

## Abstract

As the ease of travel continues to progress, tourism has become the world's principal economic activity, and more attention is being placed on cultural sites as an area to expand the industry. Grand-Pré National Historic Site in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, has realized this trend in tourism, and in hopes of strengthening their position and attractiveness as a cultural destination, it is applying for a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. World Heritage Sites are significant properties around the world which exemplify an outstanding level of cultural diversity and natural wealth. Along with being recognized as a cultural destination, Grand-Pré is looking to take advantage of another benefit of the designation; the belief that as a Heritage Site, there will be an increase in the level of public awareness which would in turn spark an increase in visitation to the area.

This paper estimates if there is any truth to the belief that an increase in tourism occurs due to a World Heritage Site designation. Given the declining trends in tourism for Grand Pré and the Annapolis Valley, this could be a way to attract new visitors to the area and sustain the local tourism industry.

In the summer of 2008, 278 surveys were collected asking visitors about their awareness and the importance of the site as well as their spending habits while visiting the area. Visitation statistics to Nova Scotia were used to create a regression model to be able to measure what kind of visitation impact a UNESCO designation could have on the area. Using these data, I assessed the potential economic impact of visitor spending attributable to a UNESCO designation on the site and local economy.

An increase of 6.2% in the number of visitors to Grand Pré due to a UNESCO designation was estimated. An average spending of \$68.72 per visitor was estimated using our survey data. This information was analyzed under both a historical and forecasted scenario of visitation to Grand Pré, to develop the increase in tourists to the site and the spending of new visitors due to a UNESCO designation. It is concluded that a UNESCO designation at the National Historic Site of Grand Pré could have considerable positive economic impacts for the site and local economy for years to come.