

'The Klondike' on Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage Sites

DESCRIPTION:

The transboundary serial cultural landscapes in First Nations traditional territories, including the Tr'ochëk fishing camp, and the Chilkoot Trail, the Klondike gold fields and the historic district of Dawson, illustrate life before, during and after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896-1898, the last and most renowned of the world's great 19th century gold rushes.

First Nations story cycles and languages articulate this environment, which reflects centuries of continuing indigenous use as well as the physical and cultural transformations wrought by a half-century of corporate mining. The 53-km Chilkoot Trail, from Taiya Inlet in Alaska over the Coast Mountains to the headwaters of the Yukon River in British Columbia, links the Pacific coast to the Yukon interior. An Aboriginal trade and travel route for centuries, the trail brought thousands of Stampeders to the Klondike gold fields from 1896 to 1898.

Downriver from this commemorative trail, at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers, is the Tr'ochëk fishing camp, the centre of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory. Dawson sits opposite. Its hastily constructed, false-fronted wooden buildings, with some relicts and open spaces amid them, illustrate life during the gold rush and after. More opulent administrative and institutional buildings speak to the one-time prosperity of this former territorial capital.

Beyond lie the Klondike gold fields centred on Rabbit (later Bonanza) Creek, site of the 1896 discovery of gold by James "Skookum Jim" Mason (Keish), sites of the labour-intensive individual miner society, the gigantic Dredge No. 4, and massive tailing piles left by corporate mechanized mining. Nearby are the relict mining camp headquarters at Bear Creek. Small-scale mining operations continue in the gold fields today.

First Nations and newcomers continue an ongoing cultural accommodation, including negotiated land settlement agreements. The American components of this proposal, including the historic district of Skagway, Alaska, are not yet on the American Tentative List.

JUSTIFICATION OF "OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE"

Criteria met:

(iv) The Klondike is an outstanding example of a landscape which illustrates exceptional adaptation and innovation by First Nations people for thousands of years, up to the present day, in responding to a challenging environment;

(v) It is an outstanding example of a mining landscape which includes the resource, transportation, supply, administrative and institutional components.

Assurances of authenticity and/or integrity:

The site of a traditional Hän fishing camp was established as a Tr'ochëk heritage site under the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Land Claim Agreement, and is owned by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. In 2001 it was designated a National Historic Site of Canada. Parks Canada continues to work cooperatively with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in on the protection and preservation of the site.

The Chilkoot Trail is managed segmentally as a National Historic Site by Parks Canada, and as an International Historical Park by the U.S. National Park Service.

The Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site is managed by Parks Canada in cooperation with local stakeholders under a Commemorative Integrity Statement and a recent management plan.

Parks Canada also owns and operates the Dredge No. 4, SS *Klondike* and SS *Keno* national historic sites under Commemorative Integrity Statements and management plans.

Discovery Claim National Historic Site is managed by the Klondyke Centennial Society.

The properties of Bear Creek, Bonanza Reserve and another portion of Discovery Claim are not designated as national historic sites, but are currently owned and managed by Parks Canada.

Comparison with other similar properties:

Cultural landscapes associated with the preludes and aftermaths of the California gold rush of 1848-49 (U.S.A.), the Central Victoria gold rush of 1851 (Australia) and the Witwatersrand gold rush of 1886 (South Africa) are differentiated from the Klondike by access, environment, time period, subsequent development patterns and negotiation of cultural accommodation with indigenous peoples.

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION:

"The Klondike represents the most comprehensive and intact of all the cultural landscapes that illustrate life before, during and after the world's great 19th century gold rushes.

The history of the Klondike is written on the land. First Nations story cycles speak to thousands of years of surviving and thriving in a challenging environment, and to a remarkable record of adaptation and innovation. These stories also speak to a way of life that was radically and indelibly altered by a brief moment on the timeline of the region's human occupation — the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896-1898, and its aftermath. Early narratives are found throughout the traditional territories, including the Tr'ochëk fishing camp and ancient trading routes such as the Chilkoot Trail; later voices overlay the Chilkoot and the still-mined gold fields, and the historic districts of Dawson and Skagway, Alaska (U.S.A.). Collectively, the places and

cultural accommodations that define the Klondike cultural landscape represent a story of extraordinary proportions."