Welcome
Aaniin
Bonjour
- AGENDA -

- Welcome
- Presentation
- Break-out Groups
- Reflection
- Next Steps
- Background -

➢ The Champlain Monument is a public art installation located within the City of Orillia’s Couchiching Beach Park on a parcel of land owned and maintained by the federal government.

➢ It was erected to encourage tourism to the region, commemorating the advent into Ontario of the white race, under Champlain’s leadership.
- Background -

- Mr. Charles Harold Hale, publisher of the Orillia Packet newspaper and community advocate, first proposed the idea to officers of the Orillia Canadian Club following a trip to Quebec and St. John, New Brunswick, both of which have their own tributes to the French explorer.
- Background -

- Orillia was a logical site for the piece as the nearest town to the Huron-Wendat capital of Cahiagué.

- Champlain was guided to the area by the Huron-Wendat to strengthen trade relations and left with first-hand knowledge and experience of their culture and traditions.
- Background -

- Records show that they arrived at Cahiaugué (which was located near present-day Warminster) on August 17, 1615, and was welcomed into the village by Chief Darontal.

- Champlain notes in his journal that they passed through The Narrows in Orillia in September and later returned to Cahiaugué, where he wintered before setting out for Quebec in 1616.
- The Monument’s Unveiling -

➢ The Monument was commissioned to mark the 300th anniversary of the French explorer’s arrival in the region.

➢ The unveiling was scheduled for August 17, 1915 but was delayed due to WW1.

➢ It was finally revealed on July 1, 1925, in front of roughly 10,000 spectators.
- The Monument’s Unveiling -

Dignitaries included the Honorable Rodolphe Lemieux, Speaker of the House of Commons, along with Vernon March, the sculptor, Grand Chief Ovide Sioui of the Hurons at Lorette, now the Huron-Wendat of Wendake (Quebec), Chief Big Canoe of Georgina Island First Nation, and Chief John Bigwind of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.
- The Monument’s Unveiling -

- Delays due to the war afforded Orillia an opportunity to garner national attention.

- The relationship between French and English speaking Canadians had long been strained, which was further compounded by conscription.
- The Monument’s Unveiling -

➢ With this in mind, the unveiling became a celebration of European exploration and the promotion of good will between English and French Canada.
- Monumental Facts -

- The Monument was created by Mr. Vernon March of Farnborough, Kent, England.

- It includes a 12-foot bronze sculpture of Champlain, dressed for court, along with two sculpture groupings representing Christianity and Commerce.
- Monumental Facts -

- The plinth was of Benedict Stone, cast in situ, from Montreal and weighed 45 tons.

- The piece was budgeted at $20,000 but the delay added $14,000 to the project, primarily due to inflation of the price of bronze.
- First Nations Representation -

➢ The men who posed for the piece were from the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and not Huron-Wendat.

➢ Stories are told of the men walking to Orillia from Rama for the work and posing for 9 to 10 hours at a stretch for the piece.
First Nations Representation

- In 1615, the Wendat were the major trading partners with the French and occupied this area but eventually moved to Wendake due to war and disease.

- The Huron-Wendat Nation of Wendake, Quebec, are known descendants.
Despite its grandeur and artistic merit, the Monument has faced scrutiny for its singular, colonial perspective.
Commerce

Sculpture Groupings

Christianity
- A Sign of the Times -

The sculpture groupings are meant to emphasize Champlain’s role in bringing Christianity and Commerce to New France, not the perspective of the First Nations.

While they set the Monument apart from others observed by Hale at the time, their portrayal of Indigenous people is more a reflection of the times than historic events.
"The people of Canada have been misled about who we are — not only as Indigenous people, but as Canadians — and we need to make sure that they all know the truth."

Murray Sinclair in conversation with Anna Maria Tremonti as part of the CBC’s “The Current”.

- A Sign of the Times -
Senator Murray Sinclair
- A Sign of the Times -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swo9flbACHo
Undeniably a remarkable artistic achievement honouring the French explorer, the Monument falls short in its depiction of the complex, cooperative, and reciprocal relationship Champlain had with the Huron-Wendat people.
Ownership and maintenance of the Monument, together with the parcel of land upon which it sits, was transferred to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in 1955.
- Restoration Work -

- In 2015, Parks Canada conducted a full condition assessment on the piece as a result of growing concerns associated with the steps and plinth.

- It was noted that the staircase and plinth needed to be replaced and that conservation work on the statues would be conducted at the same time.
- Restoration Work -

Restoration work began in 2017 and was set out in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Demolition and removal work with construction of a new foundation.
- Phase 2 - Conservation work on the bronze statues and masonry steps along with the fabrication of a new plinth.
- Phase 3 - Replacement of the staircase, plinth, and Monument.
- Work to Date -

- The foundation and staircase have been reconstructed on the original site.

- The bronze sculptures have been reconditioned.

- However, their reinstallation has been put on hold until further consultation with stakeholders.
- Developments -

➢ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission published its 94 recommendations in 2015.

➢ Concerns over the Monument’s representation of Indigenous peoples have been voiced by members of the public and Indigenous communities.
- Developments -

- The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) passed a resolution to explore the feasibility of commissioning an alternative Samuel de Champlain Monument in Orillia to be installed in close proximity to the original.

- ETFO has been working to bring stakeholders together and has committed $25,000 to the project.
Orillia City Council and the Honorable Catherine McKenna, Canada’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change have also received letters from the Huron-Wendat Nation expressing their concerns with the Monument’s representation of its people.
- Developments -

➢ The Huron-Wendat Nation would like further engagement in finding alternatives to the Samuel de Champlain Monument in Orillia, stressing the importance of working together in developing constructive educational initiatives that reflect and showcase a common history within the area.
- Developments -

➢ There has also been support expressed for the piece to be returned without modification.

➢ As a result, Parks Canada has placed the restoration project on hold and will not be reinstalling the Monument until further consultation occurs regarding an appropriate path forward.
- Charting a Path Forward -

- Parks Canada and the City of Orillia have established a Joint Working Group to pursue inclusive, public consultations and develop recommendations on a path forward for the Monument and surrounding park lands that presents a balanced and respectful representation of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and historical accuracy.
The group includes representation from the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, Parks Canada, the City of Orillia, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and two citizens at large.
- Have Your Say -

- Discussion Paper
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Questionnaire

www.orillia.ca/champlain
MICHAEL JONES... is a leadership educator, author and Juno nominated pianist/composer. He has served with the Banff Centre, the Fetzer Institute and many other leading edge universities and centres of learning. He has also been a guest speaker and conference facilitator for a variety of companies and organizations including Quaker Foods / PepsiCo Global Nutrition Group, The Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership, the International Leadership Association and many others. Locally he has been Chair and Co-Chair of the Community Cultural Roundtable for many years. Michael is widely recognized for his innovative work in bringing together authentic leadership with his music, creative artistry and dialogue practice to further the work of place-making, personal transformation and collective learning. Throughout his work he asks how leaders can re-imagine places as living systems inspired by nature, art, community and our deepening humanity.
ERIN DIXON... is a life long learner, carrying a BA in Law and Environmental Studies, and a MA in Global Leadership from Royal Roads University with post-graduate studies in Eco-psychology. She was celebrated as one of the first teams to receive the RRU Founders Award as a Weaver, reflecting leadership and personal development. For over seven years she held the role of an Indigenous Awareness Trainer for the OPP with responsibilities to lead community driven initiatives including co-facilitating weeklong Indigenous Awareness sessions for police officers and staff, alongside other ministries, services and community partners. At home, she is a committed board member and facilitator for the Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion Initiatives – Indigenous Community Development Circle. She feels at home naturally walking between and bridging different worlds and ways of knowing - braiding pathways towards what is possible, and the essence of what is being called to life.
BREAK-OUT INTO WORKSHOP GROUPS
QUESTION # 1 – What is the story currently being told through the Monument?
QUESTION # 2 – What is the story we want to tell?
QUESTION # 3 – How do we go about telling this story? Challenges? Opportunities?
- Have Your Say -

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