

RIDEAU CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, ONTARIO

PROTECTING HISTORY, CULTURE, RECREATION, AND BIODIVERSITY

Photo: André Guindon © Parks Canada

OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA BASED CONSERVATION MEASURE (OECM)

Constructed after the War of 1812 to serve as a secure war-time supply route from Montréal to the settlements of Upper Canada and the strategic naval dockyard at Kingston, the Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada officially opened in 1832 with 47 locks, 23 lockstations and supporting dams and bridges, providing through navigation between the Ottawa River and Lake Ontario. A national historic site, Canadian Heritage River, and a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Rideau Canal is valued for its canal construction and engineering technology, its integrity and authenticity, the contribution and sacrifices of canal construction labourers, its military purpose, and its contributions to the social and economic development of Upper Canada.

The Rideau Canal corridor has long been recognized as an area of special interest owing to its unique combination of cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational values. The landscape of the corridor is a mosaic of agricultural land, forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers, rural waterfront residences and urban settlements.

The Rideau Canal's natural environment is also home to a wide variety of plants and animals, including many species which are threatened or at risk. There are currently 45 species at risk observed at the site. Additionally, there are many species of cultural importance to Indigenous peoples, such as the American eel, walleye, and furbearers like muskrat and beavers, living in and along the waterway.



Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! While there is not a complete legal survey of the Rideau Canal, a delineation of the boundaries is recognized and can be placed on a map.



Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! Parks Canada's legislative, regulatory and policy instruments provide the ability to prevent and manage activities on all Agency-owned lands.



Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! Parks Canada's national historic sites are intended to be administered and protected in the long term. The UNESCO World Heritage Site and Canadian Heritage River designations also encourage long term conservation.



Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

No – and that's okay! The primary objective for national historic sites, which is for the protection of commemorative integrity, is consistent with the in-situ conservation of biodiversity.

Quick tip

If this answer was "yes" for the Rideau Canal National Historic Site it would likely be assessed as a Protected Area. Both types of areas are important, and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! Guided by a site management plan that provides strategic and long-term direction for site management, Parks Canada in collaboration with key partners ensures that the culture, history, and biodiversity of the site are conserved.