

SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE SOLUTIONS

Peace River Regional District
January 9, 2025

Beautiful and Bountiful Boreal

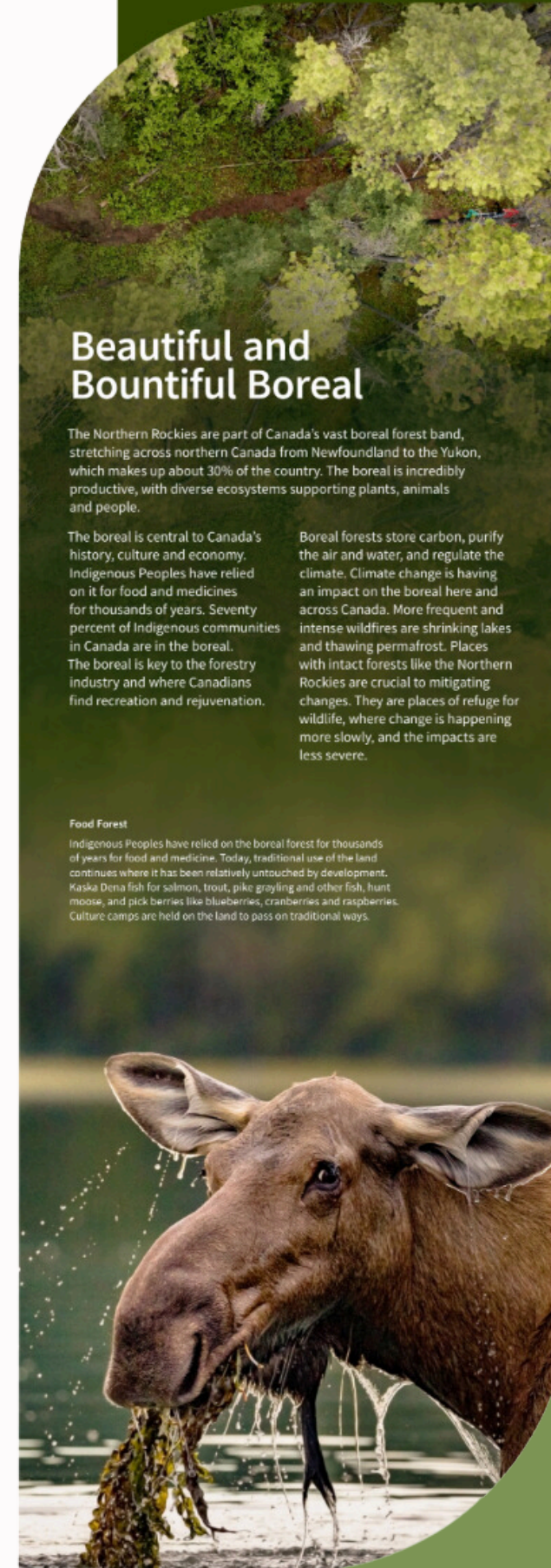
The Northern Rockies are part of Canada's vast boreal forest band, stretching across northern Canada from Newfoundland to the Yukon, which makes up about 30% of the country. The boreal is incredibly productive, with diverse ecosystems supporting plants, animals and people.

The boreal is central to Canada's history, culture and economy. Indigenous Peoples have relied on it for food and medicines for thousands of years. Seventy percent of Indigenous communities in Canada are in the boreal. The boreal is key to the forestry industry and where Canadians find recreation and rejuvenation.

Boreal forests store carbon, purify the air and water, and regulate the climate. Climate change is having an impact on the boreal here and across Canada. More frequent and intense wildfires are shrinking lakes and thawing permafrost. Places with intact forests like the Northern Rockies are crucial to mitigating changes. They are places of refuge for wildlife, where change is happening more slowly, and the impacts are less severe.

Food Forest

Indigenous Peoples have relied on the boreal forest for thousands of years for food and medicine. Today, traditional use of the land continues where it has been relatively untouched by development. Kaska Dena fish for salmon, trout, pike grayling and other fish, hunt moose, and pick berries like blueberries, cranberries and raspberries. Culture camps are held on the land to pass on traditional ways.



ALASKA HIGHWAY

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Heritage Strategy

Background

- The Alaska Highway Community Society (AHCS), which led work on the nomination of the Alaska Highway Corridor as a National Historic Site of Canada, was commissioned by the Peace River Regional District to develop a heritage strategy for the PRRD
- Northern BC Tourism contributed to the project
- Northern Trials Historical Society members engaged & provided feedback
- Treaty 8 Tribal Association and the Northeast Native Advancing Association provided initial guidance

Heritage Strategy

Highlights:

- A call for action
- A roadmap to build capacity for voices and interests
- Consistent with UNDRIP & BC's Rights of Indigenous People's Act
- Intended to build on cultural heritage opportunities
- Support community pride in tangible spaces
- Past and present thrives through PRRD residents' stewardship



Muskwa-Kechika Management Area

A globally significant area of wilderness, ecosystems and cultures.

The Muskwa-Kechika (musk-quah-ke-CHEE-kah) is a truly unique area of BC—about 6.4 million hectares of protected areas, parks and special management zones. It is a rare place, with raw, intact and isolated wilderness. The diversity and number of large mammals here are unlike anywhere else in Canada. The Muskwa-Kechika has always been protected and stewarded by Indigenous Peoples.

The boundaries lie in the traditional territories of the Kaska Dena, Treaty 8 Nations and Carrier-Sekani Indigenous Peoples, who have found food, medicine and sacred values here from time immemorial. Today, the Muskwa-Kechika is sustained through innovative management approaches to ensure that resource development is in harmony with wilderness, wildlife, ecosystems and culture.

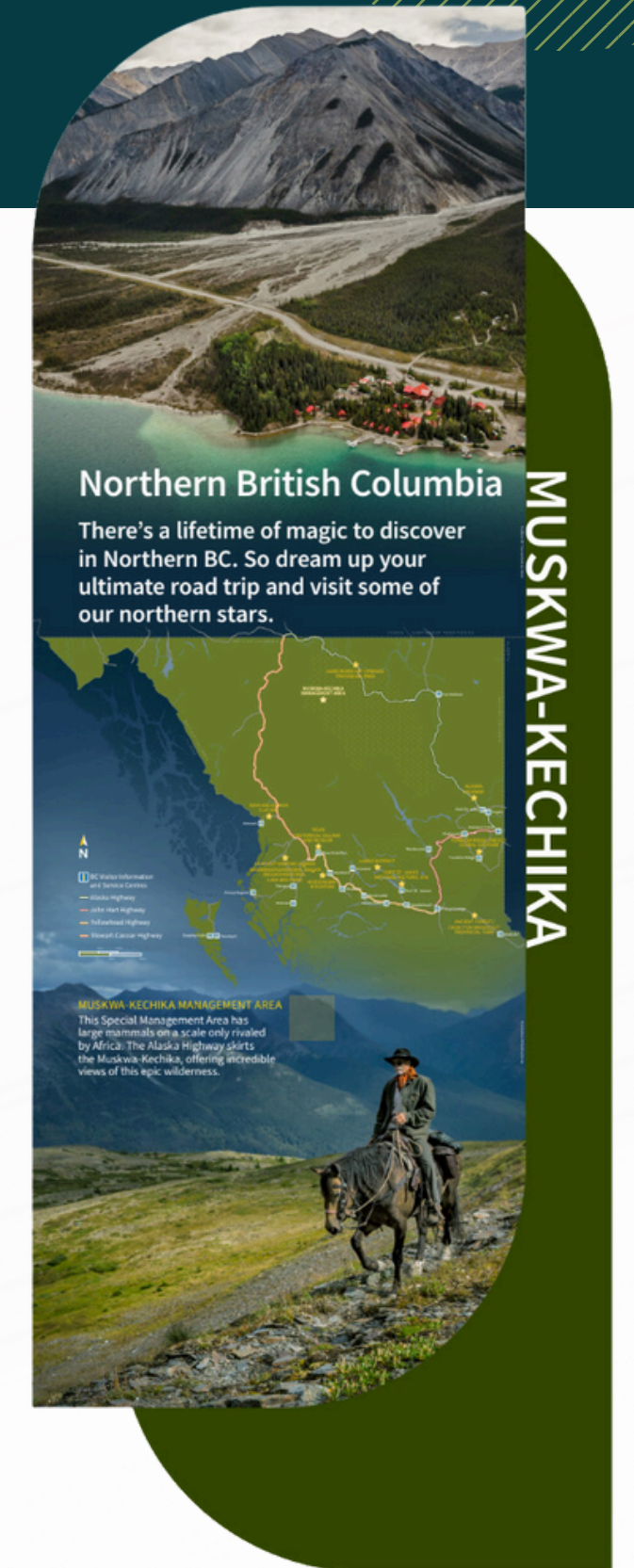
Land of the Dreamers
Dene people have a tradition of Dreamers—people who are connected to the world through their dreams. Dreamers' visions directed Dene to hunt and harvest their ancestors. They marked the area with Dene, ancestral markers from centuries past. There was no hunting of animals in the marked area to make sure they would be there to feed the people of Dene who were here.

Heritage Issues

- The Northern Trails Historical Society and local heritage organizations are working together to bring better results for their organization, community, and the PRRD as a whole

The need for support is acute due to:

- Size of PRRD and diversity
- Staff capacity
- Grants that provide no support for necessary back-end and regional work
- Need to strengthen Reconciliation



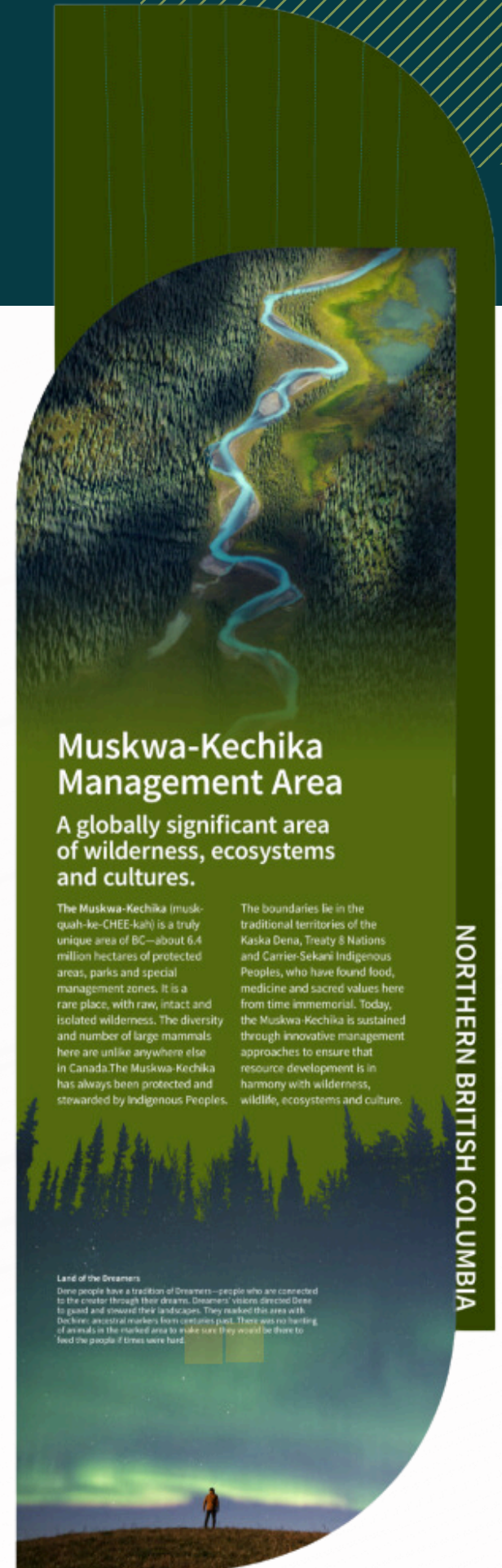
Heritage Solutions

Option 1: Status Quo

This option continues the current practice of each organization planning projects, tightening relationships, and seeking funding on its own without the economies of scale and proof of regional value important for securing grants and contributions and for building relationships to sustain and strengthen Reconciliation.

Option 2: Community Heritage Commission

The PRRD would enact a Community Heritage Commission (CHC) through provisions of Part 15 of the Local Government Act (LGA). Municipalities with CHCs, which are managed and operated through a local government council, are often focused on heritage designations of property, which is not a priority in the PRRD.



Muskwa-Kechika Management Area

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NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Land of the Dreamers
Some people have a tradition of Dreamers—people who are connected to the creator through their dreams. Dreamers' visions directed Dene to hunt and choose their landings. They marked the area with Dene lines: ancestral markers from centuries past. They use no hunting of animals in the marked area to make sure they would be there to feed the people if times were hard.

Heritage Solutions

Option 3: PRRD Heritage Service

The PRRD would hire a staff person to help coordinate and administer the NTHS with a focus on District-wide projects.

Option 4 (Recommended)

Three-year Executive Assistant for the NTHS

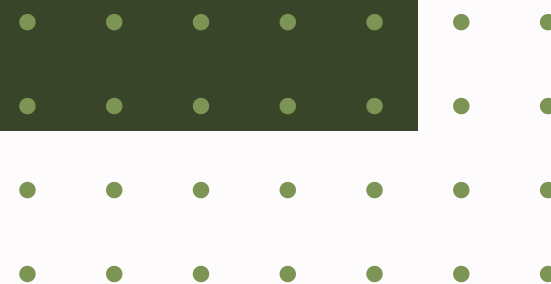
Through PRRD funding, the NTHS would create an Executive Assistant position for a three-year period. A formal program evaluation would be used to determine the position's value to the PRRD, NTHS, other interested groups (eg. tourism and business).

Recommendation & Request

To the PRRD to provide funding for 3 years to support an Executive Assistant for the NTHS for a contract position.

The budget is estimated at \$64,200 annually for a total of \$192,600 for three years.

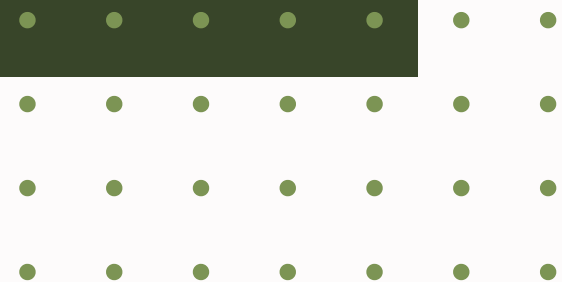
Funds will cover a wage for a fulltime position (35 hours per week), travel, office equipment and Indigenous relationship building. Office space will be provided in kind.



Conclusion

The hiring of an Executive Assistant for the NTHS would set the organization on track to provide the level of leadership needed to:

- Create relationship-building and collaborations with First Nations, NTHS members and with other organizations
- Elevate the visibility of the PRRD as a tourism destination by supporting destination development and marketing initiatives
- Support the network of heritage organizations and their staff and volunteers
- Create cross-sector opportunities for tourism, cultural heritage, business development, and showcasing the region.



THANK YOU

**April Moi, NBCTA Destination Development Manager
Administrator, AHCS**

Heather Sjoblom, Northern Trails Historical Society

Robin Holstein, Northern Trails Historical Society



Experience the Northern Rockies

This region has vast, protected land, incredible wildlife and lots to discover. As you drive northwest from Fort Nelson towards the BC-Alaska border, the landscape changes from Tripp Plains to the Northern Frontal Mountains. Along the way, you'll find pristine lakes, kilometres of trails to explore and hints of trapping and highway history.

Soaking through the wilderness is the historic Alaska Highway. Built during the Second World War, it changed the North forever. The highway connected once-isolated communities, expanded the economy and eventually brought travellers to the region. Today, northern communities along the highway consider it their Main Street.

We rely on each other, and you can too.

Along the highway, you'll find a tight knit community of lodges, small towns and indigenous communities. Fort Nelson is the administrative and service hub for the Northern Rockies. It has always been a gathering place—at the confluence of the Fort Nelson, Musikwa and Prophet rivers.

ALASKA HIGHWAY



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