

Alaska Highway Heritage Society seeks community involvement for a new Alaska Highway Corridor website project

Whitehorse, Yukon, November 16, 2015 – The Alaska Highway Heritage Society (AHHSY) is currently gathering information about highway cultural experiences, and content to create a website for travellers along the Alaska Highway.

AHHSY Project Director Sally Robinson says “we are interested in developing projects that will endure past 2017, the 75th anniversary of the highway, with a long-term vision of the corridor as an iconic tourist destination.”

AHHSY and our partner society in British Columbia, the Alaska Highway Community Society (BC), are focused on the economic development, tourism, heritage and cultural preservation of the Alaska Highway. The two societies and a team of consultants have submitted a package to nominate the Alaska Highway Corridor as a National Historic Site of Canada.

Our new project will feature the sites included in the nomination package but will also include all of the places that were mentioned during our last round of community visits. This map-based website will feature short audiovisual clips of Yukoners speaking about their favourite things to do and see in the highway corridor. Our contractors will be conducting some of the interviews ourselves, but we are also interested in working with those who want to do some local interviews and/or contribute images to the project.

Our team includes Heather Jones, Bonnie Fordyce and Lian Goodall. Yukoners with ideas, stories and interest in the project are encouraged to contact Heather at ahhsyukon@gmail.com or call Sally at 633-3896.

AHHSY has received funding from the Community Development Fund, Yukon Tourism Product Development Partnership Program, Northwestel and Yukon Energy.

The ALASKA HIGHWAY HERITAGE SOCIETY YUKON aims at commemorating the Alaska Highway Corridor as a National Historic Site of Canada by 2017 and seeking collaborations along the corridor to further economic development, tourism, heritage and cultural preservation.

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Information, interviews and photo opportunities:

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The Alaska Highway National Historic Site Project

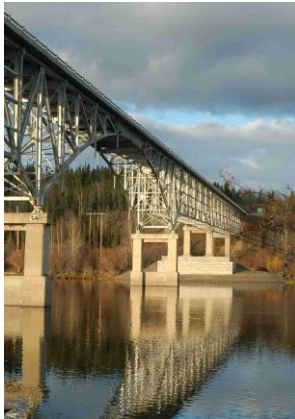
The Alaska Highway Heritage Society Yukon (AHHSY) was formed to work towards the nomination of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site of Canada (NHSC).

AHHSY is the Yukon counterpart to the Alaska Highway Community Society (AHCS) which has been spearheading efforts to raise awareness about the importance of the Alaska Highway for over thirty years. In 2011 the focus for both organizations became the National Historic Site nomination and it is now an ongoing project called the Alaska Highway Heritage project.

Vision

- Ensure that the Alaska Highway is recognized as one of North America's most significant historical routes,
- Understand the shared history of the Alaska Highway's cultural landscape,
- Protect key historic sources of cultural value to the region's communities.

Goals



- Commemoration of the Alaska Highway Corridor's cultural landscape as a National Historic Site of Canada in place by 2017, the 75th anniversary of the highway and the 150th anniversary of Confederation.
- Development of a post-nomination governance structure that will allow multiple jurisdictions and interests to work together to raise the profile of the Alaska Highway's history and heritage.
- Development of a sustainable funding model to address heritage conservation, tourism and heritage presentation requirements.

The Alaska Highway Corridor

The name, 'Alaska Highway Corridor' refers to the cultural landscape associated with the routes followed by the Alaska Highway and airfields of the Northwest Staging Route (NWSR) stretching from Dawson Creek, British Columbia through Yukon and on to Delta Junction, Alaska. The Commemoration as a National Historic Site of Canada

The current Alaska Highway national commemoration, designated July, 1954, highlights the military cooperation between the United States and Canada during World War II.

This present initiative seeks to complement the initial commemoration as an event through its recognition as a national historic site, addressing:

- A cultural landscape of importance to First Nations along the corridor,
- The support and co-operation of both First Nation and local non-Aboriginal peoples who assisted in the construction of the road and,
- The significant social, environmental, jurisdictional and cultural changes to northern lives and communities as the improved connection between north and south took effect over the following decades.

This recognition is honorific only and confers no legal obligations to protect historic resources. The decision to grant commemoration, however, depends on the proponent and affected property owners demonstrating that key resources will be conserved for the benefit of local residents and visitors. If commemoration is granted, it would provide a framework for partners to collaborate on seeking support for projects that would help tell the story of the Alaska Highway and its diversity of history and landscape. At a practical level, one of the expected outcomes of commemoration is the implementation of a strategy to improve highway amenities for travelers.

Alaska Highway Heritage Society

The Alaska Highway Heritage Society Yukon (AHHSY) was established on 21 August 2013 in Whitehorse, through the initiative of Senator Daniel Lang and others interested in the conservation and promotion of the Alaska Highway's history and heritage.

The core purpose of the AHHSY is to commemorate the Alaska Highway Corridor as a National Historic Site of Canada by 2017 and to seek collaboration and partnerships along the corridor to further economic development, tourism, heritage and cultural preservation.

The nomination project was supported in the Yukon by the Community Development Fund, the Yukon Tourism Product Development Partnership Program, CanNor, Northwestel and Yukon Energy.

Alaska Highway Community Society (BC)

The Alaska Highway Community Society is a society formed by the local governments of Northeastern British Columbia with the goal to work on their behalf as a “single community” to focus on the development of the Alaska Highway. The roots of the AHCS go back nearly 30 years, but the formative event was the 2004 Alaska Highway International Forum, which concluded with 13 communities from BC, Yukon and Alaska signing the Alaska Highway Community Initiative Memorandum of Understanding. This document signified a commitment to work together on matters of mutual interest regarding future tourism and heritage planning, and development of the route.

The AHCS is supported by local governments in northeastern BC, each represented on the board by a council member and by leaders in the cultural, tourism and heritage sectors. The North East Native Advancing Society and Treaty & Tribal Association are represented and other First Nations are preparing to join. Additionally, the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, the Province of BC and the City of Dawson Creek are providing in-kind and financial support.

Partners

Government Stakeholders: The Province of British Columbia, the Yukon Government and Yukon First Nation governments are important partners in the nomination. They own resources along the Alaska Highway, and they also share local concerns about tourism, infrastructure and heritage. Their expertise and the heritage resource information they contribute will be included in the nomination and will be the basis for developing strategic conservation plans and preparing for the interpretation and presentation of historic places.

Parks Canada and Other Federal Agencies: Parks Canada administers the work of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). It requires consent from property owners, local governments and First Nations affected by the nomination as owners and as experts for their own history. Parks Canada will also be representing issues related to Kluane National Park and other federal properties. As in the case of Yukon, BC and the First Nations, federal agencies are being invited to share ideas about the sustainability plan.

For further information contact:

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