




Defining Nova Scotia's Stories



Prepared by:

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One of the main strategies of the Interpretive Master Plan is to collect and organize Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage - its "stories" - in a manner that clearly identifies provincially significant themes and topics. This is a crucial step towards ensuring that the Heritage Division addresses these important stories and interprets them for visitors.

This section includes three different, but complementary ways of defining and organizing the province's stories: interpretive themes, which convey the "big ideas" that thread through the natural and cultural history of Nova Scotia; a Content Framework, which identifies conceptual themes, topics, and sub-topics; and a Content Distribution Matrix, which distributes content to the sites.

The Framework forms the basis for the Content Distribution Matrix, which distributes the stories across the Heritage Division and includes other major facilities outside of the Division that tell part of the story. Lastly, a gap analysis of interpretation in the province shows us where there are gaps in the distribution of content that will need to be filled through future interpretive renewal in the NSM and partnerships with outside organizations.

6.1 Interpretive Themes

The interpretive planning process develops interpretive themes to provide an overarching context in which to organize and edit interpretation; to ensure it expresses the “big ideas” that we want to communicate to visitors. Interpretive themes are not the same as topics, or content, which are listed in the Content Framework that follows. Rather, they express ideas or concepts that, by acting as a unique threads running across many subjects, help us understand a place – in this case, Nova Scotia. **Interpretive themes should answer the question, “what do you want visitors to understand and appreciate about Nova Scotia when they leave a Nova Scotia Museum site, website or other interpretive product?”**

The following main theme and sub-themes address those ideas that need to inform the interpretation across the Heritage Division, creating a consistent message to visitors. Interpretation at each site may be built around much more specific interpretive themes, and specific topics, however overall, each site (or website, program, marketing piece, etc.) should find a relationship to the themes listed below. In this way, these themes also determine what the Heritage Division is not interpreting.

Main Theme

Nova Scotia’s unique natural and cultural heritage has given its citizens a strong sense of place and identification with its history.

This refers to the uniqueness of the natural landscape, which Nova Scotians feel has special meaning for them; while also addressing the long, rich and colourful history they have inherited.



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Sub Themes

Nova Scotia's natural world has been shaped by its location in the northern hemisphere and its relationship to the sea.

Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, peninsula and island, were born of tectonic upheaval in the world's ancient oceans; once formed, ultimately by glaciation, it was the sea that determined its climate and thus its flora and fauna.

Nova Scotia's strategic location has allowed it to develop a strong engagement with the wider world.

Nova Scotians have always been mindful that they are affected by the sea. This has linked them to the world, making them the recipients of people and ideas from other lands, as well sharing their own people and ideas with the world.

Nova Scotia has been challenged, shaped and strengthened by conflict and cooperation.

From Aboriginal conflict to the clash of empires, commercial competition to the fight for responsible government, and union struggles to the battles for gender and racial equality, Nova Scotia's society has evolved by meeting the challenges of conflict and cooperation.

Nova Scotia's destiny on the edge of a continent-wide nation has involved continual struggle to fulfill the promise of political and economic equality.

The promise of the 19th century was never realized by Nova Scotia in the 20th century and her citizens have always felt the need to battle feelings of marginalization and to strive for "better terms."

Nova Scotia is a place of diversity and continuing natural and cultural evolution.

Neither the world of nature, nor human society are ever static. The world adapts and changes and Nova Scotians are inextricably bound in a relationship with their natural environment.



