



## **Trails of Placentia**

# **Environmental Assessment Registration**

**April 19, 2022**

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# THE UNDERTAKING:

**Name of Undertaking:** Trails of Placentia

## **Purpose of the Undertaking (Background Information):**

The following undertaking is an initiative of the Placentia Chamber of Commerce and the Placentia Lions Club. The Placentia Chamber of Commerce’s mandate is to enhance the socio-economic well-being of Placentia and surrounding communities.

As part of its mandate, under a provincial initiative called “Sense of Arrival”, the Chamber formed a subcommittee to look at developing a network of hiking trails in Placentia and surrounding area. After extensive research and consultation with various provincial government agencies (i.e. Legendary Coasts, Sense of Arrival), community leaders and organizations (i.e. East Coast Trails’ Association. Hike Discovery Trails’ Association, etc.) and a review of the recent provincial tourism exit survey (see below) the subcommittee recommended the development of a series of hiking trails in the Placentia area.

A provincial exit survey data sheet, recently made available by Legendary Coast, indicated that:

- ✓ 79% of visitors hiked during their trip to our province,
- ✓ Hiking is a top activity among all segments of visitors to the province with 60% of visitors hiking our trails regardless of purpose of the trip,
- ✓ Hiking is a popular shoulder activity with 80% of spring vacation travelers and 76% of fall vacation travelers taking in our trails during their vacation,
- ✓ Hikers typically spend more on average compared to visitors overall.
- ✓ See attached document for more details.

Tourism is a major economic generator in our province and Placentia is ideally situated to take advantage of this. Sixty four percent of the visitors coming off the Argentia ferry are visiting the island for vacation purposes. The goal is to develop this trail network in order to capture tourist’s attention and keep visitors in the region for at least part of their vacation.

### **Visitors love walking and hiking**

Top 5 outdoor activities visitors participate in (% of vacation travel parties)



### **Visitors enjoy history, culture and food**

Top 5 culture and heritage experiences (% of vacation travel parties)

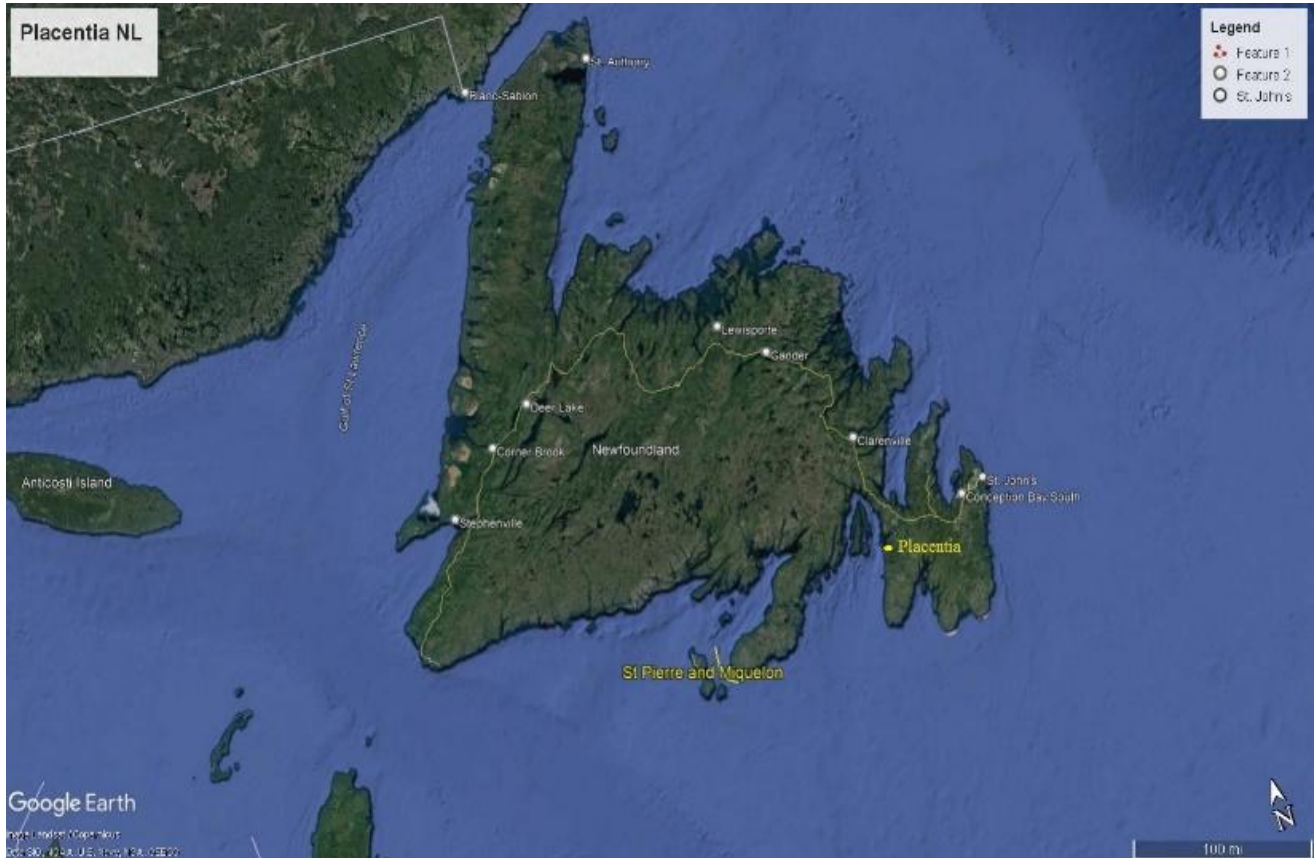


The proposed hiking trails provide visitors to our region with an opportunity to experience all of the above and more.

# LOCATION OF THE UNDERTAKING

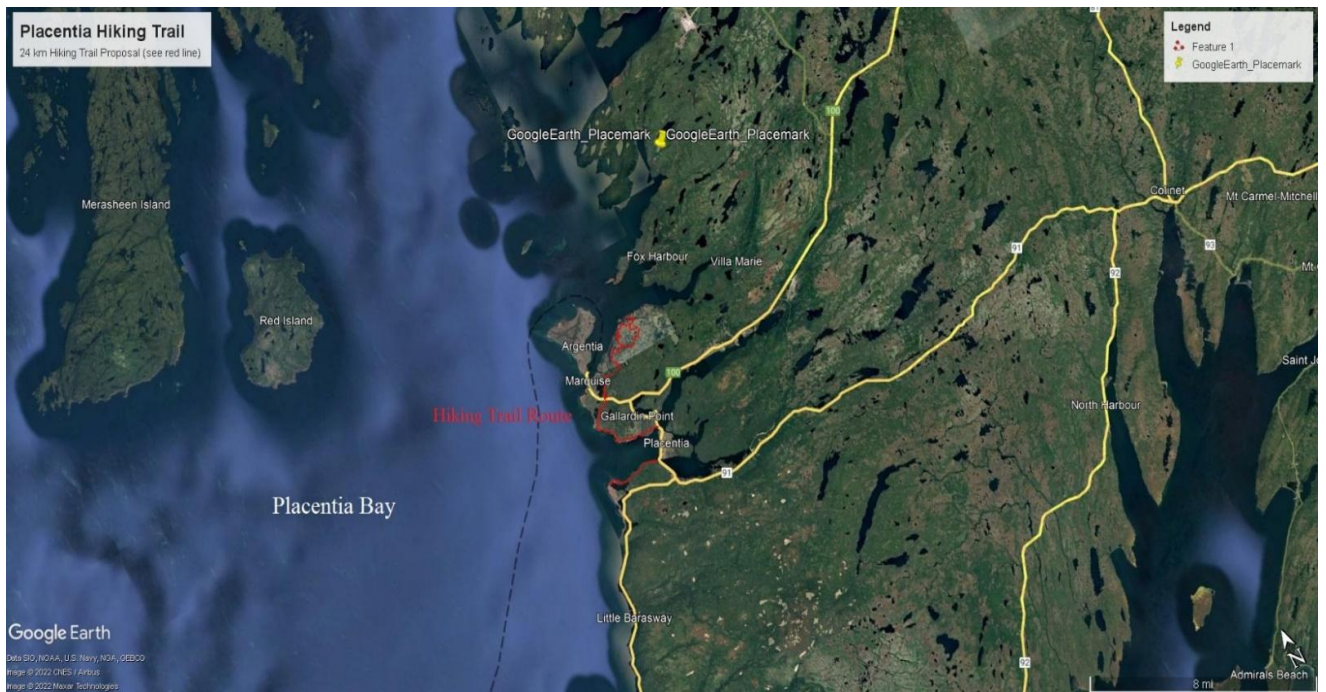
## Geographical Location:

Placentia is a small rural community in Newfoundland and Labrador located on the southeast side of the Avalon Peninsula.



Map #1 – Town of Placentia Location

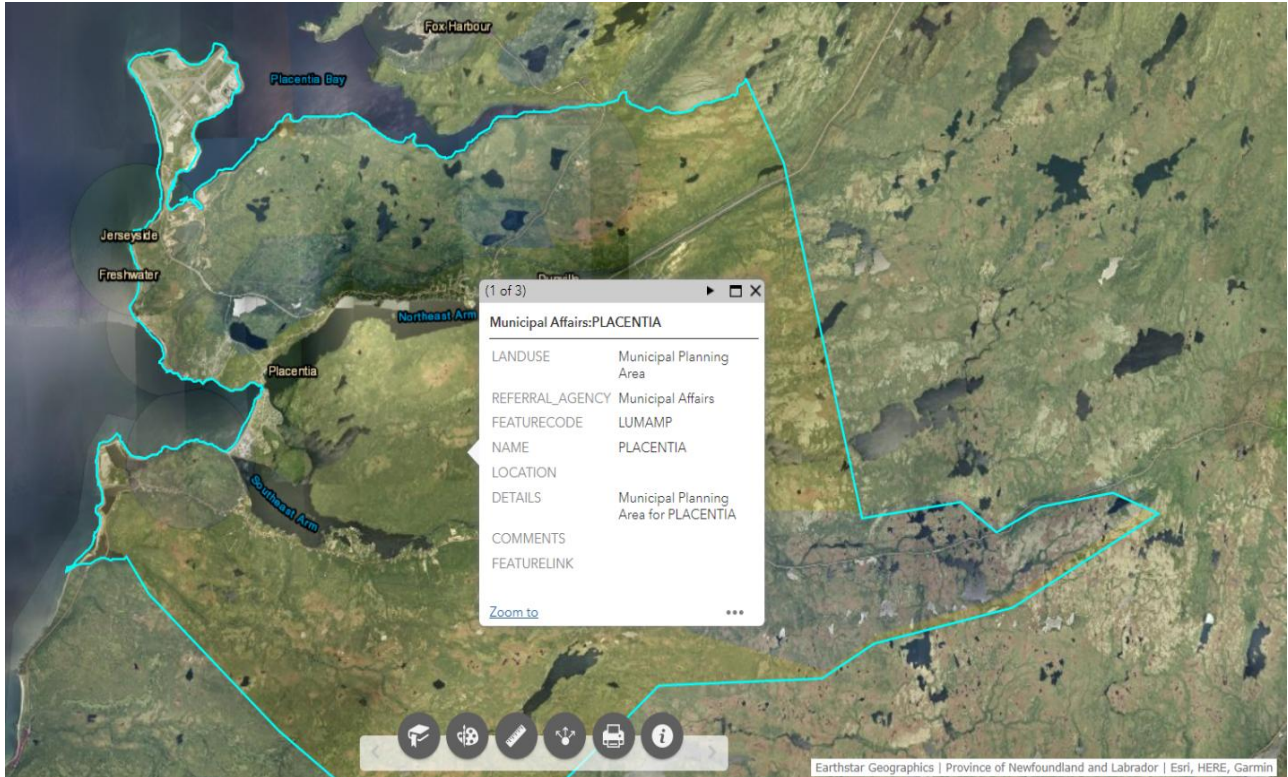
Placentia Bay is the largest bay in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The town of Placentia is located on the east side of Placentia Bay and is approximately a 90 minute drive from St. John's (see Map #2 below).



Map #2 - Region Map

The Placentia Trail system will consist of an approximately 24-kilometer linear hiking trail located within the boundaries of the community of Placentia (see Map #3 below). The Town of Placentia is in support of this trail initiative. A letter of support from the town can be seen in the attached documents.





Map #3 - Town of Placentia Municipal Boundary

The hiking trail will extend from the previous American Naval Base (located in the former community of Argentia), through the community of Placentia and continuing to the light house located in Point Verde. The trail network will pass through Castle Hill National Historic Park.

The trail network is divided into five sections: Annie Healey Trail, Backland Trail, Command Centre to Placentia Trail, Placentia Loop Trail and Placentia to Point Verde Light House Trail (see Map #4 below).



Map #4 – Overview Map - 24 km Hiking Trail

## Trail Sections

The 24 km trail is divided into five sections. This will help the reader focus on the exact location of each trail section based on the overview map above (Map #3). As stated above the trail network is divided into five sections:

1. Annie Healey Trail,
2. Backland Trail,
3. Command Centre to Placentia Trail,
4. Placentia Loop Trail and
5. Placentia to Point Verde Light House Trail.

### 1. Annie Healey Trail Section

This hiking trail will follow an existing trail and dirt roads. Ranging from 5.3 to 7.2 km (depending on the route) this trail links historical assets and coastal views. It is located on the former Argentia Naval Base and falls under the jurisdiction of the Argentia Port Authority. Included below (Map #5 and Map #6) is aerial photography showing the consultant's recommend route for the trail.





Map #5 - Annie Healey Trail Section

This section of the overall 24 km trail is owned by the Argentia Port Authority. The Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 – 2024, Land Use Designations, Section A indicates that most of the trail will pass through a rural designation. A copy of this map can be found in the attached supporting documents. Both the Town of Placentia and the Argentia Port Authority are aware of this trail development initiative and are in support of the initiative. The Town of Placentia letter of support can be found in the attachments. Also, the Argentia Port Authority letter of support and the License to Occupy Agreement letter for can be found in the attached documents.





Map #6 - Annie Healey Trail Section

i. Physical Features

Lookout: At the 0 km mark a lookout (overlooking the former military airstrip, the Marine Atlantic Ferry Terminal and Placentia) already exists (dimensions / picture). This lookout is in good shape and will need only minor repairs.

Silver Mine: Just before the 1.5 km mark there is side trail leading to a silver mine and then continues to the ocean. The former Silver Mine (Silver Cliff Mine) was abandoned in 1928. Mining equipment can be seen scattered around the site. There is a need to install safety features around the shaft openings to ensure hikers safety.

WWII Bunkers: At approximately the 3.2 km mark the trail will pass by three World War II Military Bunkers.

- Note: The Provincial Archeologist (Jamie Brake) has been contacted and is currently reviewing the proposed trail route.
- Note: Legendary Coast has been contacted and is currently reviewing the Trails of Placentia consultant document and trail route. They will make recommendations on the trail (if required) in the near future.

ii. Construction (if applicable)

Most of this trail follows old service roads that were built by the US military during WWII to connect military bunkers. These trails are in good shape and will require minimal maintenance. Just before the 1.5 km mark there is a side trail (going NE and then NW) leading to the ocean. This trail leads to an abandoned silver mine. The NE section of the trail already exists and will only need minor upgrading to meet provincial standards. The NW section of this trail exists but is grown over. It runs parallel to a small river.

- ✓ Trail Construction: A consultant (Green Leaf Consultants) was hired to conduct a Trail Assessment. GLS completed a trail assessment of this trail and made recommendations on trail construction. A copy of the consultant's report is enclosed (also see map above). Trail construction will follow the guidelines outline in the consultant's report.
- ✓ Lookout: A new lookout will be located at app. 2.3 km mark. All that will need to be constructed is a seating area (park bench). There already exists a short trail that leads to this lookout.

iii. Operation

- ✓ How the trail will be operated?

The responsibility for the operation of the Placentia Area Hiking Trail will fall under "Hike Placentia Incorporated" (HPI). This organization has already been formed and is registered with the provincial government. Both the Town of Placentia and the Argenta Port Authority are aware of the formation of Hike Placentia Inc. and of the trail initiative and are in support of the proposed trail. Currently, both groups are collaborating with HPI to determine land use designation and land ownership. (see attached letters of support located in Project

Related Documents). Where applicable a License to Occupy agreement will put in place with the landowner.

The hiking trail will be used and maintained all year round. This section of the overall 24 km trail falls within the boundaries of the Town of Placentia and is owned by the Argentia Port Authority.

- Parking Lot Location /Trail Head Location: At the 6.3 km mark a parking lot will be located with the appropriate parking lot signage and trail head signage.
- Washrooms / Eating Area / Garbage: The Argentia Port Authority (APO) currently has a Pavilion (with washrooms) located in the area. (see Backland Trails Aerial Photography map). The Pavilion is located at the 3.6 km mark. The APO is responsible for the maintenance of the lookout.
- 
- Lookouts: A lookout currently exists at the 0 km mark. The APO and Hike Placentia Inc. will be responsible for the maintenance of the lookout.

iv. Occupations:

A. Who would be working on the trail?

ACOA funding requires that Hike Placentia Incorporated hire a certified contractor to complete the require work on the trail. The work on this section of the trail will take approximately 8 weeks

B. Long Term plan and maintenance of the trail

Hike Placentia Incorporated will be responsible for the development of the long-term plan and maintenance (i.e. Trails of Placentia Consultant report implementation, formation of volunteer trail stewards and hiring of laborers for annual maintenance.

v. Project Related Documents:

- A. All project related documents are located at the end of report in the section of the report titled “Project Related Documents

## 2. Backlands Trail Section

This section of the trail will follow several old service roads (app. 3.5 km) that were built by the US military during WWII to connect military bunkers (see Map # 7 below).

This section of the trail is owned by the Argentia Port Authority. The Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 – 2024, Land Use Designations map (Section A) indicated that most



of the trail will pass through a rural designation and a small section of the trail will pass through an industrial designation. (see map below)



Map #7 - Backlands Trails Section

i. Physical Features

Lookout: At the 0.7 km mark a lookout (overlooking the former military airstrip, the Marine Atlantic Ferry Terminal and Placentia) already exists (dimensions / picture). This lookout is in good shape and will need only minor repairs.



Lookout: A second lookout, in the shape of a boat, at the 1.5 km mark (also overlooking the former military airstrip, the Marine Atlantic Ferry Terminal and Placentia) already exists. This lookout is in good shape and will need only minor repairs.

ii. Construction (if applicable)

Trail Construction: The trail already exists. However, some upgrading is required.

iii. Operation

Same as was stated on page 11 (section iii) for Annie Healey Trail Section.

- Lookouts: Two lookouts currently exist on this section of the trail (0.7 km mark and 1.9 km mark). The APO and Placentia Hike Inc. will be responsible for the maintenance of these lookouts.

iv. Occupations:

Same as found previously under the Occupations section found under the Annie Healey trail on page 11.

### **3. Command Centre to Placentia Trail Section**

i. Geographical Location

This 7 km trail would connect The Command Centre in Argentia to Castle Hill and then continue onto the town of Placentia. This route showcases some key historical features in the region and offers some great views along the coast. The hiking trail will predominantly follow existing trails and dirt roads. This section of the 24 km hiking trail will pass by a number of historical assets on the former WWII Argentia Naval Base (i.e. pill boxes, bunkers, Command Centre). There is a long-term plan to develop these assets. At this point in the project, the development of these assets is not part of this Environmental Assessment Registration. See Map #8 and Map #9 below for trail route.



Map #8 - Command Centre – Placentia Trail Section



Map #9 - Command Centre – Placentia Trail Section

Note: The red line indicates (predominantly) existing trails. The yellow line indicates the location of (predominantly) a new trail. Also, the yellow line will connect the proposed hiking trail to Castle Hill National Park (subject to approval of Parks Canada). A letter was sent to Glenn Keough, Visitor Experience and National Historic Site Manager (Parks Canada), requesting a meeting to discuss the above. Following the meeting the following email was sent to us.

Email from Glenn Keough (March 31, 2022)

With regard to our discussion on the plan to enhance and enlarge the trail network in the region we at Parks Canada are interested in helping to facilitate the development of the trail by exploring options to work towards the expansion of the current trail system at Castle Hill NHS to allow for a continuous link from Freshwater through our site to Placentia. I believe this will not only benefit your organizations and the communities in the region but our site as well as it will create more foot traffic through Castle Hill and enhance learning opportunities for those using the trails within Placentia Bay. I will confer with our archaeologists and trail development team to see what the possibilities are for an expansion through the boundaries of the NHS to get an idea of what next steps are required.

Regards and talk soon.

As previously stated, the trail committee is currently working with the Town of Placentia to ensure that the Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 – 2024 is being followed. Furthermore, the Placentia town staff are currently working with the trails committee to identify “land use designation” and “land ownership” where the proposed trail will pass through. Where applicable a License to Occupy agreement will be put in place with the landowner.

#### Land Ownership and License to Occupy Agreements

- Part of this section of the trail falls under the jurisdiction of the Argentinia Port Authority. LTO agreement is now in place. See map for boundary lines.
- Part of this trail section fall under Crown Lands. An application was sent into Crown Lands for an “License to Occupy” agreement). Thus, LTO agreement is pending.
- Part of this section of the trail falls under the Town of Placentia. Currently in the process of formalizing this agreement with the Town of Placentia.
- Part of this section of the trail falls under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada. See email above from Parks Canada for status.

#### ii. Physical Features

- ✓ Command Centre (see above map)  
A former WWII military structure called (by locals) The Command Centre / Hospital is located.

- ✓ **Parking lot**  
There is large space in front of the Command Centre that provided parking when the Command Centre was operational during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. This space, however, is currently blocked off by several large boulders and is not accessible to vehicles. This space can be utilized to provide parking for hikers.

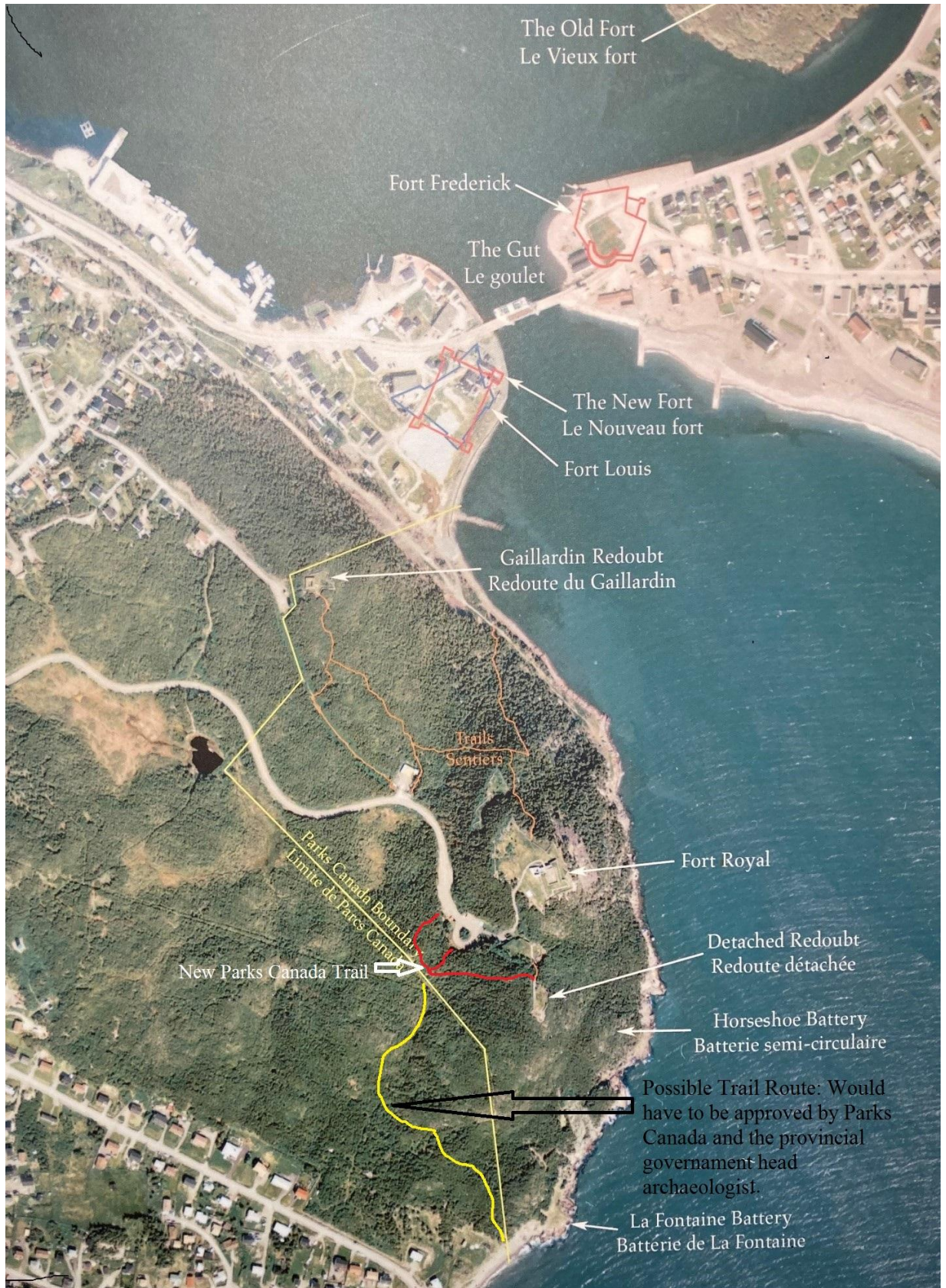
- ✓ **WW II Guns (see above map)**  
Two intact WWII guns are located on this trail section. There is a large space between the paved road and the Guns that is cleared. This space, however, is currently blocked off by several large boulders and is not accessible to vehicles. This space can be utilized to provide parking.

Also, located on the hill above the guns are two military structures. One is a pill box and the other structure (located on the highest point on the hill) appears to be a military lookout.

**Coastal Defense Battery (see map above)**  
Several bunkers (pill boxes) exist here.

- ✓ **New Trail Construction**  
Also, (indicated in the aerial photography map above - yellow line) a new section of trail will need to be constructed. This section of trail will connect the proposed hiking trail to Castle Hill National Park (subject to approval of Parks Canada).
- ✓ **Castle Hill National Historic Park.**  
The proposed trail network will connect with and pass through Castle Hill National Historic Park. The trail route would utilize the existing trails that currently exist in the park. However, a new trail (app. 10 – 30 m) would have to be built in the park to connect the proposed trail system to the park. An agreement would have to be made with park officials to complete this portion of the trail (see Map #10 below).





Map #10 – Connecting Trail to Castle Hill Historic Park Trail Section

iii. Construction (if applicable)

Trail Construction: As previously discussed, trail construction will follow the guidelines outline in the trails consultant's report.

✓ Crosswalk

A crosswalk (with appropriate signage, etc.) will need to be installed at the location where the trail crosses Route 100 (Argentia Access Road). Permission will have to be obtained from the provincial government to put in the crosswalk.

iv. Operation

Same as was stated on page 11 (section iii) for Annie Healey Trail Section.

✓ Castle Hill Historic Park:

While it is the hope of Hike Placentia Incorporated to connect the hiking trail network to Castle Hill Historic Park, the committee realizes that Castle Hill is a federal park and have Hike Placentia Inc. has no jurisdiction over this park. Furthermore, the hiking trail will only connect to the park when Parks Canada gives its approval.

v. Occupations:

Same as found previously under the Occupations section found under the Annie Healey trail on page 11.

#### **4. The Placentia Loop Trail Section**

i. Geographical Location

This is a 6 km loop around Town of Placentia. This section of the route would connect hikers to key town assets. It would also serve as a trail connecting Placentia to the Point Verde lighthouse. The hiking trail will follow existing trails and roads. Hike Placentia Incorporated is collaborating with the Town of Placentia and has received the town's support in developing this section of hiking trail.

The trail committee is currenting working with the town to ensure Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 – 2024 is being followed. Furthermore, the Placentia town staff is currently working with the trails committee to identify "land use designation" and "land ownership" where the proposed trail will pass through. Where applicable a License to Occupy agreement will put in place with the landowner. (see Map#11 below)





Map #11 - Placentia Loop Trail Section

ii. Physical Features

- ✓ Placentia Cultural Heritage District: Placentia is rich in history, in cultural and historical sites. The goal of this section of the hiking trail is to connect and increase both the “visibility and accessibility” of the existing hiking /walking trails located within the center of the community. Placentia has numerous historical sites and scenic views all located on a beach (i.e. Placentia Great Beach Boardwalk, Fort Frederick, Fort Louis, Basque Cemetery. Cultural Heritage District, etc.).
  
- B. Placentia Flood Risk Area: Part of the trail will pass through a flood risk area. The flood risk area is identified in the Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 – 2024. This map can be found in the supporting documents of the report.

iii. Construction (if applicable)

Trail Construction: As previously discussed, trail construction will follow the guidelines outline in the trails consultant’s report.

- ✓ Cross Walks  
A crosswalk (with appropriate signage, etc.) will need to be installed at the 0.1 km and 4.5 km marks. Permission will have to be obtained from the provincial government and the Town of Placentia prior to putting in the crosswalks.
  
- ✓ Lookout: At the 2.0 km mark a lookout overlooking part of the Southeast Arm already exists. This lookout will need only some safety features put in place.

vi. Operation

Same as was stated on page 11 (section iii) for Annie Healey Trail Section.

iv. Operation

The goal of this section of the hiking trail is to connect and increase the accessibility of existing hiking / walking trails located within the center of the community. These trails are located in close proximity to living accommodations for seniors as well as a nursing home and the health care facility. Such a project would immensely improve the quality of life for All of our residents.

The trail hiking committee is collaborating with the Town of Placentia to:

- connect the proposed new hiking trail to the town of Placentia trails,
- upgrade the existing hiking / walking trails in Placentia to the Great Placentia Boardwalk,
- provide infrastructure along the walking trails /green spaces that will be supportive of hikers / walkers, as well as seniors and people with limited abilities (extra benches, firmer walking surface, covered gazebos, etc.),



- provide access to washrooms and other amenities that are frequently used by hikers / walkers,
- connect hikers / walkers to the Placentia Cultural Heritage District and
- collaborate with Town of Placentia to identify Land Use Designation and Land Ownership.

v. Occupations:

Same as found previously under the Occupations section found under the Annie Healey trail on page 11.

- ✓ Who would be working on the trail?

### 5. Placentia To Point Verde Light House Trail Section

i. Geographical Location

This 3 - 3.5 section (depending on the route) coastal trail would connect Placentia to the Point Verde lighthouse. This hiking trail would offer specular views of Placentia Bay (see Map #12 below).



Map # 12 - Placentia To Pointe Verde Light House Trail Section

ii. Physical Features\

This section of the trail would be a great coastal trail that extends the network of trails from the Annie Healey trail to the Point Verde Lighthouse. It would provide hikers with a panoramic view of the islands in Placentia Bay, the former US Military Naval Base and the historic community of Placentia. Only the first 300 - 500 meters of the trail already exists. The remainder of the trail will need to be scouted more closely to determine the exact location of the trail. The intent of the Hike Placentia Incorporated is to ensure this trail will be a coastal similar to the East Coast Trails.

Lookouts: Several lookouts are planned for this section of the trail. The exact locations as of this time are not determined.

Point Verde Lighthouse: The hiking trail will end at the Point Verde Lighthouse. The lighthouse is connected to the community of Point Verde by a dirt by Also, there is an adequate parking next to the lighthouse.

iii. Construction (if applicable)

- ✓ As previously discussed, trail construction will follow the guidelines outline in the trails consultant's report.
- ✓ Parking – Point Verde Lighthouse: An existing area used for parking already exists next to the Point Verde Lighthouse. This parking area will need to be upgraded.
- ✓ Parking – Placentia Boardwalk: A large parking area already exist at the Town of Placentia end of this section of the trail. This parking area is owned and maintained by the Town of Placentia.

iv. Operation

- ✓ How the trail will be operated? Same as was stated on page 11 (section iii) for Annie Healey Trail Section.

v. Occupations:

- ✓ Who would be working on the trail?

ACOA funding requires that Hike Placentia Incorporated hire a certified contractor to complete the require work on the trail. The work on this section of the trail will take approximately 16 weeks

- ✓ Long Term plan and maintenance of the trail

Part of this section of trail is located within the Town of Placentia boundary. Thus, will fall under the town's jurisdiction. Hike Placentia Incorporated will be responsible for the development of the long-term plan and maintenance of the areas not under the Town of Placentia jurisdiction. Also, HPI will work closely with the town to develop a long-term plan for this section (and all sections) of the trail.

### **Project Related Documents**

(see attached documents if needed)

#### **Project Related Documents:**

- A. Placentia Trails – Consultants Final Report  
(Trails of Placentia Consultant is Green Leaf Resources)
- B. Town of Placentia – Land Use Map
- C. Town of Placentia Municipal Plan 2014 - 2024
- D. Town of Placentia - Flood Risk Areas
- E. Town of Placentia – Letter of Support
- F. Argentia Port Authority – Letter of Support
- G. Argentia Port Authority – License to Occupy Agreement Letter