

## FATHER PANDOSY MISSION OF KELOWNA

Evaluation of the site for inclusion in a  
Francophone cultural tourist route



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Britannique

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Father Pandosy Mission is a historic heritage site located in Kelowna, in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. Founded by French missionary Father Jean-Charles Pandosy, this site is an important reminder of the contribution of French-speaking settlers to the development and history of the region.

Originally from Marseilles, France, Father Pandosy was an Oblate priest who travelled with a small group of helpers to the Okanagan Valley in 1859. A year later, he established the Mission of the Immaculate Conception, the first permanent White colony. Father Pandosy was a missionary, but also a practical man, and he maintained strong and friendly ties with the local indigenous peoples. A man of the soil, he introduced members of the First Nations to farming and encouraged settlers (a large number of whom were French speakers) to establish themselves in the fertile areas of the valley. He helped import the first vine cuttings and apple tree seedlings to the region. This was the beginning of wine and fruit production, which has become one of the principal economic resources of the Okanagan.

This report will examine the possibility and relevance of incorporating the Pandosy Mission historical site into a Francophone cultural tourist route. This report will assess the history of the Mission and its current infrastructure. Its strengths from a tourism point of view will be identified, and potential hurdles and desirable partnerships examined.

## 2. HISTORY OF THE FATHER PANDOSY MISSION

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) is a Catholic clerical congregation that was founded in Aix-en-Provence in 1816. A native of Marseilles, Father Jean-Charles Pandosy,<sup>1</sup> OMI, arrived in British Columbia in 1858. On the orders of his superior, Father d'Herbomez, he went to the Okanagan Valley in 1859 to establish a mission. Among his French-speaking companions were Father Richard, OMI, and colonist Cyprien Laurence and his native wife, Thérèse, who originated from this region. This small group settled in the valley and had a very rough first winter. The pioneers survived by eating the meat of one of their horses, dried berries and boiled moss. A year later, Father Pandosy chose a new location 19 kilometres further south, on the eastern shore of Lake Okanagan. The pines and fertile land of the area reminded him of his native Provence. This idyllic site, named "Anse-au-Sable" (Sandy Cove) by the settlers, is now part of the City of Kelowna. In this new location, Father Pandosy founded the Immaculate Conception Mission, which later became known as the

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<sup>1</sup> These biographical details are taken from Father Pandosy, Pioneer of the Faith in the Northwest by Edmond Rivère – Midtown Press, 2012

Okanagan Mission. Situated on approximately 160 acres of land, the Mission was at first a single building with two floors: the chapel was on the ground floor while the living quarters of the Oblates and a single classroom (the area's first school, where students were taught in French) were upstairs. In 1865, the missionaries built a simple house for their own use. That same year, they built a root cellar, which is considered to be the first cold-storage structure in the region. In 1886, they erected the barn, which also contained a stable and a hayloft. These buildings were constructed of cedar with gabled roofs and dovetail joints. The Oblate Brothers carried out various activities on the Mission site: raising cattle; growing barley, wheat and potatoes; and cultivating a vineyard, orchard and vegetable garden. For 32 years, Father Pandosy dedicated himself tirelessly to his tasks as a missionary and settler. He was sent a number of times to other missions across British Columbia (including Esquimalt and Fort Rupert, on Vancouver Island), but he always returned to the Okanagan, where he shared in the life of the indigenous people and the white settlers, fulfilling the roles of priest, doctor, teacher, lawyer, musician, botanist and farmer. Toward the end of his life, the territory of the Oblates covered almost 20,000 acres; on it, they raised 500 heads of cattle and harvested 500 tons of hay a year. In February 1891, suffering from pneumonia, Father Pandosy died in Penticton, with his friend, the native chief François, at his side. The Oblates closed the Mission in 1902 and the land was sold to the Central Okanagan Land Company.

By 1954, the Mission had fallen into disrepair. The buildings were so dilapidated that the Kelowna Fire Department was ready to take them down because of the fire hazard they posed. The Okanagan Historical Society and the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus joined forces, devoting time and money to save this important religious and cultural heritage site in Kelowna. The land and buildings now belong to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson. Since 1960, the Okanagan Historical Society has been responsible for maintaining the buildings and promoting the site. In 2010, in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the Pandosy Mission, the organization received a large grant to update signage on the site (in English only). Artist Crystal Przybill created a commemorative bronze statue of Father Pandosy, which was installed on the site in the spring of 2012.

### 3. THE PANDOSY MISSION SITE

Open daily from March to October, the Pandosy Mission is located at the intersection of Benvoulin and Casorso, not far from downtown Kelowna. Admission is by donation. Eight historical buildings sit on a vast, well-maintained grassy area. Four of them were part of the original Mission, and they all hold many artifacts and agricultural tools of the era. The property and buildings are maintained by a live-in caretaker. Although rustic and presented in a simple way, the exhibits are a fascinating and valuable testimony to the region's historical past. The author of this report created a photographic

account of the site in July 2012. It can be found in Appendix B.

- a. **The Oblate Brothers' House:** This cedar log cabin is one of the three original buildings. It consists of a ground floor, where all sorts of domestic implements of the time (butter churns, wash tubs, etc.) are displayed, and a second floor, where there is a very rustic bedroom.
- b. **The Chapel:** This two-storey log cabin was the Mission's very first building. The chapel proper was located on the ground floor. Upstairs were the single classroom of the area's first school and the Oblate Brothers' ascetic dormitory. A reconstruction helps visitors discover the rough living conditions endured by these pioneer missionaries.
- c. **The Root Cellar:** Built by Brother Surel, OMI, this log cabin was the third original building. It was used for storing fruits and vegetables from the garden and orchard. A layer of compacted earth between double walls provided good insulation.
- d. **Home of Joseph Christien:** Originally from St. Anicet, Quebec, Joseph Christien was one of the French-speaking pioneers who followed Father Pandosy to the Okanagan Valley. His house was moved to the Mission site in 1970. This two-storey building houses the site's most elaborate museum exhibit, with the recreation of a kitchen, parlour, dining room, bedrooms and classroom of the era (during the local school's renovations, Christien offered the use of his home).
- e. **Home of John McDougall:** A trapper and merchant, John McDougall managed a Hudson's Bay Company store on the Mission site, starting in 1860. His house was moved to the Mission site in 1968. In its single room, the museum exhibit shows the living environment and commonly used objects of pioneer life in the region at the end of the 19th century.
- f. **Barn, Blacksmith Shop and Storage Sheds:** The barn was erected at the Mission in 1886. Although not original to the site, this period blacksmith shop was moved here in 1974. The storage sheds contain a collection of period carts and agricultural tools.
- g. **Commemorative Statue of Father Pandosy:** This very evocative bronze statue depicts the missionary as a tireless traveller leaning on his walking stick, his cassock swirling in the wind. Symbolic elements of the Syilx/Okanagan First Nation culture are embossed on his clothes: the coyote represents the spiritual aspect; the black bear, salmon, bitter root and Saskatoon berry represent the four basic foods. This life-size statue sits on a pedestal in the middle of the lawn and can be seen by visitors after they come through the entrance gate.

The tour of the site is self-guided, with the help of a brochure that gives basic information. This brochure and other information pamphlets are available at a covered stand near the entrance gate. Every building and exhibit has its own interpretive panel. These panels are of two kinds: the first kind are handwritten on a wooden support and were installed during the 1954 renovations; the second kind are weather resistant and printed on metal in black and sepia, and were made possible by the Okanagan Historical Society's 2010 fundraising campaign. Information, including that in the printed resource material, only comes in English. According to Marguerite Berry, former member of the Society's finance committee, some thought was given in 2010 to creating the panels in both official languages. However, it was quickly assessed that this extra effort would put a strain on the energy and goodwill of a committee entirely made up of volunteers. Consequently, the plan for bilingual panels was abandoned.

It is quite apparent that the Pandosy Mission does not have the benefit of a large budget.

It is open only eight months of the year, and visitors must tour the site on their own. Promotion seems to be lacking (at the height of the tourist season, during a visit in July 2012, the author of this report was the only visitor at the site). Although interesting because of the artifacts, the exhibits are far from sophisticated. However, the site is obviously maintained with a lot of care and attention. This initiative, entirely managed by a volunteer group whose efforts deserve to be recognized, is still a remarkable success.

#### 4. LOCAL CONTEXT: TOURISM AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN KELOWNA

Economically expanding, the region of Kelowna draws its prosperity from numerous industries, but for the purpose of this study, the focus will be on tourism and fruit and wine production. For tourists, from a cultural and historical point of view, the Pandosy Mission site is of undeniable interest. As for the stakeholders of the agricultural and wine sectors, without any doubt, they owe a debt of gratitude to the Oblate Brothers who, under the leadership of Father Pandosy, planted the first apple trees and grapevines in the Okanagan.

- a. **Tourism:** Located in the heart of British Columbia, the City of Kelowna has 117,312 residents<sup>2</sup> and is the largest metropolitan area in the Okanagan Valley. Its semi-arid climate, hot summers, and relatively mild winters in comparison to the rest of Canada, create ideal conditions for outdoors activities as well as fruit farming and wine production. The magnificent Okanagan Lake, as well as the beautiful natural environment of the region, attract visitors from across the country and the rest of the world. An international airport (considered to be one of the

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1 City of Kelowna: [www.kelowna.ca](http://www.kelowna.ca)

10 best in Canada) and the Coquihalla Highway allow access to the region for an ever-increasing number of tourists. Kelowna has a large tourism infrastructure to entice visitors, whose spending represents a substantial share of the local economy. A market study conducted by InterVISTAS Consulting<sup>3</sup> revealed that Kelowna is visited on a yearly basis by an average 1.5 million tourists, who spent a total of \$279 million in 2011. That same year, the city boasted more than 7,000 direct jobs in the tourism sector. Swimming and water sports, cruises on Okanagan Lake, approximately 15 golf courses, other outdoors activities for young and old alike, great restaurants and a wine route of international reputation, First Nations culture, art galleries—Kelowna has it all and delights sophisticated, discerning tourists as well as families in search of a relaxing holiday. As well, the region has a rich historical past that could be further explored in order to add a cultural component to existing tourist activities. The Pandosy Mission would fit perfectly in that context.

**b. Wine and fruit production:** More than 90% of British Columbia's orchard surface area and 95% of its vineyards are located in the Okanagan Valley. According to the BC Fruit Growers Association,<sup>4</sup> there are 800 orchard operators in the interior of British Columbia, with annual gross sales of \$130 million, who contribute \$900 million in economic activity and, between production, packaging and processing, directly employ 1,500 people per year. This flourishing industry can trace its origins back to the Immaculate Conception Mission, where Father Richard, OMI, is said to have planted the first apple tree, imported from France. According to a report from the BC Wine Institute,<sup>5</sup> in 2011, the wine and grape industry in British Columbia generated \$1.43 million in revenues and 10,323 direct and indirect full-time jobs. The Okanagan Valley accounts for more than 90% of this production and receives proportional benefits from it. From a historical point of view, the region's wine industry has undergone numerous phases, and the grape varieties cultivated today are a far cry from those grown at the Immaculate Conception Mission in the 1800s. Nevertheless, considering that the Oblate Brothers planted them for religious reasons (the idea was simply to produce communion wine), there has been extraordinary growth in this industry. It is also interesting to note that the wine industry alone attracts around 800,000<sup>6</sup> tourists per year to British Columbia, most of whom visit the Okanagan.

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<sup>2</sup> The Economic Impact of Tourism on Kelowna – report available at [www.tourismkelowna.com](http://www.tourismkelowna.com)

<sup>4</sup> BC Fruit Growers' Association: [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com)

<sup>5</sup> The Economic Impact of the Wine and Grape Industry in Canada in 2011 – Report available at [www.winebc.org](http://www.winebc.org)

<sup>6</sup> BC Wine and Grape Industry Fact Sheet – BC Wine Institute



## 5. THE CLIENTELE FOR A FRANCOPHONE CULTURAL TOURIST ROUTE

For the reasons previously explained, the appeal of the Pandosy Mission in a Francophone cultural tourist route would be undeniable. But what kind of visitors would it attract?

**a. The Francophone population of the Okanagan:** From a historical perspective, Francophone settlers made a significant contribution to the economic and human development of the Okanagan Valley. In the mid-1800s, lured by the rumours of a gold rush, a great number of Canadian and European Francophones arrived in the region and ended up settling there to undertake more common economic activities, such as trade and farming. As time went by, they left their mark on the local toponymy and topography. For example, Bernard and Léon Léquime, sons of a French settler, drew and registered the original plans for the City of Kelowna. Outside of the city, Mount Boucherie was named in honour of Isidore Boucherie, the first European to settle on the Western side of Okanagan Lake. Kelowna itself has many streets with French names, which remind us of the presence of these former settlers: among others, Léon, Gaston, Bernard (sons of Éli Léquime), Saucier, St. Amand, Gagnon, Gillard, Blondeaux, and of course, Pandosy. According to the Fédération des francophones de Colombie-Britannique (FFCB), in 2010, 20,940 Francophones lived in the Central Okanagan region, or approximately 6.5 % of the total population.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, two schools run by the Conseil scolaire francophone (one in Kelowna, the other in Penticton), a branch of the Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique in Kelowna and the Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan offer their services to this sizable linguistic community. The wine industry also recruits specialists from France (e.g., Marie-Thérèse Duarte, vintner at St. Hubertus Winery, hails from Cahors) and the region's agricultural and economic wealth regularly attracts French and Belgian emigrants. This local population, aware of its linguistic roots, would be an ideal clientele.

**b. Francophone tourists from Canada and elsewhere:** British Columbia attracts a great number of Francophone tourists. Second to Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia are choice Canadian destinations for visitors from France. However, many of them, not knowing English, arrive here under the false



impression that Canada is a bilingual country where they will be automatically understood in their own language. A tourist route in French is a natural fit for them. The Pandosy Mission, which chronicles the adventures of fellow Canadians, would be sure to arouse their curiosity. According to the estimates of the Canadian Tourism Commission, 22,568 of BC's visitors came from France in 2012, 5,943 from Belgium and 22,975 from Switzerland<sup>8</sup> (data on the number of Francophones from the latter two countries is not available). Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to get an exact figure for the yearly number of visitors from Quebec, since they are not subject to passport control. However, the estimate is 86,000 visitors for each of the last few years.

- c. Local Francophone and French Immersion Schools:** Both Kelowna and Penticton have a Francophone school: École de l'Anse-au-sable (Kelowna) and École Entre-lacs (Penticton). Furthermore, the French Immersion program is extremely popular in the region: eight schools in Kelowna, two in Penticton and two in Vernon (full list in Appendix A). Canadian Parents for French's local branch, CPF-Okanagan-Skaha, is based in Penticton. These schools face the constant challenge of finding stimulating activities in French in communities that are predominantly English-speaking. A Francophone cultural tourist route in the area would most certainly benefit this clientele.
- d. Young Francophone farm workers:** Every year, fruit and grape picking in the Okanagan attracts a wave of young people from Quebec, lured by the idea of discovering the mythical West and bringing in some cash. According to an estimate by the Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan, approximately 500 of them show up at its office each season for job search advice. Another 500 young Francophone workers find employment on their own and add to this figure. These thousand or so young Francophones could be part of the route's clientele—or of its workforce!

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<sup>8</sup> Estimate of tourists from countries other than the U.S.A. coming into Canada – Canadian Tourism Commission (2012)

## 6. IDEAS FOR ADDING A FRENCH COMPONENT TO THE FATHER PANDOSY MISSION SITE

As mentioned earlier, the resources at the Father Pandosy Mission site are currently in English only. The Okanagan Historical Society's committee responsible for the renovation of the interpretive panels in 2010 was not in a position to make the panels bilingual. The Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDE) is proposing a partnership with the stakeholders of the Pandosy Mission, with the idea of creating a Francophone tourist route across the Okanagan. Providing resources in French means that the site would become accessible to Francophones. Several options are possible, from simple and inexpensive initiatives to ambitious signage projects. Here are four such initiatives, from which one or more could be selected:

- Brochures and printed resources in French: As mentioned previously, these resources already exist in English and are available to visitors at a covered stand near the site entrance. The translation, layout and printing of these resources would certainly be an inexpensive solution that could set the stage for a bilingual site project. The advantage of this type of resources is that they could be distributed in tourism facilities other than the site (visitor centres, municipal libraries, hotels, BC Ferries, etc.) and in schools.
- Audio podcasts: This option would be attractive for smartphone users. Podcasts would convey a lot more information than printed documents, which are constrained by their physical limitations. This could lead to an interesting research and production project, in partnership with the Okanagan Historical Society, the Société historique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique and UBC-Okanagan, for example. This solution would fit nicely within the framework of L'Ouest canadien en français, an initiative of the four Western provinces to develop a smartphone app to suggest routes to Francophone visitors. However, this solution would appeal to far fewer people since it would only be available to visitors with a smartphone. Listening stations, with rented mobile audio devices, could also be considered. However, since the site does not have any visitor facilities or reception services, this initiative would require a significant financial investment.
- Bilingual website with QR code: A much less costly solution than the previous one would be a bilingual website offering detailed explanations in English and French that would be linked to QR code signage on the site.
- Bilingual signs: This solution would be the most ambitious and expensive of the four, but also the most comprehensive and visible. It would require solid



partnerships with local organizations and the support of the region's government organizations. A project of this type was undertaken with great success in 2012 at St. Ann's Academy in Victoria, BC. It was the result of a partnership between the Francophone Affairs Program of the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, the Provincial Capital Commission (which manages the building) and the volunteer organization Friends of St. Ann's Academy. A project description, along with photographs, can be found in Appendix C

## 7. DESIRABLE PARTNERSHIPS AND POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

For the reasons explained above, the SDE would have to do some serious groundwork in order to maximize its chances for success. An investment by the SDE and its representatives in developing and consolidating collaborative relationships with stakeholders from various sectors would greatly increase the chances of developing partnerships and improving how Francophone groups, sometimes misunderstood or ignored, are perceived.

Therefore, the SDE would need to seek allies and partners in the French- and English-speaking communities alike, in order to ensure the success of this project. Here is a list of potential supporters:

In the Francophone Community:

- **Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan (CCFO):** The CCFO is located in Kelowna and its mission is to provide services and activities to the region's Francophone community. This is a natural partnership, which should be established right from the start. In addition, in May 2013, the CCFO will be unveiling a series of murals illustrating the historical contribution of Francophones to the development of the Okanagan Valley. These murals, with the addition of bilingual interpretive signs, will be installed on the outside walls of the CCFO office building, in downtown Kelowna. Most certainly, they will be a choice tourist attraction to include in a Francophone cultural route and will reinforce the relevance of adding a French component to the Pandosy Mission. The organization also provides services to young Francophone farm workers seeking employment every summer in the Okanagan Valley, which means that it has direct contact with potential users of the Francophone tourist route.

**Edmond Rivère:** Mr. Rivère is a professor in the Department of French at UBC-Okanagan and has written a biography of Father Pandosy. His knowledge of the history of the site, his expertise, and the fact that he lives in Kelowna make him a key ally and

partner. Mr. Rivère

would also provide a link with UBC–Okanagan for research projects and potential grant applications.

- **Société historique francophone de la Colombie–Britannique (SHFCB):** The mission of this organization is “[translation] to promote the history and culture of Francophones in British Columbia, support historical studies by encouraging research, teaching and publication, collect and preserve historical documents and artifacts, and disseminate information and historical records.” This is another natural and valuable partnership that could be established for the Pandosy project.
- **Fédération des francophones de la Colombie–Britannique (FFCB):** This organization is “[translation] the provincial representative for various groups from across the province and from a variety of sectors. . . . The role of the FFCB is to facilitate cooperation within BC’s Francophone community. It provides political representation for this community as well as promotion and development with the support of its members and partners. It also provides support services and development in various areas, such as communications and community action, to its members.” Based on this mission statement, the FFCB would be a natural champion since the project would be of obvious benefit to the Francophone community.
- **Conseil scolaire francophone (CSF):** The CSF plays an active part in the development of BC’s Francophone community and it seems natural that it would support any cultural activities in French that would benefit the students of École Anse–au–sable in Kelowna, and École Entre–lacs in Penticton, and even those from other Francophone schools in the province who might come to visit.
- **Tourism, agricultural and wine businesses in the Okanagan offering services in French:** The SDE did some groundwork a few years ago in identifying these companies. The 15 companies currently listed on its tourism site are potential donors for a signage project at the site, for example. It would only be a matter of emphasizing to them the historical importance of the Mission and the link between the Francophone community, the economic wealth of the region from the agricultural and wine sectors, and the promotional benefits their participation in the project would generate for their business. An excellent example of this type of partnership would be for Bounty Cellars, a winery from Kelowna, to donate a percentage of the sales of two of its wines (one of which is named “Pandosy”!) to the CCFO.
- **Francophone Affairs Program, Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat:** This government organization is responsible for

improving access to programs and services for French-speaking British Columbians. It gives favourable

consideration to projects that benefit the Francophone community and promote the French language. The Secretariat was a major donor for the bilingual signage project at St. Ann's Academy in Victoria and for the tourism program "Bonjour!" in Nanaimo. It also provides a link to federal grant programs, such as those from Heritage Canada, which are more difficult to access for small community projects.

- **The Oblates of Ottawa:** The congregation's motherhouse, based in Ottawa, has ties with the site through the Okanagan Historical Society. This bilingual organization should look favourably upon a return to the Francophone roots of the old Immaculate Conception Mission.

#### In the English-Speaking Community

- **The Okanagan Historical Society:** As seen previously, the approval and support of this organization fundamental to the project. Therefore, it will be of utmost importance to establish a cordial and productive relationship with its board of directors. This collaboration will be of great benefit to the site, since it will increase its visibility among local residents as well as among tourists from other parts of the country and abroad.
- **The Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson:** In spite of its name, this diocese is located in Kelowna, on Benvoulin Street, just like the Pandosy Mission. Since it owns the site, any negotiations must involve the diocese.
- **BC Heritage Branch:** This provincial governmental organization has already helped the SDE to pave the way for a cultural route by offering a tourism workshop in February 2012 to the stakeholders of the Francophone community. The Pandosy Mission project would fit in the context of this existing collaboration.

**Bruce Whyte:** Mr. Whyte is a Cultural Tourism Advisor for the Ministry of Community, Sports and Cultural Development. He took part in a meeting on the Pandosy Mission project and gave several useful suggestions. His experience and support would certainly be invaluable.

- **Tourism Kelowna Visitor Centre:** The visitor centre would be a crucial partner for the distribution of new French resources on the Mission, and for steering Francophone tourists to the site.
- **Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA):** This organization, based in Kelowna, represents the tourism interests of the region's businesses and communities, and works closely with Destination BC. It



- would be an important partner in promoting the site to national and international tourism markets.
- **The City of Kelowna:** Once again, local government allies would prove essential in submitting government grant applications, for example, for the Francophone Affairs Program.
- **School District 67's French Immersion Schools:** Since they are always looking for activities in French for their students, many immersion schools in the area would undoubtedly support the project. All are located close enough to the Mission for day excursions.
- **Canadian Parents for French, Okanagan-Skaha Chapter:** The members of this group are French Immersion parents, generally very committed and willing to spend time and energy to help their children access resources and to make experiences available to them in French.
- **Local First Nations:** The historical relationship between the First Nations and the Okanagan Mission has been broached earlier in this report. It remains to be seen whether the serious harm inflicted on the native population in religious boarding schools in the past (including in the City of Mission, which was run by the Oblate Brothers) will be an obstacle to the efforts of the Francophone community in increasing the visibility of the Mission. However, if Father Pandosy's biographers are to be believed, his relationship with his First Nation "flock" was cordial and founded on mutual respect. Local bands, under the banner of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, should certainly be part of the consultation process.
- **BC Wine Institute:** Experts like to point out that the Okanagan wine industry only began in the 1920s, and that it is a quaint legend that it all started with Father Pandosy. Nevertheless, Father Pandosy can at least be credited for showing that grape growing was possible in the region. Therefore, seeking a partnership with this organization would be perfectly legitimate.
- **St. Ann's Academy National Historic Site:** There are a number of historical parallels between the Pandosy Mission and St. Ann's Academy (buildings were founded by Francophone missionaries around the same period of time). In order to acknowledge the Francophone roots of this historic national site, an ambitious bilingual signage project was completed in 2012. The site managers, as well as the volunteer organization that supports them in their work, would certainly be able to make useful recommendations if a similar project were to be undertaken at the Pandosy Mission.



## 8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, Father Pandosy's Mission remains a largely untapped historical treasure for the Francophone community. Few sites in BC can boast still having period buildings built by missionaries and French-speaking pioneers who tirelessly contributed to making the province what it is today. In a way, the lack of French at the site could be perceived as a historical injustice. By ignoring the linguistic and cultural origins of the site, the organizations that are currently managing it may lose a heritage asset that is important to Francophones. The SDE's cultural tourism project would allow the Pandosy Mission to regain its rightful place in BC's heritage. It would help strengthen the cultural identity of the Okanagan's Francophone community and would allow French-speaking tourists to learn about the important role the French played in the history of the westernmost and most English-speaking province in Canada. These important challenges will have to be considered part of the process, the results of which will not be easy to achieve. In this light, the following recommendations are being proposed:

- a) **Establish a cordial and respectful relationship from the start with the Okanagan Historical Society:** It cannot be emphasized enough—it is essential that this organization view a partnership as an asset for the site, not as an intrusion in its affairs.
- b) **Find local champions:** It is vital that project supporters be able to do on-site follow-up with the Okanagan Historical Society. The CCFO and the Kelowna branch of the SDE should be approached for this role.
- c) **Obtain the support of provincial Francophone organizations:** Letters of support from the FFCB, the CSF and the SHFCB will give credibility to the project and initiate dialogue with the Okanagan Historical Society.
- d) **Bring the region's tourism and wine businesses on board:** Tourism and wine business operators are major stakeholders in the Okanagan economy. Whether it be to find funding or promote a Francophone route, their participation and support would help the project to flourish.

## 9. APPENDIX A

### Contact Information of Potential Partners

Centre culturel francophone de l'Okanagan (CCFO)

Telephone: 250-860-4074

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Société historique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique  
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Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique

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OMI Lacombe Canada (Oblates of Ottawa)  
Telephone: 613- 230-2225  
Email: [communications@omilacombe.ca](mailto:communications@omilacombe.ca)  
Website: [www.omilacombe.ca](http://www.omilacombe.ca)

Okanagan Historical Society  
President: Patrick Walls  
Telephone: 250-763-3285  
Email: [ohskelownabranch@gmail.com](mailto:ohskelownabranch@gmail.com)  
Website:  
[www.okanaganhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.okanaganhistoricalsociety.org)

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson  
Executive Assistant: Sister Phyllis  
Giroux, SC Telephone: 250-448-2725,  
ext. 200  
Website: [www.nelsondiocese.org](http://www.nelsondiocese.org)

BC Heritage  
Community Heritage Planner: Ursula Pfahler  
Telephone: 250-387-4696  
Email: [Ursula.Pfahler@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ursula.Pfahler@gov.bc.ca)

Bruce Whyte, Cultural Tourism Advisor  
Ministry of Community, Sports and Cultural Development  
Telephone: 250-356-6967  
Email: [Bruce.Whyte@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Bruce.Whyte@gov.bc.ca)

Tourism Kelowna  
Telephone:  
250-861-1515  
Email: [info@tourismkelowna.com](mailto:info@tourismkelowna.com)

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association  
(TOTA) Telephone: 250-860-5999  
Email: [info@totabc.com](mailto:info@totabc.com)  
Website: [www.totabc.org](http://www.totabc.org)

City of Kelowna:  
City Manager: Ron Mattiussi  
Telephone: 250-469-8500  
Email: [ask@kelowna.ca](mailto:ask@kelowna.ca)  
Website: [www.kelowna.ca](http://www.kelowna.ca)



School District 67 – Okanagan Skaha

Telephone: 250-770-7700

French Immersion Schools:

- Kelowna: Belgo Elementary, Casorso Elementary, George Pringle Elementary, Glenmore Elementary, Peter Greer Elementary, KLO Middle School, Kelowna Secondary
- Penticton: KVR Middle School, Summerland Middle School
- Vernon: Beairsto Elementary, W.L. Seaton Secondary

Canadian Parents for French – Okanagan–Skaha

Email: [okskaha@shaw.ca](mailto:okskaha@shaw.ca)

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Executive Director: Pauline

Terbasket Telephone:

250-707-0095, ext. 214 Email:

[director@syilx.org](mailto:director@syilx.org)

Website: [www.syilx.org](http://www.syilx.org)

BC Wine Institute:

Executive Director: Miles Prodan

Telephone: 250-762-9744, ext. 10

Website: [www.winebc.org](http://www.winebc.org)

St. Ann's Academy National Historic Site

Site Operations Manager: Shelley Myhres

Telephone: 250-953-8829

Email:

[stanns.academy@gov.bc.ca](mailto:stanns.academy@gov.bc.ca)

Website:

[www.stannsacademy.com](http://www.stannsacademy.com)

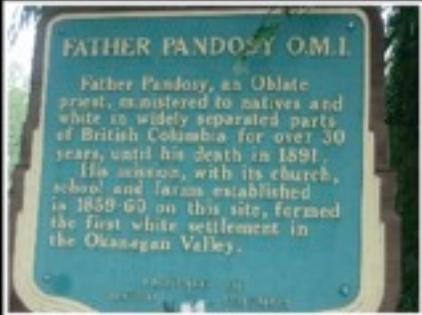
10.APPENDIX B



**La mission du père Pandosy**  
Kelowna, C.-B.

## Panneaux d'accueil à l'entrée du site





























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## 11. APPENDIX C

### Installing Bilingual Interpretive Panels at St. Ann's Academy in Victoria

In March 2011, as President of the Friends of St. Ann's Academy, the author of this report took part in a meeting with Theresa Vogel, who was the executive director of the organization at the time, and Véronique Mercier, Manager of the Francophone Affairs Program. The goal was to present an idea to Ms. Mercier for bilingual signage at St. Ann's Academy. For a century, this national historic site was a very reputable girls' school as well as the mother house of the Sisters of St. Ann on the West Coast.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann was founded in Quebec in 1850 and was devoted to educating rural children. At the request of Bishop Demers, the missionary bishop of Vancouver Island, four nuns arrived at Fort Victoria in 1858 to oversee the education of the region's Aboriginal and Métis children. At the time, there were a number of French Canadian workers and 60% of the fort's inhabitants spoke French. The gold rush that same year brought a wave of emigrants from the United States, and Fort Victoria quickly became a predominantly English-speaking community. As time went by, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann expanded on the West Coast and established many schools and hospitals across the province. Although they had to start teaching in English, the Sisters kept their Francophone roots alive and many architectural features typical of convents in France and Quebec can be observed in the Academy building. The provincial government has owned the building since 1971.

The Provincial Capital Commission (PCC), in charge of managing and maintaining the site, had been trying unsuccessfully for years to obtain a grant in order to add interpretative signage to the grounds. The PCC works in collaboration with the volunteer organization Friends of St. Ann's Academy. The group realized the importance of the Academy's Francophone roots and came up with the idea of applying, through Ms. Mercier, to the Francophone Affairs Program for a grant for bilingual signage. Shortly after the meeting in the spring of 2011, the application was approved. The rules for grants under the Francophone Affairs Program specify that the agreement must be made with a government organization (in this case, the PCC) and that the organization must commit to covering 50% of the costs in cash or in kind. The total cost of the Academy's signage project came to \$105,000. Francophone Affairs provided a cash grant for 50% of the cost, while the PCC contributed in kind by paying the salary of the site manager, Shelley Myhres, who did the historical research and wrote the texts, as well the salaries of the employees who installed the signs. The Friends of St. Ann's Academy also organized a fundraising campaign to help the PCC with those costs. The Francophone Affairs grant paid for translation services from Vox International, design services from Lime Design Inc., and printing services from Signs of the Times. The project was completed over a period of several months. The Sisters of St. Ann Archives, extraordinarily rich and well preserved, provided the source for the research. The elegant and sophisticated design of the panels appeals to visitors. The panels are weather-resistant and can be found throughout the Academy grounds. The unveiling took place on

May 2, 2012, in the presence of John Les, Parliamentary Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, the Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, and many other dignitaries from the community. Although the site has yet to be promoted to French Immersion schools, the managers have received many positive comments from visitors, some of whom are residents of Victoria discovering the history of the site for the first time.

**Excerpt from the 2011–2012 Annual Report of the  
B.C. Francophone Affairs Program**

Special Projects approved in 2011–2012:  
**St. Ann's Academy, a symbol of the Francophone  
presence in BC**

2011–2012 Measures/ Planned Activities	Expected Results	Outcome
<p>To produce a set of bilingual signs to recount the history of St. Ann's Academy, the enduring education and health-care legacy left by these Francophone Catholic sisters, and the role of Francophones in the history of British Columbia. This bilingual signage will give visitors general information, explanations about the building, its occupants and the organizations that owned it over the years.</p>	<p>Bilingual signage at St. Ann's Academy will help strengthen the identity and sense of belonging of Francophones living in BC. This signage will constitute part of British Columbia's heritage.</p>	<p>A set of new interpretive panels was unveiled on May 2, 2012 on the grounds of St. Ann's Academy National Historic Site of Canada. These signs relate the important developments that mark the beginning of education and health care in the province. On the site, 17 signs tell the remarkable story of a group of Francophone nuns who pioneered education and health care in the Pacific Northwest and established several institutions in BC, Alaska and the Yukon, most notably St. Ann's Academy of Victoria, their provincial mother house. In addition, we produced four signs including a map and itinerary for the site, as well as an accompanying brochure with a more detailed map. QR codes are included so that visitors can learn more online.</p> <p>This \$105,000 project was funded as a Special Project under the Canada–British Columbia Co–Operation Agreement on Official Languages – 2011–2012 to 2012–2013. A number of foundations and non–profit groups also provided funding. The project was started in September 2011 and completed in March 2012.</p>













