

Dear Minister Moore,

I'm a Canadian citizen, resident of Nova Scotia, a member of the *Canadian Archaeological Association* (CAA), and the vice president of the *Nova Scotia Archaeology Society* (NSAS). In this letter I speak for myself, personally, as well as on behalf of the CAA, and as a formal spokesperson for the NSAS.

We protest the Government of Canada actions that are dismantling the cultural institutions in this country. In particular, we are disturbed by the laying off of archaeologists, historians, curators and conservators within the Parks Canada Agency, the reduction to seasonal employment for others and the proposed removal of all archaeological and curatorial collections to a central warehouse in the Ottawa region with limited collections management support.

Parks Canada Agency is the single most affected service unit within the federal government under the current federal work force adjustment. Of the 1689 employees impacted, 638 will be eliminated and 1051 will be "affected," meaning their seasonal work may be shortened or they may be required to move. This is almost 600 more than the next most affected federal group – the more numerous Department of National Defence, which will see 1124 jobs eliminated or affected. Of the 1689 positions in Parks Canada, 470 are in Western region followed by 408 in the Atlantic region, 396 in Ontario, 300 in Quebec and 115 in the National Capital office. *[Figures from the Public Service Alliance of Canada website.]*

At the Atlantic Service Centre in Halifax, the Cultural Resource Management office has been reduced to two archaeologists and one historian. There are no curators remaining. The two remaining conservation positions are both "affected," for transfer to Ottawa, as is the Collections Manager for archaeological artifacts and records. Parks Canada's Atlantic Service Centre has provided collaborative services to universities, consultant archaeologists and private individuals, including the operation of joint archaeological field schools with the universities of Memorial, Prince Edward Island And Saint Mary's.

Removal of the archaeological collections and records to a central repository, with limited staff for collections management, will make access extremely difficult for Parks Canada staff. It will remove facilities required for the continuation of archaeological work in National Parks and National Historic Sites in Atlantic Canada by the remaining archaeologists, and will strongly hinder the ability of archaeologists to respond to the needs of parks and sites for public programs and resource protection. Students of local public schools, Saint Mary's University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and design regularly visit the Woodside lab on formal and informal occasions. Closing of the facility will eliminate educational opportunities of this kind. Louisbourg, which has one of the best research collections of 18th-century artifacts in North America, will close its lab for 10 weeks each winter, due to the reduction of its Collections Manager from a full-time to a seasonal employee.

Public programmes in which the public pay a fee to experience and learn about archaeology have operated at three sites in Atlantic Canada: Fortress of Louisbourg, Beaubassin and Grand Pre. Only the Louisbourg programme remains intact this year.

Parks Canada has a proud legacy of successful collaborations with First Nations across the country, protecting and present their heritage at existing sites, developing new parks and sites, and working with Aboriginal cultural institutions to promote cultural centres and historic sites within their communities. That legacy has been virtually eliminated through the removal of all liaison positions, most of which were filled with Aboriginal employees.

The pattern of reductions is repeated in regional service centres across Canada. Archaeological research in other service centres is even more dramatically affected by cuts, since Atlantic region had already seen a serious reduction through retirements prior to the announced cuts. The dismemberment of Parks Canada affects each and every one of us in this country who has an interest in history and archaeology. We must also recognize that the cuts have reduced natural resource conservation staff, including those dealing with Species at

Risk, and have entirely eliminated the national education outreach program which brought our natural and historical heritage into the schools.

We are also opposed to the cuts that will drastically reduce services at Library and Archives Canada. Staff at LAC, already struggling with reductions in past years, will face a further 20% reduction. Future access to our archival heritage is likely to be restricted to those documents which have been digitized, and the acquisition of new resources is problematic.

There are other concerns which point to sad and devastating consequences for Canada's heritage: the complete elimination of the National Archives Development Program, which supports local archives, and of the Understanding Canada Program, which provides modest support for Canadian studies programs in foreign countries. The current budgetary cutbacks are terribly damaging to Canada's cultural and natural heritage and we suggest that they should be stopped.

On behalf of myself, personally, and on behalf of the CAA and the NSAS, we protest the Harper Government's actions detailed above, and we request an accountability of the cost/benefits that the Government may suppose will devolve from these cuts, versus the economic and cultural loss to this country.

Sincerely,
Terry J. Deveau

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