

POLICY PLANNING FOR MANAGING CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPES: A CASE STUDY

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At the core of the City of Brantford between Shallow Creek Park and the Grand River is the Mohawk Canal, formerly The Brantford Cut of the Grand River Canal. At the terminus of the canal where it empties into the Grand River is the Alfred Watts Power Generating Station, a Victorian-era plant which lies in ruins.

The Mohawk Canal was completed in 1848 by William Hamilton Merritt and the Grand River Navigation Company. The canal was built to facilitate navigation, transportation and trade between Brantford and Dunnville, and to connect to the Great Lakes transportation system. However, the Mohawk Canal has had many, layered and overlapping uses over the years. The canal is also very closely connected to Brantford's industrial history, providing water, hydroelectric power, shipping and supplies for the city's early manufacturing facilities.

In 1875 the canal rights were sold to Alfred Watts, a local entrepreneur who was interested in using the canal for the development of hydro electric power. He built a dam, a small dynamo, and later a steam plant to provide power to downtown Brantford, making it one of the first Ontario municipalities to have electric street lighting. The dam was destroyed in 1927 by flooding.

The canal also fulfils a recreational use as a waterway, supporting canoeing, fishing, ice skating, and an extensive trails system. It widens into a man-made lake at Mohawk Lake, located alongside Mohawk Park. These resources have been popular tourist attractions in Brantford since 1895, when an amusement park opened at the site.

This landscape also includes the bridges, roads, railroads and pedestrian circulation routes immediately adjacent to the canal. Together these resources form a compelling and significant cultural heritage landscape which is unquestionably worthy of protection. The area is defined by a combina-

tion of cultural heritage, natural heritage and archaeological resources which together form one cohesive landscape.

How should a landscape like this be protected? What tools are available to us, as heritage professionals, to protect Cultural Heritage Landscapes? How do you determine which tool is best suited for this landscape?

These are questions we addressed as part of a Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL) Feasibility Study prepared for the City of Brantford.

There are four established ways of protecting CHLs currently in use in the Province of Ontario: You can list a landscape on a Municipal Heritage Register, designate it as an individual property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA), designate it as a collection of multiple properties under Part V of the OHA as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) or recognize it as a CHL as a part of an Official Plan Amendment (OPA). Listing and Part IV designations tend to focus on individual properties. HCDs are usually undertaken in urban, commercial and/or residential neighbourhoods, and consist of a collection built heritage resources, tied together with landscape features. The Mohawk Canal and Alfred Watts Power Generating Station is a predominantly landscape-driven area, with few buildings, that does not conform to the typical Part IV or Part V designation. ASI recommended that the area be recognized as a significant CHL as a part of an Official Plan Amendment, a landscape-driven alternative to HCD designation. Recognizing CHLs as a part of an OPA is an emerging best practice for protecting these significant but complex resources.

This study prompted us to think about the relationship between CHLs and the Ontario Heritage Act. The introduction of the term 'cultural heritage landscape' in the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) established a connection between heritage legislation and CHLs. Practitioners and

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BUTTONS, BONES, BOTTLES, STONES, CLAY, IRON & CHINA...

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF 40 BANKERS BOXES FULL OF ARTIFACTS SHOWED UP AT YOUR DOORSTEP?

Johanna Rowe, CAHP



MFN pottery.

In September 2015, Michipicoten First Nation on the east shore of Lake Superior near Wawa, Ontario, performed a homecoming ceremony and feast for 40 boxes of artifacts repatriated from Ontario's aging archaeological repositories. The community was pleased to welcome home pieces of their forgotten past which were removed during a series of projects in their immediate territory from 1950 through the 1970s.

The sealed containers included items from three indigenous settlement sites, one dating back nine centuries and one historic European site which was home to fur trading operations for more than 180 years. The one crucial item the boxes did not include is an inventory list.

After sharing this story at the Ontario Museum Association Indigenous Collections Symposium hosted by the Woodland Cultural Centre and Six Nations Polytechnique in Brantford, Ontario, in March 2017, much needed guidance, resources and best practices were gratefully received. In May, trainers from the Canadian Conservation Institute in May will be conducting a 'Care and Handling of Indigenous Items' workshop at Michipicoten First Nation.

J. Rowe Heritage Consulting was contracted by the Band to help coordinate an action plan and vision for the artifacts, the first step has been to identify what is in each box. A diverse group of volunteers are assisting with the project. As we open each lid and peer inside, we really have no idea what is in store for us. So far, we have opened only 4 boxes and already the diversity and quantity is providing us with a unique window into the people and daily lives that at one time inhabited the banks of the Michipicoten River centuries before today.



MFN clay stems.

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planners looked to the Ontario Heritage Act to implement the PPS. While the OHA may be an appropriate tool to protect some CHLs, it isn't the only way. Some of our most treasured, complex, and significant cultural heritage landscapes in Ontario have been protected using other legal instruments.

The province of Ontario has been protecting cultural landscapes for decades. The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, followed by the Greenbelt Act, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, and various management plans enacted under the Conservation Authorities Act and Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, are just a few ways that Ontario has been protecting and managing these essential pieces of our social, cultural, ecological and economic fabric.

'Cultural heritage values' are important within all CHLs; however, these are not necessarily the only values that define significance or resonate the most with people and communities. Ecological or recreational values may be equally important and may be the catalyst for stewardship and reuse. Trails, view-sheds and natural areas in our communities have similar complex values.

These realizations have important implications for how we apply policy. If we acknowledge that cultural heritage value in the context of CHLs exceed the definitions in the OHA, we may look to other tools such as the Planning Act to protect these types of non-renewable resources. This allows us to think more broadly about boundary definition, protection tools and promotion strategies, allowing us to connect with broader audiences. This is already starting to happen in Toronto's rivers, valleys and ravine systems and along the banks of the Credit River through Peel Region and Dufferin County. These places are cultural heritage landscapes, but not exclusively. Protecting CHLs with other tools also allows for the flexibility to weave heritage work into the larger policy and planning process. The Technical Study and Conservation Plan for the Mohawk Canal and Alfred Watts Power Generating Station is to be incorporated into part of the Mohawk Lake District Plan work program, a broader planning study currently scheduled for the area.