

Historic Resources Best Management Practices

Objectives

- Protect and manage historic sites and resources; and
- Protect burials outside of known cemeteries.

Best Management Practices

- Identify and map all known historic sites in the project area prior to field operations to assist in planning access, seismic and related activities.
- Seismic work, access development and other activities associated with a project should plan to avoid known sites and areas of high historic site potential and thereby limit any required field archaeological impact assessment work. Buffers of 60-100 metres along a terrace edge or bordering a water body, for example, will generally address heritage concerns.



- Techniques that minimize ground disturbance and clearing, such as heli-portable seismic survey; and use of existing roads or winter access on frozen ground are recommended.



- No disturbance is permitted to historic sites encountered during exploration activities. No objects may be removed from historic sites. Known historic sites must be buffered from exploration activities which may disturb the site. Buffers should be determined in consultation with the resource manager and First Nation as appropriate and may include visual buffering should the nature of the site warrant this. Territorial and federal law prohibits development activities within 30 metres of a known or suspected heritage site.

- Should historic sites or resources be discovered during operations, all operations in the area will be suspended. Yukon Heritage Resources should be informed of the location and nature of the site. Environmental monitors may assist in this process.



- In an area known to contain rich palaeontological resources, activity is likely to expose fossils, principally fossils of ice age mammals, which are protected under the *Historic Resources Act (HRA)*. Fossils that are unearthed should be set aside and protected and at the end of the project or earlier the Yukon Palaeontology Branch should be informed of fossils that were exposed. Under the *HRA*, bones and other fossils are held in public trust.
- Should human remains be identified during operations, all work shall cease immediately and the R.C.M.P must be notified. If the determination is made by the R.C.M.P. and Coroner that this is a historic burial, the First Nation and Yukon Heritage Resources will be notified subsequently.



- In the event that mummified remains or intact skeletons are exposed, the proponent should contact Yukon Palaeontology before disturbing them further, as these findings are of considerable scientific importance. If attempts to make contact are unsuccessful the proponent is advised to move and/or protect the remains (with intact surrounding sediments) to the best of his/her ability until they can be collected and preserved by personnel from Yukon Palaeontology.

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Context

Identifying Areas of High Heritage Potential

Based on known patterns of prehistoric and historic land use for a region, certain terrain types, localities and landscape features can be identified as likely locations for camps, travel routes or as strategic resource areas. Generally, areas in proximity to water bodies, stream courses and wetlands, prominent lookout situations on terraces, ridges and knolls and combinations of these terrain zones are considered to be of high heritage potential. In unglaciated northern Yukon, both ancient landscapes and possibly different prey species must be factored into reconstruction of past land use patterns.

Rationale

Brushing of vegetation may impact surface or built heritage sites such as brush camps or burial sites. Ground disturbance associated with summer access road construction results in significant impacts to heritage sites. Linear heritage features such as traditional or historic trails could be significantly impacted by multiple crossings of or continuous construction along the route.

The majority of heritage sites occur within 100 metres of water bodies such as streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, and any ground disturbance in this zone has an increased likelihood of impacting heritage resources. Subsurface activities are most likely to impact subsurface heritage sites, with impacts increasing proportional to the area/extent of the ground disturbance.

Increased access to back country as a result of the construction of roads can lead to the disturbance of heritage sites and features. Previously isolated sites may become the focus of looting or may be disturbed or destroyed by visitors.

Definitions:

Historic resources include historical, archaeological and palaeontological sites and resources. Historic resources are abandoned sites and objects of greater than 45 years in antiquity. Cabins, caches, graves, brush camps, and other man-made structures, features or objects are the most readily recognized historic resources.



Archaeological sites date back to before European contact and are found on or under the ground surface, and generally consist of the remains of ancient camps, hearths, stone tools and debris.

Palaeontological resources are fossil and other remains of extinct or prehistoric plants and animals. These include bones of mammoth, horse, bison and other ice age fauna as well as fossil remains and traces of plants, vertebrate and invertebrate fauna.



Historic resources are protected from disturbance under the *Yukon Historic Resources Act* - Yukon Archaeological Sites Regulations (http://www.gov.yk.ca/legislation/regs/oic2003_073.pdf). The Government of Yukon is responsible for managing historic sites on non-settlement land and outside of national parks.

This is not a comprehensive list of Best Management Practices for Historic Resources. For more information see the Best Management Practices web page on

www.yukonoilandgas.com
www.yukonheritage.com



For more Information on these and other Best Management Practices contact our office at:
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