



MAY 09 2016

Dear Mr. Watson:

Thank you for your letter of November 10, 2015, regarding Parks Canada's protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Sites like the Rideau Canal are important because they shape the collective sense of Canada's national identity and create a shared sense of national pride. The UNESCO designation was given on the basis of two criteria: as a "masterpiece of human creative genius" and as an "outstanding technological ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history." As part of the commitment to this designation, Parks Canada continues to preserve the Rideau Canal and to ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to experience and connect to this important part of our national identity.

Investments of \$46 million into rehabilitating the Canal's infrastructure have already been announced, and more work will be announced in due course. This investment will significantly contribute to protecting the cultural resources that, in part, warranted the inscription of the Canal on the World Heritage List. Some key projects include concrete wall rehabilitation and replacement in Ottawa, repairs and replacements of fixed and swing bridges crossing the Canal, and masonry repairs to locks. Also, additional heritage staff have been hired in association with the implementation of this infrastructure program.

In accordance with the World Heritage Committee recommendation, Parks Canada worked with First Nations as well as municipal, provincial and federal government partners to create the Landscape Corridor Strategy Steering Committee and develop a Landscape Character Assessment aimed at strengthening the protection of the visual setting of the Canal. The Committee continues its efforts to guide the development and implementation of tools and strategies for responsible planning and management along the Rideau Corridor.

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In 2013 Parks Canada engaged with stakeholders along the length of the Rideau Canal to develop a Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept seeking input for ways to maximize the potential of the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site as an active, animated, and relevant world-class destination. Parks Canada works with municipal and tourism industry partners to create new opportunities for visitors arriving from both land and water to experience and learn about the Canal. One such example is the o'TENT'iks installed at key sites, which provide alternative accommodation to visitors by land or water as well as contribute revenue for reinvestment into the protection and presentation of canals.

Parks Canada has embarked on the next management planning process for the Rideau Canal, which will involve engaging Canadians in meaningful discussions that will form the framework and direction for Canal management over the next 10 years. I encourage you to participate in the consultation process scheduled for summer 2016.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Rideau Canal and I appreciate having had this opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C McKenna', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Environment and Climate Change