

Walk Softly

Newsletter of the
Yukon Conservation Society
Fall/Winter 2018



Inside: • The Big 5-0 Party! • Winner of the Gerry Couture Stewardship Award

Walk Softly

is published by the Yukon Conservation Society for members and subscribers. Memberships and information about the Society can be obtained by contacting the YCS office.

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Getting Closer to a Peel Watershed Plan

The long journey to finalize a Land Use Plan for the Peel Watershed is coming to an end. Public consultations for the Peel Watershed finally occurred in fall 2018, re-establishing the democratic process that we went to the Supreme Court of Canada to protect. A huge congrats to the many, many people who sent in a submission and took part in this important step!

Sometime in early 2019, Stantec (the firm hired by Yukon government to run the consultations) will release the “What We Heard” document. This will be what the parties (Na-Cho Nyak Dun, Trondek Hwech’in, Vuntut Gwitchin, Gwich’in Tribal Council, Government of Yukon) will be considering while making the decision on the Final Recommended Plan for the Peel.

After considerations have been made, and the parties agree on the land use plan, it will be signed off and approved as the official land use plan for the Peel River Watershed.

After the plan is approved and signed off by the parties, the next steps will be the creation of an implementation plan (a How-To Guide for management of the Peel Land Use Plan), and legislation (or legal designation) of the protected areas.

We hope that when the plan is approved for the Peel Watershed, the current moratorium on staking and development will be extended until these important next steps have been completed.

Stay tuned for updates along the way!

- YCS and CPAWS Yukon

Phone System Update

We have updated our phone system and now have extensions for each staff person.

- 21 Julia (Outreach & Communications)
- 22 Joan (Administrative Manager)
- 23 Lewis (Mining Analyst)
- 25 Mike (Executive Director)
- 26 Trail Guides (summer only)
- 28 Cody (Energy Analyst)



Time for Yukon to break the single-use bag habit

The single-use bag is an icon of our throwaway society. At a time when our plastic footprint has permeated every corner of the Earth and emissions from plastic production continue to grow, how can we continue to accept items designed to be disposable?

Sure, we do not see whales with bellies full of plastic bags washing ashore in Yukon, but that does not mean our local environment is unaffected by our dependence on disposable plastics. Let us not forget too that the Yukon River eventually hits the ocean.

Talk to a Conservation Officer and they will tell you stories of birds tangled up in our grocery bags. Spend some time at your local landfill and you can see that the conveniences we enjoy have lasting effects long after we are done with them.

The average single-use bag has a life of just 12 minutes. Twelve minutes of use before being disposed of or jammed under the sink with countless others. What a waste to use significant natural resources for a convenient way to carry your groceries, particularly when there is a ready alternative in the reusable bag.

We all have them, yet so many of us forget them when we shop. Leaving the store plastic bags in hand, we simply reassure ourselves with excuses like “plastic bags are recyclable,” or “reusable bags are unsanitary.”

Yes, those thin plastic grocery bags are technically recyclable, but recycling has not worked thus far. Raven Recycling processes 14 tonnes of film plastic a month, much of it plastic bags. In order to recycle this material they have to pay \$100 per tonne to a southern recycling centre to accept it, not including the shipping.



This material will end up as a low value plastic that will likely only get one more use before being trashed – hardly a long-term solution.

The safety of reusable bags been misrepresented by the plastics industry to scare us into continuing to use disposables. The most commonly cited studies claiming high bacteria levels in reusable bags have used inadequate sample sizes or shown insignificant amounts of bacteria. If you are still worried, most reusable bags are washable, which reduces bacteria levels to near zero.

All over the world governments are (finally) realizing that an upstream solution is necessary, to curb the flow of bags at the source rather than trying to deal with them as waste. These solutions often take the form of bag bans or fees, and it comes as no surprise that these policy solutions work.

A fee has proven to be an effective method for changing consumer behaviour – just look at our neighbours in the Northwest Territories. Consumers have had to pay a \$0.25 fee for single-use retail bags since 2010, and bag use has dropped by over 70%. In 2002, Ireland introduced what some call “the most popular tax in Europe,” a 22 Euro-cent fee, and has seen over 90% less bag litter.

A fee on disposable bags is a highly visible program that impacts everyone. This is important, as we all have a role to play in reducing waste and it is clear that we will not break the habit without a little encouragement.

Whether we opt for a ban or a fee, it's time pull up our socks and put policies in place to protect the environment, before we bag it.

Zero Waste Yukon

To highlight and celebrate those who have chosen reusable bags, Zero Waste Yukon has announced a “Get Caught Green-handed” campaign that will run through January of 2019. We'll be scouring the streets for people using reusable bags and if we catch you, you'll get a prize!

If you want your opinion heard about single-use bags, please fill out the survey at www.zerowasteyukon.ca until January 31.

Celebrating 50 Years of YCS

A fiftieth anniversary doesn't happen very often... so we wanted to celebrate properly in 2018. And we did! Thank you for your support of YCS during this anniversary year.

As we do every year, YCS hosted a variety of great events to help Yukoners learn about environmental challenges in the territory – and what we can do about them. From public talks on Energy Storage and Roads & Wildlife Impacts, to our Contaminated Sites Waterfront Walk and interpretive outings in Miles Canyon, and our vehicle-free Birdathon collaboration with the Yukon Bird Club, this year's YCS events were as varied, fun and informative as ever. This summer, more than 1600 people enjoyed our interpretive programming through free guided hikes, kids' activities, and our Created at the Canyon outdoors art event.

We're grateful to the Yukon government and the Commissioner of Yukon for each acknowledging YCS' 50th anniversary – on our official birthday week (the week of April 24, 2018) in the Yukon Legislature and in midsummer with the Commissioner's acknowledgement of a special Yukon Conservation Society week.

We hosted several special events for this anniversary year. In early September, we hosted a Storytelling BBQ in the YCS garden. Not only did we offer delicious local smokies, we also made salads from cabbage, potatoes, kale, beets and carrots grown in our very own garden. We heard from speakers including Mary Whitley, Bob Van Dijken, and Lewis Rifkind about the evolution of YCS and key moments from our history. Perennial favourite Steve Slade also serenaded the guests with songs. 100 people stopped by to enjoy the occasion.



*Celebrating 50 years in style at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre
photo: Dan Bader*

We also changed up our usual end-of-year party, instead hosting a major celebration in November at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre. The event was held to celebrate our past and get ready for the next 50 years.

The Longhouse was filled with displays and slideshows from YCS history (including an actual slide projector!), a huge mural-in-progress by artist Gorellaume, a silent auction table showcasing prizes from nearly 50 local businesses and artists, and nearly 200 people celebrating what we've accomplished together these past 5 decades.

The event itself was a two-parter: we had an afternoon arts and crafts session for kids followed by dinner, speeches – and live music! In true YCS style, the dance floor was full – and it was extra special to be dancing to music from local favourites Major Funk and the Employment.

Thanks to everyone who came to join in the fun and dance 'til the lights came on!

Tackling the next 50 years

In particular, the Board and staff of YCS would like to thank you for your generous support of YCS' work to protect the Yukon's land, water and wildlife throughout our anniversary year.

As you may know, in 2018 we set an ambitious fundraising target to mark 50 years of conservation. We hoped to raise \$50,000 from individual donations over the year. The numbers are now in, and we are excited to share that this goal was not only reached but exceeded thanks to your care and generosity. Thanks to you, we can hit the ground running in 2019.

We'll be tackling the big challenges facing the Yukon: reducing habitat loss and fragmentation; creating a sustainable and resilient energy system; moving ahead on land use planning; raising awareness about upcoming environmental issues; and much more.

*Funking out with local favourites Major Funk and the Employment.
photo: Dan Bader*



The future of YCS helping work on artist Gorellaume's mural.

photo: Gorellaume



Tales from YCS History

During our 50th Anniversary BBQ, we heard a few stories about YCS history. There are a few more, so we decided to tell them in *Walk Softly*.

The roots of Raven Recycling

During the 1980s, before we had staff to respond to the numerous environmental issues, members of the YCS Board of Directors filled that role. One such issue arose when Anne Tayler and Janne Hicklin set up a booth at the old Jim Light arena downtown to accept used pop and beer cans and provide a few cents in return, as a recycling incentive.

Anne phoned when I was in the YCS office, to say city staff was going to shut down their operation because Anne and Janne had no insurance. She asked if there was anything YCS could do. I said if they told the city they were operating under the auspices of YCS, YCS insurance would cover them. Their recycling incentive booth stayed open.

Later, YCS took on much more of the recycling program role. Eventually, that recycling role grew quite large and the YCS program evolved into the Raven Recycling Society.

The end of raw sewage

A somewhat similar incident – a phone call to YCS – led to a major development.

Florien Lemphers phoned me at YCS and described how raw Whitehorse sewage was being pumped directly into the Yukon River by the city government.

After some discussion and strategy development, copies of a petition with a colour picture of the raw sewage flowing out of the pipe and into the river were distributed to Whitehorse business customer counters.

The public awareness, potential litigation for contravening the federal Fisheries Act (deposit of substances deleterious to fish into a salmon river) and shaming the municipal, territorial and federal governments, led to the Whitehorse sewage treatment facility.

Placer Mine Reclamation Plans

Before the eleven Yukon First Nation land claim agreements were completed and YESAB established, both placer and hard rock mining operations applied to the Yukon Water Board for water licences. The Board placed notices of the licence applications in the local newspapers.

One day, six placer water licences were gazetted in the Yukon News. I went to review the applications at the Water Board office. Prior to that, I reviewed the water licence legislation.

Upon checking the six water licence applications, I found none of them included the legislation-required reclamation plan. After conferring with other YCS Board members, I hand-delivered six letters of intervention, noting the absence of required reclamation plans, to the Water Board office in the Royal Bank Building.

After walking back to the YCS office, the phone rang. The executive director of the Water Board very politely asked if, whenever it was convenient for me, I could meet with her and the chairperson of the Water Board. She mentioned the chairperson was in the Water Board office as she was speaking to me.



I hung up the phone and walked back to the Water Board office. During our meeting, the chairperson repeatedly mentioned it was my and YCS' right to file interventions. He also asked a few times during the discussion if YCS would reconsider the interventions since each one required a full Water Board licence hearing.

The executive director mentioned their budget would be very hard pressed to cover six hearings.

My response was simple, the reclamation plans were a legislated requirement and YCS wanted the legislated mandate fulfilled.

Six Water Board licence hearings were held over the next several months and a requirement was placed in each licence that a reclamation plan had to be provided and implemented.

A short time later, the Water Board contracted a local engineer to write a guide to placer reclamation plans. The document, often referred to as the "white book", was then included in the placer mining water licence application package.

White Pass Herbicide Use

In 2014, there was the White Pass Railway Company plan to spray herbicide along the Yukon portion of the White Pass railway, including where the rail line was close to lakes and streams. After substantial YCS research, discussions and media coverage about how the herbicide was not legal in the USA for such use, the company decided to use labourers to clear the vegetation instead of the herbicide.

Dam Salmon

Of course, there is the one about the plan for devolution of responsibility for the Whitehorse dam to the Yukon government from the federal Northern Canada Power Commission. The Yukon government planned to close the salmon hatchery at the Whitehorse dam. Salmon eggs would no longer be collected at the fish ladder, hatched and reared at the hatchery and released in streams upstream of the dam. A phone call from YCS to the Yukon premier's office convinced the government their plan was seriously flawed. The hatchery was kept as an important part of salmon conservation in the Yukon.

These are just a few examples of how YCS efforts benefitted the Yukon environment in the past 50 years. There are more. Others include causing significant, environment-related changes to proposed mine develop plans, government policies and legislation and resource management plans.

- Skeeter Wright, YCS President

Thank you to the following supporters of our November 17 event:

Silent Auction Donors

- Allan Norberg
- Aroma Borealis
- Big Bear Donair
- Cadence Cycle
- Chris Caldwell
- Cold Climate Innovation at Yukon College
- Coles
- Don Weir
- Free Pour Jenny's
- Icycle Sports
- The Itsy-Bitsy Yarn Store
- Jan Burks
- Joyce Majiski
- Keith Williams
- Kicksled Revolution
- Leslie Leong
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- Luc Garceau
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- Walter Streit
- Winterlong Brewing Co.
- Yoga with Erica
- Yukon Fish and Game Association
- Yukon Gardens
- Anonymous

Our Sponsors

- Aroma Borealis
- Bean North Coffee Roasting Co. Ltd.
- Free Pour Jenny's
- Home Hardware
- Yukon Brewing
- Gorellaume for creating a beautiful 50th Anniversary art piece
- Major Funk and the Employment for rocking the dance floor
- Peter Mather whose caribou photo graced our cake

Event Artists

- Hilary Smith
- Julie Frisch
- Kai Miller
- Mary Amerongen
- Sarah Harrison
- Stephanie Tsigoulis
- Tecla Van Bussel

Speakers

- The Hon. Pauline Frost (Yukon Minister of Environment)
- Karen Baltgailis (MC and former YCS Executive Director)
- Lewis Rifkind (YCS Mining Analyst)
- Mike Walton (YCS Executive Director)
- Sally Wright & JP Pinard (YCS volunteers)
- Shailyn Drukis (YCS member and former Trail Guide Coordinator)
- Skeeter Wright (YCS President)



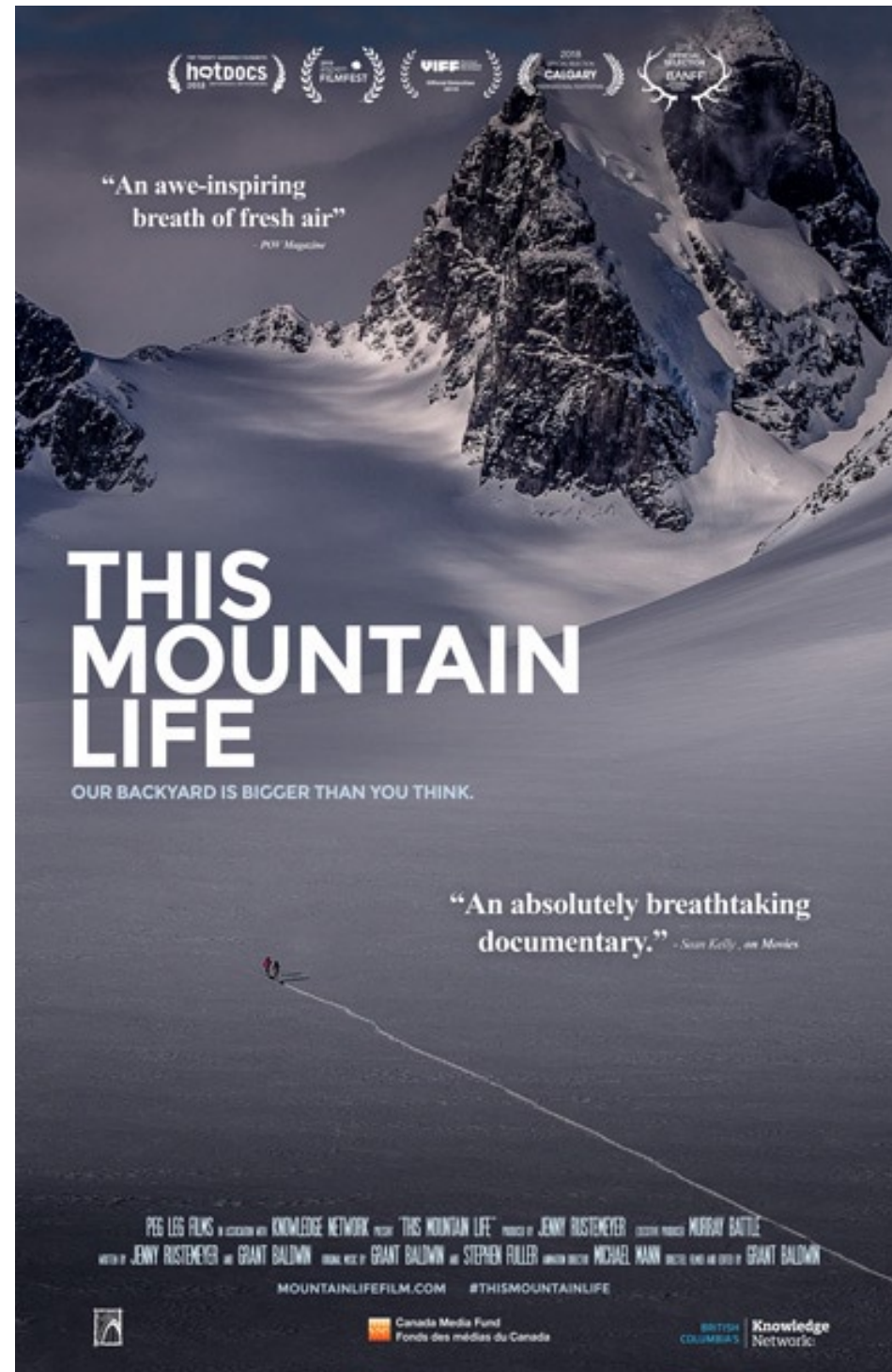
With so many supporters, we're bound to have missed mentioning a few – but thank you to everyone who has supported YCS with care, time, donations and other gifts throughout the year!

YCS Sponsoring 'This Mountain Life' at Available Light Film Festival

Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 6:00pm, Yukon Arts Centre

YCS is sponsoring a thought-provoking and powerful film from British Columbia about the impacts of wild places. Here is what to expect from This Mountain Life:

"Martina and her 60 year-old mother Tania embark on a 6 month, 2300km journey [from Squamish to Skagway] through a relentless mountain wilderness; a group of nuns inhabiting a mountain retreat to be closer to God; a photographer is buried in an avalanche; an impassioned alpinist; a focused snow artist; a couple who has been living off grid in the mountains for nearly 50 years. What is it that leads these adventurous people to sacrifice everything – comfort, family, personal safety – for a life in the mountains? Shot in cinematic detail, This Mountain Life is a riveting portrait of human passion set high in the peaks of British Columbia, Canada."



Porcupine Caribou Update: The Arctic Refuge needs your help

Comments are being accepted online until Feb. 11, 2019. Thank you to CPAWS Yukon for the following information and resources.

The Porcupine caribou herd is under greater threat than ever. Webs of pipelines and roads could soon cover the heart of their calving grounds – in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Just before Christmas the U.S. Government released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement on oil and gas leasing in the Arctic Refuge. The review downplays the importance of the Refuge to the Porcupine caribou herd. It even fails to acknowledge Gwich'in in Canada when determining what communities would be “appreciably affected” by declines in the Porcupine caribou herd.

It's critical that Yukoners and Canadians tell the U.S. Government that their environmental review is inadequate. Will you help the Porcupine caribou herd? Putting your concerns on the public record will help hold the U.S. accountable to its environmental laws.

CPAWS Yukon has set up an easy way to send an email directly to the person leading the review, despite the U.S. Government shutdown. Find the comment box under the 'Take Action' tab at www.cpawsyukon.org/porcupine-caribou.

P.S. Submit your comment and you'll find a gallery of adorable baby Arctic animals. And for a beautiful look at the Porcupine caribou's epic annual migration, featuring photos by Yukon photographers Peter Mather, Ken Madsen and Malkolm Boothroyd, click the 'Join the Migration' tab at the above web address. For help submitting a comment without the internet, please call YCS at 867-668-5678.

In case you're wondering...

What is the Porcupine caribou herd?

The Porcupine caribou are one of the last healthy herds of barren ground caribou in North America. Every year the herd undertakes a 4,000 kilometre long migration across Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Caribou are critical to the culture and livelihoods of Gwich'in communities across the north.

What is the Arctic Refuge?

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the continent's last great wild places, home to polar bears, muskoxen and the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd.

Why is the Refuge under threat?

In December of 2017 the U.S. Government opened the Arctic Refuge to oil and gas development. Now the U.S. Government is rushing to complete its environmental review process. CPAWS Yukon is working with the Vuntut Gwitchin and environmental groups across the U.S. and Canada to protect the Arctic Refuge and the Porcupine caribou herd, and we at YCS are supporting this effort.

What else can you do? Spread the word about the Arctic Refuge and share the comment link with everyone you know who cares about caribou and wild places.

Here are some points that you could raise in your comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

- The DEIS fails to comprehensively review impacts on oil and gas drilling on the Porcupine caribou herd, and even claims that drilling in the calving grounds would have no major impacts on caribou.
- The DEIS downplays the importance of the Arctic Refuge to the Porcupine caribou herd, both as calving grounds and as critical nursery grounds.
- The DEIS fails to consider Indigenous communities in Canada when determining what communities would be “appreciably affected” by changes to caribou populations or movements.



Meet Cody, our Energy Analyst

Hello YCS'ers! My name is Cody Reaume and this spring I took on the Energy Program as YCS's new Energy Analyst. I'm sure most of you know our past Energy Analyst, Anne Middler, and I would like to say that she has been incredible in bringing me up to speed on the energy scene and the nuances of the role. As I have been learning about the past work that Anne and YCS have done, I am constantly amazed at how productive she is and how impactful YCS has been over the years. I hope that I can continue this legacy and help to bring a cleaner energy future to Yukon.

I grew up in Whitehorse and was incredibly lucky to have a forest out my backyard. I spent countless hours running around in nature's playground, getting dirty, and learning. This is probably where my interest and appreciation for nature stems from. At university I got involved with an outdoors club where I learned the basics of rock climbing, slept in a quinzhee, and started doing backpacking trips. Today, I don't seem to be quite as tough (foolish?) and would prefer to sleep in a cabin than camp out in the winter, but I still love camping and hiking when the snow is gone.

My education is in mechanical and electrical engineering, and I have been passionate about clean energy since before I started post-secondary studies about 9 years ago. In university I was involved with a wind metering station, studied fuel cells, dabbled with electric cars, and excelled in thermodynamics (the study of conversions and relationships between forms of energy).

After graduation I landed a job with a CO2 capture company as a mechanical engineer. The technology separated CO2 from the exhaust of coal power plants and natural gas turbines so that it could be converted to a non GHG form. It was exciting stuff but living in Vancouver wore on me so after about 2 1/2 years I resigned and moved back up to Whitehorse.

Which brings me to today, and my new role with YCS! My focus so far has been looking for ways that YCS can get involved in directly reducing GHG emissions in Yukon. One that YCS has been a supporter of for some time is Electric Thermal Storage (ETS), which uses night-time or off-peak electricity to heat homes and businesses. I am looking for potential partners and interested parties to work with to build a stronger case for ETS in Yukon. This might involve a pilot to install some ETS systems, or it might be data collection on existing systems and an economic analysis based on the data.

A parallel task that I am seeking funding for is to develop an ETS and home energy conservation presentation that I can deliver with a lunch-and-learn model. YCS will provide lunch for a small group (5-10 people) at an organization or business, and I will go to their location to talk to them about energy conservation opportunities and why we see ETS as an excellent option.

Another opportunity is the conversion of street lighting to LED. Yukon Energy has already converted their streetlights in Dawson and Mayo, and is working on the conversion in Faro right now. I haven't seen any of these installations yet, but what I've heard from Yukon Energy is that the locals are generally very happy with the quality of the light they emit. If you have seen the lights and have comments on them please let me know at energyanalyst@yukonconservation.org! The LED streetlights last much longer than the traditional lights (reduced maintenance), consume only about 50% of the power, and almost all of that energy comes during the winter when Yukon Energy is most likely to be burning diesel and/or LNG. Updates to follow!

- Cody Reaume,
YCS Energy Analyst

I would love to hear from our readers regarding what sort of articles they would like to see from me, so if you have comments or requests please don't hesitate to contact me at the email above. You can also call me on our snazzy new phone system at 867 668 5678 ext 28!



Home Energy Monitoring

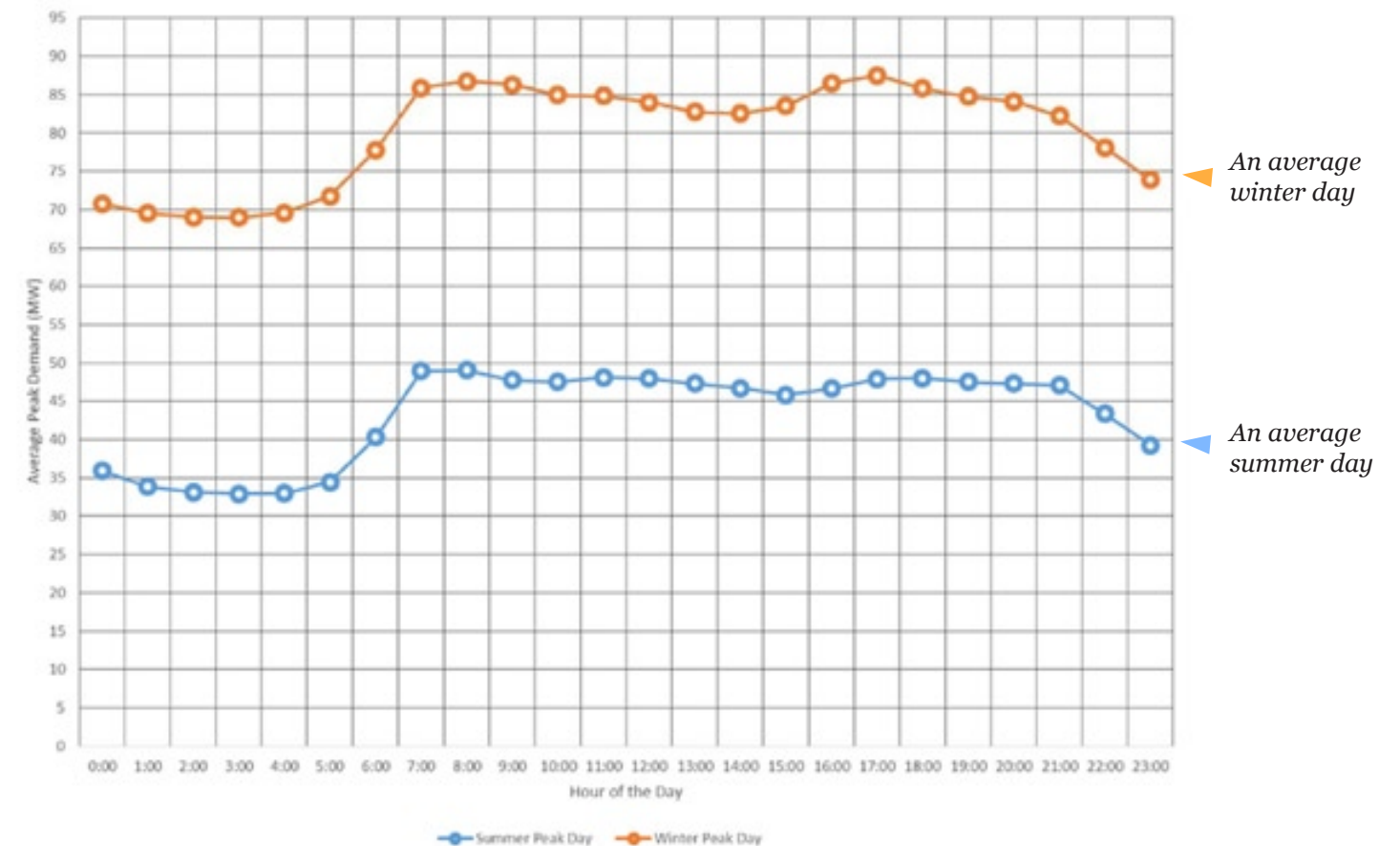
Yukon has an electricity problem. A rising population and the uptake of electric baseboard heating means that for much of the winter our hydro power plants can't supply the whole load, and thus Yukon Energy will be burning a lot of LNG and diesel this winter. Reducing our electricity consumption in the winter is a direct way for each of us to reduce our GHG emissions.

Using less electricity is always a good thing, but it is also important for each of us to think about WHEN we use it. On Monday morning around 7am, many of us get out of bed, turn on some lights and the kettle, and maybe take a hot shower. Although individually none of us requires a lot of power, the cumulative effect on the electricity grid is substantial!

The graph below shows the typical daily winter (top) and summer (bottom) electricity demand that Yukon Energy must supply. As you can see, the electrical demand is low through the middle of the night, and then jumps up in the morning. In winter it peaks between 7am-10am, then slowly drops during the day before peaking again between 4-7pm. It is during these peaks that Yukon Energy generally needs to burn diesel to meet the demand, so avoiding electricity use during these times is the most impactful.

There are some easy changes that individuals can make to minimize our contribution to these peaks. One is to run our dishwashers and clothes washers/dryers at night using either a timer or by turning them on before we go to bed. To be fair, I have lived with some very noisy washing machines, so if this is the case it is still better to run it at, say, 8pm than right at 5pm. We can also take smaller actions such as turning on the radio instead of the TV, or cooking with a crock-pot which uses a small flow of energy (~250 Watts) for a long period, rather than turning on your oven at 5pm which draws a lot of energy (~3000 Watts) right at the critical time!

continues....



There is another interesting energy conservation option that I only recently stumbled across: home energy monitors. These are an emerging group of products that monitor and record a building's energy consumption over time, allowing the owner to see when they are using a lot of energy, how much it is costing them, and how they might reduce their use.

You can go around your house turning lights off, switching off power bars, turning down the heat, and see for yourself how each item contributes to your consumption (and costs). An energy monitor will also track your energy use over time with far more information than you can extract from your utility bill. Some of them can even identify appliances and break up your consumption by appliance.

They can also pair well with rooftop solar panels as you can see how your solar installation is performing... perhaps reminding you to brush off the snow on those sunny February days!

Some of the major brands include Neurio, Sense, Eyedro, Smappee, and CURB. I haven't tried any of them out yet, so I won't recommend one, but I think the idea is fantastic. It puts the knowledge at our fingertips so that we can identify where our energy goes and how we can reduce our consumption.

For businesses, there is another way you can use an energy monitor to reduce costs and help reduce peaks on the grid. Commercial electricity rates are designed so that we pay for total energy consumption (kWh), but also for the highest flow of energy at any one moment (kW), called a demand charge.

Flowing water provides a good analogy. The total energy consumption (kWh) is equivalent to a volume of water in a tank, and the energy demand (kW) is equivalent to how far you crank open your garden hose valve. One minute of high energy demand on one day will raise a business's electricity bill for months!

An energy monitor lets a business owner see when these spikes are occurring, and make changes so that high consumption appliances or equipment aren't running simultaneously, thus reducing their energy demand (kW) and associated charges.

If you are interested in an energy monitor feel free to contact me with questions or just to discuss. It would be great to hear from others who are interested in knowing more about where their electricity goes.

- Cody Reaume,
YCS Energy Analyst



Some of our first season's harvest!



- Julia Duchesne
YCS Outreach

Our First Gardening Season

This summer, the Edible Garden Project transformed the YCS yard into a garden full of local food. With the help of an Environment Grant from the City of Whitehorse, we built 4 large garden planters, filled them with soil, and planted them with local food throughout the summer. Volunteers spent more than 60 hours helping construct, plant, tend and harvest the garden boxes, and we harvested 25kg of veggies over the summer. Half of the harvest went to the Whitehorse Food Bank and half to volunteers. Our best growers were kale, radishes, baby bok choy, arugula, chard, Turkish turnips, lettuce, and nasturtium flowers; what did not work so well was squash, beans, basil, and broccoli. We also installed an information panel in the garden to provide more information about the benefits of growing local food – from greenhouse gas reduction to healthy lifestyles to education. The garden is a learning opportunity for staff, volunteers, and passersby who love to ask about what we're growing. Thanks to the City of Whitehorse for helping make our first season a big success! Let us know if you'd like to volunteer for the 2019 season – we will need at least 5 regular (one hour a week) volunteers this year to ensure season 2 is a success.

A backwards step on saving energy

Electricity demand is growing in the Yukon, but our regulator just took a huge step backward in meeting the demand.

There are many options to ensure adequate electricity supply – like renting generators or building new infrastructure – but one of the simplest is Demand Side Management (DSM). DSM programs aim to reduce energy consumption and lower our daily peaks in electrical demand by helping us change when and how we use electricity.

DSM is a cost-effective way to ensure our existing power infrastructure goes further. Unfortunately, Yukon Energy has just been ordered to halt all current and future DSM programs.

The Yukon Utilities Board (YUB) exists to regulate our electrical utilities (Yukon Energy and ATCO Electric Yukon) and ensure they aren't spending money frivolously. This is an important role, but in this case it appears that the Board's views aren't consistent with best practices in the utility industry.

On December 27th, 2018, YUB directed Yukon Energy to cease all DSM programs, including all initiatives to reduce energy demand in the territory. These programs are used by utilities across Canada and some are already underway in the Yukon. Some readers have likely received rebates on LED lightbulbs or a timer for their car's block heater. Another option not yet used in Yukon involves cheaper electricity during off-peak hours – so you pay less to run your dishwasher overnight than at 6pm.

We should be ramping up our efforts to manage energy demand – instead, the YUB is calling for an end to existing programs and a ban on any similar programs in the future.


Demand side management is about meeting electrical demand without the environmental and social impacts of building new energy infrastructure. It's about saving money on our electricity bills and reducing the \$1.5 million per year that Yukon Energy spends to rent backup diesel generators.

But the YUB doesn't think it's a good idea.

This is the YUB's reasoning: "[Yukon Energy/YEC] has indicated the benefits of expanding the [DSM] program and submitted that *its programs have met or exceeded key performance indicators* [emphasis added]. However, the Board notes that the Yukon government has DSM incentive programs in place, and the Board is of the view that it is better to leave DSM projects to government, rather than having ratepayers fund these projects. For these reasons, the Board is of the view that continuation of DSM programs by YEC is not necessary. Accordingly, the Board denies YEC's requests to continue with any DSM programs other than end-of-life streetlight conversions...."

continues....


Supply Side Management



Increase the amount of energy produced

eg. burn more diesel
dam more rivers
build more generators

Demand Side Management



Change how we use the energy

Conservation eg. stop wasting energy, think about how you use it

Energy Efficiency eg. led lights, energy star appliances

Demand Response eg. changing when the energy is used

Unfortunately, the board's view that "it is better to leave DSM projects to government" is not supported by evidence from the Canadian and US utility industry. The Consortium for Energy Efficiency, a collaborative effort among North American efficiency program administrators, releases an annual report on the state of the industry. Their latest report indicates that \$8.5 billion of ratepayer funds went towards gas and electric DSM programs in North America in 2016.¹ Only \$0.3 billion came from other sources including governments.² From this data, it appears that most utilities have identified ratepayers as the most appropriate funding source for DSM programs, rather than governments. Utilities spend money on DSM because it's cost-effective and it works: in 2016, North American ratepayer-funded programs saved an estimated 30,166GWh of electricity³, or about 67 times Yukon's annual electricity consumption.⁴

Yukon government does offer some great energy efficiency programs through the Energy Solutions Centre, designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save Yukoners money on electricity and fuel bills. But government can't do it all. Some efficiency programs require action by the utility – such as 'peak shaving' and 'load shifting' programs to reduce peak electrical loads in midwinter or shift daytime demand to the middle of the night when it can be supplied by less costly and less polluting sources.

Such DSM programs would help to reduce the massive electrical demand swings of the Yukon grid, making it easier and less expensive to meet demand peaks. Shouldn't our utilities lead the design and delivery of these programs? Ask BC Hydro, Hydro Quebec, or SaskPower. All these utilities (and many more) run their own DSM programs.

Yukon government, through the minister responsible, should insist on a full accounting of the YUB's decision and consider taking action to ensure that DSM is part of a more affordable and sustainable energy future for the Yukon.

And while we're thinking about bringing our Yukon Utilities Board into the 21st century, there is another update to consider. Currently, the YUB has a purely economic mandate. The Board doesn't have to consider environmental or social issues in its decisions.

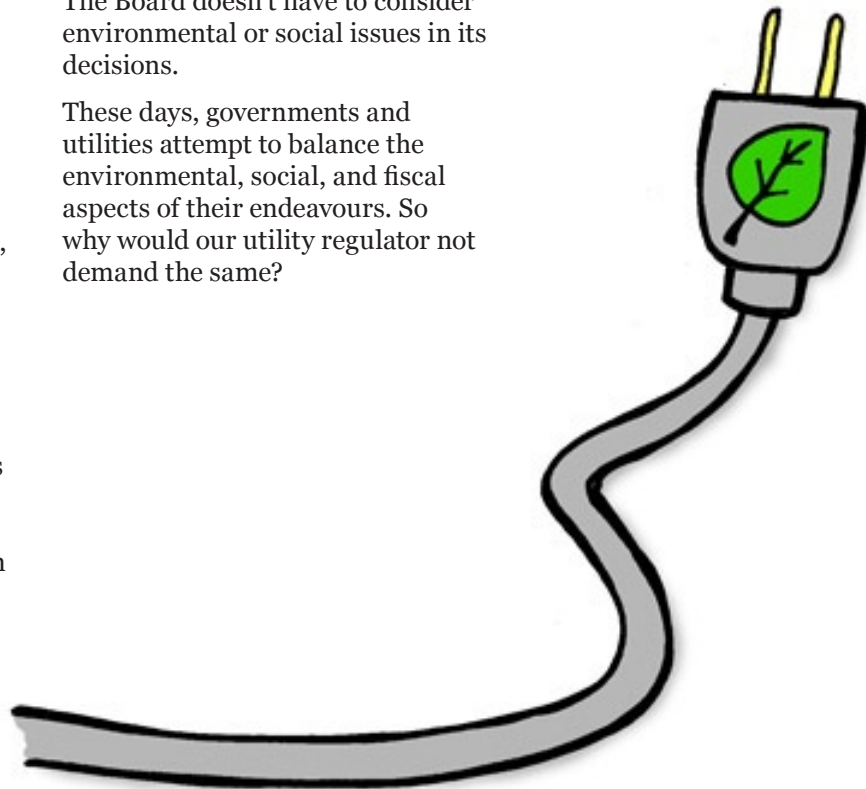
These days, governments and utilities attempt to balance the environmental, social, and fiscal aspects of their endeavours. So why would our utility regulator not demand the same?

Fortunately, the Board's mandate can be modernized.

We wouldn't be the first to update our regulator's mandate. In California, the words "safeguards the environment" are written into the mission statement of the state utility regulator. Similarly, Alberta's utility regulator aims to "protect social, economic, and environmental interests of Alberta".⁵

Let's follow these excellent leads and ensure the Yukon Utilities Board is making the right choices to secure our energy future.

*Cody Reaume, Energy Analyst,
Yukon Conservation Society
Published Jan. 16, 2019 in the Yukon
News*



1. https://library.cee1.org/system/files/library/13561/CEE_2017_AnnualIndustryReport.pdf
2. https://library.cee1.org/system/files/library/13561/CEE_2017_AnnualIndustryReport.pdf
3. https://library.cee1.org/system/files/library/13561/CEE_2017_AnnualIndustryReport.pdf
4. Yukon's 2018 annual energy consumption was approximately 450 Gwh.
5. <http://www.auc.ab.ca/pages/mission-statement.aspx>

Yukon Invasive Species Council Continues to Tackle Management of Invasive Species

When you look around the trails and roadsides of our great Territory you will notice a wide variety of species. There is however a threat to our healthy ecosystem - the introduction of invasive species*. Invasive species can over take native species and reduce biodiversity by creating mono-crops. They are very adaptive and often have impacts on wildlife, the environment, human health, and the economy, such as deteriorating soil integrity on slopes, or causing an irritating reaction if touched or consumed. Invasive species can be introduced through seed mixes in agricultural or commercial seeding projects, imported in hay and straw or spread by equipment unknowingly carrying seeds - such as mowing equipment or ATVs. The Yukon is in a unique and lucky situation, as the spread and introduction of invasive species has been relatively slow.



Bird Vetch, Yukon's Invasive Species Council's (YISC) focus of 2018, grows with tendrils that grasp onto and suffocate neighbouring plants. They overtake herbaceous vegetation and shrubs like willow and poplar. There is also the risk of change in soil composition due to added nitrogen. Bird Vetch is very difficult to eradicate once established and demands repeated effort to restore an area's biodiversity.

Yukon Invasive Species Council has done several weed pulls this year – the biggest being Range Point. Many Yukoners know Range Point as the "old Whitehorse dump." At this location, Bird Vetch removal was the main focus. This close-to-town trail has both ecological and social value. It is a popular recreation area with both the Yukon River and McIntyre Creek running through it. These salmon bearing waters

increase the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

YISC started the Range Point Project in 2017. The project includes mapping of invasive plants, removal and disposal of topsoil and invasive plants, collecting and seeding native seeds, monitoring, follow up with hand-removal, and signage to raise awareness of invasive species.

After the initial mechanical removal of the plants YISC concentrated on managing the site, in 2018, by hand pulling. The first weed pull brought out wonderful volunteers who worked diligently to remove the sprouted Bird Vetch.

YISC knew the site needed to be tackled again, as some plants were left unpulled. When YISC members and volunteers arrived the second time – gloves on and trowels in hand – many more Bird Vetch were discovered! The plants were young and small and YISC planned a third pull to catch plants further along in their maturity.

The final pull became a bit of an experiment. Volunteers diligently pulled one half of the area - hunting for all the new stems. On the other half YISC board members selected test plots that were flagged and a focused vinegar spray was applied to each plant. The goal was to weaken the roots. This experiment will help YISC monitor and learn which methods are most effective. Over a third, somewhat removed, area YISC spread stockpiled topsoil to deeply cover the root fragments in the soil. Here YISC will spread native seed before the snow arrives.

This year YISC spent over 68 hours of labour focused on eliminating all the Bird Vetch in the project area. YISC will continue to monitor the project area at Range Point and make new eradication plans accordingly.

continues....

* An invasive species is defined as an organism (plant, animal, fungus, or bacterium) that is introduced and has negative effects on our economy, our environment, or our health. "Invasive" is reserved for the most aggressive species that reproduce rapidly and cause major changes to the areas where they become established.

One lesson learned during the process: Bird Vetch is very persistent! Also, previous management efforts succeeded in preventing any flowering plants or seed development this year. The spring will reveal just how successful the project efforts are! This site is as much an active management site as a research site.

This is YISC's first big scale eradication project for the Yukon and successes are in large thanks to the public, the City of Whitehorse, the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council, and the Environmental Damages Fund for supporting the project as the funder.

YISC's hope is, that native vegetation - like locoweed, fireweed and yarrow - will start to take over again at the site!

Stay tuned for next steps at this well utilized site.

- Torey Hampson with the Yukon Invasive Species Council
www.yukoninvasives.com

Bird Vetch *Vicia cracca*

Description: Multiple weak stems and compound leaves with tendrils (that allow the plant to attach to other plants or objects) characterize this perennial plant. The distinct purplish/ blue flowers are arranged in a one-sided spike and turn into brown or black seed pods once matured. Vetch seeds disperse by the ballistic action of drying seedpods. Because Bird Vetch is spreading effectively via seeds and by underground horizontal rootstocks, infestations grow rapidly.

It is found in most Yukon communities including Whitehorse, Dawson, Watson Lake and Haines Junction.

Similar Species: Like the garden pea, Bird Vetch has tendrils to help it climb other vegetation. In Yukon only four plant species, all vetches, have tendrils. Three of these are introduced including Bird Vetch. Spring Vetch (*V. sativa*) and Shaggy Vetch (*V. villosa*) are only known from historic collections in Dawson City. Purple Vetch (*V. americana*) is the only native Yukon vetch and is found in southeast Yukon, but has been introduced to Mayo and Rancheria. Purple Vetch has fewer flowers (3-9) per bunch than Bird Vetch (10-30).

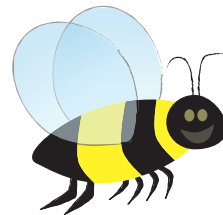
Ecological Impact: This plant can overgrow herbaceous vegetation and climb over shrubs like alder and willow. It is known to invade undisturbed sites including spruce forests and south-facing slopes. Due to the fixation of nitrogen it may change the soil composition.

Control: Bird Vetch is difficult to eradicate once established. Hand-pulling can be effective for small infestations, but the area has to be monitored and retreated for several years. Mowing and herbicide control can also be used effectively, especially for larger areas.



Welcome to our new Administrative Manager, Joan Norberg!

Joan comes from a farming background and is part owner of Grizzly Valley Farms. She brings to YCS experience in retail sales and non-profit societies, as well as having a background in bookkeeping and financial management. In the past she has been part of the Fireweed Community Market as a vendor selling crafts, preserves and farm produce as well as a board member from 2005-2013. For years growing and selling food has made her aware of how delicate our food systems are and she does what she can to live sustainably. She has written for What's Up Yukon about her farming experiences. Joan is passionate about local food and loves to garden, with a soft spot for honeybees.



Recognizing a Conservation Champion: Dorothy Bradley Wins the 2018 Gerry Couture Stewardship Award

We are pleased to announce that Dorothy Bradley has been awarded the 2018 Gerry Couture Stewardship Award. The \$1000 prize is awarded annually for outstanding personal dedication to natural resource conservation and management in the Yukon.

For decades, Dorothy has been fighting to protect Yukon waterways. Her projects range from protecting free-flowing rivers and streams from over-usage and hydro dams, to supporting the Final Peel Plan. For the past decade, she has focused on the protection of Whitehorse's last remaining wildlife corridor, spending countless volunteer hours as President of the Friends of McIntyre Creek.

McIntyre Creek is a vital wildlife corridor running through the heart of Whitehorse from Whistle Bend to Fish Lake, the only way for many wildlife species to traverse the city. It is also a crucial habitat for migratory birds and special flowers like Lady Slipper and Leafy Thistle.

Thank you for everything you've done and continue to do for Yukon water and wild places, Dorothy!

About Gerry Couture:

The anonymous donor of the award is inspired by Gerry Couture's fearlessness, creativity, innovation, and 'curmudgeonliness'. Couture has been a respected member of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Yukon Salmon Committee. He also worked as the mining analyst here at YCS until 2009, and as a commercial pilot, homesteader, trapper, commercial fisherman, and placer miner.



Dorothy Bradley receiving the award at the YCS 50th Anniversary Party on Nov. 17, 2018. Photo: Dan Bader

Reactions to the News:

"I am very honoured to be chosen to receive the Gerry Couture Stewardship award. The work to prevent development in McIntyre Creek has been a team effort and I thank my board members Michael and Celeste Bendall, James Welscott and Jeff Marynowski for working with me and providing the input they do. I'd like to thank Yukon Conservation Society for the help they have provided in the past years as well. We continue to encourage the city to keep McIntyre Creek free of development because it is a very significant wildlife corridor and building in this corridor will only increase the wildlife conflict we are facing today. Development in the corridor is still a threat today."

- Dorothy Bradley

"Dorothy is truly dedicated to speaking up for the environment. Working hard, to build partnerships with local environmental groups to ensure McIntyre Creek remains protected."

- James Welscott, Friends of McIntyre Creek

"Dorothy's hard work has helped ensure that wildlife has room to roam and that Yukon rivers stay wild and free. We're particularly grateful for her ongoing work to protect McIntyre Creek from development."

- Mike Walton, YCS Executive Director

Raven Recycling "Charged Up" for E-Waste Collection

Since October 1st, changes to Yukon Government's Designated Materials Regulation (DMR) apply new surcharges on electronics and electrical items sold in Yukon. The DMR is a product stewardship program that helps cover the cost of recycling designated materials, much like the beverage container refund system. Since its inception in 2003, the DMR only covered small vehicle tires. Expansion of this program is an important next step towards improving recycling in the territory and keeping resources out of our landfills.

Fees collected from the sale of new electronics will go to the Yukon Recycling Fund, and will help subsidize the high cost of recycling e-waste. Yukoners will also now be able to drop off e-waste for free at local transfer stations and collection points. In Whitehorse, Raven Recycling Society was picked to operate the new e-waste collection depot.

Raven has been collecting, processing and transporting e-waste from Whitehorse and Yukon communities since 2009, shipping items south to Global Electric Electronics Processing (GEEP) in Edmonton, Alberta. There, items are shredded and separated into their component parts to recover various materials. Precious metals such as platinum or gold, valuable metals such as copper or aluminum, plastics, glass and other materials are all separated and recycled to be used in new products.



Why is Raven so excited about expansion of the DMR?

For starters, recycling e-waste saves massive amounts of resources. It's estimated that worldwide, the value of raw materials in annual e-waste production is over \$64 Billion USD. As product lifespans get shorter and technology expands, so does the amount of e-waste we produce. Canadians generate approximately 20 kg of e-waste per person each year. In order to capitalize on this tremendous value of resources we need cost-effective systems in place for recycling.

These new changes are also great news for the Yukon's natural environment. Diverting electronics is essential to extending the lifespan of our landfills and keeping toxic chemicals out of our environment. Providing free drop off for e-waste will help increase recycling rates and also prevent items being illegally dumped in our wild spaces.

Responsible recycling of electronics is necessary for growing a circular economy, where resources are kept in circulation as long as possible. Closing the loop of materials through better design, improved recycling and increased reuse/repair not only mitigates environmental pollution but also offers huge economic and employment opportunities.

What's most exciting about the new DMR amendments is that they set the stage for new additions to the list. Hopefully we'll soon see packaging, printed materials, hazardous waste and automotive waste listed as designated materials, just to name a few. Progress is sometimes slow, but we're moving in the right direction. For now, Raven is happy to be expanding e-waste collection and moving our communities closer to Zero Waste, one TV at a time.

Visit www.ravenrecycling.org for more info.

Ira Webb
Project Coordinator, Raven Recycling Society

YES! I want to help protect Yukon's environment by supporting the Yukon Conservation Society!



DONATIONS

- \$60 \$200 \$500 Surprise us! _____
- Monthly Pledge (credit card only) \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP

- Student \$10
 - Individual \$25
 - Family \$40 (2 or more people)
 - _____ Total amount
- Both donations & memberships are tax deductible. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. Your tax receipt will be emailed unless you prefer a paper copy.*

- I want to volunteer, please send me information.
- I would like to receive a twice-monthly email with YCS news and events.
- I would like to receive my copy of the *Walk Softly* quarterly newsletter by email, not a paper copy in the mail.

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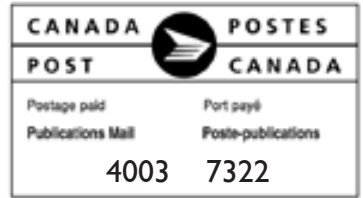
Charitable Org. # 119307890RR0001

A huge thank you to everyone who helped out in the office or in preparation for our 50th Anniversary event in November.

Thank You Volunteers!



- Our 50th Party volunteer crew (see inside for details)
- Meagan Christie for installing the information panel for our new garden
- Tanya Handley for excellent design work
- Mary Amerongen for processing memberships and donations and for leading our Peel phone-calling efforts
- Mary Whitley and everyone who made phone calls for the Peel
- Michele Clark, Julie Frisch, and everyone who helped with our year-end mailout



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Join us
for our
AGM!

Yukon Conservation Society Annual General Meeting

We will be holding our AGM on Thursday March 28 at Alpine Bakery (top floor) from 5:30-7pm. Refreshments will be served. We will be reviewing 2018 and looking ahead to 2019, electing new Board members, and voting on some administrative-related amendments to the Constitution. The wording of the proposed amendments will be viewable online at www.yukonconservation.org or in person at the YCS office by March 6, 2019.

Are you interested in becoming a Board member?

Please contact Dave Mossop via the YCS office (office@yukonconservation.org) for more information about the responsibilities involved.

Follow us!

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