



FOR RELEASE

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Watson Lake Sign Post Forest celebrated as Yukon historic site

WHITEHORSE—The Watson Lake Sign Post Forest was recognized as a historic site at a ceremony yesterday. Minister of Tourism and Culture Mike Nixon and president of the Watson Lake Historical Society Teri McNaughton were on hand to unveil the designation plaque.

"The Yukon government was proud to join with the community of Watson Lake to celebrate the designation of this treasured landmark as a Yukon Historic Site," Nixon said. "The forest has been visited by thousands of Yukoners and visitors, many of whom add their own signs to this unique site and to contribute to the history of the town, the Alaska Highway and the territory."

Dignitaries and the public gathered at the celebration that marked the site as the eighth official Yukon Historic Site protected under the Historic Resources Act. Mayor Richard Durocher represented the Town of Watson Lake, which supports the maintenance of the forest.

"Watson Lake is pleased and honoured to be part of this ceremony," mayor of Watson Lake Richard Durocher said. "We have always considered the Sign Post Forest as one of the community's greatest assets when it comes to attracting visitors to southeast Yukon. Watson Lake will continue to invest in its upkeep and plans more space so it can grow."

The Watson Lake Sign Post Forest was nominated for designation by the Watson Lake Historical Society. The nomination was evaluated and recommended for designation by the Yukon Heritage Resources Board (YHRB), and supported by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

"The Watson Lake Sign Post Forest is a unique landmark that helps us share the rich and varied stories of Yukon's history and is an exceptional example of an evolving cultural landscape," YHRB chair Anne Leckie said. "The Yukon Heritage Resources Board was pleased to have the opportunity to review the excellent nomination for this site and to recommend to the Minister that it be designated a territorial historic site."

MLA for Watson Lake Patti McLeod added: "I'm so pleased to see our Sign Post Forest receiving this important designation. Watson Lake is a unique community that takes great pride in this site. I was honoured to be a part of the ceremony."

McNaughton added: "We are excited about this opportunity to welcome newcomers and visitors to Watson Lake to celebrate the Sign Post Forest as a Yukon Historic Site. The designation reflects the forest's heritage significance, as well as the town's contribution to the territory's history and ongoing development."

Learn more: Yukon Historic Sites

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See backgrounder below.

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Backgrounder:

In 1942, Carl Lindley, a U.S. soldier from Danville, Illinois added his hometown sign to an army mileage signpost during the construction of the Alaska Highway. At that time the area was a military air base and airport on Watson Lake. Since then, tourists from around the globe have added more than 75,000 signs to the signpost forest, which is located at the junction of the Alaska Highway and the Robert Campbell Highway.

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