



Yukon Museums Strategy

**Cultural Services Branch
Department of Tourism and Culture
Government of Yukon
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Museum Definition

In the *Yukon Museums Strategy*, the definition of a museum is an elaboration of the definition included in the *Museums Policy* (1989). Amendments made to the definition reflect the current societal and economic functions of Yukon museums.

In Yukon, a Cultural/Heritage Centre or Interpretive Centre, including those owned by First Nations, is considered to be a museum.

A museum:

- May be a non-profit institution or an institution governed by a non-profit society incorporated under the Yukon Societies Act, or by a municipal government, or by a Yukon First Nation.
- Is a permanent institution with the space required to carry out museological functions and which is mandated in the service of society and for its development.
- Functions to acquire, conserve, research, interpret, communicate, and exhibit the material evidence of Yukoners and their environment for the purposes of education, enjoyment, and cultural awareness.
- Is open to the public.

Introduction

The *Yukon Museums Strategy* was developed under the advisement and guidance of the Museums Strategy Advisory Committee. The Strategy represents the shared vision and aspirations of the heritage and museum communities. Its future success will be entirely dependent on the ongoing participation and cooperation of government agencies, community organizations and dedicated individuals who share a common understanding of the intrinsic value and importance of our cultural heritage in Yukon.

The Government of Yukon wishes to express its gratitude for the contributions of the partners in the *Yukon Museums Strategy* process.

Interpretive Centres
Yukon Council of Archives
Yukon First Nations Cultural/Heritage Centres
Yukon Heritage Resources Board (Observer Status)
Yukon Historical and Museums Association
Yukon Museums

Unique Requirements of Yukon First Nations

The Yukon Museums Strategy recognizes the unique developmental needs of Yukon First Nation Cultural/Heritage Centres and their role as vital and active participants in the museum community.

The strategy recognizes that the responsibility for development and maintenance of Cultural/Heritage Centres is subject to negotiations between Yukon, Canada and individual First Nations as provided for in the Umbrella Final Agreement and individual Land Claims agreements. The Museums Strategy complements the dialogue on these Centres through consideration of issues such as Repatriation, while recognizing the independence of the various processes underway to achieve their longer-term development and viability.

In 2004, Yukon Government announced the First Nation Cultural/Heritage Centre Funding Program to help Yukon First Nations preserve and protect their culture. The fund will provide annual support for Cultural/ Heritage Centre operation and programs.

Strategy Development Process

In 2001, Yukon Government commissioned the company of Barkley & Janes to conduct a review of the heritage sector in Yukon. The review process was driven by a shared belief within government and the heritage community that fundamental changes were required to the way museums resources are managed in Yukon. The dialogue revealed issues and challenges faced by museum institutions including government resources and support services, fatigue among professional and volunteer workers, and a profound need for increased communication, partnership and solidarity within the museum community. The process was an opportunity for Yukoners to express themselves openly, listen to each other, resolve their differences, and join together to create a common vision for the future management of museum resources in Yukon.

The findings of the year-long review process were contained in the 2002 Barkley & Janes report *Strategies for Sustaining Yukon's Museums*. The *Yukon Museums Strategy* is based on key issues identified by this report as well as information from earlier studies including;

- *Yukon Historical Resources Board Adaka Conference Proceedings* (1999)
- *Museums Artifact Conservation Policy* (1992)
- *Museums Policy* (1989)
- *Yukon Museum Marketing Plan* (1989)
- *Yukon Museums Policy and System Plan* (1986)
- *Museums in Yukon: A Profile and Training Report* (1980).

Strategies for Sustaining Yukon's Museums clearly identified the need for regeneration and restructuring in the museums sector. In response to the need for change, the Cultural Services Branch formed a working partnership with museum related organizations through the Yukon Museums Strategy Advisory Committee to jointly confront the challenges facing museum development in Yukon.

Strategies for Sustaining Yukon's Museums identified key areas of importance to the museum community:

1. The necessity for new funding for museums.
2. The necessity for increased communication and joint planning between government and community-based institutions.
3. Funding for institutions and programs directly operated by Yukon Government.
4. The perception that resources for existing museums may decline with the development of First Nation Cultural/Heritage Centres that also require support from Yukon Government.

5. Concern that there may be an expectation that the museum community can support cultural tourism and the heritage community without new funding to develop museums as attractions or sites for material culture and natural history preservation.
6. Concern over declining museological programs due to understaffing, staff fatigue and reliance on volunteer efforts that are diminishing due to volunteer burnout.

The *Yukon Museums Strategy* was developed to respond to these issues and to provide strategic direction for future working relationships between government and community institutions, planning for the museum sector, and funding initiatives. Deployment of the strategy is subject to annual budget considerations. The *Yukon Museums Strategy* outlines the commitment of the Government of Yukon to:

- Recognize and affirm the social and economic importance of preserving history and culture through Yukon museums.
- Ensure the integrity of strong, independent, community museums operated by local, non-profit, volunteer boards, or municipal governments, or First Nation Governments.
- Plan for long-term development of Yukon's existing and future museums.
- Work in conjunction with museums, Yukon Historical and Museums Association, First Nations, and other stakeholders to ensure that museums have access to the resources necessary for their growth and development.
- Continue to work with First Nation, municipal and federal governments to secure multi-source funding agreements for heritage programs and organizations.
- Provide support and assistance to First Nations in their efforts to repatriate artifacts and implement the objectives of Chapter 13 of the Umbrella Final Agreement.
- The *Yukon Museums Strategy* addresses all of the issues and recommendations included in the *Strategies for Maintaining Yukon's Museums* Report.

The *Yukon Museums Strategy* will be reviewed and amended on an annual basis. The Tourism and Culture Department will commission an evaluation of the *Yukon Museums Strategy* by an independent reviewer by 2010.

Yukon Museums Strategy

Vision...*our vision of the future*

The museum community is recognized and valued for its social, cultural and economic contribution to Yukon society. Museums perform a vital service in preserving cultural artifacts, traditions and natural history. They involve communities in the celebration of our cultural traditions and realize the potential of museum resources to support the growth of cultural tourism and provide economic opportunities throughout the territory. Yukon Government values the contributions of museums and works in partnership with the museum community to set planning priorities, provide resources to empower organizations, and support the successful development and operation of institutions.

Desired Results...*the results we will target to achieve our vision*

1. Museums have access to the financial, advisory, and technical support necessary to maintain and enhance their museological operations so that Yukoners and visitors can benefit from a better understanding and appreciation of the Yukon's unique history and culture.
2. A museum community that is an empowered and active participant in the social, cultural and economic fabric of Yukon society.
3. Tourism and Culture provides client services and resources to the museum sector, partnership opportunities and structured processes for ongoing consultation on priorities and planning in the museum sector.

Guiding Principles...*The principles we will use to guide our decisions and actions*

- **Accessibility** - Government support will be accessible to all Yukon museums.
- **Accountability** – Participants in the *Yukon Museums Strategy* process commit to the principles of accountability and transparency in administrative processes and community relationships.
- **Flexibility** – All participants in the *Yukon Museums Strategy* process understand the need to manage change on an ongoing basis.
- **Collaboration** - Government and community will work collaboratively on museum issues.
- **Partnerships** - Active partnerships between government, business, cultural and economic industry associations and the archival and museum community will provide the greatest opportunities for culture preservation and museum development.
- **Self-determination** – Government will respect and support the right of museum organizations to determine their own futures and to have a voice in policy and planning processes that affect them.
- **Recognition** – Museums are valued, both as institutions for preserving and sharing history and culture, and as contributors to the cultural economy on a regional and national basis.
- **Excellence** – Yukon Government will base funding decisions on merit rather than entitlement and will use resources to support and reward excellence in programming and organizational management.
- **Preservation** - All decisions and actions will reflect the need to value, protect and preserve museum resources.
- **Learning** – Museums are valued as learning institutions in the community.

Strategies...*strategic directions we will pursue to achieve our desired results*

1. **Communication** – Cultural Services Branch will maintain communication linkages with museums and the wider heritage community to ensure effective planning and services.
2. **Funding** – Yukon Government will provide increased funding for museums and will offer museums greater flexibility in the use of resources.
3. **Workforce** – The Cultural Services Branch will work with museums individually and collectively to identify employment funding and opportunities for professional development and support for museum employees.
4. **Volunteers** – The Cultural Services Branch will work in partnership with museums and other community based organizations to assist museums to locate support and assistance in their recruitment, training, management, and recognition of volunteer workers and board members.
5. **Marketing** – Yukon Museums Strategy partners will seek opportunities to market museums as sites for cultural preservation and community learning and enjoyment as well as tourism.
6. **Capacity** – The Cultural Services Branch will support the growth of the museum community by assisting museums to identify community support, build their capacity as organizations, and develop quality museological programs.
7. **Repatriation** – Tourism and Culture, where practicable, will assist First Nation Governments to develop programs, staff and facilities to enable the repatriation of moveable and documentary heritage resources relating to the culture and history of Yukon First Nations.
8. **Beringia Interpretive Centre** – The Beringia Interpretive Centre, operated by Cultural Services Branch, will serve as an active partner in museum development and as a training resource for other museums in Yukon.
9. **Heritage Resource Centre** – The Cultural Services Branch will involve the museum community in any future planning for the development of a facility to house heritage, natural history, arts and culture programs and to provide technical assistance to the museum community.
10. **Yukon Archives** – The Cultural Services Branch will better communicate the mandate and services of the Yukon Archives.

Strategies, Actions and Performance Indicators

1.0 Communication – The Cultural Services Branch will maintain communication linkages with museums and the wider heritage community to ensure effective planning and services.

Success Indicators:

- *Active participation of community in planning processes.*
- *Satisfaction in the process as expressed by community organizations.*
- *Effective planning to resolve issues and develop the museum sector.*

- 1.1 The Cultural Services Branch will work with the museum community to
- Establish ongoing communication linkages and receive input from museum stakeholders.
 - Develop communications and information on Yukon museums and the role of museums in society.
 - Establish a forum for museums to discuss issues and develop partnerships and shared plans.
 - Develop web-based communications such as a museums web-site, newsletter, and e-mail list-serve.
- 1.2 The Cultural Services Branch will facilitate information sharing by:
- Sharing knowledge and information resident in the Beringia Centre.
 - Sharing government databases with museums and First Nation Governments and encouraging database sharing between institutions.

2.0 Funding - Yukon Government will provide increased funding for museums and will offer museums greater flexibility in the use of resources.

Success Indicators:

- *Funding to organizations.*
- *Increased flexibility in funding agreements.*
- *Satisfaction expressed by museums about funding agreements.*

- 2.1 The Cultural Services Branch will work with Yukon museums to address their long-term operations, maintenance and capital needs.
- 2.2 The Cultural Services Branch will work with all government and community stakeholders to negotiate multi-year and multi-source funding agreements.
- 2.3 The Cultural Services Branch will provide new funding for First Nation Cultural/Heritage Centres through the Yukon First Nation Cultural/Heritage Centre Funding Program.

- 2.4 The Cultural Services Branch will restructure its funding programs:
- Establish a methodology for providing stable three-year operations and maintenance funding agreements.
 - Strengthen joint funding relationships with agencies representing local, municipal, federal, and First Nations governments.
 - Assist, where possible, museums to increase earned revenue in areas such as rental space, fundraising, admissions, and gift product development and sales.
 - Assist, where possible, in identifying opportunities to leverage funds from sources outside Yukon.
 - Assist museums in developing their strategic and business planning capacity and producing multi-year budgets for operations, maintenance and capital expenditures.
 - Explore and develop new partnerships for funding.

3.0 Workforce - The Cultural Services Branch will work with museums to identify employment funding and opportunities for professional development and support for museum employees.

Success Indicators:

- *Museums are able to hire, train and retain professional staff.*
- 3.1 Participants in the *Yukon Museums Strategy* process agree on the importance of ensuring that wages, benefits and work conditions are consistent with museum sector practice and standards throughout Canada.
- 3.2 The Cultural Services Branch will make the stabilization and development of the museum workforce a priority in planning and services.
- 3.3 The Cultural Services Branch will take the following actions to facilitate workforce development:
- Establish a methodology for providing stable three-year operations and maintenance funding agreements to museums to provide increased job certainty for museum employees and to provide staff to museums currently without permanent employees.
 - Assist museums to identify and secure funding for workforce development from agencies such as Human Resources Development Canada, Young Canada Works, Training Trust Funds, Department of Canadian Heritage and other agencies.
 - Work with heritage and museum industry associations, Yukon Historical and Museums Association, Canadian Museums Association and others to identify career development opportunities for museum employees.
Work with training institutions such as the University of Victoria to develop and deliver Yukon appropriate training courses.

4.0 *Volunteers* - The Cultural Services Branch will work in partnership with museums and other community based organizations to assist museums to locate support and assistance in their recruitment, training, management, and recognition of volunteer workers and board members.

Success Indicators:

- *Museums accessing assistance from support agencies.*
- *Active volunteers supporting museum operations.*

4.1 Participants in the ***Yukon Museums Strategy*** process recognize the importance of volunteer workers and board members. The primary responsibility for volunteer recruitment, training, management and recognition lies with museums and heritage organizations in the community.

4.2 The Cultural Services Branch will take the following actions to facilitate volunteer development in museums:

- Refer museum contacts to the Yukon Volunteer Bureau, Yukon Historical and Museums Association and museum industry associations as a source of support for volunteer development.
- Assist where possible the efforts of the Yukon Volunteer Bureau, Yukon Historical and Museums Association and heritage and museum industry associations to create volunteer development programs.

5.0 *Marketing* – Yukon Museums Strategy partners will seek opportunities to market museums as sites for cultural presentation and community learning and enjoyment as well as tourism.

Success Indicators:

- *Increased visitors to museums.*
- *Increased participation by community in museum programs.*
- *Increased museum participation in the Tourism Industry.*

5.1 Participants in the ***Yukon Museums Strategy*** process recognise the:

- Importance of museums to the community and to the development of learning travel and cultural tourism. All ***Yukon Museums Strategy*** partners will seek opportunities to market museums as sites for cultural presentation, community learning and enjoyment and tourism.
- Need for an entrepreneurial approach to the management of museums, the creation of exhibits and programs, and the development of products and services.

- 5.2 Tourism and Culture will take the following actions to support marketing for museums:
- Continue to provide funding for individual and collective marketing initiatives.
 - Work with museums to establish a joint marketing plan for the museums sector.
 - Encourage museums to participate in the annual planning cycle for the Yukon Tourism Marketing Program.

6.0 Capacity - The Cultural Services Branch will support the growth of the museum community by assisting museums to identify community support, build their capacity as organizations, and develop quality museological programs.

Success Indicators:

- *Museums experience increased community recognition, support and participation.*
- *Museums build stronger linkages with regional and national organizations and networks.*
- *Museums have increased capacity to manage.*
- *Museums able to improve museological practices.*

- 6.1 The Advanced Education Branch and Cultural Services Branch will work with the heritage and museums sector to maintain and manage the Heritage Training Fund.

6.2 The Cultural Services Branch will:

- Work with museums to assess their capacity to undertake museological programs including collection management, documentation and research, conservation and preservation, exhibits and interpretation, as well as marketing and facility management.
- Work with museums to assess their community support and funding base.
- Provide assistance in developing terms of reference for feasibility studies and other planning strategies and provide partial funding, where available, to undertake such studies
- Provide assistance in locating contacts outside Yukon with museums, heritage organizations and suitable funding programs.
- Offer capacity-development workshops to respond to needs identified by the museum community.

7.0 Repatriation - Tourism and Culture, where practicable, will assist First Nation Governments to develop programs, staff and facilities to enable the repatriation of moveable and documentary heritage resources relating to the culture and history of Yukon First Nations.

Success Indicators:

- *Satisfaction of First Nations for Yukon Government support in repatriation efforts.*

- 7.1 Tourism and Culture will provide support and assistance to First Nations in their efforts to implement the objectives of Chapter 13 of the Umbrella Final Agreement and will take the following actions to facilitate the repatriation of artifacts:
- Identify Yukon artifacts and specimens located in institutions outside of the Yukon.
 - Assist First Nations in locating collections related to their mandates.
 - Continue to develop the *Searching For Our Heritage* research database that can be shared with heritage stakeholders.
 - Provide workshops and training opportunities.
 - Provide internships and mentoring opportunities for First Nation institutions.
 - Develop a presentation and communication plan to disseminate information.
 - Assist in creating partnerships between existing museums and emerging institutions.

8.0 The Beringia Interpretive Centre, operated by Cultural Services Branch, will serve as an active partner in museum development and as a training resource for other museums in Yukon.

Success Indicators:

- *Museums recognize cooperative approach taken by the Centre.*
- *Museums access information and training opportunities offered by the Centre.*

- 8.1 The Beringia Interpretive Centre will:
- Work co-operatively with other museums and First Nations on joint initiatives and projects such as marketing, tracking programs, and emergency plans.
 - Serve as a source of mentoring, on-the-job-training, and other training opportunities for Yukon museums and First Nations.
 - Be available without cost for meetings hosted by heritage organizations.
 - Take a community-driven focus in planning and seek the advice of the museum community.
 - Work cooperatively with the museum community to ensure that summer programming at the Centre does not exclude other museums from receiving funds for summer student employment.

9.0 *Heritage Resource Centre* – The Cultural Services Branch will involve the museum community in any future planning for the development of a facility to house heritage, natural history, arts and culture programs and to provide technical assistance to the museum community.

Success Indicators:

- *Support of the museum and First Nation communities for the facility.*

- 9.1** The Cultural Services Branch will take the following actions to develop any future Heritage Resource Centre for government heritage, arts and culture, and natural history programs:
- Assess the potential of the project to save money through the development of shared services such as storage, shared administration space and other requirements.
 - Conduct needs assessments, feasibility studies and other planning exercises to review the need for the facility and what benefits may be accrued to the heritage and museums communities.
 - Include the museum community and First Nations in all planning consultations.
 - Ensure that project costs do not erode funding support to museums in the community.
 - Encourage participation of museums and First Nations in identifying technical requirements including specifications for laboratories, replication workshops and registration requirements.

10.0 *Archives - The Cultural Services Branch will better communicate the mandate and services of the Yukon Archives.*

Success Indicators:

- *Satisfaction with services as expressed by clients and stakeholders.*
- 10.1 The Cultural Services Branch will take the following actions to better communicate the mandate and services of the Yukon Archives and identify gaps and efficiencies in the delivery of services to clients and stakeholders:
- Conduct user surveys.
 - Communicate the Yukon Archives mandate and services to its clients.
 - Make clients aware of links to existing archival databases.
- 10.2 Work with partners to explore opportunities to inventory existing oral histories.

Notes...