

Ginette Brindle, Joel Lafrance, Doug Stewart and Bob Andrews of Parks Canada attended the meeting to address questions the group raised after reviewing the Project Niagara Feasibility Study. Ms. Brindle opened by stating that Parks Canada wanted to hear what the community has to say. She then answered the questions as follows:

1. Q: What is the “centre of excellence” you plan to develop with Project Niagara? Is that the same as “a national centre for the promotion of Canadian heritage?”
A: *These are Project Niagara terms. The vision is a cooperative venture focused on culture, heritage and the environment. At this point there are no details or business plan.*
2. Q: What are the details of the “partnership” with Project Niagara?
A: *An Interim Memorandum of Understanding was signed September 9, 2008. In summary, the MOU says that Parks Canada and Project Niagara will collaborate to further explore Project Niagara’s proposal. It also notes that an Environmental Assessment must be completed before proceeding to any more formal agreement.*
3. Q: Where will the year-round concert facility be located?
A: *This is a question for Project Niagara.*
4. Q: What is the maximum decibel level anticipated? Can Parks Canada restrict decibel levels and types of music performed?
A: *This is a question for Project Niagara.*
5. Q: What does “the westerly park and the easterly historic zone would not be developed extensively” mean?
A: *The intent is to commemorate the battles site with signage, and possibly a small interpretive centre.*
6. Q: The study assumes Project Niagara “is a single entity running both the festival as well as the venue.” What does “managing the venue” mean? For example, will the facility be rented out for other purposes when not in use for the 50 planned concerts (as is the case at Blossom)? What other purposes?
A: *This is a question for Project Niagara.*
7. Q: Project Niagara sought a site that was available at low or no cost. What will they be paying? Operating costs do not appear to include “rent.” Is there none? What happened to Parks Canada’s practice of “market” rent?
A: *This is to be negotiated.*
8. Q: The study says it was agreed “the music festival would not touch” the battleground, then later says “there is no intention in Phase 1 to construct on” the DND lands. These statements seem contradictory. Are they not the same site? What does “not developed intensively” mean?
A: *DND is proceeding to clean up the property.*
9. Q: The study says that “at this point there is no plan to build private residences on site to accommodate artists.” Would Parks Canada ever allow that to change? Initially there was talk of an onsite hotel.
A: *Parks Canada wants any such accommodation to be offsite.*
10. Q: What is the purpose of the vehicular bridge planned for Phase 2?
A: *This is in Project Niagara’s preliminary plan and is to be negotiated.*
11. Q: There is no mention of an interpretive centre or opening the battlefield site to the public. What are the plans?
A: *Public access has not yet been determined. Will come back with an answer.*
12. Q: What are the plans for public access to Niagara Shores park?
A: *To be determined*
13. Q: What restrictions will be placed around the boardwalks and pedestrian pathways to protect the forest and shoreline?
A: *To be determined.*
14. Q: Operating cost estimates assume 100 acres will be “low utilization parkland” and 40 acres will be “high-utilization parkland.” Are the remaining 128 acres accounted for?
A: *These are approximate figures from Project Niagara.*
15. Q: Why are the Environmental Impact Assessments that Parks Canada will undertake not included in Project Niagara’s Project Timetable? Would they not be key decision (go/no-go)

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points, and should they not be on the critical path?

A: The EA is a key decision point and will be done.

16. Q: What are the details of the planned EIA's?

A: Parks Canada must follow the Canadian Environmental Act.

17. Q: What are the details of the Cultural Impact Survey conducted in September, 2007?

A: Copy of the assessment provided. In summary, it says that the proposed festival is compatible with Parks Canada policies.

18. Q: What is the purpose of the year-round concert facility, i.e. who will use it for what types of concerts?

A: This is a question for Project Niagara?

19. Q: What would Parks Canada do if the festival were to run into financial difficulty or fail?

A: Will consider during negotiations. Parks Canada concluded the feasibility study was reasonable.

Ms. Brindle then asked for feedback and heard from several members of the group. Key points raised were:

- The appearance that Project Niagara has a plan, but Parks Canada does not.
- That all levels of government we have approached to address our concerns have been given us "we'll work on the details later" answers.
- That we are very concerned about the impacts Project Niagara will have on this property and on our quality of life.
- That we are frustrated by the lack of information and alarmed at the apparent lack of planning.
- That our preference for this site is an ecopark.
- That we appeal to Parks Canada as stewards of the property to do the right thing.
- That we were not satisfied with the answers provided and will be resubmitting our questions.

Parks Canada took notes and committed to return at a later meeting.

Randy Busbridge provided updates to the group. Highlights are:

- The board of directors has adopted a constitution, and incorporation is in process.
- Board roles are as follows: Randy Busbridge – Chair and Acting Treasurer; Finn Madsen – Vice-chair; Cliff James – Secretary; Doug Campbell, Meredyth Cowling, Joanna Gorski, Dave Hennessey and Ken Morrison – Directors.
- The board has adopted a budget and **we are asking for \$20 from each member household.**
- We are still looking for volunteers to help with each of our working committees: Membership, Research, Communication, Business Development.
- We will deliver our vision of an ecopark to Town Council on May 25, and to Regional Council on June 18.
- Members are encouraged to write letters – especially to Federal and Provincial cabinet ministers – as we believe Project Niagara supporters are lobbying hard at this level.
- The Terms of Reference for the Traffic Study should be made public soon.
- Kari Cullen of Project Niagara has been invited to attend our June meeting to answer questions.
- **Our next meeting will be Wednesday, June 10. Please note** all future meetings will be held on the second **Wednesday** of each month.

Randy Busbridge