

YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE NAMES BOARD



A N N U A L R E P O R T

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YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL
PLACE NAMES BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT
1998 • 1999

YUKON PLACE NAMES

The names of places reflect the Yukon's diverse cultures, history, and landscape. Names in the Yukon such as Aishihik, Kusawa, and Tuchtua, are a few of the native names found on a modern map of the Yukon. Yukon Indians named rivers, mountains, lakes and landmarks long before the first non-native explorers and settlers arrived in the territory. Names such as Gyò Cho Chú (Big Salmon River) tell where animals and fish are plentiful. Other names, such as Thechhà Mhàn (Sekulman Lake), "Stone Scraper for Hides" describe artifacts and remember people and events. Today, Yukon Indians still remember these names and are working to record them for future generations.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, non-native explorers, fur traders, and prospectors came to the Yukon to trade with Indian people, search for gold, and explore the vast landscape, giving their own names to the land. The Danish explorer Vitus Bering, who entered the newly formed navy of the Russian tsar Peter the Great and in 1724 was appointed to conduct an expedition to explore the water routes between Siberia and North America, was the first non-native to name a geographical feature in the Yukon. During 1741, Bering named a mountain in the far southwestern Yukon – Mt. St. Elias.

While Bering and explorers to follow gave names to geographical features without asking the local people their names for places, other early explorers, such as geologist George Dawson and the Yukon's first Commissioner, William Ogilvie, recorded many native names for many places during their years in the Yukon including such names as the Yusezyu and Tatchun Rivers in central Yukon.

Many of the official names on the Yukon map today were given by non-native settlers who came to the Yukon during the Gold Rush period. In the area around Dawson City, Allgold, Bonanza, Eureka, and Nogold celebrate the successes – and failures – of the people who came to the territory during the Klondike Gold Rush. Names like Carcross (from Caribou Crossing), Fox Lake, and Eagle's Nest, testify to the richness of the Yukon's wildlife resources. Other places, such as Five Finger Rapids on the Yukon River, Blackstone Mountain, and White River, were named for the shape, colour, and form of the land and water itself. One of the best known names of this type is Whitehorse, which took its name from the White Horse rapids, whose foamy white crests reminded early prospectors of horses' manes.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHOOSING PLACE NAMES

In 1897, Canada established the *Geographic Board of Canada* whose mandate was to approve official place names across the country. Interestingly, one of the motivations for establishing this board came from events happening in the Yukon, from the discovery of gold in the Klondike. Today, the successor to this Board is known as the *Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN)* which is made up of 23 members representing the Provinces and Territories, as well as federal departments that deal with surveying, mapping, translation, archives, parks, and native affairs.

In 1986, the responsibility for naming geographical features was transferred from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to the Government of Yukon, putting geographical naming in the hands of Yukon residents for the first time. As part of this transfer the Government of Yukon established the *Yukon Geographical Names Board (YGNB)* in 1987 to undertake the job of researching and approving geographical names.

In 1995, under the Yukon Land Claims Agreement, the Yukon Geographical Names Board was replaced with the *Yukon Geographical Place Names Board (YGPNB)*. Like its predecessor, it was established with the primary function and responsibility to consider and recommend the naming or renaming of places or features located within the Yukon.

THE YUKON GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE NAMES BOARD

The Yukon Geographical Place Names Board (YGPNB) is constituted under the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), signed by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Government and the Government of Canada. The Board's primary function is to consider and recommend the naming or renaming of places or features located within the Yukon with special reference to Chapter 13, Section 11 of the UFA. The Board's mandate does not include the naming/renaming of features or sites within municipal boundaries or of transportation corridors (highways and bridges).

BOARD MEMBERS

The Board is composed of six Yukoners with a wide variety of backgrounds and experience but a common interest in developing place name policies which serve all Yukon residents. Each member is appointed by the Yukon Government for a three year term, with three members selected by the territorial government and three by the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are elected by their fellow Board members.

On March 12, 1998 the Minister of Tourism appointed the following members to the Board for three year terms until March 11, 2001. The new appointees are:

***Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Appointed For A Three Year Term
Beginning March 12, 1998***

Diane Chisholm (<i>Chairperson</i>)	John Ritter
Daniel Tien (<i>Vice-Chairperson</i>)	Sam Johnston
Percy Henry	Jeff Hunston (<i>Ex-officio</i>)
Patrick Moore	

THE PLACE NAME REVIEW PROCESS

Processing place name applications in as timely a manner as possible is a priority of the Board. However, the speed with which a place name application is processed is dependent on a number of factors which include:

- Completeness of the application.
- Whether the site identified is on First Nation traditional or settlement land, federal or territorial lands.
- Whether the site identified is in a park.

The status of individual place name applications are tracked by means of a *Geographical Place Names Application Process Flow Sheet* (See Figure 1).



Yukon Geographical Place Names Board Members Appointed March 12, 1998 (left to right) Patrick Moore, Percy Henry, Diane Chisholm, Sam Johnston, Daniel Tien, Gary White (Secretariat) and John Ritter.

NAMING FEATURES

Proposals to name or rename a geographical feature are received from a variety of sources which can include Yukon residents, all levels of governments, interest groups, Canadian citizens and even foreign visitors. To evaluate each application in a consistent manner and to meet the terms and conditions set upon establishment of the Board, the Board uses a number of principles and procedures established by the Canadian Permanent Committee On Geographical Names. These include:

- First priority shall be given to names with long-standing local usage by the general public, particularly indigenous names in the local native language.
- The Board has no jurisdiction over the names of municipalities, parks, territorial division, and other legal bodies that have been created by, or result from, legislation.
- Names for rivers, lakes, creeks, and other physical features should be used for all parts of the feature, in other words, you would not call the Yukon River one name at Whitehorse and another name at Dawson City.
- Proposals to name a place or geographical feature after a specific person should show how the person to be commemorated has contributed significantly to the area where the feature is located. In most cases, personal names are only given to geographical features after a person's death.
- When proposing names for unnamed features – those for which no local names exist – preference will be given to names from native languages, names that describe the feature, names associated with historical events, and names of people who have made an important contribution to the area where the name is proposed.

- Geographical names should be recognizable words or acceptable combinations of words, and should be in good taste. Names that are discriminatory or derogatory from the point of view of race, sex, colour, creed, or political affiliation are not accepted.
- The spelling and accenting of names should agree with the rules of the language in which they are written.
- When considering the naming or renaming of places or features located within the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation, or when acting with a federal agency where joint jurisdiction over the naming of the place or feature exists, the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board shall consult with that Yukon First Nation or federal agency.
- A Yukon First Nation may name or rename any geographical features on settlement land and such place names shall be deemed to be approved by the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board.
- Traditional aboriginal place names shall be included, to the extent practicable and in accordance with map production specifications of Canada, on revised maps of the National Topographic Series.

SETTLEMENT LANDS

Under the Land Claim Final Agreement, the Board is directed to consider the following procedures when reviewing place name applications on Settlement Lands.

EXAMPLES OF PLACE NAMES RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD

Figures 2a and b illustrate the location of place names in the Teslin area that were recently recommended to the Minister of Tourism by the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board.

As part of its process of consultation, Teslin Tlingit Council representative Ms. Emma Sam was invited to review the place names providing valuable information about the history of the names and their cultural significance to the Teslin Tlingit people. A brief description of each place name follows.

SITE 1

Feature: River

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 25' **Longitude:** 132° 37'

Principle Name: Nalasin

Alternate Name: Nisutlin River

Notes: This ancient Tlingit name refers to the calm flow of the river.



SITE 1

SITE 2

Feature: Bay

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 11' **Longitude:** 132° 40'

Principle Name: Nisutlin Bay

Alternate Name: Nalasin Ghèyi Tá

Notes: The feature is a bay.



SITE 2

SITE 3

Feature: Lake

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 49' **Longitude:** 133° 01'

Principle Name: Sidney Lake

Alternate Name: Yàna.èt Xhádi

Notes: Wild rhubarb and large whitefish were harvested during the spring period along the shore of the lake. The First Nation name is very old. The Sidney family wintered (hunted and trapped) at the lake every year and the lake's modern name probably relates to this family.

SITE 4

Feature: Bay (*not shown*)

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 13' **Longitude:** 132° 32'

Principle Name: Colwell Bay

Alternate Name: S'áxh' Áyi

Notes: The First Nation name refers to the large number of ling cod (burbot) inhabiting the bay.

SITE 5

Feature: Lake (*not shown*)

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 48' **Longitude:** 132° 30'

Principle Name: Tàslèyi K'ídze

Alternate Name: Thirty Mile Lake

Notes: The name refers to pike or jackfish (Tàslèyi). The pike in this lake are large. Elders recommend that you should not eat the fish heads for if you do, you will get a headache for a few days. The name is very old and its exact meaning has been lost. The name is derived from the Athapaskan language.

SITE 6

Feature: Site on a river (*not shown*)

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 45' **Longitude:** 132° 58'

Principle Name: Shál Xh'é Ití

Alternate Name: No other known name.

Notes: The site is located on the Nisutlin River about six miles below Portage. The name means "fishtrap" and the site is where people placed their fish traps.

SITE 7

Feature: Creek (*not shown*)

Location: Map Sheet 105C

Latitude: 60° 40' **Longitude:** 132° 34'

Principle Name: Tàslèyi Hìni

Alternate Name: Thirty Mile Creek

Notes: This creek flows out of Thirty Mile Lake (Pike Lake). Tàslèyi Hìni means pike (or jackfish) river.

SITE 8

Feature: Lake

Location: Map Sheet 105C and 105F

Latitude: 61° 05' **Longitude:** 133° 04'

Principle Name: Quiet Lake

Alternate Name: Kìt Den Á

Notes: The lake is located high in the mountains and acts like a reservoir.



SITE 3



SITE 8

SITE 9

Feature: River

Location: Map Sheet 105F

Latitude: 61° 20' **Longitude:** 133° 01'

Principle Name: Rose River

Alternate Name: L'èx Hìni

Notes: The river water is so clear it looks like it's running on aluminum foil. The shiny appearance is probably due to white coloured clay or mica.



SITE 9

SITE 10

Feature: Lake

Location: Map Sheet 105F

Latitude: 61° 18' **Longitude:** 133° 20'

Principle Name: Big Salmon Lake

Alternate Name: T'à Tlèn Áyi

Notes: Salmon (King, Chum and Coho) return to this lake every summer.



SITE 10

SITE 11

Feature: River

Location: Map Sheet 105F

Latitude: 61° 30' **Longitude:** 133° 30'

Principle Name: Big Salmon River

Alternate Name: T'à Tlèn Hìni

Notes: Salmon migrate up the river annually.

SITE 12

Feature: Creek

Location: Map Sheet 105F

Latitude: 61° 29' **Longitude:** 133° 00'

Principle Name: Lower Sheep Creek

Alternate Name: Tawê Hìni

Notes: The First Nation name means "Sheep Creek".



SITE 11



SITE 12

SITE 13

Feature: Creek
Location: Map Sheet 105F
Latitude: 61° 34' **Longitude:** 133° 00'
Principle Name: Tawê Hîni
Alternate Name: Upper Sheep Creek
Notes: This is the same creek as Lower Sheep Creek.
 First Nation elders indicate sheep winter at this site.



SITE 13

SITE 14

Feature: Lake (Not shown)
Location: Map Sheet 105F
Latitude: 61° 37' **Longitude:** 133° 05'
Principle Name: Rose Lake
Alternate Name: Ł'èx Hîni Shâk Âyi
Notes: The name means the lake at the head of the Ł'èx Hîni (aluminum river).

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Many of the place names the Board reviews have traditional names, some of which have been used for thousands of years. To assist Board members in their review of place name applications, Yukon elders, community or First Nation representatives, or language experts are frequently consulted. They assist the Board by ensuring the place name's meaning, spelling, pronunciation and cultural significance are correctly recorded and reported.

Ms. Emma Sam who works as a Tlingit interpreter for Aboriginal Language Services, a department of the Territorial Government, brought the submissions to the Board on behalf of the Teslin Tlingit Council and assisted the Board in its review of Yukon place names profiled in this report. She was assisted by Tlingit elder and Board member, Mr. Sam Johnston who clarified the name's meaning and its pronunciation. Mr. Johnston recorded the names on the Yukon Native Language Training Centre voice computer program. Their experience and assistance to the Board is acknowledged and appreciated.

BOARD ACTIVITIES

During the period of this report, Board members reviewed 28 place name applications. A summary of the applications and subsequent decisions made by the Board are illustrated in the following tables.

TABLE 1	
Place Name Applications Received For the Report Period 1998/99	
Applicant	Number of Place Name Applications
Teslin Tlingit Council	15
Selkirk First Nation	10
Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation	1
Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation	1
Yukon Residents	1
Total Applications	28

TABLE 2	
Place Names Recommended By The YGPNB To The Minister of Tourism	
Principal* Place Names Recommended	17
Alternate+ Place Names Recommended	15

* Principal place name is defined as the primary or most commonly recognized designation for a place.

+ Alternate place name is defined as a secondary or co-existing historically and/or culturally recognized designation for a place.

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The Need For A Full Time Toponymist

The Board has been hampered in carrying out its mandate because it does not have access to the services of a trained, full-time toponymist. Place name applications received from Yukon First Nations and the public-at-large require additional research to clarify the accuracy of the names and background information, name spelling, exact latitude and longitude of locations, whether there are existing names for the site, status of land claim negotiations for the pertinent First Nation with regards to whether the site will be located on settlement land or traditional land, and whether there is joint jurisdiction over the naming of the site (e.g. Parks for the Klwane region). This work is undertaken by Heritage Branch who have assigned an employee on a part time basis to carry out these tasks.

In addition, a lot of technical support work has been carried out on a volunteer basis by Board members, associates and other linguistic experts to clarify place name pronunciation, spelling and other research work to substantiate and verify requests made by applicants. In other Territories and Provinces of Canada, government toponymists complete this work prior to a review by a public Board or government Minister.

At this time the Board is faced with a backlog of 126 place name applications from Yukon First Nations and individuals dating from 1988. A breakdown of these figures is illustrated in Table 3.

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Number of Applications</i>	<i>Year Submitted</i>
Selkirk First Nation	6	1991
Little Salmon/Carmacks	9	1992
Carcross Tagish First Nation	1	1992
Champagne/Aishihik First Nation	2	1992
Teslin Tlingit Council	91	1988
Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation	1	1992
Miscellaneous Applications	16	1988-1993
Total	126	

Notwithstanding this backlog of applications, there is a continuing need for technical toponymic support to review and process new applications. Considering the size of the territory, with its large land mass and large number of geographic features, and the changes that are occurring at the Yukon First Nations level, the volume of place name applications will likely increase.

In a brief to the Land Claims Secretariat as part of its Five Year Implementation Review, the Board recommended the establishment of full-time toponymist and toponymist trainee position in Heritage Branch.

A Need For Place Name Highway Signage

A number of recently approved place names sites are located along major Yukon highways. In response to applicant's requests and in order to promote an awareness of local names and their cultural significance, the Board has recommended that highway signs be erected illustrating the new place names. The Board will continue to encourage the territorial government's Highway Sign Committee to install signage for place names at appropriate locations.

OVER THE NEXT YEAR

Over the next year the Board will continue to review the backlog of place name applications as well as process new applications. As part of this process, members will consult with applicants, First Nations, experts and the public to ensure all place names submitted are accurately documented before making their recommendation to the Minister of Tourism.

Other initiatives planned by the Board for the coming year include a Board WEB site, meeting with community representatives to inform and discuss the Board's place name application process and carrying out a place name photo documentation program in the Old Crow and Teslin areas.

YUKON PLACE NAME INFORMATION

Information about Yukon and other Canadian place names can be obtained by consulting the Canadian Permanent Committee On Geographical Names data base. Information about the data base can be obtained from:

GeoNames

Room 650-615 Booth Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0E9
www-nais.ccm.nrcan.gc.ca/cgndb/

For information about the Yukon's geographical place name application process contact:

Yukon Heritage Branch

P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada Y1A 2C6
Telephone: (867) 667-5386

If you have further questions or require additional information about the activities and mandate of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board, please contact the:

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

P.O. Box 31164
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada Y1A 5P7
Phone: (867) 393-3982
Fax: (867) 667-7006

GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE NAMES APPLICATION PROCESS FLOW CHART

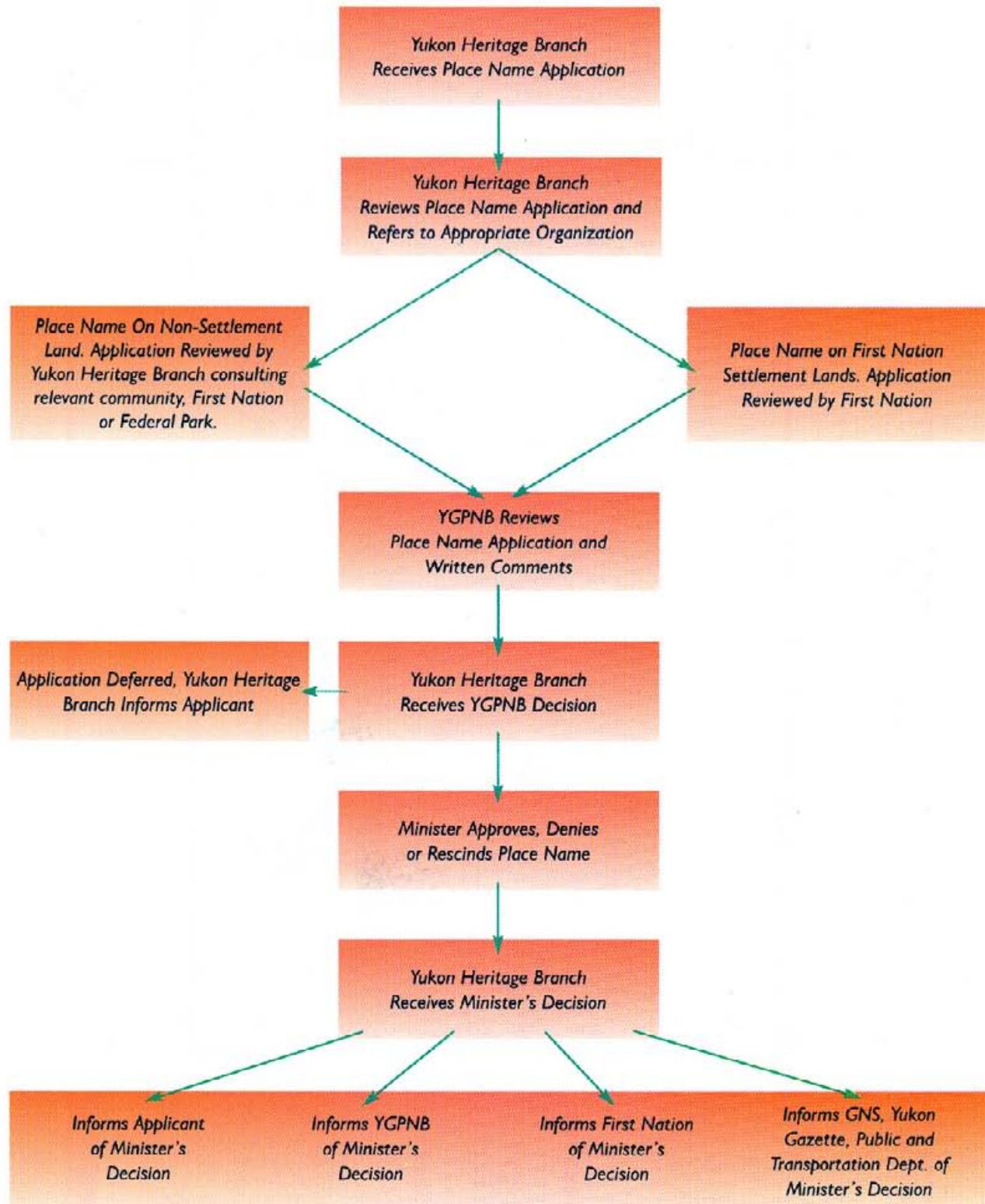
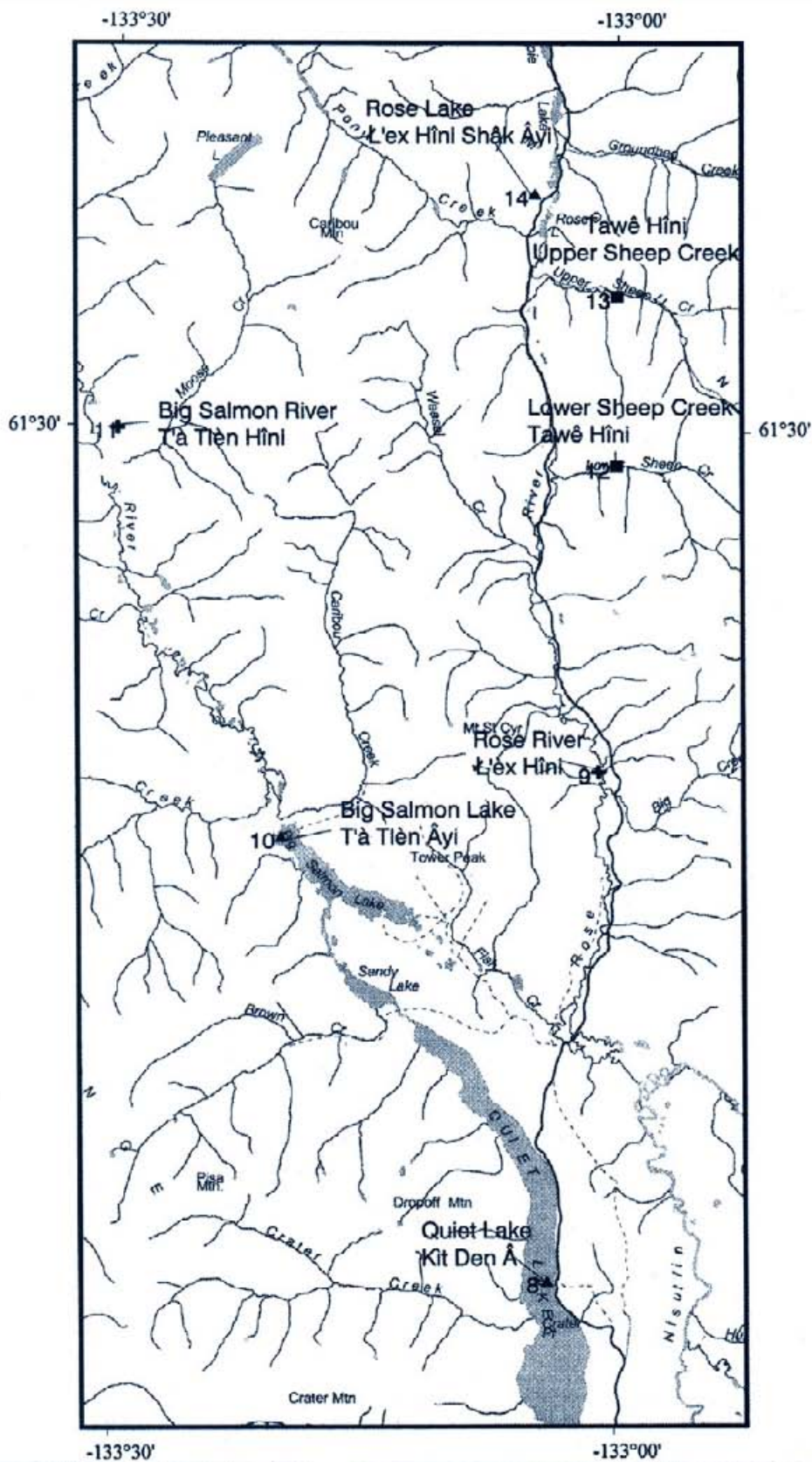


FIGURE 1



Place Names
 Teslin Area, Yukon Territory
 NTS Map Sheet 105 F

Map Scale 1:350,000
 2 0 2 4 Kilometers

Place Names Recommended	Basemap Features
● Bay	~ 2 wheel drive
■ Creek	~ 4 wheel drive
▲ Lake	~ outline
✦ River	~ highway
✧ Bay	~ other
✪ Place Name Location (see legend for feature type)	~ powerline
✫ Principal Name	~ trail
✬ Alternate Name	~ Waterbodies
	~ River

FIGURE 2 a

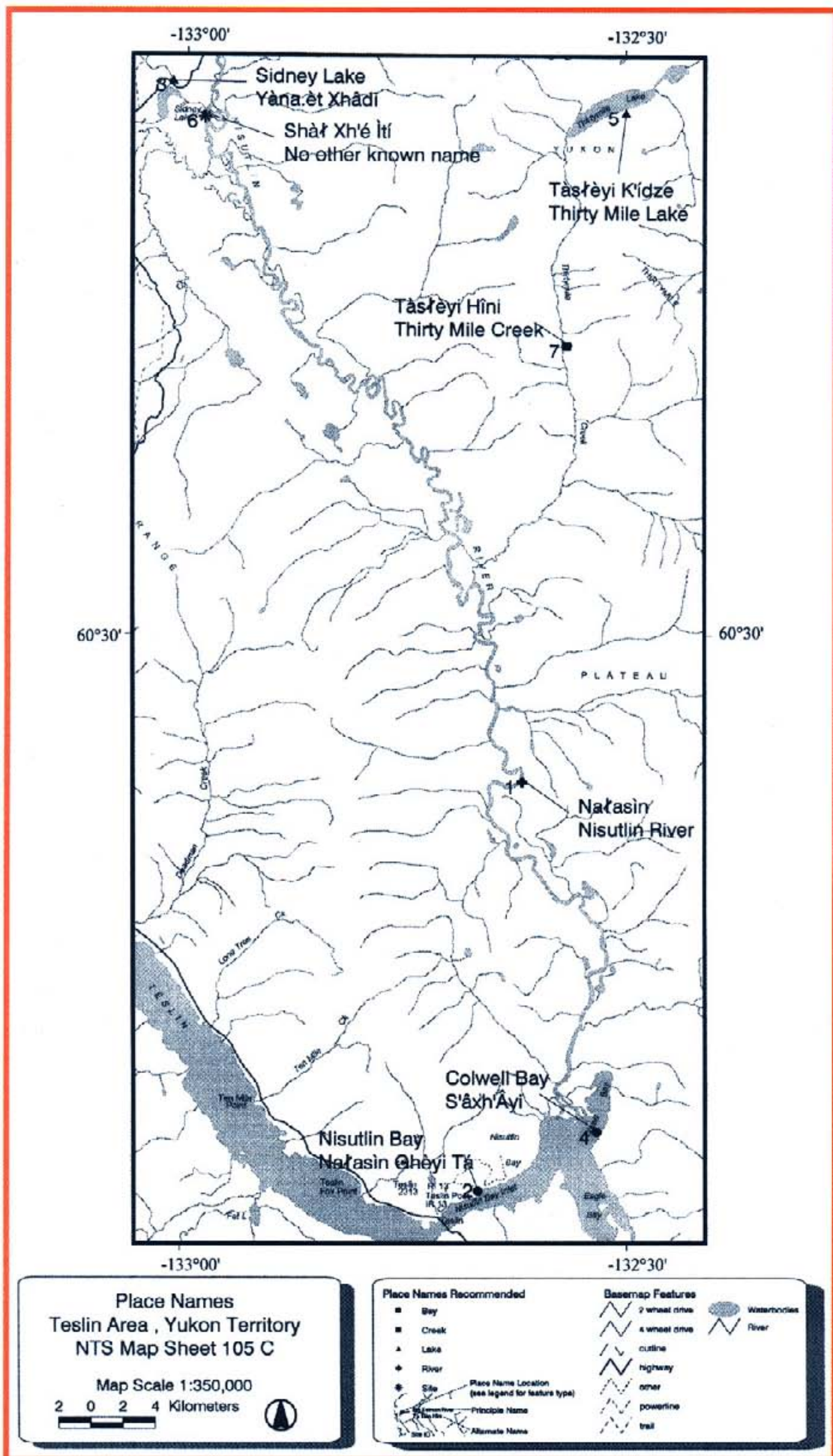


FIGURE 2b

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**YUKON
GEOGRAPHICAL PLACE
NAMES BOARD**

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended March 31, 1999
(unaudited)

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Review Engagement Report

To the Members
Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

We have reviewed the statement of financial position of Yukon Geographical Place Names Board as at March 31, 1999 and the statement of operations and unrestricted net assets for the year then ended. Our review was made in accordance with generally accepted standards for review engagements and accordingly consisted primarily of enquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to us by the organization.

A review does not constitute an audit and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

BDO Dunwoody LLP

BDO DUNWOODY LLP
Chartered Accountants

Kamloops, British Columbia
June 10, 1999

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Chartered Accountants

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Statement of Financial Position
(Unaudited)

March 31 **1999** **1998**

Assets

Current

Cash	\$ 113,087	\$ 107,471
Accounts receivable	2,543	1,658
	115,630	109,129

Capital assets (Note 1)

7,335	711
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\$ 122,965	\$ 109,840
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Current

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 3,850	\$ 7,044
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Net assets

Net assets invested in capital assets	7,335	711
Unrestricted net assets	111,780	102,085
	119,115	102,796

\$ 122,965	\$ 109,840
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Approved on behalf of the Board:

Deana Chakoh Member

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

BDO Dunwoody LLP
Chartered Accountants

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Statement of Operations and Unrestricted Net Assets
(Unaudited)

For the year ended March 31	1999	1998
Revenue		
Contribution - Yukon	\$ 57,542	\$ 56,837
Interest income	2,570	1,682
	<u>60,112</u>	<u>58,519</u>
Expenses		
Annual report	261	5,094
Consultation	-	1,163
Documentation and development costs	-	6,502
Honoraria	3,500	1,175
Office equipment	6,624	-
Office and general	2,246	428
Professional fees	1,028	856
Research and development	745	1,263
Secretariat	30,990	18,838
Telephone	176	88
Travel and accommodation	4,436	1,643
Training	411	-
	<u>50,417</u>	<u>37,050</u>
Excess of revenue over expenditures	9,695	21,469
Unrestricted net assets, beginning of year	<u>102,085</u>	<u>80,616</u>
Unrestricted net assets, end of year	\$ 111,780	\$ 102,085

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

BDO Dunwoody LLP
Chartered Accountants

**Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Summary of Significant Accounting Policies
(Unaudited)**

March 31, 1999

Nature of Business

The organization is a non-profit entity established under the Umbrella Final Agreement, passed by the Government of Canada and Government of Yukon, to consider and recommend the naming or re-naming of places or features located within Yukon, to the Yukon Minister of Heritage.

Financial Instruments

The organization's financial instruments consists of cash, accounts receivable and accounts payable. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair values of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values.

Capital Assets

Capital assets are expended during the year of acquisition and are recorded on the balance sheet at their historical cost. Investment in capital assets represents the historical cost of capital assets less the principal amount of any debt outstanding on the purchase of the assets.

Revenue Recognition

Revenue from grants is recorded when received or receivable.

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board
Notes to Financial Statements
(Unaudited)

March 31, 1999

1. Capital Assets

	1999		1998	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Furniture and fixtures	\$ 7,335	\$ -	\$ 711	\$ -
Net book value	\$ 7,335		\$ 711	

2. Economic Dependence

The organization is dependant upon government funding for the continuation of its activities.

3. Uncertainty Due to the Year 2000 Issue

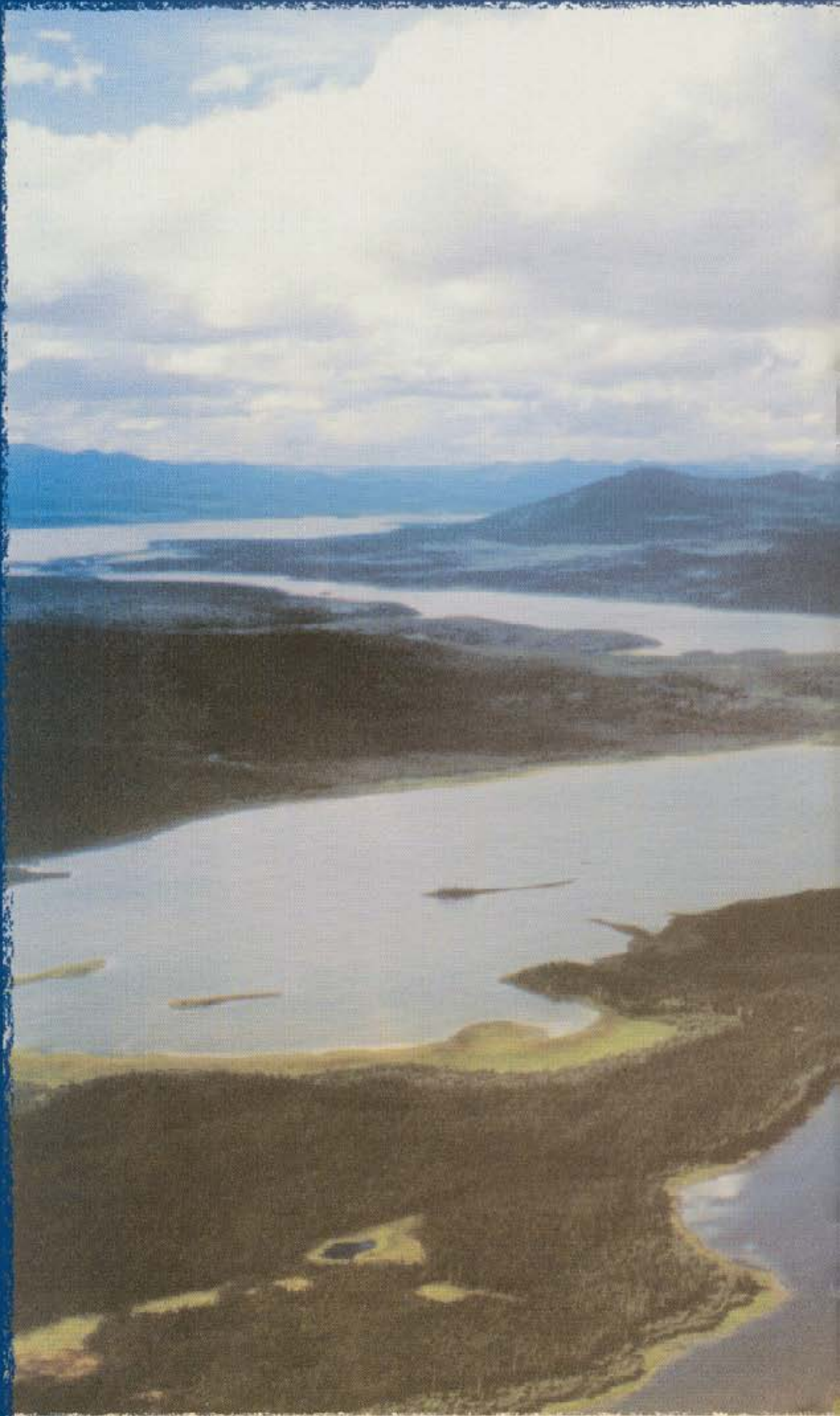
The year 2000 issue arises because many computerized systems use two digits rather than four digits to identify a year. Date sensitive systems may recognize the year 2000 as 1900 or some other date, resulting in errors when information using year 2000 dates are processed. In addition, similar problems may arise in some systems which use certain dates in 1999 to represent something other than a date. The effects of the year 2000 issue may be experienced before, on, or after January 1, 2000.

If the year 2000 issue is not addressed by the organization and its major customers, suppliers or other third party business associates, the impact on the organization's operations and financial reporting may range from minor errors to significant systems failure which could affect the organization's ability to conduct normal business operations. It is not possible to be certain that all aspects of the year 2000 issue affecting the organization, including those related to the efforts of customers, suppliers, or other third parties, will be fully resolved.

4. Statement of Cash Flows

The Statement of Cash Flows has not been prepared as the cash flows are readily apparent.

BDO Dunwoody LLP
Chartered Accountants



Cover photo: Nisutlin Bay, Teslin Lake, Yukon

Nisutlin Bay on Teslin Lake, Yukon.

The Bay is also known by its Tlingit name
Nalasin Ghèyi Tá.