



FOR RELEASE
December 18, 2015

Miles Canyon suspension bridge will remain closed

WHITEHORSE—A comprehensive inspection has revealed that the Miles Canyon suspension bridge requires immediate repair before it is safe to use again.

"The Miles Canyon suspension bridge is a major tourist attraction and contributes to the quality of life for residents of Whitehorse," Minister of Community Services Currie Dixon said. "We understand its importance to both Yukoners and visitors alike and we will move as quickly as we can to repair the bridge."

Engineering inspection firm Wood Research and Development Inc. conducted an extensive inspection on October 28 to 31, 2015. The results revealed that the bridge's towers and suspension cables are in good condition, however, parts of the main wood structures have deteriorated, including cross beams and stringers.

The company's inspection included non-destructive testing using stress-wave technology, moisture meters, digital cameras and core sampling of wood to determine the level of deterioration.

The Yukon government has hired Stantec Inc. to provide the necessary design work for repairs. Once this design work is complete, estimates on costs can be developed. A tender can then be issued and a timeline for repairs can be set.

The bridge will remain closed until repairs can be completed. Signs and barricades will remain in place to prevent access.

Work was last done on the bridge in 2010/11 when the timber towers were refurbished and replaced, new concrete footings were installed under the towers, and other miscellaneous maintenance was done.

Learn more:

Miles Canyon suspension bridge

-30-

See backgrounder.

Contact:

Dan Macdonald
Cabinet Communications
867-393-6470
dan.macdonald@gov.yk.ca

Bonnie Venton Ross
Communications, Community Services

867-332-5513
bonnie.ventonross@gov.yk.ca

Backgrounder: Miles Canyon suspension bridge

History

- The Miles Canyon suspension bridge was built in 1922 by the federal department of Public Works and Whitehorse. The bridge was opened by Governor-General Lord Byng at a dedication ceremony.
- The bridge was officially named the Robert Lowe Bridge in honour of the first speaker of the first fully elected Yukon Territorial Council.
- Before 1926, the bridge was turned over to the territorial government for maintenance and repairs.
- Repairs have been carried out over the years. Most recently, in 2010/11, the timber towers were refurbished/replaced, new concrete footings were installed under the towers, and other miscellaneous maintenance was completed.
- In October 2015, an initial inspection prompted a comprehensive inspection by industry-leader Wood Research and Development Inc.

Inspection and findings

- A comprehensive inspection by Wood Research and Development Inc. was completed on October 28 to 31. The firm used a variety of instruments and techniques including nondestructive testing and assay sampling.
- A detailed report on the condition of the bridge has been received with recommendations for repair. It has revealed that the abutment and suspension cables are in good condition. The wooden deck is also in fair condition. However, many of the wooden stringers and cross braces are in varying states of decay and need to be replaced.

Next steps

- The Government of Yukon has hired Stantec Inc. to provide the necessary detailed design for repairs. Once this design work is complete, estimates on costs can be developed and decisions made on the best way to fund it. Community Services Infrastructure Development will then tender for the repair/replacement of the components of the bridge.
- While parts of the wood structures in the bridge are in reasonable condition, the majority of the wood on the bridge will likely be replaced with new timber, excluding the towers which were replaced/refurbished in 2010/11.
- Because of the decay in the wood support structures, the bridge cannot bear any loads and is unsafe to use.

News Release #15-390

