

Report on the Heritage Regions Workshop

9am-4pm, February 17, 2015

Old Firehall, Whitehorse



Yukon Historical &
Museums Association

HERITAGE CANADA
NATIONAL TRUST



HÉRITAGE CANADA
FIDUCIE NATIONALE

Yukon
Tourism and Culture

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Overview

This one-day workshop was hosted by the Yukon Historical & Museums Association (YHMA) and facilitated by Jim Mountain, Director of Regeneration Projects with the Heritage Canada National Trust. The workshop gave participants an overview of the Heritage Regions program. In addition to sharing news/events/happenings with communities and organizations, participants explored a variety of topics including land-based heritage resource management, identifying community heritage values and assets, and the contribution of heritage buildings and historic sites in healthy communities. The workshop shared case studies and practices on how to manage, promote and preserve local heritage resources as well as how to begin a community-led initiative.

Workshop participants included a variety of members of the heritage, tourism and other sectors, from across the Yukon:

1. Nancy Oakley, YHMA
2. Rebecca Jansen, Historic Sites Unit, YG
3. Nyla Klugie-Migwans, Museums Unit, YG
4. Bob Gates, Yukon Transportation Museum
5. David White, Yukon Transportation Museum
6. Bob Patles, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
7. Cindy D. Charlie, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
8. Nina Bolton, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
9. Samantha Shannon, Old Log Church Museum
10. Susan Drury, Watson Lake Historical Society
11. Teri McNaughton, Watson Lake Historical Society
12. Leo Martel, Keno City Community Club/Keno City Hotel
13. Scott Buchanan, Keno City/Whitehorse
14. Sally Robinson, YHMA and Alaska Highway Heritage Society Yukon
15. Kitty Sperling, Friends of the Ross River Bridge Society, Yukon College
16. Tascha Morrison, Alaska Highway Community Society (BC)
17. Erica Beasley, City of Whitehorse
18. Jordan Stackhouse, City of Whitehorse
19. Christine Aikens, Parks Canada
20. Claudia Riveros, Casino Mining Corporation
21. Amy O'Rourke, TIA Yukon
22. Judy Nadon, Silver Trail Tourism Association
23. Barb Hogan, Historic Sites Unit, YG
24. Bruce Barrett, Historic Sites Unit, YG
25. Clare Daitch, Historic Sites Unit, YG
26. Robert Wills, Above Ground Engineering

The main topics brought up in Jim's presentation included:

- **Overview of National Trust's Heritage Regions program:** an integrated approach to a region's economy and culture through leveraging the ideas, energy and resources of multiple communities within it
- **Tourism and our natural and cultural heritage:** identifying what to share, and exploring initiatives that have integrity and authenticity while respecting cultural and natural heritage values
- **Cross-cultural learning:** validating and sharing through mutually beneficial initiatives
- **The 'Yukon Approach':** arts, culture and museums/heritage organizations and communities--finding innovative ways to work together for the benefit of all
- **Next Steps** for Yukon's heritage: exploring innovative ideas for ensuring Yukon's past has a promising future

More detailed information is included in the Powerpoint presentation attached to this report.

A number of themes and ideas were highlighted through general discussion.

Yukoners have proven time and again that they can "get things done"--the challenge is in how to do so in a sustained way. The Alaska Highway was brought up as an example of this. The Highway is currently being nominated as a National Historic Site, with organizations in BC and the Yukon working collaboratively on the initiative. The groups are currently looking at how the highway could be managed and conserved beyond the nomination, and are grappling with the challenge of how to sustain a Highway-wide conversation, and how to actively link between the communities in BC, Yukon and Alaska.

The Yukon was acknowledged as a leader, both nationally and internationally, when it comes to cross-cultural collaborations between First Nations and non-First Nations. The co-ownership and co-management of historic sites with First Nations and the Yukon Government (ie Fort Selkirk), was raised as an example. It was also noted that the Yukon is multi-cultural, which includes non-Europeans, but also First Nations from across Canada who live here. There is a continued need to nurture and sustain an environment of inclusion, learning and respect.

The Territory's museums and cultural centres play an important role to both the tourism economy and community life. The 'eco-museum' approach sees museums and cultural centres as locally-driven, place-based organizations that encourage sustainable community development, based on heritage conservation and interpretation. This approach takes a more holistic understanding of cultural heritage, as opposed to the focus on specific items and objects as in the case of more traditional museums. Many of the Territory's museums and cultural centres are active in this way.

Hospitality was also recognized as important, and a thing that Yukoners generally do well. Visitor expectations are changing, and there is a continued need to recognize and anticipate

this: some people want an authentic experience, “bugs and all”, but others want their standards met “five stars all the way”. Hospitality can be an important ‘selling feature’ of a region, but there is a need to both promise it, and to deliver on that promise.

Culture and heritage were recognized as central to the Yukon’s tourism economy as well as important to the health and well-being of our communities. Some participants were interested in finding ways to ‘bridge’ between community wellness and tourism activities to mutual benefit.

Resources, both financial and human, were a common concern for many. In many cases there is a clear sense of what needs to be done, but a lack of resources, either in terms of funding or people, were the barrier to ‘making it so’. Partnerships and collaboration were recognized as important resources that could be drawn on. The group also recognized that many Yukoners have volunteered and continue to volunteer a lot: ‘burn out’ is a factor for older generations. There is also a need to engage the younger generations (especially First Nations) with their heritage, and to include them in ongoing conservation activities. IT or infrastructure issues (such as unplanned power or internet outages) represent another challenge, especially for the communities outside of Whitehorse.

Through the discussions, it became clear that there is a strong sense that Yukoners can collectively work together across the Territory to ensure the unique heritage of all regions is recognized, conserved and celebrated. As one participant put it, everyone is “rowing in the same boat” with common needs, frustrations and goals. There was some discussion on the idea of having separate, but unified projects taking place across the Territory.

There was interest from various communities to work with the Heritage Canada National Trust. Participants wanted to learn more about the ways in which HCNT could partner with them.

Points from Discussion/Group Exercises

Through breakouts, the groups focused their discussion on different regions and projects.

Keno/Mayo/Silver Trail Area

Overall thoughts

The region has a rich heritage that includes geology/prospecting/mining history, community life, technology and the broader eco-landscape. Keno is an important link or jumping off point for the region’s mining history.

It was noted that Keno’s 100th birthday is coming up in 2019, and there was enthusiasm for using this anniversary to develop a long-term vision for the area.

Assets/Challenges (depending on how you look at it!)

- Liabilities
- Regulations

- Public access and promotion of excitement
- Main Road access
- Area is “off the beaten path”, so the trick is to make people think about this, but that it’s still accessible
- Idea that this is heritage that you can see/experience, including buildings, things that you can see, and the people who are interested in it

Other ideas

- Heritage-themed activities such as gold panning, geocaching
- Seasonal use of heritage properties for weddings and special events

Watson Lake, Ross River/Faro Region

Overall Thoughts

There is a need to make the Campbell Highway driveable! There is also a need to explore the connections between arts and heritage. Two societies have been recently started in the region, including the Friends of Ross River Bridge and the Watson Lake Historical Societies.

Funding was an important concern. It was noted that the Legacy Fund for WWII could be accessed for some projects, but that there is a need to identify other sources of funding.

Assets/Challenges (depending on how you look at it!) for Watson Lake:

- Watson Lake airport
- The lake
- Alaska Highway
- Signpost Forest
- Aviation history
- Watson Lake Visitor Information Centre
- The town is the gateway to the Yukon, so there is a need to be welcoming
- Town is also at the 60th parallel
- Negative image tied to ongoing social problems, perception as unfriendly, expensive (many tourists find Northern prices a shock at first), dirty, dusty road (industrial heritage isn’t always neat and pretty!), mosquitos

Assets/Challenges (depending on how you look at it!) for Ross River:

- Dinosaur tracks
- Ross River bridge
- Canol heritage, especially the North and South Canol roads (you have to experience it to understand)
- Dena Cho Trail
- Beautiful scenery/landscape

- Old Ross
- Camping
- Animal watching

Other Ideas

- Start with small exhibits in existing spaces to help keep costs low
- Non-permanent structures for seasonal activities, including stories in tents, etc. This could be a way to get locals interested and give visitors something to do.
- Community gatherings also identified as potential assets- ie steak nights to get people together
- Engagement with Yukon tourism & Yukon communities

Carmacks

Overall thoughts

There is a need to promote sharing, caring, teaching and respect for Northern Tutchone culture, knowledge and traditions. It was also recognized that there is a need to better promote an understanding of the Umbrella Final Agreement and land claims history, as well as the impact of residential schools. A willingness to learn and engage is important, as was a respect for land and peoples' connection with it.

Assets/Challenges (depending on how you look at it!):

- Facilities: airport Lake/Little Salmon River, camping/ hotel in Carmacks
- Supports: youth champions/role models, First Nation Councils

Other Ideas

- idea of an Aunties and Uncles Retreat. This could be a similar initiative to the Moosehide Gathering in Dawson, and feature stories, crafts, harvesting and traditional/cultural activities
- Tourism: workshops could include hand games, hide tanning, sewing/beading, snowshoe making, drum-making
- Entertainment: handgames, drumming, dance/song
- Tours: boats, walking tours, coal and agate mines
- Needs: education/training, financial resources, increased marketing to promote, community consent for undertaking any activities
- Can look at attracting people from Whitehorse, other First Nations, and places where Yukon lifestyle is known and appreciated, ie Europe, Japan, Switzerland
- Seasonal skills, so both summer and winter living experiences
- Could look at starting a website
- "A lifetime of survival"
- Protocol important- make a safe, inclusive space so no drugs or alcohol.

Evaluation/Feedback

All Symposium participants were invited to provide feedback on the event through a program evaluation. Twenty-one evaluations were received: a summary of the results are shown below.

Participants came from a variety of backgrounds, including:

- Museum/cultural centre managers and Board members
- Historians
- Educators
- First Nations and other Government heritage departments, heritage planners
- Volunteers
- Travel/tourism promoters

Participants heard about the Symposium through a variety of ways, including:

- Word of mouth
- YHMA E-bulletin or website
- Other YHMA meetings/YHMA staff
- From YTG
- From fellow employees/community members

Participants rated the following aspects of the Symposium:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Disappointing</i>
Quality and relevance of workshop topics/learning opportunities	10	5	4	1	
Opportunity to interact/network with other participants	12	4	3		
Time for questions/discussions	11	6	3		
Presenter	13	4	2	1	
Food	13	4	2		
Venue	14	4	2		
Overall workshop	12	4	3		

Comments received about the “most interesting thing learned today”:

- Projects that different groups are working on and ideas for ways people can work together
- Re-energized with people’s commitment and enthusiasm
- Everyone (all organizations) are ‘rowing in the same boat’, with common needs, frustrations, and goals
- Learning more about aspects of their communities that participants valued, as shared during the discussions
- Getting to meet, collaborate with and understand who is doing what throughout the Yukon
- Variety of projects happening in Yukon and across Canada--people, projects and accomplishments
- Exploring ways to combine wellness with tourism
- Examples of heritage work done and increased economic development/tourism incentives

Comments received about “something you’d like to learn more about”:

- More about how to make Heritage Regions work in the Yukon. The examples were good, but need to see how to realistically apply them in these communities--ie a brief step-by-step walkthrough of the process for developing a Heritage Regions project
- More about cultural inventories and strategies for community heritage mapping
- How to better connect with other communities, ie Watson Lake and Ross River
- More detail on the subject matter--more context for case studies would be great
- Fundraising and revenue generation
- Possible new initiatives in the Yukon--bring your project idea sort of forum that’s facilitated
- Exhibit development--ie how to complement static displays with interactive ones
- Governance--how to operate a heritage-related board, find out how others are operating

Funding Sources Identified Through Discussion

The **Yukon Heritage Training Fund** supports training to increase the skills and knowledge in the Yukon heritage sector. Administered by YHMA (www.heritageyukon.ca or call 667-4704).

The **Yukon Historic Resources Fund** provides funding for projects that promote the study and interpretation of the Yukon’s historic resources and further the promotion, appreciation, preservation and development of Yukon’s heritage. Administered by YG’s Historic Sites Unit (<http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/yhrf.html> or contact Bruce Barrett, 667-3463 or toll-free, 1-800-661-0408 x. 3463).

The **Historic Properties Assistance Program** preserves our heritage by making technical and financial assistance available through matching funding to those who wish to undertake

preservation, restoration, development and/or interpretation of their historic properties. Administered by YG's Historic Sites Unit (http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/hpa_program.html or contact Bruce Barrett, 667-3463 or toll-free, 1-800-661-0408 x. 3463).

The **City of Whitehorse Heritage Fund** provides funding for the restoration, enhancement and renovation of heritage properties, as well as increasing public awareness of heritage issues and other purposes specified by Council. Administered by the City of Whitehorse (www.whitehorse.ca)

The **Legacy Fund** provides funding for community capital projects that commemorate significant anniversaries. Part of the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage program, administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage (<http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1286366260223>). Contact information for the Whitehorse office:

300 Main Street, Room 205
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2B5
Email: wr-ro@pch.gc.ca
Telephone: 867-667-3925
Toll-Free*: 1-866-811-0055
Facsimile: 867-393-6701
TTY (Toll-Free):** 1-888-997-3123

Continuing the Conversation/ Upcoming Events

April 17-18th: Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon (TIA) Spring Conference, Dawson.

May 7th: Yukon/Stikine Regional Heritage Fair, Yukon Transportation Museum, Whitehorse.

October 19th: Yukon Heritage Symposium, Whitehorse.

October 22-24th: Heritage Canada National Trust Conference, Calgary, AB.