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National Urban Parks

Greater Victoria Information Session

October 25, 2022



Background

Speech from the Throne (2020)

- Expansion of urban parks
- Protecting a quarter of Canada's land and a quarter of Canada's oceans by 2025

Federal Budget (2021)

- Historic investment of \$2.3 billion over 5 years in Canada's natural legacy
- Including \$130 million to create a network of national urban parks

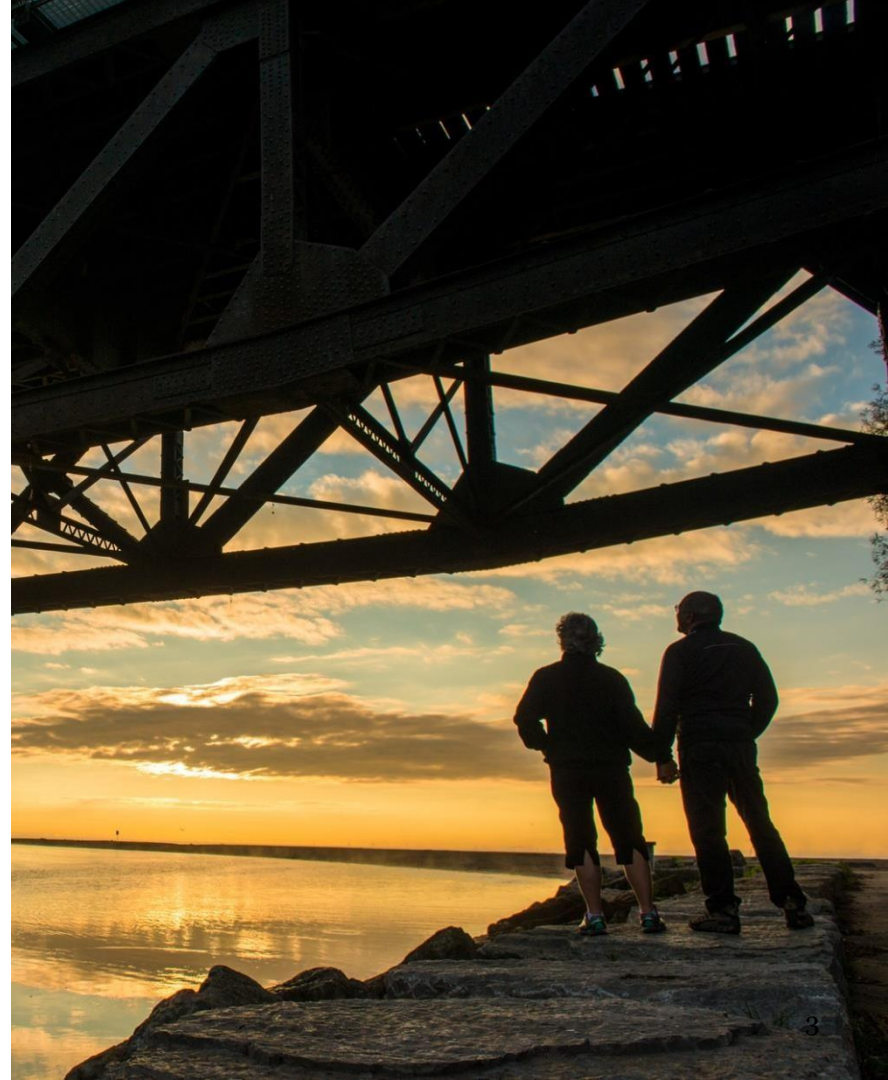




Program Launch

Announcement

- On August 4th 2021, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, launched the new program to support the creation of a network of national urban parks
- The national urban parks program is the next step for Parks Canada, building on over 110 years of history in the creation of national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas





Benefits of Urban Parks

- Protect nature
- Connect Canadians with nature
- Support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
- Contribute to conservation goals and targets
- Support climate mitigation and ecosystem services
- Individual and community health & well-being
- Diversity and inclusion
- Opportunities to learn about nature
- Meaningful partnerships
- Jobs and other economic outcomes





Urban Parks Program 2021-2026

- Develop a national urban parks policy
- Identify urban parks of national significance and where it makes sense for the federal government to play a role
- Designate up to 6 national urban parks, including at least one administered by Parks Canada
- Create a strong foundation to anchor a network of national urban parks





A Collaborative Approach





Working with Indigenous Partners

- Key partnerships in development of policy and program
- Nation-to-nation relationships
- Engaging local Indigenous communities (treaty and traditional rights holders) on specific candidate parks



Governance of National Urban Parks

The network of national urban parks will offer a flexible governance model, with various entry pathways:

Federally administered places

- National Historic Sites and Canals with significant natural values
- Other Parks Canada administered properties
- Other federal departments' administered properties



A Network of National Urban Parks



Partnership models

Parks that are co-managed under one name

Other administered places

Municipal, provincial, Indigenous, or private lands



DRAFT Policy Framework:

A network of National Urban Parks



Nature

Foundational Requirement

Contributes to national conservation targets

Possible Examples of Value-Added Elements

- Ecological values
- Conserve and restore ecosystems
- Connectivity/corridors to other natural areas
- Natural infrastructure
- Programs to build nature stewardship
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Aiming For

Conservation, biodiversity and climate gains

Connecting Canadians with Nature

Foundational Requirement

Proximity to population centres

Possible Examples of Value-Added Elements

- Free admission
- Varied programming for exploration, education & recreation
- Accessible visitor facilities and trails
- Public transit, active transportation
- History & culture
- Strong partnerships
- Inclusion of diverse groups

Aiming For

Access to nature for all local residents in an inclusive and welcoming environment

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Foundational Requirement

Collaborative work towards shared priorities

Possible Examples of Value-Added Elements

- Providing space for Indigenous leadership
- Reconnection to land opportunities
- Nature-Culture values
- Respectfully weave Indigenous knowledge & values
- Capacity building
- Promote Indigenous voices and stories

Aiming For

Achieving shared goals for protecting nature in a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation



Candidate Sites

To date, exploratory work to assess the potential for national urban park sites has begun in:

- Victoria, BC
- Edmonton, AB
- Meewasin Valley (Saskatoon), SK
- Winnipeg, MB
- Windsor, ON
- Halifax, NS

Parks Canada has also begun early discussions with Montreal.





Next Steps for the National Program

- Implementation of Pre-Feasibility Assessments with municipalities and other key partners, including studies, assessments and local stakeholder engagement
- On-going outreach, engagement and collaboration with Indigenous partners
- Development of first draft policy, with input from diverse experts and national stakeholders
- On-going identification of potential candidate national urban park sites across Canada
- Minister of Environment's December 2021 mandate letter included a new target of 15 new national urban parks by 2030



About the site: Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites





Work to date

- Working closely with key partners, Esquimalt Nation and Te'mexw Treaty Association
- Signed a Statement of Collaboration with the City of Colwood
- Infrastructure assessment at Fort Rodd
- Stakeholder engagement being planned for Winter/Spring 2022





Frequently Asked Question

Q. What does a national urban park designation mean for Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse?



Frequently Asked Question

A. A national urban park designation would not impact Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites designation as a national historic site, nor would it encroach on its protection of lands - it would likely expand opportunities for protection of biodiversity and nature, connecting people with nature and supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

As this is a new program, we are looking at a wide range of designation options that will reflect the local interests and needs of the community as well as exploring flexible governance models.



Frequently Asked Question

Q. How are Indigenous peoples being included in the conversations?



Frequently Asked Question

A. Reconciliation is a key objective of the national urban parks program, woven in all aspects of our work. The vision for this candidate site is an Indigenous-led national urban park. We are working closely with Indigenous partners at all stages and following their lead.



Frequently Asked Question

**Q. Can I have a
say?**





Frequently Asked Question

- **A.** A stakeholder engagement plan is part of the Pre-Feasibility Assessment for all locations across the country. In the coming months, more information will be shared with this group outlining opportunities to participate in this early phase of work.
- Parks Canada is additionally engaging with Esquimalt Nation and the Te'mexw Treaty Association in a nation-to-nation discourse about this project.
- Should the project progress beyond the Pre-Feasibility Assessment phase, there will be opportunities for public engagement to help inform and shape a vision for the park, conservation aims, and visitor experiences.





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