

Yukon Tourism Advisory Board

Annual Reports 2020 and 2021





Message from the Chair

The past couple of years have been unlike any other and have been incredibly difficult for all of us, as we have witnessed the devastating impact that COVID-19 has had on businesses, colleagues and loved ones. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (“YTAB” or “the Board”) members in this unprecedented time. Despite our role being very different from what was originally envisioned, YTAB quickly pivoted to tackle the challenges imposed on Yukon’s tourism industry by the COVID-19 pandemic. The insights and strategic advice provided to the Minister were vital in helping guide the Government of Yukon’s response to the impacts of COVID-19, to share industry’s plight with Cabinet colleagues and the federal Minister of Tourism.

Despite everything our industry and government have done to keep businesses open, people employed and communities safe, we know that coming out of this our industry will look different. As businesses prepare to suffer the impacts of another pandemic-slowed summer season, our focus needs to remain on business relief.

Through our continued outreach and advocacy, the Board will continue to collect intelligence from Yukon’s tourism industry and explore best practises from other jurisdictions. This approach will ensure that the advice and recommendations made to the Minister, will drive the development of policies and programs that provide meaningful and timely relief to Yukon’s beleaguered tourism sector in the short term. At the same time, the Board needs to pay attention to tourism infrastructure and human capital so that we are prepared to build back differently, and better.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the organizations and businesses from the Yukon tourism sector for the resolve they continue to show during this global crisis. They have put the health and safety of Yukon residents, visitors, and communities above their own interests, at great cost and sacrifice to themselves and their families. The leadership and selflessness being demonstrated by Yukon’s tourism industry is extraordinary.

As we look to the future with cautious optimism, the Board remains committed to serving our industry by contributing and guiding transition from relief to recovery.

Denny Kobayashi
Chair



About the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB)

The Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (“YTAB” or “the Board”) was established through the Governance Action Plan in the *Yukon Tourism Development Strategy – Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future. 2018-2028*. YTAB is established under the authority of the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

The inaugural Board members were appointed by the Minister of Tourism and Culture in March 2020. Board members are recruited through the Government of Yukon’s Boards and Committees process and are appointed to staggered three-year terms to help ensure Board continuity.

YTAB meets a minimum of four times per year. Additional meetings may be requested by the Minister or the Chair. Secretariat support for the Board is provided by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

Board composition

YTAB is comprised of nine members:

- Seven voting members, one of whom will be appointed as vice-chair;
- One non-voting independent chair; and
- One ex-officio member (Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture or their designate).

Of the seven-voting members:

- Three were selected to bring a tourism business perspective to the Board’s deliberations;
- Two were selected to bring a Yukon First Nations’ perspective
- One was selected to bring the perspective of Yukon’s cultural and/or heritage sectors;
- One was selected to bring the perspective of Yukon’s communities; and
- of the above voting members, one must also be able to bring a francophone perspective, and ideally one will bring a youth perspective.



Mandate

The duties and responsibilities of YTAB are outlined in a [Terms of Reference](#).

According to its mandate the YTAB performs the following functions:

- Advises the Minister on how to achieve industry-government alignment in the implementation of the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy (YTDS);
- Regularly reviews the YTDS to ensure that it remains relevant and takes into account the evolving nature of the industry locally, nationally, and internationally;
- Advises on the implementation of YTDS priorities and action plans and the achievement of the vision and goals of the YTDS;
- Advises on budget allocations specifically related to implementation of the YTDS;
- Advises on issues the Minister wishes the YTAB to consider; and
- Brings forward to the Minister strategic issues the YTAB deems important for achieving the goals of the YTDS.

Impacts of COVID-19

YTAB was conceptualized with a mandate to advise on the implementation of the YTDS and began meeting in March of 2020. Given the timing of their inaugural meeting and the sudden and dramatic impacts of COVID-19, the Minister asked the Board to shift their focus to deal with COVID-19 impacts on Yukon's tourism sector and what supports the industry would require to weather the pandemic. While the implementation of YTDS was important, the Board recognized that their immediate priority was industry support.

Strict quarantines, travel restrictions, and social distancing measures in early 2020 hit the travel and tourism industries particularly hard. While the Board was only required to meet a minimum four times per year, they met twelve times in their first year and played a lead role in the Government of Yukon's pandemic response.

Summary of Activities

March 2020 to March 2022

YTAB meeting dates:

- March 24, 2020
- March 31, 2020
- April 7, 2020
- April 21, 2020
- May 19, 2020
- June 5 and 8, 2020 – strategy meetings
- July 14, 2020
- August 20, 2020
- September 25, 2020
- November 26, 2020
- January 21, 2021
- February 18, 2021 – special meeting on Board administration
- March 24, 2021
- June 28, 2021
- September 21, 2021
- December 16, 2021 – special vision building session
- March 29, 2022

Over the past two years, YTAB was largely focused on response and relief and recovery support related to the restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board met a total of 17 times, primarily virtually rather than traditional in-person meetings, as they adjusted with the rest of the world to the “new normal”. They provided 39 recommendations to government to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the Yukon’s tourism sector and to help prepare it for recovery. Through a vision building session at the end of 2021 the Board prepared to identify the priorities ahead for the YTDS while the Yukon emerges and recovers from the pandemic.

Many recommendations pertaining to relief and recovery have been addressed with a combination of Yukon government and federal programs which continue to be developed and implemented. Below is more detail on key initiatives and programs.





Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan

In December 2020, the Yukon government released its **Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan**, a strategic and dynamic plan intended to inform and guide tourism sector relief and recovery through the pandemic. The Board worked diligently to provide recommendations and input to help shape a plan that would support the industry while keeping both Yukoners and visitors safe. The Board fully supported the plan as well as the YTDS as strategic cornerstones to lead the industry through the pandemic.

Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF)

The Board reviewed and unanimously supported the revised guidelines for TCMF for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The revisions addressed and mitigated the concerns raised by industry about the fund. We appreciated the opportunity to work with the department in the development and implementation of the revised guidelines.

Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS) Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS), Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplements, and ELEVATE Programs

These relief programs confirm the priority of the Government of Yukon to partner with industry to provide targeted, meaningful and relevant support to Yukon tourism operators and to Yukon's non-profit sector who provide a diverse array of visitor experiences that contribute to the exceptional reputation and Net Promoter Score that Yukon enjoys.

Feedback received confirmed that the guidelines for these programs are malleable and have been modified when required to accommodate and respond to rapidly changing and complex market dynamics that challenge Yukon's beleaguered tourism sector. This approach enhances the prospect of businesses 'keeping their doors open' into recovery and beyond.

Health and Safety YTDS Core Value

While health and safety have always been important within tourism, it has never been more important than once the impacts of COVID-19 became apparent. Yukon residents, communities, First Nations, and other governments expressed dire concern about the spread of COVID by non-resident Yukon travellers.

Additionally, the foremost consideration impacting travel decisions globally became the protocols and performance of the destination in protecting travellers from COVID-19 and any future pandemic. As such, the Board made a recommendation to the Minister to add a new core value to the YTDS to prioritize visitor and Yukon resident safety.

YTDS Implementation

In their first year the Board also examined the impacts of the pandemic's "new normal" on the implementation of the YTDS particularly in the areas of health and safety, and marketing. The addition of a new core value in the YTDS to prioritize visitor and Yukon resident safety was significant.

Integration with the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy (YTDS)

The Board was delighted to see the integration of the YTDS into the strategies of both government and NGO stakeholders. The department of Tourism and Culture's Creative and Cultural Industries Strategy presented at YTAB's November meeting, references and draws directly from the YTDS Values, Goals and select Action Plans. Presentations to YTAB of the tourism strategies from the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, and Association franco-yukonnaise all integrate the Values and select Action Plans drawn directly from the YTDS.

Yukon Sustainable Tourism Framework (YSTF)

One of the YTDS's three key goals is sustainable tourism development, to ensure a balance is struck between economic, socio-cultural and environmental values. To track progress on this goal, the YTDS called for the establishment of a framework that measures the sustainability of tourism development. The Board endorsed the development of a framework, which is modelled on the United Nations World Tourism Organization's **International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO) framework**. YTAB will serve as the official Local Working Group for the framework to: help ensure the framework elements are monitored consistently; to participate in the interpretation and sharing of the information found through an annual report; and to provide advice on practical applications of the findings.





Recommendations Delivered to the Minister of Tourism and Culture

Important to Note:

- Recommendations are made in the interest of the entire sector and honour the values of the YTDS.
- The Board endeavors to reach consensus on recommendations. It is recognized that the Board represents a diversity of perspectives and that, on occasion, its advice will not be unanimously endorsed by all members. Dissenting views will be recorded and presented to the Minister along with consensus recommendations.
- YTAB recommendations are provided to the Minister by the Chair in written correspondence. Depending on the recommendation, the Department is tasked with evaluating, researching, seeking any approvals and implementing as required based on consideration and direction by the Minister. Recommendations are not made public until reviewed by the Minister.



March 24, 2020

Provide immediate interim relief in the form of non-repayable contributions to businesses.

- Provide interim relief no later than April 30, 2020.
- Plan the relief effort into late 2021.
- Provide concise communications and timelines on the Yukon 'plan' for relief programs
- Enhance information and communications dissemination.
- Advocate or introduce a program that provides support to qualified business owners similar to what is being provided to regular employees (i.e. the EI program where business owners may not be eligible, support for business owners in quarantine
- Negotiate a property tax relief program with municipalities/communities.
- Advocate to have Canada require the national banks to provide meaningful business relief programs.
- Reduce Red Tape.

March 31, 2020

- Business Solvency and Liquidity should be the highest priority economic focus for the Yukon Government in support of the tourism industry.
- Launch 'Business Help Centres' in Whitehorse and Yukon Communities to assist businesses to navigate COVID-19 relief and recovery programs as they are announced.
- Engage YTAB to provide industry priorities to Tourism Yukon to aid their work in amending the criteria for the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

April 7, 2020

- Lobby the Federal government to amend the qualification criteria for the Canada Emergency Business Account:
 1. Include other forms of calculating wage/salary payments; and
 2. Lower the qualifying threshold for wages to \$20,000.
- Enhance the resources in the Department's Industry Services Unit to support businesses in awareness of programs available, sorting through qualification criteria, and preparing the application for relief and recovery programs offered by Canada and the Yukon.
- Temporarily waive the requirement for societies/NGOs to file their annual returns if they have regularly filed returns and been in good standing.

April 21, 2020

- Develop a Detailed Multi-Phased Reopening Plan for Yukon.
- Ensure that Relief/Recovery financial support programs include provisions that support and qualify tourism businesses that choose not to open in 2020.
- Place a high priority on parks, campgrounds, and outdoor recreation facilities and attractions in Yukon Phase 1 openings in early summer 2020.
- Reassign International Marketing and Media Relations human and financial resources to support the Reenergize phase and opening of tourism businesses and attractions that will focus on the Yukon and Domestic markets in BC and Alberta.
- Develop capital and human resources to provide business counseling/ advice to tourism businesses.
- Extend the Canada Emergency Response Benefit beyond 16 weeks with the flexibility to align with restrictions on opening directed by government.
- Emergency Business Account – enable other criteria to be used as the qualifying salary threshold, specifically reported payroll and earnings and contracts reported to provincial/territorial Workers Compensation Boards.
- Be prepared to extend Wage Subsidies beyond June 6, 2020.





May 19, 2020

- Establishing and announcing milestone dates in the Path Forward Plan is critical to enable industry planning and the decision to reopen.
- Develop a unique economic plan for Yukon's tourism sector.
- Engage YTAB early in the development of the Recover Phase of the Path Forward Plan.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate and partner with neighboring jurisdictions to promote inter-jurisdictional travel when cross border travel is approved.

June 5 & 8, 2020

- Add a new Value to the YTDS to prioritize visitor and Yukon resident safety.
- Revisit the economic goal of YTDS to better align with the realities of the impact of COVID-19.
- Initiate development of a Tourism Quality Assurance Program – at a minimum develop a COVID Safety Certification Program.
- Adapt tourism marketing to focus and respond to traveler priorities in the “New Normal”.
- Enhance integration of ‘One Government’ approach and decentralization.
- Undertake a review of the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund prior to the 2021 intake.
- Engage YTAB and/or Yukon's tourism industry in the review of Tourism Yukon's major marketing initiatives.
- Department to track all recommendations and action items from YTAB meetings.

August 20, 2020

- Engage Yukon's tourism industry in the development of the Recovery Plan activities.

September 25, 2020

In respect to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund:

1. Continue to provide enhanced funding to the TCMF during the COVID Relief and Recovery phases.
2. TCMF funding MUST require a business investment so that advertising purchase decisions are informed and strategic.
3. Remove the caps based on advertising type – let businesses decide where they will invest their marketing dollars.
4. Engage industry in undertaking a review of the TCMF program in 2021 in time for the 2022 TCMF intake.

January 21, 2021

- Relief Phase of the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan be extended until such time that travel restrictions have been relaxed and Yukon can welcome visitors back to the territory.
- Staged strategic investments should be made in industry readiness in terms of capacity, infrastructure, labor market/staffing, and sustainability.



Board Members

Independent Chair

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2023

Denny Kobayashi's professional career includes 20 years in the retail food industry, 10 years in the NGO sector, 15 years in the public sector, and most recently five years in an executive role with Northern Vision Development. In his time with the Government of Yukon, Denny was the Senior Manager of Global Marketing at the Department of Tourism and Culture and the Director of Business and Industry Development at the Department of Economic Development.

At the Department of Tourism and Culture, Denny served on regional, national, and international tourism-related committees including Destination Canada, Tourism North, Team Canada, State of Alaska Marketing Committee, Alaska Travel Industry Association, and Team Canada – 2010 Olympics. Denny holds a Master of Arts degree in Tourism Management, a graduate diploma in Destination Management, an undergraduate degree in Business Administration, a professional designation as a Certified Association Executive (CAE) and is an accredited member of the Economic Developers Association of Canada.



Denny Kobayashi

Vice-Chair and Cultural perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2023

Lisa Dewhurst is from southern British Columbia and is a member of the Nlaka'pamuk Nation of Merritt B.C. Her immediate roots are in the Interior Salish and Okanagan Nation, but also has ancestry tied to Mexico through her Great-Great Grandfather. For the past 30+ years Lisa has lived in the community of Teslin and was adopted into the Kukhhittan Clan (Raven Children). Her Tlingit name is Keis.ey, which refers to the time just before the dawn breaks.

For the past 12 years, Lisa has been a steward and a leader in the Indigenous cultural and tourism sectors, both in her community and the Yukon. For over 10 years, she was the Manager of the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre.

Lisa was a participant in establishing one of the leading cultural centers in the Yukon - the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre - and contributed to the development of the Yukon Tourism Development Strategy.



Lisa Dewhurst



Teena Dickson

Yukon First Nations perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2022

Teena Dickson has been actively involved with tourism and recreation for decades and has vast knowledge, experience and a keen understanding of why the North is a great place to live, work, play and visit.

Teena and her husband both come from large well known Indigenous families with many relations and 'cousins' throughout the North. They live a very active business life in tourism between their outfitting company-Dickson Outfitters Ltd. and Who What Where Tours. They also created the Yukon Guide School to support the outfitting industry. Teena's family businesses have been recognized over the years with territorial, national and international tourism awards including the Outfitter of the Year, Tourism Volunteer of the Year, Yukon Small Business of the Year, and Sustainable Tourism Business of the Year.

Teena has been involved on various tourism boards including the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon for over ten years and the Yukon Outfitters Association for over twenty years.

Currently, she is the Vice President of the Wilderness Tourism Association, Executive for Yukon First Nation Cultural Tourism Association and on various tourism-related committees for projects.

Tourism Business and francophone perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2022

Maxime Gouyou-Beauchamps grew up in Annecy, in the French Alps. Max has a Master's in Conservation Biology from the University of Paris XI. He has lived in Whitehorse since April 2011. Together with his wife they started the tourism company Terre Boréale in 2014 to share their passion and love for the northern wilderness with hikers and paddlers from all over the world. They have developed no less than 5 unique backpacking itineraries in the Yukon mountains.

In 2015, Max joined the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon (WTAY) board of directors and has been its treasurer ever since. He is committed to building a sustainable Yukon tourism industry and his vision is to make the Yukon a world leader in wilderness adventure tourism while preserving its Indigenous culture, its untouched spaces, and its wildlife.



Maxime Gouyou-Beauchamps

Tourism Business perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2024

Denise McHale has a degree in Kinesiology. She moved to the Yukon from Ontario in the mid 90's and has worked for the Yukon government with Health & Social Services as a Recreation Therapist, and Community Services as a Recreation Consultant and a Community Advisor.

In 2012, Denise and her husband left their government positions and purchased one of the largest tourism businesses in the Yukon, Caribou Crossing Trading Post, in Carcross. They now own several Yukon businesses. She brings the business lens of a tourism operator, a passion for sharing all things Yukon, as well as experience living and working in Yukon communities to her role on the YTAB board. Denise and her husband compete in the sport of adventure racing and have traveled the globe as part of an elite adventure racing team.



Denise McHale

Yukon communities' perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2022

June Hampton received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1965. June has been involved with the tourism sector in a variety of ways over the years. Her experience includes working in the food industry, organizing large events, volunteering at festivals, representing the Yukon at ITB in Germany and at Sports and RV Shows in the US, and opening and operating travel agencies in Faro and in Whitehorse. During the last 10 years she developed an inbound tourism company which offered individualized tourism packages around the Yukon.

She has served on the Faro Chamber of Commerce, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee and the government's Tourism Advisory Board. She was a founding member of the Yukon Visitor's Association which later became the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon and has served on the board and executive over many years.

Most recently, June has become involved with helping the Town of Faro develop a tourism strategy and spearheaded development of the Town of Faro Tourism Committee, which she served on since its inception. During all June's involvement with the Tourism Industry, June has made her voice that of the small communities outside of Whitehorse and their needs. June sees her position as the representative of the Communities on this Board as a continuation of that role.



June Hampton

Cultural and heritage perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2024

With over 37 years of experience in the fields of heritage, governance, finance, the arts and tourism, **Jackie Olson** has a lifelong passion in community development and sustainability, preservation of heritage integrity, cultural awareness and economic development in the North. As a professional, Jackie approaches the intersectionality of tourism, economic development and culture firmly rooted in her First Nation heritage. A strong traditional upbringing with teachings from her family have taught Jackie social, spiritual, and ethical ways of being.



Jackie Olson

Jackie is the Treasurer of the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon, member of the UNESCO World Heritage Tr'ondëk/Klondike Nomination Advisory Board, Chair of the Klondike Development Organization, Chair of the Yukon Artist Advisory Council, Vice President and past Treasurer of Yukon First Nation Culture & Tourism Association and a member of the Klondike National Historic Sites Advisory Committee.

She is a visionary leader in her community working on the development of the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre and as the past Executive Director of the Klondike Visitors Association, Executive Director and Heritage Director for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government, and Finance Director for the City of Dawson. Jackie is a business owner, visual artist, world traveller and well-respected member of her community.

Tourism business perspective

Term: March 20, 2020 to March 19, 2023

Neil Hartling has operated successful tourism businesses for 35 years. Since 1995, he has served as President of the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon, Chair of the Tourism Association of the Yukon and on national committees of Destination Canada. He was a founding member of the Yukon Wild Marketing Program and in 2007, was awarded the Yahoo! Canada, Big Idea Chair for winning Best Tourism Website in Canada for nahanni.com.



Neil Hartling

His company was awarded the Frozen Globe Award for best Tourism Company in the North and was designated by National Geographic as one of the Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth and one of 50 Tours of a Lifetime. Neil was recognized as a Distinguished Alumni of the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus and was recipient of the NWT Tourism Lifetime Achievement Award.

He has continuously used each of these achievements to promote and strengthen the Yukon tourism industry. Neil is a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and advocates for conservation and sustainable tourism. He has contributed leadership to the protection of the Greater Nahanni Watershed, creation of Tatshenshini Provincial Park and the Seven Sacred Rivers of the Peel Watershed. In business, he has demonstrated the value of enhanced product offerings and increased margins, creating market room for other operators to increase their profitability and sustainability.

Ex-officio member

Justin Ferbey was appointed Deputy Minister of the Department of Economic Development in March 2016, and the Deputy for the Department of Tourism and Culture in December 2021. He is concurrently also President and Chief Executive Officer of Yukon Development Corporation. He is the former Chief Executive Officer of Carcross Tagish Management and Development Corporation. He was a federal fiscal advisor in the British Columbia treaty process, the senior executive of the Carcross Tagish First Nation self-government, and the chair of a tripartite ratification committee that oversaw the Carcross Tagish First Nations' vote to become a self-governing nation.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in neuroscience, an MBA from the University of Liverpool, has certification in conflict resolution and commerce, and is an alumnus of Action Canada and the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. He has been a frequent speaker at many national conferences involving First Nation economic development and governance and has written articles for the Globe and Mail on self-government.



Justin Ferbey

