

Interpretive Master Plan



March, 2009

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In partnership with:
Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited
Robert Frame - Consultant,
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NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism, Culture and Heritage

NOVA SCOTIA
MUSEUM
The Family of Provincial Museums

Participants

Ken Adams	Director/Curator, Fundy Geological Museum	Dan Conlin	Curator (Marine History), Maritime Museum of the Atlantic	Ronnie Gilles Leblanc	Historian, Parks Canada
Stephen Archibald	Former Manager of Interpretation, Museum of Natural History	Carol Corbett	Education Department, Fundy Geological Museum	Deborah Ginnish	Micmac Association of Cultural Studies
Jerry Bannister	History Department, Dalhousie University	Catherine Cottreau Robins	Curator (Archaeology), Museum of Natural History	Don MacGillivray	Department of History & Fine Arts, Cape Breton University
Kevin Barrett	Coordinator, Heritage Property Program	Beverly Cox	Site Manager, Black Loyalist Heritage Society	Janet Guildford	History Department, Mount Saint Vincent University
Gloria Beuree	Manager, Ross-Thomson House & Store Museum	Anna Cross	Special Places Assistant, Special Places, HP&D	Mary Guilford	Curator of Collections, Museum of Industry
Rachel Boehm	Marketing Outreach Officer, Heritage Promotion & Development (HP&D)	Derek Davis	Former NSM Curator	John Grant	Education Department, Saint Francis Xavier University
Lisa Bower	Interpretive Researcher, NS Museum Sites	Howard Donohoe	Registrar/Executive Director, Association of Professional Geoscientists of NS	Martha Grantham	Supervisor, Natural Resources Educations Centre, DNR
Darrell Burke	Site Manager, Balmoral Grist Mill & Sutherland Steam Mill Museum	Eamoon Doorly	Curatorial Assistant, Conservation, NS Museum Operations	Bill Greenlaw	Executive Director, Heritage Division
Claire Campbell	Department of History, Dalhousie University	Roger d'Entremont	Directeur General, Le Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse	Gordon Hammond	President, NS Museums Association (Association of Nova Scotia Museums)
John Calder	Geologist, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources	Mark Elderkin	Species-at-Risk Biologist, NS Department of Natural Resources	Penny Harvey	Administrative Assistant, HP&D
David Carter	Designer, Site Operations	Marie Elwood	Former NSM Curator (History)	Andrew Hebda	Curator (Zoology), Museum of Natural History
Rodney Chaisson	Director, Highland Village Museum/ An Clachan Gàidhealach	Calum Ewing	Director, Museum Operations	John Hennigar-Shuh	Manager, Development and Partnerships
David Christianson	Manager, Collections Unit	Judith Fingard	History Department, Dalhousie University	Barry Hiltz	Site Operations Manager, Ross Farm Museum
Lori Churchill	Manager, HP&D	David Flemming	Heritage Consulting & Research	Bonnie Julien	Former Coordinator of School Programs, Museum of Natural History
Amy Coleman	Coordinator, Education Programs, Museum of Natural History	Stephen Flemming	Species-at-Risk Scientist, Parks Canada	Rebecca Kennedy	Manager, Historic Places Initiative
Paul Collins	Manager, Community Museum Assistance Program (CMAP)	Keith Gallant	Manager of Interpretation, Sherbrooke Village	Jessica Kerrin	Director, HP&D
		John Gilhen	Curator Emeritus (Natural History)	Peter Labor	Field Management & Outreach Coordinator, NS Environment Protected Areas Branch

Marc Lavoie	Département des sciences humaines, Université Sainte-Anne	Martha Monk	Site Manager, Fisherman's Life Museum	John Shaw	School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh
Randy Lauff	Biology Department, Saint Francis Xavier University	James Morrison	Department of History, Saint Mary's University	Deborah Skilliter	Curator of Geology, Museum of Natural History
Valeria Lenethen	Collections Management Consultant, NS Museum Operations	Nancy Morton	Site Manager, Prescott House Museum	Stephanie Smith	Supervisor, Interpretation & Operations
Gerry Lunn	Curator of Interpretation, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic	Marion Munro	Curator (Botany), Museum of Natural History	Della Stanley	Coordinator Canadian Studies Program, Mount Saint Vincent University
Craig MacDonald	Coordinator of Site Maintenance, NS Museum Sites	Mike Murray	Senior Heritage Presentation Specialist, Parks Canada	Laurie Stanley-Blackwell	History Department, Saint Francis Xavier University
Joanne MacIntyre	Chief Interpreter, Highland Village Museum/ An Clachan Gàidhealach	Martina Murphy	Site Manager, Uniacke Estate Museum Park	David States	Historian, Parks Canada
Lisa MacIssac	Manager, Tourism Development, Department of Tourism and Culture	Robert Ogilvie	Curator, Special Places, HP&D	Sheila Stevenson	Former Manager of Interpretation, NSM
David MacKinnon	Protected Areas Division, N.S. Dept. of Environment & Labour	Andrew Phillips	Curator (Education & Public Programming), Museum of Industry	David Sutherland	Department of History, Dalhousie University
Richard MacMichael	Senior Heritage Interpreter, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic	Deborah Poole	Site Manager, Lawrence House Museum	Brook Taylor	Department of History, Mount Saint Vincent University
Elizabeth MacRae	Research and Statistical Officer, HP&D	Stephen Powell	Assistant Curator (Archaeology), Museum Operations	Debra Trask	Former Curator of Buildings
Janet Maltby	Manager, Museum of Natural History	Robert Raeside	Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Acadia University	Rhonda Walker	Director, Nova Scotia Museum Sites
Brenda Maxwell	Site Manager, Barrington Woolen Mill Museum	Jeffrey Reed	Standards and Guidelines Officer, NS Historic Places Initiative	Jim Watson	Manager of Interpretation/ Gaelic Specialist, Highland Village Museum/ An Clachan Gàidhealach
David McCorquodale	Director, Centre for Natural History, Cape Breton University	John Reid	History Department, Saint Mary's University	Patricia Welton	Education Department, Fundy Geological Museum
Laurel McIvor	Curator (Interpretation), Museum of Natural History	Lynn-Marie Richard	Assistant Curator/Registrar, NS Museum Operations	Alec Wilson	Former Curator (Botany) and Manager of Collections
Debra McNabb	Director, Museum of Industry	Bruce Rickett	Senior Heritage Presentation Specialist, Parks Canada	Sheila Yeoman	Collections Assistant, Museum Operations
Marven Moore	Former Director of Strategic Initiatives, NS Museum Operations	Scott Robson	Curator, History Collection	Lisa Wolfe	Director, Ross Farm Museum
		Angela Saunders	General Manager, Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic	Lois Yorke	Director, Public Services, NS Archives & Records Management




Interpretive Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“All Nova Scotians, today and in the future,
will know, appreciate and experience the
heritage that shapes our province.”


NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism, Culture and Heritage

**NOVA SCOTIA
MUSEUM**
THE FAMILY of PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS

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INTRODUCTION

Nova Scotia features a rich natural and cultural heritage that is important to its residents and fascinating to visitors from all over the world. Recently, the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage undertook substantial strides to ensure that all Nova Scotians, today and in the future, will know, appreciate and experience this remarkably diverse heritage. Set forth in *A Treasured Past, A Precious Future: A Heritage Strategy for Nova Scotia 2008-2013*, this overarching vision has initiated an impetus for renewal in the province. The Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage supported the development of the cornerstone of this renewal: the creation of an **Interpretive Master Plan for Nova Scotia** – a tool that can be used to direct and shape the face of interpretation in the province for many years to come.

The Nova Scotia Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) represents the work undertaken by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage through the Heritage Division to identify significant stories and values inherent in the province's cultural and natural heritage. With a thorough understanding of the province's current interpretive landscape and audiences, the Master Plan sets out a series of best practices, goals and objectives, as well as strategies and recommendations that will direct interpretive renewal and increase public recognition of the value and relevance of the province's heritage. Furthermore, it positions these heritage resources to be managed and communicated in a manner that is relevant to all Nova Scotians, while supporting the mandates of diverse government departments and agencies.

As an overview of the full Interpretive Master Plan, this Executive Summary outlines current heritage interpretation in the province, the Plan's overarching approach, strategies for interpretive renewal, general recommendations, provincially significant stories, and how these parts work together to direct interpretive renewal in Nova Scotia.

CURRENT SITUATION



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Nova Scotia features a wealth of resources that collectively interpret the province's natural and cultural heritage. From heritage properties, natural history sites and special places, to a provincial collection of more than 1,000,000 artifacts and specimens, understanding these resources is an

important part of renewal. The majority of the province's audiences will connect with these resources through the interpretive role of the Nova Scotia Museum (NSM). This family of 27 sites peppered throughout the province is a stronghold of interpretation within the Heritage Division. Although the emphasis in the Master Plan rests with this museum system and its resources, other Heritage Division units are also integral to the preservation, interpretation and promotion of our natural and cultural heritage. Special Places Protection, the Historic Places Initiative, Heritage Promotion and Development, and Heritage Outreach and Funding Programs such as the Community Museum Assistance Program all play key roles in this Interpretive Master Plan. Collectively, they offer untapped resources to assist with communicating the province's rich array of stories, as well as countless opportunities for partnerships to be forged.

The depth and breadth of interpretive potential existing across the province creates a strong foundation from which goals, objectives and strategies for interpretive renewal can be built. The information gleaned from analyzing current interpretive products within the Nova Scotia Museum system, mapping complementary sites and facilities, and understanding current audience trends that point to falling visitor numbers affects the recommendations set forth in this Master Plan, directly impacting the future of interpretation in Nova Scotia.



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INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN APPROACH

The Interpretive Master Plan represents a shift toward a balance between a curatorial-driven and market-driven, visitor-focused approach to interpretation. This approach is guided by four overarching goals that form the backbone of the Plan, collectively addressing the understanding and appreciation; sustainability; authenticity and relevancy; and best practices of interpretation. When acted upon holistically, these goals offer the best opportunity for retaining and expanding audiences. Driven by geography, demography, and personal motivations, changing markets for heritage interpretation create a more comprehensive picture of future audiences. As the Nova Scotia Museum and Heritage Division begin to implement strategies for interpretive renewal, it will become important to focus their efforts with these audience types in mind.

Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage



Attracting audiences and increasing visitor engagement includes applying best practices to heritage interpretation. This involves placing audience needs at the forefront of all renewal efforts, catering to multiple learning styles, utilizing multiple modes of communication and media, and becoming socially relevant to visitors. Relevance means increasing visitor engagement by reaching audiences “where they live” and assuming roles that will help increase public involvement with the Nova Scotia Museum. Audiences must be encouraged to move toward a deeper sense of involvement, immersion and “ownership” of the Museum through an increased level of participation and support. The role of the Nova Scotia Museum is to facilitate this growth through the strategies they implement, creating passionate, engaged museum supporters that will ensure the survival of the NSM in the future.

Goal 1.

Contribute to a common understanding and appreciation of the heritage of Nova Scotia through interpretation.

Goal 2.

Achieve sustainability by ensuring that the Heritage Division thrives and survives into the future.

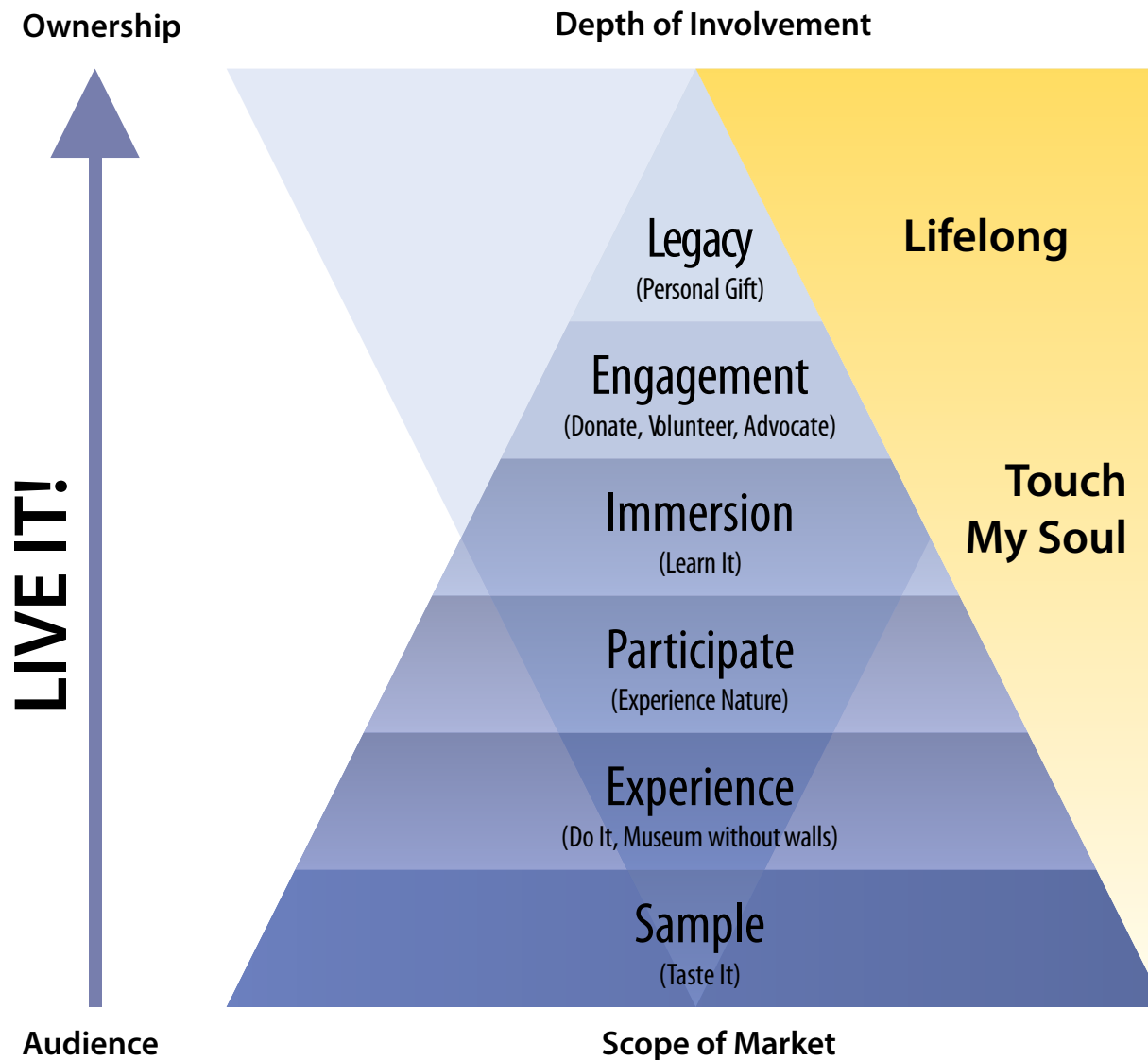
Goal 3.

Ensure that interpretation is authentic, relevant and inclusive for all audiences.

Goal 4.

Ensure best practices in interpretation are followed.

THE VISITOR ENGAGEMENT MODEL



The Visitor Engagement Model represents increased levels of visitor engagement at heritage sites in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Museum should use this tool to regain its relevancy to visitors and create passionate, engaged museum supporters who are more than just occasional visitors. Audiences must be encouraged to move toward a deeper sense of involvement, immersion and “ownership” of the Museum itself, through an increased level of participation and support. The role of the Nova Scotia Museum and the Heritage Division is to facilitate that growth through the strategies they implement.

STRATEGIES FOR INTERPRETIVE RENEWAL

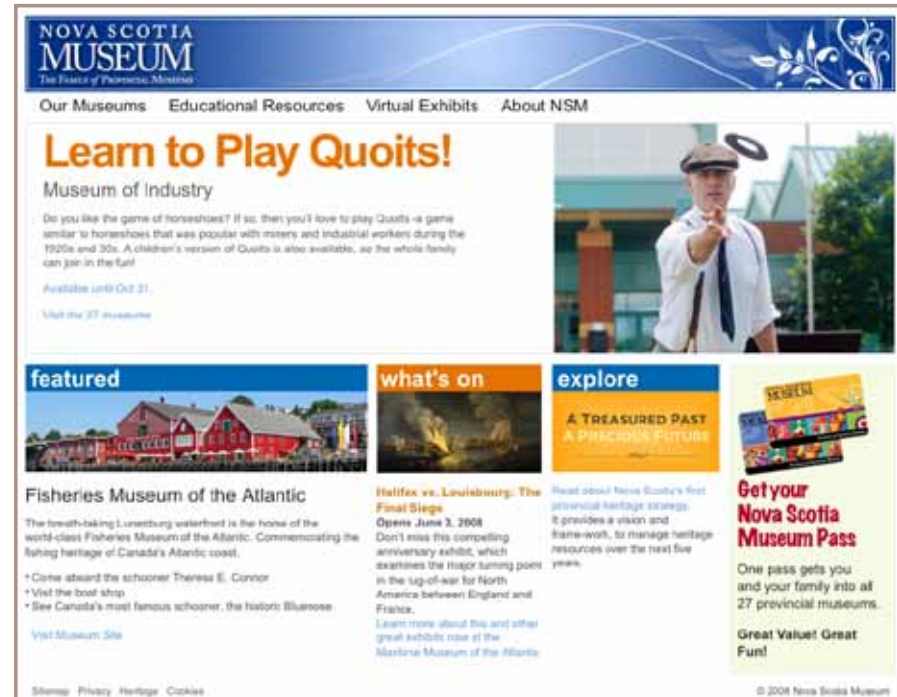
Objectives and relevant strategies were developed in close coordination with key Heritage Division staff using the four overarching goals established for the Master Plan. As the roadmap for interpretive renewal, these strategies respond to a wide variety of challenges and function as the “clay” from which the Nova Scotia Museum can shape future renewal projects and initiatives. Together, these strategies represent an effort to increase the relevance of the Nova Scotia Museum in the lives of both residents and visitors. Building on the Interpretive Master Plan Approach, they should be used in concert with best practices and policies during all future renewal efforts.

Interpretive renewal strategies for the Nova Scotia Museum are designed to attract and engage audiences for many years to come. These strategies will ensure that the Museum secures a relevant, meaningful place in the lives of both residents and visitors, and that the interpretation of the province’s natural and cultural heritage thrives well into the future.



Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage

Nova Scotia Museum



Darrell Burke

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
<p>Contribute to a common understanding and appreciation of the heritage of Nova Scotia through interpretation.</p> <p>Objective 1: Ensure a balanced approach to natural and cultural heritage. Strategies: A. Increase emphasis on natural history. B. Reduce redundancies in cultural history interpretation. C. Where possible, integrate natural and cultural history stories.</p> <p>Objective 2: Regain authority as the voice for Nova Scotia Heritage; be respected. Strategies: A. Increase visibility through public outreach in non-traditional places. B. Increase the museum's presence in the media with respect to current public issues. C. Increase the museum's presence at colleges and universities. D. Acknowledge and provide orientation to the Nova Scotia Museum at every site, including connecting visitors to other sites and resources. E. Ensure that interpretation at NSM sites is connected to the "big picture", using the interpretive master plan themes and provincially significant stories outlined in the Content Framework.</p> <p>Objective 3: Develop two-way communication between the museum and visitors. Strategies: A. Develop a vision for and implement "The Museum Online", an online extension of the NSM that is a vital component of the Heritage Division. B. Create opportunities for the public to co-produce museum interpretation.</p>	<p>Achieve sustainability by ensuring that the Heritage Division thrives and survives into the future.</p> <p>Objective 1: Achieve resource sustainability. Strategies: A. Increase earned revenues. B. Develop low-volume, high-yield programs and experiences. C. Enlarge the fundraising and donation base. D. Work to achieve greater support by various levels of government. E. Begin interpretive renewal efforts with small-scale projects that will build momentum over time.</p> <p>Objective 2: Achieve social relevance through community involvement. Strategies: A. Reflect community values. B. Develop a partnership plan to formalize networks and synergies within the Heritage Division and with outside agencies. C. Achieve a balance between the responsible social function of the museum and adherence to a responsible corporate business model. D. Build relationships with the community and encourage community use of museum sites, including non-traditional uses that relate to the mandate of the sites. E. Exploit the specific potential of each site to attract and retain specialized audiences. F. Support new initiatives with promotion and marketing.</p> <p>Objective 3: Deepen engagement through new and repeat visitation. Strategies: A. Stimulate repeat visitation by offering a variety of changing visitor experiences. B. Create memorable, high-quality, engaging visitor experiences. C. Develop programs that encourage a long-term relationship. D. Make connections and information about the heritage of Nova Scotia accessible to a broad range of audiences in an engaging and effective manner. E. Provide a gateway experience in urban centres that links visitors to all NSM sites.</p> <p>Objective 4: Be innovative. Strategies: A. Stay current: be responsive to the latest trends in media, interpretation and time-sensitive public issues. B. Acknowledge and retain successful interpretive initiatives, enhancing them as may be needed. C. Make innovation a priority for new initiatives where renewal is indicated. D. Embrace new technologies to expand audiences and increase access to information. E. Experiment; encourage test projects and risk taking. F. Facilitate staff to give creative input on a regular basis.</p> <p>Objectives 5: Be green. Strategies: A. Introduce and maintain environmentally sustainable operating practices. B. Increase public awareness of environmental issues. C. Develop environmentally responsible exhibits. D. Use historic sites to promote architectural conservation as a sustainable activity. E. Where appropriate, use museum sites to promote sustainable lifestyles and skills.</p>	<p>Ensure that interpretation is authentic, relevant and inclusive for all audiences.</p> <p>Objective 1: Speak with authority: be accurate and authentic. Strategies: A. Encourage applied research in all projects. B. Make the research process, as well as the researchers more visible to the public. C. Monitor, update and evaluate the content framework regularly. D. Distinguish myth from reality in all interpretation. E. Exploit the specific history of each site as a basis for interpretive development.</p> <p>Objective 2: Be relevant to visitors' personal experiences. Strategies: A. Conduct market research (utilize tourism product development models) when developing interpretive products. B. Create multi-dimensional visitor experiences that relate to multiple audiences. C. Link exhibits and programs with the Nova Scotia school curriculum. D. Use real things to put history in context.</p> <p>Objective 3: Expand the content to be inclusive of Nova Scotia's diverse population. Strategies: A. Research and interpret new stories that are inclusive. B. Address controversial subjects. C. Encourage multi-dimensional (layered) storylines. D. Encourage partnerships with groups within and outside of the Heritage Division.</p> <p>Objective 4: Strengthen the relationship between interpretation, the provincial collection and other heritage resources. Strategies: A. Ensure that interpretation uses and makes effective use of the provincial collection and other heritage resources that the province holds. B. Allow interpretation to help define (in addition to science and collections research) collecting needs. C. Allow science and new knowledge from collections research (in addition to interpretation) to drive interpretive development and opportunities. D. Increase curatorial involvement in designing interpretive exhibits and programs. E. Draw on communities to enrich the museum's knowledge of the collection. F. Collect and present contemporary objects that are familiar to visitors.</p>	<p>Ensure best practices in interpretation are followed.</p> <p>Objective 1: Increase training and skills development. Strategies: A. Increase staff attendance at out-of-house conferences and professional development courses. B. Enhance and support staff training and professional development within the heritage division and other government departments. C. Implement a site job-switching program, to educate staff about other sites in the system. D. Ensure staff have access to published best practices. E. Develop and formalize more student internship programs with universities and colleges.</p> <p>Objective 2: Retain and build capacity. Strategies: A. Develop clear succession planning to build corporate memory. B. Ensure staff have access to skills-building networks and partnerships, such as the Nova Scotia Museums Association. C. Support the development of university and college programs in museology and interpretation. D. Develop mentoring and volunteerism within the Heritage Division. E. Develop a needs assessment and professional development tool for the museum sites that will evaluate the skill set, staffing requirements and interpretive products in order to assist them. F. Develop project teams (a "swat team") to assess interpretive opportunities, research, design, implement, and promote interpretive products.</p> <p>Objective 3: Live in a policy framework. Strategies: A. Develop an interpretation policy based on the principles outlined in the Interpretive Master Plan. B. Use the Interpretive Working Group to oversee the implementation of an interpretive policy and continually monitor and evaluate interpretive exhibits and programs.</p>

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



Nova Scotia Museum

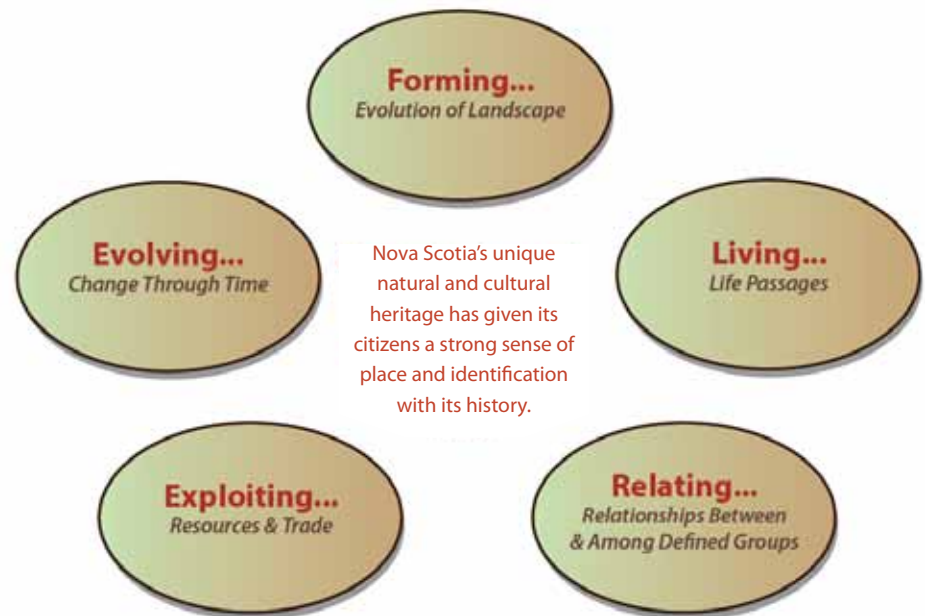
General recommendations help set the Interpretive Master Plan in motion, providing the Nova Scotia Museum with the direction required to initiate interpretive renewal in the province immediately. With an assemblage of strategies to draw upon, many have been prioritized for consideration within the immediate term. Relevant actions contained within these prioritized strategies are achievable and financially sustainable in the next two years, and will raise awareness and build momentum for

Master Plan. Many have similar thrusts, and have therefore been combined to maximize time and resources: staff training and involvement, content renewal, public engagement, public relations, and policies. When implemented across a wider field, these shared actions will generate effective, visible change with greater impact overall.

Managing renewal efforts over time involves forming an Interpretive Master Plan Team, developing an internal web initiative devoted to the Master Plan and its efforts, capitalizing on partnerships, and initiating a system of regular review to re-prioritize strategies as conditions change. The need to allocate resources to support renewal initiatives is a necessity. While it is not within the scope of the Master Plan to define operational or managerial recommendations for the Heritage Division, careful consideration of these needs is required to direct resources strategically in support of the Plan's stated goals, objectives, and strategies.

DEFINING NOVA SCOTIA'S STORIES

One of the main tasks of the Interpretive Master Plan is to collect and organize Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage in a manner that clearly identifies provincially significant stories. Two different, but complementary ways of defining and organizing these stories are utilized in this Master Plan: Interpretive Themes and a Content Framework. Interpretive themes conveying the "big ideas" that, by acting as unique threads running across many subjects, help us understand a place. The Content Framework identifies conceptual themes, topics, and sub-topics, which have been distributed across the Nova Scotia Museum and other sites communicating a piece of the provincial story through a Content Distribution Matrix. Together, this information informs all interpretation within the Nova Scotia Museum, creating a consistent message to its audiences. It also ensures that interpretive renewal efforts are focused and that gaps in the communication of provincially significant stories are identified and addressed as part of renewal efforts.



THEME/SITE	BGM	BWM	CHM	DS
E. LIVING: Life Passages				
E.1 Life at Home and Work				
E.1.1 Gender Roles and Homelife		+	+	
E.1.2 Childhood Experiences			+	
E.1.3 People in the Workplace		+		
E.1.4 Social Value of the Workplace				
E.1.5 Places of Community Interaction				
E.1.6 Food on the Table	+			
E.2 Communities				
E.2.1 Coastal Towns/Villages				
E.2.2 Inland Towns/Villages				
E.2.3 People at Sea				
E.2.4 Home Front				
E.2.5 Shore-based Industry				
E.3 Recreation				
E.3.1 Informal Play				
E.3.2 Organized Sports				
E.3.3 Boat Racing				
E.3.4 Leisure-time Activities				

This excerpt from the Content Distribution Matrix illustrates how the topics and sub-topics developed in the Content Framework are distributed across the Nova Scotia Museum's 27 sites. It indicates where content is currently well-interpreted (blue squares), where content could be enhanced (blue squares with a "+" sign), and where new content should be introduced (green squares) at NSM sites.

Through its unique system of interpretive facilities, village complexes, historic houses, and industrial mills, the Nova Scotia Museum has the ability to communicate the province's rich natural and cultural heritage. Addressing this full spectrum of stories is a great achievement for the Nova Scotia Museum. However, more can be done to ensure that all provincially significant stories are given voice and that those less-known, yet equally intriguing stories reach the eyes and ears of our resident and visiting audiences. This work will strengthen all heritage interpretation in the province, providing sites with many new, exciting opportunities and a deeper, wider well from which to draw stories as renewal takes place. A range of partners – both within and outside of the Heritage Division – exist that can help contribute to the communication of Nova Scotia's provincially significant stories. Interpretive renewal, however, begins with the Nova Scotia Museum's sites and staff as they take inspiration from new site mandates and propels content renewal forward.

	HV	LHM	MMA	MHM	MOI	MNH	NH	OMH	SPH	PHM	RTH	RFM	SHM	SV	SSM	UEMP	AV	WCM
E.1.5 Food on the Table																		
E.2 Communities																		
E.2.1 Coastal Towns/Villages																		
E.2.2 Inland Towns/Villages																		
E.2.3 People at Sea																		
E.2.4 Home Front																		
E.2.5 Shore-based Industry																		
E.3 Recreation																		
E.3.1 Informal Play																		
E.3.2 Organized Sports																		
E.3.3 Boat Racing																		
E.3.4 Leisure-time Activities																		
E.4 Cultural Expression																		
E.4.1 Architecture																		
E.4.2 Landscapes/Gardens																		
E.4.3 Folklore and Celebrations																		
E.4.4 Media (i.e. radio, TV, film, etc)																		
E.4.5 Literature/Poetry/Drama																		
E.4.6 Music																		
E.4.7 Fine/Folk Art																		
E.4.8 Cuisine as Cultural Expression																		
E.4.9 Clothing and Costume																		
E.4.10 Heritage Preservation																		
E.5 Social Development and Organizations																		
E.5.1 Community Security: Protection, Prevention, Response																		
E.5.2 Justice																		
E.5.3 Health Care																		
E.5.4 Temperance & Prohibition																		
E.5.5 Antigonish Movement																		
E.5.6 Religious Observance																		
E.5.7 Philanthropy & Social Conscience																		
E.5.8 Unions																		
E.5.9 Boards of Trade																		
E.5.10 Fraternal Organizations																		
E.5.11 Volunteerism																		

CONCLUSION: HOW THE PARTS WORK TOGETHER

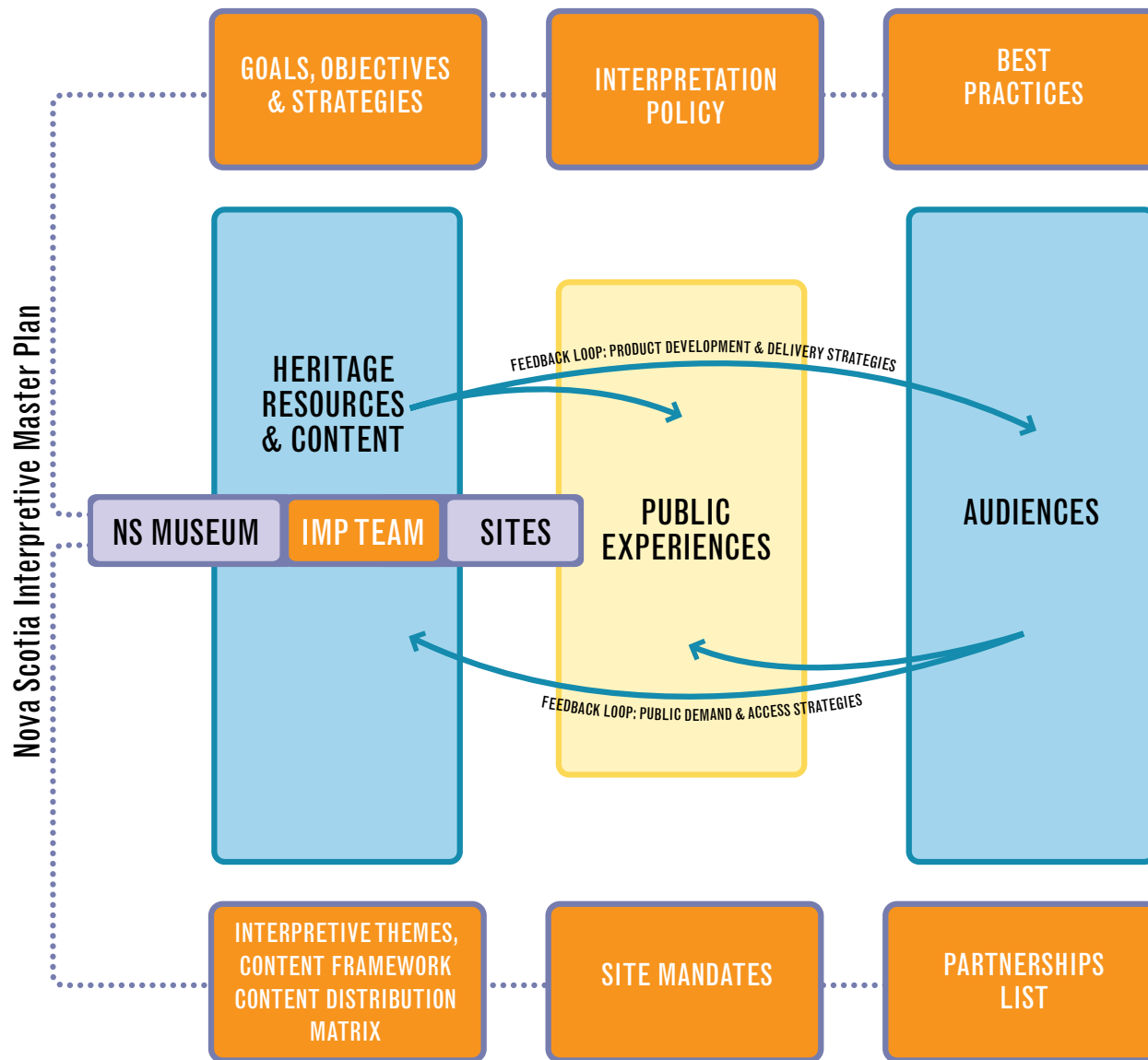
The Nova Scotia Museum is motivated to continue the process of renewal. Staff are enthusiastic about the integration of the Interpretive Master Plan into their daily work, as it represents the realization of many years of effort. The passion, commitment and insight of all involved have been invaluable to the formation of the Plan, and will be essential to its future success.

This Plan, and its parts, will be used either independently or in unison by the Nova Scotia Museum's family of sites and the newly created Interpretive Master Plan Team. All levels of staff and sites should take inspiration from the Plan and the parts outlined herein, incorporating the ideas provided with their own to achieve success.

The Nova Scotia Interpretive Master Plan is the impetus for clear direction, growth, and revitalization within the Nova Scotia Museum system. With the Interpretive Master Plan in place, the Heritage Division is now able to take significant strides towards interpretive renewal, which will, in turn, set the precedent for all heritage interpretation in the province and directly benefit Nova Scotians. As a comprehensive package, the Interpretive Master Plan is a tool for the Museum and the Heritage Division to utilize for many years to come. It is the rod with which to leverage funding, the flag to inspire museum staff, the handbook to develop interpretation, and the voice through which the Museum can speak to all Nova Scotians, reengaging them with their heritage in both new and familiar ways.



ATTRACTING AND RETAINING AUDIENCES: USING THE MASTER PLAN



This diagram illustrates how visitor engagement and renewal efforts will take place within the Nova Scotia Museum. Individually, these key areas address different needs and will be used differently by the Museum and/or staff and management at sites. Together, they provide a larger vision for the Museum – a foundation of information the Heritage Division can refer to and build on, creating a common understanding across the Division. New tools and resources provided by the Interpretive Master Plan (shown in orange) are described in further detail in the full Interpretive Master Plan document.

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