
- Enhance the profile of the BC Register of Historic Places
- Strengthen heritage conservation in communities
- Build partnerships with First Nations to celebrate their unique heritage values
- Promote heritage conservation as a climate action opportunity
- Advance a triple-bottom line approach to heritage conservation
- Increase the self-sufficiency of the provincial heritage properties
- Integrate historic place conservation into related business sectors
- Incorporate best practices for heritage stewardship into resource management
STATE OF HERITAGE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia’s heritage includes historic places in communities across the province, providing a ‘sense of place’ and contributing to our Province’s unique identity. This strategy is government’s plan for supporting heritage conservation in British Columbia over the next five to ten years. It has been written to help ensure British Columbia remains a leader in sustaining and benefitting from its heritage.

An Evolving Area of Practice

The field of heritage conservation is fairly young in British Columbia. In 1994, extensive amendments to heritage legislation provided stronger powers and authorities to local governments. There has been a shift in British Columbia, and world-wide, from a focus on landmark historic site museums to a broader focus integrating heritage as one of the values in community planning and resource management. This provides for greater recognition, celebration and conservation of the historic places that make up the unique social, economic and environmental fabric of our province. Increasingly, local governments, First Nations, and others consider heritage values in making resource management decisions.

Collaboration in the Conservation of Heritage

There is a growing appreciation that the conservation of heritage is not just the responsibility of a single agency, rather it is better achieved through collaboration within and across governments as well as with the private and not-for-profit sectors. One marker of this has been the development since 2002 of a community governance model for management of the provincial heritage properties. From the largest sites such as Barkerville and Fort Steele, to smaller sites like Emily Carr House and Historic Yale, the new governance models have increased economic benefits to communities through local job creation and as strong economic drivers for tourism in their regions. As well the sites have broadened their financial base and increased their independence from the provincial government, while achieving a stronger connection with and responsiveness to community interests.
Future Opportunities for Sustaining Heritage

The preparation of this strategy draws on consultation with hundreds of stakeholders in all areas of the province. British Columbians expressed enthusiasm about honouring and sharing their legacies with this generation and the next. Through these consultations, the opportunities for the future include:

- **Representation** – Recognition of historic places could be more representative of the diversity of British Columbia’s population, including more opportunities to celebrate First Nations’ heritage.
- **Communication** – The public value of our heritage can be more effectively communicated to a broader audience. Celebrating historic places, which includes provincial recognition, is one factor for success in addressing this opportunity.
- **Capacity** – Community capacity to conserve and manage historic places should be bolstered. This includes investing in traditional trades and skills, increasing volunteerism, and engaging youth, First Nations and new residents in the celebration and stewardship of heritage.

This strategy acknowledges these opportunities and in addressing them seeks to ensure that heritage plays an even stronger role in the prosperity of British Columbia.

Emerging Areas of Focus for this Strategy

From this understanding of the interests British Columbians have with their heritage, and the evolution that has taken place with conservation goals and approaches, four areas of focus for the next five years have emerged:

- **Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations.**
- ** Recognize and celebrate British Columbia’s historic places.**
- ** Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship.**
- ** Increase the financial self sufficiency of provincial heritage properties.**

These four areas of focus do not rule out other efforts to encourage and facilitate the conservation and celebration of our province’s historic places. These areas of focus provide a concerted effort to be more proactive, strengthen relationships, ensure sustainability of our historic places, and more broadly, increase the depth of our shared heritage as British Columbians.

First Nations and Historic Places

The Province seeks to work with First Nations to foster a common understanding of their important, non-archaeological historic places. Strengthening the relationship with First Nations around the identification and management of their cultural landscapes and built environments is integral to achieving this goal. Through a focused effort to build inclusive, respectful processes, the Province seeks to continue its work with First Nations to more effectively recognize their historic places as a key component in British Columbia’s heritage mosaic.
SETTING THE VISION AND GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

This strategy reflects a shared commitment to embrace the social, economic and environmental benefits of our heritage of historic places, as part of our collective history. It also recognizes the critical need to encourage and facilitate recognition, conservation, and commemoration of this history through government, First Nations, community and industry collaboration.

A Vision for Heritage in British Columbia

British Columbia’s heritage and historic places are honoured, and their contribution to community identity, economic health, and environmental stewardship is fully realized by this and future generations.

Goals for Realizing British Columbia’s Vision

This strategy strives to achieve the following goals:

1. **British Columbia’s identity is strengthened and renewed through heritage conservation** – By honouring the collective legacies of our cities, towns, rural areas and lands with citizens and visitors to our province, we can strengthen British Columbia’s identity as well as facilitate community renewal.

2. **Environmental stewardship through heritage conservation** – This goal will be realized through leadership in sustainable practices and historic place conservation that can be applied to stewardship in the broader built environment. This, combined with a triple-bottom line approach, brings together the economic and social aspects of heritage with the environmental.

3. **Economic diversity and durability through heritage conservation** – In working toward this goal, the link between history and the economy needs to be made in a compelling way so that British Columbians understand the role their historic places and heritage play as a catalyst for economic vitality throughout the province. An entrepreneurial approach to the management of historic places must also be fostered to ensure their long term operation and sustainability. Further, the building of capacity for future community stewardship of heritage contributes to this goal.

These goals, and the overarching vision for heritage in British Columbia, will guide the investment of resources toward encouraging and facilitating the recognition, conservation and celebration of heritage in the province.

Resource Management

The Province, in partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District has rehabilitated the largest wooden structure in North America, the Kinsol Trestle. The rehabilitated trestle is an important part of the Trans-Canada Trail on Vancouver Island building community health and tourism along with contributing to job creation.

Job Creation and Investment

In 2009, the Community Development Trust’s Job Opportunities Program provided employment and retraining for over 60 displaced forestry workers. These people learned new skills in historic place conservation by working at provincial historic properties and receiving training in the College of New Caledonia’s Heritage Building Conservation Program. A number have since gone on to work in the renovation and construction sector.

Recognition of British Columbia’s Heritage

The BC Register of Historic Places is the master record of places that have been recognized as having significance to British Columbians. The Register contains over 3,200 entries representing the diversity of B.C. communities. A further 2,300 recognitions are anticipated to be included on the Register in the next few years.

Cross-Government Integration – In 2012, the provincial government designated the McAbee Fossil Beds as a provincial heritage site. Planning for the site has brought together diverse government departments to realize both its protection and future management. The integration of heritage functions alongside other resource management functions of government has facilitated this approach.

Our Heritage – Historic Places
## LAYING OUT THE STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### GOAL
British Columbia’s Identity is Strengthened and Renewed Through Heritage Conservation

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| 1. Create opportunities to celebrate our heritage | • Promote and facilitate a variety of celebration initiatives across the province including heritage fairs, multicultural events, and Heritage Week  
• Collaborate across governments on increasing engagement of British Columbians in their heritage, specifically targeting youth, new residents, First Nations and rural communities | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Recognize and celebrate British Columbia’s historic places  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship |

2. Enhance the profile of the BC Register of Historic Places | • Improve access to, and encourage the use of, the BC Register of Historic Places  
• Integrate the use of BC Register data into crown resource management* | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Recognize and celebrate British Columbia’s historic places |

3. Strengthen heritage conservation in communities | • Facilitate guidance and training to local governments on the application of the heritage conservation provisions in provincial legislation  
• Support ways to build the capacity of communities to understand their unique identities and the opportunities for sustainable development and growth  
• Monitor and report on community heritage capacity  
• Explore ways to strengthen the role of the non-profit and private sectors in heritage conservation  
• Advance the community governance model for the use and conservation of provincial heritage properties  
• Acknowledge the potential of new development to reinforce community identity | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Recognize and celebrate British Columbia’s historic places  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship  
Increase the financial self sufficiency of gated provincial heritage properties |

*This action is repeated in support of the strategy, “Incorporate best practices for heritage stewardship into resource management”

### GOAL
Environmental Stewardship Through Heritage Conservation

### GOAL
Economic Diversity and Durability Through Heritage Conservation
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| 4. Promote heritage conservation as climate action                        | • Use heritage conservation to advance government mandates for environmental sustainability  
• Collaborate with the green building sector to raise awareness of, and advance research in, the environmental benefits gained from the use of historic buildings  
• Work with property managers to realize the environmental benefits of historic place conservation | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship |
| 5. Advance a triple-bottom line approach to heritage conservation          | • Build community leader and organizational awareness of the economic, environmental and social benefits of historic places in British Columbia  
• Facilitate Heritage BC in charting a new direction that ensures financial independence and fosters a culture of conservation in British Columbia  
• Participate ex-officio in the Heritage Legacy Fund of BC | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship |
| 6. Model good stewardship of historic places                               | • For the provincial heritage properties:  
• Address deferred maintenance to ensure resource protection  
• Facilitate on-going, effective stewardship  
• Engage in long-range planning  
• Work with leadership in government and the renovation and construction sector to develop policy and planning tools that encourage retention and reuse of the existing built environment  
• In concert with post-secondary institutions and professional associations, build skills in heritage conservation trades as well as competencies in professional historic place management and repair | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship |
| 7. Increase the self sufficiency of the provincial heritage properties     | • Explore opportunities to expand the uses of, increase revenues from, and better align provincial heritage properties with community plans  
• Work with heritage site operators to ensure that opportunities to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of operations are identified and implemented | Facilitate community heritage conservation, including First Nations  
Foster cross government and sector collaboration in heritage stewardship  
Increase the financial self sufficiency of gated provincial heritage properties |
The implementation of the strategies and actions profiled above will require provincial government and partner support, but will also offer the means to make the best use of these resources. The Province invested $5 million in the Heritage Legacy Fund of BC in 2003, with this endowment generating an annual interest income that is available to support community groups in heritage conservation. The provincial government also contributes an annual budget for the BC Heritage Branch and in 2011 set aside $21 million over three years for continued operations as well as maintenance of the provincial heritage properties. Another $8.7 million was approved for a four year project to upgrade sewer, fire and water infrastructure at Barkerville and Fort Steele. Together, these resources can contribute to the advancement of this strategy, and potentially leverage other sources of support.
REPORTING ON SUCCESS

In order to tell the story of our progress in fulfilling the strategy’s goals we will report on the following measures of performance:

- **GOAL**
  
  *British Columbia’s Identity is Strengthened and Renewed Through Heritage Conservation*

- **GOAL**
  
  *Environmental Stewardship Through Heritage Conservation*

- **GOAL**
  
  *Economic Diversity and Durability Through Heritage Conservation*

### Performance Measures

- Number of reported heritage events hosted in British Columbia
- Utilization of the BC Register of Historic Places:
  - Number of records on the BC Register of Historic Places
  - Number of historic place records accessible to the public
- State of heritage conservation capacity in British Columbia communities:
  - Number of First Nation communities reporting heritage conservation projects
  - Number of communities reporting heritage planning content in Official Community Plans
  - Number of communities reporting that they are maintaining a Heritage Commission or equivalent organization
  - Number of communities reporting incentive programs
  - Private sector investment reported by local government incentive programs
- Average ratings of awareness among surveyed community leaders on the environmental benefits gained from the conservation of historic places
- Prevalence and description of collaborations with the green building sector and leading institutions on historic place conservation as a means of advancing environmental sustainability
- Estimated economic impacts of historic place conservation in British Columbia:
  - Provincial GDP
  - Full-time employment
  - Tax revenues
- Level of self-sufficiency of provincial heritage properties:
  - Percentage of the provincial heritage property portfolio that has been converted to a routine maintenance footing
  - Percentage change in provincial contributions to operating budgets for heritage properties
Kekuli, or pit house at Historic Hat Creek Ranch. Historic places valued by First Nation communities are a significant part of our collective heritage.