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Reply all |

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Robertson, Dylan; +1 more

Good evening,

Apologies for the late reply, please see Parks Canada's responses to your follow-up questions below.

Kind regards,
Natalie Fay

Q. I'm curious what consultation Parks Canada held with groups specifically in Manitoba; I am hearing a complaint about inadequate consultation, especially among Indigenous groups and local academics. Is there anyone in Manitoba who has expressed support for this move? I cannot find anyone.

Parks Canada recognizes that many groups have an interest in the historical and archaeological objects in the collection and we will continue to work with all interested parties, including Indigenous communities, to ensure that these objects remain accessible for ceremonial, research, educational, and exhibit purposes.

Parks Canada has met with the Manitoba Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage, and has reached out to 17 Indigenous communities, and 3 additional groups with a connection to the collection representing Indigenous peoples in Manitoba (Manitoba Metis Federation, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc (NTI) / Kivalliq Inuit Association (KIA)).

Please note that objects currently displayed at national parks and historic sites, as well as objects on loan to partner organizations, will remain in these locations. Throughout this process, Parks Canada is committed to working with all interested parties, and is open to finding solutions that meet their needs, including short and long-term loans.

The Government is committed to reconciliation and renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples, based on a recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. Parks Canada recognizes that Indigenous groups have a vested interest in the objects and associated documentation in the collections and will work to ensure Indigenous peoples are involved in the care and presentation of these objects.

In line with these commitments, Parks Canada's new collection storage facility will include dedicated workspaces for researchers as well as meeting, event, and ceremonial spaces, including special ventilation for ceremonies such as smudging.

Q. Please clarify in more detail and plain language the issue at the Wpg facility.

A. The Winnipeg facility's main environmental issue is frequent and sharp variations of relative humidity. When the relative humidity goes up or down, objects – particularly objects made of materials like wood, bone, and leather – expand and contract in response. In an object with multiple parts, like a chair, each part expands and contracts at a different rate, creating stresses within the object. The cycle of expansion and contraction causes cracking and flaking and excess humidity can cause rusting and mould.

For these reasons, the integrity of the objects stored in the Winnipeg facility is at risk from the fluctuations in the relative humidity.

The new facility's environmental control will ensure a Class A environment, one that meets the accepted professional standard for collections storage. Thanks to the building's double envelope and specialized HVAC system, the internal environment will be stable.

Q. How many job losses are expected in Wpg? At the time of the 2012 announcement, the minister mentioned four jobs in Dartmouth, NS being axed as a result of this policy. Please include jobs moved to Quebec.

No positions will be eliminated as part of this project.

Parks Canada's archaeologists and historians will remain in their respective regions to continue their important work.

There are three positions that are directly related to the collection that will be relocated to the new facility.

Q. I'd like to confirm whether there are artifacts from Mennonite, Ukrainian or Icelandic settlers being moved so far. In my calls to these communities in Manitoba, none have said Parks Canada consulted with them.

Parks Canada recognizes that many groups have an interest in the historical and archaeological objects in the collection.

In addition to the groups consulted to date, Parks Canada is open to discussions and committed to working with other interested parties to find solutions that meet their interests and ensure that these objects remain accessible for research, ceremonial, educational, and exhibit purposes.

Parks Canada's collection reflects the national parks and national historic sites administered by the Agency. The majority of the objects in Winnipeg were recovered from archaeological contexts on lands managed by Parks Canada.

We can confirm that the Winnipeg facility has a total of 6 historic objects and 1 reproduction identified as Ukrainian, all of which were purchased to support interpretation at national historic sites. There are no objects identified as of Mennonite or Icelandic origin from Manitoba in the collection.

Q. Was there any costing/analysis done on keeping these artifacts within Manitoba? What were the costs involved, and the benefits/drawbacks?

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) completed an Investment Analysis Report in which various possible options were examined, including an option to renovate the existing facilities. The construction of a new special purpose facility was found to be the best value for money.

A single, new, Parks Canada owned, purpose-built facility was determined to be the most viable and cost effective solution to ensure the long-term sustainable care and management of the collection.

Parks Canada's collection will be safeguarded through optimal environmental and storage conditions, such as:

- Class A climate with rigorous temperature and humidity set points.
- Double wall construction around the collection storage area for additional insulation, to maintain optimal temperature and humidity requirements, and to protect the collection from external threats, such as pests. These measures also help the facility keep energy costs down.
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems that are on emergency generators to ensure consistent climate control in the event of a power outage.
- A storage system that maximizes space and provides flexible storage capacity to facilitate access and retrieval, and to account for changes in the collection over time.

Consolidation of the collection into a new purpose-built facility will allow for the protection and conservation of the collection under optimal storage and environmental conditions and also provide Indigenous peoples, researchers, institutions, and community groups from across the country with access to the collection in one location. Other national and international institutions have consolidated their collections for the same reasons.

Parks Canada remains committed to ensuring that the project is cost efficient and makes the best use of public funds.

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Natalie Fay
Parks Canada Media Services