INTERPRETIVE PLAN

MAHONE BAY MUSEUM

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1. Introduction

Heritage interpretation is any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to the public, through first-hand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape or site. (Interpretation Canada, 1976)

The interpretive plan is divided into eleven sections. These sections describe the current state of the museum's exhibits and programs, as well as strategies and recommendations to update and improve these areas. The interpretive plan will ensure that the museum has clearly defined interpretive themes. The plan will identify a variety of interpretive techniques and act as a guide to ensure that the site offers visitors and local audiences an interpretive experience that meets their needs and interests. The plan will also identify the responsibilities of the curator and exhibits committee in relation to exhibits through an updated *Exhibits and Interpretation Policy*. The appendices contain resources and information that can help the museum reach its interpretive goals. Implementing the plan overtime will help to increase long-term community engagement and a sustainable future for the museum.

1.1. About the Museum

The Mahone Bay Founders Society first establish the Settlers Museum was in 1979. At that time, the museum was open seasonally and housed in Pioneer Hall in the basement of Trinity United Church. In 1986, the Nova Scotia Museum purchased ceramics and antique furniture from the Inglis-Quinlan family. Motivated by the desire to keep the Inglis-Quinlan collection in the area, the Founders Society purchased the Begin Home in 1987 to act as the permanent site for the museum. The Inglis-Quinlan collection is on long-term loan to the museum and forms the bulk of the museum's collection. Since its establishment, the museum has continued to collect artifacts and archival sources with relevance to Mahone Bay and area. Each year, the museum participates in the many community festivals and provides programming for local residents and visitors. The museum has a variety of permanent and temporary exhibits that interpret the many stories of the local community. The museum is run by a Board of Directors that makes up the Mahone Bay Founders Society and is partially funded by the department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage through the Community Museum Assistance Program. The museum is able to operate thanks to generous donations of time and capital from its membership, friends, volunteers, and the Town of Mahone Bay.

1.1.1. Vision

The Mahone Bay Museum will inspire interest in local history and heritage preservation and instill a life-long love of museums.

1.1.2. Mission

The Mahone Bay Museum serves and engages residents and visitors through the preservation, interpretation, and celebration of our local history and culture.

1.1.3 Values

Encouraging curiosity
Developing expertise in staff and volunteers
Adhering to current museum standards and best practices
Providing access to collections
Communicating effectively
Being fiscally responsible and viable in the long term
Striving to be inclusive
Educating youth and families through children's programming
Creating partnerships with community organizations and local schools

1.1.4 Mandate

- To carry out research that is project, exhibit, and community based.
- To maintain and improve our museum facility, a municipally registered heritage property.
- To preserve:
  - Artifacts
    - Mahone Bay Museum collection;
    - Short and long term loans of exhibits, artifacts, and other materials
  - Archival collections
- To undertake interpretation, education, and programming activities:
  - Telling the story of our collections and our area through exhibits and programming.
  - Supporting our community in its heritage endeavours
    - Assisting with the development of policy;
    - Providing information about heritage resources and programs, including built heritage;
  - Supporting our youth through in-house educational programming and outreach programs.
  - Engaging in advocacy.
  - Developing appropriate professional and volunteer resources.
- To generate revenue to support our activities and operations.

1.2. Project Background

The museum's Board of Directors has worked towards developing an interpretive plan for several years. In 2008, the Board began strategic development planning and identified the need for an interpretive plan. The interpretive plan is needed to fulfil the museum's mandate to undertake interpretation, education, and programming activities.

In 2011, the board hired consultants, Sally Warren and Barbara Richman, to complete research for a community engagement project. Community members were interviewed to determine their perceptions of and attitudes towards the museum. Participants were asked to identify the

museum's strengths and challenges and how the museum could improve. Through this survey, local residents expressed the museum's perceived importance within the community but they also explained that they viewed the museum as being primarily for tourists. The findings from this research identified the need for greater appeal to local residents. These findings were used to guide further research for the 2014-15 interpretive plan project.

The museum began transforming its interpretive approach in 2014 with the formation of an exhibits committee. In the past, exhibits were researched by summer students, volunteers, board members, the volunteer curator, and the museum manager at the beginning of each operating season. Exhibit topics were selected based on the museum's collections, major community milestones, and suggestions by the volunteer curator. The exhibits committee held their first meeting in August 2014 to discuss and select exhibit subjects and begin planning exhibits for the 2015 operating season.

In the spring of 2014, the museum applied for a Strategic Development Initiative grant from the Nova Scotia government's Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Through the use of these funds, the Founders Society hired a museum professional to act as Project Manager.

1.3. Project Goals
The success of the interpretive plan will be measured by the achievement of the plan's stated goals.

The interpretive plan has the following goals:

1. Support the development of procedures and policies for exhibits, interpretation, and programming to ensure the museum is adhering to current museum standards and best practices.
2. Refine the museum's interpretive themes to represent a diverse and well-rounded story of the local community from the past to the present.
3. Support the development of well researched, and accurate exhibits that tell a unified story with clearly identified main messages and learning objectives.
4. Support the development of new audiences for our exhibits and programming.
5. Increase visitation, involvement, and collaboration with local residents and groups.
6. Support the development of children's programming that appeals to cross-generational audiences.
7. Strengthen partnerships with local schools and educators through the development of school programs with curriculum connections.
8. Strengthen the museum's reputation as a heritage resource for local and visiting researchers through increased access to the museum's archival records.
9. Encourage visitor engagement through the development of interactive exhibits.

2. Site Self-Analysis

Conducting a site self-analysis allows the museum to identify any discrepancies between its current state and its project goals. Once these discrepancies have been identified, the interpretive plan will establish strategic steps for implementing improvements.

2.1. Resource Inventory

Conducting a resource inventory allows for an assessment of the museum's resources. It identifies the museum's areas of strength and areas that require further development.

2.1.1. Collections

The majority of the museum's artifact collection consists of the Inglis-Quinlan collection that is formally owned by the Nova Scotia Museum. The Inglis-Quinlan collection is largely comprised of ceramics that were collected by former Mahone Bay resident, Percy Inglis. His collection was bequeathed to his niece Clara Inglis and a selection of the pieces were purchased by Nova Scotia Museum. This collection also contains pieces of antique furniture.

The museum's artifact collection consist of a variety of objects with relevance to Mahone Bay and area. These objects include shipbuilding tools, half-models, textiles, household items, and ceramics.

The museum also has a large photograph collection that contains early images of Mahone Bay and area. These include photographs of architecture, events, people, and local shipyards. The archival collection also includes records from Mader's Wharf, as well as written documents from the Inglis-Quinlan family. The archival collection contains an electronic database of approximately 200 heritage properties with photos and ownership histories until 1993. Hard copies of entries from this database are also available.

2.1.2. Visitor Services and Access Features

Visitor Services

- Public washroom
- Small retail area with books, art, and other items for purchase
- Interpreters
- Free walking tour brochures of heritage properties

Access Features

- Wheelchair ramp
- Two entrances/exits on first floor
- Exit on second floor
- Parking lot with 6 parking spaces
- Signage
    - Sign and announcement board in front of museum
    - Sign when entering town from Blockhouse and after exit 10

    o Provincial blue key signs

2.1.3. Methods of Interpretation

The museum uses the following methods of interpretation:

Exhibits
* Children's discovery areas
* Historic room settings
* Labels
* Layered information (labels, binders, brochures)
* Maps/graphics/photographs
* Dioramas

Programs
* Special events
* Talks

Personal Interpretation
* Guided tours

Extension
* Publications/newsletter
* Web-site, Facebook, Twitter

2.1.4. Staff

The museum is overseen by a Board of Directors who make up the Mahone Bay Founders Society. The museum is staffed by a seasonal manager/curator and three to four summer students whose wages are funded by federal and provincial grants. The museum also employs a bookkeeper on a stipend each year. All other activities are carried out by the Board of Directors and other volunteers. The museum board consists of a maximum of 12 members. Board members chair various committees for the museum. These committees are: Acquisitions; Building and Maintenance; Communications; Education and Outreach; Finance; Human Resources; Membership and Volunteers; Retail; Ways and Means. In addition to the committees, board members are also responsible for fulfilling the duties of Board of Directors Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

2.1.5. Audiences

The museum has several audiences with distinct interests and needs. There is a large visitor market that consists of tourists visiting the area from May to October. These visitors are interested in a recreational experience and would also like to learn more about the area and its history. Some of these visitors are also engaging in ancestral tourism and may have familial connections to the area. These visitors are interested in conducting genealogical research and learning more about their family history and connection to the area.

Another museum audience consists of local residents who look to the museum as a source of historic information, entertainment, and a steward of local heritage. These visitors value the promotion of local history through exhibits and events. Some local residents also engage in historic and genealogical research and value access to the museum's archival materials.

The museum also serves families with children. These families can be local residents and vacationers. Families visit the museum to learn about local history and participate in interactive activities. They are looking for affordable and educational activities for their children.

2.1.6. Community Partnerships
The museum partners with a number of community groups and organizations.

These include:
* Bayview Community School
* Cemetery Commission
* Garden Club
* Heritage Advisory Committee
* Local businesses
* Local experts
* Local researchers
* Mahone Bay Area Chamber of Commerce
* Mahone Bay Centre
* Mahone Island Conservation Association
* Royal Canadian Legion
* South Shore Genealogical Society
* Visitor Information Centre

2.2. Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities
Through the museum's community engagement initiative in 2011, and community discussions in January 2015, the museum was able to identify the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities

o Free Admission
o Dedicated volunteers
o Collections and local stories
o Exhibit and program efforts
o Location
o Leadership
o Heritage Fair project displays
	Building
	o Site
	  • Curb Appeal
	  • Access
	o Facility
	  • Space
	  • Access
	  • Upkeep
	  • Technology
	Connection/Engagement
	o Community
		Exhibits and programs
		o Special Projects showing the evolution of place, industry or activity
		  • Ship building
		  • Power
		  • Plastics factory
		  • Green living
		o Oral histories
		  • Connect to Special Projects

- Willing to do school service on demand - Conducted community engagement project - Offers offsite activities - Local talents to draw on for expertise - Research resources available for public use - A place to meet and socialize	- Founding Families - Newer Residents - Seniors - Youth - Attracting new volunteers and members - Strengthen partnerships with local groups - Limited visitations by local residents - Tourists - Variety of ages - Variety of interests Interpretation (exhibits and programs) - Appeal to broad population - Increased use of technology - Catch it before it disappears - Tell more diverse stories - Research and build archives - More interactive - Small window for hosting school programs Funding (needs) - Physical plant - Staff - Exhibits and Programs Marketing - Members - Local Community - Tourists - Gain exposure Limited access to research materials	- High school students to gather - Curriculum linked school programs - Linking past and present - Inclusive of new demographic - Present the history - Explore the present and the links Integrating New Technology - Video - Smart Phone - Databases - Website Connecting to the Community - Sourcing Volunteers for Special Projects - Connecting to the School Curriculum - Involving local businesses/artists, etc. in Special Projects - Connecting to the Seniors Project - Connecting even more to the Mahone Bay Centre Connecting to Visitors - Big tourist influx - Possible donations - International connections Marketing and Communication - Strengthening the web presence - Using VIC and other groups to promote and distribute information - More communication to the general community - New node Building - Curb appeal - More gardens closer to the street

		· Large artifact or mannequin
		· Paint a brighter colour
		· Better Signage
		· Promote accessible entry
		Generating New Revenue
		o Foundation funding for projects
		o Individual funding for projects
		o Corporate funding for projects
		o Possible tax levy for operations

2.3. Recommendations

The museum is housed within the Begin Home, a municipally registered heritage property. Unlike many museums housed in heritage properties, the primary interpretive focus is not the story of the Begin family and their home. The home's kitchen and parlour display historic room settings. These rooms contain various furnishings, many of which are from the Inglis-Quinlan home. As the museum has moved towards an exhibits-based interpretive style, exhibits have been placed around and in some cases on top of the furnishings in the historic room settings. In order to ensure that our interpretive goals are focused, the furnishings in these room must contribute to the overall story of the exhibit. The two types of interpretive methods could be blended through the use of labels and interpretive panels but other exhibits should not be placed on top of the historic room settings. We must clearly identify exhibit goals and messages in the exhibit planning and development stage if we hope to achieve a clear interpretive message.

Based on the feedback received during the community discussions of January 2015, there is considerable interest in the history of shipbuilding among local residents. Participants also expressed their belief that the museum's archival collections should be more accessible. In addition, participants maintained that school and children's programming were essential to the long-term success of the museum. Providing this programming will increase community engagement and also ensure that the museum is fulfilling its educational goals identified in its mandate.

In order to increase the museum's focus on shipbuilding, the shipbuilding exhibit should be relocated from the second floor sail loft to the kitchen room on the first floor. The sail loft should then be transformed into a multi-purpose room that contains the museum's small reference library and a table with a desktop work station for visitor use. Creating a space for visitors to explore our reference library, and archival sources is essential if the museum hopes to establish itself as a valuable resource for researchers. The multi-purpose room can also be used to host and facilitate school programming. Without such a space, there is little room in the museum to host school groups. This space can also be used for the preparation of exhibit materials which should not be prepared near exhibits or artifacts.

Increasing access to the museum's archival collection can help attract a larger audience of local and visiting researchers. There are many records that have been processed and can be viewed by research. However, there are many photographs and documents that have yet to be properly processed into the museum's archival collection. These photographs and documents must be properly catalogued and described. In addition to increasing access to records on site, the museum should also begin to digitize its photograph collection using the Council of Nova Scotia Archives' website MemoryNS. This project may qualify for funding through the Provincial Archival Development Program (PADP) and a funding application was completed and submitted in April, 2015.

The following sections contain further recommendations and strategies for interpretive renewal. These actions are meant to hone the museum's interpretive focus and ensure that the museum's exhibits and programs are working towards clearly defined goals and objectives.

2.4. Evaluation

The interpretive plan will be implemented gradually over a period of several years. Throughout this implementation process, the plan's progress must be periodically evaluated. Evaluation will take the form of surveys, feedback forms, and further community consultations. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the interpretive plan should be consulted to ensure that the plans for the up-coming season correspond with the goals of the interpretive plan.

3. Vision Statement for Interpretation

The vision statement for interpretation identifies the museum's interpretive goals and objectives. The statement is meant to convey the site's "best case" for interpretation and acts as a guide when developing exhibits and programs.

The Mahone Bay Museum will:

- Offer thoroughly researched exhibits that demonstrate the museum's expertise in local history and heritage preservation.
- Offer participatory and memorable exhibits that educate and engage our local community and our visitors.
- Act as a resource to local schools and offer educational programs with curriculum connections on-site and with outreach programs.
- Display objects from our collection in permanent and temporary exhibits on a rotating basis to ensure that the public has access to a wide variety of artifacts.
- Provide visitors with access to the archival collection to further genealogical and local history research.
- Provide training to our staff and volunteers to ensure that our interpreters are knowledgeable and help to create memorable and educational museum experiences.

4. Audience

As identified in the resource inventory, the museum has several audiences with different needs and interests. The two main audiences can be categorized as local residents and visitors. The museum receives many visitors each year who are touring the area. These visitors attend the museum in large numbers throughout the operating season. However, the museum has remarked that local residents do not attend the museum regularly with the exception of exhibit receptions and other special events. The museum would like to strengthen community engagement through exhibits and programs that speak to the interests of our local residents. Throughout the following sections there are recommendations meant to increase local resident's involvement with the museum. This involvement will go beyond regular visitation with the goal of offering programs and events that strengthen community ties with the museum and inspire an interest in local history and heritage preservation. When implementing the interpretive plan, it is essential to keep the needs and interests of these two audiences in mind. The museum hopes to increase involvement of local residents while continuing to offer a memorable museum experience to visitors touring the town and area.

5. Interpretive Themes

Before the museum can rejuvenate its exhibits and interpretation, it must first determine what themes, topics, and subtopics it is interpreting. The museum's current areas of interpretive focus require further development to establish an interpretive framework that forms a diverse and well-rounded picture of the community's stories from the past to present day.

5.1. Current Interpretive Themes

The museum's interpretive focus has gradually evolved over time. The museum's current location, the Begin Home, was purchased to store and exhibit the ceramics and antique furniture collected by Percy Inglis and purchased by the Nova Scotia Museum in 1986. Each year there is an exhibit featuring ceramics from the Inglis-Quinlan collection. The museum also has a permanent exhibit displaying the story of the settlement by the Foreign Protestants in 1754. The third permanent exhibit, located in the second floor sail loft, tells the story of shipbuilding in Mahone Bay and features shipbuilding tools and dioramas depicting historic shipbuilding scenes. The permanent shipbuilding exhibit is a newer focus for the museum and has gained popularity in recent years.

The museum currently has the following five areas of interpretive focus:

1. Built Heritage
2. Settlers/settlements and ancestry
3. Shipbuilding, sailmaking- History and Industry
4. Crafts and Design
5. Personalities and Stories

In their current state, these areas of focus are not fully representative of the community and its history. Expanding, refining, and categorising these areas of focus into themes, topics, and subtopics will help the museum to interpret a more well-rounded community narrative.

5.2. Proposed Interpretive Themes

In order to determine what themes, topics, and subtopics met the needs and interests of the local community, the museum held three community consultation sessions in January, 2015. For a description of the consultations format and a summary of the participants responses, see *Community Discussions Summary*. Discussion participants were asked what stories and subjects they thought were most important when considering the history of Mahone Bay and area. The community consultation helped the museum to determine which stories and subjects were perceived as most relevant and valuable to community members. They also helped to strengthen the community's interest and engagement with the museum by creating an open-dialogue in which local residents' views and opinions were communicated and documented. The following table represents the proposed interpretive themes for the Mahone Bay Museum. These themes, topics, and subtopics have been determined by consulting the local community, the museum's Board of Directors, the Nova Scotia Museum's *Interpretive Master Plan*, and the museum's 2011 Strategic Development Initiative.

Museum's main theme: Mahone Bay and area has a unique history that was shaped by the people living here, their activities, and the landscape around them.

	Theme	Topics	Subtopics
1.	Mahone Bay and area is/was home to diverse groups of people who settled and lived in the area throughout various periods of time.	- Pre-1754 History - First Nations Settlement - Migration - Genealogy	- First Nations - First Nations/European Contact - French Settlement - Foreign Protestants - Myth/Reality of Settlement - Family Stories - Family Names
2.	Mahone Bay and area is/was home to many industries and commercial ventures that have evolved over time.	- Industry	- Manufacturing - Sailmaking - Shipbuilding - Tourism
		- Resource Development	- Agriculture - Forestry - Mills
		- Commerce	- Illegal commerce - Local businesses
		- Environmental Values	- Environmental Impact (then and now)

3.	The people of Mahone Bay and area express themselves through a wide variety of cultural and social activities.	- Community Life	- Food - Gender roles - Life at home - Life at work
		- Recreation	- Boat racing - Leisure Activities - Sports
		- Cultural Expression	- Architecture/built heritage - Art - Clothing and costume - Festivals and celebrations - Gardens - Heritage Preservation - Music
		- Organizations	- Clubs - Fraternal Organizations - Philanthropy
4.	The physical landscape of Mahone Bay and area is characterized by many features that are unique to coastal environments.	- Natural History - Landscapes - Climate - Ocean Environment	- Bays and Harbours - Rivers - The Islands - Weather
5.	Mahone Bay and area is/was home to various defined groups that have/had distinct relationships and interactions with one another.	- Education	- Schools
		- Religion and Spirituality	- Churches - The Three Churches - Religious diversity - First Nations spirituality
		- Social Equality	- Class - Gender - Social Conflict
		- Governance and Politics	- Confederation - Women's Rights
		- War and defense	- Conflicts between empires - Conflicts with First Nations peoples - Mahone Bay and area during wartimes - Privateering

6. Interpretive Methods and Media

The interpretive themes determine which stories the museum is telling. The next step is to determine which interpretive methods and media are used to give life to these stories.

When planning exhibits it is important to ask: What is the most effective way to tell these stories to our audiences? There are many different types of exhibit media. These include interpretive panels and labels, images, computer interactives, videos, audio clips, interpreters, and many varieties of interactive features. The different types of exhibit media have their own strengths and weakness. Visitors are unlikely to read interpretive panels that feature lengthy explanations. Brief labels are effective at conveying small pieces of information that can be read and absorbed quickly by visitors. Exhibit media that rely on technology such as computer interactives and touch-screens can be very attractive to some museum visitors but they are also expensive to install and difficult to maintain.

The museum displays a variety of permanent and temporary exhibits that feature objects, exhibit labels, and descriptive text. The museum is faced with several challenges when planning and developing its exhibits. The museum facility is relatively small and there is a limited exhibits budget. In spite of these challenges, the museum can still produce exhibits that communicate the significance of the history of the area in a thought-provoking and memorable way.

To ensure positive visitor experiences, the museum should focus on object-based exhibits. Visitors are most interested in authentic objects. As such, the museum should rely on its collections and add interpretive value with brief exhibit panels and labels. Interpreters can also provide more in-depth context that is not being displayed on exhibit panels and labels. The museum's Discover activities are strong examples of low-cost interactives that catch visitors' interest and encourage participation with the exhibits and subject matter. Each new exhibit should feature a Discover activity that encourages interaction with the exhibit and in some cases with other visitors. The museum can also develop a working collection of objects that visitors can actually touch. This provides a hands-on experience that is more memorable than looking at an object in a display case. Increasing the number of interactive activities will encourage visitors to stay on site longer and have positive interactions with the exhibits, interpreters, and other museum visitors.

6.1. Interpretive Objectives

When planning exhibits, they should also have clearly defined interpretive objectives. These objectives should be measurable and their success can be determined after visitors view the exhibits using summative evaluation techniques.

Example of an interpretive objective:

- After viewing the Mahone Bay during World War II exhibit, visitors will be able to identify one or more of the exhibits main messages.

7. Exhibit Development

Exhibit development is a lengthy process that begins with the curator and exhibits committee selecting exhibit themes and topics and conducting research about those selections. The themes and topics should be drawn from the interpretive plan. The curator and exhibits committee will also maintain an open dialogue with local residents and museum members to receive feedback on exhibit topics. In order to ensure exhibits contain accurate and factual information, a development schedule must be created by the curator and exhibits committee for each exhibit. Summer students will aid in exhibit research for the museum's next operating season. Beginning research well in advance of installation will help ensure that exhibits contain fact-checked information from a variety of sources.

Each exhibit should be based on a "Big Idea" and every aspect of the exhibit should relate back to this idea. The exhibit should then be subdivided according to themes, sub-themes, main messages, and supporting ideas. The curator and exhibits committee should meet to fill out exhibit planning templates after they have conducted their initial research. These templates will ensure that the exhibits' messages are clearly defined and present a unified story.

After completing the research and templates, the curator and exhibits committee should begin to identify exhibit media and objects from the museum's collection to be featured in the exhibit. The exhibit media can include text panels and labels, images, audio clips, and many other forms of media deemed appropriate to interpret the exhibit's story. In conjunction with the selection of exhibit media and museum objects, the curator and exhibits committee should begin to write exhibit script that will be featured on the interpretive panels and labels.

The next step in exhibit development is design. The curator and committee will determine the design of exhibits based availability of space and their selected exhibit media and objects. Designs will be mocked up using temporary panels, labels, and other exhibit media to ensure the design works in the exhibit room or case. The final step in exhibit development is installation. During this step, the curator and exhibits committee will install exhibit media and objects and prepare exhibits for public viewing.

The museum Exhibit and Interpretation Policy was updated to reflect current museum standards and best practices. For an updated copy of the Exhibit and Interpretation Policy see Appendix 12.2. The policy explains the roles and responsibilities of the curator and exhibits committee in greater detail.

The museum would like to increase community engagement and participation of local residents in the museum's activities and programs. Community engagement can also take the form of local residents' active participation in exhibit development. For an example of community engagement through exhibit development partnerships, see Appendix 12.3.

8. School Programming

The museum has identified its commitment to children's education in its values and mandate statements. Providing school programming with curriculum connections to local schools will allow the museum to reach its goal of acting as a community resource for children's education.

Currently, the museum manager and board members volunteer as judges for the Bayview Community School Heritage Fair. During the judging, projects are selected for display in the museum on a weekly rotating basis throughout the museums operating season. This collaboration is mutually beneficial and the school and museum are interested in maintaining this partnership.

Although the Heritage Fair collaboration is successful, the museum has struggled to attract local educators to their school programs. There are many barriers that prevent educators from bringing their students to museums. Barriers include the cost of transportation, lack of time, and school programs that lack curriculum connections.

The most important element to developing school programming is demonstrating strong curriculum connections. Local educators will only bring their classes to the museum if our school programming clearly demonstrate specific curriculum outcomes. Without these connections, the programs are not aiding the teachers in reaching their yearly curriculum goals.

It is also important for museum school programs to be focused on object-based learning. Educators can teach their students about history using the school's resources and will not view visiting the museum as a valuable learning experience unless we provide access to sources and artifacts that are not readily available in the classroom. For an example of an overview of a school program with curriculum connections, see Appendix 12.4.

The museum's operating season runs from the beginning of June to beginning of October. The school year runs from September to June. This means that the school year and museum's season only have two overlapping months, September and June. It is important to share school program overviews with educators before the school year begins so that they can sign their classes up for September time slots.

In December 2014, the museum became a beta tester for the *Toolbox for Museum School Programs*. The beta testing is being overseen by Maggie McIntyre an Interpretive Researcher for the department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. The resource was developed to help museums in Nova Scotia create successful school programs with curriculum connections. As a beta tester, the museum manager will correspond and meet with Ms. McIntyre throughout the spring and summer of 2015 to provide feedback on the resource and information on the museum's use of the toolbox. This resource provides excellent guidance for developing and facilitating school programs.

9. Volunteer Program

The MBSM is staffed by a seasonal manager/curator and summer students who are employed through federal and provincial grants. The museum is reliant on the tireless efforts of its Board of Directors and other volunteers. Well-trained, dedicated volunteers will help increase community involvement and ensure a sustainable future for the museum.

9.1. Current Situation

Several challenges have been identified for the recruitment of museum volunteers. The museum has a dedicated core of volunteers who are interested in volunteering for specific museum special events or as interpreters at the museum. These volunteers are valuable to the museum and have helped with many successful museum events and activities. In order to increase the success of the museum volunteer program, it is essential to recruit volunteers who have an interest in working with the various museum committees.

The volunteer program's second main challenge is the need to recruit new volunteers. Specific groups that have been identified as a target audience for volunteer recruitment are students and new residence to the community.

9.2. Recommended Volunteer Program

The museum's Volunteer Policy was last updated in 2003. In order to ensure that the policy is relevant to the museum's current needs, the policy and volunteer job descriptions must be updated. A volunteer application form should be created to allow volunteers to identify their areas of interest and availability. Applications can be made readily available on site and at museum events to allow ample opportunities to recruit new volunteers.

An annual volunteer recruitment campaign will allow the museum to continual reach out to the community in search of talent and expertise that will improve the quality of the museum's research and interpretation and increase community engagement.

9.2.1 Orientation and Training

After developing a Volunteer Policy and volunteer application form, a volunteer orientation and training program must be developed and implemented.

9.2.2. Youth Volunteer Program

The need for new volunteers was identified by our Board of Directors and during the community consultation sessions.

Establishing a youth volunteer program will help the museum recruit new volunteers and teach youth transferable skills that will prepare them for their future employment opportunities.

Proposed Volunteer Positions:

- Youth Cataloguer
- Youth Interpreter

9.2.3. Recruitment of Volunteers for Museum Committees

In conjunction with a volunteer recruitment campaign, the museum should advertise its committees and encourage local residents to join these committees. Before advertising these committees, the museum must update the roles and responsibilities for each committee to ensure that they are representative of the museum's mission, mandate, and overall goals.

10. Museum Membership

There are a number of different types of museum memberships. One format is the value based membership. Under this format, a membership is purchased because it often offers the possibility of unlimited visits at one low price. Value based memberships are popular among consumers but do not necessarily create loyal members who continue to support an institution over time. The museum does not charge a formal admissions fee but instead suggests that visitors make a donation before viewing the site. As a results, a value based membership structure is not feasible at this institution.

Another type of membership is the relationship membership. Under this format, the institution attempts to cultivate a membership base that is invested in developing a relationship with the institution and its other members. Relationship membership programs create social spaces for members to interact and learn. This format provides members with specialized and memorable experiences and helps to foster a loyal membership base with increased renewal rates.

Revenue from memberships provide significant funding for the museum. Increasing our membership base will help to ensure the museum has a sustainable future. Under the current membership format, we are not offering members special incentives to join. In order to increase membership, we must provide members with a social space where they feel engaged with the museum and other members. Access to information such as the newsletter and invitations to events and openings should be available to everyone to increase attendance at and participation in our events and programs. Members-only events should take the form of behind the scenes tours, previews of new exhibits, and specialized programs.

Current membership format:

Membership Dues are:

- *Individual $15 per year*
- *Family $25 per year*
- *Business $25 per year*

Membership entitles you to Museum newsletters, to invitations for special events and openings, and to a vote at our Annual Meeting. Join the many individuals, families and organizations that are members of the Mahone Bay Museum.

> **Proposed Membership Format:**
>
> *Membership Dues are:*
>
> - *Individual $15 per year*
> - *Family $25 per year*
> - *Business $25 per year*
>
> *Membership entitles you to access to events and programs such as: behind-the-scenes tours, previews of new exhibits, and specialized members-only programs. Members also have a vote at our Annual Meeting and receive priority registration for museum programs. Join the many individuals, families and organizations that are members of the Mahone Bay Museum.*

11. Planning and Implementation

Implementing the interpretive plan will be a gradual process that will take place over a number of years.

11.1. Developing Policies

Upon completing a site-analysis and consulting with the Board of Directors, it is evident that several policies need to be created and updated to help the museum achieve its interpretive goals. The museum should adopt the Canadian Museum Association's Code of Ethics and use this document as a framework when developing its policies. Adopting and adhering to the CMA's guidelines will ensure that the museum is adhering to current museums standards and best practices.

11.1.1. Communications Policy and Strategy

The museum's audiences have been identified. The next step is to determine how the museum's interpretation will be promoted to these groups. The museum does not have a communications policy to guide how its message is presented to its audiences. There is a communication committee but its roles and responsibilities have not been clearly defined. The communications policy should identify which mediums the museum will use to promote its brand and messages. These communication should remain in-line with the museum's brand and mission but must take the appropriate tone when using a variety of online and print mediums.

11.2. Updating Policies

In order to ensure that the museum continues to meet the current standards and best practices, its policies must be periodically reviewed and updated.

11.2.1. Exhibits and Interpretation Policy

The exhibits and interpretation policy has been updated and can be found in Appendix 12.2.

11.2.2. Archival Policies and Procedures for Staff and Researchers

If we are establishing a space for researchers on the second floor of the museum, we must update the policy regarding access to the archival collection. This policy must identify the

proper protocol for patrons wishing to access records and identify any fees for photocopies, scans, etc. Currently, these fees are listed in the Collections Management Policy under Use. They are listed as 10 cents per photocopied or scanned page. We should also include a "using the archive" section to our website similar to that of the Nova Scotia Archives. This section will share our archival protocols with patrons. We must also identify retrieval and care and handling procedures for staff members providing researchers with access to the archival collection. The museum should develop a Public Access Research Policy.

11.2.3. Collections Management Policy

The museum's Collections Management Policy should be reviewed and updated to ensure that it adheres to current museum standards and best practices. Updating this policy will help to ensure purposeful collecting that preserve local heritage and is representative of the museums mission and mandate. This will also help to support the museum's interpretive goals.

11.2.4. Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Job Descriptions

The museum's Volunteer Policy and job descriptions must be updated to represent the museum's new interpretive goals. Updating this policy and holding a volunteer recruitment campaign will also help the museum to increase community engagement.

11.3. Updating the Interpretive Plan

The interpretive plan should be evaluated and adjusted annually to ensure its efficacy. A new plan should be developed if this plan is no longer seen as relevant and capable of guiding the museum in achieving its interpretive goals.

12. Appendices

The appendices feature a variety of resources to be used as reference while developing exhibits and implementing the interpretive plan.

12.1. Exhibit Classification

There are four different types of exhibit features ranging from active with motion to passive and inert.

12.1.1 Classification Matrix

Exhibit Feature

		Motion	Inert
Visitor Mode	**Active**	1	2a
	Passive	2b	3

Examples

1 Seismograph, live animal, "hands-on device"
2a Electronic exhibit where visitors push buttons
2b Viewing zoo animal, moving models
3 Art, photographs, flat-work graphics
*from *Interpretive Master Planning* by John. A Veverka.

12.1.2 Mapping Exhibit Load

Ideally, an exhibit should contain a combination of the four exhibit features. The more type 1 features present in the exhibit, the more interactive and hands-on it is. Type 3 exhibit features are the least appealing to museum visitors because they require reading a panel or looking at an image but do not contain any interactive elements.

12.2. Exhibit and Interpretation Policy

1. Introduction

Through its exhibits and interpretation of objects, the Mahone Bay Museum provides learning opportunities and promotes local history and cultural heritage. Each year, the museum aims to appeal to diverse audiences by featuring a range of permanent and temporary exhibits with an emphasis on local history and culture.

1.1. Exhibit Definition

An exhibit is the medium used by museums for presenting and interpreting objects to the public. Exhibits use some combination of objects, text, graphics, props, furniture or architectural elements to create a physical space dedicated to the exploration of specific themes and messages (*Alberta Museums Association*).

1.2. Exhibits play an important role between linking the community and its heritage. The museum will strive for accuracy of information, relevance to the community, effective communication, opportunities for learning, and safe display of artifacts.

2. Exhibits

Exhibits will reflect the museum's mandate, demonstrate its commitment to the highest possible standards of exhibition, and address the needs and interests of the community.

2.1. Permanent Exhibits

Permanent exhibits form the core of the museum's exhibitions, and introduce the visiting public to the region's cultural and natural heritage, outlining the local, regional, provincial, and national importance. Although the themes of these exhibits may remain constant, their content (i.e. information, stories, artifacts, and photographs) will be changed or updated regularly.

2.2. Temporary Exhibits

The museum will utilize temporary exhibits in order to provide visitors with varied learning opportunities and to provide an experience which will inspire people to return to the museum to see "something new." When possible, the museum will feature temporary exhibits produced by both other institutions and agencies. Temporary exhibits will also be developed in-house by the curator and exhibits committee.

2.2.1. The museum will credit institutions providing temporary exhibits.

2.2.2. The museum reserves the right to decline the use of any objects or materials offered for use in exhibits.

3. Developing Exhibits

The museum will ensure that exhibits are presented in an ethical and professional manner.

3.1. Exhibits will conform to the museum's mandate and *Collections Management Policy* and will provide opportunities for learning and enjoyment.

3.2. The curator will act as chair of the exhibits committee and work with committee members to determine the topics of exhibits, carry out research, and develop exhibits.

The curator and exhibits committee will:

3.2.1. Establish an annual exhibition plan for permanent, temporary, and travelling exhibits.
3.2.2. Select exhibit topics approximately one year in advance of their display. This will ensure adequate time for research, design, evaluation, and installation.
3.2.3. Identify the exhibit's goals and objectives, storyline, and main messages.
3.2.4. Identify the objects, props, and materials used to support the exhibit storyline and messages.
3.2.5. Create a development schedule and exhibit budget.
3.2.6. Carry out on-going research of exhibit themes and topics to ensure up to date and accurate information.
3.2.7. Dismantle temporary exhibits during the museum's offseason and return artifacts from the museum's collection to their appropriate storage locations. The artifacts' documentation will be updated to reflect that they are no longer on exhibit.

3.3. The curator will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in the planning, preparation, and installation of exhibits have the necessary skills and training to complete exhibits that meet the expectations of visitors and needs of the collection.
3.3.1. The curator will provide annual training sessions for all staff and volunteers involved in exhibit development to ensure they are trained in appropriate care and handling techniques and have an understanding of the CMA's *Code of Ethics*.

3.4. Under the direction of the curator, summer staff will aid in the research for future exhibits to give an accurate and fair evaluation of the exhibit topic or theme and its role in the history of the community.

3.5. Community members and volunteers will participate in the development of exhibits when relevant.

3.6. When borrowing objects for exhibits, the museum will complete an Incoming Loan Agreement with the lender and Condition Report on each object within the exhibit. Loaned objects used in temporary exhibits will only remain in the museum for the duration of the exhibit after which they will be returned to the lender. See the *Collections Management Policy* for more detail.

3.7. Resources are allocated in support of planning, preparation, and installation of exhibits.

3.8. The museum will adhere to municipal, provincial, and federal legislation requirements that impact exhibit content (i.e. the Canadian Copyright Act and firearms legislation).

3.9. Any commercial support or sponsorship of exhibits will not compromise the museum's standards and objectives.

4. **Learning Opportunities**
The museum will ensure that exhibits effectively promote learning and enjoyment by using a variety of interpretation methods to meet the needs and interests of all visitors.

4.1 New artifacts will be regularly rotated in and introduced to permanent exhibits.

4.2 The museum will develop school programs with curriculum connections to act as a resource for local schools and educators.

4.3 School programs will be developed in conjunction with exhibit themes.

4.4 The museum will provide evaluation forms for teachers after their students have participated in programs to share feedback and evaluate effectiveness.

4.5 The museum will partner with Bayview Community School to display students' Heritage Fair Projects on a weekly rotating basis throughout the museum's operating season.

5. **Interpretation**
Exhibits will illustrate a common interpretive theme for each gallery and complement the museum as a whole. Exhibits will inspire an interest in local history and heritage preservation. The museum will remain up-to-date on new interpretive techniques and principles, and will utilize these methods in conveying the exhibits' messages to visitors.

5.1 Text panels will have a professional appearance and the information on the panels will be clearly visible to visitors.

5.2 All objects that are not originals will be labelled as replicas.

6. **Conservation**
Staff and volunteers will respect the integrity of the artifacts to be exhibited and avoid any situation that might put the artifacts at risk. This will be accomplished by providing training to staff and volunteers within the museum on the proper care and handling of artifacts and ensuring these methods are put in practice.

6.1 Artifacts on exhibit will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are in good condition. Any artifacts found in poor condition (i.e. exhibit fatigue) will be immediately removed from display and evaluated for appropriate conservation treatment.

6.2 Any artifact used in an exhibit must be in stable condition and be fully catalogued. A condition report will be completed whenever possible before placing an artifact on display.

6.3 The museum will follow Canadian Conservation Institute guidelines for materials used in the construction of exhibits and mounts.

6.4 Exhibition and storage areas will not be used for construction of exhibits. A separate workplace and construction space must be used for exhibits being produced in-house.

6.5 Lighting and environmental conditions within the exhibit area will be controlled in accordance with current conservation standards as much as possible.

6.6 Exhibit areas will be cleaned and inspected monthly by trained staff or volunteers to ensure that artifacts are not deteriorating or being damaged.

6.7 Signage instructing not to touch objects will be placed throughout exhibits as needed.

7. **Safety and Accessibility**
The museum will ensure that all exhibits are kept safe for visitors, staff, and volunteers.

7.1 The museum will adhere to municipal, provincial, and federal legislation requirements that impact exhibits (i.e. safety codes and accessibility legislation).

7.2 The museum will avoid using hazardous materials in exhibits.

7.3 The museum will strive to ensure exhibits can be enjoyed by visitors of all ages and abilities.

8. **Evaluation**
Exhibits will be evaluated to ensure they engage and interest our visitors. Exhibits that do not demonstrate continued success in communicating with visitors will be changed or upgraded to make them more engaging and visitor friendly.

8.1 The museum will employ a variety of evaluation techniques to ensure that exhibits meet their objectives and engage visitors. (i.e. front-end evaluation, formative evaluation, critical review and remedial evaluation, summative evaluation).

Last updated March, 2015

12.3. Community Engagement through Exhibit Development Partnerships
Galt Museum and Archives, Lethbridge, Alberta

This museum in southwestern Alberta, Canada, took a new approach to engaging its community through its exhibits. In the fall of 2009, in preparation for a "Treasures and Curiosities" exhibit on display from February through May 2010, the museum invited one hundred community members (including business leaders, government representatives, and the mayor), along with staff and board members, to choose their two favorite artifacts from the collection to be included in the exhibit. Intentionally eclectic, the exhibit drew on the broad content scope of the museum's collections, covering (as described in the press release for exhibit participation) "commerce, immigration, education, community services, religion, transportation, military service, diversity, and the personal lives of individuals who chose to live here." The Galt advertised the wide variety of objects in the collection as well as the "curiosities" it held.

The process went like this: The Galt Museum staff trained a group of twelve volunteers to help the community members choose a subject area and period and then to pick objects by looking together through the collections database and storage areas. If an object sounded interesting, they would go and look at it. The community participants were often very moved by the memories related to the objects they saw, and some people took a number of hours to decide on their objects. The preparation process created a buzz of anticipation in the community about the museum and the exhibit.

The "Treasures and Curiosities" exhibit included the participants' personal stories about why they chose the particular object, and as one visitor noted, this approach "added interest and depth" to the exhibit. Another visitor commented, "The stories and histories provided by the community members made the pieces relevant and interesting, beyond the mere value of the object." The exhibit was designed to look like crates and storage, with labels looking like tags.

This example demonstrates that small museums have many tools to utilize in engaging their communities, not the least of which is their collections. Director Susan Burrows-Johnson commented, "The successful engagement of the community in 'what is in the collection' was a reminder about the use of objects and about community participation. The time, commitment, and emotional response from our community members to the objects was the most extraordinary part of the process."

Following the well-attended exhibit, the community viewed the museum in a new light and, of course, has asked for another exhibit of this kind in the future.

From: *Reaching and Responding to the Audience (Small Museum Toolkit)*, by Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klingler.

12.4. School Program Overview: War Gardens for Victory

Content and Outcomes

Overarching Theme	Students will learn about war gardens, rationing, and the challenges of food production in Canada during the Second World War. Archival sources and artifacts will be used to illustrate how larger national and international challenges affected residents of Mahone Bay and area. Students will draw parallels between war gardens and modern concerns about sustainability and the benefits of locally grown produce.
Curriculum Outcomes addressed by this program	Social Studies Decades of Change: Post-1920 Canada - Demonstrate an understanding of Canada's participation in WWII (8.3.2) - Analyze the effect of WWII on Canada and her people (8.3.3) Food and Nutrition The Food Consumer - Identify decisions involved in food purchasing (8.3.2) - Identify environmental issues related to the production and consumption of food (8.3.3) Nova Scotia Food Products and Related Industry - Recognize the benefits of selecting locally grown/produced food (8.5.2)

Basic Logistics

Grade	8		
Program Created by	Margaret Mulrooney	**Date of Creation**	February 2015
Program Availability	September and June		

Program Structure

Program Length	90 minutes
Maximum Group Size	30
Student Groupings	Students will be split evenly into two groups: A & B
Facilitation - # of Staff	2

Program Framework

Activity	Location	Time	Featured Objects
Group A & B: Introduction of program themes with museum manager/curator.	Second floor activity room.	15 minutes	NFB's 1943 animated short "He plants for Victory".
Group A: Tour the WWII exhibit with worksheet. Tour the other exhibits.	Museum first floor.	25 minutes	Excerpts from Halifax Herald wartime economy cookbook, ration coupons.
Group B: Transplant tomato seedlings, label plants, and write out care cards for seedlings.	Museum backyard. Rain location: second floor activity room.	25 minutes	
Group A: Transplant tomato seedlings, label plants, and write out care cards for seedlings.	Museum backyard. Rain location: second floor activity room.	25 minutes	
Group B: Tour the WWII exhibit with worksheet. Tour the other exhibits.	Museum first floor.	25 minutes	Excerpts from Halifax Herald wartime economy cookbook, ration coupons.
Group A & B: Concluding discussion with manager/curator about wartime rationing, food shortages, war gardens, and modern concerns about food production and sustainability.	Second floor activity room.	25 minutes	