

national historic plaques or, in exceptional circumstances, by distinctive monuments. Suggestions for the establishment of historic sites and parks come from many sources — the general public, Members of Parliament, historical societies and other groups, departmental staff and members of the Board itself.

Before a site is referred to the Board for consideration, a background paper is prepared. The Board then evaluates the significance of the site and makes its recommendation to the minister. If ministerial approval is granted, a development plan is prepared.

Land for historic parks and sites is acquired in various ways; normally it is transferred free of charge by the province in which it is located to the Federal Government, but under special circumstances the department itself acquires the land through purchase or private donation.

Administration

The National Historic Sites Branch is part of the Parks Canada Program of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

Responsibility for the development and maintenance of new and existing parks has been decentralized and vested in five regional offices: Atlantic (Halifax), Quebec (Quebec City), Ontario (Cornwall), Prairie (Winnipeg) and West (Calgary).

The Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings is a major project of the National Historic Sites Branch. Begun in 1970, it is a computerized screening program to survey, analyse and categorize old buildings in Canada.

Parks and sites

Across Canada more than 50 major national historic parks and sites are open to the public. In addition, some 700 plaques honour important persons, places and events in Canada's history.

Many of the historic sites commemorate military aspects of Canada's history. The fortress of Louisbourg on the coast of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, is Parks Canada's most ambitious reconstruction project. Louisbourg was built by the French between 1720 and 1745 to protect New France. In the latter year, it was captured by the British. A section of the town, with the massive