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# Klondike

National Historic Sites of Canada

## Management Plan

2018





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by the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, 2018.

Klondike National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan, 2018.

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## Foreword



Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world.

This vast network of national parks, historic sites, and marine conservation areas represent the very best that Canada has to offer and tell stories of who we are, including the history, cultures and contributions of Indigenous peoples.

Management plans are key accountability documents for the management of heritage places. They are developed through extensive consultation and articulate a long-term vision, set strategic management direction and establish objectives for Parks Canada places.

This management plan represents Parks Canada's continued commitment to protect and present Klondike National Historic Sites for the benefit of present and future generations.

The input from many dedicated individuals and organizations, including Indigenous peoples, local and regional residents, visitors and stakeholders has been invaluable in helping shape this plan.

Parks Canada will report on progress toward achieving the objectives for Klondike National Historic Sites and review this management plan every ten years, or sooner if required.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this management plan for their contributions and their commitment to the future of this national treasure. I am pleased to approve the Klondike National Historic Sites Management Plan.

Daniel Watson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Canada



## Recommendations

*Approved by:*

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Daniel Watson  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Parks Canada*



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Diane Wilson  
*Field Unit Superintendent*  
*Yukon Field Unit*  
*Parks Canada*



## Executive Summary

The Klondike National Historic Sites of Canada include five distinct national historic sites managed by Parks Canada in and around Dawson City, namely the Dawson Historical Complex; Dredge No. 4; S.S. *Keno*; and the Former Territorial Court House. Discovery Claim National Historic Site of Canada is managed in cooperation with the Klondike Visitor's Association.

A vision and key strategies with accompanying objectives and targets, have been developed to guide management of the Klondike National Historic Sites over the next 10 years. This was done in consultation with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (First Nation), valued stakeholders and partners, and the public. The three complementary and inter-woven management key strategies include:

1. **The Klondike Unites: Welcoming Canada and the world by maintaining exceptional programming, and growing site visitation and revenue;**
2. **Prospecting for Opportunities: Ensuring protection and encouraging use of historic structures; and,**
3. **Step into our Community and into History: Developing a long-term strategy for the care and use of the site's collection of artefacts.**

This plan will be implemented collaboratively. A Site Advisory Committee comprised of key partners and stakeholders will be established. This committee will ensure diverse voices are engaged in the management and operation of Klondike National Historic Sites and will help communication and annual reporting of the sites' progress and accomplishments.



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## 1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada manages one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. The Agency's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national park, national marine conservation area, heritage canal and those national historic sites administered by Parks Canada supports the Agency's vision:

"Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada."

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by the Agency. The *Klondike National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan*, approved by the Chief Executive Officer for the Parks Canada Agency, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of the Agency's mandate.

Parks Canada's many stakeholders and partners, including the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in whose traditional territory Klondike National Historic Sites is located, helped shape this plan, which sets clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of these sites by articulating a vision, key strategies and objectives. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of this management plan to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement on the management of Klondike National Historic Sites in years to come.

## 2.0 Significance of Klondike National Historic Sites

The Klondike National Historic Sites include five distinct national historic sites managed by Parks Canada in and around Dawson City, namely the Dawson Historical Complex; Dredge No. 4; S.S. *Keno*; and the Former Territorial Court House National Historic Site of Canada. Discovery Claim National Historic Site of Canada is managed in cooperation with the Klondike Visitor's Association. All five sites are part of the assemblage of national historic sites related to the Klondike Gold Rush (along with Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site of Canada in northern British Columbia, which is also managed by Parks Canada).

Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site reflects the social, economic and political components that shaped the Yukon region over the last century. This site consists of over two dozen buildings located in Dawson City's downtown core. Cultural resources of national historic significance within the Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site include: the Commissioner's Residence, the Old Post Office, the Robert Service Cabin, Ruby's Place, Bigg's Blacksmith Shop, the Dawson Daily News, the Klondike Thawing Machine Company, the Northwest Mounted Police Married Officer's Quarters, the Bank of British North America, and reconstructions of the Red Feather Saloon and the Palace Grand Theatre.

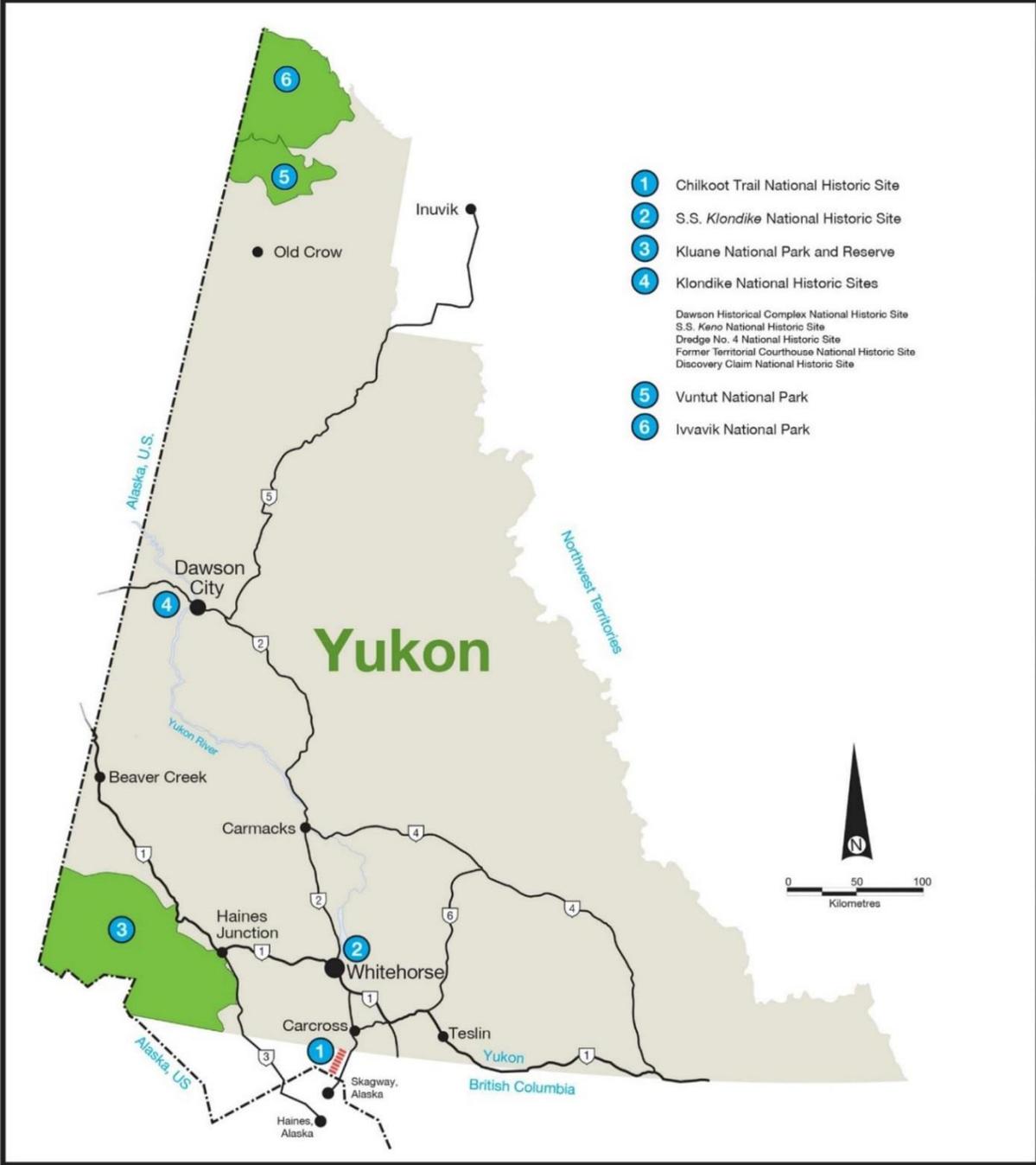
The S.S. *Keno* National Historic Site, constructed in 1922, rests on Dawson City's scenic waterfront, between Front Street and the Yukon River. Although, the S.S. *Keno* National Historic Site was the smallest sternwheeler in the British Yukon Navigation Company's fleet, the vessel is integral to telling the story of gold rush river transportation. This history includes the important role of First Nations in supporting this transportation system.

The Former Territorial Court House National Historic Site on Front Street asserts its presence as you drive into Dawson City, located 550 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse. This visual impact was intended to impress upon visitors and newcomers the power and authority of the federal government in the Yukon Territory. The building's classically inspired architecture is a rare example of a turn-of-the-century courthouse executed in wood, and is rated as Classified, the highest possible rating by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO).

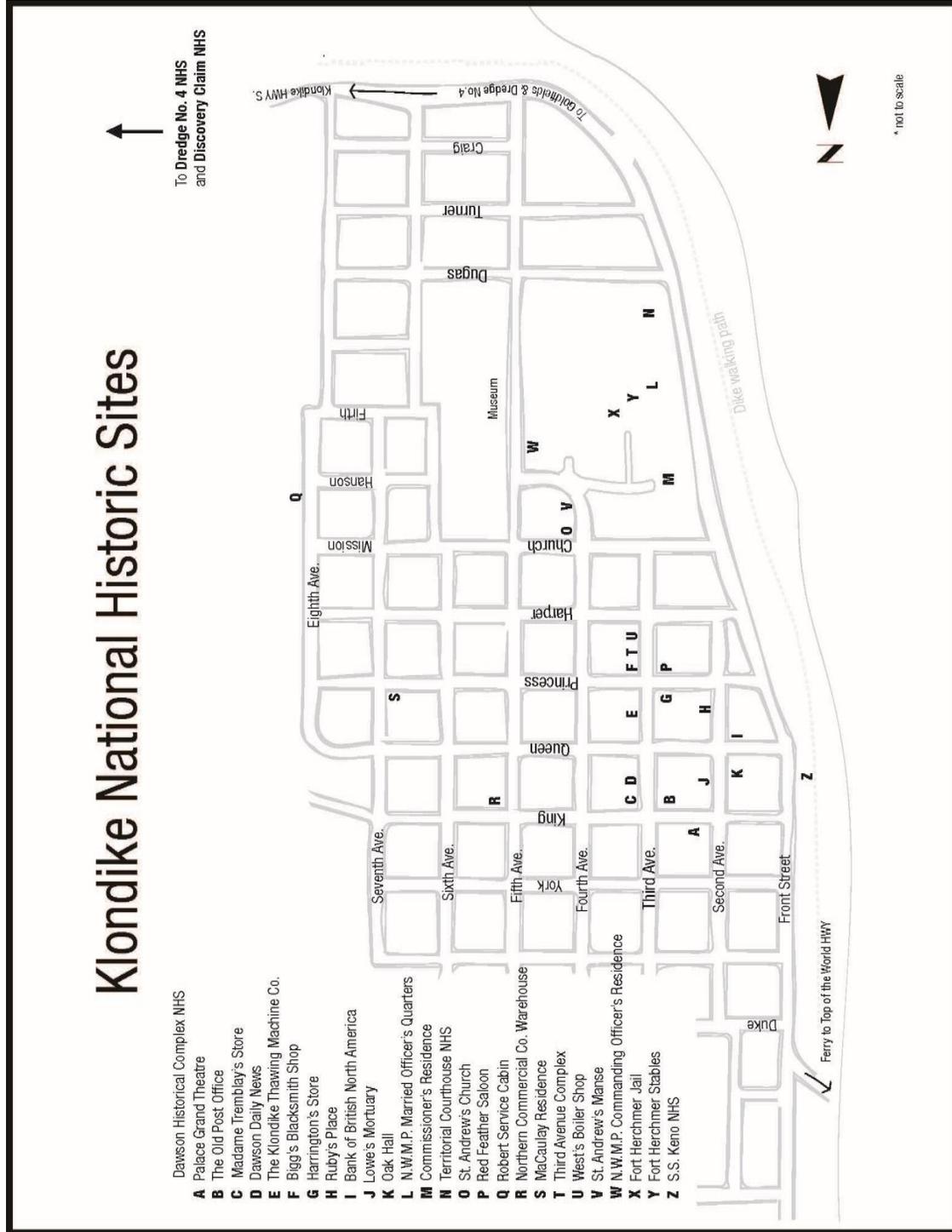
The massive wooden-hulled Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site commemorates large-scale corporate mining in northern Canada. Dredge No. 4, a bucket line dredge, stands eight stories high and is located 14 kilometres southeast of Dawson City on the west bank of Bonanza Creek. From 1899 to 1966, huge machines dug up the ground of the Klondike region to extract gold, forever changing the landscape. Bear Creek Compound is associated with Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site. The compound is an industrial complex of approximately 60 buildings, 30 minor structures and thousands of site-specific artefacts located in the Klondike River valley. There are 18 buildings designated as Recognized by FHBRO in Bear Creek Compound.

Discovery Claim National Historic Site is the site of the original discovery of gold in Bonanza Creek, which sparked the Klondike Gold Rush. Staked by George Carmack on August 17, 1896, the site remains a legally defined mining claim, located 15 kilometres up Bonanza Creek from its confluence with the Klondike River. This site is managed in cooperation with Klondike Visitor's Association.

Map 1: Regional Setting



Map 2: Klondike National Historic Sites



### 3.0 Planning Context

Dawson City is a vibrant heritage community and Klondike National Historic Sites intertwine with its daily life. Parks Canada owns and manages 11 cultural resources of national significance and 19 of other heritage value within the city itself. Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office designations include six Classified and 20 Recognized structures.

These resources help shape the historic look and feel of Dawson so highly valued by locals and visitors alike. Parks Canada shares the passion for Klondike history and the celebration of cultural resources with the local community, heritage and tourism stakeholders. In addition to structures owned by Parks Canada, there are six buildings with separate Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designations owned by others, including the Anglican Church, Town of Dawson City, Yukon Government, and local businesses. Tr'ochëk National Historic Site, located across the Klondike River from the Dawson Historical Complex, is owned and operated by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Throughout the region, there are other buildings and landscapes that have heritage values recognized by the Yukon Government, the Town of Dawson City, and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Dawson City has been recognized nationally for its best efforts to preserve municipal heritage.

The implementation of the 2004 Management Plan for the Klondike National Historic Sites resulted in a number of successful initiatives with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, municipal and territorial levels of government and community based groups. Parks Canada has worked actively as part of a working group to achieve World Heritage Status for the Klondike region and has advanced a program to maintain and improve the heritage structures for all sites. Team members have supported the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in developing a management plan for Tr'ochëk National Historic Site and routinely collaborate on joint programming, promotion and cultural / interpretive training. Visitor experience programming is more dynamic, new creative programs have been developed, and cultural resources are well showcased.

This management plan encompasses all five national historic sites owned and managed by Parks Canada and provides long-term direction in the form of key strategies, objectives and targets. The plan was developed in consultation with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, partners, stakeholders and the public. The key planning considerations and critical management priorities identified for the 10-year planning period include:

- **Top quality, engaging programming:** Parks Canada Agency works with others to encourage visitors to explore Dawson City, and recognizes the significant investment visitors make to travel here. Parks Canada employees at the Klondike National Historic Sites have a reputation for excellence in storytelling and visitor experience. Working together to deliver engaging, high quality visitor experiences that will continue to attract visitors to Dawson City is a priority for Parks Canada.
- **Historic structures:** Of the various cultural resources at Klondike National Historic Sites, the heritage structures face the most visible decline. Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site contains over 40 heritage buildings. Extreme climate, changes in permafrost stability, and an extremely short construction season, challenge our ability to maintain these structures. The development and implementation of a creative use and occupancy strategy will address some of the challenges in the protection and preservation of these important heritage structures.

- **Artefact collection:** The Klondike National Historic Sites' artefact collection is extensive. The majority of movable artefacts are stored appropriately and not under immediate threat. Many artefacts are used in programs, behind the scenes tours, and in static exhibits at various locations. Maintenance of the collection requires significant resources. Parks Canada is committed to working with the larger heritage community to develop a long-term strategy for the use and care of the site's collection of moveable artefacts.

## 4.0 Vision

Gold has shaped societies and defined world economies. It is the commodity behind one of the world's most famous and transformative events – the discovery of gold in the Klondike and the ensuing gold rush of 1898.

A visit to Dawson City and to Parks Canada's five national historic sites in the Klondike is the passport to personally experience and understand this internationally significant event.

The Klondike Gold Rush is far more than just a moment in time. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in connection to this area stretches back beyond memory. Used to flourishing in the face of extreme circumstances – including extreme weather and food scarcity, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in adapted to the rapidly changing social and economic dynamics of the gold rush. The First Nation continues to share their traditional territory with newcomers and remains a strong steward of the land.

In Dawson City and throughout the Klondike, heritage is at the forefront. Modern placer mining is everywhere. Although the industry has evolved, it still relies on the same principles and techniques to extract gold, evident in the goldfields surrounding Dawson City today.

Dawson City, remotely located at 64° North latitude, is a heritage destination like no other. The entire community, of which Parks Canada is a part, works together to celebrate its heritage through the authentic structures, the vintage boardwalks, the powerful landscapes, and through the lives and stories of the people.

The human stories are stirring and emotional. The Klondike experience is unique in the world. A visit to this most authentic setting creates a lasting memory.

## 5.0 Key Strategies

Key strategies are broad management approaches that will direct management activities over the next 10 years, working toward the vision for the Klondike National Historic Sites. Each key strategy has corresponding objectives and targets. The targets are designed to measure the success in achieving objectives over the implementation period.

At the outset of management plan implementation, Parks Canada will establish a Site Advisory Committee comprised of key partners and stakeholders. This committee will engage committed organizations and individuals in the protection and presentation of Klondike National Historic Sites, forging a long-term collaborative environment.

## **Key Strategy 1: The Klondike Unites: Welcoming Canada and the World**

This strategy is about reaching Canadians and the world through innovative visitor programs and messages, building public awareness, increasing site visitation, and increasing revenue. Increased exposure for the Klondike National Historic Sites will raise awareness of Dawson City and surrounding areas as a tourism destination for high quality cultural and natural experiences.

### Objective 1.1

Strategic marketing, partnerships, enhanced non-personal visitor experience and public outreach activities lead to increased total visitation.

#### Targets:

- Continue to grow annual visitation by an average of 2% per year.
- Increase the total percentage of visitors to Dawson City who participate in Klondike National Historic Sites' programs (personal and non-personal) by an average of 2% per year.

### Objective 1.2

Dawson City is a dynamic learning environment that captures the imagination of our guests with high quality visitor experiences designed to meet changing visitor expectations and needs.

#### Targets:

- On average 90% of visitors are satisfied with their visit.
- Partnering and commercial business initiatives (such as packages, shared promotions, etc.) result in increased visitor experience opportunities.

### Objective 1.3

Collaboration with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in identifies, promotes and supports employment and economic opportunities for their citizens, and advances and promotes the stories of Dawson City, the Klondike and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

#### Target:

- Parks Canada respects and supports the *Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement* and identifies and collaborates on opportunities that achieve mutual objectives.

### Objective 1.4

New technologies provide virtual tourists and urban Canadians with increased accessibility to Klondike stories, themes and artefacts.

#### Targets:

- New virtual experiences are developed and implemented within five years of plan approval.
- Klondike National Historic Sites' webpage visitation increases by 10% within five years of plan approval.

### Objective 1.5

Collaboration with Yukon Government and the tourism industry leads to effective promotion of Dawson City as nationally significant destination.

## Targets:

- The percentage of Canadians who understand and appreciate the significance of the Klondike National Historic Sites has increased.
- Media stories and promotions are an accurate and positive portrayal of visitor experience opportunities.

## Objective 1.6

Klondike National Historic Sites supports the World Heritage Site nomination process and will be involved in the on-going management of the Tr'ondëk-Klondike World Heritage Site pending successful designation.

## Target:

- Parks Canada's efforts to support the nomination and, if designated, the future World Heritage Site, are effective, meaningful, and valued by the local advisory committee and the broader Dawson community.

## Key Strategy 2: Prospecting for Opportunities

Sustainable solutions for the long-term stewardship of Klondike National Historic Sites' realty holdings are needed. This strategy is about involving stakeholders and partners in occupying, sharing and caring for historic structures. This will lead to new opportunities for visitors to explore and discover the Klondike National Historic Sites.

## Objective 2.1

Identify opportunities for alternate use and adaptive reuse of buildings, asset enhancement and reduction of operating costs, while increasing realty revenue for re-investment in historic structure maintenance.

## Targets:

- A heritage building use and occupancy strategy is developed and implemented.
- Increased use and care of historic structures by third parties, resulting in an increase of leases and associated realty revenue.

## Objective 2.2

Working with partners, develop high quality, iconic experiences in Dawson City, focussing on high visibility heritage structures.

## Target:

- The Palace Grand Theatre hosts a program of live performances within five years of plan approval.

## Objective 2.3

Working with partners, consider private sector, non-profit and/or community-based proposals for increasing community and visitor access and use of Bear Creek Compound.

## Target:

- Increase in the number of partnering and/or commercial business initiatives that result in visitor and community experience opportunities, or in the adaptive reuse of heritage structures.

### **Key Strategy 3: Step into our Community and into History**

The primary focus of this strategy is to evaluate the Klondike's extensive collection of movable artefacts, and to develop a plan for future use of the collection. To be developed in consultation with the heritage community, the plan will explore how to increase access and utilization of key resources as well as consider the possible divestiture of artefacts that do not best represent or contribute to the protection, presentation and enjoyment of Klondike National Historic Sites.

#### **Objective 3.1**

Evaluate the extensive collection of artefacts to determine those components of the collection that best represent the site's commemorative themes, including those that best contribute to visitor experience opportunities.

#### **Targets:**

- Commemorative integrity rating is improved.
- The collection is assessed, consolidated and in use.

#### **Objective 3.2**

The heritage and local community of Dawson City are engaged in the stewardship of Klondike cultural resources.

#### **Target:**

- The Site Advisory Committee meets formally on an annual basis.

## **6.0 Summary of Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Parks Canada is responsible for assessing and mitigating the impacts of management actions on ecosystems and on cultural resources. The *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* requires a strategic environmental assessment of all plans and policy submitted to the federal Cabinet or to a Minister for approval deemed to have important positive or negative environmental effects.

A strategic environmental assessment was undertaken on this management plan, and the management direction found within has been adjusted to respond to findings. The following is a summary of the environmental assessment:

Strategic environmental assessments of management plans provide an opportunity to identify the broad and unintended impacts of proposed management actions, and to assess the cumulative effects of multiple activities on the environment.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment evaluated the potential for effects on cultural and natural resources, visitor experience, public education and awareness, and relationships with communities and Indigenous partners. This evaluation considered the targets outlined in the plan to determine if they might have adverse or positive environmental effects. The implementation of this plan will improve commemorative integrity through initiatives such as:

- Increased awareness and understanding of the commemorative intent of Klondike National Historic Sites;
- Collaboration with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to enhance relationships and provide opportunities for mutual benefit, and;
- Stewardship of heritage resources.

The management plan identifies several targets as having the potential to result in positive interactions with the environment:

- Partnerships to increase the profile of Klondike National Historic Sites will increase visitation to the sites. Increased visitation along with high quality programming will increase awareness and understanding of reasons for designation as national historic sites;
- Collaboration with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in will enhance relationships and provide an opportunity for mutual benefits;
- Greater communication between Klondike National Historic Sites and community members to foster stewardship;
- Increased focus on the management and maintenance of heritage resources related to reasons for commemoration and heritage value; and
- Increased use and occupancy of historic buildings to increase the longevity of these resources.

Impacts to the natural environment and cultural resources are expected to be minimal. Project level assessments will be carried out for projects and activities listed in the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, Assessable Activities, Exceptions and Executive Committee Projects Regulations*.

The implementation of the management plan will help achieve the *2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* by protecting the natural environment in which the national historic sites are situated and management of contaminated sites (under the themes Sustainably Managed Lands and Forests and Safe and Healthy Communities).

The Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that the *Klondike National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan* would have several positive effects and is not likely to cause any important negative effects.