

Rideau Heritage Network Conference Summary

Morning

Manuel Stevens opened the conference and welcomed everyone to Smiths Falls and the Rideau Canal Museum.

Sally Coutts then proceeded to update the members on the activities the Rideau Heritage Network undertook during 2006, including communication items such as the website, newsletter and display panels; the evolution of the working group into a steering committee; and various projects such as the lockstation adjacent land use study, assisting the Rideau Heritage Initiative and the Needs Assessment Survey.

Susan Millar and Manuel Stevens discussed the Rideau Canal lockstation adjacent land use study, currently nearing completion. Commenced last October, this project involves the identification and evaluation of the heritage components and values of the setting of the lockstations and the threats to those values from development activities, changing land uses, etc. An adjacent land use study form has been created for each lockstation which outlines the general description of the canal lands, the topography and facilities, official plan policies and zoning bylaws for adjacent lands, a land use map, and a discussion on development potential and recommendations for the conservation of the setting. The final report will be completed this spring.

Marcus Letourneau informed the members of the outcome of the Needs Assessment Survey completed last summer. He presented the findings, challenges, opportunities and recommendations based on data gathered from the municipalities along the Rideau Canal Corridor.

Manuel Stevens provided a discussion on the proposed project, Design Guidelines for New Development along the Rideau Canal. High quality design of new buildings that complements the architectural tradition of the canal corridor will reinforce the importance of the canal corridor as a significant heritage area. The concept of design guidelines is inline with the *Rideau Canal Management Plan*, many official plans, and the Planning Act.

Deborah Hossack discussed with the group the development of and results from the Rideau Heritage Initiative. Many of the members had an opportunity to work with the six Carleton University masters students last summer and found it to be a very successful pilot project. In partnership with the Ministry of Culture and the Historic Places Initiative, these students met with municipalities and local citizens along the Corridor and nominated numerous heritage properties to the Canadian Register of Historic Places.

The attendees were asked if they would be willing to pay a small membership fee in order to cover costs of the Network. This suggestion arose from a discussion regarding the possibility of our own RHN website. The attendees communicated they are comfortable paying a small annual membership in order to fund our own RHN website as well as other communications documents, such as display panels, the newsletter and pamphlets. An individual and group membership structure was suggested.

Members were encouraged to submit their ideas, news articles, etc to the RHN for inclusion in upcoming issues of *Rideau Canal Connections*, the newsletter for the RHN.

Afternoon

The RHN's guest speaker, Claude Charbonneau, Senior Advisor to the Historic Places Program of Parks Canada, delivered a very interesting and informative presentation on Understanding the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Properties in Canada. This condensed presentation and the S & G's binder Claude provided to the members was highly beneficial and created interest for a half or full-day training workshop this summer.

Susan Millar then presented a draft slideshow presentation on the RHN. This presentation discusses the importance of heritage conservation along the Rideau Canal Corridor and the role the Rideau Heritage Network plays in celebrating and promoting the corridor's diverse and distinctive cultural heritage. Following final revisions, this slideshow will be presented to all municipal heritage committees along the Rideau and a copy will be provided for the committees to share with their local council.

Following the slideshow presentation, Rowena Cooper presented the proposed governance structure for the RHN Steering Committee. The attendees approved the new 9-member governance structure and decided the maximum six-year service should be divided into 3 two-year terms. Manuel Stevens and Rowena Cooper were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

There was much interest in training sessions for this summer. Training topics suggested by the attendees include:

- heritage conservation district designation
- the designation process
- inventory and evaluation
- cultural landscapes
- a full-day workshop on the Standards & Guidelines
- a half-day workshop on the Standards & Guidelines + half-day workshop on the Provincial Policy Statement
- a joint Rideau Heritage Network / Ministry of Culture workshop

Other feedback includes the translation of RHN information into French; an invitation for a RHN display at the Westport on the Rideau Heritage Festival June 1st-3rd, and other events along the Rideau throughout the summer and early autumn.