

**Report on the State of Conservation of  
Rideau Canal World Heritage Site  
(Canada)**

**Property ID 1221**

**In response to:**

**Reference: Letter CLT/WHC/ENA/24/14720, dated 11 June 2024**



*Ottawa Locks, Rideau Canal World Heritage Site*

## Section 1: Executive Summary

The Rideau Canal, Fort Henry and the Kingston Fortifications National Historic Sites of Canada were inscribed ensemble as the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site as a masterpiece of human creative genius, in recognition of its concept, design and engineering work as a slackwater canal system; and as an outstanding example of a technological ensemble which illustrates a significant stage in human history – the fight for the north of the American continent.

Two hundred and two kilometres in length, the Rideau Canal passes through 13 municipalities within the Province of Ontario. There is a 30m buffer zone along the slackwater sections of the canal, which corresponds with the 30m minimum development setback from the water permitted in each of the 13 municipalities along the waterway. Land use planning and development matters on land beyond the federally-administered property are under the jurisdiction of the relevant local municipal authority and are subject to multijurisdictional protection measures.

Since the site's inscription on the World Heritage List in 2007, Canada has provided information to the World Heritage Centre regarding a variety of projects located within the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site, or within its broader setting, as a part of Paragraph 172 or periodic reporting, and in response to third-party correspondence. As requested, this State of Conservation Report provides updates on a number of projects that have the potential to impact the site's visual values and summarizes efforts to ensure these potential impacts are mitigated. Information is also provided on the measures in place - or in progress - to ensure both the visual setting and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site are protected from cumulative impacts resulting from threats such as urban development and climate change. Finally, the latter portion of the report provides an overview of projects being undertaken within the World Heritage Site, projects aimed at conserving the physical components that contribute directly to the site's OUV.

Thanks to the measures outlined in this report, including rigorous impact assessment processes; legislation, policies and approval processes at the appropriate jurisdictional level; and strong working relationships with partners and stakeholders, it is Canada's contention that the OUV of Rideau Canal World Heritage Site is well-protected, and that there are currently no proposed projects that pose a threat to the OUV of the site. Work is also ongoing to ensure values associated with the site's visual setting are protected, as per the recommendation in the Committee Decision to inscribe the property (Decision 31 COM 8B.35). This work, which includes two landscape studies along the canal that will contribute to a shared understanding of the values of the visual setting of the site, is outlined in the report and represents an important step leading to enhanced measures to ensure their protection.

It should be noted, however, that Parks Canada's involvement in these landscape studies and in the review processes for projects adjacent to Rideau Canal World Heritage Site is not solely about protecting the site's OUV or visual values but rather reflects Parks Canada's role as the federal lead for cultural heritage places conservation in Canada. In this capacity, Parks Canada works with partners to ensure the myriad of heritage values present within the broader setting of the World Heritage Site are considered in development review processes and land-use planning exercises.