



Heritage Youth Corps

Action Plan

Conserving Quebec's historic rural cemeteries by
Bringing together youth and community volunteers

Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network 2008

Heritage Youth Corps

Overview

The exodus in recent decades of young and middle-aged English-speakers from Quebec's rural regions is a well-studied demographic phenomenon that has left many communities with too few able-bodied volunteers to properly maintain these important local heritage sites. Pioneer cemeteries, public meeting halls, one-room schoolhouses, little wooden churches, veterans' memorial parks, museums, roads and barns—these are just a few examples of heritage sites that belong to rural anglophone traditions in Quebec. Where such sites continue to exist they also testify to the dedication of community volunteers who for generations have carried out much of the work needed to keep these sites in good repair.

A 2007-08 survey of more than 300 old graveyards in four Quebec regions, however, confirms that ongoing demographic decline in rural English-speaking communities has precipitated the neglect of many of these heritage properties, resulting in their accelerated deterioration. In all, 131 heritage cemeteries, several dating to the early 1800s, were found to be at risk, according to a grading system used by local researchers participating in the Cemetery Heritage Inventory and Restoration Initiative (CHIRI), sponsored by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network. At many sites, what's most urgently needed, in terms of maintaining their physical integrity, is basic yard work, comprising such tasks as grass-cutting, brush clearing and fence repair. These are tasks that youth in rural communities can perform with minimal supervision.

The following Action Plan contains the outlines for organizing and sustaining Heritage Youth Corps activities in two Quebec regions: Montérégie and Estrie. The purpose of the Heritage Youth is to match the needs of non-profit cemetery associations, non-profit historical societies and heritage groups with teams of youth seeking gainful employment in local heritage conservation.

The normal active season for the Heritage Youth Corps will be from May 15 to September 15. The work of each team will be organized under the direct supervision of a regional Heritage Youth Corps Leader, who will also be responsible for preparing materials lists and work-schedule estimates for target sites in consultation with participating community groups.

Targeted Direct Results

- Anglophone youths acquire knowledge about and first-hand experience in heritage conservation.
- Public appreciation of anglophone contributions to the heritage of rural Quebec is fostered.

Financial Resources Required

Total Est. Budget = \$51,000

**Targeted Quebec regions:
Montérégie**

Estrie and

Division of Tasks

Funding, administrative support for and overall direction of the Heritage Youth Corps will be the responsibility of QAHN. Prior to commencement of work on site, QAHN will arrange for each Heritage Youth Corps leader to follow a certified course in health and occupational safety.

Heritage Youth Corps crews shall consist of one leader and three crew members.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – QAHN

Duties

- Personnel recruitment and project coordination with regional Youth Corps leaders
- Payroll.
- Cemetery site selection and assignment to regional Youth Corps crews
- Liaison with cemetery associations, private landowners and/or local historical societies.
- Orientation of employees and overall guidance
- Training and technical support.
- Trouble-shooting.

HERITAGE YOUTH CORPS LEADER

Duties

- Conduct on-site evaluation of achievable work at each cemetery.
- In consultation with the cemetery associations, landowners and heritage groups in charge of the targeted cemeteries, develop a detailed work plan for each targeted cemetery.
- Explain the goals of the project, tasks to be accomplished, and project limitations to all parties concerned.
- Secure written authorization from affected landowners, cemetery associations and heritage groups to undertake work at targeted cemeteries. Each cemetery will be different, and each will require a written agreement with the owner / manager specifying the exact nature of the work to be performed.
- Identify and approach potential donors and/or lenders of tools, equipment and supplies. Ideally these will be organizations with links to the targeted cemeteries or community groups active in the area.
- Acquire all necessary transportation, tools and equipment from appropriate sources, and draft and sign agreements governing their use and safe return (if applicable) once the project is completed.
- Participate in the interviewing and hiring of crew members.
- Participate in the orientation and training of crew members.
- Ensure that all crew members are adequately trained for the safe operation of equipment.
- Coordinate transportation of employees to work sites.
- Conduct research on the targeted cemeteries, consulting existing records of burials to determine size of lots, location of graves, etc.
- Oversee all aspects of the reclamation work as it is carried out.

- Oversee basic mapping at sites where no previous cemetery maps exist. Include current location of gravestones, existing fences, apparent cemetery limits, access paths, directions, etc.
- Secure burning permits (when burning branches and detritus is deemed necessary) when required from local municipal authorities, and ensuring that fires are under control at all times.
- Secure tree-cutting permits from local municipal authorities when required for cutting trees within the cemetery area.
- Ensure that crew members follow the best environmental practices.
- Ensure the personal health and safety of all crew members.
- Submit bi-weekly progress reports and timesheets for all employees to QAHN Executive Director.
- Meet with personnel from participating cemetery associations, heritage groups or landowners (where applicable), who will be invited to inspect the work being performed.

Education Level

Post-Secondary/University

The ideal candidate would be a university student enrolled in one of the following fields of study: history; geography; anthropology; archaeology; environmental studies; museum studies or a related specialty.

Qualifications

- Strong leadership skills
- Excellent communication skills.
- Highly organized
- Experience with power tools and ability to instruct others in their safe operation.
- Drivers license.
- Mapping skills would be considered an asset.

HERITAGE YOUTH CORPS YARD WORKERS

Duties

- Lawn mowing, edging, weeding, brush and branch cutting, tree pruning, removing lawn litter (dead branches, detritus, garbage, etc.); repairing and installing fences, gates and posts, painting fences, repairing or painting existing signs, disposal of cuttings and debris, straightening tilted gravestones etc.
- Cleaning of old headstones (only light brushing with soft bristle brushes is permitted; some use of water alone or mixed with non-ionic soap may be prescribed in some cases.)
- Delineating cemetery boundaries where these have been overtaken by encroaching woodland and undergrowth. This may involve measuring, flagging cemetery limits, erecting stakes, posts or fences, etc.

Education Level Required:

Secondary or post-secondary.

Qualifications

- Good physical fitness, punctuality and ability to work with others.
- Ability to use hand tools and operate small power tools

EXCLUSIONS:

Heritage Youth Corps employees are not permitted to perform the following activities:

- Moving gravestones from their current locations, even if they are broken, lying flat on the ground, partly buried, or (apparently) not in their original location. Neglected cemeteries must be treated as archaeological sites, and therefore gravestones should not be moved from their corresponding burial sites.
- Gravestone repair. At present, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network does not possess the necessary expertise or materials to attempt any repairs other than the correction of tilting stones.

EQUIPMENT LIST FOR EACH CREW:

Pick-up truck or van.

Gas-powered lawnmower.

Gasoline and motor oil.

Leaf and hard rakes.

Shovels.

Chainsaw.

Gas-powered weed-wacker.

Bow saw.

Wheelbarrow.

Pruning shears.

Portable water supply and fire extinguishers (in case of fire).

Paint and brushes.

Soft bristle brushes.

Wooden stakes.

Measuring tape.

String.

Flagging tape.

Non-ionic soap.

Wooden stakes.

Paper, pencils, rulers, compasses, etc. (for making basic maps).

Fence building materials; nails; wire; etc.

Protective clothing, including: work gloves; hats; steel-toe boots; raincoats and rain pants.

PRIORITY CEMETERY SITES

The following list of old graveyards consists of sites judged to be among those which are at greatest risk in the Monteregie and Estrie regions, as of May 2008.

- 1) Bodwell, Fitch Bay
- 2) Hilltop, Fitch Bay
- 3) Magoon Point, Georgeville
- 4) Judd Point, Georgeville
- 5) Hill, Georgeville
- 6) Hopps, Austin
- 7) Gilman, Mansonville
- 8) Kinney, Coaticook
- 9) Lambkin, Waterville
- 10) McIver-Beaton, Milan
- 11) Orcutt, Mansonville
- 12) Perryboro, Saint-Hermenegilde
- 13) Prescott, Bury
- 14) Sacré-Coeur, Stanstead
- 15) Wyman, Barnston-Ouest
- 16) Capron, Dunham
- 17) Fitchett, Dunham
- 18) Mandigo Corners, Saint-Sebastien
- 19) Stone, Saint-Ignace-de-Stanbridge
- 20) TenEyck, Dunham
- 21) Brand't Hill, near Danville

GROUPS CONTACTED FOR IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Missisquoi Historical Society
Megantic-Compton Church and Cemetery Association
Brome County Historical Society
Stanstead Historical Society
Compton County Historical and Museum Society
Compton County Pioneer Cemetery Association
Potton Heritage Association
Brookside Cemetery Association (Fitch Bay)
Businesses, such as hardware suppliers.**

DIRECT FUNDING PARTNERS

Summer Jobs Canada	\$30,000
Emploi-Quebec	\$15,000
Townshippers Foundation	\$1,500
Total Financial Contributions	\$46,500

***Local businesses and other groups could be approached as potential sponsors, with appropriate credit given to them in all related QAHN publicity.*

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Salaries

Two Projects Managers (\$18 per hour plus benefits for 10 weeks)
\$20,500

Youth Crew Labour (6 weeks' work each for 9 youths at \$10 per hour)
\$21,500

Honoraria

Bookkeeping and accounting

\$1,000

Travel

\$3,500

In-kind (Volunteer time and materials supplied by participants, from list created by QAHN)

\$5,000