



NOV 30 2015

Dr. Mechtild Rössler
Director
World Heritage Centre
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
France

**Subject: State of Conservation, Gros Morne National Park
Decision 38 COM 7B.74**Dear

Dear Dr. Rössler:

Mechtild
In response to the World Heritage Committee decision 38 COM 7B.74 with respect to Gros Morne National Park, please find attached a report on the state of conservation of this World Heritage site. I would also like to confirm that this report can be made available to the public through the State of Conservation Information System, as requested by the World Heritage Centre.

I look forward to receiving your confirmation that the report has been received in accordance with the December 1, 2015 deadline.

Yours sincerely,

George Green
George Green
Vice President
Heritage Conservation and Commemoration Directorate
and
Head of Canadian Delegation to the World Heritage Committee.

Attach.

cc H.E. Éline Ayotte, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO
Nicholas Dimic, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO
Secretary-General, Canadian Commission for UNESCO

**Édouard Huot, Policy Advisor, United Nations Division, Department of Foreign
Affairs, Trade and Development Canada**

Carol Sheedy, Vice President, Operations Eastern Canada, Parks Canada Agency

**Geoff Hancock, Field Unit Superintendent, Western Newfoundland and Labrador
Field Unit**

State of Conservation Report - December 1, 2015**Gros Morne National Park (Canada) (419)****1. Executive Summary of the report**

As per the World Heritage Committee decision (38 COM 7B.74), Parks Canada has prepared a state of conservation report for the aforementioned property. The report provides a paragraph by paragraph response to the World Heritage Committee decision.

Response to decision paragraph 5: As of the submission of this report to the World Heritage Centre (December 1, 2015), there is no possibility of onshore and onshore-based petroleum exploration using hydraulic fracturing in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, including where Gros Morne National Park (the Site) is located. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) has an active commitment to “not accept applications for onshore and onshore to offshore based petroleum exploration using hydraulic fracturing before a full review of the process is completed and guidelines are in place”. The Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel is presently at the stage of summarizing information obtained through public consultation sessions and other face-to-face meetings with stakeholders and is expected to release its report in February 2016. Therefore, it is premature to invite a World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the Site at this time. Canada will provide the Panel’s report, along with a status update, to the World Heritage Centre once it becomes available. Canada will also provide to the World Heritage Centre the response of the GNL when it becomes available. Additional information is available at: <http://nlhfrp.ca>.

Response to decision paragraph 6: The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board’s (CNLOPB) *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* for the western portion of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore area has been completed and is published on the CNLOPB website at <http://www.cnlopb.ca/sea/western.php>. Parks Canada manages the Gros Morne National Park and contributed to the SEA. The SEA clearly identifies Gros Morne National Park and the features contributing to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The SEA also identifies environmental protection measures and procedures for the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Area and indicates that their implementation would also serve to help address any associated effects on adjacent protected areas, including Gros Morne National Park. The SEA further indicates that additional mitigation measures aimed at reducing the possible adverse effects on protected areas would be determined during project-specific environmental assessment and regulatory approval processes. Moreover, the SEA highlights potential cumulative environmental effects resulting from multiple stressors affecting Gros Morne National Park. The CNLOPB would consider these factors in the planning and decision-making regarding any future offshore oil and gas proposals in the region. At present, there are no CNLOPB petroleum licences in the portion of the offshore area adjacent to Gros Morne National Park and the CNLOPB has no plans to initiate any process to issue licences in that portion of the offshore area.

Response to decision paragraph 7: Canada takes note of the World Heritage Committee’s request that a buffer zone around the Gros Morne National Park be established to enhance the effective protection of the property. Existing federal and provincial legislation and regulations have ensured the protection of Gros Morne National Park’s OUV since it was inscribed in 1987. In response to decision 38 COM 7B.74 paragraph 7, Parks Canada, as the Site manager, held meetings with Departments of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, which have jurisdiction over land areas within the province that are adjacent to the property. Officials concluded that the current suite of legislation and regulations provides a sufficient and effective framework to ensure the protection of the Site over the long term.

Further, the Departments committed to continued collaboration to ensure the enduring protection of Gros Morne National Park, and to reassess the effectiveness of the framework, as required. Discussions will be held, inter alia, once the report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Hydraulic Fracturing Review Panel becomes available.

Further, to encourage a culture of conservation, Parks Canada will continue to consult with communities, adjacent land managers and other interested stakeholders to identify and address potential concerns that may impact Gros Morne National Park's OUV.

The World Heritage Centre is authorized by Canada to upload this report for public access.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

This report is an update to the report provided to the World Heritage Centre by Parks Canada on January 31, 2014 and is a response to the decision 38 COM 7B.74 adopted by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at its 38th session, June 2014.

WHC Decision Paragraph 5: "The World Heritage Committee, ... Reiterates its request to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre / IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the property, if the moratorium on acceptance of applications for petroleum exploration in the vicinity of the Site is discontinued without putting in place other appropriate measures for maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property"

As reported previously, the Minister of Natural Resources for the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (GNL) established an independent review panel (the Panel) in 2014, to conduct a public review of the socio-economic and environmental implications of hydraulic fracturing in Western Newfoundland. The mandate of the Panel is to make recommendations on whether or not hydraulic fracturing should be undertaken in Western Newfoundland. Under Canada's Constitution, provinces have jurisdiction over the natural resources within their province.

The Terms of Reference for the Panel were issued by the Minister of Natural Resources, GNL, in consultation with the provincial Department of Environment and Conservation and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (CNLOPB). The Terms of Reference, along with research completed during the Provincial Government's internal review are available on the review Panel's website: <http://nlhfrp.ca/terms-of-reference/>.

To date, the Panel has:

- Received in excess of 600 submissions from the public which have been posted to the website.
- Contracted an external organization to undertake a province wide public opinion survey which resulted in over 800 Newfoundland & Labrador residents participating in a detailed survey regarding Hydraulic Fracturing. Results of the survey have been posted on the website and can be found at: <http://nlhfrp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MQO-Fracking-Report.pdf>.
- Worked with key stakeholders in Western Newfoundland to determine the most appropriate locations and timing for the public consultation sessions.
- In addition to the public consultation sessions, a number of groups and individuals have requested to meet the Panel in face-to-face to meetings. The Panel will be holding eight face-to-face groups meetings in response to these requests.

Although a report from the Panel was initially scheduled to be released by October 2015, the Panel is now expected to publicly release its report and recommendations in February 2016. The commitment from the GNL to “not accept applications for onshore and onshore to offshore petroleum exploration using hydraulic fracturing before a full review of the process is completed and guidelines are in place”, remains in effect.

Canada will provide the Panel’s report, along with a status update, to the World Heritage Centre once it becomes available. Canada will also provide to the World Heritage Centre the response of the GNL when it becomes available.

Given that a moratorium on applications for onshore and onshore-based petroleum exploration using hydraulic fracturing is in place and that there are no active offshore licences in areas adjacent to the Gros Morne National Park, it is premature to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN reactive monitoring mission to the Site at this time.

WHC Decision Paragraph 6: “The World Heritage Committee, ... Requests the State Party to complete the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process, to review the potential impacts on the OUV of the Site and to submit a copy of the SEA to the World Heritage Centre, prior to making any decisions that would be difficult to reverse, in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines”.

The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board’s (CNLOPB) *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)* for the western portion of the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore area has been completed and is published on the CNLOPB website at: <http://www.cnlopb.ca/sea/western.php>.

The environmental setting section of the SEA identifies Gros Morne National Park as a protected area and a World Heritage Site inscribed for its “exceptional natural beauty and outstanding examples of major stages in the earth’s geological evolution” (SEA page 286 and Table 4.89), corresponding to criteria vii and viii.

The SEA examined the regional environment in the context of potential oil industry activities and provides a foundation for program planning and informing future decisions. It provides an overview of the natural environment (e.g. protected areas, species) and socio-economic environment; and identifies mitigation measures which may be applied to offshore oil and gas activities to avoid or limit their effects on these environments.

Parks Canada contributed to the SEA, which clearly identifies Gros Morne National Park and features contributing to its OUV. The SEA identifies environmental protection measures and procedures for the offshore area and indicates that their implementation would also serve to help address any associated effects on adjacent protected areas, including Gros Morne National Park. The SEA further indicates that additional mitigation measures aimed at reducing the possible adverse effects on protected areas would be determined during project-specific environmental assessment and regulatory approval processes, as required. Moreover, potential cumulative environmental effects resulting from multiple stressors affecting Gros Morne National Park and other protected areas within the scope of this SEA, are highlighted for consideration in the planning and decision-making by the CNLOPB regarding any future offshore oil and gas proposals in the region. In compliance with paragraph 6 of the World Heritage Committee decision, no decisions were made that would be difficult to reverse. At present, there are no CNLOPB petroleum licences in the portion of the offshore area adjacent to Gros Morne National Park

and the CNLOPB has no plans to initiate any process to issue licences in that portion of the offshore area.

Working with other federal and provincial authorities, Parks Canada will ensure that the protection of the OUV of Gros Morne National Park is paramount when consulted on any relevant project proposals through the established environmental assessment processes.

WHC Decision Paragraph 7: "The World Heritage Committee, ... Encourages the State Party to establish a buffer zone to enhance the effective protection of the property".

The State Party has taken note of the World Heritage Committee's request a buffer zone be established to enhance the effective protection of the property, as well as of paragraph 104 of *the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, which defines the purpose of a buffer zone.

Canada has robust environmental assessment, planning and permitting processes at the federal and provincial levels, and consistently utilizes these processes to protect the OUV of Gros Morne National Park.

While developmental pressures external to the Gros Morne National Park boundary include potential onshore and onshore-based developments, Parks Canada monitors the progress of these, as well as any other potential external developments, and provides input into all formal regulatory consultation processes regarding potential development, with a view to protecting the Property's OUV and ecological integrity, as well as its visitor experience opportunities.

Through the implementation of existing federal, provincial and municipal legislation, regulations and policies, and by working with the provincial government and stakeholders, Parks Canada along with other federal agencies and the PNL have successfully maintained and protected the OUV of Gros Morne National Park since it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987.

Further, to encourage a culture of conservation, Parks Canada will continue to consult with communities, adjacent land managers and other interested stakeholders to identify and address any potential concerns that may impact Gros Morne National Park's OUV in processes such as management planning for the Site.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

N/A

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

N/A

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

Canada authorizes the World Heritage Centre to publicly release this report.

6. Signature of the Authority



George Green
Vice President
Heritage Conservation and Commemoration Directorate
and
Head of Canadian Delegation to the World Heritage Committee