



**PARKS CANADA AGENCY  
ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY BRANCH  
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE DIRECTORATE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW ASSESSMENT  
RIDEAU CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA  
POONAMALIE DAM ACCESS ROAD CONSTRUCTION  
FII PROJECT RPA 58**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Parks Canada has proposed to rehabilitate the Poonamalie Dam, Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada. A component of this Project will entail establishing a service road to facilitate access to the Project Area. This Archaeological Overview Assessment will evaluate the archaeological potential of the Project Area for the new service route and determine if an Archaeological Impact Assessment and/or mitigation measures are required for the Project..*

**PROJECT OVERVIEW AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

Parks Canada has proposed to rehabilitation Poonamalie Dam, which will include construction of a catwalk across the overflow spillway section to the main dam deck, the installation of a service gain in front of the existing radial gate and other miscellaneous improvements. The Project will also include the construction of a service road to facilitate access to the site and a parking area for service vehicles and a crane. This service road will be a single land roadway that will connect Salter Lane (an existing private drive) to the north end of the dam. This service road will run along a 30 ft wide right of way and an unopened Township road allowance to existing Parks Canada property. All lands have been purchased and are under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada.

The original canal dam at First Rapids (Poonamalie) was proposed to be an earth and rock filled structure, but was changed to be a weir across the whole river, to be constructed of wood using stone pier abutments (Watson 2018). It was 365 feet (111 m) long, built to a height of 6 feet (1.8 m) and had four of its bays (sluices) that could be removed entirely to allow the water level to be dropped enough to permit work on the banks of the upper canal cut (Watson 2018). Additionally, the entire top row of timber on the weir could be removed to "prevent any great rise of the lake in the spring" (Watson 2018). Following the construction of the dam, the landscape of Lower Rideau Lake was modified and an "island" was created (Figure 2). In 1904, a second dam slightly upstream of the original dam was constructed, only to be replaced in 1971 by the current concrete waste weir.

No terrestrial archaeological investigations have been conducted within the Project Area, however, archaeological surveys undertaken by Gordon Watson in the 1970s within the area revealed remains of Indigenous occupations including artifacts dating to the Archaic and Early Woodland periods (Moore et al. 2005:144-147). The Rowe Site (BfGa-26) included early Indigenous ceramic sherds (Moore et al. 2005:144). Given the Project Area contains open forested lands, with some disturbance from a past roadway, the Project Area retains archaeological potential for further evidence of Indigenous occupation. Additionally, there may be remains (e.g. construction building) from the construction of the first and/or second dams at the site.



## **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IMPACT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Given that evidence of Indigenous occupation and/or the construction of the first and/or second dams may exist below surface within portions of the Project Area, Project activities are deemed significant to impact potential archaeological resources. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) is required for the location of the proposed service road as well as the following mitigation measures to limit Project impacts to potential archaeological resources:

1. Forward all additional Project information, including construction drawings, pertaining to the Poonamalie Dam Rehabilitation Project to the Terrestrial and Underwater Archaeology sections for further review and comment.
2. If archaeological resources (i.e., artifact, structural remains) are encountered, excavation should cease in the immediate area, photographs of the find(s) taken and the Parks Canada Project Manager be informed. The Project Manager should then contact Parks Canada's Terrestrial Archaeology section for advice and assessment of significance, which will in turn determine what will be required to mitigate the find.

## **REFERENCES**

Moore et al. 2005. Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada Submerged Cultural Resource Inventory. Report on file with Archaeology Section, Parks Canada, ON.

Watson, Ken. 2018. A History of the Rideau Lockstations: Poonamalie - Lock 32 (also known as: First Rapids). Website last accessed August 7, 2018: <http://www.rideau-info.com/canal/history/locks/h32-poonamalie.html>.



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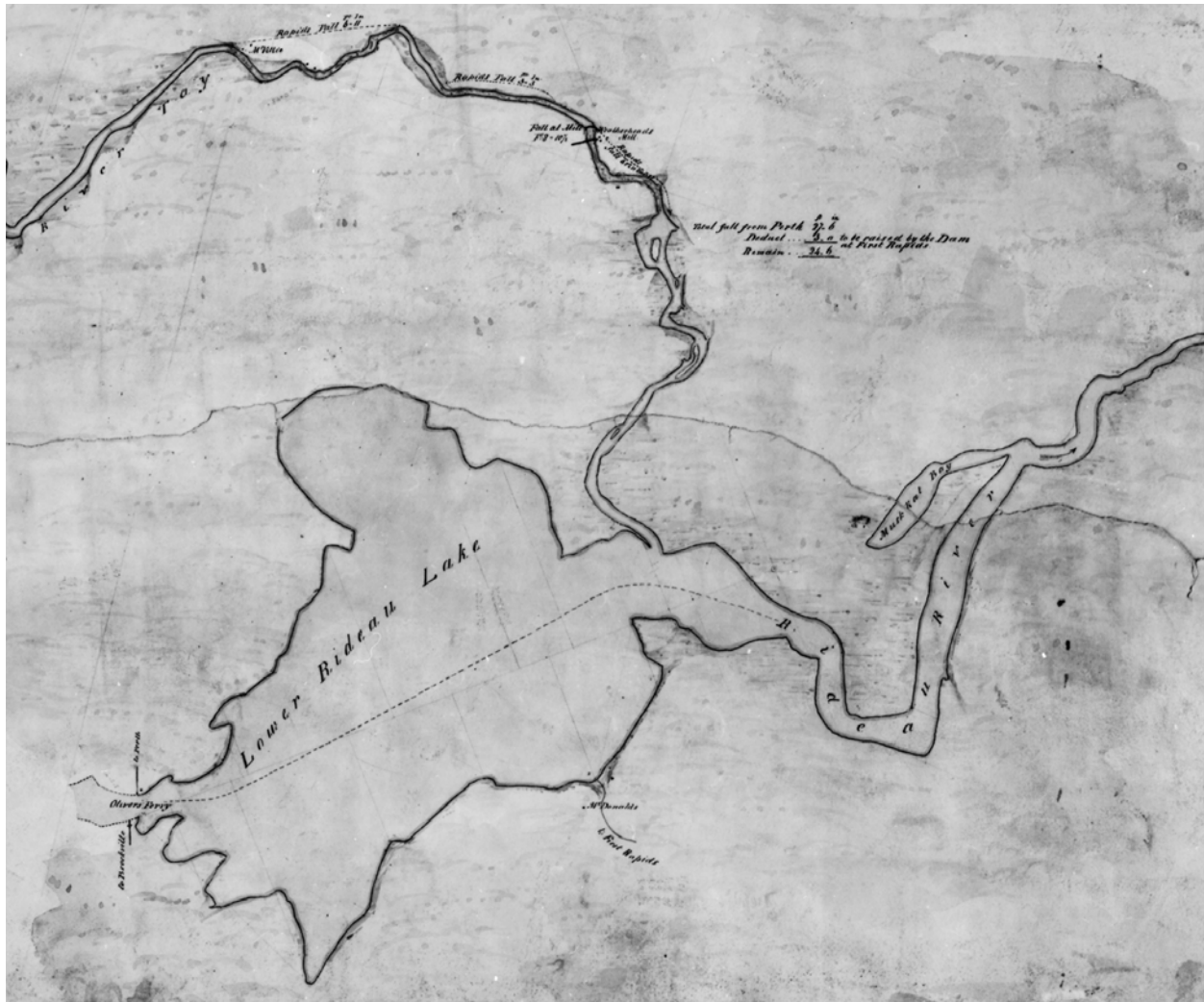


Figure 2. Lower Rideau Lake, 1831, prior to inundation by the first Poonamalie dam. The confluence of the Tay River and Rideau River is at the present location of Stonehouse Island (NMC 21969 shown in Moore et al. 2005:143).

