

YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL
PLACE NAMES BOARD



A N N U A L R E P O R T

1 9 9 9 • 2 0 0 0



YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL
PLACE NAMES BOARD

A N N U A L R E P O R T

1 9 9 9 • 2 0 0 0

YUKON PLACE NAMES

The names of places reflect the Yukon's diverse cultures, history, and landscape. Names in the Yukon such as Aishihik, Kusawa, Tutchitua, are a few of the native names found on a modern map of the Yukon. Yukon Indians named rivers, mountains, lakes and landmarks long before the first non-native explorers and settlers arrived in the territory. Names such as Gyò Cho Chú (Big Salmon River) tell where animals and fish are plentiful. Other names, such as Thechhàl Mǎn (Sekulman Lake), "Stone Scraper for Hides" describe artifacts and remember people and events. Today, Yukon Indians still remember these names and are working to record them for future generations.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, non-native explorers, fur traders, and prospectors came to the Yukon to trade with Indian people, search for gold, and explore the vast landscape, giving their own names to the land. The Danish explorer Vitus Bering, who entered the newly formed navy of the Russian tsar Peter the Great and in 1724 was appointed to conduct an expedition to explore the water routes between Siberia and North America, was the first non-native to name a geographical feature in the Yukon. During 1741, Bering named a mountain in the far southwestern Yukon – Mt. St. Elias.

While Bering and explorers to follow gave names to geographical features without asking the local people their names for places, other early explorers, such as geologist George Dawson and the Yukon's first Commissioner, William Ogilvie, recorded many native names for many places during their years in the Yukon including such names as the Yusezyu and Tatchun Rivers in central Yukon.

Many of the official names on the Yukon map today were given by non-native settlers who came to the Yukon during the Gold Rush period. In the area around Dawson City, Allgold, Bonanza, Eureka, and Nogold celebrate the successes – and failures – of the people who came to the territory during the Klondike Gold Rush. Names like Carcross (from Caribou Crossing), Fox Lake, and Eagle's Nest, testify to the richness of the Yukon's wildlife resources. Other places, such as Five Finger Rapids on the Yukon River, Blackstone Mountain, and White River, were named for the shape, colour, and form of the land and water itself. One of the best known names of this type is Whitehorse, which took its name from the White Horse rapids, whose foamy white crests reminded early prospectors of horses' manes.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHOOSING PLACE NAMES

In 1897, Canada established the *Geographic Board of Canada* whose mandate was to approve official place names across the country. Interestingly, one of the motivations for establishing this board came from events happening in the Yukon, from the discovery of gold in the Klondike. Today, the successor to this Board is known as the *Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC)* which until recently was referred to as the *Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN)*. The GNBC is made up of 23 members representing the Provinces and Territories, as well as federal departments that deal with surveying, mapping, translation, archives, parks, and native affairs.

In 1986, the responsibility for naming geographical features was transferred from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to the Government of Yukon, putting geographical naming in the hands of Yukon residents for the first time. As part of this transfer the Government of Yukon established the *Yukon Geographical Names Board (YGNB)* in 1987 to undertake the job of researching and approving geographical names.

In 1995, under the Yukon Land Claims Agreement, the Yukon Geographical Names Board was replaced with the *Yukon Geographical Place Names Board (YGPNB)*. Like its predecessor, it was established with the primary function and responsibility to consider and recommend the naming or renaming of places or features located within the Yukon.

THE YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE NAMES BOARD

The Yukon Geographical Place Names Board (YGPNB) is constituted under the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), signed by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Government and the Government of Canada. The Board's primary function is to consider and recommend the naming or renaming of places or features located within the Yukon with special reference to Chapter 13, Section 11 of the UFA. The Board's mandate does not include the naming/renaming of features or sites within municipal boundaries or of transportation corridors (highways and bridges).

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board is composed of six Yukoners with a wide variety of backgrounds and experience but a common interest in developing place name policies which serve all Yukon residents. Each member is appointed by the Yukon Government for a three-year term, with three members selected by the territorial government and three by the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are elected by their fellow Board members.

On March 12, 1998 the Minister of Tourism appointed the following members to the Board for three-year terms until March 11, 2001. The new appointees are:

***Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Appointed For A Three Year Term
Beginning March 12, 1998***

Diane Chisholm (<i>Chairperson</i>)	John Ritter
Daniel Tlen (<i>Vice-Chairperson</i>)	Sam Johnston
Percy Henry	Jeff Hunston (<i>Ex-officio</i>)
Patrick Moore	

THE PLACE NAME REVIEW PROCESS

Processing place name applications in as timely a manner as possible is a priority of the Board. However, the speed with which a place name application is processed is dependent on a number of factors which include:

- Completeness of the application.
- Whether the site identified is on First Nation traditional or settlement land, federal or territorial lands.
- Whether the site identified is in a park.

The status of individual place name applications is tracked by means of a *Geographical Place Names Application Process Flow Sheet* (See Figure 1).



Yukon Geographical Place Names Board Members Appointed March 12, 1998 (*left to right*) Patrick Moore, Percy Henry, Diane Chisholm, Sam Johnston, Daniel Tlen, Gary White (Secretariat) and John Ritter.

NAMING FEATURES

Proposals to name or rename a geographical feature are received from a variety of sources, which can include Yukon residents, all levels of governments, interest groups, Canadian citizens and even foreign visitors. To evaluate each application in a consistent manner and to meet the terms and conditions set upon establishment of the Board, the Board uses a number of principles and procedures established by the Geographical Names Board of Canada. These include:

- First priority shall be given to names with long-standing local usage by the general public, particularly indigenous names in the local native language.
- The Board has no jurisdiction over the names of municipalities, parks, territorial division, and other legal bodies that have been created by, or result from, legislation.
- Names for rivers, lakes, creeks, and other physical features should be used for all parts of the feature, in other words, you would not call the Yukon River one name at Whitehorse and another name at Dawson City.
- Proposals to name a place or geographical feature after a specific person should show how the person to be commemorated has contributed significantly to the area where the feature is located. In most cases, personal names are only given to geographical features after a person's death.
- When proposing names for unnamed features – those for which no local names exist – preference will be given to names from native languages, names that describe the feature, names associated with historical events, and names of people who have made an important contribution to the area where the name is proposed.

- Geographical names should be recognizable words or acceptable combinations of words, and should be in good taste. Names that are discriminatory or derogatory from the point of view of race, sex, colour, creed, or political affiliation are not accepted.
- The spelling and accenting of names should agree with the rules of the language in which they are written.
- When considering the naming or renaming of places or features located within the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation, or when acting with a federal agency where joint jurisdiction over the naming of the place or feature exists, the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board shall consult with that Yukon First Nation or federal agency.
- A Yukon First Nation may name or rename any geographical features on settlement land and such place names shall be deemed to be approved by the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board.
- Traditional aboriginal place names shall be included, to the extent practicable and in accordance with map production specifications of Canada, on revised maps of the National Topographic Series.

SETTLEMENT LANDS

Under the Land Claim Final Agreement, the Board is directed to consider the following procedures when reviewing place name applications on Settlement Lands.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Tr'ondék Hwëch'in Elder Percy Henry, a fluent speaker of Hän and Gwich'in languages, was awarded the **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the Yukon Historical and Museums Association in March, 2000. Among his many heritage accomplishments was the creation of a Hän language dictionary and lesson booklet for use in the Robert Service School in Dawson City. Percy has been a member of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board since its establishment in 1995.
(Photo credit courtesy of the Yukon Historical and Museums Association).

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Many of the place names the Board reviews have traditional names, some of which have been used for hundreds of years. To assist Board members in their review of place name applications, Yukon elders, community or First Nation representatives, or language experts are frequently consulted. They assist the Board by ensuring the place names meaning, spelling, pronunciation and cultural significance are correctly recorded and reported.

50th Arctic Science Conference, Denali, Alaska – September 19-22, 1999

Members of the Board gave a presentation about the Yukon's place name process to approximately forty enthusiastic conference delegates consisting of language specialists, First Nation organization representatives, linguists and language policy makers. A feature of the presentation was a demonstration of the Yukon's language data base. Discussions highlighted the different naming processes in Alaska and Yukon.

The conference is held annually in different regions of the north to provide a perspective on scientific achievement in the North over the past 50 years, as well as a forum for presentation of current scientific findings. The Board's presentation was held as part of a session on northern languages.



Conference participants had a chance to meet and discuss place name processes in different jurisdictions at the 50th Arctic Science Conference, Denali, Alaska. From left to right **Matt Ganley, Diane Chisholm, Jake Tansy** and **Dr. James Karl**. Elder Jake Tansy is an expert on the Athapaskan place names in the area of Denali National Park.



John Ritter describing the work of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board at the 50th Arctic Science Conference, Denali, Alaska.



Delegates at the 50th Arctic Science Conference held in Denali, Alaska, September 19-22, 1999. From left to right, **Gary Holten, John Ritter, Jeff Leer** and **Giulia Oliverio**.

Yukon Geographical Place Name Board Open House – Dawson City

As part of its community consultation process, the Board held an evening Open House in Dawson City, Yukon on October 1, 1999.

Interested residents attended the open house which was held in the newly completed Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Cultural Centre. Among the highlights of the evening was a review of the Board's place name process and demonstration of the territory's computer place name data base.



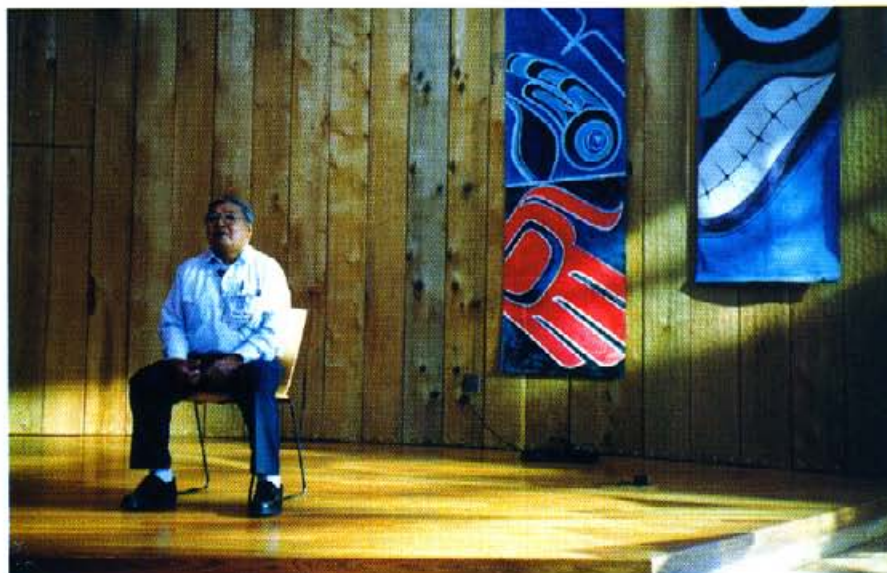
Diane Chisholm explaining the Yukon Geographical Place name process at an open house in Dawson City, October 1, 1999.



Gary White reviewing the Yukon's computerized place name data base at the Dawson City open house.

Oral History Conference, Anchorage, Alaska

Members of the Board attended the Oral History Conference held in Anchorage Alaska from October 6-10, 1999. This conference, organized by the Oral History Association, included workshops on oral history, exhibits from Native Americans about oral history, and technical sessions concerning the preservation of audio, video and film materials. This well attended conference provided the board with an opportunity to discuss the Yukon's place name process and answer specific questions raised by delegates.



Percy Henry discussing Yukon place names at the Oral History Conference held in Anchorage, Alaska from October 6-10, 1999. *(Photo courtesy of Yukon Archives)*

Adäka Conference, Whitehorse

Board members attended the Adäka conference held October 27-29 in Whitehorse to foster links among the many organizations, boards and individuals working to preserve Yukon history, traditions and heritage resources. Organized by the Yukon Heritage Resources Board, the conference consisted of workshops and forums where Board members had the opportunity to review and discuss the territory's place name processes and demonstrate how place names are one of the important means of preserving and recording Yukon history and culture.



The Adäka conference provided participants the opportunity to discuss Yukon heritage. From left to right, **Brian Walker, Anne Smith** and **Yukon Geographical Place Names Board members Percy Henry** (Photo courtesy of the Yukon Heritage Resources Board).

Umbrella Final Agreement – Five Year Implementation Review

In October 1999, the Chair reviewed the activities and accomplishments of the Board over the past five years with the 5-Year Implementation Review Working Group (consisting of representatives of the federal, territorial and Yukon first nation governments). In her review, she included a description of the Board's mandate as well as highlights of its activities over the past five years. These included 139 place name recommendations to the Minister of Tourism and the need for a Board toponymist to deal with the backlog of Yukon place names and anticipated names generated by the settling of land claims. The Chair also reviewed the benefits of the territory developing a territorial strategy for highway signage and the need to fully document all Yukon place names using site photographs and recordings of place names with Indian pronunciations.



Participants at the Adäka conference held in Whitehorse from October 27–29, 1999 broke into small discussion groups to discuss the many different aspects of Yukon heritage including place names. (Photo courtesy of the Yukon Heritage Resources Board)



Panel discussions by different heritage experts was an important part of the Adäka conference. **Yukon Geographical Place Names Board Chair Diane Chisholm** (second from the left) gave a presentation about Yukon's place name process during one of the panel sessions. (Photo courtesy of the Yukon Heritage Resources Board)

PLACE NAME APPLICATION REVIEW

During 1999/2000 the Board reviewed 13 new place name applications, 5 outstanding place name applications and responded to one request to name a site on behalf of a third party. A summary of the applications reviewed by the Board follows:

Applicant	Number of Place Name Applications
First Nation	11
Private Citizens	1
Outstanding Place Names	5
Carcross Tagish First Nation	2
Total Applications	19

Note – Applications received from the Selkirk First Nation were reviewed in consultation with representatives of the First Nation.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Need For A Full Time Toponymist

Similar to the past several years, the Board has been hampered in carrying out its mandate because it does not have access to the services of a trained and full-time toponymist. Place name applications received from Yukon First Nations and the public-at-large require additional research to clarify the accuracy of the names and background information, name spelling, exact latitude and longitude of locations, whether there are existing names for the site, status of land claim negotiations for the pertinent First Nation with regards to whether the site will be located on settlement land or traditional land, and whether there is joint jurisdiction over the naming of the site (e.g. Parks for the Kluane region). This work is undertaken by Heritage Branch who has assigned an employee on a part time basis to carry out these tasks.

In addition, a lot of technical support work has been carried out on a volunteer basis by Board members, associates and other linguistic experts to clarify place name pronunciation, spelling and other research work to substantiate and verify requests made by applicants. In other territories and provinces of Canada, government toponymists complete this work prior to a review by a public Board or government Minister.

At this time the Board is faced with a backlog of 126 place name applications from Yukon First Nations and individuals dating from 1988. A breakdown of these figures is illustrated in Table 3.

Applicant	Number of Applications	Year Submitted
Selkirk First Nation	6	1991
Little Salmon/Carmacks	9	1992
Carcross Tagish First Nation	1	1992
Champagne/Aishihik First Nation	2	1992
Teslin Tlingit Council	91	1988
Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation	1	1992
Miscellaneous Applications	16	1988-1993
Total	126	

Notwithstanding this backlog of applications, there is a continuing need for technical toponymic support to review and process new applications. Considering the size of the territory, with its large land mass and large number of geographic features, and the changes that are occurring at the Yukon First Nations level, the volume of place name applications will likely increase.

In a brief to the Land Claims Secretariat as part of its Five Year Implementation Review, the Board recommended the establishment of full-time toponymist and toponymist trainee position in Heritage Branch.

A Need For Place Name Highway Signage

A number of recently approved place names sites are located along major Yukon highways. In response to applicant's requests and in order to promote an awareness of local names and their cultural significance, the Board has recommended that highway signs be erected illustrating the new place names. The Board will continue to encourage the territorial government's *Highway Sign Committee* to install signage for place names at appropriate locations.

OVER THE NEXT YEAR

Over the next year the Board will continue to review the backlog of place name applications as well as process new applications. As part of this process, members will consult with applicants, First Nations, experts and the public to ensure all place names submitted are accurately documented before making their recommendation to the Minister of Tourism.

Other initiatives planned by the Board for the coming year include a Board WEB site, meeting with community representatives to inform and discuss the Board's place name application process and carrying out a place name photo documentation program in the Old Crow and Teslin areas.

YUKON PLACE NAME INFORMATION

Information about Yukon and other Canadian place names can be obtained by consulting the Geographical Names Board of Canada data base. Information about the data base can be obtained from:

Geo Names
Natural Resources Canada
634 - 615 Booth Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0E9
<http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca>

For information about the Yukon's geographical place name application process contact:

Yukon Heritage Branch
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada Y1A 2C6
Telephone: (867) 667-5386

If you have further questions or require additional information about the activities and mandate of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board, please contact the:

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

P.O. Box 31164
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada Y1A 5P7
Phone: (867) 393-3982
Fax: (867) 667-7006

GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE NAMES APPLICATION PROCESS FLOW CHART

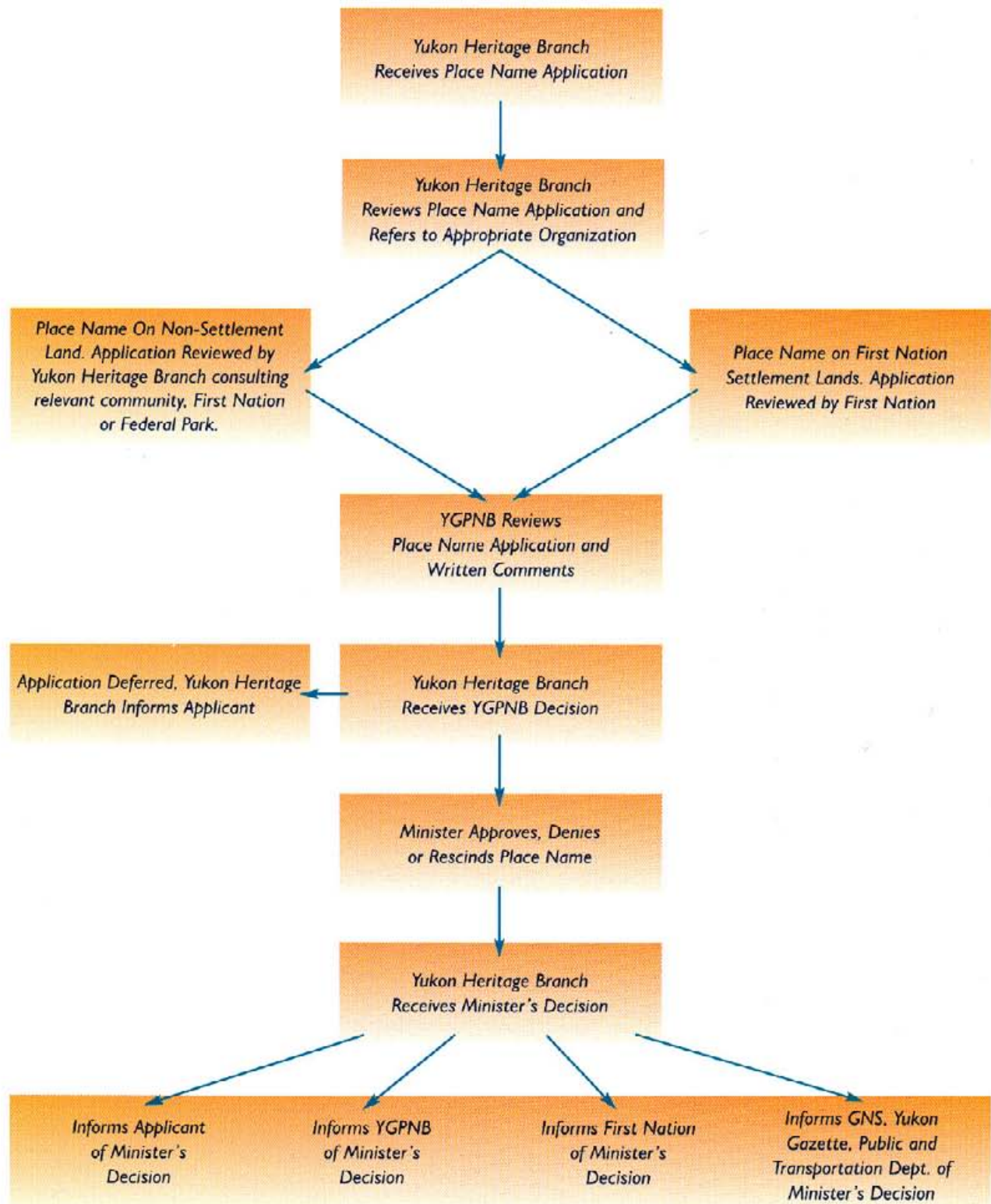


FIGURE 1

Page left intentionally blank.

**YUKON
GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE
NAMES BOARD**

Financial Statements

(Unaudited - see Review Engagement Report)

March 31, 2000

Review Engagement Report	14
Financial Statements	
Statement of Revenue and Expenditures	15
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	16
Balance Sheet	17
Statement of Cash Flows	18
Notes to Financial Statements	19

Review Engagement Report

**To the Members of
Yukon Geographical Place Names Board**

We have reviewed the balance sheet of Yukon Geographical Place Names Board as at March 31, 2000 and the statements of revenue and expenditures, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. Our review was made in accordance with generally accepted standards for review engagements and accordingly consisted primarily of enquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to us by the company.

A review does not constitute an audit and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

The previous years financial statements were reviewed by other chartered accountants.

Whitehorse, YT

July 21, 2000


Chartered Accountants

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
(Unaudited - see Review Engagement Report)

For the year ended March 31,	2000	1999
Revenue		
Contribution - Yukon	\$ 58,073	\$ 57,542
Investment Income	2,023	2,570
	60,096	60,112
Expenditures		
Annual report	3,635	261
Bank charges and interest	161	-
Consultation and development costs	183	-
Documentation costs	8,704	-
Honoraria	5,563	3,500
Insurance	422	-
Office equipment	811	6,624
Office expense	1,058	2,246
Professional fees	3,104	1,028
Registration fees	814	-
Research	-	745
Secretariat	19,480	30,990
Telephone	212	176
Training	-	411
Travel and accommodation	11,181	4,436
	55,328	50,417
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 4,768	\$ 9,695

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31,

2000

1999

	Invested in capital assets	Unrestricted	Total	Total
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$ 7,335	\$ 111,780	\$ 119,115	\$ 102,796
Invested in capital assets	811	-	811	6,624
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	-	4,768	4,768	9,695
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 8,146	\$ 116,548	\$ 124,694	\$ 119,115

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

Balance Sheet
(Unaudited - see Review Engagement Report)

As at March 31, 2000 1999

Assets

Current

Cash	\$ 114,731	\$ 113,087
Accounts receivable	2,960	2,543
Prepaid expenses	77	-

	117,768	115,630
--	---------	---------

Capital assets (note 1)

	8,146	7,335
--	-------	-------

	\$ 125,914	\$ 122,965
--	------------	------------

Liabilities

Current

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,220	\$ 3,850
--	----------	----------

Net assets

Invested in capital assets (note 1)	8,146	7,335
-------------------------------------	-------	-------

Unrestricted net assets	116,548	111,780
-------------------------	---------	---------

	124,694	119,115
--	---------	---------

	\$ 125,914	\$ 122,965
--	------------	------------

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Deane Chastko, Member

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

Statement of Cash Flows
(Unaudited - see Review Engagement Report)

For the year ended March 31,	2000	1999
Cash provided by (used in)		
Operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ 4,768	\$ 9,695
Change in non-cash operating working capital		
Accounts receivable	(417)	(885)
Prepaid expenses	(77)	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(2,630)	(3,194)
	1,644	5,616
Investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(811)	(6,624)
Increase in net assets invested in capital assets	811	6,624
	-	-
Increase (decrease) in cash	1,644	5,616
Cash, beginning of year	113,087	107,471
Cash, end of year	\$ 114,731	\$ 113,087

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

**Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited - see Review Engagement Report)**

March 31, 2000

1. Accounting Policies

The organization is a non-profit entity established under the Umbrella Final Agreement, passed by the Government of Canada and Government of Yukon, to consider and recommend the naming or re-naming of places or features located within the Yukon, to the Yukon Minister of Heritage.

(a) Capital assets

Capital assets are expensed when they are purchased and are recorded on the balance sheet at their historical cost. The net assets invested in capital assets account represents the historical cost of all capital assets less the principal amount of any debt outstanding on the purchase of the assets.

(b) Revenue

Revenue from grants is recorded when received or receivable.

(c) Financial instruments

All significant financial assets, financial liabilities and equity instruments of the board are either recognized or disclosed in the financial statements together with available information for a reasonable assessment of future cash flows, interest rate risk and credit risk.

2. Uncertainties - Year 2000 Computer Issue

Although January 1, 2000 has passed it is still not possible to conclude that all aspects of the Year 2000 Issue that may affect the entity, including those related customers, suppliers, or other third parties, have been fully resolved.



Cover Photo:

Consulting Yukoners about the place name process is an important part of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board's work. The Board held an open house in Dawson City on October 1, 1999.

