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For immediate release.

The Advisory Board of the Grand Pré and Area UNESCO World Heritage Designation initiative has announced the creation of their Outstanding Universal Value Sub-Committee. Tasked with defining why the Grand Pré region is important to humanity as a whole, this committee brings together local residents, subject experts and academics from across Atlantic Canada. The Committee will serve as the cornerstone for the nomination proposal, as the outstanding universal value of a proposed site is the main argument used to justify its inclusion on the World Heritage List. The Committee will also be responsible for proposing the boundaries for the designated site and for conducting a comparative analysis to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Grand Pré region in relation to other cultural sites around the world.

Committee Chair, Dr. John Johnston, who is based out of Halifax, has been an Historian with Parks Canada since 1976. Johnston notes that “This is a wonderful opportunity for scholars from different disciplines and varied research interests to get together with each other and with members of the local community to determine just what it is about the greater Grand Pré area that makes it special, not just within Atlantic Canada but on an international scale”.

The committee is slated to hold their first meeting in Grand Pré over the next two months and are aiming to conclude their discussions by December 2008. According to Johnston, “These discussions will be lively, I’m sure, with many nuances. Yet at the same time we’re all aware that at the end of the process we must articulate succinctly just what the importance is, where it is found or made evident, and where the boundaries lie”.

The World Heritage List stems from the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and contains natural and cultural properties that have been deemed to be of outstanding universal value and for whose protection is of interest to humanity as a whole. Canada currently has 14 sites on the World Heritage List, including Old Town Lunenburg. The Grand Pré region is currently one of eleven sites on Canada’s Tentative List of sites to be considered. The Grand Pré and Area Advisory Board is aiming to complete their nomination proposal for submission in February 2010. Regular updates on the nomination proposal can be accessed online at www.nominationgrandpre.ca.

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