



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Yukon's ancient Arctic ground squirrel makes its television debut**

WHITEHORSE—The exciting discovery of an ancient Arctic ground squirrel will be included in a three-part documentary called *Ice Age* to be released next year. The series is a co-production between the BBC and Discovery Channel.

"Outreach is extremely important when it comes to scientific discoveries," Tourism and Culture Minister Mike Nixon said. "It is always exciting when we can partner on international film projects that will promote Yukon's ice age palaeontology contributions to a wider audience, including both the public and the scientific community."

Yukon's Department of Tourism and Culture Palaeontology Program participated in the segment devoted to the Arctic ground squirrel. During the film shoot, the crew uncovered an assortment of ice age mammal bones and frozen ice age squirrel nests, including one nest with a complete squirrel skeleton and mummified skin that date back about 80,000 years.

The three-part BBC/Discovery co-production will investigate the last 100,000 years of life in the northern hemisphere and include Yukon's contribution, which speaks to the time when animals had to adapt or perish.

Research by the palaeontology program contributes to the understanding of how modern tundra differs from ice age steppes, offering a glimpse into the land of Beringia as Yukon looked tens of thousands of years ago.

"Yukon is an amazing place to visit and film in," producer and director of *Ice Age* and BBC's Natural History Unit Tim Walker said. "The amazing level of preservation of the prehistoric remains in Yukon gives us incredible insight into the lives of animals like the woolly mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros and the little Arctic ground squirrel."

The BBC Natural History Unit is based out of Bristol, England. BBC producer Tim Walker, researcher Daniel Rasmussen and crew filmed in Yukon for one week, joined by Yukon palaeontologist Dr. Grant Zazula as they studied ancient nests of Arctic ground squirrels recovered from the permafrost.

Yukon's palaeontology program manages the territory's fossil resources, conducts research of Yukon's ancient life and environments, and provides scientific expertise for the programming and operational needs of the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre.

To learn more about Yukon's palaeontology program visit [www.tc.gov.yk.ca/palaeontology](http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/palaeontology).

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Contact:

Elaine Schiman  
Cabinet Communications

Heather Leduc  
Communications, Tourism and Culture

867-633-7961  
elaine.schiman@gov.yk.ca

867- 667-5318  
heather.leduc@gov.yk.ca

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