

6.6 Directing Future Research and Collections

The Content Framework and Content Distribution Matrix are also valuable as tools to direct future research and collecting in the NSM, as interpretive renewal occurs in order to meet the requirements of the Content Framework. **The Content Framework can be used to direct research into those themes and topics where apparent knowledge gaps exist for effective interpretation, or where there is a potential to create new knowledge.** Creating a research atlas (using the Department of Environment's model) may be beneficial to the Nova Scotia Museum system.

Ongoing research is the lifeblood of an active interpretive program. As the NSM approaches resources available for such investigation, they must view them in the widest possible terms: existing research, specimens, landscapes, artifacts, buildings, manuscript and printed documents, maps, photographs, film, and oral histories need to receive attention so that all possible relevant resources can be utilized to create engaging interpretive programs for any given situation, whether it be a sign or plaque, an exhibit, a guided tour, or a costumed presentation.

While the province's *Heritage Strategy* can be used to ensure that these resources are protected, the Interpretive Master Plan ensures that they are used to their full potential to create insights and informational links at the heart of interpretation.

The Content Framework should stimulate broad-scale thinking about a site and its connections across the province.

The key ways of achieving this are through:

Documentary Research

- » To establish historical context;
- » To fully explore the natural history or cultural history of a place;
- » To fully identify the people, events and activities associated with a place.

Material Culture Research

- » To assess the availability of artifacts for interpretation;
- » To research artifact connections and stories

Field Research

- » To focus site analysis and reporting for landscapes and/or buildings;
- » To undertake, when possible, oral history interviews.

In using the Content Framework to test the potential of museum exhibits and programs and sites to deliver multi-level stories, and to follow through with an active program of research, it should be possible through a carefully created, maintained and continually reassessed interpretive program to encourage in visitors an appreciation of:

- » The diversity of place and that places have more than one value; there are layers of natural history and historical use over time to consider;
- » Themes and topics that are under-represented, such as Mi'kmaq heritage, or stories of women and children, multi-cultural heritage in the 20th century, contested site histories, experiences with failure, conflict or poverty;
- » The need to look beyond a narrow association of places with wealth, privilege or social elitism, and that there are always other stories than the most obvious.