

CANOL TRAIL NEWSLETTER

GNWT's work on Mile 0-8 of the Canol Trail



Welcome to the Canol Trail newsletter

Over the next few years, Environment and Climate Change (ECC) will be completing work to support the remediation of Miles 0-8 of the Canol Trail, as these sites are the responsibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

In 2023, ECC awarded a contract to K'alo Stantec to complete additional environmental site assessment work, including archaeological studies, risk assessments, remedial options analysis, and remediation and risk management plans.

ECC will provide Project updates and notices of upcoming information sessions through this newsletter.

Archaeology Community Workshop

ECC held an Archaeology Workshop in Norman Wells on June 29, 2023. Elders and land users from Norman Wells and Tulita attended the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to gather information on past and recent land use and access, and to help identify important areas we should consider during remediation activities.

2023 Field Work

K'alo Stantec completed field work at Miles 0 and 8. This work included:

- **Archaeological field program** Archaeological field work was completed in September 2023 to identify historical features related to the 1940s Canol Trail development and cultural materials and sites from the precontact period (i.e. before the arrival of the first Europeans).
- **Environmental field program** Additional environmental sampling of soil, water and building materials was also completed in September 2023 to help find the boundary of contamination and further assess surface bodies of water in the area. A survey was conducted at Mile 8 to look for areas with buried debris.
- **Drone program** A drone program was completed in October 2023 and May 2024 to capture aerial photos and video of Mile 0-1 and Mile 8. Photos and videos collected during the drone program will be shared during community sessions.

K'alo Stantec hired six local wildlife monitors and field assistants to help with the archaeological, environmental and drone programs.



Signage

In October 2023, ECC, with the help of a local field assistant and a wildlife monitor, installed signage at Mile 0 and Mile 8 to caution users about site conditions.

Mile 0 – The GNWT advises trail users to avoid using surface water as a source of drinking water. In general, drinking untreated surface water is not recommended because surface water from lakes and rivers can contain dirt and microorganisms that can make you sick.

Mile 8 – Trail users should not disturb the soil at this site due to four areas of lead contaminated soil. Further work is ongoing to determine the best remedial option and risk management strategy to address risks with lead contaminated soil.

Buildings – Trail users should not enter historical buildings due to concerns with building stability and asbestos. The emergency shelters at Mile 0-1 and Mile 8 are safe to use.

Here are a few things we heard at the archaeology workshop:

- In the past, the Canol Trail was used for traditional activities including hunting, fishing, trapping, recreation and spiritual/cultural activities. Now, access is limited due to overgrown vegetation in the area.
- Concerns about buried debris.
- Specific place names are used, such as Mackenzie Mountain Trail, instead of Canol Trail.
- People want the area to be healthy so they can use the trail for traditional and cultural activities.

The feedback received during the Archaeological Workshop was used to support the archaeological and environmental field work and will be used for future remediation planning.



Photo courtesy of K' alo

What's Next?

K'alo Stantec will assess the results of the field program and provide reports to ECC. Once these reports are finalized, ECC will travel to Norman Wells and Tulita to present the findings in 2025.

For more information

For more information or to sign up to be on a mailing list to receive future newsletters and hear about upcoming information sessions, contact:

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