BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE PAST:

Strategic Plan for Backus Heritage Village

By Sheila A. Johnson

1 Earliest view of Backhouse Mill and sawmill, late 1890. Credit: Wanda Backhouse-Kelly

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Building a Better Future for the Past:

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BACKUS HERITAGE VILLAGE 2016 - 2020

BACKGROUND

When I began work in March of 2016 as the Curator of Backus Heritage Village, I was given three directives by the General Manager of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority.

The first was to assess the operation of Backus Heritage Village and determine what is needed to regain accreditation under the Community Museums Operating Grant Program, operated by the Province of Ontario. Although Backus Heritage Village had been an accredited member of this program since the 1980s, that designation was withdrawn in 2014 due to non-compliance with Standards for Community Museum in Ontario.

The second, was that Backus Heritage Museum be operated in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority as well as all applicable municipal, provincial and federal legislation.

And the third, that a plan of action be developed to implement the following objectives in the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018, specifically:

“Goal 3: Link people to the environment through outdoor, education and cultural heritage experiences.

Strategic Priorities

- Create master plans for all conservation areas that incorporate all attractions i.e. historical village, trail systems, education programming, special events, etc.
- Enhance conservation and heritage programming to optimize customer experience.
- Conduct a strategic review of the environmental and historical education programs as well as the historical village in order to confirm their place and importance in advancing LPRCA’s mandate.”

A new Supervisor was hired for Backus Heritage Conservation Area two years ago and her interest in this project was to clarify the future direction of Backus Heritage Village as it relates to the operation of Backus Heritage Conservation Area.

The following report was prepared in 2016 for presentation to the Backus Museum Committee and the LPRCA Board to address the above considerations. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to identify a future direction for Backus Heritage Village that achieves the goals and objectives of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority and creates a successful Community Museum.

A HISTORY OF BACKUS HERITAGE VILLAGE – 60 YEARS YOUNG

The Big Creek Conservation Authority was formed by Order-in-Council by the Province of Ontario in September, 1948. A pamphlet created by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority in 1970 with funding from the Ontario Government’s SWEEP Program summarizes the history of the Big Creek Authority. This document describes 1956 as its “most outstanding” year, because of the acquisition of the Backus property:

“The acquisition of the Backus property had a twofold benefit. First it placed in public hands the largest woodlot of its kind in the region, ensuring its existence in perpetuity for the benefit of its people. It also gave the authority its opportunity of preserving a very valuable historic site in an environment which justified development for recreation. The cost of the property was $98,000. Provincial grants paid 100% of the standing timber and half the cost of the land, leaving the sum of $22,000 to be raised by the Authority.”

Evans Knowles’ interest in the Backus property was triggered by his visits to American Conservation Authorities who were developing heritage facilities as additional recreational attractions. The Backus property sale included 19 hectares with five original buildings and 263 hectares of Carolinian forest.

The official opening of the Backhouse Mill took place later in 1956 and the Conservation Authority maintained the house, mill and dam on the original Backus property. In 1959, the Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity installed highway signs directing people to the historic plaque at the Backhouse Mill. While the Conservation Authority maintained the heritage buildings, the site was not operated as a museum. That changed on June 18, 1967. The Port Rowan and South Walsingham municipalities built the Centennial Agricultural Museum at Backus Conservation Area as their Centennial project on land provided by the Authority. The new building was turned over to the Big Creek Conservation Authority to operate as a museum with exhibits “illustrating, through artifacts, the early settler’s way of life. As early as 1956, the Authority had been planning to construct such a museum, acquiring items from the past – old ploughs, augers, a potato hillier.” The purpose of this museum was to; “provide a lasting memorial to pioneers who paved the way for the prosperous agricultural community that presently exists in this area.”

In 1955, the Department of Planning and Development (Provincial) extended the Conservation Authority’s mandate to include the preservation of historic sites and buildings “illustrating the life of the watershed during its period of development”. The Provincial Department responsible for the creation of conservation authorities believed that an understanding of human history was essential to

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3 Long Point Region Conservation Authority, A Beginning: Big Creek Region Conservation Authority, Pamphlet by Long Point Region Conservation Authority, 1970, pg. 1
4 Ibid., pg. 10.
5 Marylee O’Neill Houghton, Backus Historical Complex Master Plan, (Museum Programs Collaborative, 1983), pg. 4.
6 Ibid., pg. 4.
7 LPRCA, A Beginning:, pg. 10.
8 Ibid., pg. 10.
9 Ibid., pg. 11.
the comprehension and teaching of environmental conservation. By mid-20th century, Conservation Authorities were actively collecting and creating museums, specifically outdoor museums or ‘pioneer villages’; Black Creek Pioneer Village in 1956, Fanshawe Pioneer Village in 1959, Doon Pioneer Village in 1960 and Upper Canada Village in 1961.\textsuperscript{11}

The ‘Pioneer Village’ was developed in mid 20th century Ontario by Conservation Authorities. This type of museum was created as a natural extension of the core mandate of Conservation Authorities to provide an alternate use for heritage structures relocated during the creation of water reservoirs. These popular museums used ‘living history’ techniques to teach about the past\textsuperscript{12}. Costumed interpreters, period demonstrations, and historic buildings furnished and assembled in an appropriate landscape created an experience of stepping back in time for visitors, which remains to this day a powerful and effective learning environment.

When the Big Creek Conservation Authority acquired the Backus property, the following buildings/features were included with the purchase:

1798 Backhouse Mill National Historic Site
1852 Backus Homestead (designated locally and provincially)
c. 1900 Garage
1928 Child’s Playhouse
Backhouse family Cemetery
Miller house (later demolished)

The following buildings/industrial artifacts were added in date order from 1967 to 1998:

Centennial Agricultural Museum, 1967 New Building
c. 1870 Forbes Barn. Relocated in 1973
1843 Vittoria Carriage Shop. Relocated in 1973
Late 19th century Woodhouse Drive Shed. Relocated in 1973
1900 Sawmill. Acquired 1976
Townsend windmill. Acquired 1976
C. 1900 Townsend Barn. Relocated in 1977
Late 19th century Suderman Barn and Blacksmith Shop. Relocated in 1979


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pg. 175.
1864 Ronson Log House. Relocated in 1979

19th century stump puller. Acquired c. 1970s

Treadmill and drag saw. Acquired c. 1970s

Shingle mill. Acquired c. 1970s

Replica Ice House. Constructed 1978 Replica Building

1869 Teeterville Church. Relocated in 1980

1895 Johnson Log House. Relocated in 1981

1866 Cherry Valley School. Relocated in 1982

Heritage Craft Building, 1991 New Building

Bake oven. Constructed 1998, reconstructed 2013 Replica Building

From 1956 to the 1960s the museum was referred to as a ‘historic site’. With the addition of more buildings in the 1970s, the site began to take on the characteristics of a pioneer village. The site name was changed to the Museum Complex or the Backus Historical Complex by the early 1980s. In 1992, the name of the museum was changed to Backus Heritage Village.

In 1971, the Big Creek Region Conservation Authority and the Otter Creek Conservation Authority amalgamated to become the Long Point Region Conservation Authority.

In 1973, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority approved the use of the house, now referred to as the Backus Homestead, as the headquarters of the Long Point Bird Observatory. In a proposal for funding to The Richard Ivey Foundation, the Long Point Bird Observatory describes their objectives;

“...first, to provide a headquarters for the Long Point Bird Observatory; and second, to restore a building which enhances a site of historic significance to the people of Norfolk County and southwestern Ontario.”

This proposal describes how deteriorated the Homestead House had become:

“Built of a friable sand brick, the walls of the house are slumping seriously, the extensive structural restoration is necessary if the house is not to be lost as one of the major features of this historic site.”

The cost of the restoration/repair of the Homestead House was estimated at $48,300. The Long Point Region Conservation Authority secured capital funding to cover 60% of this cost but was still responsible for the remaining 40%. The LPRCA agreed to lease the property to the Long Point Bird

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13 Houghton, Backus Historical Complex Master Plan, pg. 1.
15 Long Point Bird Observatory, Renovation of the Backus Homestead as a Headquarters for the Long Point Bird Observatory, A Proposal Submitted to The Richard Ivey Foundation by the Long Point Bird Observatory, (March 1973), pg. 1.
16 Ibid., pg. 2.

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Observatory for a nominal rent if they could secure the required matching funding of $19,320. This was the purpose of the ultimately successful proposal to the Richard Ivey Foundation. Repairs were completed on the Homestead and the Long Point Bird Observatory moved in.

In 1982, the Long Point Foundation for Conservation was established as a not-for-profit organization. This organization was created to raise funds:

“...for the purpose of promoting any program, practice or research which directly or indirectly, conserves, restores, develops, manages or otherwise benefits conservation in and about the area of the Long Point Regional watershed.”

However, it also had a heritage mandate:

“To promote and foster within the said watershed interest in and the study of conservation and to own or otherwise provide facilities for education and instruction including the acquisition of historical data and artifacts and the preservation and display of the same in such facilities.”

In 1983, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority engaged the consulting firm of Museum Programs Collaborative to develop a ten year master plan to guide the rapidly expanding Backus Historical Complex. The study was undertaken because the site had been growing for the past decade without an overall plan, purpose or direction. The study recommended the following mission for the Backus Historical Complex:

“It is the goal of the Backus Historical Complex to represent the efforts of early Norfolk pioneers and their descendents in the management of lands, forests, water and animals. The Complex will demonstrate the progression of the 19th century life upon the advent of new technology and will serve to collect, preserve exhibit and interpret the artifacts and history of the local area in a professional manner.”

The Master Plan described the artifact collection as follows:

“The Museum’s collection is comprised of 1,536 artifacts which are registered on catalogue cards. All of the collection is owned by the Museum. Information included covers the artifacts accession number, description and a condition report. A separate donor file is kept with information pertaining to who donated the artifact and where it came from. A subject file has been completed.”

The 1983 Master Plan was well done and directed a period of development at Backus Heritage Village. In 1989, the Conservation Education Centre was constructed with classroom and exhibits focusing on the history of conservation and featuring the unique biosphere of the Long Point region. The Long Point Foundation for Conservation spearheaded the fundraising for this project which totalled $1,330,000 when complete. The Conservation Education Centre building also served as the Visitor Centre for the Backus Historical Complex, which was a recommendation in the 1983 Master Plan.

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18 Ibid., pg. 4.
19 Houghton, Backhouse Historical Complex Master Plan, pp. 47.
20 Ibid., pg. 33.
Plan although not the prime impetus for this capital project. In addition, the Master Plan recommended new space be developed for thematic exhibits which was completed with the renovation of the Centennial Agricultural Museum exhibits from 1991 - 1992 under Curator Mary Baruth. Also in 1991, the new Heritage Craft Building was added to the collection of buildings in the Heritage Village providing up to date washrooms, food service and demonstrations of period crafts and trades. The interior of the Backus Homestead was restored to c. 1920s from 1993 – 5 and offices for museum staff were relocated here at the conclusion of the lease with the Long Point Bird Observatory 22.

However, the key recommendation of the 1983 Master Plan was not implemented:

“That the existing buildings and the surrounding landscape be restored and refurbished to reflect the history of the Backus family and local rural life from 1796 to 1900 and a research and interpretive program be prepared for each building.” 23

A Landscape Plan was developed in 1990 to guide the implementation of this key Master Plan recommendation. Although some work was completed towards this goal, it was not fully implemented.

In 1988, the Norfolk Board of Education and the Haldimand-Norfolk Roman Catholic Separate School Board signed contracts with the Long Point Region Conservation Authority for the delivery of heritage programs to every Grade 2 and 4 classes in Norfolk County. Programs relating to early settlement were developed for these grades and a new 1812 program was developed for Grade 7, although not added to the contract until the 1990s 24. This contract is still active. Heritage programs on Early Settlement for Grade 3 and on 1812 for Grade 7 continue to be delivered by Backus Heritage Village to every school in Norfolk County.

In 1992, the Backus Heritage Village Trust Fund was established by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority with gifts from private donors. The interest from this fund supports maintenance of the Homestead and Grist Mill and other priority projects of Backus Heritage Village 25.

The mid 1990s was a tumultuous time for Conservation Authorities in Ontario. Provincial Transfer Payments to support Long Point Region Conservation Authority operations were reduced from approximately $500,000 in the early 1995 to $68,000 by 1999 26. The proportion of the total budget for the Long Point Region Conservation Authority provided by Transfer Payments went from providing approximately 23% of total revenues to less than 2%. Staffing at Backus Heritage Village experienced significant instability. Prior to 1996, the full-time Curator’s position was filled with staff who remained in that position for at least 5 years. From 1997 to 2007, 8 different people filled the Curator’s position. The number of staff positions dedicated to the Museum reduced from 2 full-time and one seasonal Educator in 1995 to one seasonal Heritage Educator/Curator in 2003. This staffing complement remained unchanged to 2016.

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22 Ibid., pg. iii – iv.
23 Houghton, Backus Historical Complex Master Plan, pp. iii.
25 Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Backus Heritage Village Trust Fund: Help Preserve our Pioneer Past, (Brochure created by LPRCA, 2016), pg. 2.
In 2001, Harry Needham Consulting Services was engaged to revise and update the 1983 Master Plan for Backus Heritage Village. His report detailed why the site was not functioning as an effective pioneer village, listing issues with mixing of buildings for heritage and recreation purposes, multiple points of access and no logical flow between buildings.\footnote{27} It is clear that the key recommendation in the 1983 Master Plan to develop a coordinated interpretive plan for the Heritage Village was not implemented. Needham stressed that the organization does not need another Master Plan, but that it needs to consistently implement the plans that it has. He cited issues with volunteer management and high staff turnover contributing to inconsistency in Master Plan implementation. Limited capacity and lack of professional staff was hampering the consistent implementation of a good plan.

In 2004, Rod Demerling developed a Strategic Plan for Backus Heritage Conservation Area. This study titled, Moving Forward: A Sustainable Plan for Backus Heritage Conservation Area 2005 – 2009, focused on the development of strategic partnerships for its implementation. This study once again identified that the healthy development of Backus Heritage Village required professional staff and that one seasonal employee cannot do the work required to move the organization towards sustainability. High turnover in the seasonal position was the key cause of organizational instability. Demerling also identified that more staff resources were needed to deliver a successful volunteer program which was continuously experiencing problems.

The Backhouse Mill is the recognized jewel in the collection of heritage buildings at Backus Heritage Village. From 1998 to 2015, LPRCA moved forward a number of important projects to improve the repair and interpretation of this building.

1999 Mill machinery restored to enable grinding of flour for demonstration and sale
2009 Repair flume on Backhouse Mill
2011 Replaced and painting of siding on Backhouse Mill
2015 Structural improvement made to Backhouse Mill funded by the W. Garfield Weston Foundation

See Appendix A for a complete list of repairs to heritage buildings from 1956 to 2015.

Conclusion

Backus Heritage Village was created with the sale of land and buildings by the Backus Family to the Big Creek Conservation Authority in 1956. Commencing with 4 buildings on 40 acres, it has grown to 23 structures on the original site. Created originally as a Historic Site, it became a local museum in 1967 with the addition of the Centennial Agricultural Museum. Despite what appears to be an intention to develop the site into a pioneer village in the 1970s and 1980s, implementation of that strategic direction was less than successful, despite the development of good master plans. 1995 - 2005 was a turbulent decade for all museums owned by Conservation Authorities. During that period, Backus Heritage Village lost significant staff capacity, although the strategic direction of operating a ‘pioneer village’ remained. While there were important conservation and interpretation projects implemented from 2005 – 2015, Backus Heritage Village became ‘stuck’ in that conundrum of trying to operating a living history site with insufficient staff resources.

\footnote{27} Harry Needham, Backus Heritage Conservation Area Revising the Master Plan for the Heritage Village, (Harry Needham Consulting Services Inc., 2001), pg. 4 – 6.
SITE ASSESSMENT – CURRENT SITUATION

Backus Heritage Village is a big place! Starting with the four original buildings and a cemetery, 19 additional heritage structures and industrial artifacts have been moved to this 40 acre site over the past 60 years.28

The grounds are beautiful. They include hills and valleys, forests and fields, a herb garden, and a demonstration wheat plot. Trees and shrubs are mature and there are plantings around the main house buildings. Because the museum is located inside Backus Heritage Conservation Area, it is isolated from modern intrusions, for example, overhead hydro lines, industrial or commercial development within sight lines, and noise from highways, rail lines and airports. Backus is able to preserve the heritage feel at events and programs because of the absence of these modern intrusions which is highly valued by the local community, particularly re-enactors.

In addition to a collection of important heritage buildings, the Museum houses a collection of approximately 5,00029 artifacts collected from the local community commencing in the 1960s. This artifact collection is significant and highly valued by the local community. It includes not only three dimensional artifacts but also archives, large scale industrial artifacts and photographs.

Programming

Backus Heritage Village delivers 71 teaching days to all Grade 3 and Grade 7 classes in Norfolk County each year. This education program is outstanding! The contract with the public and separate Boards of Education has been in place since 1988. This program was consistently identified in stakeholder interviews and community consultations as one of the strengths of Backus Heritage Village.

The Education program delivered to schools was revised in 2016 to comply with Board of Health regulations and to bring the program in line with current, and recently revised, Social Studies curriculum. Currently, one program on the theme of Early Settlement is delivered to Grade 3 classes and revised seasonally. One program on the theme of 1812 is delivered to Grade 7 classes and updated annually. All programs are taught by the Curator. Teacher evaluations have been introduced and every program is evaluated. Recommendations for improvements are implemented immediately, if financially feasible. In June, 2016, the Grand Erie School Board audited both programs and made recommendations for improvement which were implemented for fall 2016 programs. Also in 2016, Backus Heritage Conservation Area updated the booking system for all school programs to improve communication with teachers.

Evaluations by teachers are consistently high. 96% of the teachers who completed evaluations of the spring program rated their school visit as an excellent learning experience for their students.

In addition to the Education Program, Backus Heritage Village is open to the public for the months of July and August. Again, changes were made to the interpretation program in 2016 to bring it in line with Museum Standards and to test visitor response to these changes. The first change was an up to date map guide to be used by visitors as a self-guided tour. Please see Appendix B for a copy of this guide.

28 The Miller’s house was also part of the original 1956 land sale, but was demolished.
29 This is an estimate based on the recorded numbers of artifacts in 1983.
The second change was to manage conservation and heritage students as one staff team under joint supervision by the Outdoor Educator and Curator. Students were all cross trained in the interpretation of the Conservation Education Centre, the Backhouse Mill and the Homestead House. A schedule was drawn up and interpreters were stationed in one of four locations every day. The next day, the interpreter would move to the next location on the schedule. In this way, the interpreters were trained in the full story of the Backus site which, as they indicated in their exit interviews, improved their ability to deliver a high quality visitor experience. While 3 of their locations were in buildings, the fourth interpreter delivered timed interpretive activities on site. These activities followed a theme that changed every two weeks and were geared to families. Again in exit interviews, the student team was able to provide key information on what worked for the site and the customer and made recommendations to improve the interpretive program for 2017. This staff team assisted with the opening and closing of the museum for the season, conducted research and completed all cleaning and gardening throughout the open season. Critical to the success of the interpretive program was content. Thanks to a significant donation of time and expertise by Wanda Backus-Kelly, new interpretive manuals were developed for the Backhouse Mill and Homestead House. Brandon Good and Wanda Backus-Kelly also trained the interpretation team in effective interpretive techniques for a museum.

Visitor surveys conducted throughout the 2016 summer months recorded an overwhelmingly positive response by our visitors to the changes in the interpretation program. 80% of visitors ranked their experience as Very Good or Excellent.

There are many factors contributing to the delivery of a good interpretive program in a museum. The quality of the Curatorial program has a direct impact on the quality of public programming. At Backus Heritage Village, the Curatorial Program includes the opening and closing of the Heritage Village and the curatorial cleaning of the site during the operating season. For 2016, it took me 6 weeks to clean the heritage buildings to normal museum standards to prepare for opening. It was back-breaking work! Many of the buildings had clearly not been cleaned to a curatorial standard in many years. Once the buildings were up to a basic curatorial standard, cleaning depots with approved cleaning products for a museum were set up in key locations and a regular rotation of building cleaning was completed by the Interpretive Team who was training in proper cleaning methods. This fall, buildings have been shut down using approved museum practices which should facilitate a normal opening in June of 2017.

When developing an interpretive program for a historic site, it is understood that not all buildings require the same level of interpretation. At Backus Heritage Village, the following interpretive structure was implemented for the 2016 season:

**First (1st) Tier buildings** are defined as buildings that must remain closed and locked unless manned by properly trained Village staff. 1st Tier buildings are: the Conservation Education Centre, Backhouse Mill, Teeterville Baptist Church, and Backus Homestead.

**Second (2nd) Tier buildings** are defined as buildings that must be properly barricaded and secured if they cannot be manned by trained staff and/or volunteers during operating hours. 2nd Tier buildings are: Cherry Valley School, Johnson Log House, Ronson Log House, Blacksmith Shop, Suderman Barn, Carriage Shop, Church Drive Shed and Garage.
Third (3rd) Tier buildings are defined as buildings that are either closed to the public or stand alone industrial artifacts. These include; Maintenance Drive Shed, Townsend Barn, Cider Press, Shingle Mill, Wind vane, Treadmill and Drag Saw and Stump Puller.

In addition to Interpreted Buildings, the following buildings were used for daily, timed activities:

**Level I Demonstration Buildings (Buildings open only when staffed for activity)**

- Cherry Valley School
- Johnson or Ronson Log Houses
- Blacksmith Shop
- Weaving Shop
- Community Hall (Former Aunt Erie's Kitchen)

**Level II Demonstration Buildings (Buildings generally open)**

- Forbes Barn
- Centennial Museum

While exhibitions are an important component of the interpretive program at a museum, I was able to make only small improvements in this program. Wanda Backus-Kelly walked through the Homestead House with me and we were able to make small changes to improve the accuracy of the presentation. I also removed all of the exhibits in the log houses and re-set up these displays and made minor improvements to the Cherry Valley School House to improve historical accuracy.

Finally, Backus Heritage Village presents an active program of public events, the most popular being the War of 1812 which has a 27 year history. Again for 2016, the events were changed to present a program with a wider appeal. Key long standing popular events were retained; Heritage Hoedown, Sprit Walk, Murder Mystery and 1812 Re-enactment. Added to this was a dance program from WWI and a folk music concert by Ian Bell on Lake Erie shanties to test community interest. In addition, preparation for Canada 150 in 2017 commenced with two tryouts for the formation of Norfolk North and Norfolk South Vintage base ball clubs.

**Museum Administration**

The Supervisor of Backus Heritage Conservation Area (BHCA) made the decision that the offices for the staff of Backus Heritage Village would be housed in the Conservation Education Centre with the rest of the BHCA staff. That was a brilliant move! Working in the same office of the Outdoor Educator facilitated communication and cooperation at every level. The team at BHCA is outstanding and were there for me whenever I needed help or support navigating my first season. Moving to a new office was a good thing, because I found the administrative and digital records of the museum in disarray. I cleaned out the office located at the back of the Homestead and moved all records to my new office in the Conservation Education Centre. There, documents were organized into a working filing system. While not completed until the summer, I was finally able to put my hands on documents.

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and information when needed. Digital records were another matter. None existed, although I am still discovering files. A basic digital filing system was also created with care for regular back-ups.

All interpretive support materials in the former offices from the Backus Homestead were sorted, organized and put in labeled storage containers. The former office was turned into the storage centre for interpretive and education materials and a rudimentary curatorial centre.

Collections Management

I was not able to make progress in improving the conditions of the collections management program. This program is in a significantly deteriorated state. Twelve years ago the collections was in full compliance with museum standards. It was catalogued, organized and accessible. Today, the collection is in such deteriorated condition that it is under threat. There is a general lack of security, documentation and proper storage conditions. Poor management of the collection is a direct cause of the loss of CMOG funding and is one of the leading concerns of the community. Only two actions were taken in 2016 in this regard. The first, was to implement a moratorium on all further collecting until the collection meets basic museum standards; and the second, to close the archive to research requests until professional staff have time to put the archive in working order and oversee such requests.

Building Maintenance

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority has been maintaining the buildings of Backus Heritage Village to a good standard. They are to be commended for saving important heritage buildings by moving them to this site that would have undoubtedly been demolished otherwise. Most importantly, if it was not for the purchase of the Backus property by the Big Creek Conservation Authority in 1956, the vitally important Backhouse Mill and Backus Homestead would have been lost.

Buildings are weather tight and functional. In 2016, the two log houses were rechinked, new posts installed at the front and back doors of the Forbes Barn to hold open barn doors during events, and the cedar tree was cut down at the corner of the Suderman Barn. In addition, museum staff and volunteers repaired and repainted all of the building signs, replaced and puttied 12 broken windows in the Garage, Homestead House and Teeterville Church, cleaned the chimneys, assisted with starting fires for school programs, cut grass and helped with set-up and clean-up for events. BHCA staff was diligent about ensuring safety requirements were met: security systems operational, every building stocked with fire extinguishers and first aid kits and regularly checked. BHCA staff was always willing to help with custodial, maintenance and program support whenever needed.

Governance

Under the direction of the General Manager of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, the Backus Museum Committee was reorganized into a dedicated group of volunteers currently composed of the Chair and 3 current members of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board and up to 6 community members. In 2016, a new Governance Policy was approved which clearly defines the role of Committee members and staff in the management and operation of Backus Heritage Village. This dedicated committee is committed to implementing the goals of the LPRCA Strategic Plan to move the Museum in a positive direction.

In addition, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board affirmed their decision to stay in the museum business during the planning process for their 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan.
STRATEGIC PLAN METHODOLOGY

Data from 6 key sources were collected in 2016 to develop this Strategic Plan. They include:

• 101 Visitor Surveys collected from July 1 to September 1, 2016 and 32 evaluations by teachers of the spring education program
• 11 Stakeholder interviews conducted between April and August, 2016
• Two community consultations on September 28 and October 12 involving 45 people
• SWOT by Backus Museum Committee on September 15, 2016
• Operational assessment from April to September, 2016
• Capacity assessment from April to October 2016
RESULTS FROM SURVEYS

Who are your customers?

The results of the Visitor Survey provide a glimpse of who visits Backus Heritage Village. Here are the key learnings:

Backus Heritage Village is a tourism draw: 75% of visitors are from outside Norfolk County.

50% of visitors come once a year.

25% of visitors are from Norfolk County. This statistic is quite low. Local visitors are not visiting as frequently as they should. The common complaint is that there is no reason to visit Backus more than once a decade because programming and exhibits are static.

More adults visit Backus than children. This is a site that appeals to the Cultural Tourist – defined as a tourism segment predominated by retired adults who are healthy, well educated and have the means to travel. One of their favourite destinations is museums because they value learning and learning is a key feature of museum programming.

The typical group visiting Backus Heritage Village is a family with one other adult relative. This speaks to the multi-generational appeal of Backus Heritage Village. There is something for the whole family to enjoy, from parents and grandparents to children. It is also indicative of the one of the key reasons people travel – to visit relatives. And when you have visiting relatives what do you do? Take them to the local attraction. Backus Heritage Village is an important local tourist attraction.

For a summary of the analysis of the Visitor Surveys, see Appendix C.

Another key customer group are teachers. Despite the fact that the contract for Education programming is with the Boards of Education, it is critical to the success of Backus Heritage Village that teachers are provided with a positive learning experience for their students that meets current curriculum guidelines. For the results of surveys from teachers for the spring Education Program, see Appendix D.
RESULTS FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The Stakeholder Interviews, SWOT and the two Community Consultations provided a wealth of information on how the local community views Backus Heritage Village. Here is a summary:

What does the community value about Backus Heritage Village?

The Backhouse Mill: Consistently, from all data sources, the Mill is cited as the most important heritage asset of Backus Heritage Village. The community feels a strong sense of ownership towards the Mill. It is critical to their understanding of the history of Norfolk County and their place in it.

A strong second, is the history of the Backhouse/Backus family as illustrated by the Homestead House, Garage and Playhouse. The history of the Backhouse family stretches from the 1790’s to today. This story is the local community’s connection to their roots and it is of vital importance to them.

The next most valued heritage asset, is the artifact and archival collection and the remaining collection of heritage buildings moved here from other communities in Norfolk County. This is the material culture that represents the history of specific Norfolk communities. This is their history and it is very important to the local communities represented.

Backus Heritage Village is beautiful! The grounds throughout the season, the positioning of the heritage buildings on the site and the lack of modern intrusions makes the site a highly valued cultural landscape.

Backus Heritage Village is recognized for the delivery of quality education programs and events. Specifically, what the community values is the use of living history interpretive techniques in the delivery of programming. Costuming, live demonstrations, first person interpretation or role playing, historical vignettes and theatre are all techniques used to provide visitors and students with an immersive experience.

What is the perception of Backus Heritage Village by the Community?

The greatest concern expressed by the community is that the Long Point Region Conservation Authority has not been a responsible steward of the community’s heritage. This concern was consistently and repeatedly voiced. They feel that there has been a general lack of proper care of the collection, both archives and artifacts, and maintenance of the heritage buildings has not been to acceptable standards.

Of equal concern is the perception that Backus Heritage Village is a poor manager of volunteers. Issues with the volunteer program include lack of organization and training of volunteers, lack of recognition, poor communication and a complex administrative process.

The perception exists that Backus Heritage Village is operated as a ‘private club’. It is not welcoming or accessible to the local community, nor does it reflect community concerns or values.

The Community wants MORE! Norfolk County has a wealth of museums. They provide excellent programming to local residents and they have been doing so for decades. As a result, local residents...
have sophisticated tastes when it comes to museum programming. While the community has enjoyed Backus Heritage Village programming in the past, events and exhibitions have remained static. After visiting Backus Heritage Village once, there is little to bring them back each year or draw them back for multiple visits in a year. They want exhibits and programs that reflect and celebrate their history. They want a longer operating season. The summer operating season is too short and not accessible by the community. They want the museum operated to professional standards, and in particular, they want their history (archives, artifacts and buildings) properly cared for.

RESULTS FROM SITE ASSESSMENT

One of the key objectives of this Strategic Plan is to assess the operation of Backus Heritage Village to determine what changes are needed to achieve Standards for Community Museums in Ontario (CMOG) through the Province of Ontario. Meeting these standards is a requirement to receive a Provincial Operating Grant. Backus Heritage Village lost CMOG funding in 2014 due to non-compliance with standards. Fiduciary responsibility for the operation of Backus Heritage Village to standards is the responsibility of the owner. See Appendix E.

In short, a great deal needs to be done. Please see Appendix F for a list of the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.

There are three steps to achieving CMOG standards:

First, update the program to meet basic museum standards;

Second, update the policy and administrative framework of the museum to stabilize these updated programs;

and third, consistent delivery to maintain those programs to CMOG standards.

Although significant work will be needed to bring Backus Heritage Village programs up to standards, an equal amount of work will be needed to maintain those programs at these standards. This leads to an important decision about capacity. There is no sense developing new programs or upgrading existing programs if the resources are not there to maintain them.

To achieve Standards for Community Museum in Ontario, six programs need to be delivered at Backus Heritage Village:

Collections Management and Conservation – Archives, Artifacts and Heritage Buildings

Exhibition

Interpretation – Museum open to the public

Education Program for schools

Events

Volunteer Management

Approved by the Backus Museum Committee on November 10, 2016.
Approval for distribution for Community comment by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board, December 7, 2016.
All six programs must be brought up to standard and the related administrative framework (policies, procedures, plans, evaluation etc.) developed before the site can be reconsidered for funding support through the CMOG program.

The most urgent of these programs is the work required is to meet the Collection and Conservation standard. The collection is so deteriorated due to lack of care over the past decade that it is under threat. Close behind collections is exhibitions which are also well behind basic museum standards. Both of these programs require research, and a start on this requirement was made in 2016. Backus Heritage Village is most fortunate to have the Backus family directly involved in providing support for this museum. They are the site’s historians and are indispensible in providing accurate context for museum programming. The Backus Family is without question one of the ‘gems’ of this museum.

While work commenced in 2016 to bring public programming up to basic museum standards, (Interpretation, Education and Events) the policy framework for these programs still needs to be updated and interpretation and events need at least another year of development.

RESULTS OF CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

The existing staff structure of Backus Heritage Village does not have the capacity to deliver a museum program which meets Standards for Community Museums in Ontario. This is not new information. Both the Harry Needham study in 2001 and the Rod Demerling study in 2004 identified that limited staff resources and high turnover due to the seasonal nature of the job contributed directly to inconsistent implementation of approved plans.

Currently, Long Point Region Conservation Authority employs one full-time, seasonal Curator. This position is 35 hours per week for 39 weeks. It is difficult to understand how much staff time it takes to develop and deliver museum programs.
To help explain this, see the chart above. To meet CMOG standards, Backus Heritage Village needs to develop and deliver six programs. In 2016, I looked at each program and calculated what proportion of my time over the course of one year would be needed to upgrade that program to meet standards AND deliver the program. After experiencing a full season at Backus Heritage Village, I can conclude that a full-time seasonal position has the capacity to develop and deliver three of the above programs. For 2016, those programs were 3, 4, 5. However, there is a caveat in this calculation. The Collection Management, Conservation and Exhibition programs are significantly below standards. Even if I dedicate this proportion of my time to these three programs, it will still take me several years to achieve full implementation of standards. In short, a minimum of two full-time seasonal staff is necessary to bring Backus Heritage Village up to CMOG standards.

In the operation of Backus Heritage Village, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority has two legal obligations. The first, is that the museum be operated as a safe public facility, in compliance with LPRCA rules and regulations and all relevant municipal, provincial and federal laws. The second, is the perpetual care and protection of the artifact collection. The current staffing structure does not have the capacity to guarantee compliance with either obligation. For vital reasons of liability and public safety, the basic program at a museum the size of Backus Heritage Village needs to be managed by 2 professional staff.

Currently, Backus Heritage Village is open to the public for approximately 9 weeks during the months of July and August. To meet CMOG standards, the museum must be open for a minimum of 20 days for each of eight months of the year.30 To meet this standard, Backus Heritage Village needs to expand its operating season to weekends in May, June and September, in addition to five days a week during July and August. With this change, Backus Heritage Village will be open from May 1st to mid October, which is the same operating season of Backus Heritage Conservation Area. Since a minimum of 4 student staff is needed to operate Backus Heritage Village when it is open to the public, these students will need to work 16 weeks instead of the current 10.


Approved by the Backus Museum Committee on November 10, 2016.
Approval for distribution for Community comment by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board, December 7, 2016.
Key Issues

Three key issues have emerged from the research:

1. Connection to the Community is broken

2. The artifact and archival collection is under threat

3. Limited capacity of current staffing structure
How do we fix this?

Four steps are needed to address these issues:

A. Define yourself by what you are

B. Narrow your focus

C. A NEW Strategic Direction

D. Create Capacity
A. DEFINE YOURSELF BY WHAT YOU ARE.

Recommendation # 1:
Change name to BACKHOUSE HISTORIC SITE

Justification

To be successful, this museum needs to go back to why it was created in the first place. In 1956, there was a strong desire on behalf of the Backus family, the Big Creek Conservation Authority and the local community to preserve an important historic site. That land purchase resulted in Backus Heritage Conservation Area and Backus Heritage Village. Throughout the first two decades of the museum’s existence, it was called a historic site.

As we move into the 1970s and 1980s, important heritage structures threatened with demolition were moved to this history preserve. While Conservation Authorities across the province were developing pioneer villages at this time, Backus was becoming a museum of buildings. There was no master plan to guide the development of this site into a pioneer village and although quite a good one was developed in 1983, it was not implemented. Today, Backus Heritage Village is not a pioneer village. This museum type is extremely expensive to operate. If this is the desired strategic direction of the LPRCA, it will take significant operational and capital investment to achieve.

If Backus Heritage Village is not a pioneer village, then what type of museum is it?

The most valuable heritage assets at Backus Heritage Village are the four original buildings acquired in 1956 AND the land that they sit upon. The second most important heritage asset is the Backus family, alive and well today as it has been for the past 220 years. This museum is and always has been a Historic Site. This is as true today as it was in 1956. This is what your visitors come to see and what your community values. This museum has the capacity to be a very good Historic Site.

Another good reason for the name change is the confusion between Backus Heritage Conservation Area and Backus Heritage Village. Visitors and the general public cannot differentiate between what is Backus Heritage Conservation Area and Backus Heritage Village which leads to significant communications issues.
B. NARROW YOUR FOCUS

Many organizations fall into the trap of trying to be all things to all people. With a very limited capacity, the Backhouse Historic Site needs to adopt a unique and focused mandate that is coordinated with all other museums in Norfolk.

**Recommendation # 2**

*Mission:* By telling the story of the experiences of the Backhouse family from 1796 to today, the Backhouse Historic Site helps visitors discover their own connection to the history of Norfolk County and their place in the present.

**History**

What is it that we do at museums? The purpose of museums is to preserve the material culture of the past. The artifacts, archives and buildings collected at museums are physical representations of the history of a specific community. History is not a ‘thing’. It is not a list of dates and names or a chronological account of what happened. It is the stories we tell each other about the past. Those physical artifacts, archives, photographs and buildings are the containers or triggers for stories.

The Backhouse Historic Site is soaked in stories! The job of this museum is to tell those stories in accessible ways; exhibitions, education programs, events, living history interpretation, guided tours etc.

There is a wealth of museums in Norfolk county and they do an excellent job of preserving the history of their communities. Collectively, they tell the story of the history of Norfolk county. Through specialization, these museums make the most effective use of limited resources. The Backhouse Historic Site cannot do it all and needs to focus their mandate on the following specific stories:

- History of the Backhouse Family from 1796 to the present
- Long Point Settlement
- War of 1812
- History of landscape change and the Conservation Movement in the Long Point Watershed
- The History of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority
- The History of Port Rowan and former South Walsingham Township
C. A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Recommendation # 3
That a new 5 year Operations Plan be developed for Backhouse Historic Site to achieve the following goals and objectives;

Goal 1: The Backhouse Historic Site is a respected and accredited Museum
Collection is relevant to mandate
A Partnership is formed with the County of Norfolk for the transfer of ownership of all artifacts not relevant to new mandate
Collection is catalogued
Research archive is organized and accessible to the public
Museum achieves all standards of the Community Museum of Ontario Program
The former Centennial Museum building is converted into a new History Centre. This Centre is the home of the archives, artifact storage and a changing exhibition gallery.

Goal 2: The Backhouse Historic Site delivers an authentic history program
Program is based on historic research
Program is relevant to the mandate
Program is continuously evaluated for improvement
Program is unique in Norfolk County
Program is grounded in living history interpretive techniques
The artifact and historic building collection is the foundation of all programming

Goal 3: The Backhouse Historic Site is a place where the community feels welcomed, celebrated and reflected.
The Backhouse Historic Site works cooperatively with all of the museums in Norfolk County
Programming and events are based on collaborative community partnerships
The volunteer program is well organized and managed.
D. CREATE CAPACITY

As concluded in the capacity assessment and in at least 2 previous Strategic Plans, the existing staffing structure does not have the capacity to bring the museum operation up to CMOG standards nor to maintain those standards, when achieved.

More importantly, the existing staffing structure does not have the capacity to operate Backus Heritage Village as a safe public facility, in compliance with LPRCA rules and regulations and all applicable municipal, provincial and federal regulations.

The following changes are recommended for the staffing and volunteer structure.

Recommendation 4
That the staffing complement of the Backhouse Historic Site be increased to 2 seasonal, full-time professional staff for 39 weeks.
That 4 students for 16 weeks be employed to open the Backhouse Historic Site for the following expanded season:
Weekends in May, June, September, and first two weeks of October, and, five days a week for the months of July and August.

This will extend the operating season of Backus Heritage Village from the first week of May to the second week of October to align with the normal operating season of Backus Heritage Conservation Area.
NOTE this is the minimum staffing required to open the museum to the public and does not include staff for programming beyond building interpretation. This is the minimum length of operating season required to meet CMOG standards.
Benefits of new structure

Staff is required by their employment contracts to operate in compliance with LPRCA and all other relevant municipal, provincial and federal regulations.

Core or basic program is delivered by trained staff.

Volunteers are supervised by staff and provide capacity for program growth and expansion.

This is the minimum staff structure needed to meet and maintain compliance with standards for Community Museums in Ontario (CMOG) and to operate a safe, public facility.

Volunteer Program

While professional staff is essential for the management of a basic museum program, volunteers are key to enhancing and growing that program. Volunteers and community partners are instrumental in moving a museum program from basic to great. The second most common concern expressed by the community about Backus Heritage Village is poor management of the volunteer program. This problem was also raised in the 2004 Demerling Report, which correctly identified that the volunteer program needed more staff resources to be successful.

The face of volunteerism is changing. The last of the Baby Boomers is retiring and this group has very different expectations of volunteering from earlier waves of this massive demographic. Current volunteers are busy people, committing a portion of their time to many causes. They carefully choose organizations with causes that resonate with them and expect that the places where they volunteer to be safe, well organized and provide opportunities for work that is worthy. Good volunteer programs have staff to organize the work of volunteers, ensure they have all the supplies or equipment they need to do the job, train volunteers in the use of that equipment and keep administration and scheduling on track. Safety is paramount both in what the volunteer does, and, as in the standard requirement for police checks, who is accepted to volunteer.

Volunteers are key to the future success of this museum. However, the community expressed concerns about an overly complex application system, lack of training, poor organization and lack of appropriate gratitude for their contributions. The Volunteer Program at Backus Heritage Village needs reworking. Here are recommendations:

**Recommendation 5**
That the Backhouse Historic Site develop a 3 tiered Volunteer Structure:
A. Community Partners
B. Short term special project volunteers
C. Program Volunteers

Approved by the Backus Museum Committee on November 10, 2016.
Approval for distribution for Community comment by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board, December 7, 2016.
Community Partners

Community Partners are other organizations with a special interest or program that complements the mandate of the Backhouse Historic Site.

Examples are:

Norfolk Spinners and Weavers’ Guild
Norfolk Militia
Port Rowan – South Walsingham Heritage Association

Community Partners provide a specific service for the Backhouse Historic Site that is defined in a written agreement signed by both the LPRCA and the Community Partner. Only approved and current members of the Community Partner may participate in the delivery of the program outlined in the written agreement. The written agreement will be approved annually. Individual members of the Community Partner are not volunteers of the Backhouse Historic Site.

Short term Special Project Volunteers

Occasionally, a short term special project or event is initiated at the Backhouse Historic Site that involves the donation of time by the general public, special interest groups or other not for profit organizations. For example, the provision of safety or food services at an event.

Example may be;

Local volunteer Fire Departments
Long Point Lions Club
Norfolk North and Norfolk South Vintage Base Ball Clubs
Backus Scouts

Short term volunteers may participate in only the specific project. The parameters of the project will be defined in written correspondence and be agreed to by all participants before the project commences. Each agreement covers a one-time program or event.

Program Volunteers

Program volunteers are members of the public who wish to participate in the delivery of programs and services of the Backhouse Historic Site. Volunteers will fill out a full application package for review by staff and an interview will be scheduled with prospective volunteer. After the interview, the volunteer will be notified of the decision by staff. All program volunteers will be provided with training and supervision by staff. A program volunteer’s application will be current for 3 years and will be renewed for successive 3 year terms following successful evaluation.
CONCLUSION

It is clear from the tone of community consultations and stakeholder interviews that Backus Heritage Village is at a critical juncture. Fiduciary responsibility for this important heritage asset belongs to the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board, and decisions made now will either speed or reverse the decline that has been steady for the past 16 years. The local community wants an active, professional community museum and they are willing to roll up their sleeves and help, but the first step in this direction needs to be taken by the owner. The Long Point Region Conservation Authority is already moving forward on this. They have affirmed their commitment to operating a museum in their current Strategic Plan. They have hired a professional Curator and they have revitalized the Backus Museum Committee to oversee the development of this new Strategic Plan.

Backus Heritage Village is 60 years young this year. By working together, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority and the local community can achieve the stability and success everyone wants for this important local museum. Let’s make this year the start of that transformation.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila A. Johnson
Curator
Backus Heritage Village
November 10, 2016
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Approved by the Backus Museum Committee on November 10, 2016.
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**Secondary Sources**


**Policies**


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# Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>19 hectares of the John C. Backus property was purchased to be developed into a recreational and historical facility. 263 hectares of Carolinian forest was also purchased as part of the agreement between the authority and teh Backus family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>The Mill House adjoining the pond and across from the Mill was sold and removed from Backus. (building moved) Backhouse Mill received designation as a Provincial Heritage Site. Plaque installed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>New siding was placed on the south and west sides of the Mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Mr. J. C. Backus signed a release of her interest in the Backus house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>The Backus Homestead is renovated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>49 hectares of the Peter Sterczer property was purchased adjacent to the Backus property. One acre of land was expropriated near the Backus Mill. The flume was re-lined. A footbridge was built below the mill and the old machine shed beside the Mill was turned into a picnic pavilion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>The decayed timber between the mill stone assembly and the turbine in the Mill was replaced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>The mill dam was washed out n heavy rains and repairs were necessary to the dam, road and flume. Sheet piling was installed in the dam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Alarms were installed in the Mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Port Rowan and South Walsingham Centennial Committee leased land from the LPRCA to build the Museum building as a Centennial project. Once complete, the building was turned over to the Authority and it was opened to the public on June 18, 1967.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>The Backus Homestead re-decorated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>The west foundation of the Mill was repaired and the cemetery restored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Repairs to the Backus Mill and the Backus pond is dredged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1973  The Forbes barn is donated by John Forbes of Charlotteville. The Mill flume was completely replaced. The Vittoria Carriage Shop relocated to Backus Heritage Village.

1974  The Backus Homestead is renovated with the aid of the Long Point Bird Observatory and the Richard and Jean Ivey Foundation. A lease is given to the Long Point Bird Observatory to use the Homestead as their head office for 10 years. Lease extended to 1986. Drive shed relocated to Backus Heritage Village.

1975  189 acres of the John Tarcza property was purchased adding to the land surrounding Backus Heritage Village. A waterwheel was constructed and installed in the Mill and major repairs were conducted on the Mill floor and foundation. Gears were installed and the flume was extended to facilitate Mill operation. First time flour ground at the Mill since 1956.

1976  A 1900 sawmill is donated by the Kolbe Fish company of Port Dover. A windmill is received from the City of Townsend.

1977  A cider press is received and security system is installed in the Mill and Museum. A threshing barn is received from Townsend Township.

1978  Replica Ice House constructed

1979  Alex Suderman donated a barn which was a former carriage shop and livery stable. An 1850 log house made of ash logs was obtained from Ross Aspden of Maybee’s Corners near Courtland.

1980  A lumber storage building was built with used lumber. Teeterville Church is donated to Backus Heritage Village. A corn crib is donated.

1981  A log house is donated by Randy and Judy Nunn of Langton. A shed is built to house the shingle mill.

1982  Siding was replaced on the Mill. The Cherry Valley School is donated to Backus Heritage Village.

1983  Museum Program Collaborative complete comprehensive Master Plan for Backus Heritage Village.

1984  Replacement of deteriorated beams and posts in Mill. A desk, benches and blackboard and wood stove installed in Cherry Valley School. Outdoor bake oven was constructed funded by the Norfolk Wheat Board and the Long Point Foundation for Conservation

1987 Four large flour bags containing Backus Gristmill and Lumber mill archival materials dating from 1896 to 1950 found. 17,000 pieces were added to the archives. Backus Family Buick put on display in the garage. New cedar roof on the Homestead House. Day in the Life of a Pioneer Child school program developed.

1989 Renovations to Museum building – new roof, upgrading of interior walls and ceiling and installation of track lighting. First 1812 Re-enactment event presented. 1812 Education program developed.

1990 Reconstruction of the foundation under Teeterville Church. Reorganization of LPRCA Department: Heritage Village, Conservation Education and Backus Heritage Conservation Area management combined into one department.


1992 New displays installed in the Centennial Museum over the next 2 years to include Norfolk Reformer, a bank, Harness shop and shoemakers shop and an exhibit highlighting the Dave Stone collection. Support received from the Richard and Jean Ivey Fund. Name changed to Backus Heritage Village. Deck installed at Aunt Erie’s Kitchen.


1995 Bake oven was redesigned and reconstructed by the Wheat Producers of Oxford and Norfolk Counties. Norfolk Militia members reconstructed the fieldstone fireplace and chimney in the 1860s Log House.

1998 Long Point Foundation for Conservation raises $300,000 in their Third Century Campaign. Repairs to Backhouse Mill include replacement of the Sluice, painting and upgrading of interior lighting
New steel roof on Forbes Barn
200th Anniversary of the Backhouse Mill
Backhouse Mill designated a National Historic Site
1999 Backhouse Milestones Turn Again: Mill machinery restored to enable grinding of flour for demonstration and sale.
2000 Renovation of the child’s playroom and kitchen exhibit in the Homestead. Clutch and drive shaft assembly in the Mill repaired. Wall rebuilt and new roof on log house and repairs to drive shed.
2001 10th anniversary of the Evelyn Franklin Weavers Guild at Backus Heritage Village
2005 Repair to the roof and clutch for the Grist Mill and installation of wooden eaves trough on cabins and museum.
2006 Repair to mill wheel in Grist Mill and new cedar roof on the Log Cabin
2007 Improvement to displays in Forbes Barn and Garage
2009 Repair flume on Backhouse Mill
2011 Replacement and painting of siding on Backhouse Mill
2015 Structural improvement made to Backhouse Mill funded by the W. Garfield Weston Foundation. New siding and windows in Museum building

32 From Long Point Region Conservation Authority Annual Reports, 1980 to 2015.

Approved by the Backus Museum Committee on November 10, 2016.
Approval for distribution for Community comment by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board, December 7, 2016.
Appendix B

SELF GUIDED TOUR

1. CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE
   Did you know that Long Point is an internationally recognized world biosphere? Or, that Backus Woods is one of the largest remaining tracts of Carolinian forests in Canada? Explore the present and future legacy of the Backhouse family through interactive displays on this region’s unique natural history.

Guided Tours Available.
Constructed 1991.

2. 1798 Backhouse Mill
   National Historic Site
   A National Historic Site In 1796, John C. Backhouse acquired 600 acres near Walsingham, Norfolk County on the condition that he build a mill. In 1797, he erected a sawmill on Dedrick Creek and used the lumber to build a grist mill around 1798. The Backhouse Mill is one of the oldest and best preserved examples of the small-scale water powered mills found throughout Canada in the 19th and 20th century. This wooden structure has survived two centuries of continued use and is furnished with a collection of operable equipment closely associated with the most important technological changes in 19th century milling history. Discover the history of the first generation of the Backhouse family on the Guided Tour.

Guided Tours Available
Original to Historic Site, 1798.

3. GARAGE, C. 1900
   This building housed the Backus family Model T and Paige automobiles. It replaced the carriage house with the advent of the automobile at the turn of the 20th century. See inside the 1936 Buick McLaughlin Sedan, the 3rd automobile of John C. Backhouse.
   Original to Historic Site, 1900.

4. BACKUS HOMESTEAD, C. 1852
   When the Backhouse family emigrated to Walsingham from the Niagara region, they built a single room log cabin for their first home. In 1800, a frame house was built opposite the Conservation Education Centre. Known as “The House with Forty doors”, it contained a staircase imported from England. In 1850, John H. Backhouse, grandson to John C, commenced construction on this brick house. Completed in 1852, the house contains 15 spacious rooms and was constructed with 3 layers of brick made from clay found on the property. Originally a large wooden verandah went around the house. Today only the northern and eastern sections remain. Discover the history of later generations of the Backhouse family on the Guided Tour.

Guided Tours Available
Original to Historic Site, 1852.

5. CHILDREN’S PLAYHOUSE, C. 1928
   This playhouse was constructed for Hazel “Budd” Backus, the only daughter of John C. and Florence Backus. As the only girl with three brothers, John H., George A. And Thomas, Mr. Backus felt his daughter needed a playhouse of her own. This little house was furnished with a small table and two chairs. Hazel even had a miniature set of Wedgwood dishes to use for teatime. The playhouse was built by Howard Sudney in 1928.
   Original to Historic Site, c. 1928.

6. FORBES BARN, C. 1870
   Originally located between
Fisher’s Glen and Port Ryerse on Lakeshore Road, it was moved to Backus Heritage Conservation Area in 1973. This building is an excellent example of a grain storage barn, typical of the type used on the Backhouse farm in the 19th century. The threshing floor is located on the first floor in the centre of the barn and loose hay and straw would be stored in the 2nd floor loft. Take a look inside for an exhibit of agricultural artifacts. **Original 1870. Relocated 1973.**

7. DRIVE SHED, 19TH CENTURY
This 3 sided structure provided shelter for horses and carriages while their owners attended church. The bottom section of the walls was frequently double lined so if horses kicked the walls, the liner could be more easily repaired than the building’s structure. Originally located on Lot 1 Woodhouse, Gore, Broken Front, the building was moved to Backus Heritage Conservation Area in 1974. See the collection of Thornton Family wagons inside. **Original 19th century. Relocated in 1974.**

8. MUSEUM, 1967
Built in 1967, as a project of the Port Rowan and South Walsingham Centennial Committee, the museum chronicles businesses of the 19th century. Learn about the many shipwrecks off Long Point in Davey Stone’s Locker which is filled with treasures from the bottom of Lake Erie. See gravestones of the Backhouse family relocated behind the Museum for their preservation. **Constructed, 1967.**

9. STUMP PULLER, 19TH CENTURY
This tripod was used to clear tree stumps from fields. Six men and a team of horses were required to operate it. Once pulled, the massive roots were used on the outer rim of fields as stump fences. These fences kept cattle out of crop fields and acted as windbreaks to slow erosion of freshly cleared land. **Original, Acquired c. 1970s.**

10. TREADMILL AND DRAG SAW, C. 1900
A treadmill generated power to operate small machinery on the farm. A team of horses would walk on the ramp powering a drive shaft which was attached to a belt. The belt transferred power to operate machinery. In this exhibit, the treadmill is powering a drag saw used to cut lumber. **Treadmill c. 1970s. Drag Saw, c. 1900.**

11. VITTORIA CARRIAGE SHOP, C. 1843
This building is the second floor of a carriage shop located in Vittoria. The building originally housed a carriage and wagon repair shop and later a general store. It was relocated to Backus Heritage Conservation Area in 1973. **Original, 1843. Relocated 1973.**

12. OTTERVILLE CIDER PRESS, 1953
Like most 19th and 20th century farms, the Backhouse family raised an apple orchard. At harvest time, families would join together for apple cider-making bees. A belt from a tractor turned the screw to crush apples for juice. On the ground floor, juice was collected into barrels. When work was over, families celebrated the harvest with a meal frequently followed by music and dancing. **Cider Press, 1953, Otterville. Purchased and relocated 1977.**

13. STOREFRONTS
a. **Community Hall:** Check your watch! Timed activities take place here daily when the museum is open.
b. **Dedrick’s Mercantile:** The
General Store provided important services in the 19th century. Here, settlers could trade, barter or buy needed manufactured goods for their home or farm. Everything was sold here from tools to seed to dry goods to cloth. The shopkeeper also served as a banker, extending or denying credit to his customers. Expecting a letter? Pick it up or mail it here at the post office, often located at the rear of the store.

**c. The Weaver’s Shop:** Small commercial waving shops were common in 19th century Ontario producing yard goods, coverlets by order and colourful rags for rag rugs. Stop in and chat with members of the Evelyn Franklin Weavers Guild and learn the art of weaving or spinning from these experts.

*Original collection, South Walsingham Township, acquired 1979.*

14. **SHINGLE MILL, 20TH CENTURY**
The Shingle mill makes wooden shingles from blocks of wood by cutting with the grain and splitting off a thickness required for either shingle or shakes. Cedar and white pine were most commonly used to make shingles. Originally made by hand with a shingle bench and frow, a shingle mill mechanized the making of shingles, quickly generating the thousands needed for roof construction.

15. **BLACKSMITH SHOP, 19TH CENTURY**
Located inside the Suderman Barn. Early farmer set up their own blacksmith shops to forge hinges and tools, horse shoes and iron tires for wagons, all needed on the farm. Depending on their skill, they would take in orders from other farmers, generating additional income. The blacksmith worked in semi-darkness to help him assess the colour of the hot metal being worked. On the north wall is the forge, air bellows, hood and range. The anvil is on a large tree stump in the centre of the shop. The blacksmith buried the metal to be worked in the hot coals of the forge. By looking at the metal’s colour, the smith can determine if the metal is ready to be worked. Using tongs and hammers, the metal is pounded on the anvil into the desired shape.

*Original to Port Rowan, relocated in 1979.*

16. **SUDERMAN BARN, 19TH CENTURY**
This building was formerly a carriage shop and livery stable, located on Lakeshore Road just west of Port Rowan. The ‘salt box’ style of roof and board and batten siding are typical of livestock barns of 19th century farms and representative of the barns on the Backhouse farm. See an excellent example of an early corncrib beside the barn. A corn crib was used to store ears of corn until they were sufficiently dry to be shelled or milled into animal feed.

*Original to Port Rowan, relocated in 1979.*

17. **TOWNSEND BARN, C. 1900**
This building is an excellent example of an early 20th century implement barn. With mechanization and the advent of tractors, farm machinery increased in size and specialization. Buildings were now being built to house not only farm animals, but farm machinery.

*Original, Townsend Township, c. 1900s, relocated 1977. Drive shed addition, 1982. Closed to the public.*

18. **JOHNSON LOG HOUSE, 1895**
This log house was built in 1895 on a hundred acre farm located
one mile east of Glenn Meyer, Lot 3 Concession 13. James and Isabel Johnson, UEL were the owners of the land. Their son, Sidney Albert Johnson built the log house when he assumed ownership of the farm. Original, Glen Meyer, 1895. Relocated 1981.

19. RONSON LOG HOUSE, 1864
This log house was built by T. B. Ronson on his farm located on Lots 2 and 3 Concession 1 of North Talbot Road. This home and farm was part of a larger community of farms, private residences, churches, mills and a general store that formed the community of Acadia in Middleton Township. This log house is representative of the first home of the Backhouse family. Original, Acadia, 1864. Relocated 1979.

20. BAKE OVEN
Bake ovens produced a week’s supply of bread and pies for the family. This reconstruction is similar in style to the type used in this area in the mid-19th century. A fire was lit in the interior and once the oven reached the desired temperature, the coals were scraped out and the bread loaded in. Determining the proper heat was crucial to baking. One method was to place a small pile of flour at the entrance to the oven. If the oven was too hot, the flour turned back. If it turned brown, it was just right. Reproduction, 1994. Reconstructed in 2013.

21. HERB GARDEN
A farm wife grew herbs in her gardens for culinary, medicinal and textile purposes, but also for scent and insect and animal avoidance. This type of garden was located steps from her home for quick and easy access. The plants found growing in this garden today are representative of those grown in the 19th century. Planted 1993.

22. CHERRY VALLEY SCHOOL HOUSE, 1866
This building was originally located on Cherry Valley Road, in the former Township of Townsend, south of Waterford. Built in 1866, this one-room school house was known as Townsend & Windham Union School #6. This unique 8-side design for the school house was adopted after the school trustee traveled to Kansas to see a similar building. Each side of the school measures 36 feet and the exterior walls were constructed with 3 layers of brick. The tall windows on each face provides for a bright interior at a time when interior lighting of schools was rare. The shape of the building and the cupola would help to draw hot air up, leaving the interior cool on hot days. The Cherry Valley School House may be one of two octagonal schools built in Ontario and was in use from 1866 to 1929. Today, the school house still provides 19th century lessons to school children and visitors. Original, Townsend Township, 1866. Relocated 1982 – 1983.

23. TEETERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, 1869
The Teeterville Baptist Church was established on June 4, 1859 with a Prayer and Convenant Meeting. Ten years later, a church was built and by 1871, there were 63 people in the congregation. The last recorded Sunday School was on October 29, 1979. Simply furnished with box pews and a built-in baptismal pool beneath the pulpit floorboards, this building is typical of early 19th century rural, protestant churches. Original, Relocated 1980.
24. ICE HOUSE, C. 1900
An Ice House was used to store blocks of ice cut on the mill pond during the winter months. The unique construction of this building and the insulation of the ice in layers of sawdust would keep the blocks frozen for use during the summer months. Ice Houses provide the first refrigeration in the 19th century. An example of an icebox is in the Backus Homestead kitchen. Blocks of ice stored in the ice house were chopped down into smaller pieces to insert in the lower storage shelf of the ice box. The ice would keep perishables like milk and raw meats cool enough to safely eat over several days. Often it was the eldest child’s responsibility to carry in blocks of ice for the kitchen. 

*Replica built 1978.*
Appendix C

Results of 2016 Visitor Surveys

Total number of surveys collected between July 1 and September 1, 2016: 101

Where are our visitors from?

![Origin of Visitors Pie Chart]

- South Walsingham/Long Point
- Norfolk County
- Ontario
- Canada
- United States
- Other Countries

How many in your party?

![# of People Pie Chart]

- Adults
- Children

Ratio: 2.25 adults and 1.31 children is typical visitor group size visiting Backus Heritage Village
If from out of town, where are you staying?

Where staying

What brings you to Norfolk County?

Coming to Norfolk for...
Is this your first visit to Backus Heritage Village?

First Visit?

If not, how often do you visit?

Frequency of Visits per year
How long did you spend at Backus Heritage Village?

**Length of visit**

- 1 - 2 hours
- 2 - 3 hours
- 3 - 4 hours
- 4 + hours

How did you find out about Backus Heritage Village?

**Most effective marketing**

- Friends/Family
- Website
- BHCA
- Visitor Magazine
- Site Brochure
- School visit
Please rate your experience.

**Mill Tour**

- Poor
- Needs Improvement
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

**House Tour**

- Poor
- Needs Improvement
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent
Appendix D

Summary of Education Evaluations
Backus Heritage Village
Spring 2016

Total number of survey submitted = 32
Total number of students = 870

Program plan complemented my classroom unit plan
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 100%

The Program related to the Ontario Curriculum
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 100%

The program was well organized
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 100%

Instructor was an effective presenter/demonstrator.
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 100%

Presentations were clear and organized.
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 100%

Instructor stimulated student interest.
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 87%

Students had a positive learning experience.
% of total recording Agree or Strongly Agree 87%

% would recommend this program to another teacher 92%
Appendix E

Backus Museum Committee members

Chair: Mike Columbus

LPRCA Board Members: Roger Geysens, Noel Haydt, Robert Chambers

Community Representatives: Betty Chanyi, Julie Stone, Ron Sackrider and Madeline Wilson

Excerpts from the Backus Museum Committee Governance Policy, 2016

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN THE COMMUNITY

The board of directors is ultimately responsible and accountable for the organization's outcomes, use of resources and strategic directions. The board of directors is the governing body and it is to them that the funders, the community and other stakeholders look for assurance that the organization is pursuing its mandate, is using its resources wisely and is delivering on its objectives.

Increasingly, the expectations and accountabilities of a board are growing, especially from third party funders, such as government, foundations and others. Expectations of funders and others that the board is the governing body, fulfilling its role in regards to governance and oversight of the organization, are now well established.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board members are representatives of the community and hold fiduciary responsibilities to ensure appropriate business procedures and accounting processes are in place; that contracts and agreements are reviewed for due diligence and are adhered to; that statutory requirements are recognized and fulfilled; and that the best interests of the organization and its organizational health are sustained.

ROLE OF THE BACKUS MUSEUM COMMITTEE

1 Policy Development

With the input of professional staff and/or consultants, the Committee is responsible for developing and recommending for approval to the LPRCA Board operational policies for the Backus Heritage Museum. In establishing written policies, the Committee and LPRCA Board provides its members and staff with clear authority and guidance needed to carry out their respective roles: Committee members formulate, monitor and evaluate policy and make recommendations to the LPRCA Board for approval and staff implement it.

The Committee and Board will develop policies that ensure compliance with federal, provincial and municipal government statutory requirements.
2 Planning
The Committee will develop short and long-range plans for the approval of the LPRCA Board. The plan should outline the objectives for each function of the museum for the specified planning period, specify the expected outcomes, indicators and impacts, and guide the Board and staff in providing the space, facilities, financial means and human resources to achieve these objectives.

3 Progress
The Board is responsible for the safety, security and preservation of the museum's collections, providing appropriate storage facilities and ensuring the physical security and preservation of the collections. These facilities must meet professional museum standards for the fulfilment of such basic functions as acquisition, preservation, research, exhibition and education and should comply with all relevant codes for staff, volunteer and public safety. The Committee will recommend policy and procedures for the collection for the approval by the LPRCA Board. The Backus Museum Committee will support the Collections Management function of Backus Heritage Museum.

4 Identity
The Backus Museum Committee and the LPRCA Board provides an important link between the museum and the community. The Board represents the views of the community in policy development, communicates the mission and vision of Backus Heritage Committee to elected representatives and the public, and advocates greater public involvement and increased moral and financial support for Backus Heritage Museum.

5 Fundraising
The Backus Museum Committee will develop an annual fundraising goal and a program to achieve that target. The Committee will be actively involved in the planning and delivery of the fundraising program.
Appendix F

Standards for Community Museums in Ontario

Introduction

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is pleased to introduce a revised edition of the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.

The environment in which museums function is changing and the museum profession is growing and becoming more skilled and knowledgeable. Museum standards must continue to evolve as museums find new ways to serve their communities and fulfill their mandate.

The 10 revised standards for community museums represent the minimum requirements for the operation of a good community museum. Community museums need to meet the standards in order to qualify for funding under the Community Museum Operating Grant.

The province has a fundamental commitment to the preservation, presentation and sustainability of the material culture of Ontario, through the community museums of the province. In achieving these standards, Ontario's museums will continue along the path to excellence and remain a resource to the communities they serve.

To help you meet the revised standards, the ministry will continue to provide advisory services, resource materials and relevant museological information.

Governance standard

As a community museum, you must be governed according to standards and be open and accountable to the public for your decisions.

Requirements

1. A community museum must be:
   a. governed by a publicly accountable body.
   b. established by a written document(s) which include(s) descriptions of:
      • authority for the museum
      • museum’s mission statement that
         o defines the museum’s purpose
         o makes a commitment to the museum’s role in the public trust
         o identifies who the museum serves
         o identifies what the museum will collect
         o identifies the impact it will have in its community
c. how the museum will dissolve its assets and liabilities should it cease to operate

2. The museum's governing body must:
   a. be established by a written document which outlines:
      • its composition and structure – including selection of members and terms of office
      • its obligation to ethical behaviour and the avoidance of conflict of interest – as a body and as individuals
      • its obligation to meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on its decisions or activities
      • its responsibilities and duties, including:
        o recruiting, supervising and evaluating the museum's curator or director (i.e. the museum's chief manager)
        o formulating the museum’s statement of purpose
        o formulating written policy governing operations and defining programs
        o securing funding necessary to carry out the museum's programs
        o preparing or approving an annual budget and monitoring it to ensure public accountability
        o ensuring that the purposes for which the museum exists are being fulfilled
        o ensuring that the collection is being cared for under proper conditions
   b. meet regularly and as often as necessary to conduct its business effectively
      • meetings must follow a written agenda and a written record must be kept of all discussions and decisions

3. The museum's operation and administration must:
   a. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have a bearing on its operations and activities

4. The museum and its staff must:
   a. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour as an institution and as individuals.

5. The museum's operations and activities must be:
   a. directed by short and long-term written plans (e.g. business plan, strategic plan, visioning plan or master plan) that are:
   b. approved by the governing body
   c. contain goals and objectives relevant to the museum’s statement of purpose

**Finance standard**

As a community museum, you must demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

**Requirements**
1. A community museum must:
   a. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in the pursuit of funding
   b. demonstrate a commitment to financial sustainability and stability
   c. seek diverse sources of funding - both public and private
   d. make public an annual financial report

2. The museum's governing body must:
   a. secure funding necessary for the operation and maintenance of the museum and its activities
   b. secure funding for capital projects
   c. approve the annual budget that allocates and controls financial resources related to the museum's operation and administration
   d. review and approve the museum's budget in relation to the goals, objectives and priorities of the museum

Collections standard

Objective of the Collections Standard

As a community museum, the artifacts you keep represent your community’s heritage. To protect their value, you must maintain a well-organized, managed and documented collection.

Requirements

A community museum must:

1. have a written collection development policy stating that it will:
   a. ensure that the scope of collection is consistent with the museum’s statement of purpose
   b. establish priorities for collection development
   c. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in collection development (e.g. repatriation, human remains)
   d. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on collecting activities (e.g. illicit materials, firearms, hazardous materials)

2. have a written collections management policy stating that it will:
   a. ensure proper procedures and documentation for acquiring, using and deaccessioning artifacts in the collection
   b. ensure proper procedures and documentation for incoming and outgoing loans
   c. ensure proper procedures for the management of collections records
   d. demonstrate a commitment to conservation standards in the labelling, care and handling of artifacts
   e. distinguish between artifacts in a research (or study) collection and objects in an education (or hands-on) collection
f. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on collections management and documentation (e.g. acquisition and de-accessioning, tax receipts, firearms, hazardous materials)

3. assign the duties of a Collections Manager (or equivalent position) to an appropriately trained staff member and provides adequate time, workspace and funding for collections management activities

4. use an effective collection documentation system, which may be paper-based, electronic, or a combination and includes:
   a. a standardized numbering system
   b. an accession register
   c. a master catalogue file
   d. signed donor and loan forms

5. keep a periodically updated paper or electronic copy of the collection records off-site in a secure location

6. keep its collection records current

Exhibition standard

Objective of the Exhibition Standard

As a community museum, your exhibits provide an important link between your community and its heritage.

In the planning and presentation of exhibitions, you must strive for accuracy of information, relevance to the community, effective communication, opportunities for learning and engagement, and the safe display of artifacts.

Requirements

A community museum must:

1. have a written exhibition policy stating that it will:
   a. ensure that the themes and number of exhibits are consistent with the museum’s statement of purpose and the needs and interests of the communities it serves
   b. demonstrate a commitment to accuracy and fairness, inclusivity and respect in exhibit presentation
   c. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in exhibit presentation
   d. meet conservation standards in exhibit design, materials and use of artifacts
   e. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on exhibit presentation (e.g. safety codes, copyright, disability legislation).

2. ensure its exhibits are consistent with the museum’s exhibition policy

3. ensure it has an exhibition schedule comprising a mix of permanent and temporary exhibits
4. ensure the relevance, accuracy and effective communication of each exhibit by:
   a. establishing clearly defined objectives and evaluating exhibits against their objectives
   b. using appropriate expertise, including staff, volunteers, community groups, or consultants
   c. carrying out sufficient research

5. ensure that all staff (including volunteers) involved in the planning, preparation and installation of exhibits have the necessary skills and training

6. ensure that exhibits are safe for visitors and staff by:
   a. placing hazardous materials in display cases
   b. adequately supporting, securing or providing barriers against heavy objects or moving parts that could cause injury
   c. training staff in the safe operation of exhibits (e.g. machinery)
   d. meeting legislated requirements in the handling and display of firearms

7. ensure that exhibits are accessible and capable of being used and enjoyed by visitors of all ages and abilities (See the A.O.D.A. Wizard for your organization’s specific requirements such as the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, and dates for implementation)

8. ensure that exhibits effectively promote learning and enjoyment through:
   a. providing a variety of interpretation methods to meet a range of visitor needs
   b. regularly replacing artifacts in permanent exhibits with other examples from storage, to refresh the exhibits for the community’s enjoyment as well as for conservation purposes

9. ensure a portion of the museum’s budget is allocated annually for:
   - exhibit development
   - design
   - construction
   - maintenance
   - evaluation expenses

   ensure that exhibit preparation activities that are harmful to artifacts are carried out in a workshop that is isolated from collection areas (i.e. display and storage).
   - activities would include those that produce dust, excessive heat or vibrations, and those that involve the use of aerosols and solvents (e.g. paints and varnishes)

**Interpretation and education standard**

As a community museum, your interpretation and education programs allow the community to interact more closely with your collections and information and reach audiences of all ages, interests and abilities.

**Requirements**

A community museum must:
1. have a written interpretation and education policy stating that it will:
   a. ensure that the theme, content and format of interpretation and education programs are –
      • consistent with the museum’s statement of purpose
      • meet the needs and interests of the communities it serves
   b. establish priorities for the development of interpretation and education programs
   c. ensure that responsibility for interpretation and education programming is given to properly trained staff
   d. demonstrate a commitment to accuracy and fairness, inclusivity and respect in interpretation and education programs
   e. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in interpretation and education programs
   f. demonstrate a commitment to meet conservation standards in use of artifacts
   g. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on interpretation and education programs (e.g. copyright, disability legislation)

2. have an interpretation and education program consisting of a mix of school programs, public programs, and special events; all interpretation and education programs must:
   a. be consistent with the museum’s statement of purpose and meet the needs and interests of the communities it serves
   b. promote learning and enjoyment

3. ensure the relevance, accuracy and effective communication of its interpretation and education programs (see above for A.O.D.A. requirements) by:
   a. establishing clearly defined and measurable learning objectives and outcomes, and undertaking a process of program evaluation
   b. using appropriate expertise – including staff, volunteers, community groups, or consultants
   c. carrying out research

4. ensure all staff involved in the development and delivery of interpretation and education programs, have the appropriate skills and training

5. provide sufficient space and a safe and secure environment for interpretation and education programs

6. allocate every year a portion of the museum’s budget for interpretation and education program expenses

Research standard

As a community museum, research is an ongoing activity and is reflected by your well-researched exhibits, interpretation, publications and educational programming. As well as helping staff researchers, you also have a responsibility to assist outside researchers.

Requirements

A community museum must:
1. have a written research policy stating that it will:
   a. demonstrate a commitment to the pursuit of research by staff and outside researchers
   b. ensure that the scope of research is consistent with the museum’s statement of purpose
   c. establish priorities for research activities
   d. demonstrate a commitment to accuracy and objectivity in the results of research
   e. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in research (e.g. confidentiality of records, ownership of information)
   f. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on research activities and products (e.g. copyright legislation)

2. have a research program that is consistent with its statement of purpose, and reflects the needs of its communities, site, collections and public programs.

3. schedule time for staff to carry out the museum’s research program

4. allocate a portion of its budget every year for research expenses, such as reference material, photocopying and staff travel

5. provide a clean, well-lit, separate space for staff and external researchers to carry out research

6. ensure that researchers who have access to the collection have training in handling artifacts

Conservation standard

As a community museum, you have a responsibility to protect and preserve the collection entrusted to your care, so that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy and learn from it.

You will demonstrate the stewardship of your collection by following procedures that ensure its long-term preservation.

Requirements

A community museum must:

1. have a written conservation policy that sets out how it will:
   a. demonstrate its understanding of the distinction between preventive care and conservation treatment
   b. demonstrate its commitment to the preventive conservation of the collection
   c. establish priorities for making decisions regarding conservation treatment
   d. ensure that responsibility for the care of its collections is delegated to appropriately trained staff
   e. demonstrate a commitment to consult with, and be guided by, the advice of qualified experts in conservation
   f. demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour in the care of collections
Building a Better Future for the Past:

g. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements that have an impact on the conservation of collections

2. demonstrate a commitment to protect the collection through proper care and handling by:
   a. implementing a program to instruct staff how to safely handle artifacts
   b. ensuring that artifacts are durable enough to withstand their proposed use e.g., displays, interpretation, loans, hands-on activities
   c. implementing safe packing, unpacking and transportation procedures

3. provide one or more exclusive spaces for the storage of the collection. These areas will be:
   a. used for collection storage only
   b. large enough to store existing artifacts without crowding, and to accommodate projected future acquisitions
   c. kept clean through the implementation of a regular housekeeping schedule performed by staff or volunteers with the necessary training
   d. kept dark, except when staff are present
   e. restricted to access only by designated appropriate staff (e.g., curator or registrar)
   f. equipped with suitable and safe shelves, cabinets and artifact supports

4. maintain the safety and preservation of artifacts on exhibit by:
   a. ensuring that cases and floor spaces are large enough to hold artifacts without crowding or distortion
   b. ensuring that artifacts on display are adequately supported with safe materials
   c. using display materials (such as case materials, backgrounds, adhesives, labels) that are not harmful to artifacts
   d. ensuring that exhibits are kept clean and maintained by staff trained in the handling of artifacts
   e. ensuring that light-sensitive artifacts are displayed only for short periods of time
   f. implementing a program of regular inspections of artifacts on exhibit to check for losses and damage
   g. updating collections records to reflect changes in location e.g., storage to display

5. ensure the security of the collection by:
   a. protecting artifacts from water damage
   b. protecting artifacts from theft and vandalism, including restricting access to artifacts
   c. establishing written standard procedures to deal with emergencies and disasters, and training of all staff in these procedures

6. provide an appropriate environment for artifacts in all storage and exhibit areas by:
   a. reducing visible light levels to accepted standards
   b. removing as much ultraviolet radiation as possible
c. maintaining relative humidity and temperature levels within an appropriate range for museum artifacts

d. reducing dust and pollution through a combination of physical plant (e.g. use of vestibule, appropriate air filtration) and preventive procedures (e.g. use of door mats, no smoking rules)
e. implementing a regular cleaning and maintenance schedule of the museum and storage spaces performed by staff or volunteers with the necessary training
f. implementing preventive pest management procedures, including regular inspections for pests in the museum and inspection of all incoming collection and non-collection material
g. implementing a program of regular checking and recording of environmental conditions, with follow up procedures to correct deficiencies

7. ensure that conservation treatment procedures will not damage artifacts and are carried out in accordance with professional standards of practice by:
   a. ensuring that individuals treating artifacts have an appropriate level of training in conservation
   b. ensuring that all conservation treatments are properly documented and the documentation is retained on file
   c. ensuring that conservation treatment carried out in the museum takes place in a separate space that is appropriately equipped and ventilated according to health and safety standards

Physical plant standard

As a community museum, your buildings and grounds must provide a safe and functional environment for visitors, staff, the collection and associated activities.

This objective must be balanced with the need to preserve the integrity of heritage buildings as artifacts themselves, as well as archaeological resources present on the property.

Requirements

A community museum must:

1. ensure the design and layout of its building(s) and grounds:
   a. accommodate the physical and functional needs of its users, staff, collections and activities
   b. are appropriate to the museum’s statement of purpose, and to its community role and image
2. meet its obligation to federal, provincial and municipal requirements that apply to physical safety of staff, visitors and property
3. ensure that each of its buildings meets environmental norms appropriate to its functions
4. ensures the security of its users, staff, collections and information by developing and regularly updating an emergency preparedness plan or equivalent that:
   a. identifies potential threats e.g., personal threat, fire, water or vandalism
   b. takes steps to minimize the level of individual risks e.g., by installing sufficient security lighting
c. includes written procedures to respond to threats, emergencies and disasters  
d. includes training staff and volunteers to implement emergency and disaster response procedures  
e. establishes a system of periodic testing and assessment of the effectiveness of emergency procedures  
f. ensures that any preventive or security systems installed are assessed for their potential impact on collections and the museum’s character and functions

5. have a written maintenance manual that sets out how it will:
   a. conduct regularly scheduled inspections and maintenance of building(s) and grounds  
   b. set priorities and schedules for ongoing repairs and capital upgrades  
   c. ensure that health and safety codes are met in the maintenance and repair of the physical plant  
   d. conduct daily, weekly and monthly housekeeping routines

6. strive to be environmentally responsible in its use of energy and materials, including the handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials

7. maintain the historical integrity of its resources should it be located in a heritage building, on a historic site, or on grounds containing an archaeological site and maintain the historical integrity of these resources in its use, maintenance, repair and modification following conservation standards and procedures

8. ensure that if buildings are open on a seasonal basis they are monitored for temperature and humidity, and measures are taken to decrease the risk of environmental damage during the off-season

Community standard

A community’s heritage is part of its identity. As a steward of the community’s heritage, the museum is actively engaged in the community and responsive to its needs. The museum is accessible and relevant, and draws support from its community.

Requirements

A community museum must:

1. have a written policy that defines its relationship with the community, and that will:
   a. ensure that it performs its role as a steward of the collection  
   b. ensure that it provides services and programs consistent with its statement of purpose that meet the needs and interests of the community  
   c. endeavour to allow all sectors of the community to participate in the museum's decisions, goals and directions that may affect them or reflect on them  
   d. engage members of the community in museum activities  
   e. identify and pursue appropriate community partnerships
f. endeavour to provide equality of access to information about the museum’s collections, services and programs through adequate promotion

g. endeavour to provide equal access to all members of the community, both physically and intellectually, to the museum’s collections, information, services and programs, including through electronic means e.g., a website or social media.

2. have regular, posted, and advertised hours, during which it is open to the public, and which meet the needs of the community

- a museum not open for long periods of time due to staffing considerations or weather must assess the needs of the community and make its services available by appointment and/or outreach activities

have a volunteer program to encourage community participation in its activities, which should include:

- identification and development of volunteer opportunities

  a. procedures for recruitment of volunteers
  b. matching the needs and interests of volunteers to those of the museum
  c. provision of appropriate training and supervision for volunteers
  d. provision of a safe and secure working environment for volunteers
  e. volunteer evaluation
  f. public and private recognition of volunteers’ contributions

**Human resources standard**

As a community museum, your ability to fulfil your museum’s purpose depends largely on the professionalism and capabilities of your staff.

You are better able to meet your mandate and carry out activities if you recruit qualified staff and provide ongoing training opportunities.

As an employer, you are concerned with the safety, security, wellbeing and continued motivation of the people who work with you.

**Requirements**

A community museum must:

1. have a written human resources management policy stating that it will:

   a. ensure that staff responsible for administering the museum and its collections have appropriate professional training
   b. ensure that all museum activities are carried out by appropriately trained staff
   c. ensure that each staff member has a written job description (see Glossary)
d. ensure that human resource management, including recruitment, performance assessment, and termination is conducted in an ethical manner and is consistent with accepted practice and applicable legislation

e. ensure that staff are provided with information on health and safety hazards in the workplace and are trained in their management or mitigation

f. ensure that at least one person on staff has current First Aid training

g. endeavour to provide equal access to the workplace by staff of all abilities

h. ensure that staff are familiar with and adhere to a museological code of ethics

i. meet municipal, provincial and federal legislative requirements relating to people in the workplace

2. have a written staff training policy that sets out how it will:

a. help staff to maintain or upgrade their skills

b. set priorities for staff training

c. determine appropriate levels of support e.g., financial, time, for individual staff training

d. ensure the development of an ongoing in-house training program for staff and volunteers; ensure its delivered by qualified people

e. provide staff with access to professional development opportunities and interchange with museum colleagues, including communication with other museums in the region

f. ensure the development and regular delivery of an orientation program for members of the governing body

3. Budget a portion of its allocation every year for:

a. development, delivery and assessment of an in-house training program staff

b. access to professional development e.g., seminars, workshops, conferences

c. purchase and maintenance of a collection of current reference material

Glossary

The following glossary refers to terms used by the Ministry of Culture in the document *Standards for Community Museums in Ontario* and is intended only to assist readers of this document. Definitions and descriptions from other sources have been included to enhance the reader’s understanding of these terms.

**A publicly accountable body**

The organization identifies its stakeholders and ensures there is a strategy for regular and effective communication and consultation with them about the organization’s achievements and work. *Imagine Canada Standards Program Handbook*

“Accountability begins with compliance with laws and regulations. Going beyond legal requirements, many museums voluntarily choose to adhere to ethical codes and accountability standards to ensure good stewardship of assets held in the public trust and to maintain public confidence. Standards are consensus documents or written statements of generally accepted principles. Standards provide a
common language to enable museums to communicate about their performance and increase accountability.” American Alliance of Museums Reference Guide Ethics, Standards and Best Practices for Museums

**The authority for the museum**

In the case of municipal museums, the establishment of the museum in the form of constating documents such as by-laws or council motions. In the case of not-for-profit corporations, the letters patent for the museum and the proof of incorporation. In all cases, the museum's legal ownership of the collection must be established in writing.

"Each museum should have a written constitution or other document setting out clearly its legal status and permanent, non-profit nature" ICOM Code of Professional Ethics

"Every museum requires a written mandate, which may take the form of a constitution with by-laws, an act, a municipal charter, etc.; this public document establishes its legal, non-profit status and purpose, and its objectives." CMA Ethics Guidelines

**The museum's governing body**

An appointed or elected body that is solely responsible for the operation of the museum, such as a Board of Directors, a Management Committee, or an Advisory Committee. This body cannot have a mandate that includes other municipal entities (e.g. libraries, tourist offices, or recreation centres).

"The persons or organisations defined in the enabling legislation of the museum as responsible for its continuance, strategic development and funding" ICOM Code of Professional Ethics

"The governing body of a museum may be an elected or appointed Board of Trustees or Directors, or a Management or Advisory Board or Committee of municipal officials. Whatever its formation, it is the legal entity that is accountable to the public and to the museum community for the policy, financing and administration of the museum." CMA Ethics Guidelines

"The curator is the chief executive officer of the museum. This person might have any one of a number of titles including Director, Museum Manager, or some combination of terms. The Regulation governing grants states that a museum must have an appointed curator, defined as a person whose full-time service is devoted to the administration of a museum. A good curator should be able to: conduct research on the collections for documentation, exhibition and program development; ensure that the collection represents the museum’s mission statement, fulfill requirements for keeping the collection well-preserved." OMA Recruiting and Hiring Museum Curators and Directors: A Human Resource Tool. OMA: July 2003.

**Ethical behaviour**

A commonly accepted standard of behaviour for board members, staff and volunteers, outlined in publications such as the Canadian Museums Association's CMA Ethics Guidelines and the International Council of Museum's ICOM Code of Professional Ethics.
"Ethics are based upon the underlying values of honesty, fairness, respect, excellence and accountability which the larger community applies to the rational evaluation of moral issues. Since the application of such values change over time, museum ethics must reflect an ongoing dialogue between the museum community and the society it serves." *CMA Ethics Guidelines*

**Community**

The community served by the museum. This can be a community distinguished by geographic boundaries (e.g. Lambton County), by common interest (e.g. Museum of Textiles), or by ethnicity (e.g. Ukrainian Museum of Canada). A museum may also serve a number of different communities (e.g. special interest and local community).

**Appropriate research space**

A designated space where staff and outside researchers may sit at a desk or table to consult reference books, archival material, and other documents. The space should be neither in the exhibit area - where it might interfere with public enjoyment of displays - nor in collection storage. The space should be well lit, and large enough to accommodate one or two researchers and their papers.