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## News Releases and Backgrounders

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### News Releases

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## ***Government of Canada provides action plan for Trent-Severn Waterway Renewal***

**PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO, September 25, 2009**--The Honourable Jim Prentice, Canada's Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, today announced the Government of Canada's action plan in response to the Trent-Severn Waterway Panel Report: The Future of the Trent Severn Waterway.

"Our government is fully committed to the renewal of the Trent Severn Waterway, an important National Historic Site and Canada's longest historic canal," said Minister Prentice. "The Government of Canada's recent \$83 million investment demonstrates our ongoing commitment to protect this significant heritage resource and ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to experience and enjoy it."

The Trent-Severn Waterway is an extraordinary historical icon and the largest watershed in central Ontario. Over its 175-year history, the Trent-Severn Waterway has evolved with technological advancements and increasingly diverse uses. The changing regional context and the interests of Waterway users led to the Government of Canada decision to initiate a review of Waterway operations and its connections to the surrounding corridor.

"As one of Canada's largest National Historic Sites, the Trent-Severn Waterway is one of the defining characteristics of central Ontario. I am very pleased to see the Federal Government's response to the recommendations of the Panel charts a course that enhances collaboration on tourism, heritage and planning for renewal of this national treasure", said Mr. Dean Del Mastro, Member of Parliament for Peterborough.

The measures the Government of Canada will bring forward are as follow:

- Bring clarity around jurisdictional issues. The goal is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Ontario within six month, detailing areas of collaboration and coordination.
- Assure the future of our water by establishing an advisory committee to engage users in the review of water management policies.
- Work with municipalities and other organizations towards fully developing a Planner's Forum as a means of coordination on key issues such as waterfront development.
- As a means of encouraging the development of renewable energy, establish a dedicated professional unit in Peterborough to lead hydroelectric development on the waterway.
- Work with heritage organizations to develop a Heritage Network that will encourage public awareness, education and visitor experiences.

The Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada is part of Parks Canada's nation-wide network of national parks, national marine conservation areas and national historic sites, a network that is recognized as one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected areas in the world. This initiative will help Parks Canada ensure Canada's cultural and natural heritage are presented and protected for the enjoyment, education, and appreciation of all Canadians, today and in the future.

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**Backgrounder associated with this News Release.**

[Government of Canada's Response to the Panel Report on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway](#)

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### Backgrounder

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## ***Government of Canada's Response to the Panel Report on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway***

### Origin of the Trent-Severn Waterway Panel Report

In 2006 MP Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North) presented to Parliament, Private Members Motion M-161. The motion received unanimous consent in the House of Commons resulting in an independent review Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the Waterway's potential reflecting the value of this economic generator in the heartland of Ontario. Public engagement was high with more than 1000 participating in 32 public meetings and more than 150 written briefs.

On April 28, 2008, the Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW) submitted a report to the Minister of the Environment outlining 26 recommendations for the future of the Waterway organized under several themes: Improving the Performance of Governments; Assuring the Future of Our Water; Planning for Future Places to Live and Enjoy; Encouraging the Development of Renewable Energy; Protecting, Presenting, and Enjoying Our Cultural Heritage; and Improving the Condition of Waterway Infrastructure. The Panel report is available at (<http://www.tswpanel.ca>).

### An Overview of the Government of Canada's Response to the TSW Panel Recommendations

The Government of Canada has welcomed the Panel Report and has directed Parks Canada to take a leadership role in working with all stakeholders to bring the substantive recommendations of the panel to fruition. The 26 recommendations in the Panel Report reflect the complexity of the Waterway and Parks Canada has undertaken a thorough analysis of each recommendation.

A number of federal government agencies and departments, Government of Ontario agencies and departments, and municipalities have jurisdiction over aspects of the Waterway - it is indeed a complex web of responsibility. Parks Canada will work collaboratively with jurisdictions and stakeholders, and provide a focal point for the coordination of actions to address improvements in the Waterway corridor and in Trent-Severn Waterway operations.

Where there is shared responsibility, Parks Canada will approach others with an interest in the Waterway. For instance, Parks Canada officials will explore the potential for a Memorandum of Understanding with the Province of Ontario to lay out an approach that specifically addresses areas of common interest, including planning, heritage, tourism, economic development and water management.

Where Parks Canada has direct responsibility the Trent Severn Waterway will undertake specific actions and investments. For example, Parks Canada has upgraded the web site [http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/ne-wl/trent\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/ne-wl/trent_e.asp) so that the public can have almost real-time access to water level information. Parks Canada is also developing a strategic plan for hydro-electric power generation on the Waterway, and is establishing a dedicated team to manage it.

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a National Historic Site, and part of Canada's historic and cultural fabric. Parks Canada is enhancing its capacity to offer inspiring and educational experiences for Waterway visitors and users, and to work more closely with interested parties to protect, preserve and share the stories and history of the Waterway.

### Response to Recommendations in the Panel Report

### Improving the Condition of Waterway Infrastructure

The Government of Canada recognizes the need to maintain, repair and replace waterway infrastructure and has committed \$83 million over the next 5 years to invest in infrastructure renewal. This commitment is a first step that assures funding and supports the orderly renewal of infrastructure throughout the Trent-Severn Waterway.

#### Improving the Performance of Governments

The Government of Canada is supportive of improving communications and coordination among levels of government and Parks Canada will take a leadership role.

Parks Canada will meet with appropriate ministries of the Province of Ontario, municipalities and other stakeholders to explore the development of the recommended collaborative networks, as a means to strengthen communications and coordination. Examples include water management, a heritage network and destination marketing organization (DMO) for the Trent-Severn Watershed.

The Government of Canada understands the need of stakeholders for clarity around jurisdictional issues and is prepared to meet with the Government of Ontario to begin a dialogue. The goal would be to develop a Memorandum of Understanding within six months, setting out areas of collaboration and co-ordination. Specific agreements could set out how jurisdictional responsibilities on a range of matters may be defined and managed into the future. For Waterway residents this would result in more streamlined access to information, approval processes and decision-making.

The Government of Canada supports measures that are designed to cut red tape and streamline services to Canadians. Parks Canada will work with Transport Canada and other stakeholders to improve the Historic Canal Regulations. The goal is to modernize the application to reflect current day requirements and future needs, protect the public interest and enhance the heritage protection capacity of the regulations. As it updates its Guiding Principles and Operating Policies, Parks Canada will ensure provisions for Historic Canals are modified. These changes would reflect the integrated delivery of Parks Canada mandate with a balanced approach that is focused on all visitors.

#### Assuring the Future of Our Water

Parks Canada will establish an advisory committee that will engage water users in the review of water management policies and provide advice on the issues and shared vision for a balanced approach for water management in the two watersheds. The advisory committee will include organizations that represent the interests of waterfront property owners.

Under the proposed Canada – Ontario MOU, a specific agreement could consider measures for coordinated service delivery and harmonized permitting for the occupancy and use of the bed of the Waterway. Protocols could also be established to define how jurisdictions will work together with the advisory committee to better manage water storage, flows, allocation and use in the two watersheds.

The Lake Simcoe water quality initiative has been a very useful approach for dealing with issues specific to that lake. Working with stakeholders, Parks Canada will use the best practices and what has been learned from Lake Simcoe in addressing other TSW management issues.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of making environmental information accessible and understandable for citizens. Parks Canada will take a leadership role in working with federal and provincial government departments and agencies to ensure relevant environmental information is readily accessible to the public to promote stewardship and sustainable resource management. Parks Canada has upgraded its web site to provide public access to near real-time water level information in March 2009 ([http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/ne-wl/trent\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/ne-wl/trent_e.asp)).

#### Planning for Future Places to Live and Enjoy

The Government of Canada supports mechanisms that involve stakeholders in an effort to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Parks Canada will take the lead with municipalities and other organizations toward fully developing a Planner's Forum as a means of coordination on key issues such as waterfront development.

The Government of Canada recognises the need for communities to invest in the most advantageous projects and supports the development of a Heritage Tourism organization as a destination marketing organization for the Trent-Severn Waterway, which can serve as a vehicle for leveraging funding to support key planning and economic investments in communities in the Trent-Severn watersheds.

#### Encouraging the Development of Renewable Energy

The Government of Canada supports the development of renewable energy on the TSW and will seek to maximize the waterway's full potential through open and competitive processes.

Parks Canada will take steps to determine the overall potential for hydro development on the TSW, while respecting the needs of property owners, and the natural and cultural heritage of the Waterway. Parks Canada will create a strategic plan for the development of hydroelectric power generation on the Trent-Severn Waterway. Parks Canada will establish a dedicated, professional unit to lead hydroelectric development located in Peterborough.

The Government of Canada expects that all licensing agreements with hydro producers will reflect current requirements and contribute to the maintenance, repair and capital investment of the TSW. Parks Canada will assess the full potential for new hydro development projects, and will review existing agreements to ensure that all hydro projects will provide an appropriate return to the Federal Crown. Revenues earned from these new hydro development projects will be re-invested in the Trent-Severn Waterway system.

#### Protecting, Presenting, and Enjoying Our Cultural Heritage

The Government of Canada recognizes Trent-Severn Waterway's heritage values and is committed to the protection and presentation of the rich, diverse and unique cultural and natural resources in the Trent-Severn watersheds. Parks Canada will work with interested organizations to strengthen public awareness and access to this rich heritage resource.

Parks Canada will work with heritage organizations in the Trent-Severn watersheds to develop a Heritage Network. Public awareness, education and experiences would be important results.

Parks Canada would be supportive of formal recognition of the Trent-Severn watershed as a cultural landscape with the support of all stakeholders.

As part of an Agency-wide initiative, Parks Canada will realign its resources on the TSW to improve the ability to tell the Waterway story and engage visitors, students and residents, and all Canadians in understanding and appreciating this living history resource. Parks Canada is investing in social science capacity, which will position the Agency to better understand and respond to market demands and visitor expectations.

Government of Canada recognizes the need for safe navigation on the Trent-Severn Waterway and the appropriate distribution of navigation aids. Parks Canada has already replaced some of the navigation aids and will further consult stakeholders to ensure safe boating practices by means of additional devices.

#### **News Release associated with this Backgrounder.**

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