

February 10, 2026

The Honourable Julie Dabrusin, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature;

The Honourable Wade Grant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Nature;

The Honourable Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation

Dear Honourable Ministers Julie Dabrusin and Evan Solomon, and the Honourable Wade Grant,

We write to you as members of the Town of Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee. We recently learned that Parks Canada is planning to close the *Canadian Register of Historic Places*, a valuable repository of information in place since 2004, with information on 13,500 registered properties from across Canada.

Much of our Committee's work focuses on the preservation and celebration of historic properties in our municipality. We are pleased that the *Canadian Register* contains pictures and information on the four iconic lighthouses within Saugeen Shores: the Saugeen River Rear and Front Range Lighthouses, the McNab Point Lighthouse, and the Lighthouse and Lightkeeper's Dwelling on Chantry island. These properties are cherished by our community as symbols of our Town's maritime history and have been lovingly restored by volunteers. The Chantry Island Lighthouse and Keeper's Cottage has been open to public tours since 2001; August 2025 marked the 30,000th tourist visit to the island. The success story of our marine heritage properties demonstrates the high level of public interest in historic sites, and the importance of maintaining easily accessible information for professional and personal research.

We are also proud that Saugeen Shores is home to the Donaldson Archaeological Site, the largest and best-documented Saugeen Complex site known, representing many aspects of Middle Woodland (200 BC – 900 AD) life, including habitation and mortuary practices.

As a Municipal Heritage Committee we are all too familiar with the loss of information on heritage properties. With its changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the current Ontario provincial government is planning to eradicate much of the content of existing municipal heritage registers as of January 1, 2027. Only provincially designated properties will be permitted to stay on Municipal Registers, negating the hard work of local committees to recognize hundreds of historically and culturally significant properties. It's disappointing to think that the federal government is heading down the same path.

The "About Us" section of the *Canadian Register* website says the following about its importance:

" With the Canadian Register you can:

- Learn about other parts of Canada
- Locate places to visit on vacation
- Research history in your community
- Create connections to your past

The Canadian Register is also a vehicle for F/P/T governments, heritage conservationists and other interested parties to enable Canadians to recognize, celebrate and protect historic places today and for future generations.”

The same page also implores Canadians to take action to protect historic places, stating: “Over 20% of Canada’s historic buildings have already been demolished. (That’s the same as wiping out about 60 Canadian university campuses.) We need to work together to protect these remaining places. Make your choice - how do you want to protect a historic place near you?”

Our Committee believes that one of the most important steps in the preservation and celebration of historic places is recognition by sharing information. We respectfully ask that the *Canadian Register* online database be maintained and that its future development be supported.

Yours truly,

Cheryl Grace, Chair, Town of Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee

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