

ARCHAEOLOGY al Parks Canada



"Archaeological heritage is an essential element in the affirmation of our Canadian identity and a source of inspiration and knowledge. It is the policy of the Government of Canada to protect and manage this heritage."

Archaeological Heritage Policy Framework, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, 1990

- [What is Happening to Archaeology at Parks Canada?](#)



Signal Hill National Historic Site

- In 2011, Parks Canada [celebrated archaeology](#), highlighting the contribution that archaeology had made to the organization's 100 year history. What a difference a year makes.

In 2012, the Harper Government is in the process of reducing the Parks Canada archaeology program to ruins.



Gros Morne National Park

- There are currently [42 National Parks and Park Reserves](#) in Canada. In addition to that, there are [950 National Historic Sites](#), of which 167 are administered by Parks Canada. So when the Federal government announced at the end of April that 3872 Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) employees would have their jobs affected, it was devastating to learn that 1689, or 44% of those cuts, would be coming from within Parks Canada. According to the [Globe and Mail](#), "At Parks Canada, 1,689 PSAC members received affected notices and staff were told that 638 positions will be eliminated." When you make cuts to Parks Canada, you not only make cuts to the protection and research of pristine places and unique ecosystems, but you make cuts to those sites that were most significant in shaping the history and culture of all Canadians.



L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site

- According to a report called "[The Economic Impact of Parks Canada](#)", which was prepared for Parks Canada by The Outspan Group Inc. in April 2011, the total organizational and visitor spending at Parks Canada was \$3.3 billion in 2008/2009. Bear in mind that was the year that the global economy collapsed. Of that \$3.3 billion, Parks Canada spent \$587 million of it and the Government of Canada got back \$217 million in taxes. The other \$2.7 billion came from visitors, and \$1.2 billion of that was spent by non-Canadian visitors. This is not a money losing operation. That's \$1.2 billion entering the Canadian economy during the worst financial slump in decades. For every \$1 that Canada spends on Parks Canada, it is getting back \$2 dollars in foreign spending *and* 40 cents back in taxes. Why would you make cuts to a program that is not only a national and international source of pride, but a program that brings billions of dollars into the Canadian economy?



Archaeology at Signal Hill National Historic Site 2009

- What is attracting these visitors to Parks Canada? There are dozens of National Parks and Park Reserves, but there are also hundreds of National Historic Sites. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the places that we send our visitors, like L'Anse aux Meadows, Gros Morne, Red Bay, and Port au Choix are all National Parks or National Historic Sites. Has anyone ever visited St. John's without a trip to Signal Hill? Signal Hill is a National Historic Site. Every Province and every city across the country has sites like this and these are where the cuts are being made.



Lake Minnewanka, Banff National Park 2001

- So what do these cuts look like to archaeology at Parks Canada? Its hard to get a handle on exactly what's happening because people are being told that their jobs are affected, but not always exactly how they are going to be affected. Senior archaeologists across the country are taking retirement packages and their jobs are not being replaced. Full time employees are becoming seasonal workers and, off course, there are outright layoffs. Some areas, like [Prince Edward Island](#), won't have a single archaeologist working in the region after this round of cuts. One of the national trends seems to be eliminating regional laboratories and collection repositories across the country and consolidating all those jobs and facilities in Ottawa. The artifacts from National sites in Newfoundland and Labrador are already stored out of province in the Atlantic Centre in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, but over the next 1-3 years that facility will be closed and everything will be shipped to Ottawa.



Lake Minnewanka artifact

- Here are a couple CBC articles worth checking out that discuss some of the impacts of the cuts to Parks Canada, specifically the impact on Archaeology and other research in Atlantic Canada:

Rob Ferguson, a retired Parks Canada Archaeologist, is interviewed on this [Information Morning Nova Scotia clip \(May 8, 2012\)](#).

Ferguson and other archaeologists and conservators discuss the impact of closing the Parks Canada Lab in Dartmouth in the CBC story below.

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Kiss our heritage good-bye? (Red Bay N.H.S.)

- In an ongoing thread discussing this disturbing new reality on the [Canadian Archaeological Association facebook page](#), one Parks Canada Conservator observed "*At this moment there are more people employed in a single Tim Hortons than are employed by Parks Canada nationally to preserve and care for millions of archaeological and historic objects in storage and on display.*"