

## **News From the Yukon: Celebrating Important Yukon Sites**

Last June, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (a First Nation located in Dawson City) and the Government of Yukon signed an agreement to conserve heritage resources at a site commonly known as Forty Mile, a historic site northwest of Dawson City.

The agreement, the Forty Mile, Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine Historic Site Management Plan, was a requirement under the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement land claim and self-government agreement.

Located on the Yukon River where it straddles the mouth of the Fortymile River northwest of Dawson City, the historic site has the remains of three clusters of pre-Klondike gold rush communities: a mining town, Yukon's first North West Mounted Police post, and an American-based commercial trading post.

"This management plan is the culmination of several years' work and will provide sound guidance for the co-operative management of the cultural and natural resources at this very important historic site," said Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor.

For several years the Yukon government and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have worked together on archaeological investigations, stabilizing and restoring the historic North West Mounted Police building and Anglican Church, clearing brush and maintaining the site. As part of the interpretation plans, they recently published the booklet *Archaeology at Forty Mile/Ch'ëdä Dëk*, an overview of archaeological studies that uncovered a history of occupation at Forty Mile dating back more than 2,000 years.

"Forty Mile is vital to understanding the story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon Territory," Chief Darren Taylor said. "We are happy to work with the Yukon government to protect and celebrate the value of this important historic site."

According to a CBC report, Parks Canada officials are trying to have the United Nations recognize Dawson City as a World Heritage Site, along with other places in Yukon and elsewhere that were part of the 1898 Klondike gold rush.

Rob Watt, Parks Canada superintendent of historic sites in Dawson City, said work on a proposal, which will likely take years to complete, could start as early as 2008. "We're talking about sites possibly as far south as Seattle, also Skagway, the Chilkoot Trail, some locations in Whitehorse and potentially the Forty Mile as part of the Yukon River," Mr. Watt told the CBC.

Mr. Watt stated that negotiating with all of the stakeholders would be an important first step. "In this case it would be the U.S. National Park Service, the B.C. government, the Yukon government, any First Nations that are involved with their traditional territories and Parks Canada."

Parks Canada already has 13 sites with UN designation, including Kluane National Park in the Yukon and Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories.

*Yukon Government news release, 06/09/06; New Parks North (<http://www.newparksnorth.org/forty.htm>); CBC News, 06/13/06 ([www.cbc.ca/north/story/nor-dawson-heritage-site.html](http://www.cbc.ca/north/story/nor-dawson-heritage-site.html)).*