

Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan



YA, Van Bibber Family fonds, 79/2 #62, PHO 100

prepared for
Fort Selkirk Management Group
by Midnight Arts
March 1994
digitized & updated September 2004

Yukon
Tourism and Culture
Tourisme et Culture

FORT SELKIRK INTERPRETATION PLAN

by

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Cover photo: First plane to land at Fort Selkirk.
L-R; Sophie Anderson (Old Abraham's daughter),
Old Abraham, John MacMartin & Mrs. MacMartin.

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Note to the 2004 Edition

The original *Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan* was prepared using an early version of Ventura Publisher that is now obsolete. Consequently, the plan was only available in paper form. Over the past summer, the report was scanned and digitized as an MS Word document, making it easier to issue additional copies.

It was decided that the Plan would be more useful with some updates. Many of the projects proposed in this report have been accomplished. Other items are simply out-of-date such as references to “upcoming” anniversary special events in 1995 and 1998.

This is not a formal update, which would require a detailed look at current interpretive activities and programs, and community consultation to determine how best to proceed in future. Rather this edition of the report can be seen as a scorecard, showing the many successes of the past decade.

In the past decade, there were two major developments, neither of which was anticipated in the original plan. The Selkirk First Nation built a cultural centre in Pelly Crossing, a replica of the Big Jonathan House in Fort Selkirk. The displays contain many references to Fort Selkirk and the Fort Selkirk video is frequently shown at the centre. Also, as part of the Virtual Museums of Canada program, a Fort Selkirk website was developed containing extensive interpretive material and a teacher’s corner (<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/FortSelkirk/>). The site is available in English, French and German.

Outdated information has been dropped. Goals accomplished and new information are listed in footnotes. The charts in Section 7: Implementation Strategy, have been modified to quickly indicate which suggested items have been accomplished.

H. Dobrowolsky
August 2004

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What is Interpretation?

Interpretation is a special way of communicating information in a manner which reveals meanings and relationships to an audience rather than to simply communicate factual information. It helps people to understand historical and natural heritage through first hand involvement with ideas, cultures, objects, artefacts, landscapes or sites.

What is an Interpretation Plan?

An interpretive plan takes a comprehensive approach to all aspects of interpretation. What are the themes and stories that best interpret Fort Selkirk? What are the site resources? Who are the members of the audience: river travellers, the Selkirk First Nation, students, other Yukoners - and what are their needs and interests? What are the best ways to tell these stories? Interpretive approaches can address a broad range of alternatives from self-guided hikes with a brochure, to displays and interior restoration of some of the buildings, to interpretive programs with demonstrations of traditional crafts and videos depicting Fort Selkirk in the 1940s as a living community. Some stories might be told elsewhere in the Yukon to reach students and highway tourists. Which interpretive methods work best and which could be improved?

What is needed to put interpretation into place? Answering this question means addressing issues such as setting priorities, training, costs, and timetables. Putting all these elements into a comprehensive interpretive plan, rather than taking a piecemeal approach, can mean increased tourism, more jobs and other social and economic benefits for the Selkirk First Nation, as well as the opportunity to share their culture and heritage.

Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan

Based on the "Meeting Place" concept introduced in the *Fort Selkirk Management Plan*, the stories of Fort Selkirk are told within the framework of six themes and 31 individual stories. This framework is flexible; new stories can be added and stories can be updated as new information comes available. We look at the interpretive resources available to illustrate these stories. The rich supply of interpretive resources at Fort Selkirk include oral traditions, heritage structures and sites, artefacts, as well as the natural resources. A visitor analysis gives a better picture of visitor demographics and expectations. The plan looks at the building blocks of interpretation: onsite interpreters, interpreter training, an elders visit program, and a visitor centre. Based on the stories, the resources, audience, and the information provided by Pelly residents and other resource people, this report presents concepts for the most appropriate interpretive methods.

This is followed by interpretive implementation charts which look at the purpose and possible location of each interpretive method, sets priorities, and provides a range of costs for each option. Site interpretation should take a staged approach, using pilot programs and evaluation to ensure that not too much is attempted at once and that the program moves forward by building on successes.

An interpretive manual has been produced as a resource tool. This volume will be a sourcebook for onsite interpreters. It has been designed so that it can be added to and modified as new information and stories are available.

1.1 Guiding Principles

After consultation with the elders, various Selkirk First Nation members and other resource people associated with the site, the following principles have been developed as a basis for all interpretation activities at Selkirk.

Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan: Guiding Principles

- Use the expertise of Elders and acknowledge their role as educators, interpreters and counsellors in passing on stories from the Selkirk First Nation.
- Interpretation should be culturally appropriate and implemented by members of the Selkirk First Nation.
- Visitors should learn that Fort Selkirk is still a home to the Selkirk First Nation and be taught respect for the site.
- Selkirk First Nation members should have the opportunity to realize social and economic benefits from interpretation.
- Interpretation should be environmentally friendly. Interpretation should make use of site resources but never to their detriment.
- The Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan should build on the guidelines set out in the Fort Selkirk Management and Preservation Plans.
- All Yukoners should have the opportunity to experience, enjoy and learn from the heritage of Fort Selkirk.

2.0 THE THEMES & STORIES

Selkirk, it's going to be for a memorial, many years yet. Indian people's story is the one that hold that place together. — Sam Williams

Understanding perspectives from different cultural traditions enlarges our understanding of the past. —Julie Cruikshank, *Reading Voices*

2.1 Introduction

Selkirk is a place full of stories. One of the goals of the *Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan* is to organize those stories and suggest how they might be told.

In the *Fort Selkirk Management Plan*, Fort Selkirk as a “Meeting Place” was introduced as the unifying thematic concept or main story. All themes and stories draw on the overall concept of Selkirk’s significance, geographically and historically, as a meeting place. This concept is further developed in the Interpretation Plan by six themes: *The Natural World*, *The Seasonal Round*, *Northern Tutchone Homeland*, *Trade & Travel*, *Power & Sovereignty* and *A Shared Community*. Three of these themes come from the management plan, three others have been added to better organize the individual stories (see Figure 1: *Fort Selkirk Thematic Outline*).

Most of the stories are told from a Northern Tutchone view of the world. While there has been a Euro-American presence at Fort Selkirk over the last 150 years, it should be recognized that the built history of Fort Selkirk amounts to a brief period in the cultural occupation of the site. Even the oldest stories, like the ancient volcanic formation of the area, are found in the oral history accounts of the Northern Tutchone. This is not to say that the other stories are not important, but since the Northern Tutchone were there to witness and be part of most of these, this First Nation’s perspective seems more appropriate and serves as a unifying thread.

Many of the stories are interwoven, one leading naturally into another. Recently, the palaeontologist Richard Harington found caribou bones under the basalt wall that were dated to 1.6 million years ago. While fascinating in itself, an account of the oldest caribou bones in the world leads naturally to the use of the caribou in First Nations culture. Caribou appear in *The Seasonal Round* in discussions of food preparation, clothing and the traditional technologies used in hunting and trapping (see *Figure 2*).

While there are many topics which could be interpreted at Fort Selkirk, there are some which can only be told here, or are told best here, while other stories might best be addressed somewhere else. In developing the stories list, we have kept this in mind and focussed our efforts on stories that portray Fort Selkirk most clearly as the “Meeting Place”.

The “Meeting Place” concept and the six interpretive themes are examined below, followed by short descriptions of the individual stories. At the time of writing, only 12 of the stories have been developed—these can be added to or modified as new information comes to light. For the remainder of the stories, the main messages are suggestions for the direction or development of the story and will likely change with further research. Since we are building on the *Fort Selkirk Management*

Plan, much of this information is taken from the plan with some editing and additions.

2.2 The “Meeting Place” Concept

The dominant image for Fort Selkirk is as a “Meeting Place”. Maps reveal a pattern of numerous trails and rivers that converge at Fort Selkirk. This image captures many of the major stories and messages of the site:

- Fort Selkirk as a meeting place for the Tutchone people living in the area;
- Fort Selkirk as a meeting place for Tutchone and native people from outside the area, e.g. Tlingit, Han, etc.;
- Fort Selkirk as an historical meeting place of native and non-native cultures;
- Fort Selkirk as a meeting place for non-natives – William Ogilvie and George Dawson arranged their rendezvous for Fort Selkirk as a reliable meeting place during their “wilderness” explorations;
- Fort Selkirk as a meeting place for two major river systems, the Yukon and the Pelly;
- Fort Selkirk as a meeting place for people and wildlife - its location reflects its proximity to good hunting and Fishing grounds;
- Fort Selkirk as a modern meeting place for cultures - here is the opportunity for tourists and other river travellers to meet with the Selkirk people.

Fort Selkirk Interpretive Plan Thematic Outline

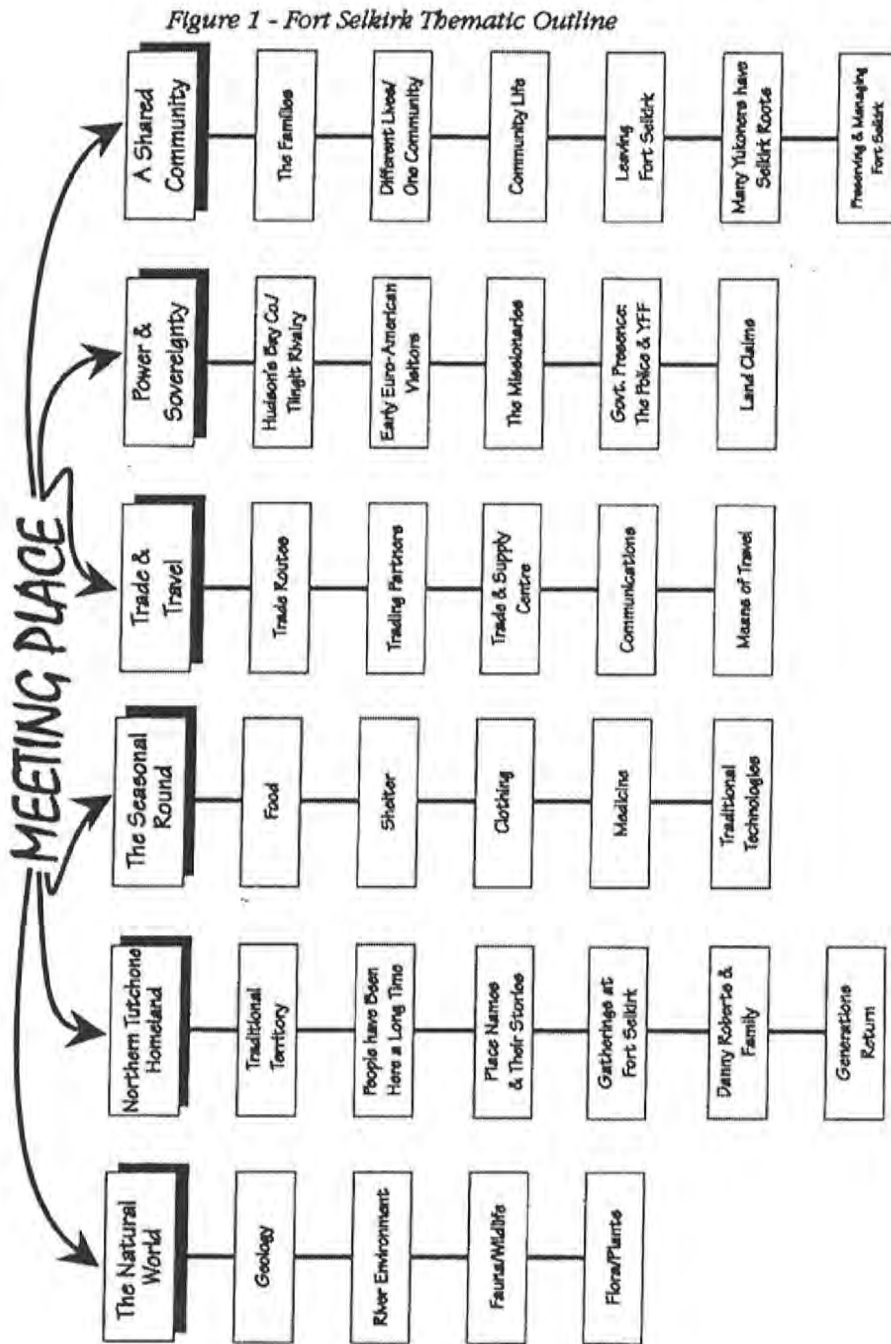


Figure 1 - Fort Selkirk Thematic Outline

2.3 Theme: The Natural World

This theme relates to the natural world surrounding Fort Selkirk, and inhabited by Selkirk First Nation. Natural history stories regarding the geology, river environment fauna and flora are brought alive by a “meeting” with traditional knowledge. Oral traditions recounting the eruption of Volcano Mountain have been substantiated by geological evidence. Two major rivers, the Yukon and the Pelly, meet at Fort Selkirk. These rivers are not only summer highways for the Selkirk people, but also an important source during the salmon runs. Recently caribou bones, dated to 1.6 million years old, have been found under the basalt wall at Fort Selkirk. It is a powerful image to think of caribou, still an important food resource for the Selkirk First Nation, roaming the country long before the lava flows that created the basalt wall and long before human occupation.

The natural world is part of the Fort Selkirk heritage. Local people continue to use natural resources for food, shelter, medicine, clothing and other necessities. Today, the natural environment is important to visitors for its wild beauty, its recreational opportunities, and for its links with the culture and history of the site. Respect for, and the wise use of these natural resources ensure their continued presence.

THE NATURAL WORLD: The Stories

Geology

- Scientific description of major geological features in the area.
- The scientific record is illuminated by oral history accounts such as the eruption of Volcano Mountain between 7,000 and 14,000 years ago.

River Environment

- Fort Selkirk is at the confluence of two major river systems: the Yukon and the Pelly.
- The dynamic nature of river hydrology has caused the erosion of a traditional fishing campsite at Victoria Rock.
- This story relates to the transportation and wildlife stories.

Fauna/Wildlife

- The Yukon River valley is suitable habitat for many of the Yukon’s mammals and birds, but there are some special stories about three species you can see near Fort Selkirk.
- The oldest caribou bones ever found came from under the basalt cliffs across the river. Caribou used to migrate through here by the thousands, and although their numbers are fewer today, they are still hunted for food.
- Thousands of Pacific salmon migrate up the Yukon River and spawn in side channels near Fort Selkirk.
- During spring and fall migrations, the islands in the Yukon River are used as nesting places by sandhill cranes. Fort Selkirk is on a major bird flyway.

Flora/Plants

- A description of the trees, plants and other vegetation in the Fort Selkirk area.
- This story relates to First Nation use of plants in the area for food, medicine & building.
- Vegetation in the Fort Selkirk region is influenced by the soil and climate.

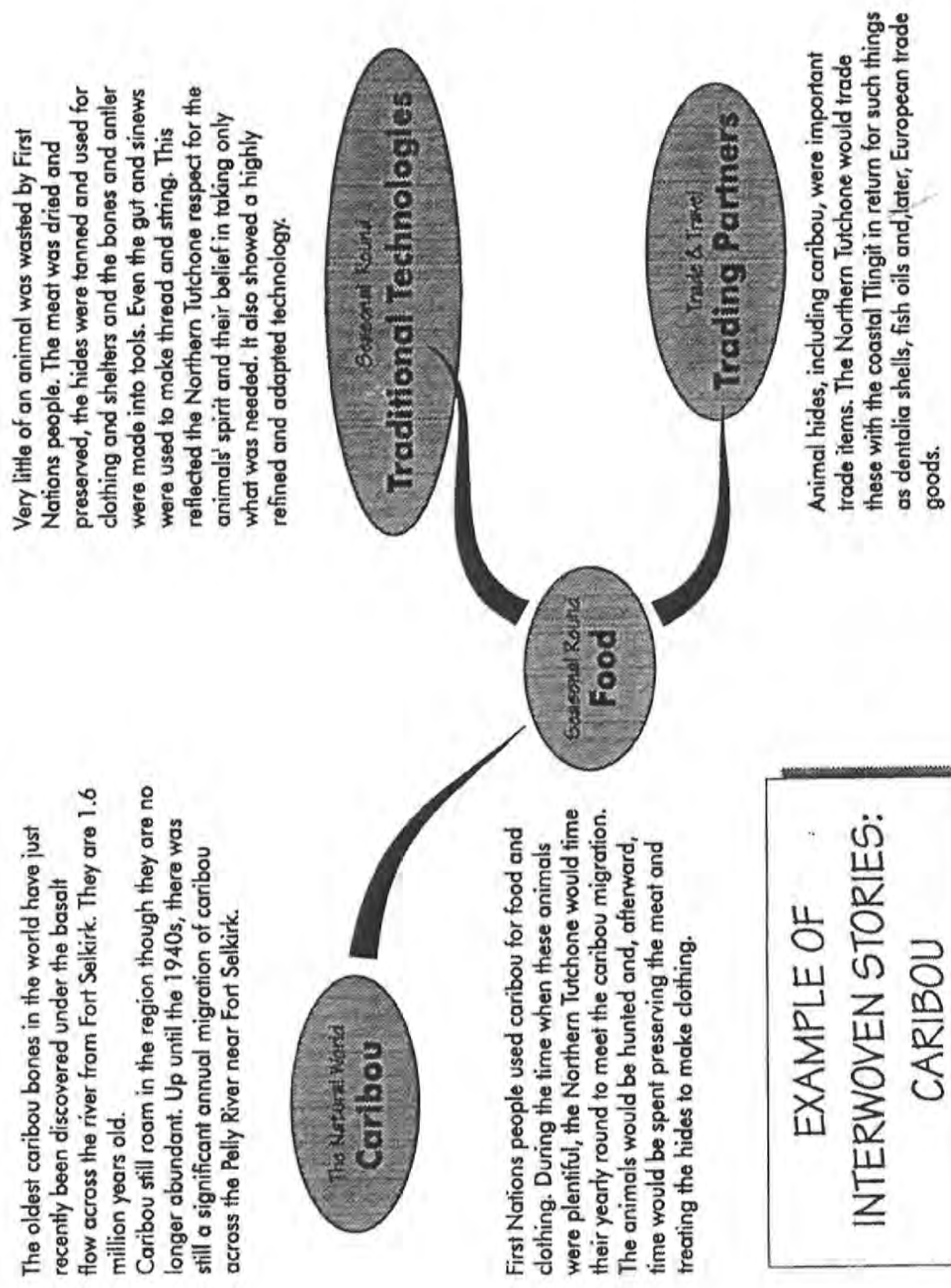
2.4 Theme: Northern Tutchone Homeland

This kind of flat country, everything fall over. You walk around this whole area. Up high in the mountains, no matter where you go, you going to see nothing but stone axe stumps, no tin cans, no paper. — Harry Baum

Although the site of Fort Selkirk was and is an important meeting place to the Selkirk First Nation, the area they regard as home is the much larger area of land that they and their ancestors have occupied for thousands of years. This large area of country and its variety of habitats enabled a self-sustaining way of life. Northern Tutchone people have an intimate knowledge of the mountains, forests, lakes, creeks and trails, as well as the seasons and cycles of the animals, fish and plants within this area. Nearly every feature in the landscape has a Northern Tutchone name, and each place name has a story to go with it.

For generations this site and region has been the home base for the Selkirk people. While the location may first have been chosen as a result of the excellent fishing and hunting nearby, and the suitability of the terrain for a settlement, its long use has brought additional importance to Fort Selkirk. The oral traditions describe the site as an exciting place where babies were born and families were raised, where friendships were made and renewed, where the people danced and stick gambled, where generations are buried, and now, the place to which generations return. The return to Fort Selkirk reflects the desire to re-affirm and enhance the Selkirk First Nation members' connections with the site and its rich spiritual associations and the respect that all Yukoners have for its heritage.

Figure 2 - Example of Interwoven Stories



NORTHERN TUTCHONE HOMELAND: The Stories

*Every Christmas Eve, six o'clock, everybody dance . . . Wolf, they got two feathers.
Crow, they got one. They dance like they got no bones. Dancing stick, eight feet long.*

—Harry Baum

*When people from Petty are down there (Selkirk), they are really happy . . . Just a good
feeling when everyone gets together down there.*

—Alex Morrison

Traditional Territory

- The Northern Tutchone people ranged over a large area during their seasonal round. Fort Selkirk was only one of their stopping places.
- The extent of their travels is reflected in the network of trails through this area.
- This story will also discuss neighbouring cultures, traditional land use & allotment.

People Have Been Here a Long Time

- Prehistoric artifacts found at Fort Selkirk and other sites in the area such as Pelly Farm and Three Way Channel tell stories of how people lived here long ago.
- Much of our knowledge of this prehistoric technology comes from the traditional knowledge of the Selkirk First Nation elders.

Place Names & Their Stories

- Nearly every landscape feature within the Selkirk First Nation's traditional territory has a Northern Tutchone name.
- Usually there is a story to go with the name. The story might be a legend from the distant past, or refer to a particular event that took place at that site, or a person who lived there.
- Newcomers to the area renamed many of the mountains, lakes, and rivers. These were the names that later appeared on official maps.
- In recent years, First Nation elders have assisted linguists and land claim researchers in documenting many of the original names. The Yukon Geographical Names Board has been instrumental in officially recognizing many First Nation place names.

Gatherings at Fort Selkirk

- The area of Fort Selkirk has been an important gathering place for the Northern Tutchone people and people of other First Nations before and after the arrival of non-native traders.
- People met here to trade and visit, and for special occasions such as potlatches, Christmas celebrations, funerals, christenings and weddings.
- Today Fort Selkirk is still a gathering place for the Selkirk First Nation and visitors.

Danny Roberts & Family

- At the time most people were leaving town, Danny Roberts and his family moved back to the townsite from Kirkman Creek.
- The "Mayor of Fort Selkirk" stayed on and saw many changes over the years.

Generations Return

- Fort Selkirk is still considered a living community by the Selkirk First Nation.
- Students from Eliza Van Bibber School visit the site with elders during field trips, and many families spend time at the site every summer.

2.5 Theme: The Seasonal Round

My parents travelled around Selkirk. Old people, you know, never had one home, travelled all around.

— Grace Johnson

Selkirk people just like a circle.

— Stanley Jonathan

This theme tells the stories of the First Nation hunters and fishers of the Fort Selkirk area and their long-term and successful adaptation to their subarctic environment. The resources they depended on for survival were scattered, and in most cases, available only at certain times of year. Consequently, family groups travelled extensively to trap and hunt. At different seasons, they moved to take advantage of fish runs, caribou migrations, trapping areas, nesting ducks, and plant and berry harvests. The site of Fort Selkirk was important in this yearly round as a place where smaller family groups gathered together with one another and other First Nations people. Not only was it close to good fishing and hunting but it was also important in the yearly cycle as a place for meeting, socializing and trading.

It is important in this theme to understand that we are not talking only about people who are long gone, but the ancestors of the Selkirk First Nation – people who have continued to live on the land into this century, adapting to new technologies and ideas and the many other changes brought by the newcomers while retaining the practical knowledge of their ancestors.

THE SEASONAL ROUND: The Stories

See Dad's cache, 10 feet by 10 feet. One side king salmon, one side dry meat, down the middle all kinds of berries. Everybody do that, not only us.

— Stanley Jonathan

Food

- Selkirk First Nation people obtained food from several large and small mammals, fish, some birds and various plants.
- People obtained food resources from different areas depending on the season.
- People used a variety of techniques to preserve and store food.
- Members of the Selkirk First Nation still obtain much of their food from the land and use preservation methods taught by their elders.

Shelter

- The Northern Tutchone people were adept at erecting temporary shelters using indigenous materials.
- These ranged from brush shelters of the early days to canvas wall tents and more permanent small trapline cabins in the post-contact period.

Clothing

- Special skills were required to tan hides, sew and decorate clothing.
- With the introduction of new trade goods such as beads, steel needles and cloth, First Nations women adapted their skills to use and incorporate these new materials.

Medicine

- First Nations people used the plants around them for medicinal purposes as well as food.
- Indian doctors or shamans had special spirit powers which they used to treat illness and give other types of help.
- Selkirk First Nation Indian doctors included Old Abraham, Copper Joe, and Big Jonathan Campbell.

Traditional Technologies

- Selkirk First Nation people were adept at using materials at hand to create everything they needed for hunting, fishing, transport, cooking, shelter, sewing, etc.
- When employing traditional technologies, they showed respect for the resources they used and wasted very little of what they took.
- Their technology was much more than material items; it was also the knowledge displayed in their use, wisdom which was passed down from one generation to the next.

2.6 Theme: Trade & Travel

*My dad made moose skin boat. Twenty-five skins. That thing could go anywhere.
Used to build one-man canoe to go beaver hunting. Don't use no nail, nothing
except stripped rawhide, tie the ribs, pretty soon get as tight as a drum.*

— Johnson Edwards

For hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, aboriginal people met in the Fort Selkirk vicinity to trade. Much of the trade was between the interior people and the coastal people who brought their dentalia shells, eulachon oil and other products of the sea to trade for superior quality furs, skins and other interior resources. Later the Tlingit brought British, Russian and American trade goods such as guns, knives and kettles to trade for furs, skins, meat and fish. Exchanges with peoples to the north and west were for copper and other items, and there may have been an extended trade network all the way to the arctic via the Gwich'in people.

The Klondike Gold Rush solidified Fort Selkirk's role as a regional commercial centre for trade and supply. After the gold rush, the community still played this role as a steamboat stopping point, a

centre for area wood camps, a communication centre as a result of the telegraph line, and as a base for trading and provisioning. Fort Selkirk remains an important travel point for river travelers and has the potential to once again be an active trading site.

TRADE & TRAVEL: The Stories

Travel Routes

- Fort Selkirk lies at the hub of a network of overland and water trails. These include the overland route to the coast, used by Tlingit traders and later known as the Dalton Trail, the nearby Whitehorse to Dawson winter road, the patrol routes taken by G.I. Cameron and other RCMP up the Pelly and Macmillan Rivers, and the traditional trails used by the local Northern Tutchone.

Trading Partners

- Long before white traders came into the Yukon, the Northern Tutchone people had a well-established trade network with other First Nations people, particularly the coastal Chilkats.
- Northern Tutchone people traded tanned hides, furs and clothing for resources that they could not obtain in their own area.
- Trading relationships were often marked by the formation of partnerships between the headmen from the two different First Nations.
- Trading negotiations took place according to formal rules of conduct.

Trade & Supply Centre

- Arthur Harper was the first independent trader to set up a trading post at Fort Selkirk.
- By this century, Fort Selkirk was well-established as a central trade and distribution centre for a large area that extended up the Petty and South Macmillan Rivers.
- Over the years, there were several stores at the site including the Dominion Hotel & store, Horsfall's store, the Taylor & Drury Store, the Schofield and Zimmerlee Store, and the Hudson's Bay Company store.

Communications

- Fort Selkirk as a communications centre. The settlement was the hub of a network of land, sea and air routes.
- Early means of sending messages, the telegraph office, the post office, the Camerons' two-way radio and Martha Cameron's newscasts.

Means of Travel

- In the early days, Northern Tutchone people used various methods for travelling and packing their gear over land or water depending on the season.
- The first visitors to the Yukon adopted many First Nations modes of travel. In turn, First Nations people adapted readily to the travel innovations brought by the newcomers. Northern Tutchone people still love to travel on the land as well as voyaging longer distances to visit friends and relatives.

- Changes in mass transport had major effects on Fort Selkirk including lessening its isolation, strengthening the local economy, and eventually, leading to its abandonment.

2.7 Theme: Power & Sovereignty

They trained soldiers there [Fort Selkirk]. My mother, they're young that time. Lots of people thought they were fighting one another.

— Emma Johnson

Fort Selkirk is in a prime location for transportation, for hunting and fishing, for trade, and for settlement. This fact has led to struggles over who should have power and sovereignty over the site. Of necessity, the Selkirk First Nation historically had strong leaders such as Thlingit Thling, Hanan and Big Jonathan. The Tutchone people were caught in the middle of a trade dispute between the Tlingit and a newcomer on the scene, Robert Campbell of the Hudson's Bay Company. Campbell named his new post Fort Selkirk. He also gave his name to a First Nation family of the area in appreciation for their help after the Tlingits had ransacked his post. The plundering of the Fort Selkirk trading post resulted from anger on the part of the Tlingit over who would control trade with the Tutchone. This incident provides a great interpretive opportunity which would be enhanced by further archaeological exploration of both of Campbell's trading posts.

Explorers such as Schwatka (1883) underlined the lack of an official Canadian presence in the Yukon. Ogilvie and Dawson (1887) were sent to investigate and delineate Canadian interests in the Yukon. Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries competed for religious sovereignty in the 1890s. The arrival of the Northwest Mounted Police and the Yukon Field Force during the Gold Rush confirmed Canadian sovereignty in the Yukon.

These events had a pronounced affect on the native people. The new residents surveyed and subdivided the town site, set up a central graveyard, and created a reserve for the natives three miles away (which was never inhabited). The native population did not leave, but continued to occupy one end of the town site. In response to the many sudden changes at Fort Selkirk, the Selkirk First Nation began to organize in new ways to deal with these different circumstances.

POWER & SOVEREIGNTY: The Stories

Hudson's Bay Co./Tlingit Rivalry

- The Hudsons Bay Company, in the person of Robert Campbell, infringed upon existing Tlingit/Northern Tutchone trade when he built the Fort Selkirk post.
- Campbell had difficulties trying to usurp the Chilkat trade — he was often short of supplies and his prices were lower than the area people were used to being paid.
- Northern Tutchone people tried to warn and protect Campbell from the hostile Chilkats.
- After the Chilkat attack on Fort Selkirk in August 1852, the Hudson's Bay Co. did not come back to the area for 86 years.

Early Euro-American Visitors

- Schwatka and his mandate from the U.S. government; Ogilvie and Dawson visit the site on behalf of the Canadian government. The sovereignty implications of both expeditions.

The Missionaries

- Anglican Church missionaries arrive in 1891 and introduce the First Nations people to Christianity and its practices. Many ceremonies, such as confirmations and burials, now centred around the church.
- At Fort Selkirk, many First Nation students were introduced to a different learning system at the Anglican school. In addition to learning the skills necessary for survival in the bush, they now studied the language and skills useful in the post gold rush society.
- In the 1940s, Father Bobillier re-established the Catholic Church at Fort Selkirk and lived here for nearly 10 years.

Government Presence: The Police & the Yukon Field Force

- The first Northwest Mounted Police Detachment at Fort Selkirk was established in 1898. It was one of many posts set up at regular intervals along the Yukon River to monitor the Klondike stampeders.
- For nearly a year (1898/99), Fort Selkirk was the headquarters of the Yukon Field Force. This influx of 200 soldiers had a great impact on the small settlement.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police re-opened their detachment at Fort Selkirk in 1932. Cpl. G.I. Cameron and his family were well-respected members of the community for over 14 years.
- The system of laws enforced by the Mounted Police often conflicted with First Nations methods of resolving conflicts. Today many First Nations are looking to traditional ways of sentencing and rehabilitation, as well as working more closely with the Mounted Police.

Land Claims

- This story outlines the process by which the Selkirk First Nation have asserted their claim to their traditional territory.
- With the formation of the Fort Selkirk Management Group in 1990, the Selkirk First Nation and the Government of the Yukon expressed their commitment to co-management and cooperation to preserve the town site heritage.

2.8 Theme: A Shared Community

One time it got down to 73 below. Had cache under the floor. Had potatoes and everything in my cache – it all froze. I had to get up all night to keep the stove going all the time. Thermometer only go to 65. It went way past below 65. It stayed like that for two weeks.

— Danny Roberts

The Selkirk First Nation was, and is, a sharing community, another key requirement of a meeting place. For generations, Fort Selkirk was the central social community in an enormous trading network. During a period of 60 years, The Selkirk First Nation shared occupation of the site with non-native settlers. For decades, the two cultures shopped at the same stores, attended the same churches, traded with each other, and participated in all of the other activities that typify a single community. During the gold rush, the town was bustling with activity: churches, stores, hotels, sawmill, farm, wood camps, docks, telegraph office, NWMP, and Yukon Field Force barracks. Later, as the non-native population declined, the pace of life slowed. This would be the place to tell the story of Fort Selkirk as a living community at different periods in time, as well as the story of life here in winter, the season about which tourists are most curious.

Another element of this theme is the connection of different cultures to the site. Tlingit and other native groups visited here and in some cases married into the community. Families – the Harpers, Camerons, Horsfalls, Van Bibbers, MacMartins, Wilkinsons and others – also lived here and made it their home. This is one of the special qualities about Fort Selkirk that distinguishes it from many other sites. Fort Selkirk remained a vital community and a meeting place for different cultures long after the Klondike Gold Rush had ended.

The last two families - one native and one non-native - left Fort Selkirk together. Today, this interaction is continued as the site is being co-managed by the Selkirk First Nation and the Government of the Yukon for the benefit of all Yukoners.

The meeting place that is Fort Selkirk will once again be a lively, happy community. For the Selkirk First Nation, the revival is a chance to meet their past with its vital cultural and spiritual memories. It is the desire of the Selkirk First Nation that both the old and new generations return to Fort Selkirk, if only seasonally, to exchange knowledge and ideas and re-affirm their roots at this place. Other generations from other cultures will return as well to appreciate an important element of Yukon's heritage. Once again travellers in the Yukon will seek out Fort Selkirk as a meeting place of history and cultures at the bend in the river, where the Pelly joins the Yukon.

A SHARED COMMUNITY: The Stories

The Families

- A look at the lives and personalities of area families such as the Van Bibbers, Jonathans and Camerons. This could be examined through family albums, genealogies, and clans.
- This story could also include stories about growing up at Fort Selkirk.

Different Lives/One Community

- For sixty years, the Selkirk First Nation shared the occupation of this site with non-native settlers. The two cultures differed in many respects: language, relationship to the land, type of housing, worldview, etc.
- They were interdependent. First Nations people adopted many new ways, goods, and employment opportunities from the newcomers; non-native traders settled at Selkirk to purchase the furs, meat and fish provided by First Nations trappers and hunters.
- They lived and worked together cooperatively.

Community Life

- This story examines activities and events in the community at different periods in its history.
- The face of the community that few visitors are able to see is Fort Selkirk in wintertime. This part of the story focuses on winter activities and dealing with the cold.

Leaving Fort Selkirk

- The construction of the Mayo Road and the end of the sternwheeler era led to the consequent abandonment of Fort Selkirk. This story could discuss what happened to the Selkirk First Nation in the next decades.

Many Yukoners Have Selkirk Roots

- Family trees reveal that many First Nations families around the territory have roots at Fort Selkirk.

Preserving & Managing Fort Selkirk

- Fort Selkirk is one of the Yukon's most significant historic sites as it represents many major themes in Yukon history, particularly the meeting of cultures. The site is notable for the extent and good condition of its historic resources.
- This site is of particular importance as a home to the members of the Selkirk First Nation whose ancestors have lived in the area for thousands of years.
- The Heritage Branch of the Yukon Government and the Selkirk First Nation are working together to preserve, develop and interpret Fort Selkirk for the benefit of all Yukoners.
- In 1990, the Yukon Government and the Selkirk First Nation issued the Fort Selkirk Management Plan. This document, signed by the Chiefs of the Selkirk First Nation and the Minister of Tourism, is a formal commitment to and vision for the cooperative management of Fort Selkirk.

3.0 THE INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES

The *Fort Selkirk Management Plan* noted in fair detail the heritage resources available at Fort Selkirk. Following is a reprise of that section with additional material pertinent to the *Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan*.

3.1 THE SETTING

Selkirk has an abundance of resources, which represents a broad spectrum of natural and cultural history. The natural elements of the river confluence and rugged basalt bluffs provide a striking but not discordant contrast to the string of historic structures set on a nearly perfect natural town site. When we step back from the site and look beyond foreground scenery, the network of trails and volcanic features become apparent. Hidden in the forests and waters are the resources which sustained the Selkirk people. We can listen to the stories of the Northern Tutchone about how they live on this land, stories that go back hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. There is a great wealth of stories to be told about Fort Selkirk and there is also a significant number of resources to illustrate them.

3.2 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

3.2.1 Oral Traditions

Fort Selkirk has a rich fabric of oral traditions tied to the surrounding landscape, natural resources, cultures, people and events of the region. Selkirk First Nation elders relate mythological stories about the creation of the world, people, and animals. Events from the more recent past such as volcanic eruptions, Tlingit /Tutchone trade practices, and the ransacking of Robert Campbell's post in 1852 are part of their oral traditions as well. Likewise they heard about the gold rush, traders, missionaries, and other visitors from their grandparents and parents. Having lived in the area all their lives, elders have a keen sense of changes that have taken place in their environment. They know the Northern Tutchone (and some Tlingit) names for landforms, special places, animals, plants, traditional tools, and technology. Family and personal names, kinship relationships and ties to Indian people throughout the Yukon are all important threads in the history of Selkirk people.

Although the most important sources for this knowledge are still the elders themselves, oral history recording programs conducted by the Selkirk First Nation recently have created a collection of tapes, transcripts, and reports for some of this information. Some stories have been published in books such as *My Stories are My Wealth* and *Pan of the Land Part of the Water*. The Council for Yukon Indians (Curriculum Development Branch), and the Yukon Native Language Centre also have tapes pertaining to Selkirk people. The Yukon Heritage Branch has tapes and transcripts of recordings made at the site with elders (*Fort Selkirk Oral History Project 1984, Elders Oral History Project 1985*).

Other former residents and people with knowledge of Fort Selkirk have been recorded as well. These sources generally offer information about post-gold rush events, personalities, and activities related to community life, riverboat technology, telegraph line operation, police work, trapping, store operations, etc. In 1978, the *Yukon River Aural History Project* conducted a series of recordings on Yukon River history. Included are interviews with Henry Breaden, G.I. Cameron, Martha

Cameron, George Dawson, and others. Brief summaries as well as the tapes are available at the Yukon Archives (81/32). The Yukon Archives has several other tape series on people and places in the region (e.g. May Menzies Collection). The Heritage Branch continues to conduct on site interviews when specific information about certain structures or other particulars of site history are required for site management purposes.

3.2.2 Archaeological and Palaeontological Sites

Fort Selkirk Sites

Three sites have received Borden designations at Fort Selkirk. (These are official designation numbers assigned by The Archaeological Survey of Canada.). KeVe2 is located at the upriver end of the site, extending from the traditional dog salmon fishing camp down to the vicinity of Danny Robert's cabin. It has yielded artefacts dating from 300-2000 years ago. The earlier occupation (circa 2,000 B.P.) appears to have been a small camp. Artefacts from the occupation around 300 B.P. show that the area may have been a trade rendezvous. The second Robert Campbell post located in front of Danny Robert's cabin is designated as KeVe1. Some prehistoric and historic artefacts, as well as extensive structural remains of the post have been found in test pits dug there. KeVe10 located on the Swinehart Farm road just behind the townsite was a prehistoric campsite where some scattered stone flakes were found.

Other Related Sites in the Vicinity

Other sites in the immediate area have a bearing on interpreting the regional archaeological context of Fort Selkirk and in providing visitors with a sense of the setting and meaning to landmarks such as Victoria Rock or the Pelly River confluence.

These include *Nju Yen Tjek* ("It [the river] cuts through here"), (KeVf1), also known as Three-way Channel. This was a traditional fishing site probably used in the last century. Five fish baskets along with other fishing technology were discovered during the archaeological project sponsored by the Selkirk First Nation and the Heritage Branch in 1988 and 1989. Also recovered at the fishing site were three hammerstones and a bow. A campsite associated with the fishing site is located on the upriver end of the island.

Thi Ts'ach'an or Victoria Rock (KeVe7) is another traditional fish camp where a canvas canoe frame was found. MacNeish excavated KfVd2 at Pelly Farm in 1960. This site revealed five occupation levels spanning several thousand years. Another MacNeish site is KeVd3, 3 miles upriver from Fort Selkirk where microblades were found. This prehistoric site is of some concern since it is washing out and it represents an interesting example of an early riverside camp. KfVe3 is a small lookout southwest of Volcano Mountain.

Another fish camp (KeVd7) behind Robert Campbell's first post produced a skin scraper, various bone and stone fragments, plus hearth material dated A.D. 1350 +/- 70. The post site itself (KeVd8) also yielded some prehistoric material as well as remains of the post buildings. At Wolverine Creek (KeVd6) there are three cremation sites and two fenced graves. More than 1,500 stone flakes, in association with charcoal dated at A.D. 1470 +/- 80 were also recovered from here, near a moose lookout that is used to this day.

A recent discovery was made across the Yukon River at the base of the basalt cliffs. During a geological study to date the rocks of the cliff, caribou bones were discovered *under* the basalt. These

dated to 1.6 million years old and are held to be the oldest caribou bones discovered in the world. This raises the possibility of other such finds in the area.

3.2.3 Heritage Structures And Sites

The arrangement of buildings at Fort Selkirk is linear, that is, it is a long narrow settlement along the bank of the Yukon River. The structures are practically all oriented to the Yukon River which is also linear at this point in its course. While the site was surveyed, and some of the buildings were actually built on, or were moved to formal lots, most of the buildings in town are situated close to the river. The mixture of municipal orderliness, as depicted by the survey plan, and the rather haphazard arrangement of most buildings despite the survey, says much about the attitudes of the site's builders and occupants and their resourcefulness in the adaptation and re-use of the structures. Fort Selkirk's architecture could be said to depict equally the commercial and civic optimism of the newcomers and the organic practicality of those used to living off the land.

The surveyed lots and large permanent structures of the non-natives contrast to the use of buildings by the Tutchone people. Their buildings were generally smaller to suit their seasonal and part time occupancy. On the death of an owner, they were often burnt, while abandoned structures were frequently dismantled for firewood. At this stage, the relatively limited number of these buildings enhances their importance from both the architectural and interpretive points of view. Brush shelters and later, tents, were traditional accommodation. Log buildings were adopted when non-native peoples arrived.

The buildings of Fort Selkirk show an interesting spectrum of design and construction methods. They range in functional type from simple, single person dwellings through a typical rural store to a complex of structures representing the role of the mission in the community. While modest in scale and finish, the structures also vary considerably in crafting. This too reflects the attitude of the builders. The Northern Tutchone people had developed a portable and disposable culture over countless generations of living the seasonal round. Their buildings, for the most part, were simple, easy to heat, and were often burned or recycled after the owner's death. This contrasts with the Anglican mission house, for example, with its two stories and dovetail notches. This house was built to last and provides an arrangement of rooms reminiscent of southern living.

The buildings make a statement about Fort Selkirk's multifaceted role as a service and trade centre. They should be considered as interpretive resources both individually and as a built landscape. The community as a whole is also significant as one of the few pre Klondike Gold Rush settlements in the Yukon. Two buildings, the school and the Mission House, remain to interpret this period.

3.2.4 Artefacts

Prehistoric artefacts recovered at Fort Selkirk range in age from about 2000 years to the time of contact about 150 years ago. They consist mainly of numerous types of stone flakes and microblades. One copper point and one biface scraper were found, but these items were not located within a context that allowed them to be helpful in dating the site. Other items collected were ceramic shards, glass beads, and a piece of a clay pipe. These specimens are useful mainly for research purposes, although casts and/or originals of some items might be used in interpretive displays both on and off site. Most of these artefacts are located at the Heritage Branch, Department of Tourism pending deposition with the Archaeological Survey of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, at the completion of analysis.

Ethnographic objects like the hammer stones, fish baskets, and bow recently collected in the region are useful for interpreting traditional lifestyles of Northern Tutchone people. Although located off-site at present (in Selkirk First Nation office at Pelly Crossing and the Yukon Archaeologist's office in Whitehorse), these items might be used for replication projects (replication means to make a copy of something), or in some circumstances, for display at Fort Selkirk. Some Selkirk First Nation members may have similar objects, or things like old style skin clothing, which they might be prepared to have photographed for display purposes. In some cases these items might also be suitable for replication to produce display items.

Historic artefacts are widely scattered throughout the site, in and outside of buildings. At least two preliminary inventories of these items have been done (Porter 1981; *Fort Selkirk Town Site: Preliminary Artefact Inventory 1989*). Both lists include a wide variety of small wooden, glass and metal objects such as boxes, bottles, tin cans, nails and bolts. Some medium-size objects of more significance include traps, saw blades, barrel stoves, and furnishings. There are a few larger items like a buzz saw, car, and a wooden sleigh. Some artefacts have been collected in the Stone Shed for storage. There was also a small collection of artefacts in the Heritage Branch Marwell Storage Centre but these items have been returned to the site. While few of these artefacts are unique or highly significant, most have a useful role to play in giving life to the site for interpretive purposes. They were/are the stuff of everyday existence and visitors can gain an appreciation for what was available and what was adapted to various purposes by residents.

When Fort Selkirk residents moved to Minto and Pelly Crossing in the late 1940s and 1950s, many of them left furnishings and other belongings in their homes and caches. Apparently some of these things were removed by other people over the years, but it is not known whether any of this material still remains in the territory. A limited number of Fort Selkirk items are also held by museums or private individuals in the Yukon.

3.2.5 Documentary Sources

The Yukon Archives has extensive documentation on Fort Selkirk. The Heritage Branch produced a *Fort Selkirk Bibliography* (Dobrowolsky 1988)¹ which lists Yukon Archives references for published sources, corporate records (Anglican Church records), films, government records, manuscripts, photographs, maps, and tape recordings. The Yukon Archives has finding aids for other collections which include relevant data (eg. White Pass & Yukon Route Collection). Numerous photographs, such as the Van Bibber collection, and films such as the G.I. Cameron collection, offer a visual record of Fort Selkirk over many decades. The Yukon Archives also holds the *Yukon Waterways Sites Survey*, a collection of maps, photos and drawings produced in 1973 by Parks Canada.

Fort Selkirk material is located at several other repositories too, notably the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, the National Archives of Canada at Ottawa, and at the Selkirk First Nation office. The Hudson's Bay Company Library has published accounts of the fur trade and the HBC Archives holds original post records and correspondence series for Fort Selkirk. One post journal is located at the National Archives of Canada, as well as photos and field journals for the Yukon Expedition of 1887. At time of writing, publication of Campbell's post journals and correspondence is being arranged.

¹ This bibliography has been updated: H. Dobrowolsky, *Fort Selkirk Bibliography: 2000 Update* (prepared for Selkirk First Nation and Yukon Government, Heritage Resources).

The Archaeological Survey of Canada and Yukon Heritage Branch hold copies of manuscript reports and photos related to archaeological investigations in the region. The original Kohklux map (drawn by Chilkat Chief Kohklux 1869) which shows Tlingit travel routes to Fort Selkirk, and meeting places with Yukon Indians is at the Bancroft Library in California. A copy is located at the Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC). The Kohklux map is featured in the CYI Curriculum Branch *Athapaskan/Tlingit Transition Grade 3 Cultural Enrichment Kit*, while Fort Selkirk is the focus of a booklet produced by the Department of Education called *Explorations*. YNLC also holds typescripts of Reverend T.H.Canham's diaries which include daily entries for the time he spent at Fort Selkirk (1899-1908). The Selkirk First Nation holds photographs of elders and families, band administrative records, and copies of tapes, research reports, and other data on projects at Fort Selkirk.

3.2.6 Landscape Features

Many features in the Fort Selkirk area have special meaning to the people who have lived there. Important landscape features in the planning area include Victoria Rock, the Pelly River confluence, and the lava bluffs opposite the townsite. Volcano Mountain lies outside the planning area, but is a prominent geographic feature associated with many native stories. Wolverine Creek just upstream from Fort Selkirk has been used as a water source but has been found contaminated in recent years.

Landscape Features Summary

- Victoria Rock - native name, *Tthi Ts'ach'an*; spiritual place, landmark, campsite, fishing place,
- Lava Bluffs - native name, *Melu*; dominates view from Selkirk, geologic interest, stories about cannon practice by Yukon Field Force,
- River Sloughs - fishing, navigation, wildlife,
- Trails - connections to White River, Aishihik, Klucane Lake, Selwyn, Dawson, as well as local trails to Victoria Rock and other places,
- Cinder cone - just upstream of Fort Selkirk on opposite shore; native name, *Ne Ch'eDdhawa*.

3.3 NATURAL RESOURCES

3.3.1 Climate

Fort Selkirk has a continental climate with pleasant but short summers and cold winters. It is wetter and colder than Whitehorse. Annual temperatures average -5 C, with July at +15 C and January averaging -30 C. The May to September average is +11 C. Annual precipitation is 276 mm with a little less than half of this falling from June to August. The early autumn and late spring can be very agreeable times to visit Fort Selkirk, for brilliant fall colours or mild weather winter activities. River freeze-up and break-up can make river travel problematic.

Favourable climate and soils make agriculture possible in small pockets along central Yukon river valleys such as the Stewart, Pelly and Klondike. A combination of silty or organic soils on river terraces and flood plains and a greater number of frost-free days make these sites some of the more suitable agricultural land in the Yukon. Pelly Farm, just upstream on the Pelly River has produced local grain crops and raised livestock since the turn of the century.

3.3.2 Geology

Fort Selkirk is on the Lewes Plateau, just north of the Dawson Range. The Lewes Plateau is part of the Yukon Plateau, a broad interior plateau that extends through the central Yukon. Although the local geology is complex, a few interesting features stand out. The ridges to the south of Fort Selkirk are made of granite, but it is the massive basaltic lava flows across the Yukon River that dominate the setting. These flows originated from Volcano Mountain, a cinder cone 17km north of Fort Selkirk. The flows dammed the rivers forcing the Yukon River to cut across a spur of its former valley below Selkirk. According to geologists from the late 19th century on to Hugh Bostock in 1936, the volcano ceased to erupt perhaps only a few hundreds of years ago. These observations were based on the sparse vegetation cover on Volcano Mountain and some of the large lava flows.

Recent work by Lionel Jackson of the Geological Survey of Canada sheds more light on the age of the local geology. His evidence suggests that the volcano is much older than previously thought, and probably erupted during the early Pleistocene or late Pliocene period, partly under glacial ice. Jackson's scientific investigations on the volcanic history of the area were stimulated by oral accounts by Selkirk First Nation elders Tommy McGinty and Harry Baum.

Bostock's and Jackson's geological maps show the extent of lava flows in the area. Victoria Rock, just 3km downstream of Fort Selkirk also consists of basalt and other metamorphosed (changed by heat and pressure) rocks. Victoria Rock is also known by Selkirk people as an important cultural heritage site, and as the site of an historic fish camp.

The townsite of Fort Selkirk lies on a terrace made of glacial drift (deposits from the last ice age) and alluvium (sands, silts and gravels deposited by the river). Volcanic ash from the White River eruptions was also deposited in the region, although archaeologists have not noted its presence at the Fort Selkirk site. The surface geology has changed with events like the lava flows, movements of the river channel, and possibly ash accumulations. Fort Selkirk lies in the scattered permafrost zone.

3.3.3 River Environment

As the Yukon river waters rise and fall and currents reshape the islands and banks, the river environment changes every season. The Yukon River water flow fluctuates from highs in June-July to low levels in September-October. The townsite elevation is above the high water flooding mark. Flooding is not known to have occurred at Fort Selkirk in recent times. River navigation records provide more detailed descriptions of historic water levels.

The main flooding risk is from ice dams during spring break-up. Break-up normally occurs mid to late May depending on weather conditions. These events are difficult to predict, but could damage structures such as boat landings or buildings too close to the river bank. Victoria Rock, just downstream of Fort Selkirk, is a known bottleneck where ice jams frequently occur.

Archaeologists found that an historic fish camp at Victoria Rock was eroded away by river currents. The river's channels and sloughs provide habitat for spawning salmon, which in turn attract grizzly bears. Many other animal species, such as moose and black bear depend on the riverside vegetation for food. The river floodplain with its silty soils and good growing conditions supports the largest trees and most diverse vegetation in the area. This band of vegetation along the river

floodplain is called the riparian zone.

3.3.4 Vegetation

Fort Selkirk lies in the Yukon Plateau (Central) Ecoregion. This central Yukon zone of rolling hills and plateaus is dominated by white and black spruce forests. Lodgepole pine colonizes areas after forest fires, with aspen and balsam poplar on disturbed or well-drained sites. Willows, shrub birch, cinquefoil, soapberry and alder are typical shrub species, with feathermoss dominating the understory in forested areas. Wildflowers, like the spring crocus, are abundant in the townsite.

Native people traditionally used many plant species for food or medicinal purposes. Currants, cranberries, mossberries, raspberries, strawberries and blueberries are still picked throughout the Yukon. In earlier times during the spring, “everybody liked to scrape off the inner bark of spruce and pine to get the sweet, juicy shavings of sap. They also like to chew the pink resinous gum from spruce and fir trees” (McClellan, 1987). See the Council for Yukon Indians publication, *Land of My Ancestors - Plants as Food and Medicine*, 1993, for more information.

The Fort Selkirk site was cleared for fuel wood during the early part of the century. Stumps from the steamer era can still be seen amongst the trees of the new forest. Dan Van Bibber says that when the cleared area behind Fort Selkirk was meadow, strawberry picking was popular. Forest succession has now replaced most of these strawberry patches.

3.3.5 Fish & Wildlife

Mammals

People have hunted and trapped animals in the Fort Selkirk vicinity for generations. Elders report that sheep, caribou, moose and fish are the most important food species. Excavations at the basalt cliffs across from the townsite have revealed caribou bones about 1.6 million years old, from before the volcanic eruptions. These caribou are the oldest known in the world. Elders speak of the caribou migrating across the lava terrace north of Fort Selkirk. Bostock (1936-p.45) wrote that in “some years they (caribou) appear in large numbers along the Lewes River from Selkirk to Carmacks... (they) return in great herds of many thousands in July.” These migrations of the Forty Mile herd no longer exist, but are an important part of the Fort Selkirk heritage.

Many of the Yukon’s wildlife species may be found here today. Common species likely to be seen by river travellers include moose, black bear, coyote, red fox, arctic ground squirrel, rabbit, and muskrat. Other less commonly seen species include grizzly bear, sheep, wolf, wolverine, lynx, martin, mink, and weasel.

Woodland caribou seen in the area are very similar to barren ground caribou, but are heavier. Caribou are sociable, usually observed in bands of 10-50 animals. These small herds migrate between dry open ridges and forested valley bottoms. Lichen, often growing on trees, is the mainstay of the Caribou’s diet. In summer, they also eat a variety of leaves, twigs, sedges and grasses. Caribou are excellent swimmers.

Moose rut in late September, then calve in early June, often using river islands for the calving.

Moose are browsers who like sparsely treed areas. They range through higher altitudes in summer, then move down in winter.

Black bear prefer lower elevations and feed in forest openings, aspen growths and river flood plains. Black bears are good swimmers and fast runners. They breed in late June, then den up from October to until April. Their cubs are born in the dens in February.

Birds

Birds of prey, waterfowl, songbirds, and game birds such as sharp-tailed grouse are frequently viewed along the river valley. The Pelly River confluence area is often used as a staging ground by migratory birds such as sandhill cranes. These long-legged, long-necked birds roost (resting place) on river bars and islands during the spring and fall migrations. Fort Selkirk is located on a major North American migratory bird flyway over the Tintina Trench. Hundreds of thousands of waterfowl and cranes follow the Tintina Trench route into Alaska. Sandhill cranes migrate in large flocks, in V or line formation. The Pelly Farm site attracts sharp-tailed grouse, swans and geese during migration.

Peregrine falcons nest in many of the cliffs along the river from Minto to Alaska. This part of the Yukon River has one of the largest peregrine falcon populations in North America. Bank and cliff swallows also inhabit the cliffs along the Yukon River. Ravens nest in the basalt cliffs at Fort Selkirk.

Fish

Salmon have been fished from the Yukon and Pelly Rivers for centuries. Thousands of Chinook and Chum salmon typically spawn in areas of upwelling groundwater in the side channels or sloughs of the Yukon River from Selkirk upstream to Minto. Salmon also spawn in back eddies downstream of Selkirk. Chinook spawn in late July and September, while Chum spawn from September to November. Spawning fish during these periods attract Grizzly Bears to this stretch of river.

The Pelly River also produces Chinook salmon and a large species of whitefish known as the *Tezra* whitefish. These fish are an important part of the local food fishery. Other species in the Yukon and Pelly Rivers include grayling, pike and trout.

4.0 VISITOR INFORMATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Information on who visits Fort Selkirk is useful for planning displays, signs, trails, and interpretive programs. This profile of visitors tells us what languages people speak, where they are from, when they visit, how they travel, what they expect, and what kinds of interpretive programs they are most likely to enjoy. The graphs and diagrams also show at a glance the variation in visitor use from June through September.

It is important that the Fort Selkirk Management Group have a firm grasp of site visitation and use. All potential users of the site should be made aware that they are required to communicate their intentions to the Management Group. This would include commercial operations, school groups, government and First Nation organized events, and other users (e.g. the RCMP, the church). By coordinating all the demands on the site, the Management Group is able to ensure that the facilities are adequate, the interpretive program is responsive and that every visitor has a good quality experience.

4.2 WHAT THE GRAPHS SHOW

July is the most popular month to visit the site. Historically, numbers have usually dropped off dramatically in August although this was not the case in 1993. There are even fewer visitors in June and September. Although use of the site by Yukon residents is highest in July, use by those from outside the territory is spread out more evenly between July and August. Europeans made up the majority of visitors in August, 1993-Daily visits vary from 2-6 people in June and September, up to 50 per day in July. Party size ranges from 2-15. The 1993 statistics are generally considered representative of most years.

The best information source on visitation to Fort Selkirk is the Guest Book kept by Danny Roberts. Estimates of the proportion of visitors who sign the Guest Book range from 50% to almost 100%.

- Figure #3 shows the number of visitors who signed the guest book in 1993, but the figures are probably conservative, since they may not show many of the day use visitors.
- Figure #4 estimates the number of day use visitors. This number will increase with planned commercial day tours to the site.
- Figure #5 shows the number of registered visitors during the last 10 years. There has been some fluctuation in numbers of visitors, but use of the site has remained reasonably consistent.
- Figures #6 and 7 show the origin of visitors,
- Figure #8 shows the pattern of monthly visits. Note that Canadians tend to visit earlier in the season, and Europeans visit later.
- Figure #9 shows how people get to Fort Selkirk. Practically all visitors arrive by canoe, kayak or motorboat.

These graphs, taken together, show many of the characteristics of visitors to Fort Selkirk.

We know that:

- Most people who visit Fort Selkirk are on a multi-day Yukon River trip.
- The majority of people who visit Fort Selkirk stay 1-2 nights.
- People who visit for one day usually start from Minto, and may stay at the site for 2-5 hours.
- Although local people do not make up the majority of visitors, they may visit the site many times.
- Many local people and Yukoners in general visit the site in family groups.
- The greatest number of visitors are Canadians, and of these most are Yukoners.
- Other Canadians are mostly from B.C., Alberta or Ontario.
- Europeans account for most of the foreign visitors, and Germany is the most common place of origin.
- The majority of Americans who visit are from Alaska.
- In June and July, the majority of visitors are Canadians, while in August and September, the majority are Europeans; Americans seem to prefer July.
- The majority of visitors are on private trips, although the percentage on commercial trips is growing.
- The majority of visitors arrive by canoe, followed by those in power boats, kayaks, rafts and finally airplanes.
- Many local people and other Yukoners who visit, speak Northern Tutchone or other native language.
- About 40% of the visitors to Fort Selkirk speak English as a second language; most of these people speak German.
- French is spoken by 5-10% of Canadians who visit, but is also spoken by many visitors from Europe.
- Asian languages account for a small percentage of tongues spoken now, but appear to be growing.
- Many people who are interested in learning about Fort Selkirk and the Yukon River may not ever visit the site; this group of people probably accounts for the vast majority of the interpretive audience.
- The number of visitors to Fort Selkirk has remained relatively stable for 10 years; we can expect a surge in numbers during 1995 and 1998, but a return to slow growth after these anniversary events.
- Improved road access, if contemplated, would have a dramatic impact on the number of visitors to the site, as well as affect the management of natural and cultural resources.
- Day use will likely increase as more commercial boat tours visit the site, especially during anniversary years.

Guest Book Entries, 1993
Fort Selkirk

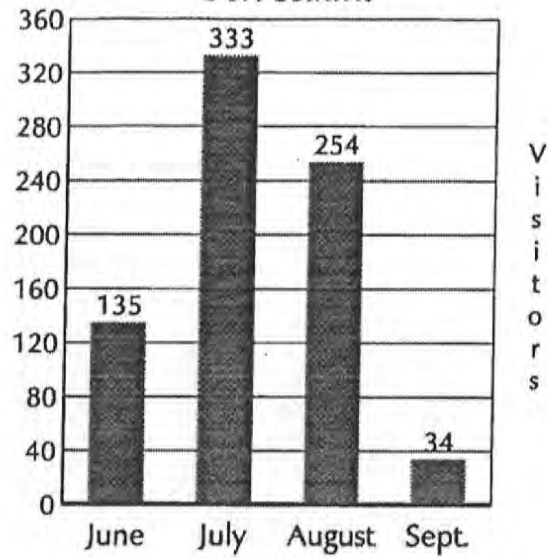


Figure 3

Overnight and Day Users
Fort Selkirk, 1993

Note: Day use numbers are estimated. Numbers for overnight use are actual, numbers for day use on the graph show total of both overnight and day use.

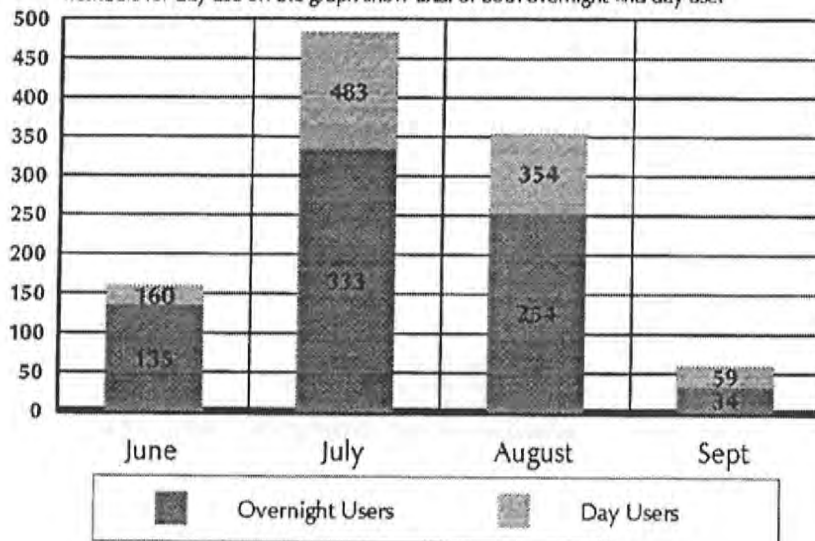


Figure 4

Ten Year History of Overnight Visitors to Ft. Selkirk

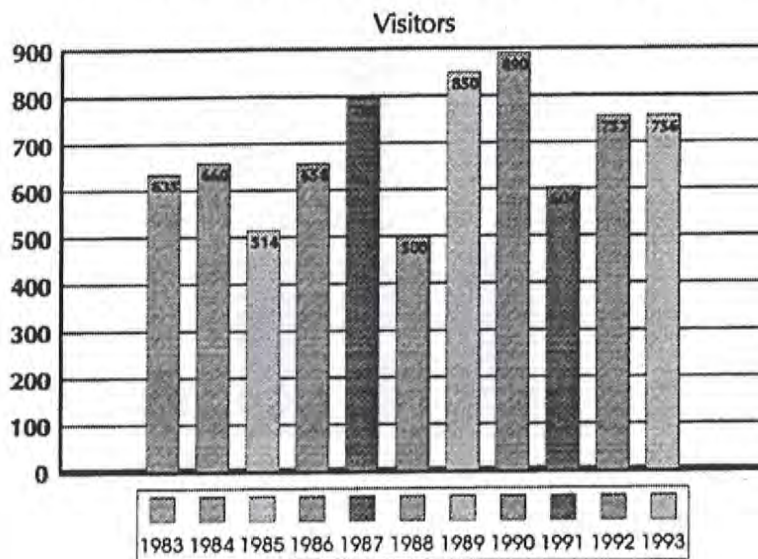


Figure 5

Origin of Visitors to Fort Selkirk, 1993

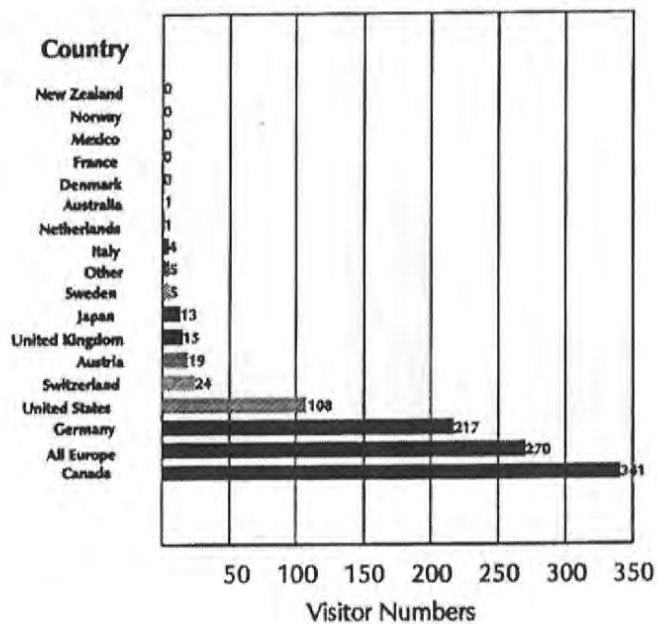


Figure 6

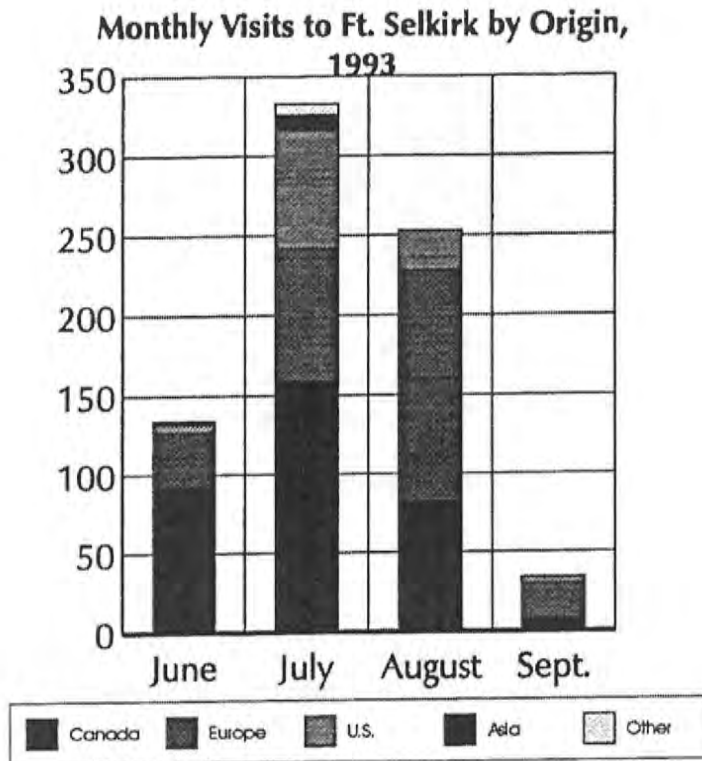


Figure 7

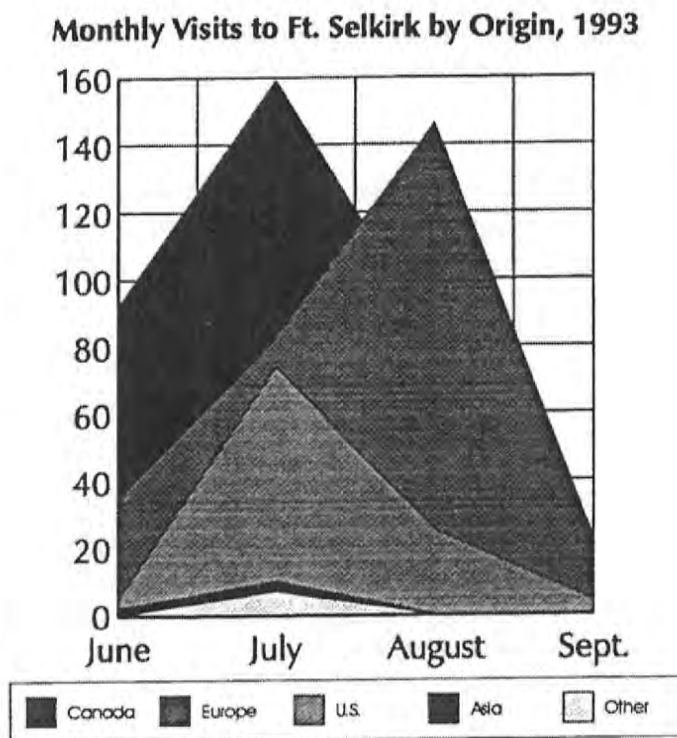


Figure 8

Method of Travel to Ft. Selkirk, 1993

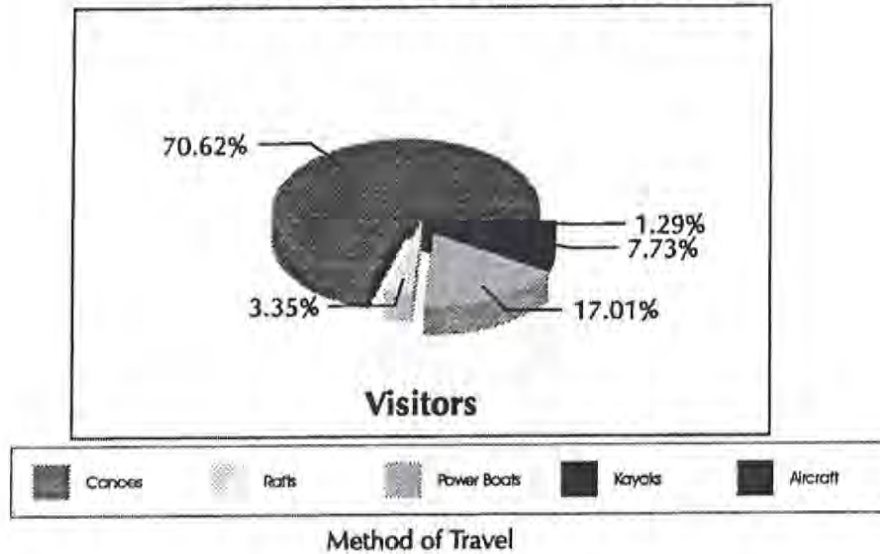


Figure 9

4.3 LOCAL USERS

Selkirk First Nation members of all ages use Fort Selkirk. Selkirk First Nation members have used and continue to use Fort Selkirk for traditional uses - hunting, trapping, fishing, berry picking, as a burial ground and as part of a system of trails. They have strong ties with Fort Selkirk as a gathering place.

Selkirk First Nation members tend to stay longer than other visitors, ranging from seasonal employees and hosts who reside at the site through-out the summer and part of the spring and fall, to those who visit for a few days with family or friends. Some visit for a day.

4.4 RIVER BOATERS

Most people travelling to Fort Selkirk and down the Yukon River are going to Dawson City. They started their trip in Whitehorse, Teslin, Carmacks or Minto. Most of these boat trips are unguided. These visitors use canoes, kayaks, riverboats and sometimes homemade rafts.

The largest group of visitors aside from local visitors, are Europeans, mainly from Germany, Switzerland and Austria. The site is also visited by Scandinavians, Japanese and Australians. Canadian visitors are primarily from the Yukon, B.C. or Ontario. Contrary to their dominant position overall as visitors to the Yukon, comparatively few Americans visit Fort Selkirk. Many of these are from Alaska.

From the limited data available and conversations with those familiar with the site visitors, this group travelling by boat down the Yukon River appear to be similar to the adventure travel segment of the tourist market. These visitors are more often male than female, and tend to be younger than the typical visitor to the Yukon. Based on data from the Yukon River visitor survey carried out by the Park Planning Section of the Yukon government in 1988, it is likely these visitors to Fort Selkirk are predominantly 18 to 44 years old and single. They tend to have higher incomes, be employed in professional or managerial occupations and have post-secondary education.

Based on other studies of adventure travellers, this group wants a unique, participatory experience, unspoiled wilderness, excitement, involvement and activity from their trip. They want their travel experience to be entertaining, challenging and to provide a stimulating, learning experience. Meeting people who live on the land, and experiencing different cultures is something this group values. They seek these new experiences in an uncrowded, undisturbed wilderness. Ways to encourage contact and sharing are described in the Interpretation Plan.

Boaters usually have novice-intermediate paddling skills and according to some observers, frequently don't carry sufficient supplies. Three established Yukon companies — the Kanoë People, Arctic Edge and Yukon Cat — offer canoe tours to Dawson, stopping at Fort Selkirk. Guides provide limited interpretive information, but encourage their clients to wander the site, or view the photo albums. Group size varies from 10-15.

Selkirk First Nation members say that many people stay two to three days at Fort Selkirk. The Guest Book confirms this and also suggests that some camp only one night.

4.5 COMMERCIAL DAY AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

In the last four years commercial day tours from Minto have provided an opportunity for highway travellers to visit Fort Selkirk. Plans are being developed by other companies to provide site visits as part of a longer Yukon River tour.

4.5.1 Existing Tours

Heinz Sauer has taken people on boat tours from Minto for the last four years. Most of his clients want a river experience and are not necessarily motivated by a chance to visit Fort Selkirk. Some key points about this operation are:

- about 300-400 people take Yukon River day tours from Minto, many of these go to Fort Selkirk,
- business volume is increasing annually,
- about half are German speaking people who want to explore, get off the road,
- these people are interested in the river,
- the tour company advertises in the Milepost, but much of the business is through word-of-mouth referrals, particularly through local bed and breakfast operations, the proprietor does not feel brochures at visitors centres are an effective form of advertising,
- bed and breakfast guides attract the kind of people interested in off-road experiences,
- the guide does not provide structured interpretation at Fort Selkirk, but answers questions; the proprietor feels that many people want to explore the site on their own.

4.6 SPECIAL USE GROUPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Special groups might include people participating in cultural events, school tours, professional or special interest groups such as heritage conference delegates or other organized parties.

Students from Pelly Crossing now form the special group which has most regularly visited the Fort Selkirk site. The Pelly Crossing School has about 50 students from kindergarten to grade 10. Grades 7 to 10 visited the site for 4 days in the spring of 1989- Pelly Crossing students also participated in the government-Selkirk First Nation sponsored archaeology field schools for two summers.

There are no formal, ongoing programs to use Fort Selkirk for Selkirk First Nation projects or other community functions. For three summers the Yukon Heritage Branch provided funding for joint cooperative archaeology and oral history programs which brought elders, youth, and specialists together to investigate the history of the site and region. The Selkirk First Nation held its General Assembly at the site in 1988 and stick gambling, drumming, and other activities in conjunction with the meetings.

4.7 INTERPRETIVE AUDIENCE PROFILE

Information about the number and origin of visitors, as well as interviews with tour operators and others, allowed us to create an audience profile. This profile shows the different types of travellers that interpreters may talk to. It shows some of the different expectations of river travellers. Figure 10 shows the types of people that might benefit from the Fort Selkirk interpretive program.

Interpretation Audience Profile

Type of Visitor	Characteristics	Interpretation Notes
Wilderness River Boaters (private trips)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - majority of visitors - on 7-21 day trips in 2-8 person groups - almost half are Europeans - stay 1 to 2 nights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - want to explore the site on their own - would appreciate contact with First Nations guides or interpreters, hear stories - would be interested in an interpretive walk or perhaps long hike in evening. - interested in natural environment
Wilderness River Boaters (commercial trips)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small proportion of visitors, but growing - on 7-14 day trips, in 10-15 person groups - in future, some will be on overnight trips from Minto - almost half are Europeans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - want to explore the site on their own - have guides who may have their own approach to interpreting the site - appreciate contact with First Nations guides or interpreters, hear stories - would be interested in an interpretive walk or perhaps long hike in evening
Local Day or Overnight Use Boaters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - families from Pelly Crossing may visit for the day or spend several nights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may want to tell children about Fort Selkirk through storytelling, looking at photo albums - participate in fishing, hunting and other activities
Day Users on Commercial Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on guided day tours from Minto (or Pelly Crossing in future) - Fort Selkirk may be the highlight of their highway trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have 1-4 hours on the site, with their own guide or interpreter - many would just want to explore since time is limited
School Groups/Other Educational or Youth Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - groups of 10-25 staying for one day or overnight - may come in shoulder season - could learn about Fort Selkirk in school as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would want fairly structured interpretive programs, perhaps focussed on one theme - may want to participate in activities such as storytelling, creating or using traditional technology implements - guided walks
Special Event Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local people attending cultural events - 1995 and 1998 anniversary visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participate in special interpretive programs
Highway Traveller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will not visit the site - the rubber tire group: retired couples travelling to Alaska 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will take part in audiovisual programs, read signs or printed material, purchase books - could learn about Fort Selkirk in Whitehorse, Minto or Pelly Crossing

Figure 10

4.8 MARKETING

The Department of Tourism views Fort Selkirk as a “niche market” attraction. Since it is located off the main highway, and requires a boat or aircraft to visit, it can serve only specific market groups. These include wilderness adventure travellers on self-guided trips on the Yukon River, wilderness adventure travellers on guided trips, and those on day or overnight boat tours from Minto or perhaps Dawson.

The so-called “rubber tire” market, which makes up 85% of visitors to the Yukon, could have access to the site on day tours from Minto or Felly Crossing. Most of the retired “rubber tire” visitors, however, are more likely to read information about Fort Selkirk in visitor centre displays or roadside kiosks than actually visit the site. Younger visitors, often in family groups, who travel to the Yukon as a destination, may be more likely to take a one or two day side trip to Fort Selkirk.

Information on Fort Selkirk is presented in the Vacation Guide. Brochures or other information on Fort Selkirk could be placed at any of the Visitor Reception Centres in the Yukon.

4.9 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation of visitors and future plans suggests some additional points and future possibilities to consider when implementing the interpretive program.

- Printed material should be in English and German as a minimum, also use Northern Tutchone for locally available materials.
- Northern Tutchone should be used for place names and signs, where appropriate.
- The majority of visitors have at least one evening at the site when many would appreciate a more structured interpretive program, preferably with a First Nations guide.
- Many people would enjoy a marked trail to a viewpoint or other special feature.
- Many people want the opportunity to explore the site on their own, either with or without maps or other guides; these people would, however, appreciate signs to explain what they are looking at.
- Most visitors would participate in special events such as storytelling, observing the demonstration of traditional technologies.
- Most visitors are interested in the natural environment as well as history of the Yukon River; they may have questions to ask the interpreter about what they saw on the river.
- The number of visitors on commercial trips, often with their own interpretive guide will increase.

- There will be a surge in the number of visitors in 1995 through 1998, but this growth rate would likely not be sustained at the same rate beyond 1998; avoid building an infrastructure or providing service expectations that could not be sustained.
- The proportion of foreign visitors to Selkirk will likely increase, with more Asian - speaking visitors in the future, many of whom will not be able to speak much English..
- Fort Selkirk Management Group needs to be aware of any planned commercial or otherwise organized visitation in order to ensure the quality of the experience is high, and that natural and historical resources are protected. Potential users of the site should be made aware that they must inform the Management Group of their plans to visit the site. This is in their best interest to avoid conflicts or overloading the site on a particular day and ensure that all visitors are able to benefit from the interpretive program.

5.0 INTERPRETERS

5.1 ROLE OF INTERPRETERS AT FORT SELKIRK

You need someone who has time to deal with tourists full-time.

— Lucy Carriere

We're going to need more of that kind of people [talking about interpreter Eugene Alfred].

— Danny Joe

The primary role of interpreters at Fort Selkirk is to bring the site alive for visitors, to present first hand the stories of the people who have lived in the area for thousands of years. By presenting information on life at Fort Selkirk, the interpreter provides a context for the material remains of the site.

Danny Roberts has been filling this role to a large degree, for the last 40 years. Most books written by river travelers give prominent mention to Fort Selkirk and its “Mayor”, Danny Roberts. The interpretive program will recognize and build on Mr. Roberts’ work and experiences.

When elders visit Fort Selkirk to participate in interpretive programs, the interpreter will serve as a bridge between the elder and the audience. At the same time, the interpreter has the opportunity to learn from the elder, the primary source of information about First Nation’s culture and life at Fort Selkirk. The interpreter will be able to document information provided by the elder to include in their Interpretive Manual.

The interpreter provides an important service for the tourism industry by serving as a Yukon host. In this role they will be answering a wide variety of visitor inquiries. The interpreter also provides security and maintenance functions for the site.

5.2 TRAINING FORT SELKIRK INTERPRETERS

In order to maintain a professional level of interpretation at Fort Selkirk, interpretive staff should be given training each season. This will initiate new staff and refresh and improve the skills of returning staff. Initial interpretive training should emphasize presentation skills and principles of interpretation. Future topics for interpretive training could include: storytelling, learning to design programs and theatre. This training, combined with the interpreters’ resource knowledge will better enable the interpreters to present the stories of Fort Selkirk.

5.2.1 Off-site Training

Interpretive training in Yukon is usually done in-house by a variety of agencies (e.g. Parks Canada, territorial museums). There are no formal courses available at Yukon College and opportunities for workshop training are just beginning (e.g. MacBride Museum, Interpretation Canada). It is recommended that Fort Selkirk interpreters be sent to available workshops. Considering that Fort Selkirk is a remote site, we also strongly suggest that interpreters take basic training in first aid.

The total time required for both off-site and on-site training would be approximately eight days.

5.2.2 On-site Training

The staff of Fort Selkirk, interpreters and other site workers, should meet at the beginning of each season for a half-day session to exchange information on their upcoming summer's projects. The project manager could go over what the construction and maintenance will be doing that summer and what interpretive programs the interpreters will undertake over the summer. This session would also provide general information to all staff on serving the tourism market (like the "Good Host" program offered by the Yukon Tourism Industry Association) as all staff will be Fort Selkirk hosts to some degree. All site staff should also receive information about security (e.g. closing doors and windows in buildings) and site maintenance (e.g. picking up garbage).

We also recommend that early in each season, there should be a two to three day training session at Fort Selkirk with interpreters, Danny Roberts, elders and other resource people. This training would provide the opportunity for the interpreters to learn on-site about the historical and natural resources of Fort Selkirk from the elders and Danny Roberts. Resource people could include First Nation interpreters and rangers from other Yukon heritage sites such as Kluane National Park and Herschel Island.

This training session would also provide them with an opportunity to discuss the needs (e.g. to have an enjoyable visit), interests (e.g. learning about First Nations cultures) and characteristics (e.g. cultural differences) of visitors to the site. The interpreters could inform elders about the aims and format of the summer's interpretive programs so that they will be comfortable and understand their important contribution.

5.3 INTERPRETIVE MANUAL

While there is no substitute for training and experience, the Fort Selkirk Interpretive Manual will be a valuable tool for Fort Selkirk interpreters. As well as containing general information about the process of interpretation and guidelines for carrying out on-site interpretive programs, the manual will also serve as a handy, one volume reference to the site. It contains descriptions of the stories and themes, summaries of 12 (to date) representative storylines drawn from the thematic outline, sample programs, and useful reference appendices. These will include a list of Northern Tutchone place names for landmarks around the site, a listing of archaeological sites, anecdotal descriptions of the cultural resources, a listing of the natural resources, a chronology of historical events and a bibliography of other source material. The bibliography contains recommendations for publications to be included in an onsite library.

The time and scope of this project does not allow for development of more than 12 stories from the thematic outline at this time. The manual is in a binder format to permit updates and additions.

5.4 ELDERS VISIT PROGRAM

In keeping with the guiding principle that Selkirk elders should be encouraged to become involved in interpretation planning and activities, it was recommended that there be a program of elder visits to the site. Many spoke of the success of the culture camps held at the site in 1988 and 1989 during which elders came to Fort Selkirk to demonstrate traditional technologies to students as part of an overall archaeological project. These activities were also very popular with visitors. Elders on the site would be teachers and mentors for interpreters. The interpreter in turn would assist elders in reaching the public. While the elder's activities on site should be determined by the elder and the interpreter, the following offers some suggestions as to how they can be used.

Herschel Island Territorial Park initiated an Elder visit program in conjunction with the Aklavik Elders Council. This allowed elders to visit the site with transportation provided by the Park.

Storytelling

This can take place informally in a central location, such as a Visitor Centre at the Stone House, or the interpreter can schedule campground fireside talks for times of the day when there are most visitors available, such as early evening.

Demonstrations

Long time ago, they make big raft 60 feet long. Piled cordwood in it, seven sections long and go to Dawson. Sure sell lots of wood, I tell you that.

— Grace Johnson

Why don't they have people build a raft? That would be really good for the kids and tourists to see. That would be good for my generation to see. That's how people used to visit.

— Audrey Baker

Elders may wish to demonstrate traditional technologies and skills at the site. This does not have to be a formal presentation but they should be prepared to talk about what they are doing with the assistance of the interpreter.

Logistics

A number of Felly Crossing elders have expressed interest in sharing their knowledge with visitors at the Fort Selkirk site. It may also prove rewarding to invite Selkirk elders from other communities. While the elder's activities on site should be determined in large part by the elder and the interpreter, there are certain logistics to such a visit that should be considered beforehand. An elder visit program should begin as a pilot project with one or two visits during the busier period at Fort Selkirk, sometime during mid-summer. Starting small allows for an assessment of what went well and what could be improved in subsequent seasons.²

Most agree that the optimum amount of time for an elder's visit would be two to four days. Arrangements for identifying elders and visiting times should be made by interpretive staff through the Selkirk First Nation Office. Accommodation arrangements would depend on the elder – some

² A pilot Elder Host program was held during the summer of 2004 and involved about eight elders conducting traditional activities on site.

might enjoy tenting; the less spry would require a more comfortable place to stay. Salary or honorarium amounts should be determined by the Management Group and the First Nation, possibly based on similar programs elsewhere.

5.5 RESEARCH

Over the years, much valuable information has been compiled on the Fort Selkirk site and the people who have lived there. There are still significant gaps and further site research can be an important part of a good interpretive program.

Oral History & Tradition

Interpretation is not just for visitors. While elders are on site, interpreters in particular should make a serious effort to learn from them. This can be done casually or formally recorded using audio or video machine. There have been oral history projects undertaken at Fort Selkirk to learn more about its history but that bank of knowledge is far from complete. This would be the main method of collecting sufficient information for a book. It is also an opportunity that is rapidly disappearing as those who have a firsthand knowledge of living at Fort Selkirk pass on.

Natural History

More site-specific natural history research should be done. This should take place in the context of blending scientific research with traditional knowledge. For example, it would be valuable to have a plant biologist spend time at the site with an elder experienced in food and medicinal plants. Amateur birders could record sightings at the Visitor Centre. Copies should be obtained of any scientific work done in the region, such as the recent geological and palaeontological investigations.³

Archival Research

Much archival research has been done in the past but there are still a number of sources that could be checked. Most of these have been identified in the Fort Selkirk Management Plan. There are still sources in Yukon Archives which could be checked. For example, the large collection of Anglican Church records deposited in Yukon Archives in 1989 contain some Fort Selkirk documents and a large collection of Fort Selkirk area photographs. There is also a large collection of documents, photographs and films from the Wilkinson Family which has not yet been catalogued.⁴ The other component of archival research is reviewing the research material and determining how best to use it for effective interpretation.

Archaeological Research

There is still much to be learned from the two early Hudson's Bay Company post sites as well as other promising prehistoric sites in the Fort Selkirk area. Recent palaeontological finds (ancient caribou bones under the basalt wall) merit further investigation.⁵

³ During the 2002 field season, biologists Catherine Kennedy and William conducted a detailed inventory of plants at the Fort Selkirk site.

⁴ Many of these records have been listed in the *Fort Selkirk Bibliography: 2000 Update* (Dobrowolsky, 2004). The Wilkinson Family fonds has since been catalogued and is available in a searchable finding aid on the Yukon Archives website. It includes many photos and some film with Fort Selkirk images.

⁵ In 2005, detailed archaeological investigations will be conducted at the original HBCo. site.

6.0 INTERPRETIVE METHODS

This section provides a look at options for interpretation. Interpretation can be conducted both on and off the Fort Selkirk site. The method selected should be most appropriate not only to the venue but also to the story being told or the information being conveyed. It should be kept in mind that while the same message can be delivered by a variety of delivery methods, some will be more effective and suitable than others.

6.1 ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

Sample Charts of Delivery Methods

On the following pages are charts showing different interpretive methods and identifying which might be most appropriate to illustrate the stories identified within each theme. This is a summary of the methods that might be used to interpret each story. There are overlaps. For example, a number of themes and stories might be addressed in a publication, display or guided walk.

The potential uses of each interpretive method are discussed in more detail starting on page 53.

key to icons


















	VISITOR CENTRE		DEMONSTRATIONS
	SIGNAGE, ON-SITE, OUTDOOR		VIDEO, SLIDE SHOW
	SIGNAGE, ON-SITE, DIRECTIONAL		WALKS, SELF-GUIDED
	SIGNAGE, OFF-SITE		WALKS, GUIDED
	MAPS		PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM
	BROCHURES, INFORMATION SHEETS		DISPLAY
	BOOKLETS		ARTEFACT, SPECIMEN, REPLICA, FURNITURE
	INTERPRETER TALKS		RESTORATION
	FIRST NATION CENTRE		

Figure 11

Theme	Natural World										Delivery Method									
Geology	riverbank facing cliffs	profile map on sign	off site	river bank																
River Environment	riverbank facing cliffs		off site	river bank																Victoria Rock
Fauna/Wildlife	riverbank facing cliffs		off site	river bank																
Flora/Plants																				Trail to Swinchart/ Victoria Mt
																				Big J. House

Theme		Northern Tutchone Homeland										Delivery Method					
Story	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon	Icon
Traditional Territory	Felly X'ing/ Big J	Big J House/ Stone House	on site	off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House
People Have Been Here A Long Time			on site	off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House
Place Names & Their Stories		Big J. House		off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House
Gatherings at Fort Selkirk	Big J.			off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House
Danny Roberts & Family				off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House
Generations Return	Big J.			off site/ on site	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House	Big J. House

Theme	Seasonal Round										Delivery Method									
Seasonal Round	near Big J. House	Big J. House		off site/ on site	campfire/ Big J. House															
Shelter	near Big J. House		on site	off site/ on site		campfire/ Big J. House	town													Blanchard Cabin
Clothing				off site	campfire/ Big J. House															Big J. House
Medicine				off site	campfire/ Big J. House															Big J. House
Traditional Technologies				off site/ on site																Big J. House
Food				off site/ on site																

Theme	Power & Sovereignty											Delivery Method					
HBCo/ Tlingit Rivalry	near flag poles		on & off site	on & off site	camp fire												
Early Visitors			on & off site	on & off site	Stone House												
Mission- aries	Anglican Church		on & off site	on & off site	Stone House										School & Church	School & Church	School, Partial & Restor- ation of Church
The Police & The Yukon Field Force	existing by YFF site		on & off site	on & off site	Stone House										RCMP Det.	RCMP Det.	RCMP Det.
Land Claims			on & off site		Big J. House												

6.1.1 Types of Programs

Interpretive Talk



The Interpreter presents a prepared talk on a particular subject at a fixed site; artefacts and/or replicas can be used to illustrate the topic (e.g. a talk on the “Trading Posts & Stores” theme could be presented at the T&D store).

Interpretive Walk



The Interpreter leads a walk and presents information about various interpretive features along the way (e.g. a guided tour of the site, a hike to Victoria Rock).

Demonstrations



Demonstrations are used to illustrate activities or techniques. Two approaches for using demonstrations at Fort Selkirk are:
A: Interpreter can demonstrate something while conducting informal interpretation (e.g. carving).
B: Elders or resource people can demonstrate an aspect of a particular interpretive theme (e.g. drying fish).

Spontaneous Interpretation

The Interpreter can be available to the visitors to answer their questions on an informal basis.

Roving

The interpreter can casually approach visitors and provide information about the feature the visitors are looking at (e.g. walk around the site). This provides a security function as well. Prior to an evening program, the interpreter could walk around the campground to inform the visitors about the upcoming program.

Videos/Slide Shows



Videos and slide shows can be used to provide an animated program.

Note: The use of videos on site is discussed at greater length in section 6.1.7.

Props - Artefacts and Replicas (also see 6.1.5. Artefacts)



Interpretation is defined by first-hand experience and the presence of “the real thing”. While Fort Selkirk is a rich site due to the presence of numerous buildings, the lack of objects is a drawback to effective interpretation.

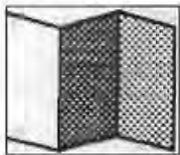
Artefacts and replicas would enhance the interpretive programs. The few pieces of furniture that are present are greatly appreciated by the visitors as these add to creating the picture of what life was like at Fort Selkirk. It is difficult for the interpreter to interpret many aspects of Fort Selkirk life without having artefacts to refer to. For example, talking about toboggans is not as effective as having the toboggan there to describe.

It is recommended that artefacts and/or replicas be used on site in interpretive programs.

6.1.2 Publications

This group of interpretive vehicles includes pamphlets, brochures, booklets and books. Depending on the message and the type of presentation desired, the costs of these can vary enormously. Some items could serve as interpretation and information sources both off-site and on-site.

Interpretive Brochures



Brochures can serve a number of purposes. They can convey a variety of types of interpretive information on and off the site. They can be printed in different languages for visitors who have little English. Although there is a possibility of littering, visitors can be encouraged to recycle the literature. Finally, as one Selkirk elder pointed out with some justice, if people can take a pamphlet, they will be less likely to take a doorknob.

The visitor can take a self-guided tour using a brochure with a site plan to lead them around the site. This approach is preferable to using interpretive signs in front of buildings. Such a brochure could also contain anecdotal material about the buildings as well as general history of the Selkirk First Nation, townsite history and information about the preservation and management programs.⁶ It is recommended that eventually, a translation of this brochure be published in German. A brochure has been produced in the past with information about the history of the Selkirk First Nation. Reprinting this publication might be an alternative for providing information in the short term.

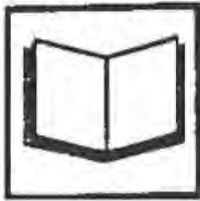
An off-site brochure can provide images and basic information on Fort Selkirk, for example, where it is, what is there, a bit of its history, how to get there and where to get more information. This can be as simple as a fact sheet printed in one colour on single or multiple sheets or one of the multi-colour cards used by many museums. If the brochure is to be promotional, however, it should also

⁶ The booklet, *Fort Selkirk*, was published in 1995. It contains a history of the site based on the Meeting Place thematic outline, a map of the site and brief histories of the various structures. A French version is also available.

be attractive. Attractive does not necessarily mean full-colour, glossy and expensive. Good design and creative use of materials can create an eye-catching and tasteful brochure for a reasonable cost.

A brochure that unfolds into a poster should also be considered for off site interpretation. This would allow a better portrayal of the extent of Fort Selkirk and the beauty of its setting. This publication could contain historic and contemporary photographs, as well as information about general history, events and transport to the site. In a kiosk or VRC, it is also more eye-catching and can serve as a take home souvenir.

Booklets & Books



Booklets and books are a potential source of more in-depth information about the site. These are also a likely source of revenue and could be sold at Fort Selkirk, Pelly Crossing and other Yukon locations. These can provide interpretive information about the site that cannot be accommodated in signage or brochures. They would also provide good resource material for off-site educational programs.

Many would like to see a booklet about Fort Selkirk archaeology similar to those produced about Tatlamane Lake, and Frenchman and Tatchun Lakes. Yukon archaeologist, Ruth Gotthardt, has volunteered to work on this project if funding is made available.⁷

Another project might be collecting elders stories and putting them in a booklet. These could include legends, stories of local history and biographies of the elders themselves.

Put into writing the culture and history of the people, so younger people will know what we have gone through. Bring it right up to date.

The language of our people is important and should be used as much as possible in all the work at Selkirk.

— Emma Alfred

This would be complemented by a booklet highlighting the themes of Northern Tutchone Homeland, the Seasonal Round, and Trade and Travel. This booklet might also include oral and natural history stories.

A booklet with photographs and stories about the historic resources would complement the self-guided brochure with additional information.

There was also some interest expressed in creating a book similar to *Gold and Galena*, by the Mayo Historical Society. An undertaking of this scale would add much information about the site but is a serious time and money commitment. Such a project should be considered as a long-term goal.

⁷ This has been completed. Greg Hare and Ruth Gotthardt, *A Look Back in Time: The Archaeology of Fort Selkirk* (Whitehorse, 1996).

6.1.3 Signage



There has been a clearly stated desire to keep outdoor signage unobtrusive and to a minimum. This is particularly important in the area of the townsite where the landscape is open and even small signs are noticeable. Signage in the historic site proper should be muted and discrete so as not to compete with the historic and cultural features. They should be low level and constructed from a vandal proof material such as porcelain enamel, cibachrome resin or aluminum etching.

We suggest three signs or sign groupings of this type be set up:

- *The Land* — located near the campground and facing the river and the basalt wall. This would orient the visitor to the landscape and interpret natural history stories about geology, the river environment and animals. A drawing of a profile map would effectively interpret landscape features.
- *Northern Tutchone History* — located near the Big Jonathan House. This would interpret the two themes, Northern Tutchone Homeland and Seasonal Round.
- *General Townsite History* — located in a central location such as by the flagpoles, this would interpret the themes of Trade & Travel, Power & Sovereignty and A Shared Community.

Other signage recommendations include:

- At some point, it would be desirable to replace the sign presently in front of the Anglican Church with something less obtrusive and more in keeping with the thematic outline.
- A reproduction of the canvas banner marking the Taylor & Drury Store would interpret the building's role in the Trade & Supply Centre story.
- The wooden routed signs, presently in front of many structures, should be replaced by discreet name plaques set unobtrusively on the outside of the building near ground level. We suggest bronze coloured metal plaques, no larger than 6" x 6" or 6" x 8", stating the name of the structure, the construction date (if known), and the date first stabilized. Further information on the buildings can be provided by interpreters, in the self-guiding brochure, in a future booklet, or in a display at the Visitor Centre.
- Simple low level wood routed signs would be appropriate to identify the Charlie Stone House as the Fort Selkirk Visitor Centre and the Big Jonathan House as the Selkirk First Nation Centre.
- There should be a change in tone of the signs between the historic site and the visitor reception areas. Signs at the boat landing and campground should be noticeable and welcoming. These can be larger scale, higher profile signs to attract attention to regulations and camping areas. By using signage standard to other territorial campgrounds,

the visitors will know when they are in the camping/visitor facility area and when they are in the historic site proper. These signs should not, however, interfere with the view of the townscape. The usual arrival point for visitors to the site is at the campground landing. Here a welcoming sign may be erected which is visible from the water. A wood routed sign with the name of the site compatible with other Territorial campgrounds would be suitable. Orientation signs should also be posted close to the landing site directing people to the campground and visitor centre. These can be simple and constructed in the same format as the welcoming sign.

- Simple routed signs could act as “pointers”, marking trailheads and indicating hard to find spots such as the Catholic Church.
- Regulatory signs will also be required. They should be in English, German and French and carry messages regarding:
 - Respect for the buildings, landscape & people (i.e. Selkirk First Nation people living and working on the site)
 - Respect for archaeological sites and artefacts
 - Disposal of garbage
 - Camping and burning areas
 - WildlifeThese messages should be repeated at trailheads and other access points to the site.
- A sign at the First Nations cemetery could list known burial sites with a message requesting respect for the site — there should not be directional signs encouraging unguided visitation. This could be done for the Yukon Field Force cemetery as well.
- Regulatory signs should differ from the welcoming and directional signage and from interpretive signage either by colour and/or design. They should be attractive and eye-catching, without being overly obtrusive.

6.1.4. Stone House Visitor Centre



The site should have a building where visitors can get oriented, find information and displays, get messages about programming from the bulletin board, and find the site interpreter.

In accordance with the Preservation Plan, not all buildings are appropriate for this purpose by reason of fragility or historic importance. The Stone House and the Big Jonathan House are both appropriate venues for interpretive displays and programming. As the Stone House is nearest the campground and canoe landing, it is the best facility for a site-orientation and information centre. Also, since it is nearest the work camp, it has the easiest access to maintenance equipment and electricity for audio/visual presentations.

We suggest that since the Stone House will likely not be sufficient to house all interpretive material in the future, that the Big Jonathan House be considered as site for a Selkirk First Nation Centre. It could retain its function as a gathering place and also be a site to view cultural material

related to Northern Tutchone history and culture.

6.1.5 Artefacts



When Selkirk people moved from the townsite in the late 1940s and early 1950s, they left many of their belongings behind in their houses and their doors unlocked. By the time the Government of the Yukon became involved in preservation work at Fort Selkirk in the late 1970s, many of these items had disappeared. Nonetheless, there are still many artefacts left at the site – a potentially valuable resource for interpretation.

Since 1980, there have been a number of efforts to collect artefacts at the site. These have ranged from collections of furniture and other items associated with the buildings to those collected from more formal archaeological excavations undertaken in connection with building stabilizations and prehistoric sites. Artefacts at the site range from very small (microblades, beads, square cut nails) to very large (Alex Coward's Model T truck and, indeed, the buildings themselves).

Most artefacts are located either in the Stone Shed (Bldg. #33) or dispersed about the site. In accordance with requirements of the Yukon-Canada Archaeological Sites Permit regulations, all prehistoric artefacts found at Fort Selkirk must be deposited with the Archaeological Survey of Canada (Canadian Museum of Civilization). Cast replicas have been made of a number of these artefacts and many prehistoric items have been retained in the Yukon on a loan basis. There are lists available for most of the artefact collections.

While the collection of artefacts raises a number of important considerations (cataloguing, proper storage conditions, cleaning, research for off-site artefacts, etc.), in this plan we are most concerned with the use of artefacts as part of an overall approach to interpretation. There is much potential to illuminate our stories with objects. Below are listed some ways in which artefacts can be used for on and off-site interpretation. As well, we discuss some general principles that must be kept in mind in order to protect and preserve the artefacts. Artefacts should be stored securely during off-season, either on or off site. Diana Komejan, the conservator with Heritage Branch, has offered her expertise to discuss the best ways to conserve and display artefacts in any future interpretive use of artefacts at the townsite.⁸ Interpreters can assist in care of artefacts and in ongoing attempts to repatriate artefacts to the site. The most important considerations in artefact use must be the security and conservation of the objects.

Displays - In Cases

Display cases could house smaller items to illustrate stories such as traditional technologies and trade items. This could include actual artefacts from the site as well as casts of prehistoric items. As well, elders and other members of the Selkirk First Nation could make replicas of traditional items such as snares, fish traps, beaded mooseskin clothing, etc.

Before display cases are constructed, it should be determined what storylines the display will illustrate and which artefacts should be used. The selection of artefacts would be based on the condition of

⁸ In 2003, Valery Monahan, the current conservator with Heritage Resources, and Siegfried Rempel of the Canadian Conservation Institute inspected the site and made recommendations on artifact care and storage at the site (Fort Selkirk Management Group Minutes, 20 August 2003).

the artefact itself, what conservation work might be required, and any special display requirements such as supports or stands. The size and design of the cases would be determined by the sizes and types of artefacts selected, as well as the location of the display. Cases should be constructed of marguard, an unbreakable glass and plastic compound, with hidden locks. Metal framing may also be used to further discourage access to the case. Another design consideration in designing cases would be the security of the artefacts in the off-season, whether the artefacts should be stored off site or in a central secure location.

Smaller portable cases with casts of prehistoric objects might be suitable for off-site interpretation in places such as schools.

Wall Displays

While any interior displays would most appropriately feature items such as reproductions of historic photographs and maps, there are a few paper artefacts appropriate for display.

For example, the two-sided posters from the school could be either framed or sandwiched between sheets of lexan secured by Swiss clips. Care should be taken, however, that they are not hung in direct sunlight, which would cause the paper to fade.

Artefact Use for Interior Restorations (see Item 6.1.8. Interior Restorations)

Outdoor Artefacts

The most obvious item in this category is the Model T truck, once used by Alex Coward to haul wood. There are several historic photos of this vehicle in action and it is an excellent illustration of transportation at Selkirk. Unfortunately, the truck is slowly rotting into the ground. Unless measures are taken to give it some basic protection, there will eventually be nothing left to interpret. In this case, protection can be as simple as moving it into the garage (Bldg. #15) and setting it on blocks or if it is too fragile to move, building a shelter over it.

Conclusion

Artefacts are a most effective means to tell a story. Objects that people have handled and used in the past can be wonderful interpretive tools to evoke a sense of that past. Artefacts can be displayed in a variety of contexts from a small case in a building to a complete interior restoration. Replicas of artefacts that can be handled and passed around are useful props in an interpretive talk.

The final selection of storylines and the means of interpreting them will act as a guideline for the artefacts that could be displayed. The conservation and protection of the artefact must be a paramount consideration in any such use. It is strongly recommended that a conservator be consulted to determine which artefacts are most suitable for display, as well as provide direction for preservation/conservation measures and maintenance.

6.1.6 Displays



Displays, whether they be of artefacts, photographs or other interpretive items would best housed in limited locations where the interpreter could offer security and information.

Site orientation could be offered by displaying a plan of the townsite and its immediate vicinity, as well as a large-scale map of the area. This latter map should include features such as Pelly Farm, Volcano Mountain, Selkirk Cinder Cone, other landscape and historic features, and historic trails and travel routes. Names on the map should be in Northern Tutchone with English names underneath in a smaller typeface.

Displays interpreting particular themes could be housed in other structures (e.g. First Nations culture in the Big Jonathan House, police history in the RCMP Detachment) but again, security should be a major consideration.⁹

6.1.7 Videos & Slide Shows



Videos and slides are very effective tools to convey visual interpretive messages. Watching views of historic Fort Selkirk can be a wonderful way to spend a rainy evening. Factors that should be considered when deciding to use videos is the cost of the equipment including a small generator, what videos are available and what might be produced for the site, and limiting the hours at which videos are shown so as not to disturb campers. Equipment can be powered by generator or solar power, or else a 12 volt system with rechargeable batteries can be purchased.

A fascinating interpretive resource is the collection of films of G.I. Cameron, shot at the site in the late 1930s and 1940s. Scenes such as sternwheelers on the river, people heading out for the trapline by dog team, and the arrival of the winter mail plane give a strong sense of Fort Selkirk as a dynamic, living community. These films are now available on video and Yukon Archives holds audiotapes of Mr. Cameron describing the scenes. The films stand alone in their present format or, with some editing, could convey specific messages (e.g. What is Fort Selkirk like in winter?). There are a number of films taken by Kathleen (Martin) Coward at Fort Selkirk, and apparently the Wilkinson collection at Yukon Archives contains films of the area. These latter two collections would have to be reviewed for quality and content.

Neda'a has prepared a video called "Digging Up Yukon's Past." This film describes archaeological projects around the Yukon in which First Nations elders and students work with archaeologists to learn more of their past. This includes scenes of the work at Fort Selkirk, There is video footage of elders doing demonstrations during archaeological work on the site. Apparently Neda'a also has video footage taken at Fort Selkirk. More research has to be done to determine if there is other

⁹ Displays have been set up in both the Big Jonathan House and the Stone House using artifacts and historic photographs.

video material suitable for Fort Selkirk.

Slide shows could highlight preservation and archaeological work on the site. This could also be an opportunity to show historic views of the townsite at different periods in its history. Slide shows can be transferred to video or disk to limit the required equipment.¹⁰

6.1.8 Interior Restoration



The 1992 Preservation Plan identifies six buildings as being suitable for interior restoration.

These structures are:

Frank Blanchard Cabin (#2)	RCMP detachment/Cameron Home (#20)
Stan Jonathan Cabin (#6)	Armstrong Cabin (#31)
Andrew Baum Cabin (#13)	School (#28)

The use of partial or full restoration can be a powerful interpretive tool. Seeing the period furnishings, utensils and decorations of a building gives the visitor strong impressions about the people who lived in the structure and their way of life. One building in Fort Selkirk has already been partially restored. St. Andrew's Anglican Church houses replicas of the original altar and pews, as well as the original wood stove, contributing greatly to the atmosphere of a house of worship. Cemetery markers, fences and grave houses have been and are continuing to be restored or replaced by Selkirk First Nation members.

Restoration can be a relatively expensive alternative, however. Much research is required to determine and accurately replicate finishes such as wall coverings and paint colours. If furnishings or other household objects are too fragile or damaged for display, they may have to be replicated or suitable duplicates found. If there are few suitable objects available for display in a building, decisions have to be made about the appropriate level of restoration, perhaps supplemented with an interior display.

In making these decisions, a few important guidelines should be followed. If items need to be repaired, the repairs should be obvious. For example, if a table needs a new leg, the new piece should not be exactly like the other three with a paint job to match. Otherwise, the public is being fooled about the authenticity of the item. Metal items may require a protective coating. When using paper or textile items, one should be aware that very few of the buildings at Fort Selkirk are mouse proof.

The most important consideration in undertaking restoration is the security of the artefacts. If a

¹⁰ In 1998, Midnight Arts and A/V Action collaborated to write and produce a 26 minute long video called "Fort Selkirk: Voices of the Past." This was prepared for the Selkirk Development Corporation; Yukon Government, Heritage Resources; and the Department of Education. The video is being shown at both Fort Selkirk and at the Big Jonathan House in Pelly Crossing.

building is partially or fully restored, it will be necessary to place restrictions on public access and use. This can be as simple as tying a rope across the arms of a chair to prevent people sitting on it, or as extreme as sealing off a room by putting Plexiglas in the doorway.

Should the Management Group determine that restoration is an appropriate option for site interpretation, two good candidates for interpretation would be the Frank Blanchard cabin and the Cameron family cabin. The Blanchard Cabin retains many of its built-in furnishings and is a good illustration of a compact trapper's cabin, simple to build and easy to heat. The Cameron Cabin is a good candidate in that it should be possible to obtain information about the interior of the building from the family. This building illustrates both non-native family life at Fort Selkirk and police history at the site, an important consideration in light of the upcoming RCMP anniversary.

6.1.9 Photo Albums¹¹



This particular method has proven to be a very successful means of interpretation with site visitors, workers, elders and other members of the Selkirk First Nation. Photo albums can be particularly effective if organized in telling the stories of Fort Selkirk Families and Community Life and illustrating the townsite at different periods in its history. Albums should illustrate particular themes or stories with minimal text. Site copies should be available at the Stone House Visitor Centre during the tourist season and kept at Eliza Van Bibber School in Pelly Crossing in off-season.

6.1.10 Special Events

This includes special events or celebrations, such as salmon bakes and dances that might be held at the site in summer. These would be special opportunities to for an interpretive social experience as well as a potential economic opportunity. If possible, such events should be promoted well in advance to allow visitors and local people to plan their site visit accordingly. This type of project could be initiated on a pilot basis and later extended if successful.

6.1.11 Ecomuseum

Ecomuseum is a term used to describe a living site, an historic site enriched by the presence of people living and working there. Over the years, many people have expressed the desire that Fort Selkirk become more of a living community, with Selkirk First Nation members periodically spending time at the site. Within the context of the Interpretation Plan, this is referred to as an ecomuseum –carrying out regular community activities in the context of an historic site. Selkirk First Nation families, spending time at Fort Selkirk in summer, could bring to life their traditional area at the east end of town. Living at the site and carrying out activities such as netting and drying fish, tanning hides, and constructing skin clothing would fulfill a number of goals. It would educate younger people to a traditional way of life, interpret First Nations culture to visitors, and rekindle Selkirk as a living community.

¹¹ Photo albums have become an important interpretive tool at Fort Selkirk for both visitors and Pelly Crossing residents. The collection of over 500 Fort Selkirk photos held by Heritage Resources have been digitized and put on a database where they are available for a variety of interpretive purposes.

To implement this goal, a number of factors would have to be examined. What should be the regulations governing site use? What impression do we want to create and would generators and boom boxes fit into this image? Should traditional lifestyles be all that is allowed? What about accommodation? Short-term possibilities might include erecting a few wall tent frames or inhabiting those cabins identified in the Preservation Plan as suitable for reuse and re-occupation. Long-term options might include building a few compatible log cabins in the area.

6.2 OFF-SITE INTERPRETATION

The main targets for off-site interpretation are visitors seeking an off-road experience and those people, including students, who are particularly interested in Yukon culture.

The approach used to reach these target audiences differs slightly. For the former group, more emphasis should be placed on promotion. For the latter, interpretive material may be strictly informational. It should be emphasized, however, that Fort Selkirk is being promoted as a site where cultural study may take place. In this light, educational messages should also promote Fort Selkirk as an educational place to visit. It is also hoped, of course, that visitors who come seeking an off-road experience are also looking for knowledge and enlightenment.

For both groups then, the messages delivered off-site should convey that Fort Selkirk is a:

- place to learn about Northern Tutchone culture,
- wilderness and heritage site to visit, for an afternoon or a few days,
- unique opportunity to learn about a pre- and post gold rush townsite.

6.2.1 Visitor Reception Centres

There are various Visitor Reception Centres (VRCs) in the Yukon, located at entry points into the territory. These serve to orient visitors to the Yukon and all of them carry general interest items such as maps and brochures. There are often exhibits or displays specific to the vicinity of the VRC. For example, there is the Alaska Highway display in Watson Lake, the Carcross/Southern Lakes in Carcross and the recreated NTTC store in Dawson City.

The VRCs provide an opportunity to promote Fort Selkirk through brochures, booklets or posters. All of these centres have video capabilities as well and Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Dawson have well-appointed theatres. In addition to printed material, there is a chance to present a promotional/informational film to visitors. This would have to fit in with Tourism programming for individual VRCs.

A second type of facility is the information kiosk such as that for the Silver Trail located at Stewart Crossing. These are smaller-scaled facilities that may be staffed and feature display signs and brochures about local attractions.

6.2.2 Publications & Mass Media

When using mass media such as videos, radio and television programming, print media, etc., it has to be determined whether the purpose is off-site interpretation, site information (facilities available and how to get there), or site promotion. For information about publications and their uses, refer

to section 6.1.2. Some discussion has been made of videos as an interpretive tool in section 6.1.7. Such video material would be equally suitable for off-site interpretation.

While most agree it is desirable to make Fort Selkirk known to more potential visitors, we recommend that this be done on a limited basis until on-site interpretation is better established and site security is assured.

6.2.3 Highway Signs & Displays



Signage would be most appropriate at access points to Fort Selkirk, namely Pelly and Minto. These would make the most sense if there were an opportunity to go visit the site from that point. For example, while there is an active boat tour operation running out of Minto Resort, it would be a good place to have signage or an interpretive display about Fort Selkirk and life along the rivers.

Even if people are unable to visit Fort Selkirk, the site is sufficiently significant in Yukon history that it merits some off site interpretation. At present, there are four attractive signs by the highway at Pelly Crossing, which tell the story of the Northern Tutchone people and the significance of Fort Selkirk in their history. They are not placed in the best site to attract visitors. Visitors might be drawn to the signs if point of interest markers were erected on the highway. Tourism Development would do this at the request of the Selkirk First Nation. It has also been suggested that setting up picnic tables would make the site more attractive. Another alternative would be interpretive signs in Pelly Crossing campground or an information kiosk containing site and programming information on Fort Selkirk.

A smaller sign display could also be considered for Minto as it acts as one of the main access points for Fort Selkirk at present. Tourism is willing to fund such a sign on private property with the agreement of the campground operator and the Selkirk First Nation. Any highway signage would have to conform to the Department of Highways regulations for signage and pull-offs if constructed on the right of way.

Highway signage would also include directional signage to the interpretive signs. In future, when interpretive programs and access are better established, the Selkirk First Nation may wish to put up a promotional sign for Fort Selkirk at Pelly Crossing.

6.2.4 Schools: Curricula & Programs

Eliza Van Bibber School

The social studies curriculum provides a number of opportunities for the students of Eliza Van Bibber School to study Fort Selkirk. The social studies curricula for grades 1 to 5 are community based (grade 1: families, grade 2: communities, grade 3 : interaction of communities, grade 4: Yukon First Nations and grade 5: Canada — Past, Present & Future). As much as possible, the school uses local people and resources in teaching.

Students at Eliza Van Bibber School are presently preparing a two-day lesson plan for activities at the site. There is a strong interest in taking students from all grades to Fort Selkirk.

This plan recommends that certain interpretive materials (e.g. photo albums, replicas) that are used at Fort Selkirk in the summer could be used at the school during the rest of the year. The students could use these as learning materials and, in the case of the albums, perhaps add to the information about the photographs and even get family photos copied to contribute to the Fort Selkirk stories.

In the past the band office was given replicas of archaeological tools and slides of the work at Fort Selkirk. Perhaps these materials could be loaned to the school for use in education programs.

Other projects that the school could undertake include: preparing genealogies and family histories of Fort Selkirk families, tracing family trade and travel routes in the area, making models of the site, creating displays and dramatizing incidents for the Selkirk First Nation history, which could later be enacted at the site. We recommend that elders and community members work with the school to develop teaching units.

Yukon-wide Schools

The grade three and grade four social studies curricula include components of the elementary school curriculum related to Fort Selkirk.

The *Exploration* social studies program for grade three addresses three Yukon communities: Fort Selkirk, Dawson City and Whitehorse. While there is some written information available on Fort Selkirk, there is a need for other materials and information. Many Yukon students do not understand that there were non-native communities before the Klondike Gold Rush. A classroom kit on Fort Selkirk containing replicas, photographs and other materials would be helpful for teachers.

The grade 4 social studies program entitled *Early Yukon Cultures* helps students look at a number of elements of First Nations culture. Many of the interpretive themes identified in the Interpretation Plan relate to units in the grade four program (e.g. food, clothing, trade and travel). Some of the stories in the *Fort Selkirk Interpretation Plan* thematic outline dovetail with the education units now being promoted by CYT (*The Art of Clothing, Trees and Forests, Plants as Food and Medicines*). The interpretive materials (e.g. sign texts, brochures, videos) that will be developed for Fort Selkirk would be excellent resources for Yukon teachers. The information should be passed on to Yukon schools. In grade four social studies, Yukon students learn about First Nations cultures from other parts of Canada and often confuse southern First Nations cultures (e.g. Haida) with Yukon First Nations cultures. Materials about the Selkirk First Nation could assist teachers in teaching students about Yukon First Nations cultures.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementation should take place in logical phases similar to the “Build on What’s There Now” approach recommended in the *Fort Selkirk Management Plan*. Each element of the plan should be well established and found to be working well before going on to the next stage. Pilot programs and evaluation would be important tools in this process.

The *Interpretive Implementation Summary* charts on the following pages show how we propose to present this information. This will show planners at a glance the various interpretive methods available, the target audience, the purpose or objective in using that method, approximate cost, and the order of priority.

It should be stressed that the priorities are suggestions only, excepting the items identified as number 1. These are the basics necessary to get the interpretation program going. Otherwise, if the funding and desire are there, a third or fourth priority item can be moved up. For example, if funding was available to erect a sign at Minto, this task could take a higher priority. On the other hand, planners might wish to take a year or two to decide exactly which stories and information would be best presented at Minto.

Note: Since this document was originally prepared, many of the tasks listed in the following tables have either been accomplished or, for various reasons, are no longer relevant. In this 2004 edition, the numbers in the final column have been erased (Schedule/Priority) and check marks inserted to show the various items that have been accomplished

key to icons



VISITOR CENTRE



SIGNAGE, ON-SITE, OUTDOOR



SIGNAGE, ON-SITE, DIRECTIONAL



SIGNAGE, OFF-SITE



MAPS



BROCHURES,
INFORMATION SHEETS



BOOKLETS



INTERPRETER TALKS



FIRST NATION CENTRE



DEMONSTRATIONS



VIDEO, SLIDE SHOW



WALKS, SELF-GUIDED



WALKS, GUIDED



PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM



DISPLAY







ARTEFACT, SPECIMEN,
REPLICA, FURNITURE





RESTORATION

INTERPRETTIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY


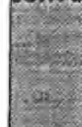







Interpretive Method	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule Priority
	Visitor Centre	Stone House	Adapt building for use as a VC. eg. secure & protect building, install facilities for interpretation, orientation and on-site admin.	Counter, desk, chairs, benches, filing cabinet, locks, misc. \$3,000	✓
	Site Library	Stone House	more detailed Interpretive material for tourists & interpreters. Ongoing	Book purchase, binders, copying \$1,200	✓
	Bulletin Board	Stone House	announcing Interpretive events, acts as a message board for travellers	Cork board \$50	✓
	First Nation Centre	Big Jonathan House	Selkirk First Nation gathering hall, interpretation centre for First Nations cultural material	Table, work bench chairs, benches, misc. \$2,500	✓
	Interpreter	on site	Have 2 interpreters on site, establish talk locations, monitor trails, set up program, gather demo. materials	2 @ \$15 hr 40hr. wk X 12 weeks \$14,400	✓
	Elder Visit Program	on site	beginning with pilot program, Elders to interact with Selkirk First Nation youth and visitors, storytelling, demos.	4-8 elder days X \$100. supt \$30 \$520 - 1040	✓
	Story Gathering	on site/off site	ongoing - interpreters make notes of elder stories and collect other material to add to store of knowledge on site	N/A	
	Interpreter Training	on site/off site	develop skills for effective program delivery	2 to attend workshop in Whitehorse \$2,000	✓
	Self-Guiding Townsite Tour Pamphlet	on site	Bird's eye map of townsite. Building identification & brief background. N. Tutchone History, Townsite history, Community Life, Preservation/Management.	writing, design, layout, printing 5000 copies \$8,000	✓
	German Translation			translation, layout \$1,000	
	Info. Card	VRCs	To increase tourist awareness. Explain how to get there	writing, design, layout, printing 5000 copies \$2,500	✓
	Poster/ Pamphlet	on site/off site	once there are programs, acts as a promotional vehicle. Colour photos, general history, events, transport.	writing, design, layout, printing 5000 copies \$8,000	

INTERPRETIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY




Interpretive Method	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule/Priority	
	Structure Plaques	Unobtrusive, on exterior of each bldg. & structure.	Identification giving bldg. name, date erected & date first stabilized. Small, etched metal, bronze colour.	30 buildings, \$150 plaque \$4,500	✓	
	The Land	riverbank near campground	landscape orientation natural history stories: geology, river environment, animals	enamelled metal, 28x40, writing, design, layout \$4,000	✓	
	Northern Tutchone History	near Big Jonathan House	Interpret Northern Tutchone Homeland & Seasonal Round	enamelled metal, 28x40, writing, design, layout \$4,000	✓	
	General Townsite History	near flagpoles	Interpret Trade & Travel, Power & Sovereignty and Shared Community	enamelled metal, 28x40, writing, design, layout \$4,000	✓	
	Yukon Field Force	existing at north end of YFF parade square	Interpret Power & Sovereignty focussing on the Yukon Field Force	N/A	✓	
	Missionaries	replacement of existing sign before Anglican Church	Interpret Missionaries story	enamelled metal, 28x40, writing, design, layout \$4,000	✓	
	T&D Store Sign	front of T&D Store	reproduction of historical canvas banner, to identify and interpret Trade & Supply Centre	materials, printing \$400	✓	
		Welcome to Fort Selkirk	campground visible from the river	orientation for river travellers - "this is Fort Selkirk & here's the campgrd."	Complete	✓
		Visitor Centre	In front of Stone House (unobtrusive, wood routed)	Identification of Stone House as Visitor Centre	sandblasted wood #350	✓
		"The Rules"	campground	English, German, French with cautions re: garbage, fires, bears, respect of buildings, graves & archaeological sites	metal \$1,500	
Pointers		Campground Landing	Direct visitors to VC, Campground, drinking water.	\$1,000	✓	
	Yukon Field Force Cemetery	south of parade square indicating cemetery trail	directional sign	sandblasted wood #350	✓	

INTERPRETIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Interpretive Method



	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule/ Priority
	Trailhead Markers	start of Victoria Rock, Swinehart Farm & Victoria Mt. Trails	Directional signs giving destination, trail length & estimated walking time.	routed wood \$200	
	St. Francis Xavier R.C. Church	trailhead west of Stone House	replacement of directional sign indicating trail to church west of Stone Hse.	routed wood \$200	✓
	First Nation Centre	Big Jonathan	Identification of Big Jonathan House as an interpretation centre	sandblasted wood \$350	✓
	First Nations Cemetery	trailhead behind Catholic Church	Remind visitors to respect the sacred nature of the site	sandblasted wood \$500	
	Pelly Crossing Interpretive Signs	Pelly Crossing Existing	Interprets Northern Tutchone Homeland, Seasonal Round. Hand to spot, needs pointer sign(s).	N/A	N/A
	Pelly Crossing Pointer Signs	North Klondike highway & near Pelly Crossing Store	to draw people to existing interpretive signs.	funded by Dept. of Tourism	
	Minto Access Interpretive Sign/Kiosk	Minto Campground	Interpretive/Promotional telling what is at Fort Selkirk, how to get there, some interpretive information.	enamelled metal, 28x40, writing, design, layout \$4,000	
	Minto Pointer Sign	highway before Minto campground	Indicating presence of point of interest stop at Minto campground	funded by Dept. of Tourism	
	Fort Selkirk promotional sign	Pelly Crossing	'Visit historic Fort Selkirk' - part of future promotional/marketing program	sandblasted wood \$1,000	

INTERPRETIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY





Interpretive Method	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule/Priority
	Townsite Plan	Stone House	Wall Maps for Orientation		
	Area Map	Stone House	Topographic Wall Maps for Orientation, including oblique aerial photos		✓
	Traditional Place Names	Big Jonathan House	Interpret Northern Tutchone Homeland: showing Traditional Territory, Place Names, Trade & Travel Routes		✓
	Landscape Profile	The Land sign on the riverbank	Orientation/Interpretation of Natural World themes		
	Traditional Tools	Big Jonathan House	To Interpret People Have Been Here A Long Time & show changes in traditional technology		✓
	Means of Travel & Shelter	Big Jonathan House	Photo Display		✓
	General History	Stone House	Interpret Trade & Travel, Power & Sovereignty, Shared Community		✓
	Trading Posts/Stores	T&D Store	Interpret Trade/Supply Centre		
	Medicine/Plants	Big Jonathan House	Photos and Display of Dried Plants to Interpret N. Tutchone use of plants		✓
	The Mission: Display/Restoration	School	Interpret Missionaries, Gatherings, Community Life		
	Police: Display/Restoration	Cameron Cabin	Interpret Police at Fort Selkirk, The Families		
	Interior Restoration	Frank Blanchard Cabin	Interpret Seasonal Round: shelter, The Families		

INTERPRETIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Interpretive Method

	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule/ Priority
	Digging Up Yukon's Past	Stone House	People Have Been Here A Long Time		
	Cameron Films	Stone House	Community Life, Police	30-40min. 20 copies \$8,500	
	Video Machine Set up	Stone House	To provide video presentations on various topics, Purchase Video Machine and small, quiet generator to run it	TV, VCR, generator \$2,000	✓
	Preservation at Ft. Selkirk	Stone House	Slide Show Preserving/Managing Ft. Selkirk		
	Other Audio/Visual Material	Stone House	Research &/or develop other video presentations related to the site or relevant themes		✓
	Casts of Stone Tools	Big Jonathan	People Have Been Here A Long Time		✓
	Replicas from HBC Site	Stone House	HBC/Mingit Rivalry Trading Partners		
	Traditional Technology artefacts & reproductions	Big Jonathan	Seasonal Round		✓
	Specimens of Traditional Trade Goods	Big Jonathan	To interpret Trade & Travel through typical trade goods such as Dentalia, eulachon oil, tanned hides, etc.		

INTERPRETTIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

Interpretive Method	Name	Location	Purpose	Estimated Cost	Schedule/ Priority
	Benches	throughout townsite	provide a resting and viewing area for visitors & elders		
	Boardwalks	Where originally Located	Interpret period landscape & protect ground cover		
	Fences	Around the School & Mission House	Interpret period landscape, Different Lives/One Community		✓
	Demonstrations		Dependent on programs established by interpreters and elders		

8.0 EVALUATION OF INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND MEDIA

The development and implementation of interpretive programs at Fort Selkirk are only the first steps in an overall interpretation plan. Evaluation must be built into the plan to verify that interpretation methods are reaching the right audience and that the messages are being clearly communicated. Evaluation is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. Interpreters are constantly learning more about the site, the audience, and how to best reach them. Evaluation is the tool that shows them what works best and how to improve their skills.

Evaluation should be ongoing. Evaluation for all forms of interpretive media should occur before final implementation of any mode (known as *formative evaluation*). This evaluation can be used to assess a number of things. For example: is the information of interest to visitors and can they understand it clearly, is the format of the sign, brochure or display assisting with effective communication, is the material in a suitable location for visitors? By testing out expensive interpretive media before final implementation, expenditures will be more cost effective.

Evaluation should occur again after implementation of interpretive media and programs (known as *summative evaluation*). This will provide information for any future changes or additions of interpretive media and will allow for ongoing modification of programs,

If visitors have concerns or problems with any forms of interpretation, or a lack of interpretation, they will likely tell the interpreters at Fort Selkirk. These comments should be recorded in a notebook and passed on to Heritage Branch/the Fort Selkirk Management Group. Serious and repetitive comments warrant review of any problematical interpretive media. Evaluation of interpretive programs will be ongoing allowing for modification of personal interpretation.

Recommendations for evaluating specific interpretive media are outlined below. The various evaluation exercises must be considered together in determining what the final format of interpretation will be for Fort Selkirk.

8.1 TO EVALUATE THE AUDIENCE

Evaluation of the visitors of audience at Fort Selkirk will provide more precise information regarding their motivation, length of stay, age groups, etc. One way to do this would be ensure that people sign the visitor register. This should have categories for the visitor's name, address, number in party, method of travel and length of stay as well as a section for comments. Another method of audience evaluation would be to request some visitor information in any survey forms that are handed out on site. This might include questions about the visitor's age, whether they are travelling with a commercial tour or privately, their departure point, and destination.

8.2 TO EVALUATE INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION

There are numerous possibilities for interpretive stories at Fort Selkirk. This Interpretation Plan has condensed much of the available information into distinct themes and stories. It is generally known that visitors to Fort Selkirk are eager to learn about First Nations cultures. There are a numerous stories that address this part of Fort Selkirk's history. It is not known, however,

specifically what aspects of First Nations culture that visitors are interested in. In order to write signs, brochures and design displays and programs it is important to determine the particular interests of visitors regarding First Nations cultures and balance this with the priorities of the Selkirk First Nation.

We recommended that visitors to Fort Selkirk be asked to complete a simple survey form to determine what they are particularly interested in. The survey should be presented to as wide a cross-section of people as possible and contain a few questions about the visitors themselves (length of stay, number in party, etc.). A simple one-page questionnaire should be developed by Heritage Branch with the assistance of the Development Branch of the Department of Tourism. The assistant development officer of the Development Branch is experienced in developing questionnaires for historical associations. During the survey, visitors should be informed about how important their feedback is in developing interpretation on the site. The survey should be short and easy to fill out so that visitors do not feel encumbered by it. The Fort Selkirk interpreters could carry out the survey over the summer.

Types of questions could include:

- What aspects of First Nations culture at Fort Selkirk are you interested in learning about: traditional and/or contemporary lifestyles, methods of travel, food gathering, societal structure?
- Would you be interested in purchasing a booklet about the Selkirk First Nation?
- How would you prefer to have the information presented to you: rate the following from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred), interpretive talks, interpreter led walks, pamphlets, map of site with written information, signs, displays in the Stone House, demonstrations, restored buildings.
- What aspects of natural history are you interested in learning about: birds, caribou, geology, river environment?

The evaluation of programs and interpretive media will also provide information about what stories visitors to Fort Selkirk are most interested in.

8.3 TO EVALUATE BROCHURES/PAMPHLETS

Many of the interpretive stories could be presented in brochure or pamphlet format. The survey mentioned above will determine to what extent site visitors are interested in obtaining written information about Fort Selkirk. A preliminary site brochure could be developed to determine if the extent or depth of information is suitable for visitors. This brochure could simply be a photocopy of a draft site brochure. The interpreters can ask visitors for feedback on the brochure when visitors return it to the Stone House.

8.4 TO EVALUATE SIGNAGE AND DISPLAYS

Mock signage and displays (i.e. text typed on paper with accompanying graphics and artefacts) can be presented to visitors for their comments. These could be set up at the Stone House. This type of evaluation is particularly valuable for insuring the effectiveness of costly and more permanent interpretive media. The signs and displays have been designated as a level two or three priority which allows for a season or two to test these.

8.5 TO EVALUATE PROGRAMS AND INTERPRETERS

The use of formal interpretive programs is new for Fort Selkirk. The whole approach should be evaluated as the project develops. The next two seasons of interpretive programs should be viewed as test pilots for determining what programs can be done at Fort Selkirk. What the interpreters can accomplish, what visitors want to learn about and what methods are most effective, should all be considered. In time, certain types of programs will emerge as being best suited to the site and to the visitors to Fort Selkirk. This can be evaluated in four ways: through the survey, by the on-site interpreters, by another professional interpreter and later by another survey (for summative evaluation).

Interpretive programs are dynamic and thus should be continually evaluated and modified by the interpreter. The programs should also be evaluated by someone other than the interpreter delivering the program as should the interpreter's presentation. This is best done by an experienced interpreter. Until there is a Fort Selkirk interpreter with several seasons of interpretation, it would enhance the professional delivery of interpretive programs to bring an experienced interpreter on-site to evaluate programs and to provide guidance and assistance. This should happen near the beginning of the season, but after the interpreters have had some experience delivering programs.

9.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Members of the Selkirk First Nation have expressed interest in establishing various economic development enterprises at Fort Selkirk. While this is not part of site interpretation, many of these proposed activities would fit in well with the overall Interpretation Plan.

Some suggestions for fundraising activities have included:

- setting up a small store or commissary where river travellers could stock up on basics. Many people are running short of supplies by the time they reach Fort Selkirk and as there is no longer a store at Stewart Island, this would fulfill a real need.
- selling locally made arts and crafts.
- selling samples of traditional food such as dried moose meat, dried salmon and berry preserves.
- selling tickets to special events such as salmon bakes & exhibitions of traditional dancing.
- selling booklets, books and posters on and off site featuring Selkirk First Nation and Fort Selkirk history. For example, if the Selkirk First Nation became involved in production of a book in partnership with a local publishing company, they could sell the product on and off site.

Preparing a Business Plan

One way to realistically fit these enterprises into overall site management would be to prepare a business plan. This can be an uncomplicated exercise that can provide perspective on the overall economic development opportunities.

Such a plan could answer a number of general and specific questions such as:

- What opportunities do you see?
- Who is your audience/market — information available from the interpretation plan — and what do they want/need?
- What are the short and long-term goals and expectations for an enterprise?
- What returns do you expect — enough to pay the salary one person on the site? enough to generate start-up funds for other projects?
- What would be needed in terms of resources to carry it out?
- What type of promotion/marketing might be required?
- Should tour operators contribute to the Fort Selkirk Interpretive Program? If so, they should receive sufficient notice to build this into their costs and advertising.

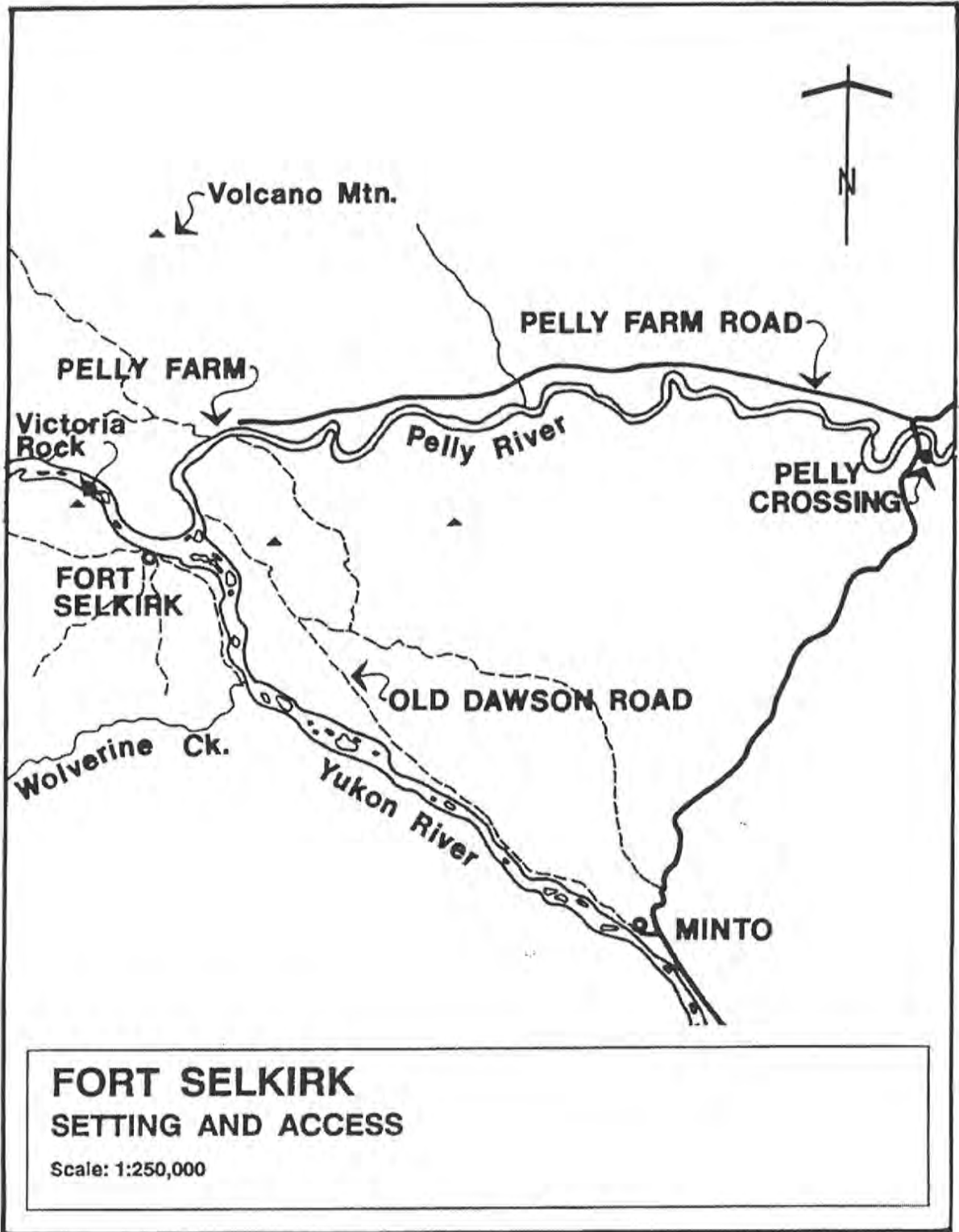
Expertise in preparing such a plan is available from federal and territorial economic development agencies.

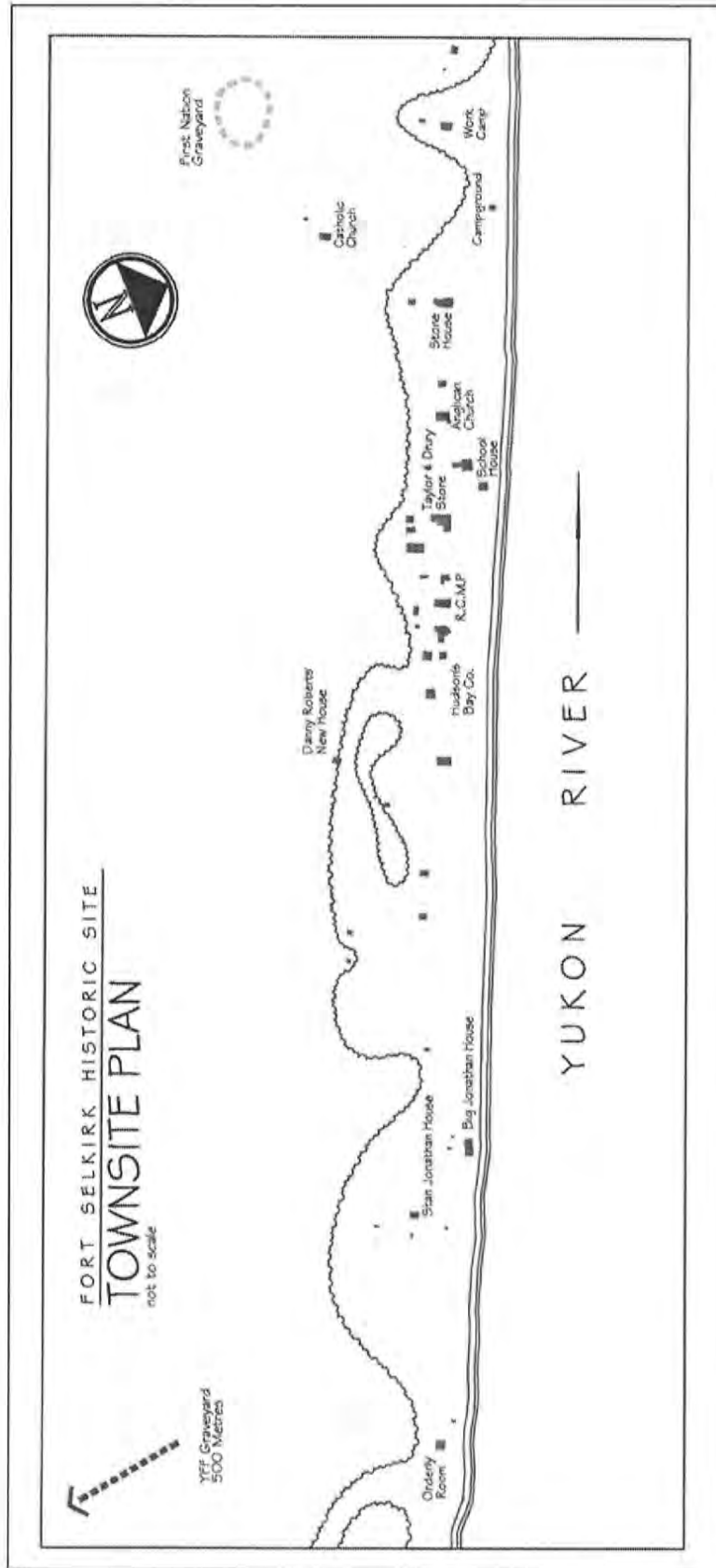
APPENDIX: MAPS

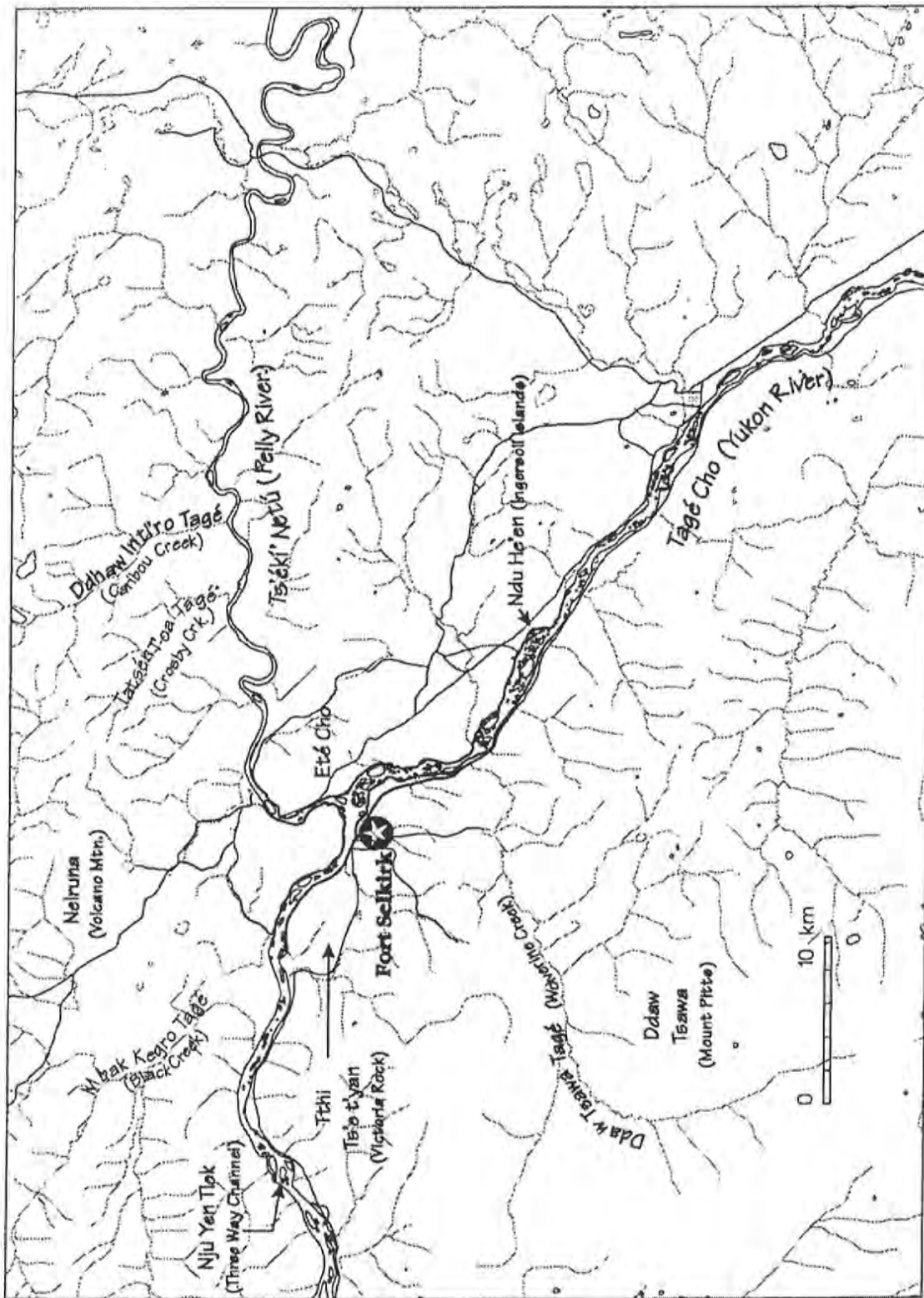
Fort Selkirk Setting & Access Map

Fort Selkirk Townsite Map

Sample Map of Northern Tutchone Place Names







Sample Map of Northern Tutchone Place Names

