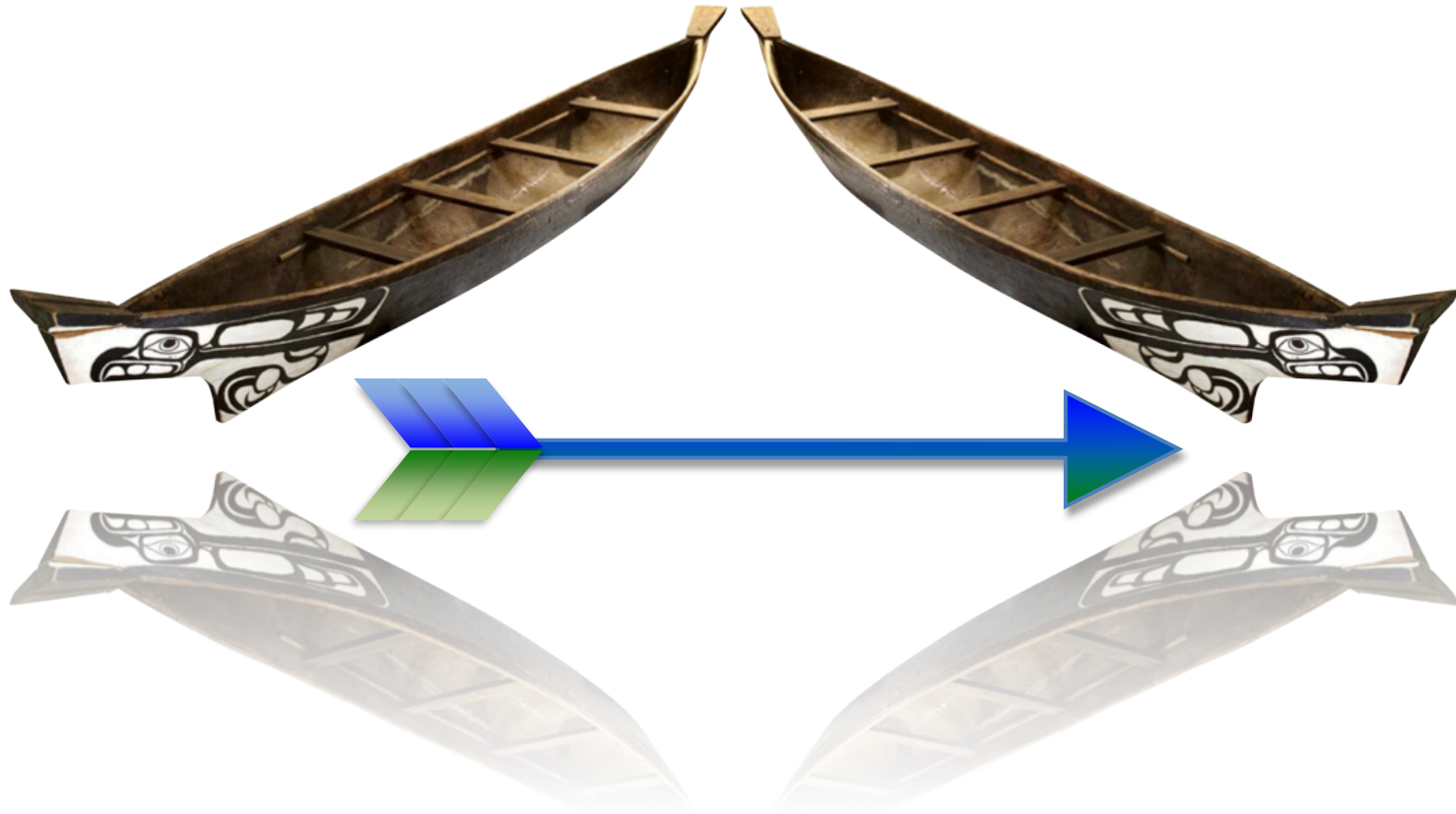


ONTO THE NATIONAL STAGE

Charting a Future Course for The Canadian Canoe Museum



A Strategic Plan 2010-2020

Post-Retreat Edition September 2010

Core Values of The Canadian Canoe Museum

- C** The CCM values first, **stewardship of its COLLECTION**—the craft, artifacts and research materials related to canoes, kayaks, and self-propelled water travel—striving to be known as the destination for “all things canoe” by celebrating documenting, preserving, handling and conserving the collection in ways befitting its uniqueness and value;
- A** The CCM values the **ABORIGINAL ROOTS and the natural origins of the collection**—celebrating where possible and appropriate the people and places, cultures and traditions, the faces and the stories, of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples from which the Canadian canoeing tradition has grown;
- N** The CCM values a **NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**, meaning commitment to connecting the collection and related activities (exhibits, research, education, outreach) to all Canadians in a context that honours the full historic continuum of builders, building traditions, and stories of self-propelled water craft from coast to coast to coast;
- O** The CCM values **ORGANIZATION**, as in nurturing of board, staff, volunteers, membership and the museum itself as a robust community, as well *organization*, as in being organized, meaning commitment to acting respectfully & responsibly, striving for excellence, order, and environmental sustainability in all things;
- E** The CCM values **collaborative EXPERIENCE**, meaning it seeks where possible and appropriate to avoid flat transmission of canoe-related knowledge, opting instead to create in its exhibits and programs a progression of hands-on experiences in which visitors can actively explore canoes and canoeing traditions.

Note: This document describes a process based on the assumption the museum as it is currently configured is about the right size. With this, it is assumed that as memberships, partnerships and affiliations grow across the country, the size and operating cost of the new physical plant and staff in Peterborough would not grow inordinately from where they are now (3500 m² of exhibits, library, archives; 5000 m² of storage, conservation, shops; increasing full time staff equivalents to, perhaps, 10 with a parallel increase in operating budget).

Introduction

The Canadian Canoe Museum, established in Peterborough, Ontario in 1997, is a unique national heritage centre that explores and communicates the canoe's enduring significance to the peoples of Canada. Built around a remarkable family of craft gathered by museum founder, Professor Kirk Wipper, the collection, which is the world's largest, now includes 600 canoes, kayaks and self-propelled boats that represent all of the major indigenous, non-indigenous and commercial building traditions of Canada. From behemoth west coast dugouts of the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest to the delicate and intriguing bark craft of the Beothuk of Newfoundland; north, to the skin-on-frame kayaks of northern peoples from Baffin Island in the east to the Mackenzie River Delta in the northwest; and including fine examples of all-wood and canvas-covered craft manufactured by the great canoe companies with names like Herald, Peterborough, Chestnut, Lakefield and Canadian—the museum's collection paints a singular portrait of Canada and holds within it an unsurpassed story of a nation and its three founding peoples.

The CCM Story

Over its fifty years of evolution, The Canadian Canoe Museum has a number of central narratives that have inspired people to get involved. The first of these, which took form in the late 1950s, was “join the collector,” museum founder Kirk Wipper, in amassing a representative collection of canoes. Through the 1960s and 70s, the story shifted to “building a home for the collection,” a log structure on property at Camp Kanadore near Minden, Ontario, which became the Kanawa International Canoe Museum. Wipper's friendship with anthropologist Alike Webber and other people intimately connected with aboriginal craft helped give the Kanawa organization credibility that went beyond one man's passion for canoes, which aided the cross-border acquisition of a significant collection of aboriginal craft from the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. In the 1980s, Wipper sold the camp and began looking for a new home for what was now a unique and very significant collection of canoes, kayaks and self-propelled watercraft.

The 1980s story was not quite “canoe collection as orphan” or “collection outgrows collectors ability to look after it” but it was a difficult time for Wipper and the Kanawa Museum. There were a number of false starts in various locations for creating a new museum, including Temagami, Haliburton, and Whitby, before a group in Peterborough finally convinced Wipper to move the collection to the Kawartha area. The purchase of the office and factory of the Outboard Marine Corporation on Monaghan Road enabled the Canadian Canoe Museum to be formed with the enticing call to volunteers and canoe enthusiasts to “help build a museum.” This narrative culminated in several “grand openings” as the facilities on Monaghan Road evolved from 1996-2001.

From 2002-2003, the “building” story continued. A team of architects, including Arthur Erickson, was engaged to design an elaborate outdoor water feature, outdoor learning space and birchbark-scroll inspired structure to link the Weston Centre (the main museum building on Monaghan Road) with the Collection Centre on the back of the museum property. Unfortunately, funding for this project collapsed just as the first phase of this development was put out to tender and, in October, 2003, the CCM board of directors opted to close the museum until May 2004, engaging the accounting firm of Kroll and Associates to consolidate its financial position and restructure the organization. The museum was quietly reopened in May 2004, but remained dogged by the story of closure.

By 2010, however, after significant staff turnover and years of conservative budgets, careful management, and concerted communication efforts, the “closure” story has slowly been eclipsed, through Herculean work by everyone involved—board, staff, volunteers, members, donors and friends. It has now been replaced by a much more hopeful narrative about a “national treasure” proudly housed in Peterborough, Ontario—the natural home of canoe manufacturing in North America. The challenge, at this juncture in its evolution, is for the CCM to craft a new story to take the organization forward.

That new story arises from the museum’s core values and previous strategic plans. The Canadian Canoe Museum’s core values frame the museum’s point of view and guide all aspects of organizational decision making relating to realizing the museum’s mission. However, as the organization has worked through the creation and refinement of several strategic plans over the last several years (*Charting Our Future, 2008-2018* and *Charting our Future, 2010-2020*) two priorities have risen above the rest. The first of these is **building a sustainable national organization**, meaning an organization with stable and predictable revenue streams from a variety of sources, including membership, partnerships, innovative programming and a proposed new endowment—an organization much less dependent on fundraising than it is at the moment to meet its annual operating budget. The second longer term priority has to do with building partnerships and procuring a site on the water in downtown Peterborough that will result, eventually, in the creation of a **new integrated facility on the water for the museum**.

These two main priorities are the essence of the CCM’s “new story.” Because “building a sustainable national organization” is about reaching out to Canadians across the country and because building a “new integrated facility on the water in Peterborough” is about creating a national focal point for canoeing in Canada the museum’s new story is all about the museum being strong, vibrant and national; hence, the museum’s new story is about moving onto the national stage.

The Next CCM Story—“Onto the National Stage”

To realize its full value and significance to the citizenry of Canada, it is essential that the Canadian Canoe Museum be acknowledged and recognized as a cultural institution of national significance perhaps, like Pier 21—Canada’s Immigration Museum or the Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg, becoming a national museum in its own right. In the meantime, “moving onto the national stage” means thinking nationally, using every means of communication, every strategy and every museological device to engage the hearts, minds and support of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Becoming a **sustainable national organization** will almost certainly challenge conventional notions of what a museum is, or what a museum could or should be. But that is exactly what the CCM should be doing through continued building of a fresh and strong suite of exhibits, workshops, school programs and special events at the museum itself but also through creative approaches to affiliation and membership, partnerships, travelling exhibits, outreach initiatives, fundraising and communication. In this sense, moving “onto the national stage” has to do with creating a rich and vibrant network of partners, friends and supporters across the country all of whom are linked through knowledge and affiliation to the collection and to the idea of a collectivity called the Canadian Canoe Museum. This first step in enacting the museum’s new story is critical to its long term success as an organization and, in many respects, can be achieved with existing facilities in Peterborough.

The second phase of this plan to move “onto the national stage” concerns the eventual creation of a facility in Peterborough that will physically connect the craft in the collection to the waterways of Canada. The existing facilities for exhibit and storage on Monaghan Road are less than ideal for the collection. This move will allow the museum to meet the environmental control standards of a Category A collecting institution (the current facilities do not and, without unrealistic infusion of cash, can not be brought to this standard), required for a facility of national scope and purview. This move will also allow expansion of facilities for virtual program and exhibit creation, and for managing increasingly complex communications as the museum’s membership and affiliation lists grow. The move will also create a physical context for much less static displays with higher turnover rates and higher possibilities for creating and hosting travelling exhibits in partnership with other museums across the country and around the world. Moving “onto the national stage” by creating this new facility in Peterborough would also allow the CCM to connect in a much more meaningful way to the Trent Severn Waterway, to the City of Peterborough (as a cultural hub in the central business district called for in Peterborough’s new Downtown Master Plan), as well as to provincial and national tourism marketing strategies as an exciting, new and ultra Canadian marquis or trophy attraction to draw people from across the country and around the world to a southern Ontario location that is not Toronto or Ottawa.

The Two-Row Approach

A “Two-Row” approach, inspired by the wampum belts of First Nations from whom the canoe originates, enables the two threads of this new story to be carried forward simultaneously, each inextricably linked to the other through a decade of CCM growth punctuated by the 400th Anniversary of Champlain’s Trent/Severn passage and by Canada’s Sesquicentennial in 2017. A plan to build a sustainable organization and to create a building a sustainable facility to house the dream, are both being actively pursued. The difference is in emphasis and resource allocation at different points on the ten year time scale. If all goes well, the Spring of 2020 would see a strong sustainable national organization opening a new facility on Little Lake that will draw locals, as well as people from afar in Canada and beyond, serving Canadians elsewhere via satellite exhibits, remote school programs, co-sponsored and co-curated projects and expeditions, web-based initiatives and other creative cultural partnerships in every corner of the land.

The beauty of the Two-Row Approach to Moving Onto the National Stage is that it clearly lays out two steps in one future vision. Neither of these steps is exclusive of the other but the plan’s construction acknowledges a ten year timeline, thereby justifying funds for building improvements to keep the existing facility going for another decade at the same time as it allows an emphasis to be placed on building a sustainable organization *first* before turning to the business of building a new and sustainable facility.

The Two-Row Plan



1st Priority—Building a Sustainable National Organization

Activity Coordinated by the Development Committee

2010—The first and most important step in the development of strong organization is to seek funding for the creation of a major gifts group within the Development Committee and a development/membership position inside the organization to steward the museum’s membership and donor lists and to coordinate activity in both of these critical realms of the organization. Also this year, we need renewed activity to keep museum programs fresh and vibrant, continued building of partnerships to increase distant awareness and connection to the museum, and retooling of the affiliation (membership, donation level) matrix.

2011—Launch of Cross Canada CCM Affiliation Drive through memberships and adopt-a-canoe programs and other organizational partnerships (with other museums, provincial canoeing organizations, clubs and organizations). This is also the year during which the formal CCM Sustainability Push is announced as part of the “National Stage” Campaign, perhaps with the announcement of lead gifts already in place that show public/private targets and matching funding targets which can work to build an operating cushion.

2012—Sustainability Push continues with special emphasis on municipal, regional, and federal contributions. In the event that one-time contributions cannot be secured, multi-year commitments to operating budget will be sought as equivalent contribution/s. Continued building of national partnerships. Toronto event to build relationships with existing and new major donors. Increased national representation on CCM Board of Directors.

2013—Constant renewal and celebration of programs and volunteer contributions to museum operations. Continued or renewed Affiliation Drive. Continued major donor relationship building. Endowment Campaign continues.

2014—Go public with new museum story line that includes the network of members, affiliates and partners across the country, possibly launched in off-site location hosting an outreach exhibit. Continued Affiliation Drive. Sustainability Push continues. Off site fundraiser this year—i.e. franchising of Beaver Club Gala?

2015—Champlain 400th Anniversary! The big marker for the museum in this anniversary year is to announce success in the Sustainability Push as the 1st Phase of the National Stage Campaign and to do so with strong participation as a full partner with Parks Canada, the City of Peterborough, Trent University and other municipal organizations to celebrate the long tradition of boating in the Trent Severn Waterway. The main message of this PR push is that the CCM is active and strong as an organization with connections across the country and a strong position in the Ontario tourism industry.

2016—With the successful conclusion of the Sustainability Push, and the profile brought to the area and to the museum by the Champlain Anniversary celebrations, this is where the organization and all its fundraising efforts shift to the 2nd Phase of the strategic plan—a capital building campaign to create a new home for the museum on the water in downtown Peterborough. Negotiations with feds re: National Museum status.

2017—Canada’s 150th Birthday! Ideally, two things would happen in this sesquicentennial year, the first being an announcement by the federal government of support for building a new facility on the water for the museum, the second being the announcement of another strong outreach initiative or two elsewhere in the country, linked to the museum but based in other Canadian cities or institutions in partnership with the CCM.

2018—As operations in Peterborough get increasingly focused on the capital campaign and the new facility, emphasis within the organization as a whole is elsewhere in the country on outreach. New and ambitious targets for National Canoe Day participation, unprecedented corporate buy-in. Television series about the canoe launched by media partner.

2019—Transitional year. National communication push and continued affiliation building and capital campaign.

2020—By now, as the new facility is opened on the water in Peterborough, the launch is hosted by a strong national organization that is now taking a distinctive leadership in the Canadian museum community. Some sort of on-going national status for the CCM is announced in partnership with the federal government.



2nd Phase—Building a New Facility

Activity Coordinated by the CCM 3.0 Committee

2010—With a firm 10-year planning horizon established by the evolution of the CCM strategic plan, and with the building a strong, sustainable organization predicated on making the very best of its current location, efforts are made to spend carefully on renewal of exhibits and interior design (i.e renovating the lobby into a dedicated exhibit space called the McLean/Matthews Gallery).

2011—The emphasis this year is on improving curb appeal. Outdoor façade refreshment (paint, super graphics), signage, parking lot improvements. On-water site negotiations and partnership building with the city and related organizations continues. Planning charettes and PD junkets organized re: form and function of future facility keep the long-term dream active and alive.

2012—Funding is sought for a new facility feasibility study. Five-Bay is opened to the public as part of the on-going renewal and development of existing facilities. Partnership with the City of Peterborough and Kawartha Tourism helps to fund the creation of an annotated canoe walking trail in downtown Peterborough. The idea of branding Peterborough as “Canoe City” is floated in conjunction with the walking trail project.

2013—Feasibility study spawns consultations with key partners regarding the dimensions of possible business opportunities that could arise in the new location (creation of performance/theatre space, retail environments, condominium development, waterfront dockage, café etc.) Continued negotiations re: new location—the sooner the site is secured and this announcement can be made the better.

2014—New location is secured. Move scenarios are explored. Peterborough branded as “Canoe City” and regional tourism buys into the creation of a new marquis attraction on the water in Peterborough.

2015—Champlain’s 400th Anniversary. This is a year of great collaborative celebration with the CCM joining in with the City, the County and municipalities up and down the Trent Severn Watershed along with other organizations in the tourism and accommodation sector, organizations in the cultural sector and Parks Canada to mark this occasion. The museum’s unique take on the anniversary harkens back to the basis of equality and mutual respect for Native and non-Native world views inherent in Champlain’s relationship with First Nations.

2016—New site is secured (if that hasn’t happened by now). Work begins on creating a new story and exhibit plan for the museum. In-house design team PD junkets to boat (and other) museums to prime the design pump. Calls are made for architectural concepts for the new facility.

2017—Canada’s Sequicentennial! The federal government announces its intention to support the creation of a new facility for the CCM as a 150th birthday present to the people of Canada. Architectural concepts are unveiled at a ground-breaking ceremony that formally marks the museum’s intention to move. Major summer regatta on Little Lake, hosted by the museum, marks the joy that comes from the prospect of putting a boat museum on the water!

2018—Site development and building begins. Museum programs and exhibit development processes continue apace in the existing site, perhaps with communication emphasis on outreach and activities within the organization on a national scale. On the water activity on Little Lake sponsored by the CCM continues. The downtown presence continues to build.

2019—A year of transition. Programs and exhibits are moved to the new facility in stages.

2020—June 26th—Grand Opening of the new Canadian Canoe Museum on Little Lake on National Canoe Day.





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