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**Red Bay  
(Canada)  
No 1412**

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**Official name as proposed by the State Party**

Red Bay Basque Whaling Station

**Location**

Newfoundland and Labrador Province.  
Town of Red Bay  
Canada

**Brief description**

Located in Labrador on the shore of the Strait of Belle Isle, Red Bay provides the earliest, most comprehensive and best preserved testimony of a pre-industrial whaling station in the Arctic zone. Established by Basque mariners in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it enabled the organisation of summer coastal whale hunting, the butchering of the whales, the rendering of whale fat by heating to produce oil, and the storage of the oil. Sold in Europe, the oil was primarily used for lighting. The property includes remains of rendering ovens, cooperages, wharves, temporary living quarters and a cemetery, together with underwater remains of vessels and whale bone deposits.

**Category of property**

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

**1 Basic data**

**Included in the Tentative List**

1st January 2004

**International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination**

None

**Date received by the World Heritage Centre**

16 January 2012

**Background**

This is a new nomination.

**Consultations**

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Archaeological Heritage Management and on Underwater Archaeological Heritage.

**Technical Evaluation Mission**

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 22 to 25 September 2012.

**Additional information requested and received from the State Party**

A letter was sent to the State Party on 20 December 2012, asking it to:

- Significantly reinforce the analysis of the socio-technical system that operated at the Red Bay site, in order to better justify criterion (iv);
- Present the scientific results with regard to the state of health of the populations;
- Provide additional information about the Management Committee;
- Consider the possibility of an extension of the buffer zone;
- Specify the conditions with regard to the monitoring and protection of the underwater remains.

The State Party provided an additional reply dated 25 February 2013, which has been taken into account in this evaluation.

**Date of ICOMOS approval of this report**

6 March 2013

**2 The property**

**Description**

Red Bay is situated at the north-eastern tip of Canada, north of the Strait of Belle Isle which separates the island of Newfoundland from Labrador. It is the archaeological site of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Basque whaling station. It was located close to a zone highly favourable at the time for whale hunting, as the mixing of the cold Labrador current and the warmer waters of the St. Lawrence River meant that it was rich in plankton and small crustaceans.

The site is located in a bay naturally protected by Saddle Island. The higher land close to the coast provided favourable conditions for observing whales in the strait.

The terrestrial and underwater archaeological excavations carried out at Red Bay enable the reconstruction of the establishment of the Basque community, and of the entire series of processes carried out on the whale carcasses, up to the shipping of the products to Europe.

The excavation sites have been reburied for protection, or are underwater, covered by tarpaulins. Few elements are immediately visible to the inexperienced visitor.

The two major whaling locations at Red Bay have undergone excavation. One occupies the western continental side of the bay, corresponding partly to the site of the present-day village of Red Bay. The second, which is the most important in terms of archaeological remains, is on the other side of the strait, on the northern part of Saddle Island, on a site which has historically not been much reused. The underwater elements have essentially been studied *in-situ*.

The property forms a landscape which, because of the low level of human occupation in the village of Red Bay and the natural coverage of Arctic grassland, still retains the same geomorphological and environmental characteristics as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The main elements of the property are as follows:

The two main sites of the property, and Saddle Island in particular, had in total around fifteen buildings for the rendering ovens used to melt the whale blubber and produce the oil. All of them are located next to the beaches where the whales were butchered, and provide easy access for the transport by sea of the final cargo. Today they are visible as grass-covered mounds. The oven buildings were low stone structures with wood-frame roofs covered with imported clay tiles, of which piles of fragments remain. Twelve oven sites have been excavated, and then in most cases reburied for protection (giving each one the appearance of a tumulus once again); the others have remained unexplored.

- Near the shore and the oven buildings, but slightly further back on terraces, are the remains of five cooperages for the assembly of the barrels used to transport the oil. Each barrel (*barrica*) had a standard capacity of 211 litres. The cooperages were originally quite large wooden buildings, stoutly constructed with clay-tiled roofs. Tools used to bend the barrel staves have been found, along with nails.
- The remains of living quarters show that the houses were made of wood. They were occupied in the summer, which was the only season favourable for whale hunting in acceptable conditions. The houses are located close to the rendering oven complexes. Other flimsier constructions seem to have been temporary warehouses. In one case, the remains seem to suggest an early chapel.
- The site of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Basque cemetery still exists at the tip of Saddle Island, with tombs hollowed out of the rock. Some of the human remains have been used for anthropological research, which has provided important information about the whaler populations, their state of health and the causes of their deaths (documentation of February 2013).
- Many extremely large whale bone deposits are scattered around the bay, some of them under the water (the most numerous being offshore from the village of Red Bay), and others on the shore or a small distance away, on the western coast of the bay at the foot of Tracey Hill and to the east of the strait opposite the Twin Islands.
- Remains of shipwrecks from the 16<sup>th</sup> century have been found in the bay: three at a depth of around 25-30 metres and one at 72 metres. Their state of preservation is good, and they are perfectly identifiable, such as the *San Juan*, built in 1565. The wrecks provide information about naval architecture and the use of the vessels for whaling purposes. A fifth wreck of a small vessel has also been found.
- The remains of the foundations of a wood and stone wharf have also been uncovered at Saddle Island.

- Large numbers of archaeological artefacts have been discovered through excavations both on land and at sea. The artefacts are on site, or have been deposited at the *Memorial University of Newfoundland* at St. John's (particularly those objects requiring technical follow-up for conservation purposes).
- The remains at the Red Bay site are reinforced by substantial archives, at the *Memorial University of Newfoundland* and in the archive services of the Basque Region in Spain.

The present-day village of Red Bay reuses the port facilities of the strait and the favourable coastal plain. The village is thinly populated with scattered housing, an access road and a few streets. The excavations have been carried out in unoccupied areas. The present-day houses are light in structure, and have no more than one upper floor. Their foundations consist of wooden posts, and they have no cellars, which means that the subsurface has not been damaged from the viewpoint of possible future excavations. There is also a former fishery and corresponding wharf, which have been closed since the 1990s and are currently being converted into a centre for maritime tourism (2012). There is also a Visitor Interpretation Centre set up in an elevated position, which provides an excellent panorama of the property and its environment.

Saddle Island has a lighthouse, and Penney Island has a 19<sup>th</sup> century cod fishery establishment, which has now been abandoned. The property also includes some small maritime structures.

### History and development

On the terrestrial part of the site there are archaeological artefacts dating back as far as 8000-9000 BCE. This is followed by evidence of the first Paleo-Eskimo populations, who occupied the bay on several occasions between 3000 and 1400 BCE.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards, the Basques (from northern Spain and south-western France) became the first European specialists in the hunting of whales, which they captured in their coastal areas or nearby. Their first transatlantic expeditions were for cod fishing, around Newfoundland, in the 1520s.

The Basques realised that the Strait of Belle Isle and the north of the St. Lawrence River estuary were favourable for summer whale hunting. A stage was reached when they organised whale hunting on an annual basis, with the aim of achieving a monopoly in lighting oil in Europe. Whale fat, once heated, liquefies and then remains liquid. This enterprise took on a pre-industrial dimension at a very early stage, with a market that was rapidly expanding.

"Grand Bay" (or "*la Gran Baya*"), today known as Red Bay, became an important Basque whaling centre from the 1530s onwards. The site was occupied during the summer months for whale hunting, the butchering of the whales and the production of oil in rendering ovens on the

shore, and finally the shipping of the oil in barrels to Europe. The whales hunted were of two main species: *Eubalaena glacialis* and *Balaena mysticetus*. In addition to lighting, the oil was also used as a mechanical lubricant, as a solvent, or as a raw material for making soap. Other whale products were also marketed. During this period, the Basques had around 15 similar installations in the region.

In whale hunting terms, Red Bay's peak came in the years 1560 – 1570: a thousand men and a dozen ships operated in the bay each summer, and a dozen rendering ovens were in use at that time. The socio-technical system for the organisation of the expeditions, the stopover at Red Bay, the whale-hunting, oil production, and the economics of whale oil commercialisation have been described in a detailed text (documentation of February 2013). The question of the fuel economy for the oil rendering ovens has remained unanswered, apparently because of a lack of source material on this matter.

From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it seems probable that regional overexploitation of whales had depleted populations in the Strait of Belle Isle. In response, an attempt was made to extend the whale hunting season into the autumn, but this proved to be difficult. Whale hunting techniques had moved on, and there were new competitors (the Dutch, English and Norwegians), which led to changes in the locations and then the commercial balance of whaling. Whaling stations in Labrador and the St. Lawrence River went into decline in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Basques no longer held a monopoly and they finally abandoned their transatlantic whaling operations. The pressure of political events, particularly the mobilisation of Basque mariners by the Spanish government for military purposes, also played an important role in reducing the number of whale hunting expeditions (defeat of the Invincible Armada in 1588).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the site became a trading post for the French and the Inuits of Labrador and a small seasonal port for cod fishing. At certain points in time, Thule Inuits occupied the Red Bay site, alongside the fishermen.

Long-term settlement, leading to Red Bay becoming a proper village, dates back to the 1840s.

The first discoveries on the role of Red Bay as a 16<sup>th</sup> century whaling station date from the 1970s. In 1979, the site was listed as a National Historic Site of Canada by the government.

### **3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity**

#### **Comparative analysis**

The property is compared with the other Basque whaling stations identified archaeologically along the Strait of Belle Isle and the shores of the St Lawrence River estuary. All the other sites are less rich in terms of evidence, and are

less well preserved. Red Bay is indisputably the most complete, the most significant and the best preserved of all. Red Bay was furthermore one of the largest stations, clearly reflecting the pre-industrial dimension this activity had assumed in the region.

The Basque Country, which today sits astride Spain and France, today has no surviving remains of its whaling facilities either from the Middle Ages or the early modern period, as all of them were located in ports which have been affected by frequent rebuilding.

In addition to its significance in representing the first generation of transatlantic whaling stations, Red Bay provides the best preserved historic testimony to European whaling, particularly as carried out by the Basques.

Other whaling sites around the world are generally from later periods. None have yet been included in the World Heritage List, although some are on national Tentative Lists.

Bangu-Dae in South Korea is the only site of any importance which is earlier than Red Bay. The South Korean site is protohistoric, and has Palaeolithic engravings showing whales, amongst other motifs. This site is not really comparable with Red Bay in terms of period or of the record.

Japan was also engaged in whaling at an early period, from the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Indications exist which date back to the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, bearing witness to an organisation of coastal whaling which resembles that of Red Bay, but these are very limited in heritage terms.

A series of whaling stations were set up by the Dutch and English in the Arctic archipelago of Spitzbergen (Norway), in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence of the first of these is found at Jan Mayen Island and Smeerenburg. These new stations contributed to the decline of Basque whaling expeditions. The Jan Mayen site has been damaged by coastal erosion, and is less complete than Red Bay, but good documentation has been preserved; Smeerenburg was the largest Dutch station in this zone. The two sites are located in a protected natural zone and have a large number of well-preserved archaeological elements. Remains have also been preserved at the British whaling stations: at Graveneset, with the port of Trinity, at Lægernes and Midterhuken, and at Strákatangi. They include elements similar to those of Red Bay, such as oil rendering ovens and cooperages, along with brick ovens and forges. These are important examples which are complementary to the testimony of Red Bay, both in terms of tangible remains and in chronological terms, as they represent the second period of Arctic whaling by Europeans, in proto-industrial conditions.

In more recent periods, particularly at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were whaling ports in North America, and in the Labrador and Newfoundland

regions, such as Hawke Harbour, Schooner Cove, Williamsport, Aquafort, Trinity and Dildo, and on the Pacific coast, such as Monterey. Remains also survive in the Azores, on the Island of Pico. Similarly, a series of Antarctic stations were established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Southern Australia and in New Zealand, on the island of South Georgia in the South Atlantic (United Kingdom) and in South Africa. These stations however have no direct parallels with Red Bay, as the technical systems employed are very different.

To sum up, Red Bay is the largest and best preserved whaling station amongst the earliest set of stations, created by Basque whalers in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in north-eastern Canada.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

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#### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value**

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The property bears testimony to the pioneering establishment of Basque transatlantic whale hunting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the Arctic maritime provinces of north-eastern Canada.
- It exhibits a full ensemble of archaeological remains, both on land and under water, which are in many cases well preserved: vessels, oil rendering ovens, cooperages, whale bone deposits, temporary living quarters, a cemetery and a significant set of archaeological artefacts.
- The remains embody all the stages of the sociotechnical process of 16<sup>th</sup> century whale hunting, and the exploitation of whale blubber to produce lighting oil.
- It is the best preserved whaling station of this type and of this early period, and the most complete in terms of constituent elements; it illustrates a large-scale pre-industrial and commercial whaling process.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is appropriate, as the synthesis of historical and archaeological knowledge about the property enables a sufficient overall understanding both of the site and of the way it functioned from a human and technical viewpoint.

#### **Integrity and authenticity**

##### **Integrity**

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass all the terrestrial and underwater archaeological elements constituting the Red Bay whaling station. Geographical and maritime conditions are such that there is little possibility of finding others outside the boundaries of the property. The variety of the elements is such that they bear witness to all the main stages of the whale hunting process: wrecks of vessels, archaeological remains of

hunting, whale bone deposits attesting the butchery of the whales on the coast, remains of the oil rendering ovens, seasonal living quarters and a cemetery.

Development at Red Bay after the abandonment of whaling remained modest. Today the site includes the coastal village and some modest port facilities already referred to. These elements did not interfere with the excavations in 1970 to 1990, and the inaccessible archaeological elements have been preserved; it will thus be possible to study them at a later date.

The climate of Red Bay, particularly for the underwater remains, has enabled good preservation of the timbers of the ships and their cargos.

The landscape question is paradoxical. On the one hand, the uncultivated Arctic tundra vegetation means it is relatively easy to interpret the geographical space, which has not really changed since the Basque whaling period, except for the scattered houses of the village and the road. It also enables good interpretation of its general content for the specialist (mounds above terrestrial archaeological remains, organisation of the station). On the other hand, this kind of landscape is not at all explicit even for a highly motivated visitor: nothing is directly visible as the excavated remains have been carefully reburied for protection, and even the underwater remains have been covered by tarpaulins held down by ballast. This does not affect integrity, as this technical situation is justified for reasons of conservation. However, interpretation of the site is therefore essential for a visitor wishing to gain an understanding of the property.

In the additional documentation it provided in February 2013, the State Party has largely answered ICOMOS' questions concerning the adequacy of knowledge about the social, economic and technical phenomena enabling an understanding of the ensemble of archaeological remains proposed for inscription. Only the fuel economy for the oil rendering ovens remains insufficiently established, apparently because of a lack of source material. A fuel crisis (supply, cost) may possibly have occurred, which may have added another reason to those already proposed for the decline of the Basque whaling stations in the Strait of Belle Isle (maritime warfare in Europe, decline of whale populations).

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the archaeological integrity of the property is satisfactory, as it has been made comprehensible by a good overall body of knowledge of the social, economic and technical processes associated with its history.

##### **Authenticity**

The authenticity of the structural elements uncovered by the archaeological excavations is unquestionable. The items found have not been disturbed or reused, but were simply abandoned in the natural condition of their preservation. The conditions were relatively favourable for the stone and ceramic structures of the terrestrial

elements, but not for the wooden structures. Wooden structures were only reasonably well preserved if underwater, where conversely the conditions were extremely favourable.

However, the legibility of the authenticity is less clear, and is extremely variable depending on the point of view. It may be considered to be good in archaeological terms, especially with regard to the general structures of the vessels, naval architecture, and spatial and functional relationships. The appearance of the landscape is also relatively authentic, because of the stability and permanency of the vegetation and the limited impact of human presence (although there is some impact, because the present-day village is situated exactly above one of the two major features of the property).

The abundant documentary archives are helpful in enabling a better understanding of authenticity. The same applies to the collections of archaeological artefacts, which are not always stored on-site, for conservation and research reasons.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the property is unquestionable, but that the presentation of this authenticity to visitors is a delicate task. The initial concern about the lack of correlation between the material evidence, which often seems inexplicit or difficult to perceive, has largely been overcome by the additional documentation of February 2013. ICOMOS wishes to draw the State Party's attention to the importance of the scientific reconstructions for visitors, in order to enable them to fully understand the authenticity of the testimony provided by Red Bay.

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ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

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#### **Criteria under which inscription is proposed**

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (v).

*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Red Bay is an exceptional example of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Basque whaling tradition, and its transatlantic commercial exploitation. Through its archaeological remains, it constitutes the largest, best preserved and most complete whaling station of this type.

ICOMOS considers that Red Bay does indeed constitute the most complete, earliest and best preserved archaeological testimony of the European whaling tradition. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Basque mariners carried out this seasonal activity to produce oil which was then used for transatlantic commerce.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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*Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Red Bay is the largest and most extensive archaeological site illustrating the technological process of producing whale oil in an Arctic station. The remains consist of rendering ovens, cooperages, temporary living quarters and wrecks of vessels. No other comparable site provides such a complete understanding of the technology used at that time for whale oil production, and which played a strategic role for three centuries.

ICOMOS considers that Red Bay constitutes a fully comprehensible set of archaeological elements illustrating the establishment of a proto-industrial process of large-scale whale oil production, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

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*Criterion (v): be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the whaling station at Red Bay is the most outstanding example of land and sea use associated with whaling and large-scale whale oil production in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological resources found there illustrate the adaptation of the Basque mariners to the harsh terrestrial and marine environment in the course of the establishment of their station at Red Bay.

ICOMOS considers that this was a pre-industrial establishment of notable length, but which covered a time span limited to some 70 years, and that this does not constitute a really long-term example of the traditional exploitation of a marine resource. The property also provides testimony to human pressure on the natural stocks of whales in the region, and their depletion by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which probably led to the decline and abandonment of the station. The specific qualities of the site are satisfactorily expressed by the previous criteria, but not by this one.

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ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of integrity and authenticity, and meets criteria (iii) and (iv).

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#### **Description of the attributes**

- Red Bay has the most comprehensive and best preserved archaeological remains of a whaling station established by Basque mariners in the first

half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in the Arctic regions of north-eastern Canada.

- The property has both terrestrial and underwater archaeological remains: whale oil rendering ovens, cooperages, wrecks of ships and *chalupas* (whale boats), vast whalebone deposits, temporary living quarters and a cemetery.
- The property bears testimony to the use of the port and coastal areas for whaling purposes, for the butchery of the whales, the organisation of whale oil production and the storage of the oil in barrels.
- The property provides a well preserved and authentic panorama of the site and its main geographical characteristics.
- The property has important archaeological artefacts and archives which are useful for understanding the fixed tangible remains.
- All these testimonies combined enable a credible reconstruction of the socio-technical process of whaling in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the processing of blubber to produce lighting oil on a proto-industrial scale for a transatlantic commerce.

#### 4 Factors affecting the property

There is no important threat from the development of the village of Red Bay, either to the property or its buffer zone. Red Bay's socio-economic situation may be considered to be stationary, with a few small-scale fishery activities, and its population is slightly in decline. There are however some uncertainties about the future use of certain sectors near the property for agricultural or mining purposes.

The main projects known about are linked to the promotion of the property for tourism purposes, with the recent opening of the Visitor Interpretation Centre in an elevated position above the village, and the conversion (currently taking place) of the fishing cooperative and wharf into a marine tourism office. But Red Bay is located far from any densely populated areas, and its climate is often harsh. The increase in tourism, leaving aside the initial modest increase in numbers, will remain limited. However, excessive numbers of walkers visiting the terrestrial archaeological sites or the cemetery could affect them, as they are relatively fragile.

Some of the rendering oven locations are right on the coast, and are thus threatened by coastal erosion. This is a relatively slow process at the moment. With climate change, the situation could worsen in the medium-term, with more violent storms and a rise in seawater levels.

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ICOMOS considers that the main threat to the property is coastal erosion.

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## 5 Protection, conservation and management

### Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the property correspond to the crests of the hills for the continental part, and to a maritime area which includes the main island of Saddle, Penney Island and the Twin Islands group. The surface area is 312.973 ha, and the population does not exceed 95 persons (seasonal workers are also present).

The buffer zone extends to a distance of 200 metres beyond the boundaries of the property to the east, south and west, and to the cove to the north. The area covers 285.2 ha and the population does not exceed 100 (presence of seasonal employees).

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ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of the buffer zone are adequate.

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### Ownership

Approximately 85% of lands included in the nominated property are owned by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador (Crown Lands), including the shores and the uninhabited islands. Ownership is exercised by the provincial Department of Environment and Conservation, but the territorial administration is carried out on the basis of the municipal plans of the Town of Red Bay. The coastal sea beds of the property are also considered to be Crown Lands.

The remaining lands are the property of the Canadian government, and this is also the case for the underwater archaeological site 24M. A certain number of lots are the responsibility of Parks Canada, including the Visitor Interpretation Centre and the whole of Saddle Island. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has title to the shoreline used for berthing vessels.

There are no private ownership rights, but parcels of land are leased or granted to homeowners in the town enabling them to build and carry out works subject to compliance with the legislation.

### Protection

The legal and administrative protection of the property is exercised by the three levels of government having jurisdiction (governmental, provincial and local). The three levels of protection are coordinated so that the measures taken are effective and complement each other. They form the legal framework for conservation and management of the property.

The main federal legislation consists of:

- The Navigable Waters Protection Act (1995);
- The Parks Canada Agency Act (1998).

Their application for the protection of the property is the responsibility of the Parks Canada Agency, which is in charge of cultural and natural properties of national significance. Red Bay is one such property, as it was awarded National Historic Site of Canada status in 1979.

The provincial protection legislation consists of:

- The Historic Resources Act (1990), of which the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation is in charge;
- The Municipalities Act (1990) and the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000).

The Municipal Plan of the Town of Red Bay (2010-2020) contains the territorial planning information concerning the uses of the property, with a mixed development zone, a preservation zone for the archaeological sites, a commercial zone, and a rural resources zone. The commercial zone includes small shops, along with small-scale fishing and tourist accommodation.

It may be considered that the attachment of the inhabitants to the historic property of Red Bay and its remains constitutes a form of traditional protection.

The additional documentation of February 2013 specifies the condition of the monitoring and protection of the underwater remains forming part of the property.

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ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate.

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### Conservation

The property has been the subject of a series of terrestrial and underwater archaeological campaigns, from 1978 to 1992, concerning 32 features. The knowledge gained has been complemented by three collections: vessels and underwater archaeological features, whale bone deposits, and terrestrial archaeological artefacts. Further excavations are not considered necessary; they would probably not increase overall knowledge of the property, just increase the collections. The provincial authorities are responsible for archaeological matters. Some of the artefacts are conserved locally, and some (particularly the most fragile items) have been entrusted to the *Memorial University of Newfoundland* at St. John's. The Basque archives have also been studied since the mid-1970s.

The upper wooden structures of the terrestrial remains have disappeared, whilst the stone footings and fragments of tiles have been preserved. The timbers of the wrecked vessels have resisted the impact of time well, because the water is relatively cold and the eco-biological environment is favourable.

In accordance with the request made by ICOMOS, the State Party has incorporated the scientific results of the study of human remains from the cemetery into the general knowledge of the property and its history.

The structural elements present on the site today are in a stabilised and durable state of conservation. No interventions are planned in the short to medium term. The small population residing at the site, and very limited building development also contribute to the conservation of the property.

The motivation of the local residents to preserve their heritage is an active factor for conservation.

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ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the property is satisfactory, and that the measures taken are effective.

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### Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The parties involved in the management of the property are: Parks Canada, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Provincial Archaeology Office, and the Town of Red Bay. The Memorandum signed in the early 2000s by the four entities involved in the management of the historic site of Red Bay was renewed in December 2011, in view of the work required to produce the nomination dossier for inscription on the World Heritage List. It instituted a common Management Committee, which has been in charge of the implementation of the Management Plan since 2012.

Parks Canada provides an annual budget of CAD310,000 to its Red Bay unit, excluding salaries. The Provincial Archaeology Office also contributes to the site management budget, as does the Town of Red Bay.

The personnel employed at Red Bay are those of Parks Canada and the Visitor Interpretation Centre. They comprise one supervisor in charge of the site, one person in charge of maintenance, and six seasonally-employed guides. The municipality provides one person for site management purposes, and can carry out specific programmes with the help of the relevant provincial departments.

In view of the conservation options adopted, there is no longer an archaeological mission or any permanent conservation personnel on-site. Only "as-needed" missions are carried out. Parks Canada and the Provincial Archaeology Office supply the personnel needed for the scientific management of the site. They can intervene as part of a project, or when a specific request is made.

Red Bay can also count on a group of experienced volunteers for any terrestrial or underwater archaeological work, and for site maintenance and servicing work.

The catering and accommodation services are provided by private individuals (family-owned companies).

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

Parks Canada is accountable to the federal government for the Management Plan of Red Bay, National Historic Site of Canada. The plan has been approved and covers a period of 5 years beginning in January 2012; it provides a long-term strategic vision. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the *Management Plan for the Red Bay Basque Whaling Station*, which brings together all the partners involved in the management of the property (January 2012). The plan was preceded by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the various management partners. The joint Management Plan has been devised to be used in conjunction with the provincial plans for the development of the straits region.

Parks Canada is monitoring the state of coastal erosion at those points where it threatens rendering over locations. If necessary, preventive rock barriers will be put in place. The most threatened site, on Penney Island, is considered to be a pilot site.

There are two buildings for the reception of visitors. The Visitor Interpretation Centre is the responsibility of Parks Canada. It is located in an elevated position which provides a panoramic view of the site. It has collections of objects and models. A second tourist information centre is currently being constructed (September 2012) at the small port. Tourist itineraries inside the property have been set up, with appropriate signage and information.

ICOMOS considers it necessary to improve and deepen the interpretation of the site for visitors, in view of the rather inexplicit nature of the remains preserved on land and in the bay: the addition of photographs on the information panels showing the sites before they were reburied; cutting of the grass to make the terrestrial remains more understandable; improving the signs leading to the Visitor Interpretation Centre – Museum; ensuring the homogeneity of, and enhancing, the scientific content at the various visitor reception locations, etc.

#### Involvement of the local communities

The local community consists of the residents of Red Bay. They are few in number (around one hundred adults), but are strongly involved in the preservation of the property. Most of them have already participated on a voluntary basis in maintenance work, or assisted the archaeologists. Almost all of them have signed a common declaration of support for the heritage project. They are officially represented on the decision-making bodies by the Town of Red Bay.

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ICOMOS considers that the property management system is adequate and effective, and that sufficient additional information has been provided about the functioning of the Management Committee, and about its role as the property management coordination authority. ICOMOS also recommends that the presentation of the property to visitors be improved and deepened, in view of the property's lack of visible remains.

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## 6 Monitoring

A monitoring programme has been in place since 1985, led by Parks Canada in association with the Provincial Office of Archaeology. It gathers information about the conservation of the attributes of the property. It also monitors the quality and efficacy of the presentation to the public of the values of the property.

For the terrestrial remains, the quantified periodic monitoring exercise, carried out annually, covers the elements which have remained intact, the reburial mounds covering terrestrial attributes, coastal erosion, constructions and housing works, and visitors.

For the underwater properties, the monitoring is concerned with physical changes occurring to the protective coverings of the re-covered archaeological sites (annual), the physical and chemical characteristics of the water (5 years), and the deterioration of the wood (5 years).

A thorough Commemorative Integrity Evaluation was also carried out by multi-disciplinary teams from the State Party (October 2011). This was a detailed inventory of the attributes present in a given place, considered in terms of their contribution to the understanding of the property as a whole. This evaluation will provide yardsticks used as a basis for future monitoring.

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ICOMOS considers that monitoring of the property is in place, and that it is satisfactory.

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## 7 Conclusions

ICOMOS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of Red Bay, which provides the most comprehensive and earliest terrestrial and underwater archaeological testimony of European Transatlantic whaling, by Basques in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for the production of whale oil on a grand scale. Sufficient additional information about the knowledge of the socio-technical processes at play during the whale hunting period has been provided by the additional documentation to fully justify criterion (iv).

## 8 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Red Bay Basque Whaling Station, Canada, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (iii) and (iv)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

#### Brief synthesis

Situated in Labrador, in north-eastern Canada, on the shores of the Strait of Belle Isle, Red Bay was an Arctic maritime base for Basque mariners in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is the earliest, most comprehensive and best preserved archaeological testimony of a pre-industrial whaling station. It was used for coastal whale hunting in the summer, the butchery of the whales, and the rendering of the oil and its storage. The whale oil was sold in Europe primarily for lighting purposes. The property includes the remains of rendering ovens, cooperages, a wharf, living quarters and a cemetery, together with the underwater wrecks of vessels and whale bone deposits.

**Criterion (iii):** Red Bay Basque Whaling Station is an outstanding example of the tradition of whale hunting established by the Basques in the 16<sup>th</sup> century for the production of oil which was transported for sale in Europe. In terms of the diversity of its archaeological remains, this is the most extensive, best preserved and most comprehensive whaling station of this type.

**Criterion (iv):** Red Bay Basque Whaling Station constitutes a fully intelligible ensemble of archaeological elements illustrating the establishment of a proto-industrial process of large-scale production of whale oil, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Integrity

The property includes all the terrestrial and underwater elements that illustrate all the major phases of the whale hunting process. The various attributes of the property are generally well preserved, and their relationships with the land remain engraved on and visible in the landscape. They therefore satisfactorily express the Outstanding Universal Value of the property; however, as visibility of the remains is limited, a policy of active and thorough interpretation is necessary. The knowledge of the socio-technical system involved is sufficient to allow full interpretation of the ensemble of preserved remains at Red Bay.

#### Authenticity

The various attributes of the property are of unquestionable authenticity, as is the general landscape around the present-day village of Red Bay. However, the authenticity perceived by the visitor remains limited to an impression of the landscape, as the tangible attributes have been reburied, which is however justified in view of the need for conservation. The Visitor Interpretation

Centre is essential to enable an understanding of the site and its authenticity.

#### Management and protection requirements

Red Bay was listed as a *National Historic Site of Canada* in 1979. The property management and protection plan has been in place for a long time; it is effective, and the responsibilities of each of the players are clearly identified. The Management Committee was set up at the end of the preparation of the nomination dossier, between the four institutional property management partners. The Management Plan for Red Bay, the National Historic Site of Canada is designed to be used in conjunction with the Management Plan for the Red Bay Whaling Station, which brings together all the partners involved in the management of the property. At present, the protection of the property – following an intensive phase of archaeological research from the 1970s to the 1990s - is ensured by the permanent covering and reburial of both terrestrial and underwater remains. Current management thus consists of monitoring the state of conservation and developing structures for visitor interpretation and reception.

#### Additional recommendations

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration the following:

- Notifying the World Heritage Committee of any agricultural or mining project which could possibly arise in the environment of the property and which could potentially have a negative impact on it, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;
- Improving and deepening the interpretation of the site for visitors, in view of the inexplicit nature of the remains preserved on land and in the bay.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



View of the Red Bay port



Whale bone deposit



Oven site on Penney Island



Remains of cooperages for the assembly of the barrels