



Report

To: Peace River Regional District Board
From: Trish Morgan, Community Services Coordinator
Date: October 14, 2009
Re: Charlie Lake Cave Heritage Recognition

From the September 10, 2009 Board Meeting, staff were directed to investigate the feasibility of having the Charlie Lake Cave site designated as a heritage site under Parks Canada and/or UNESCO to bring attention to its prehistoric value. In doing so, staff have investigated the requirements to be recognized at the world, national, provincial and local levels.

The Charlie Lake Cave site is situated on an outcrop of sandstone above Stoddart Creek which drains into Charlie Lake. The actual site that was excavated in 1974, 1983, 1990 and 1991 focused mostly on the deep gully at the mouth of the cave which has been gradually filling in for the past 10,500 years. Since few artifacts and skeletal remains were found from these excavations, researchers have been provided with only limited insight into the cultural significance of the site. "The early deposits at Charlie Lake Cave contain fairly scanty evidence about the people who first inhabited the post-glacial landscapes of western Canada, and some indications of the nature of the environment in which they lived" (Driver et al. 2000). Although there is evidence of early humans utilizing the site there seems to be no evidence of a permanent settlement and the particular uses seem to be unclear as well (i.e., whether it used as a refuse dump for carcasses or a butchering site).



Charlie Lake Cave – October 12, 2009

UNESCO – Gaining World Heritage Site Status

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. In 1972, 177 countries ratified the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the *World Heritage Convention*, for short). The Convention established the World Heritage List as a means of recognizing that some places, either natural or cultural, are of sufficient importance to be the responsibility of the international community as a whole, as such, the World Heritage List serves as a tool for conservation.

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The Convention is overseen by the World Heritage Committee, which is composed of 21 countries elected by the States Parties. Parks Canada was designated in 1976 as the lead agency for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Canada.

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As of June 2003, 754 sites of cultural and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value have been inscribed on the World Heritage List of which the following 15 sites are from Canada (in order of inscription):

1. Nahanni National Park Reserve (NWT)
2. L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site (NL)
3. Kluane/Wrangell – St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatschenshini –Alesk (YK & BC)
4. Dinosaur Provincial Park (AB)
5. S'Gang Gwaay (BC)
6. Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks (AB & BC)
7. Head-Smashed-in-Buffalo Jump (AB)
8. Wood Buffalo National Park (AB & NWT)
9. Historic District of Old Quebec (QC)
10. Gros Morne National Park (NL)
11. Old Town Lunenburg (NS)
12. Waterton- Glacier International Peace Park (AB & Montana)
13. Miguasha National Park (QC)
14. The Rideau Canada (ON)
15. Joggins Fossil Cliffs (NS)

In an effort to manage its workload, the World Heritage Committee has set limits on the pace of inscription for countries that are already well represented on the World Heritage List. With fifteen World Heritage Sites, Canada is considered to be well represented. Therefore, the World Heritage Committee will limit the examination of future Canadian candidate sites to a maximum of one per year. In 2004 Parks Canada submitted 11 sites for consideration, of which 9 continue to remain on Canada's Tentative List and are undergoing evaluation by Advisory Bodies designated by the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO). Two sites, the Rideau Canal in Ontario and Joggins Fossil Cliffs in Nova Scotia, have completed their reviews and were added the World Heritage List in 2007 and 2009 respectively. Prior to 2004, the last Tentative List submitted by Canada was in 1980, although it appears that additions were submitted to update the list during that time.

THE NOMINATION PROCESS TO BECOME A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Step 1: Canada's Tentative List

In order for a site to be nominated to the World Heritage Committee, the site must first be on Canada's Tentative List – an 'inventory' of its important natural and cultural heritage sites located within its boundaries which provides a forecast of the properties. It is an important step since the World Heritage Committee cannot consider a nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List unless the property has already been included on the State Party's Tentative List.

In order for a site to be included on Canada's Tentative List it must be recognized as a Canadian National Historic Site, National Park or a National Marine Conservation Area. Without this designation and recognition a site will not be considered for Canada's Tentative List. The only exception in this matter is for paleontological sites for which Canada currently has no national recognition process or designation, as such a specific framework for examination has been set out for these sites.

Further in order to be included on Canada's Tentative List, Parks Canada examine sites in the context of the conservation work that has been carried out in the past two decades, so that the very best candidates can be put forward for consideration. Many of Canada's existing National Historic Sites and Parks have been considered for the list but due to its strict criteria and high standards have been turned down.

After a recent review of their process, Parks Canada determined that the updated Tentative List should be based on sound science. In addition, stakeholder support was a key consideration. Any site nominated as a potential World Heritage Site would have to have the support of those responsible for the site as well as the

respective provincial or territorial governments, and, where relevant, Aboriginal groups. This support would be based on an understanding of the implications of inscription.

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The current framework for selection to Canada's Tentative List is based on the rationale underlying the Convention's requirement for "outstanding universal value" and attempts to help assess the relative significance of a site. Four levels of significance can be used when assessing the importance of a natural site for inclusion on the Tentative List and include international, regional (a biogeographic region), national and/or provincial significance.

Sites to include on the revised Tentative List should only be those that are considered significant at the international level in terms of distinctiveness, integrity, naturalness, dependency and diversity.

Step 2: The Nomination File

By preparing a Tentative List and selecting sites from it, a State Party can plan when to present a nomination file. The nomination is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review and to check it is complete. Once a nomination file is complete the World Heritage Centre sends it to the appropriate Advisory Bodies for evaluation.

Step 3: The Advisory Bodies

A nominated property is independently evaluated by three different Advisory Bodies – two mandated by the World Heritage Convention and one by an intergovernmental organization.

Step 4: The World Heritage Committee

Once a site has been nominated and evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to make the final decision on its inscription. Once a year, the Committee meets to decide which sites will be inscribed on the World Heritage List. It can also defer its decision and request further information on sites from the States Parties.

Step 5: The Criteria for Selection

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria (see criteria above).

National Heritage Site Recognition

In order to nominate a site to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) proponents must explain, demonstrate and provide significant evidence of national importance of a proposed place, person or event, in keeping with HSMBC criteria (i.e., illustrate an exceptional creative achievement; symbolize a cultural tradition; is associated with persons of national historic significance; or, is associated with events of national historic significance). Further, information on existing historical recognition including any other heritage assessments, reviews or designations and suggestions for further research must be included along with written support of the property owner.

In determining national significance the HSMBC will consider sites on a case-by-case basis, based on specific criteria and in context of a spectrum of Canadian history. Exceptional achievement or outstanding contributions will take precedence and a representative example may warrant designation if it eminently typifies a nationally-important example. Explicit and meaningful association must be direct and understandable. Uniqueness or rarity is not, in themselves, evidence of national significance hence "firsts", per se, are not necessarily considered nationally significant. In general, only one commemoration will be made for each place, person, or event.

With respect to archaeological sites in particular the Board recommends that a declaration of national significance be based on one or more of the following [guidelines]:

- a) substantive evidence that a particular site is unique, or

- b) that it satisfactorily represents a particular culture, or a specific phase in the development of a particular cultural sequence, or
- c) that it is a good typical example, or
- d) that it otherwise conforms to general Board [guidelines] touching the selection of historic sites for national recognition.

Once the nomination is received by HSMBC it is screened by staff to ensure that the pertinent criteria have been met. If the nomination's screening is unsuccessful it may be appealed. If the screening of the nomination is successful it will be added to the HSMBC Agenda for final consideration.

It is important to note that national recognition is purely a form of commemoration and it does not afford the property or site any formal recognition. Formal protection is the responsibility of the provincial or local government.

In terms of the Charlie Lake Cave site there has been much research already conducted at the academic level, however, this information would be best compiled for a nomination by a professional archaeologist who has greater understanding of its significance and whether it meets the criteria set out by the HSMBC.

Provincial Heritage Recognition

In order for a site to be recognized and protected at the Provincial level it must meet the requirements of the BC Register of Historic Places (BCRHP), the official listing of historic places that have been formally recognized for their heritage value by the Province and local governments. To do so, local governments must have in place a Community Heritage Register that meets the criteria established by the BCRHP documentation standards in accordance with the Canadian Register of Historic Places documentation standards.

Listings provided by Local Governments must meet the definition of "heritage property," provide support for why the historic place is considered to have heritage value or character and meet documentation standards (i.e., photos, location information, etc.)

Local Heritage Recognition

Currently the PRRD does not have a heritage function although in 1997 By-Law No. 1105, 1997 (Heritage Conservation) was adopted. Under the *Municipal Act* this By-Law allowed for "the extended service of services related to heritage conservation" and in particular noted the provision of a heritage register for within the boundaries of the Regional District, but did not make note of any of the conservation tools available under the *Act*. Since that time, a basic heritage register, listing 4 properties, has been maintained by the Regional District.

Now in 2009, in order to utilize the heritage conservation tools designated under Part 27 of the *Local Government Act* an enabling by-law must be adopted. Additionally, the PRRD heritage register and the files of the current heritage properties would require changes and updates to meet provincial documentation standards.

What is the advantage to establishing an enabling By-law?

- 1) The ability to utilize, if the Board chooses, conservation tools under Part 27 like:
 - establishment of a heritage register that has legal status and acts as a planning tool
 - heritage alteration permits which outline guidelines for renovations to the structure or site
 - establishment of a Community Heritage Commission
 - heritage inspection for the purpose of assessing heritage value
 - the ability to make a request to the Province for Provincial protection of the property
 - temporary protection of a site from alteration or demolition
 - designation of heritage conservation areas

- 2) Inclusion of sites to the BC Register of Historic Places (providing the file meets BC documentation standards) which makes them eligible for submission to the Canadian Register of Historic Places (this is not the same as being recognized as a National Historic Site).

Conclusion

Based upon initial research, it is very unlikely that the Charlie Lake Cave site will ever become a UNESCO site nor a Canadian National Historic Site. When staff spoke with Lyle Dick, West Coast Historian for Parks Canada, he indicated that a project like the Charlie Lake Cave should be developed first as a regional/provincial site before looking ahead to gaining national recognition and then World Heritage Recognition. He noted that many very important and already nationally recognized sites are not even considered for Canada's Tentative List. Therefore, with focused work at the local level the site could become a local heritage site and potentially a Provincially recognized historic site.

To proceed the PRRD needs to implement the following steps which will guarantee only that the Charlie Lake Cave site becomes a local historic point of interest.

- 1) Create a PRRD Heritage Service function
 - Gives authority to conduct the research
 - Authorizes the PRRD to collect tax dollars to pay for the service
 - Establishes boundaries, criteria and limitations for heritage consideration within the PRRD
- 2) Establish a Community Heritage Commission
 - Terms of Reference
 - Commissioners
 - Identification of heritage sites
- 3) Create of Community Heritage Register
- 4) Acquire the Charlie Lake Cave site lands
- 5) Compile the necessary documentation to be added to the Provincial Heritage Registry

The cost to operate a PRRD Heritage service is difficult to estimate because we don't know how many sites would be included. Previous estimates just to establish the service and to create and operate the Heritage Commission were \$60,000 for setup and \$30,000 for annual operating expenses and maintenance. There will be additional setup and ongoing costs to develop, maintain and provide programming at the Charlie Lake Cave site.

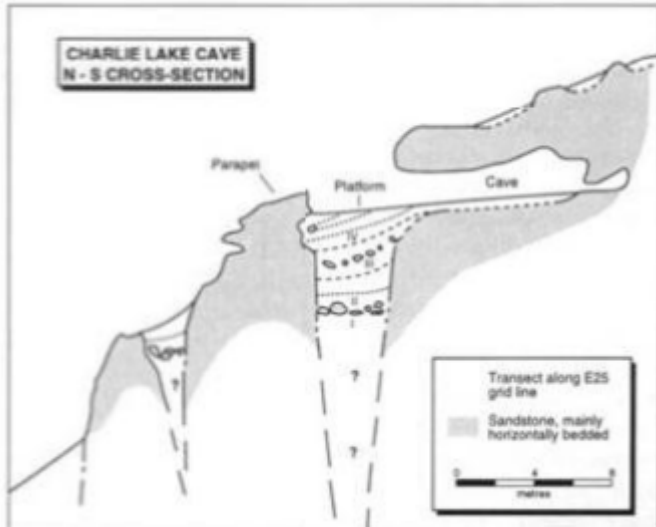
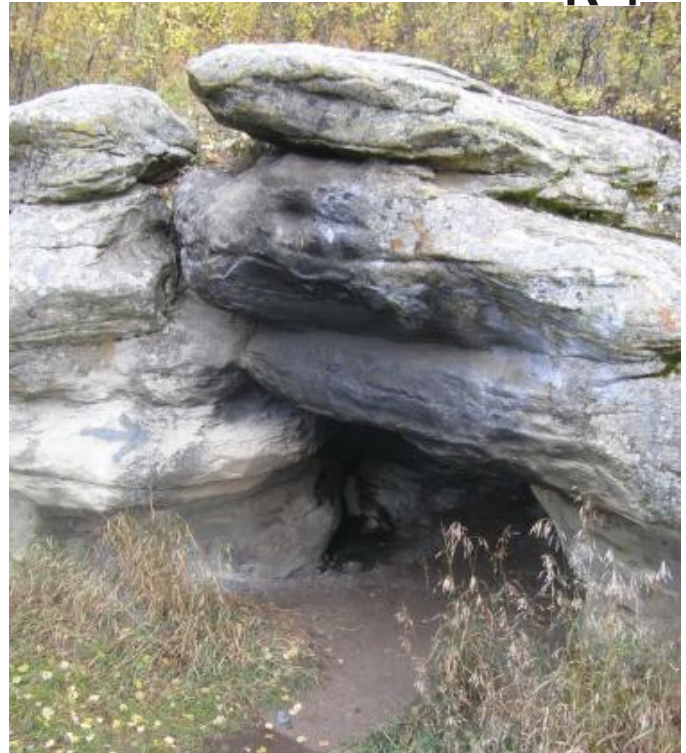


Diagram of the cave and gully
- from *Early Human Occupation in BC*



Entrance to the Charlie Lake Cave



Inside the Charlie Lake Cave



Exterior view of cave and filled in gully

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Excavation of the gully in front of the cave



Excavation of the gully in front of the cave

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