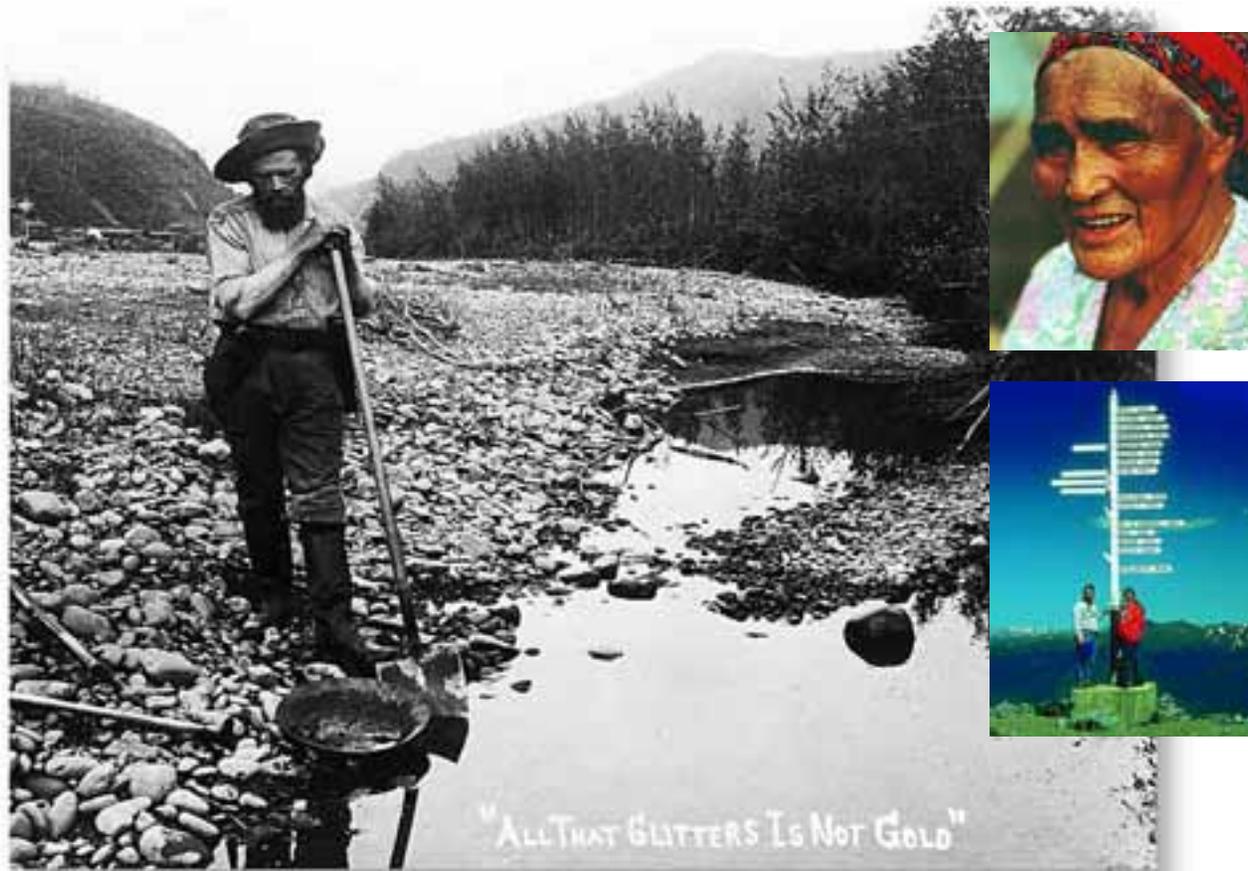


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# Silver Trail Interpretive Plan



Yukon Department of Tourism  
Heritage Branch  
December 1997

Inukshuk Planning & Development

*In Association with Anne Leckie, Albert Drapeau and Aasman Design Inc.*



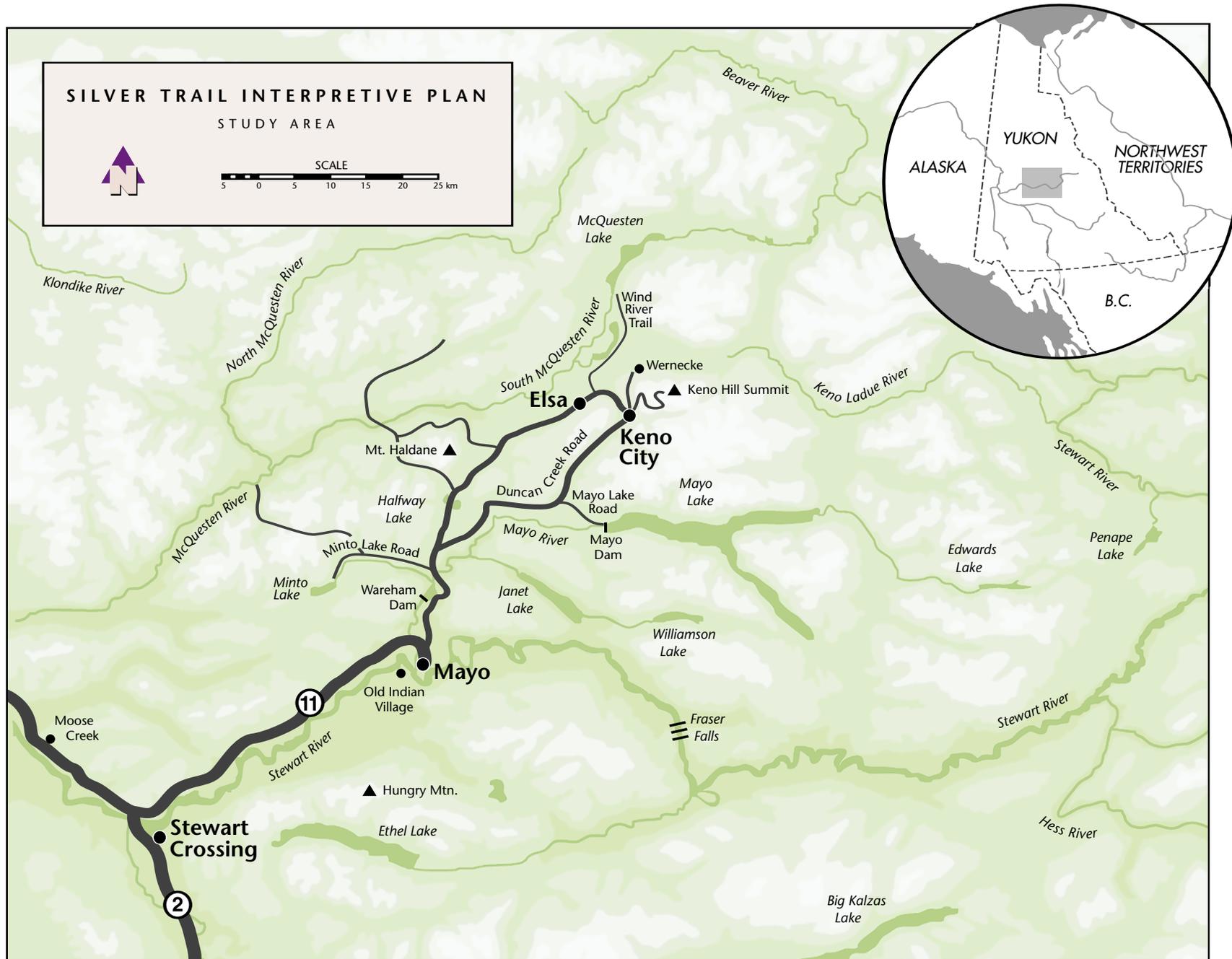


# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1 Program Background &amp; Plan Context</b> .....	5
<b>1.2 Purpose &amp; Objectives</b> .....	6
<b>1.3 Planning Approach</b> .....	6
<b>2.0 The Tourism Context</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>3.0 The Existing Situation</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1 Program Background &amp; Plan Context</b> .....	11
<b>3.2 Duncan Creek Road Corridor Overview</b> .....	17
<b>3.3 Assessment of Current Sign Text</b> .....	20
<b>3.3.1 Stewart Crossing to Mayo</b> .....	20
<b>3.3.2 Mayo to Keno City</b> .....	21
<b>3.3.3 Duncan Creek Road</b> .....	24
<b>3.4 Analysis of Thematic Representation</b> .....	25
<b>3.5 Implications for Interpretive Plan Development</b> .....	26
<b>4.0 Silver Trail Corridor Interpretation Plan</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>4.1 Approach</b> .....	27
<b>4.2 Thematic Representation Rationale</b> .....	30
<b>4.3 Media and Audience</b> .....	30
<b>4.4 Highway Interpretive Units</b> .....	31
<b>4.5 Sign Types and Locations</b> .....	31
<b>4.5.1 Silver Trail Corridor</b> .....	33
<b>4.5.2 Duncan Creek Road</b> .....	33
<b>5.0 Sign Design Concepts</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>6.0 Implementation and Operations</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>6.1 Priorities</b> .....	39
<b>6.2 Directional Signs</b> .....	41
<b>6.3 Capital and Maintenance Costs</b> .....	42

## **Table of Illustrations**

Map of Silver Trail Interpretive Plan Study Area.....	2
Map of Existing Dept. of Tourism Interpretive Signs.....	10
Typical Regional Site .....	27
Map of Overall Corridor Plan .....	28
Typical Minor and Major Sites.....	29
Map of Silver Trail, Stewart Crossing to Mayo.....	32
Map of Silver Trail, Mayo to Keno .....	34
Map of Silver Trail, Duncan Creek Road Loop .....	35
Corridor Identity Image .....	36
Typical Panel Design, Colour Pallet .....	37
Panel Frame Cross-Section and Post Details .....	38
Stewart Crossing–Regional Orientation Exhibit .....	39
Stewart River Valley Overlook–Major New Site .....	40
Minto Bridge–Major New Site .....	41
Major and Minor Site Advance Warning Signs .....	42



# 1.0 Introduction

The Silver Trail branches off the Klondike Highway at Stewart Crossing. It follows the north fork of the Stewart River into the heart of the traditional territory of the Nacho Nyak Dun for a distance of 112 km. At Mayo the road turns north to Elsa, ending at Keno City. The current highway was constructed in 1950 to link Whitehorse to Mayo. The original Mayo to Keno City wagon road intersected the Liberal Trail winter road from Mayo to Dawson City and the Duncan Creek Road just north of Minto Bridge. These original roads were constructed in 1904 with the road to Elsa (Galena Creek) built by 1915, following the discovery of silver. The Stewart River bridge was completed in 1960. Numerous exploration roads and trails have been constructed off the Silver Trail since. The Wind River Trail, McQuesten, Minto and Mayo Lake roads are all examples.

Mining interest in the Mayo region began in the late 1800s. A minor gold rush took place in 1885 when the first placer miners came to work the river bars of the Stewart and McQuesten Rivers. By 1887, \$100,000 worth of gold had been extracted from the bars in the Stewart River bed. Miners headed for Duncan Creek, disembarked from the steamboats at Gordon, and later, Mayo Landing. The current Mayo town site, named after Frank Mayo, was established in 1903.

Silver mining began in 1906 when H.W. McWhorter discovered silver in Galena Creek, three miles south-west of Elsa. The first silver mine, at Silver King, operated between 1913 and 1918. The entrance shaft is still visible from the road. The nearby United Keno Hill Mines Ltd. continued to extract ore until the late 1980s. At its peak in the

1950s, United Keno Hill was the largest silver producer in North America and the fourth largest in the world.

The communities in the Mayo Mining District have experienced the boom and bust cycle common to mining regions throughout the world. A number of mines have since been abandoned with the Elsa town-site being dismantled following the closure of the United Keno Hill operations. The population of Keno City has also dwindled to around 40 permanent residents. With a population of just under 500 people, Mayo continues to function as the government, transportation, service and regional supply centre for the central Yukon. The area still has

significant mineral potential and active exploration and mining activity continue to this day.

The tourism potential of the Silver Trail was not really appreciated until the early 1980s. As part of a bid to encourage more tourism into the region, a regional tourism association was established. Ten interpretive signs were erected by Yukon Tourism along the Silver Trail corridor in the mid eighties. One of the most noticeable initiatives of the new regional tourism association was to adopt and promote the “Silver Trail” theme. This resulted in the visitor information booth development at Stewart Crossing and the erection of banner poles at key locations along the road corridor.



*The “Silver Trail theme” promoted with the use of banners.*

The tourism association also started to develop its own site location identification signage.

The Silver Trail provides the visitor with three distinct driving images. Between Stewart Crossing and Mayo, the driver is exposed to occasional views of the river and Hungry Mountain as the road follows the Stewart River valley away from the Tintina Trench. The visitor passes through a white spruce forest in the first 5 kms. which insulates the underlying permafrost. The swampy marshland in the valley floor, visible at km 6, reflects past river meanders. This narrow winding portion of the road gradually gives way to an area of sand dunes before climbing onto the McConnell moraine at about km 32. The forest cover along this stretch of road is predominantly aspen, poplar and birch, reflecting the

drier soils and southern slope exposures. There are also lodgepole pine trees which are near their northern limits. At the end of the McConnell glaciation, a lake was formed behind an ice dam which crossed the valley at km 54 (Burn 1985). The lake extended upstream as far as Fraser Falls, leaving fine ice rich sediments underlain by permafrost.

The stunted black spruce, extensive wetlands and thermokarst lakes (often called “drunken” forests) between Mayo and Elsa reflect this glacial history. The visitor is afforded a panoramic view of the Mayo River valley and Lake Wareham after climbing Glacier Hill, aptly named for the icings that develop each winter from subsurface springs. Mt. Haldane stands out in the distance. The mountain is all the more impressive because it stands

alone, towering over the adjacent ridges. As the traveller reaches Minto Bridge, the wetlands visible at the bridge provide excellent migratory waterfowl habitat. The wetlands were created as a result of the construction of the Wareham dam and early placer mining activity. Approaching Elsa and Galena Hill, evidence of the area’s mining history gradually becomes more visible with good views out over the McQuesten River valley. The original Silver King claim and drift, at km 93, is easily missed, its significance unmarked.

Approaching Keno City, the peaks of the Patterson Range provide a distant backdrop to the visible signs of mining activity around the community. While the road formally ends at Keno City, many consider the true end of the road to be the sign post atop Keno Hill summit. From here there are spectacular 360 degree views of the surrounding country-side. The twin peaks of Mt. Hinton tower above Keno Hill.

The Duncan Creek Road winds through the narrow Duncan Creek valley from Keno City back towards Minto Bridge. Locals describe this road as a drive down a “country lane”, while others are more cautious, noting the road receives only seasonal maintenance. There are only brief glimpses of the upper canyon as the creek flows south-west towards the Mayo River. The dense vegetation and proliferation of alders reflect the extensive disturbance of the area in prior years and recent fire history.

Interpretive signs give residents and visitors alike, an appreciation of the Yukon’s natural, cultural and historical features. Along the Silver Trail and Duncan Creek Road loop there are numerous additional opportunities to tell a story about the region’s natural, cultural and historic features. These signage opportunities provide a simple, inexpensive way to inform, interest and educate the viewer on a year round basis.



Looking east towards Mayo McConnell moraine

The primary objective of a road-side interpretive sign is to tell a story. The story will have many themes describing how places got their names, why some landscape features are present and others not, descriptions of people who use the land and historical events that have taken place along this trail.

### 1.1 Program Background and Plan Context

The Department of Tourism Heritage Branch has the primary responsibility for developing and maintaining interpretive signage along the principal highways within the Yukon. In 1995, the Department commissioned a study of all existing

highway interpretive signage with a view to establishing program guidelines. The *Yukon Interpretive Signage Strategy* (Inukshuk Planning & Development, 1995) provides Yukon-wide guidelines for new site selection, spacing distances, site rationalization, sign construction and maintenance. The program guidelines provide direction for the preparation of these corridor specific plans.



*Mt. Haldane*

Key recommendations from the 1995 Strategy which guide the succeeding corridor plans include:

- program principles such as optimum spacing distances between sites and facilities; variety in interpretive media, message balance and representation; the need for year round site accessibility; and shared responsibility for program implementation;
- a hierarchy of sign types reflecting site significance and role, differentiating between territorial entrance, regional orientation, major and minor locations;
- program management directions to encourage inter-agency co-operation and co-operative partnerships in plan implementation;
- site facility development policies regarding the appropriate use of information booths, toilets, garbage containers, viewing platforms and similar support infrastructure; and
- inspection and maintenance standards to guide annual inter-agency agreements on site maintenance and facilitate budgeting.

In 1996, plans for the Klondike Highway were completed. In the Interpretive Plan for the North Klondike Highway, general reference is made to the Stewart Crossing regional orientation site. The North Klondike report suggests that the Stewart Crossing site is not significant in terms of its utility for that corridor but recognizes its relevance for a Silver Trail plan.

The Silver Trail is a priority because the existing signage is all at least 12 years old and many themes are missed or under-represented by the 10 existing signs. The regional tourism association also believes interpretive signage can play a valuable role in tourism promotion, attracting more visitors into the heart of the region.

## 1.2 Purpose & Objectives

The intent is to produce an interpretive plan that describes themes, suggests appropriate locations and presents guidelines for sign placement and site upgrading along the Silver Trail and Duncan Creek Road loop. The goal is to present the road traveller with an accurate, balanced, and interesting picture of the Silver Trail landscape, highlighting the natural, cultural and heritage character of the corridor.

The study objectives include:

- identifying representative themes and messages for both the Silver Trail and Duncan Creek Road;
- evaluating the effectiveness of existing signage for site location appropriateness, redundancy, message currency, theme representation and balance;
- determining the need for new sites for interpretive site development;
- formulating concepts for corridor motifs and key site priorities;
- outlining the capital costs and operational requirements, recommended corridor improvements; and
- seeking Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation, community, and government agency input in defining corridor needs, suggesting changes and development priorities, locating new sites, evaluating message content and creating corridor motifs.

## 1.3 Planning Approach

The study approach involved a review of the road corridor history, 1989 regional tourism plan, 1992 Silver Trail Marketing Strategy and the 1994 Visitor Exit Survey regional data. This was followed by

interviews with individuals, government agencies, First Nations, area communities and a field-trip along both roads.

This report highlights the opportunities, thematic deficiencies and issues which were considered in drafting the corridor signage development plan. The strengths and weaknesses of the existing sites are discussed in terms of location, theme representation, message content and current utility. Recommendations for possible corridor improvements are then put forward.

In their 1992 report *Silver Trail Marketing Plan* Graham & Associates conclude: “the Silver Trail is a positive concept, but the term is limited in market appeal.” From a regional tourism planning perspective this might be true; in terms of the corridor itself, it does present a simple, identifiable concept and readily identifiable visual image.

However, as the authors note in the marketing study, the “silver trail” theme is not inclusive enough to properly represent the range of interpretive themes that could, and should, be portrayed along the corridor. The most obvious missing theme is the First Nation “homeland” connection. This is a major deficiency for three significant reasons. First, it implies that the landscape was largely “unoccupied” prior to European exploration and settlement. This is simply inaccurate. Second, the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation presence is a story in its own right and visitor research confirms that First Nation history and culture is of significant interest to the tourist. Third, government is obligated to respect the land claim settlement legislation and support their culture. Making the visitor aware that they are within the traditional territory of the Nacho Nyak Dun is one way that First Nations interests can be protected and respected.

## 2.0 The Tourism Context

The Silver Trail region is relatively unknown and its visitor potential largely undiscovered. The existing 1989 Silver Trail Tourism Development Plan emphasizes the need to draw visitors off the Klondike highway into the area. Improving the interpretive signage is viewed as one means to “market” this road as an attractive travel corridor.

The 1994 Visitor Exit Survey (VES), reveals that 88% of the travellers on the Klondike Highway simply passed by the Silver Trail region without stopping. A significant opportunity and difficult challenge for the region is to secure a larger share of this pass through traffic. The 1994 VES indicates that 29% of the visitors to the Yukon came to the Silver Trail region at some time during their Yukon trip. However, of the approximately 60,000 visitors who passed through the region, only 7,290 (12%) actually stopped. This is not surprising since travellers on the Klondike highway have to “go out of their way” to explore the Silver Trail corridor. Of those who did stop over, 78% had pre-planned their visit, while another 14% had not planned to visit the region, but at some point chose to do so.

Given the short length of the highway corridor (112 km), a side trip excursion for visitors travelling the Klondike Highway to and from Dawson City is

not a major decision as the diversion can take as little as 3 or 4 hours. The key determinant is time and visitor flexibility. The VES data confirms that 98% of Silver Trail regional visitors were on a “pleasure” trip and 94% used a vehicle other than public transportation. Almost 44% used a motor-home, RV, camperised car, truck or van which fits the profile of an independent traveller. Sixty-seven percent of those who stopped and stayed overnight used existing campgrounds. This also supports the conclusion that most visitors are independent travellers.

A comparison of the road flow pattern between 1987 and 1994 suggests there has been a notable increase in visitation numbers into the heart of the region. Since road conditions do not appear to have been a limiting factor, this suggests that the type of visitor who did come knew what to expect and was not dissatisfied with their experience. The 1994 VES data and road flow pattern analysis does not include Yukon residents who may regularly visit the area for recreation. It is also not apparent whether travellers made a conscious effort to explore the Silver Trail and Duncan Creek Road loop or whether they merely stopped at Stewart Crossing.

The importance of the Stewart Crossing regional orientation site cannot be overlooked, for several reasons. First, the highway junction occurs at a “T” intersection which creates a natural decision point. While the data indicates that 78% of the visitors had already made a decision to visit the region before reaching Stewart Crossing, 14% appear to have been encouraged to do so somewhere enroute. In developing the Stewart Crossing site, the Silver Trail Tourism Association set their goal at diverting 5% of Klondike Highway traffic. It is not possible to confirm from the available data what influence the Stewart Crossing site really had because no tracking measurement was employed. However, it is reasonable to presume the site had some influence. Similarly, Heritage Branch installed a radio transmitter at the same location which provides a concise summary of the Silver Trail and encourages visitors to take the side trip. Again, without a tracking mechanism, it is impossible to determine the effectiveness of this initiative.

The inclusion of Binet House and the Keno City Mining Museum in the government’s “passport” program has resulted in a notable increase in visitation to these two facilities. What is more notable is that these are both interpretive facilities which confirms public interest in interpretive opportunities. Thus, updating the highway signage program complements those tourism attraction initiatives.

The regional interviews also confirm that improving the regional orientation display at Stewart Crossing and developing a clear gateway to the Silver Trail region is a priority issue. The logic behind improving interpretive signage along the Silver Trail is consistent with the nature of the dominant visitor market.

### 1994 Yukon Visitor Exit Survey Visitor Road Flow Pattern Analysis

Highway /Segment	1987 VES (No. of Visitors)	1994 VES (No. of Visitors)
Stewart Crossing to Mayo	0 – 2,000	3,800
Mayo to Stewart Crossing	0 – 2,000	3,800

The traveller characteristics are remarkably similar to those of the Campbell Highway. Significantly, scenery was the main attraction and lack of time the principal reason for not staying longer in the region. Fifty-six percent (56%) of those who did come indicated that they wished they had allowed more time (VES 1994). This was the most common response in all nine Yukon tourism regions. When visitors were asked what the single most negative thing about their visit to the Silver Trail region was, twenty-four percent (24%) mentioned transportation concerns while 18% indicated nothing at all.

A closer look at the data though, suggests that only 13.5% of these travellers rated the road conditions as poor. The survey question, however, did not differentiate between sections of road. For example, between Stewart Crossing and Mayo, the road is chip-sealed. From Mayo to Keno City the road has a reasonable gravel base while the condition of the Duncan Creek Road varies significantly with weather conditions.

Very little specific research has been done in the Yukon on visitor interest in interpretive signage. The 1992 *Psychographic Segmentation Study* and a departmental survey in 1994 provide some general information concerning visitor interest and site use which are applicable here. Applicable conclusions include:

- Yukon visitors generally expect to see interpretive signs and stop when they do,

especially if they have advance warning;

- reading about a site in the Milepost magazine often accounted for their stop;
- visitors stop most often to view the scenery, take a rest or read the sign, with preferred sites being those with a significant view;
- visitors like to have and will use basic facilities when provided, such as toilets and garbage containers;
- the quality and approach to interpretive signage taken by the Yukon appears to be meeting visitor needs;
- the visitor profile is changing with a younger, more mobile segment of the tourist market looking at the Yukon as a discrete destination from the traditional primary destination of Alaska; and
- the independent highway traveller profile most closely fits the “Organized Neighbourhood Outdoor Folk” and “Earthy Explorer” psychographic study categories.

The most significant change between 1987 and 1994 is in visitor origin, as illustrated by the Point of Origin table.

According to the 1994 VES, visitors from British Columbia and Alberta make up 62% of all Canadian visitors while Germans dominate the overseas market (53%), followed by the Swiss (20%). While there has been a slight drop in Canadian and American visitors, it has been offset by increases in overseas travellers, particularly from German speaking countries.

Silver Trail residents have indicated that numerous enhancement opportunities exist. Tourism Yukon is updating the Silver Trail Tourism Plan this year, and interpretive signage improvements will be an important part of the implementation strategy. With over 93% of visitors being independent and travelling by vehicle, improving the effectiveness of interpretive signage along the highway is consistent with visitor needs and regional tourism development goals.

### Points of Origin

Country	1987	1994
Canada	32%	21.8%
United States	55%	50.2%
Overseas	13%	28%



Minto Bridge

## 3.0 The Existing Situation



Mayo Waterfront Signage

The ten existing Silver Trail signs are a mix of styles, materials and formats, erected for a variety of reasons as a result of local and government initiatives. Consequently, the site selection and development standards vary considerably. The files do not reveal why certain signs were erected or themes followed. Some are self-evident, commemorating an event or place while others, such as the Duncan Creek Road signs, have been placed to help visitors find their way.

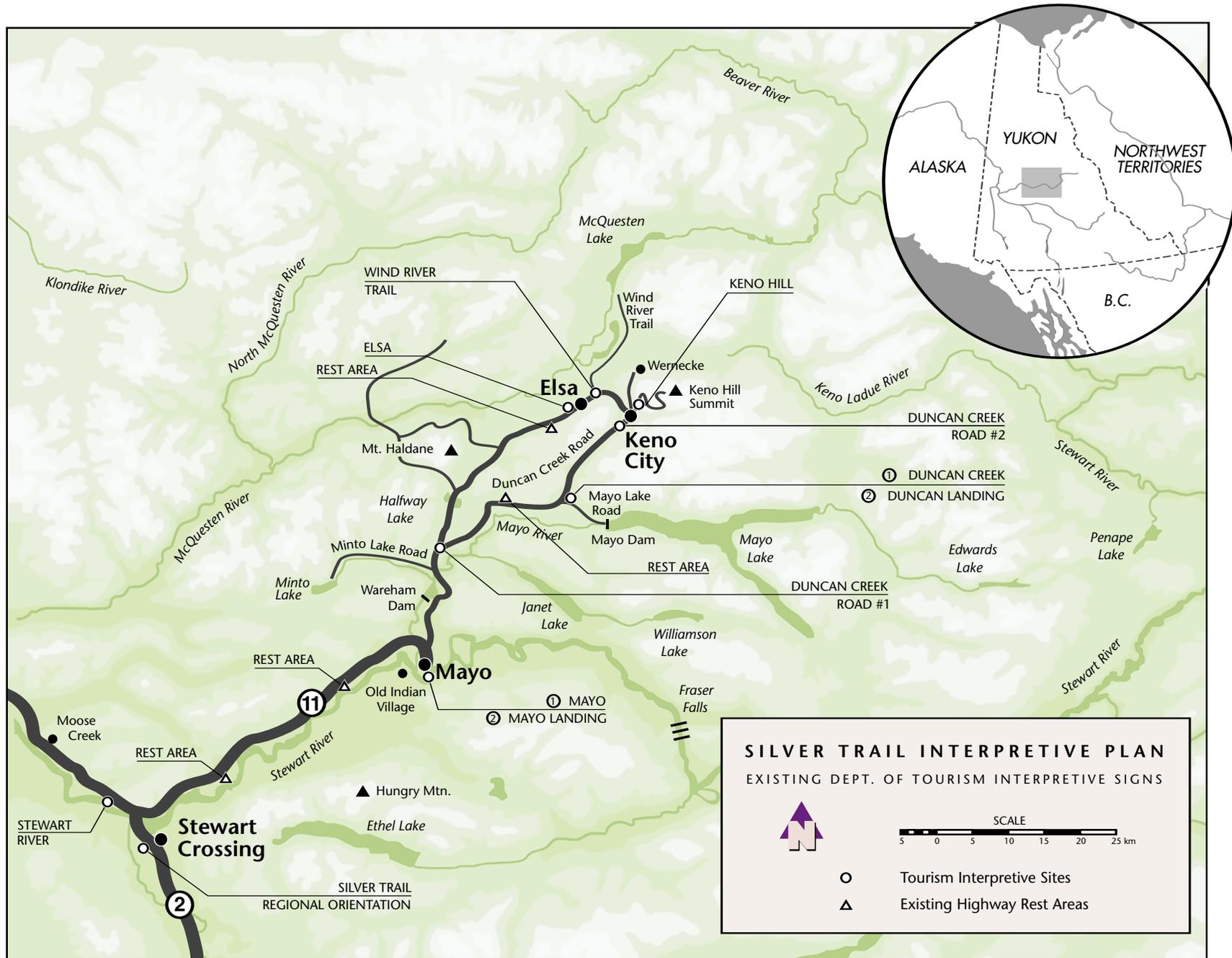
Many of the signs are poorly located, outdated and unbalanced in terms of today's efforts at thematic representation. In some cases, the signs are now redundant at their present location. The Mayo/Mayo Landing sign combination in the waterfront park is a good example. The new interpretive exhibit and seating area, developed by the Nacho Nyak Dun and Village of Mayo, presents much of the same information that is covered on these panels.

Long text blocks on the traditional routed signs are rather uninviting and more pictures would help carry the message, draw people's attention, and present the thematic message more simply and creatively.

The signs do not reflect a co-ordinated effort to effectively present the region to the visitor. One of the key objectives behind the corridor signage plan is to provide order, image continuity and effective message delivery to meet user needs.

All the 1985-86 vintage routed signs used a varathane finish that has not weathered well. The Elsa, Wind River and Keno Hill signs are examples. Some sites are quite overgrown and there is little evidence of any concerted maintenance effort.

There are eight existing interpretive signage locations and four highway rest area locations along the two road corridors (see map, next page). In a spatial context, the sign representation is extremely variable. The spacing distance on the Silver Trail averages 22 km but there are some anomalies with sign spacing as close as 2 km to as much as 51 km apart. For example, no signs exist between Stewart Crossing and Mayo, yet there are a variety of potential interpretive features. The existing highway rest area at km19 is an ideal location to interpret a range of themes from geology and river morphology to First Nation stories about "Hungry Mountain".



Most of the existing signs are located at key road junctions with the exception of the two Mayo signs, and the Keno Hill sign. The eight existing locations are: Stewart Crossing (km 0), the Mayo/Mayo Landing signs on the Mayo waterfront (km 51), the identical Duncan Creek Road/Silver Trail junction signs (km 69 Silver Trail, km 0 Duncan Creek Road at Keno City), Elsa (km 100), the turnoff to Wind River Trail (km 102) and one in Keno City (km 111).

There are also two signs on the Duncan Creek Road at the turn-off to Mayo Lake (km 21.5 Duncan Creek Road). Except for the more recent Stewart Crossing interpretive signage, all the signs were erected in 1985 and 1986 and are nearing the end of their useful life.

Overall, the current Silver Trail interpretive program covers four of the broad thematic categories identified in the Yukon Interpretive Signage Strategy (*Historic – Settlement; Historic – Exploration and Mining; Historic – Transportation and Communication; Regional Orientation*). However, half of the current interpretive signs are actually *Historic – Exploration and Mining*, with silver mining being the dominant theme. Furthermore, all ten interpretive signs refer to Euro-american history themes with no mention of First Nations history. A better balance is also needed between natural, cultural and historic themes to keep visitor interest up and properly represent the region as a whole.

### 3.1 Silver Trail Site Assessment

#### **Stewart River (km 555.5 N. Klondike Hwy)**

This site lies north of Stewart Crossing and is part of the Klondike Highway. In the North Klondike Plan, this site is to be relocated approximately 1 km to the north and developed as a major site. Both the proposed First Nation and ecology stories could introduce a Silver Trail regional element.

A problem with having the regional orientation site to the south, at Stewart Crossing is that it is located after the highway intersection and requires south-bound travellers to back-track across the bridge, if they decide to take the Silver Trail. It is possible that an additional orientation sign could be incorporated into the Stewart River site, promoting the Silver Trail region to the visitor. Such a sign could be developed with the regional tourism association through a co-operative partnership. The sign could be funded and maintained by the regional association.

#### **Stewart Crossing (km 537 N. Klondike Highway; km 0 Silver Trail)**

Stewart Crossing is recognized as the “gateway” to the Silver Trail. The Klondike Highway and the start of the Silver Trail form a T-intersection at Stewart Crossing, creating a natural decision point for the tourist. Originally, Stewart Crossing was a sawmill and wood camp for the steamboats and this community history has not been interpreted to date. The existing rest area was originally used as a community postal kiosk. The site was expanded to include picnic tables, garbage cans and toilets with the visitor information booth added later by the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association (STTA).

The existing site has several limitations. It is located on the south side of the Stewart River bridge, past the highway 11 junction for southbound traffic.

#### Thematic Representation Matrix

Thematic Category	No. of Signs	Site Location
Historic - Settlement	1	Mayo Landing, Duncan Landing
Historic - Exploration & Mining; General	4	Mayo, Elsa, Keno Hill, Duncan Creek
Historic - Transportation & Communication	4	Wind River Trail, Duncan Creek Road (2 identical)
Historic - General	0	
First Nations History	0	
Natural History	0	
Regional Orientation	1	Stewart Crossing

Also there are few visual signs from the north suggesting the regional orientation function of this site.

For northbound traffic the site is located on the opposite side of the natural traffic flow.

The site is cluttered and not well maintained. The site contains post office boxes, a visitor radio frequency sign, a small visitor information booth, outhouses and three interpretive panels in a wooden frame. Site maintenance has been a recurring issue because of the number of uses.

One proposal is to move the visitor information booth to private property across the road and leave the outhouses and signage where they are.

Establishment of a second site would be confusing to travellers, but would make more area available for interpretive site development.

A second proposal would be to explore the feasibility of relocating the entire site across the road. This would entail entering into joint venture discussions covering site development and maintenance.

In either case the existing signage is not adequate for a regional orientation site.

The existing booth sign was installed in 1991. The message deals with the character and points of interest of the Silver Trail, focusing primarily on the readily accessible wilderness and hiking trails near Keno City and the general Silver Trail mining

history. This may entice some travellers but does not fully embellish the attractions of the area. For example, there is nothing to entice the visitor to drive even the first 10 km into the Devil's Elbow wetland area. There is also an opportunity to interpret the history of the road and make some reference to Mayo. First Nations culture and natural history themes are noted but could be expanded.

The interpretive sign structure needs to be modified since its effectiveness is limited by the angle of the sign enclosure and the lack of direct access to the signage by the support beams across the front (see picture below).



*Silver Trail Intersection*



*Stewart Crossing Interpretive Kiosk*

In the past, some have considered the toilet facilities to be an unnecessary operational cost, given the location of visitor service facilities at the lodge (currently closed). However, the existing toilet facilities appear to be over-used, confirming their value. The outhouses should either be repaired or replaced and a screening wall separating the outhouses from the rest of the site added. Alternatively, public washrooms could be integrated with a new Stewart Lodge building.

It will be important to work with the site owner to integrate the future interpretive site with the redevelopment plans for Stewart Lodge. The existing post office mail boxes and “no camping” sign are also out of context with the surroundings and would be best relocated.

Since Stewart Crossing is a highly visible site with considerable local interest and involvement, the regional orientation focus is appropriate. It is also important that the graphic signage of the site be associated with the start of the Silver Trail and not the Klondike Highway, so that visitors see the Silver Trail as another opportunity, entirely separate from the highway corridor they have been following.

### ***Devil’s Elbow (km 9.6)***

In the initial stretch of road there are limited and occasional views of the river and the associated wetlands created by former meander channels. This section of the Silver Trail provides some excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing, and moose and waterfowl can often be seen along the Stewart River. A moose calving protected site exists between km 6-16 and a moose calving sign is

located at km 3.7. The sign, however, is too small for most highway travellers to read. The Nacho Nyak Dun identified the interpretive potential of the Devil’s Elbow site.

A shallow pull-out already exists along the bluff, overlooking the river at Devil’s Elbow. The bank is too steep and the road too narrow to create a safe and cost-effective rest area at this location. Other problems with this site include a rather restricted view and poor sight lines from the east.

The Mayo District Renewable Resources Council has also expressed interest in seeing this site developed. A safer alternative site exists in the vicinity of km 10.2 where an abandoned gravel pit could be used as a parking area and short trails might be developed in partnership with the Mayo District Renewable Resources Council. The spacing distance is appropriate for a minor rest area. Exact site location would require further consultation.

### ***Stewart River Valley Overlook (km 19)***

The first existing highway rest area is a pull-out at km 19, overlooking the Stewart River Valley. No interpretive signage exists but this would be an excellent opportunity to develop a major interpretive site at minimal cost. Possible themes include geology, river morphology, and a First Nations story about Hungry Mountain.

The site has one garbage can. Toilets would need to be added and brush cleared to open up the view.

### ***The Conservative Trail (km 38.8)***

The road continues to climb onto the McConnell moraine and outwash plain. The Conservative Trail, a back road to mining properties, joins the Silver

Trail at km 38.8, goes behind Liberal Ridge and eventually joins up to the Minto Lake Road. This is not always vehicular accessible but is a good hiking or biking area, offering a trailhead opportunity. This creates a loop recreation trail possibility that could also be acknowledged at the Minto Lake site.<sup>1</sup> The transportation interpretive theme can be better interpreted elsewhere.

### ***Highway Rest Area (km 44)***

At km 44, there is another Highways rest area with three tables and two outhouses. This location has no obvious interpretation potential and given its proximity to Mayo, the addition of interpretive signage is not recommended.

### ***McIntyre Park (km 49)***

As the road continues to Mayo, it descends a steep embankment down to the Mayo River.

Just before the Mayo River bridge lies McIntyre Park, a small picnic site and day-use area managed by the Village of Mayo. Others have suggested developing this site because of the salmon spawning and old fish trap that was once used here.

As this site is on the village boundary and less than 1 km from the Mayo-Keno City intersection, it would be a suitable location for the local community to develop as part of the regional tourism plan.

A pull-off has been constructed just after the Mayo River bridge, less than 250 metres from the entrance to McIntyre Park. A large village identification sign and a map of Mayo streets were installed here in 1992 by the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association. The location is not ideal nor very visually appealing.

<sup>1</sup> Recreation trail development is not within the Heritage Branch sign program mandate. The interpretive opportunity is just being recognized. Development is dependent on First Nation and government consultation.

### ***Village of Mayo/Mayo Landing (km 51)***

The Silver Trail turns north at the Village of Mayo (km 51). Two interpretive signs have been erected together in the waterfront park adjacent to the Stewart River. These routed cedar signs, installed in 1985, cover the history of Mayo Landing and the signs are in poor condition. A new interpretive site is currently being developed at the foot of Centre Street and eliminates the need for this signage. The

site is also within one block of Binet House.

The signs should not be replaced at this location and the site should be dropped from the Heritage Branch inventory.

Beyond Mayo, the Silver Trail leaves the Stewart River and heads north, following the Mayo River valley towards Elsa. While the community cemetery at the airport contains some interesting grave

sites of area pioneers, it does not really fit into this program. The Frog Lake Wetlands Protected Area lies behind the airport but there does not appear to be a suitable site next to the road for an interpretive site.

### ***Wareham Lake Hydro Dam (km 56)***

At km 56, there is a small road junction on the left leading to the Wareham Lake Hydro Dam. A side road off this road links up with the access to the territorial campground. Only a short drive from the highway, the dam offers a scenic viewpoint. Yukon Energy has recently fabricated their own interpretive sign at the highway so no additional development is needed.

### ***Five Mile Lake Campground (km 56.5)***

Beyond the Wareham Lake Hydro Dam lie the Five Mile Lake Campground and separate Day Use Area. The recreation potential of this area has been developed by the Parks & Outdoor Recreation Branch in association with the Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association. Additional signage development is not needed.

### ***Glacier Hill (km 59.5)***

About 8 km out of Mayo the road takes a sharp bend and climbs up Glacier Hill where there is a spectacular view over the Mayo River Valley, with Wareham Lake in the foreground. From the top of the hill one can also see Mount Haldane in the distance. This location, at the top of the hill, would be a possible location for a minor interpretive site. Geomorphology, Wareham Lake creation and glaciation themes could be pursued.

### ***Minto Bridge (km 64)***

A little further on, Minto Bridge (km 64) and the surrounding marshland offer considerable potential for interpretation.



*Village of Mayo Entrance Rest Area*

Minto Bridge was the site of a roadhouse for the horse-teams hauling ore to Mayo at the turn of the century. Some old cabin sites can still be seen on higher ground slightly upstream to the north and the old road is still visible to the west of the bridge. The existing marsh was created by construction of the Wareham Lake dam and early placer mining activity to the west. This is a highly productive wetland and excellent migratory waterfowl viewing site.

Any new interpretive site should be located on the north side of the Minto Bridge, away from the privately owned Mease farm. One can still see the old cabin on their property. Possible interpretive themes include wildlife viewing, recreation and the habitat change caused by the placer mining and dam activity.

When this site is developed, it is recommended that the Duncan Creek turn-off site be abandoned and the sub-regional orientation sign relocated to this site.

#### ***Mayo Lake/ Duncan Creek Turnoff (km 69)***

The existing interpretive site at the Duncan Creek turn-off was installed in 1986 and is a logical location for some form of sub-regional orientation to the Duncan Creek Road loop. This sign was specifically erected to encourage tourism and promote use of the “back” road to Keno City. The road is also used by local residents as the main access to Mayo Lake.

The rest area is not properly defined and is really little more than a widening of the intersection itself. The sign can be easily missed by north-bound traffic. More site definition is required to encourage travellers to stop. No advance warning signs are provided. There is one garbage container but no outhouses. It is noteworthy that apart from the

campground and day-use area at km 56.5, there are no toilet facilities anywhere along the corridor between Mayo and Keno City.

Heritage Branch and Highways should work together to better define the entry/exit point. As the intersection is only three kms north of Minto Bridge it may be possible to eliminate this site entirely if highway directional signage is improved.

The current sign duplicates the sign at Keno City. The interpretive themes portrayed include exploration, placer gold mining and transportation history in the context of sub-regional orientation.

The existing sign has been damaged and is in need of replacement. It displays a regional orientation map to Mayo Lake but does not show Minto Lake Road which should be included.

The Duncan Creek turn-off is less than 1 km north of the Minto Lake Road which heads west towards Minto Lake, Hight Creek, the Liberal and Conservative trails. Minto Lake is reputedly a good area for moose hunting, however, it is probably not a good idea to encourage tourists to use this road beyond the Minto Lake cutoff due to variable road conditions. Also, the Hight Creek/Minto Lake Road is actively used by placer miners and the placer leasees have expressed some concern about liability. The proximity of these two roads and their relationship to Minto Bridge is another reason for considering concentrating the regional interpretation opportunities at the Minto Bridge site.

#### ***Halfway Lakes (km 76)***

Just before Halfway Lakes is the turn-off for the Mount Haldane trail. The intersection is marked by a small routed wood sign erected by the regional tourism association. The trailhead is 3.5 km to the west. For the highway traveller there are better

locations to view Mount Haldane so no additional signage is proposed for here.

The Silver Trail swings round the north end of these lakes past the lodge. Boating and northern pike fishing are popular here. No interpretive signage development is recommended.

#### ***Thermokarst Lakes, Mount Haldane View (km 80)***

In the valley, to the west of the highway, lie a cluster of thermokarst lakes which are easily visible from an existing small highway rest area. This is a good example of a typical “drunken forest” caused by permafrost terrain, with trees tilted at different angles. Mount Haldane also stands out above the thermokarst lakes and is the dominant scenic feature along this section of the highway. Although only 1,839 m high, it is one of the area’s more impressive summits, as it stands alone, away from any ridges. Promotion material on the mountain has recently been published to encourage tourists to hike up to its summit.

A pull-out and a small sign for Mount Haldane already exist at km 80. The history of Mount Haldane and the thermokarst lakes are logical topics for interpretation at this site.

#### ***Corkery Creek (km 83.5)***

Another potential interpretive site identified by the Parks & Outdoor Recreation Branch is at Corkery Creek. Here, a trail on the east side of the road leads up to a tiny waterfall, about 9 metres off the side of the road. An equipment pull-off currently exists nearby on the left side of the road. The waterfall is not readily visible from the road because of the deep underbrush. While interesting, the falls are not significant enough to justify site development.

### **South McQuesten River Junction (km 87)**

The South McQuesten River junction at km 87 is a well used mining road that terminates at Dublin Gulch. It also provides access to a popular canoe route. The desire for additional signage has been expressed in interviews concerning the new regional tourism plan currently being prepared. Adding additional signage at this location duplicates the Wind River sign theme and is not significant enough to compromise the spacing distance standards. Therefore, no sign is recommended here.

### **Original Silver King Mine (km 93)**

This section of the road provides one of the better views of Elsa and the hillside where silver mining has occurred. As the road crosses Galena Creek, the ruins of the first Silver King mine can be seen on the

south side of the road. Old mining shafts are visible from the road, and a gravel pit just beyond the site is a possible rest area. Another potential pull-out site lies on the existing United Keno Hill mine lease. Here, a trail overlooking the mine entrance in the steep sided ravine could be safely developed.

This is a site where overlooking the spacing criteria can be justified. Although it is quite close to the sign at Elsa and the proposed thermokarst lakes site, it is the reason behind the “Silver Trail” name. While the mine shaft is visible from the road above the creek, the road is quite narrow with steep banks, making stopping a safety concern.

Development of this site would require company cooperation and thus better fits into the regional Tourism plan.

### **Elsa (km 100)**

A look-out and rest area has existed across from the Elsa school for over 40 years. The existing rest area and sign is in a state of disrepair. The community also erected a brass cairn at this site which needs to be cleaned and restored as part of the site refurbishment. The traffic bollards and garbage cans need to be replaced and there are no toilet facilities provided. Again, the advance warning signage is missing.

The site offers panoramic views of the McQuesten River valley with Steamboat Mountain in the far distance. Various abandoned mines are visible as well as the tailing ponds created out of the Crystal Lake wetlands.



Local Identification Signage



Elsa Rest Area

### **Wind River Trail (km 102)**

There is also an interpretive sign just two kms beyond Elsa, located at the Wind River Trail road junction. The Wind River Trail originated as a winter road, built in the 1950s for truck haulage of oil-well-drilling equipment and supplies up to mine and oil and gas exploration sites in the Richardson Mountains and Eagle Plains area.

The existing interpretive sign was installed in 1986 and gives a general summary of the history of the trail. Here is an opportunity to add some First Nations history and explain how the river was named by the Gwich'in because of the furious winds which blow down it.

The interpretive site is in a rather dangerous location with no safe pull-off or advance warning signage. As it is on the west side of the road on the inside of a bend, north-bound travellers easily miss it. The sign is also badly weathered.

### **Keno Hill (km 111)**

The existing interpretive sign is located at the foot of Keno Hill in the centre of the community across from the restored museum. The rationale for the present site is difficult to discern. It was erected in 1985. There is no site definition or associated infrastructure. The sign is visible but doesn't stand out. A more pedestrian oriented exhibit would be appropriate and in context with the surrounding area. The need for this sign can be questioned as the content is covered in the refurbished museum.

Like all the signs built around 1985, the sign is badly weathered.

### **Keno Hill Summit (km 113)**

From mid-June onwards it is usually possible to drive to the signpost at the top of Keno Hill. From the summit one has a spectacular view of the valley, mines and mountain ranges. It is also one of the best

sites to see marmots. The story behind the cairn and signpost could be told here or at the foot of the hill by re-orienting the content of the existing Keno Hill sign.

## **3.2 Duncan Creek Road Corridor Overview**

The 54 km Duncan Creek Road was the original road used to haul silver ore from Keno to Mayo. Duncan Creek runs in a south-westerly direction towards the Mayo River.

### **Duncan Creek Road (km 0 Duncan Creek Road)**

The Duncan Creek Road intersection does not stand out from any of the adjoining roads in the community. The intersection is poorly defined with the interpretive sign not visible until the second intersection point about 100 metres down the road itself.

The road has no edge definition and looks like what it is – a relatively little used back road rather than an inviting country lane.



*Duncan Creek Road/Silver Trail Intersection*

The existing sign duplicates the sign at the Silver Trail cut-off at km 69 of the Silver Trail. The sign needs to be relocated closer to the actual start of the road rather than at the second intersection where it is not readily visible.

Given the informal road network, it will be difficult to define a suitable orientation exhibit site. The intersection itself needs to be properly defined and readily apparent to the motorist. The sign is difficult to read and is more suitable for a pedestrian oriented display. Site development here should create an entry/arrival gateway image and needs to be developed carefully to avoid mixing up sign functions.

The existing silk-screened signboard, installed in 1986, is located beside Upper Duncan Creek at the side road to the local ball field. The sign itself is in

relatively good condition, while the frame and cover need repair. There are no advance warning signs or infrastructure. While it would make sense to have an advance warning sign for north-bound travellers coming into Keno City, such signage would not make sense in town for visitors headed the other way. While a proper pull-out is required, toilet facilities are an added expense that cannot be justified when the site is within the community.

With better definition of the road entrance and improvements to directional signage, this site can eventually be eliminated.

#### ***Van Cleeve's Roadhouse (km 19)***

Driving along Duncan Creek Road one can sometimes see the remains of old mines, fences, log buildings, cabins and workshops that have been

abandoned since the turn of the century. Unfortunately, most of the log cabins are at best foundations or pieces of fences. Van Cleeve's (a prospector and trapper) roadhouse, the first night's stop on the journey from Keno to Mayo, used to be an interesting sight to stop at but was mostly wiped out in a forest fire a few years ago. The site is presently marked by a small sign erected by the regional tourism association.

#### ***Duncan Creek Golddusters (km 20.5)***

Duncan Creek Golddusters is an active family run placer mine open to tourists. The operation is not visible from the Duncan Creek Road.

#### ***Mayo Lake Fork (km 21.5)***

The road to Mayo Lake follows the Mayo River valley eastward, across Duncan Creek and along the north bank of the Mayo River. The intersection is not well defined. The main traffic flow is towards Mayo Lake when travelling north-bound. Visually, it is a large intersection with no defined stopping or parking area like the Silver Trail/Duncan Creek Road intersection. In this case the signs are located along the north axis of the triangle formed by the road junction.

There are two interpretive signs at this intersection. The placement of the signs is slightly off-centre which encourages north-bound traffic to keep right rather than continuing northward. The signs are not visible to south-bound traffic on the Duncan Creek Road so tourists can easily carry on by without seeing them. There are also no advance warning signs or proper highway directional signs.

The first sign discusses the history of Duncan Creek while the second refers to the location of Duncan Landing and how to reach the abandoned settlement. These two routed wood signs are in relatively good shape.



*Van Cleeve's Roadhouse – Local Identification Marker*



*Duncan Creek Interpretive Sign, Mayo Lake Intersection*

The message content on the two signs could be combined. The second sign provides only a vague description of how to find Duncan Landing. It does not say for example, which side of the creek to follow or whether a visible trail exists.

While this is an appropriate location to tell the story of Duncan Creek, there is no reference to Mayo Lake which, at 34 km. in length, is the largest lake in the area. There is also no reference to the nearby dam which is a modern day attraction. The history of Mayo Lake is also an interesting story that could be added.

It is recommended that when the sign is replaced, the message be updated to combine the Duncan Creek stories with reference to Mayo Lake and the graphics used include some sub-regional orientation.

#### ***Stones Farm (km 38)***

This is an existing rest area that overlooks a burn and the Mayo River. In this stretch of road, it is one of the few places where the river is very visible and the fire history readily apparent. It is a possible new minor site.

#### ***Field Creek (km 40)***

Cabins, on the west side of the creek, remain from a settlement of 700 people back in the 1920s. The remains are basically just foundations but provide a good opportunity for historic interpretation. The remains are not readily visible from the road.

### 3.3 Assessment of Current Sign Text

To provide thematic continuity, the message presented at each individual sign location was analyzed as the messages reflect particular perspectives and themes.

The actual text on each Tourism Department sign is

in the left column. The right column contains notes that explain the text deficiencies and suggested ways to improve thematic representation to make the signage more relevant today.

Similar to the South Canol Road and Campbell Highway, there is an over-reliance on large panels

with upper case text and no graphic elements. Upper case text hinders reader comprehension. Research shows upper case text takes longer, and is more difficult to read. Adding a graphic element usually reduces text length and makes the interpretive message clearer.

#### EXISTING SIGN TEXT

##### 3.3.1 Stewart Crossing to Mayo Stewart Crossing

Current Theme: Silver Trail Regional Orientation

*Stewart Crossing - km 537 Klondike Highway and km 0 Silver Trail junction*

If there is one thing that typifies the Silver Trail area, it is accessibility. Nowhere else can the traveller find such easy access to a mountain top experience or to the human history of an area.

Much like the wilderness itself, Silver Trail history, predates the Klondike Gold Rush, is untamed and still highly visible. Artifacts, buildings, equipment and monuments still dot the landscape. While efforts are being made to catalogue it, Silver Trail history is not yet confined to books and memories. Supplemented by tours of the historic Binet House in Mayo and Mining Museum in Keno, travellers here will acquire a first-hand sense of that history.

Equally accessible are the area's recreation facilities and wilderness hikes. Travellers may readily drive to alpine meadows and hike panoramic ridge tops by Keno, travel magnificent historic waterways by canoe, explore old mine sites for unusual specimens, or fish the area's waters.

The Silver Trail is a quiet, lightly developed region that will appeal to those who travel with a sense of adventure.

#### COMMENT

- The existing interpretive signage in the Silver Trail booth was installed in 1991.
- Message deals with the character and points of interest of what is essentially a "tributary corridor"
- Sign encourages people to drive up the Silver Trail. It provides some encouraging glimpses into the nature of the trip (focuses on the readily accessible wilderness and hiking trails up in Keno City and the general Silver Trail mining history). It sounds interesting but is only part of the entire story. For example, there is nothing to entice the visitor to drive even the first 10 km into the Devil's Elbow wetland area. While not listed in the sign inventory, two parallel signs at this booth introduce travellers to the Nacho Nyak Dun, communities along the trail, early gold and later silver mining history and wilderness adventure opportunities. First Nations culture and natural history themes should be expanded.
- There is an opportunity to interpret (more) the history of the road.
- Modifications to the interpretive sign structure are also highly recommended since its effectiveness is limited by the angle of the sign enclosure and the support beams across the front tend to keep visitors from approaching the sign and being able to read the information.
- No reference to travel time for visit.

## Village of Mayo

Current theme: Silver mining and trade routes

*Village of Mayo - km 51 Silver Trail - on bank of Stewart River*

The town site of Mayo was established in 1903, here at the head of navigation on the Stewart River. It was named after Alfred Harry Mayo, a circus acrobat turned fur-trader who built several posts in the Yukon. The site was a natural boat landing, and Mayo developed into the distribution centre for the region's rich mineral resources. Gold had been mined in the area since 1883, and the discovery of massive silver deposits thirty years later opened up a booming new industry.

## Mayo Landing

Theme: Historic: Exploration/Mining

*Located in the village of Mayo, on the bank of the Stewart River.*

The high grade silver ore from Keno Hill was shipped 2,000 miles to smelters from this point. During winter months, 5,000 to 8,000 tons of sacked ore would await the opening of river navigation. River traffic stopped in 1950 when roads were built from Whitehorse. The long haul of silver-lead ore still goes on today, by truck, rail, and ocean liner.

### 3.3.2 Mayo to Keno City

#### Duncan Creek Road

Current theme: Mining, trade routes, transportation

*km 69 Silver Trail, km 0 Duncan Creek Road\**

This entire area was known for years as the Duncan Creek Mining District, taking its name from one of the first creeks in the area to be prospected. Duncan Creek was named after Duncan Patterson, who staked the first claim on the creek in 1901. For many years this was the most productive mining district in the Yukon.

The road along Duncan Creek was first built by the territorial government in 1903 and 1904. The original wagon road was constructed in several stages and crossed the creek more than once. In many cases 'roads' such as this were little more than trails, sometimes built by miners themselves so that they could haul in supplies and equipment.

- The colour combinations are inconsistent with one sign displaying dark letters on a light background, and the other, light letters on a dark background.
- A new interpretive site is currently being developed for downtown Mayo and this eliminates the need for signage here.
- Text is outdated.
- No mention of the Old Village of Mayo (relocated) or First Nations.
- Theme adequately covered.

- The long blocks of text are rather uninviting and more pictures would help carry the message, draw people's attention
- Map doesn't show Minto Lake Road
- While there is too much text the themes are adequately covered.
- \* The same sign is found at km 69 of the Silver Trail (at its junction with the Duncan Creek Road) and at km 0 of the Duncan Creek Road (at its junction with Keno City).

Although the rivers provided the main means of travel in the Yukon, wagon roads connected major communities with the small outlying mining camps and kept the district alive.

In the days of horse-drawn transportation, journeys took days instead of hours. Passengers travelled in large coaches that stopped periodically at roadhouses such as Van Cleave's for shelter and food.

By 1904 there was a winter road connecting the district with Dawson City. Called the Liberal Trail, after the political party then in power in Ottawa, it wound through the gold mining creeks of the Klondike District and ended at Minto Bridge, just south of here. This assured the importance of Minto Bridge during the winter months, while the town of Mayo, on the Stewart River, ranked first during the season of river travel.

With the advent of silver mining in the 1920s the miners had to develop new methods of transportation to handle the heavy loads of ore. During the summer months the ore would be brought down from the mines in huge horse-drawn wagons. In the winter the wheels would be replaced by runners, converting the wagons into sleighs. The ore was taken to Mayo, where it would be loaded onto sternwheel riverboats for shipment to Dawson or Whitehorse. In the winter months the sacks of ore were stockpiled along the water's edge, waiting for the ice to leave the river. In one boom year there were 22,000 tons of silver ore on the Mayo waterfront.

The road from Mayo to Keno was originally built in the 1930s. First constructed as far as Elsa and later extended to Keno, its completion was one factor in reducing the high costs of transportation. The horse-drawn wagons were eventually replaced by Caterpillar tractors, which were replaced in turn by trucks. After the highway was completed the loads of ore bypassed Mayo and were shipped directly to Whitehorse.

While the Duncan Creek Road is not a major highway, it still can be driven quite easily during the summer months. As well as providing a scenic drive of great interest, the route will give a glimpse into the Yukon's colourful past.

## Elsa

Current theme: Mining

### *km 100 Silver Trail*

In 1924, Prospector Charlie Brefalt staked a silver claim here on Galena Hill and named it after his sister, Elsa. It proved to be a major discovery and eventually produced millions of ounces of silver. Other properties in the area such as the Silver King and Calumet also developed into major mines. By the 1930s the town of Elsa had taken shape and it gradually became the major community serving the mines. Since 1948, Elsa has been home to united Keno Hill Mines which at one time was the world's fourth largest producer of Silver concentrates.

## Wind River Trail

Current theme: Transportation

### *km 102 Silver Trail*

In the winter of 1959 a 380-mile trail was constructed through the wilderness, leading North from the Keno Road along the Wind and Eagle Rivers to an exploration camp located 45 miles past the Arctic Circle. Construction took place in the winter months, when snow and ice could form a firm surface for trucks to drive on. This pioneering winter trail concept was devised for short-term access to a remote area beyond the existing road system, and it provided a cheaper alternative to the conventional method of hauling with caterpillar tractors. The trail was completed in just three months and by March 1960 over 6,000,000 pounds of equipment had been hauled in to the site.

## Keno Hill

Current theme: Mining

### *km 111 Silver Trail*

Prospectors have travelled through this district in search of Gold since the 1880s. The first major evidence of silver was discovered in 1919, when Louis Beauvette staked the roulette claim on Sheep Mountain, later renamed Keno Hill. In the next few years hundreds of silver claims were staked, with optimistic names like Lucky Queens and Shamrock. The town called Keno, named after a popular gambling game, developed here in the 1920s as a supply centre and transfer point. Before the advent of trucks and tractors, sacks of silver ore were hauled by horses down the mountain and transferred here to huge horse-drawn sleighs for the 40-mile journey to the steamboat landing at Mayo.

- To some degree, the old, weathered appearance presents the right image to visitors as they visit the ruins of abandoned mines near Elsa and the community of Keno.

- Outdated since Elsa has gone through changes since 1985.

- Varathane finish is peeling.

- No mention of First Nations origin of name "Wind River."

- Expand message to cover Sign Post Road and area trails.

- Content is covered elsewhere in museum.

- Sign does not seem to correspond– location doesn't relate to hill.

### 3.3.3 Duncan Creek Road

#### Mayo Lake Junction

Current theme: Mining, orientation

*km 21.5 Duncan Creek Road, km 0 Mayo Lake Road junction*

Duncan Creek was named after a local prospector named Duncan Patterson, who, along with three others staked the first official claim in 1901. Gold had originally been found on the creek three years earlier, but the first discoverers had worked in secret and never recorded their claim. When word of Patterson's find got out, miners rushed to the area and within a year the entire length of Duncan Creek had been staked. A mining settlement known as Duncan Landing existed for many years at the confluence of Duncan Creek and the Mayo River. By 1902 a summer detachment of the North West Mounted Police had been established there, which was transferred to Mayo in 1904.

The site of Duncan Landing can be reached by driving south along the Mayo Lake Road to the bridge and walking 1/4 mile, following the creek downstream.

- Two signs side by side could have been combined.
- Site needs orientation signage.
- Missing Mayo Lake boating opportunities.

- Directions vague as far as where to go – no idea which side of stream to follow to get to Duncan Landing.

### 3.4 Analysis of Thematic Representation

Theme considerations for the Silver Trail highway corridor fall into the four categories shown below: cultural (First Nations), historical, natural history and regional tourism promotion.

Within each is a subset of themes that reflect the significant events and defining characteristics of the region. Natural history themes are not represented, while tourist orientation and visitor expectations are discussed at only two of four junctions within the region.

#### Cultural Theme Representation

The presence of the Nacho Nyak Dun and their cultural history is lightly represented when it should be a major underlying theme. Most of the signage relates to the area’s mining history, ignoring a wealth of opportunities to reflect on First Nation themes, including the fact their traditional territory surrounds the road corridor.

To adequately balance interpretive text in the region from a cultural perspective, any changes to existing sign texts and new signage should respond to the following questions:

- *Who are the First Nations that live here? How many are there? Where are they located and where did they come from?*
- *How did they live and interact with one another and what changes occurred when they met the first European explorers? How do they live today?*

A variety of approaches are suggested to include First Nation’s cultural representation. Three possibilities are:

- the introduction of additional text panels that parallel the existing historical panels.

Category	Theme	Represented by	At
CULTURAL <i>First Nations</i>	• Nacho Nyak Dun	Visitor information booth*	km 537 Klondike Hwy.
HISTORICAL	• Settlement  • Transportation  • Exploration/Mining	Mayo Duncan Landing  Duncan Creek Road (#1) Wind River Trail Duncan Creek Road (#2)  Mayo Landing Elsa Keno Hill Duncan Creek	km 51 Silver Trail km 21.5 Duncan Creek Road  km 69 Silver Trail km 102 Silver Trail km 0 Duncan Creek Road  km 51 Silver Trail km 100 Silver Trail km 111 Silver Trail km 21.5 Duncan Creek Road
NATURAL HISTORY	• Flora • Fauna • Geomorphology • Ecoregion	<i>not represented</i> <i>not represented</i> <i>not represented</i> <i>not represented</i>	— — — —
REGIONAL TOURISM PROMOTION	• Orientation & Expectations	Visitor information booth	km 537 Klondike Hwy.

\* The text relating to this theme is found in a pair of side panels at this location. These side panels are not included on the sign inventory, as noted on page 20.

In this way, First Nations place names and traditional land use patterns can be integrated with “new” names and land use patterns. First Nations spellings and, ideally, place name translations, would reinforce the message to travellers that First Nations did and do still exist in this landscape;

- development of additional signage/themes that discuss pre-contact history, lifestyles, traditional territories, language and culture; and
- grouping major sites. In this way, a story can be told by way of different themes in close juxtaposition. For instance, the Minto Bridge site provides an opportunity to discuss natural history, travel and mining exploration themes all at one site.

#### ***Historical Theme Representation***

The mining history of the Silver Trail is well covered and there is a good balance between interpretation of place names, and general area history.

Both the Keno City Museum and Binet House contain excellent interpretive displays of area history, reducing the need to develop this theme much further.

#### ***Natural History Theme Representation***

This theme is also under-represented and there are a number of possibilities to interpret the area’s geomorphology, landscape and wildlife.

A map showing ecoregion boundaries and their relation to geopolitical boundaries might be included at one site such as the rest area at km 19.

The mineral resources theme is well represented except for the original Silver King mine site. More could be said about the impacts of mining on the landscape including the consequential effects, both positive and negative.

#### ***Regional Tourism Representation***

In this region a conscious effort has been made to link interpretive signage to regional tourism promotion. Stewart Crossing is the “gateway” to the Silver Trail. The banner poles erected at key locations along the corridor are effective and provide some thematic continuity.

More could be said about the hiking trail and canoeing possibilities that exist off the Silver Trail. The rivers along the highway are all relatively accessible for canoeists, while the numerous former mining exploration roads provide a network of trails to be discovered by biker and hiker alike.

From a tourism promotion perspective, the Stewart Crossing site is very important. Ideally it should be relocated to the north-bound traffic side of the road. More needs to be done for south-bound visitors, preferably at the upgraded Stewart River site on the Klondike Highway.

At a smaller scale, there is a need for sub-regional orientation sites at or near key road junctions.

There is some possibility of developing additional “talking signs” at key intersections in conjunction with Highways which could serve several purposes including providing road condition advice and regional orientation, or other interpretive messages that might encourage the traveller to consider these alternative routes. At the present time the Stewart Crossing talking sign signal can be picked up from Crooked Creek to the Moose Creek Lodge. Possible additional sites include the junction of the Mayo-Keno Road and at Keno City.

The effectiveness of these signs has not been measured so it is difficult to determine whether they are a good program investment. Pending a review of the effectiveness of the Stewart Crossing site, additional “talking” signs should be a low priority.

### **3.5 Implications for Interpretive Plan Development**

The research confirms:

- the need for more thematic balance especially in the area of First Nations history and culture;
- the need to upgrade the Stewart Crossing regional orientation site and investigate the feasibility of adding that function to the new Stewart River site to catch south-bound travellers;
- there is no question that the Silver Trail provides a good side trip diversion for Dawson City bound tourists and the type of visitors attracted to the region are generally independent travellers with an interest in initiatives such as the interpretive sign program;
- there are opportunities to eliminate, relocate and update the existing signs and install additional sites along both highway corridors;
- all the affected communities support program improvements to encourage regional visitation;
- a phased implementation approach would be appropriate given existing and projected visitor traffic volumes, the program budget and the condition of some signs;
- The 1994 VES indicates visitors to this region, although not numerous, are generally independent travellers who can stay longer and would spend more time if they were encouraged to do so;
- most of the existing signs are in relatively poor shape and reaching the end of their useful life. The messages also need to be reviewed and updated; and
- there are opportunities for inter-agency and community participation to control capital development and maintenance costs.

# 4.0 Silver Trail Corridor Interpretation Plan

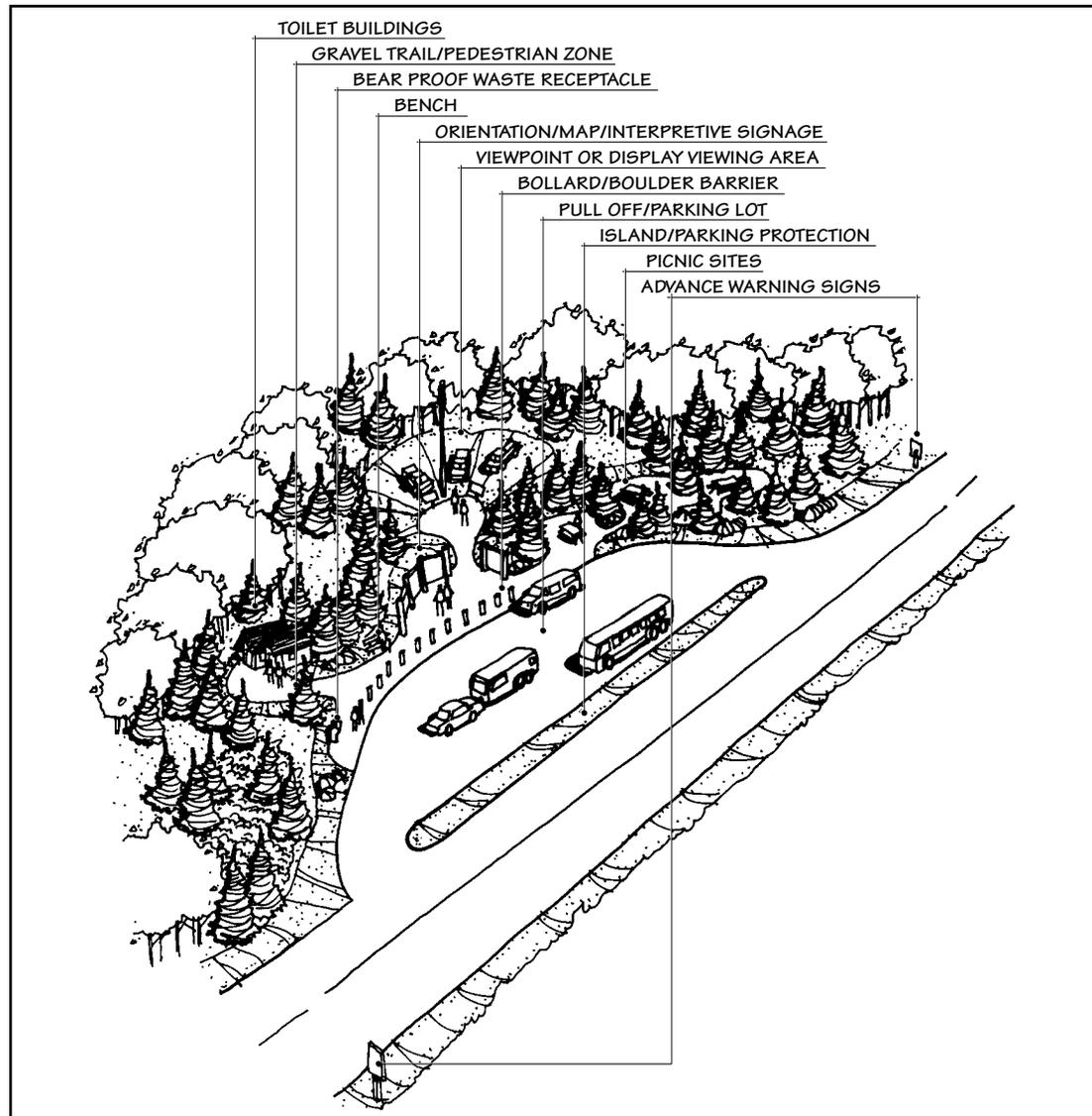
## 4.1 Approach

The concept builds on what currently exists, responding to specific problems and thematic weaknesses. It begins by acknowledging specific regional concerns and the need to give travellers some incentive to visit the region and choose these alternate routes.

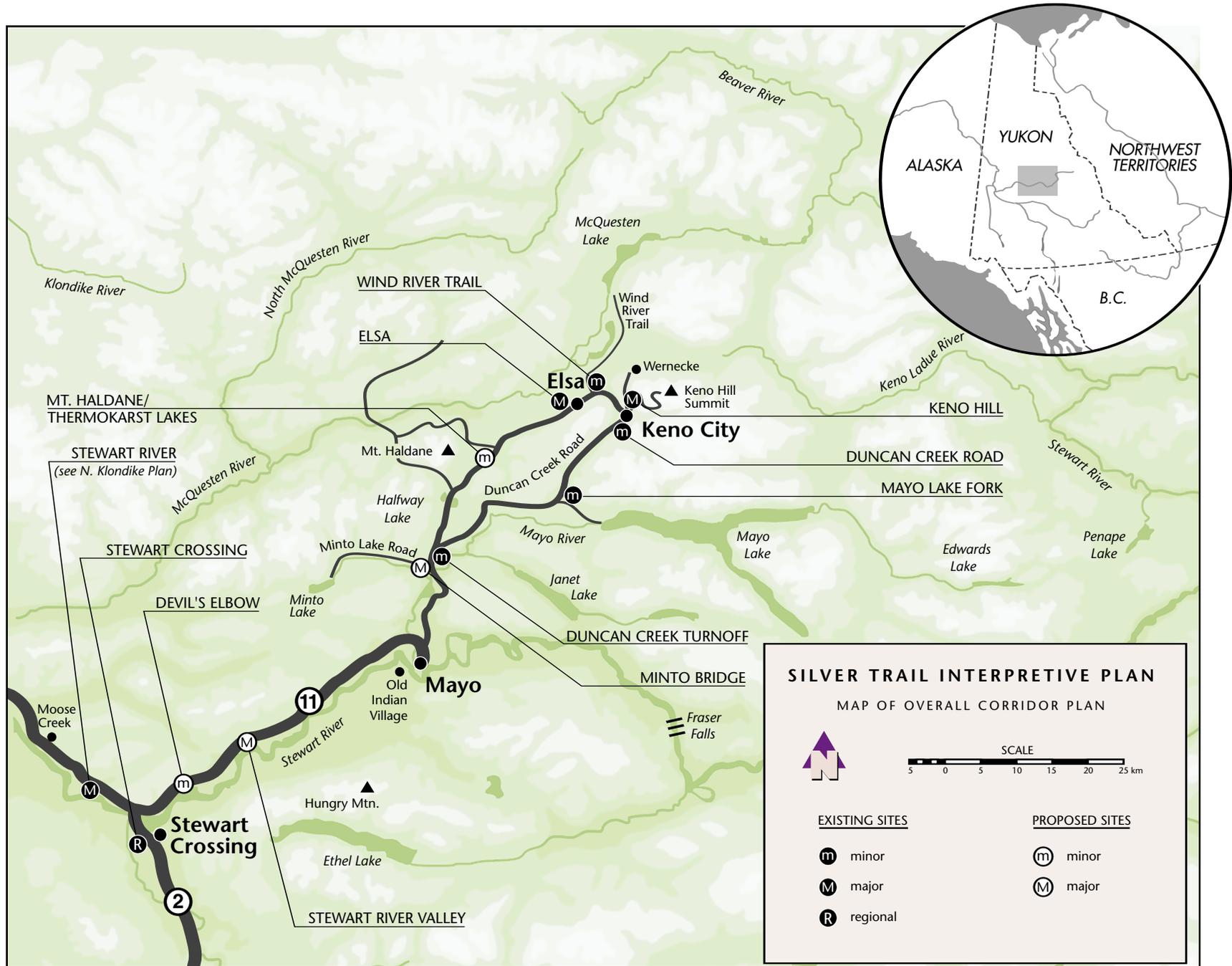
The wood routed and stained signs erected in the mid eighties have generally not weathered well. All will need to be replaced in the next five years. The real issue is that the approach is dated and interpretive messages unbalanced.

The Concept Plan proposes a basic site hierarchy (see *Overall Corridor Plan*, next page) which follows the general guidelines set out in the Yukon wide *Interpretive Sign Strategy*. Priority is given to upgrading the regional orientation site at Stewart Crossing. If the opportunity becomes available to relocate the site to the north side of the Klondike Highway in conjunction with redevelopment of the Stewart Lodge site, it should be taken. This would place the site on the right side of the highway and could be mutually beneficial to both government and private sector operators. Some existing sites are eliminated and new ones added while the option to consolidate themes at fewer sites has been considered.

Unlike the other major highway corridors, the road length is relatively short, negating the need for a lot of new sites. Some locations are redundant or should be refocused to provide better overall representation. The Duncan Creek Road signs do not have to be duplicated and the Mayo/Mayo Landing signs are probably no longer needed given the development of the new interpretive platform on the Mayo waterfront.



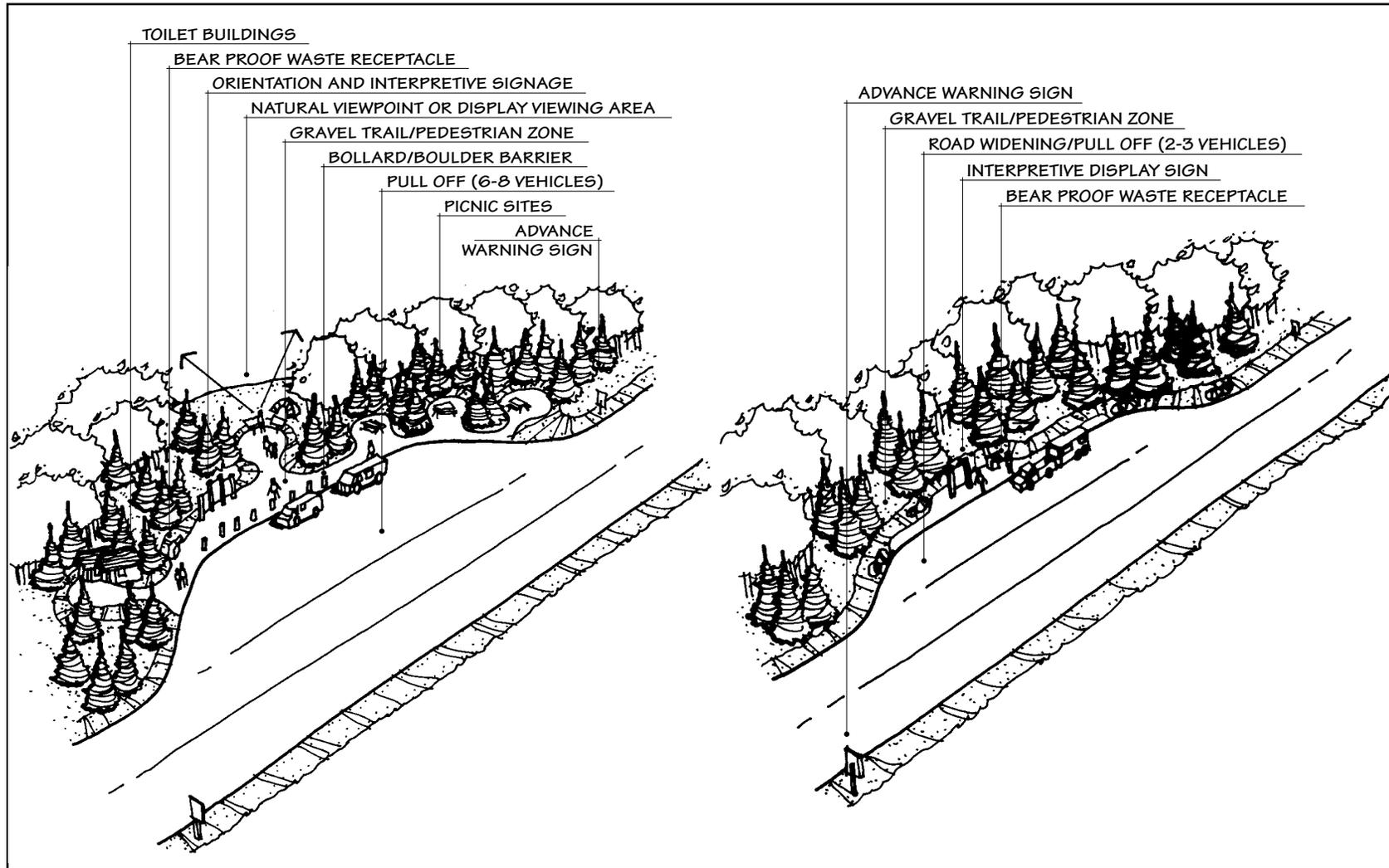
Typical Regional Site



It is also recommended that the thematic content of existing Duncan Creek Road signs at the Mayo Lake turnoff and Keno City be upgraded and given a sub-regional orientation focus, when replaced.

Remaining sites are classified as either major or minor. Being a short road corridor, the major sites are generally spaced between 10 and 65 kms apart. The spacing distance takes into account anticipated travel speed which varies with road conditions.

Visitors are encouraged to leave their vehicles. They are expected to spend more time at major sites and thus the interpretive exhibits will tend to be more elaborate. These sites would all have bear proof garbage cans and outhouses, except at Minto Bridge.



Typical Major Site

Typical Minor Site

Minor sites will usually have a single sign with minimal support infrastructure, usually only a bear-proof garbage can. The pull-outs are smaller with the signage generally viewable from the vehicle.

The Plan also looks at site consolidation, combining highway rest areas with logical interpretive sites whenever possible such as km19. Given present tourist numbers, it is difficult to justify both the capital and O&M dollars for new site development unless sites can serve multiple purposes or achieve economies of scale. A good example of this is the Stewart River Valley overlook site which is currently a Highways rest area.

## 4.2 Thematic Representation Rationale

The interpretive sign program focuses on natural, cultural and historical themes. Using the “Silver Trail” concept as a thematic base, the following themes need to be added to adequately represent the region.

### ***Silver Trail Base Theme***

The “silver trail” theme was adopted in the mid 1980s as part of an overall strategy to promote regional tourism. The theme is now well established and consistent with the area’s mining and transportation history.

### ***Traditional Territories Theme***

The Silver Trail corridor falls within the homeland of the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation. Prior to the development of roads, the rivers were the natural travel corridors. There are a number of opportunities to introduce First Nation traditional use and occupancy stories that are of interest to visitors.

### ***Ecoregions Theme***

The Silver Trail falls within the Yukon Plateau - North ecoregion. According to Yukon Wild, 77% is coniferous forest and 22% alpine tundra. The ecoregion has north-west flowing rivers such as the Stewart and McQuesten and many lakes, with Mayo Lake being the largest lake in the area. This ecoregion has long, cold winters and warm summers. The effects of glaciation are evident throughout the corridor with plenty of evidence of permafrost related conditions. Plateaus, and small groups of mountains, dissected by forested U-shaped valleys, are typical in the area.

### ***Distinctive Features Theme***

The Silver Trail is a scenic road, offering a variety of changes in scenery along its route. At Stewart Crossing the road winds through a mature white spruce forest before rising up onto the drier and warmer lower slopes of the McConnell moraine which are dominated by aspen poplar, birch and lodgepole pine. The Mayo River valley wetlands give way to the rounded hills and commanding presence of Mount Haldane. Further north, the broad expanse of the upper McQuesten valley with the snow-capped Wernecke mountains in the background stand out. At Keno City, the rounded summit of the hills and alpine areas above tree-line provide breath-taking views of the surrounding landscape.

The Duncan Creek Road, while improved from its earliest state, is still very much a frontier road, with its clay/silty surface, winding nature, and close adherence to the landscape. The surrounding landscape is predominantly north-west facing slopes which are very sparsely vegetated. As a result of prior disturbance and fire the tree growth adjacent to the road is quite thick, eliminating all but occasional views of the upper Duncan Creek canyon.

## 4.3 Media and Audience

The focus of this Interpretive Plan is on signage rather than other media because signs are usually the simplest, and most cost effective approach, requiring the least amount of maintenance. A number of other media approaches can be used in conjunction with an on-site signage program to present the corridor themes.

The Silver Trail visitor profile suggests that these people are independent travellers that attach a high importance to “being there”. The wilderness character of these roads is what attracts them to get off the main highways. They want to take the “road less travelled” and experience these roads directly. This is the determining factor in media selection.

Although signs cannot convey a great deal of detail, they complement the on-site experience, providing insight into the principal theme being interpreted.

### ***Radio Frequency Messages & CD-ROM Sites***

The use of “talking signs” has been introduced into the Yukon in the last few years as part of the visitor radio program. While their overall utility is still unverified, the technology has been used successfully elsewhere. These signs can be used to add a personal message and convey moods, drama and music that are not possible with the written word. The medium is flexible, adding more depth than is possible with a fixed sign while the message itself can be easily changed. Since Yukon First Nations have an oral tradition, this media provides another opportunity to present their culture themes.

The principal drawbacks with these systems relate to the set-up and maintenance costs. These include the availability of a power source, shelter and security of the transmitter, the range of the message and getting the visitor to tune in. The visitor can remain in the vehicle and need not stop, devaluing the overall experience.

In the case of the Silver Trail Highway, there is one talking sign currently in use at Stewart Crossing. The sign can be picked up at Crooked Creek and near the Moose Creek lodge to the north. Since the effectiveness of the Stewart Crossing transmitter has not been evaluated, further investment in this technology is questionable.

The Silver Trail Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Association is currently investigating the feasibility of developing a CD-ROM display exhibit for Stewart Crossing. The City of Whitehorse has developed a similar display. If this initiative proceeds and is successful, it provides another interpretive medium that can be used to present the images and stories of the Silver Trail, reducing the need for additional signage.

#### **Print Media and Tapes**

The opportunity to develop highway corridor guidebooks or pamphlets was also considered for the Silver Trail as its history has been well documented by the Mayo Historical Society. The logic behind this approach relates to the intrusiveness of signage into a wilderness landscape.

Cassette tapes are a blend of the “talking sign” and print media. They are transportable, informative and, like guidebooks, have a souvenir quality that makes them an opportunity for private sector investment. Both approaches would need to be supplemented with “marker posts” to work effectively for the traveller.

Chris Burn’s book on the geology of the Silver Trail is a good example of an informative guide that could be linked to a road-side marker program. Given the current number of highway visitors, these media approaches are unlikely to be cost effective for some time. However, when the time is right, they could easily be adapted by the private sector to complement the government signage program.

#### **4.4 Highway Interpretive Units**

There are many stories to tell in the thematic framework suggested for these roads. The landscape is not uniform and different sections of both roads convey different visual images. The challenge is to find a way to organize the driving experience so the visitor’s attention is focused on the dominant themes and can follow the logical landscape changes. At the same time, the objective is to maintain an image of the road corridor as a whole experience. The key is finding the right number of simple, logical connecting themes.

One thematic unit has been proposed for the Silver Trail highway because of its short length. While the corridor has been broken down into three sections: Stewart Crossing to Mayo, Mayo to Keno City and the Duncan Road loop, it is the “silver trail” thematic image that has caught on. While it would be possible to break sections of the road into thematic units relating to the Stewart River, silver mine development and Duncan Creek gold rush, this adds unnecessary complexity to the interpretive challenge without adding significant value to the visitor experience.

#### **4.5 Sign Types and Location Recommendations**

Following public feedback on the draft report, some of the proposed sites were dropped since there were too many for the interpretive signage program and they were not meeting the minimum spacing criteria. However, some of these sites should still be considered as local initiatives in the future and have potential to be developed as part of the Silver Trail region’s Tourism Plan.

After discussions with the Village of Mayo and the Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation, both the existing signs on the Village of Mayo waterfront and the

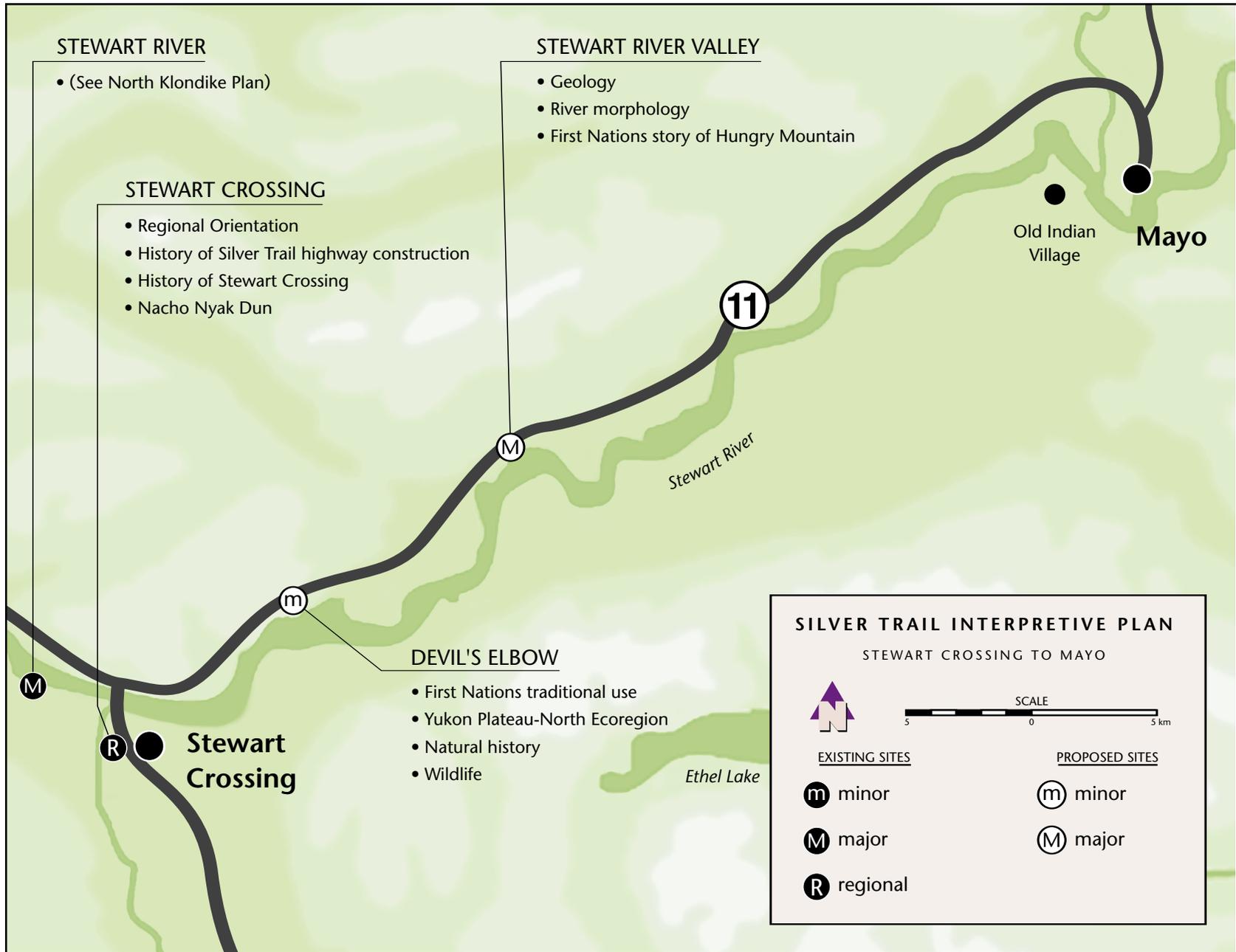
proposed McIntyre Park site were dropped from the interpretive program. The existing signs in the Village of Mayo are being replaced by three new interpretive sign panels. The option of relocating these existing signs to McIntyre Park was discussed but was concluded as being unnecessary.

The proposed Glacier Hill site was also eliminated from the list of recommended interpretive locations since there is a concentration of sites along this section of the Silver Trail. However, the view from the proposed site at the top of the hill still has good interpretive potential and is worth considering in the long term.

The proposed original Silver King Mine site has significant potential from a tourism point of view but does not fit within this program, for two reasons. First, the site is only 7 km from the existing Elsa site. Second, this program does not deal with sites outside the road right-of-way and this would have to be located on United Keno Hill’s property. However, there is a unique opportunity here for regional residents to work with United Keno Hill Mines to develop a viewing site close to the road, looking across at the mine portal. Again, this initiative would be more appropriate in the Tourism Plan.

The Wind River Trail site poses a problem because it is too close to the intersection and not visible to north bound traffic. There is also a spatial problem since it is only 2 km from the Elsa site. However, regional residents felt that over the long term the Wind River Trail might be important and that the interpretive site should be retained.

Although the proposed Stones Farm site provides a panoramic view of the Mayo River, it has been dropped since Duncan Creek Road has a fair number of signs already and this was the lowest priority site.

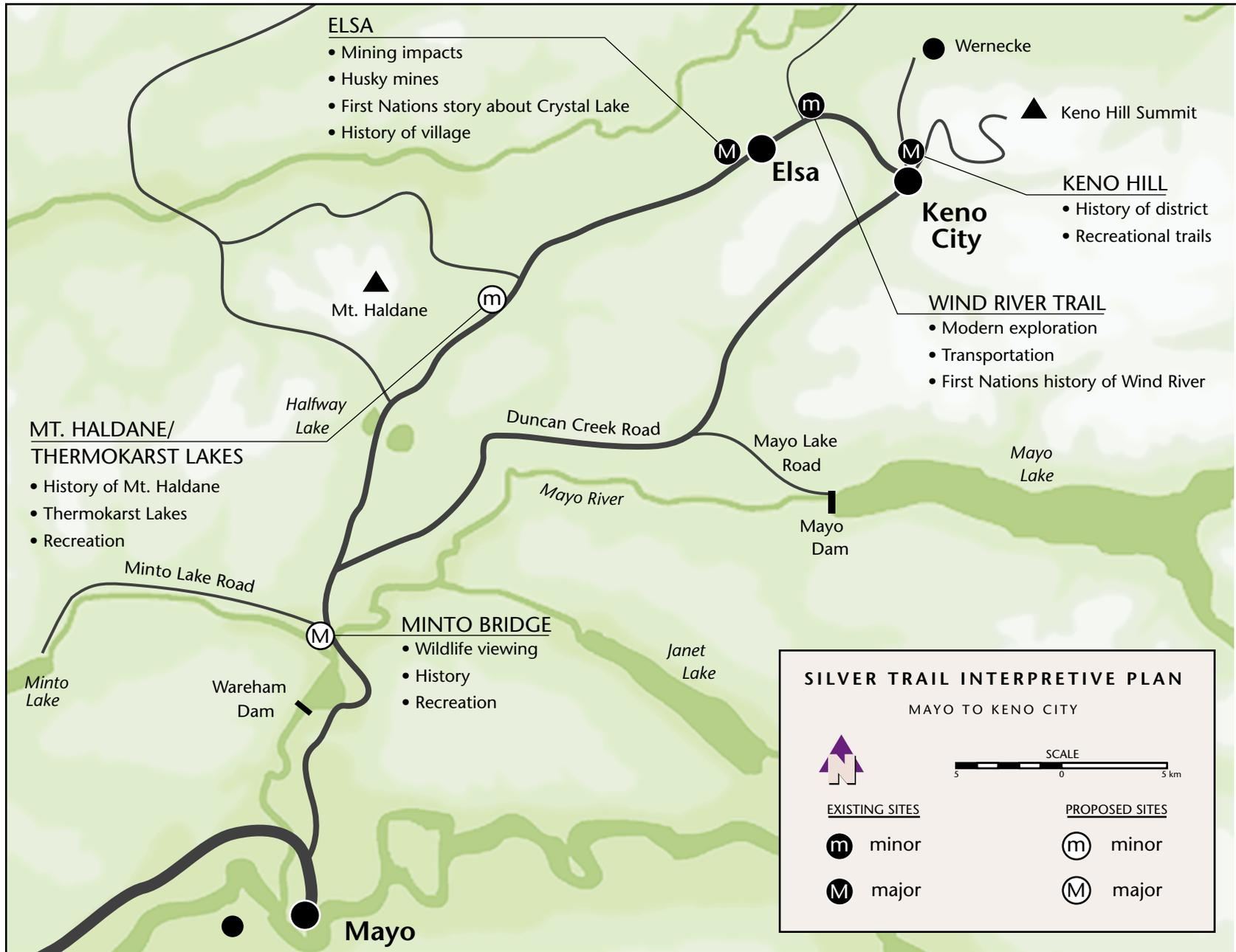


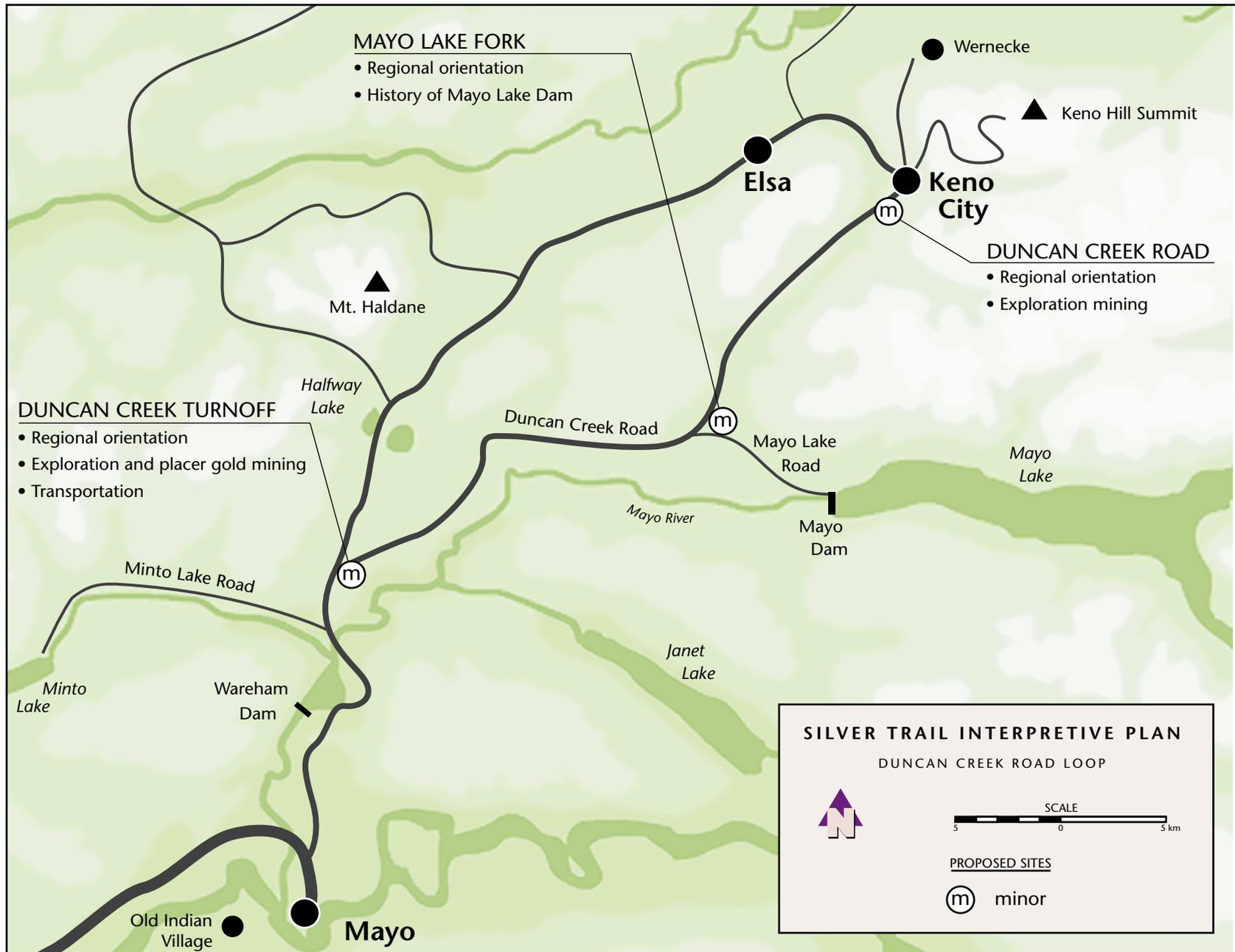
The following is a summary of the sign development program and recommended priorities for each

site. Proposed signage themes are listed along with the site's function in the sign program hierarchy.

The associated capital and maintenance costs are listed in the implementation chapter.

<b>Signage Recommendations</b>				
<b>Sign</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>4.5.1 Silver Trail Corridor</b>				
Stewart Crossing	Km. 537 N. Klondike Hwy	Regional Orientation Exhibit	1	Regional orientation, history of the Silver Trail highway construction, Nacho Nyak Dun traditional territory, history of Stewart Crossing
Devil's Elbow	km 10.2, abandoned gravel pit on right side of the road	Minor–New	2	First Nations traditional use, Yukon Plateau - North Ecoregion, natural history, wildlife
Stewart River Valley Overlook	km 19, existing rest area	Major–New	1	Geology, river morphology, First Nations story of Hungry Mountain
Minto Bridge	km 64	Major–New	2	Wildlife viewing, history, recreation
Mount Haldane/ Thermokarst Lakes	km 80, existing highways pull-out, left side of road	Minor–New	2	History of Mount Haldane, thermokarst lakes
Elsa Rest Area	km 100, left side of the road in Elsa	Major–Upgrade	1	Mining impacts, Husky Mines, First Nations story about Crystal Lake, history of village
Wind River Trail	km 102, side of the road at intersection	Minor–Upgrade	3	Modern exploration, transportation, First Nations history of Wind River
Keno Hill	km 111	Major–Upgrade	1	History of district, recreational trails
<b>4.5.2 Duncan Creek Road</b>				
Duncan Creek Road Intersection	km 0 Duncan Creek Road, Keno City	Minor–Upgrade	2	Regional orientation, exploration mining
Mayo Lake Fork	km 21.5, left side of Duncan Creek Road at Mayo Lake Road fork	Minor–Upgrade	3	Regional orientation, history of Mayo Lake Dam
Duncan Creek and Mayo Lk Rd Turnoff	km 54, existing interpretive area	Minor–Upgrade	2	Duncan Creek Road regional tourism orientation, exploration/ placer gold mining, transportation





# 5.0 Sign Design Concepts

One corridor identity image for both the Silver Trail and Duncan Creek Road is recommended. The corridor image needs to reflect the “silver trail” theme for consistency and incorporate the Nacho Nyak Dun presence. These themes can be illustrated in a thematic logo. The icon needs to portray a consistent and unified visual image balancing First Nation use and occupancy and the principal interpretive themes presented along the corridor.

### Corridor Identity Image

The corridor image is rectilinear in shape, and like those proposed for other corridors, is intended to anchor the bottom of interpretive signage. Compared with others, this image is a strong representation of the two disparate themes of silver mining and First Nations Traditional Territories. It also incorporates the well-established ore cart icon.

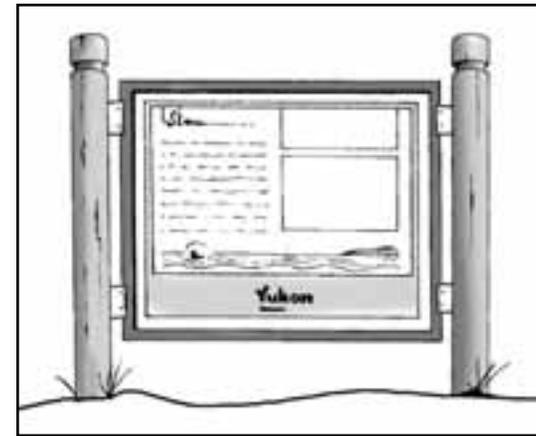
The common element is the notion of “Trail,” represented by the straight lines under the ore cart and raven. These merge with the curvilinear shapes below that represent the Stewart River. This river

was a principal travel corridor for First Nations and the early gold seekers. It was this river from which the Nacho Nyak Dun took its name. The river was the location of the Yukon’s first major gold rush and the main route out for most of the silver that came down the “Silver Trail”.

### Materials and Uses

The corridor image is intended to “anchor” individual panels, whether 3M vinyl, porcelain enamel or other forms that may be digitally created. In groupings of panels at a major site, designers may wish to anchor the entire grouping with a single large corridor identity image. Depending on fabrication options, this image may be either one or multi-dimensional, as it lends itself well to relief lines.

In every case, the Yukon Government wordmark with “Tourism” signature will be displayed outside the panel border itself, centred along the bottom. It will be located either on the panel mounting board, on the substrate, or on the substrate of the dominant panel within a grouping.



Location of Yukon Government wordmark

### Colours

A colour pallet for the Silver Trail, based on the Pantone colour Matching System (PMS), consists of a deep blue (PMS 280), green (PMS 361) light purple (PMS 2655), and a light blue (PMS 292).



### Corridor identity image

Ore cart, raven, wolf and all text elements are coloured blue (PMS 280). The tree motif is green (PMS 361) and the mountain/horizon motif is light purple (PMS 2655). The lines below are a blended pattern of the light purple (PMS 2655) to light blue (PMS 292). The font family used for all text elements is Franklin Gothic.

# S Stewart river travel

Noscitur ibusm nos valus ubi sub ubi. Sempere ad hoc vincit. Agricolaï patria files et non sequiter est nolo contendere. Ars longa, vidi longa, nolo est longare. Pater nostur qui est in caelis sanctificatur nomun tuum. Vini vidi, vincit. Meum tibi offerro promte et sincere. Ex deus machina est via appia. Est no nada van ortifier lax dasia? Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetu quis nostrud exercitation ullam tempor incidunt ut laborew et dolore me veniam. Quis nostrend commodo consequat. Duis autem vesses, molestiae consequat, vel illum de et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit. Ectamen nedue enim haec movere eronylar at ille pellit sensar luptae. Ullamcorper, suscipito iusto odio dignissim qui blandit cum soluta epicur. Et harumd dent, simam liber a mollit an omque nihil dereud placeat facer te pre. Da est, omnis quod a quinsud et aur possit atib aepe eveniet dolo tea non este recusand. Of etury sapiente delectus au asperiore repellat. Hanc quid, est cur verear ne a commodare nost ros quos morite. It tum etia ergat. Access potest fier a to factor, tum toen legen in busdad ne que imper ned ligiding ditat, quas nulol prati potius inflammat ut coercend magis and et dodecend ecendense videantur. Invitat igitur vera ratio bene santos ad ios ad uistit ami aequitated fidem. Neque hominy infant aut in aut inuis? Fact est, cond que neg facile efficerd possit duo nit duo conteud notiner si effecerit. Et opes vel forunag ve eisumod tempor lore magna



## Typical panel design elements

Head text style: *Albertus Italic*

Body copy text style: *Minion*

Text Point sizes: Head size is 3-4 times body size, ranging from 90-128 point; body size is 30-36 point.

## Colour Pallet:



The blue-purple colours represent the water life source and the blending of the two main themes of the area. The dark blue represents the silver trail and the green represents the First Nations specifically.

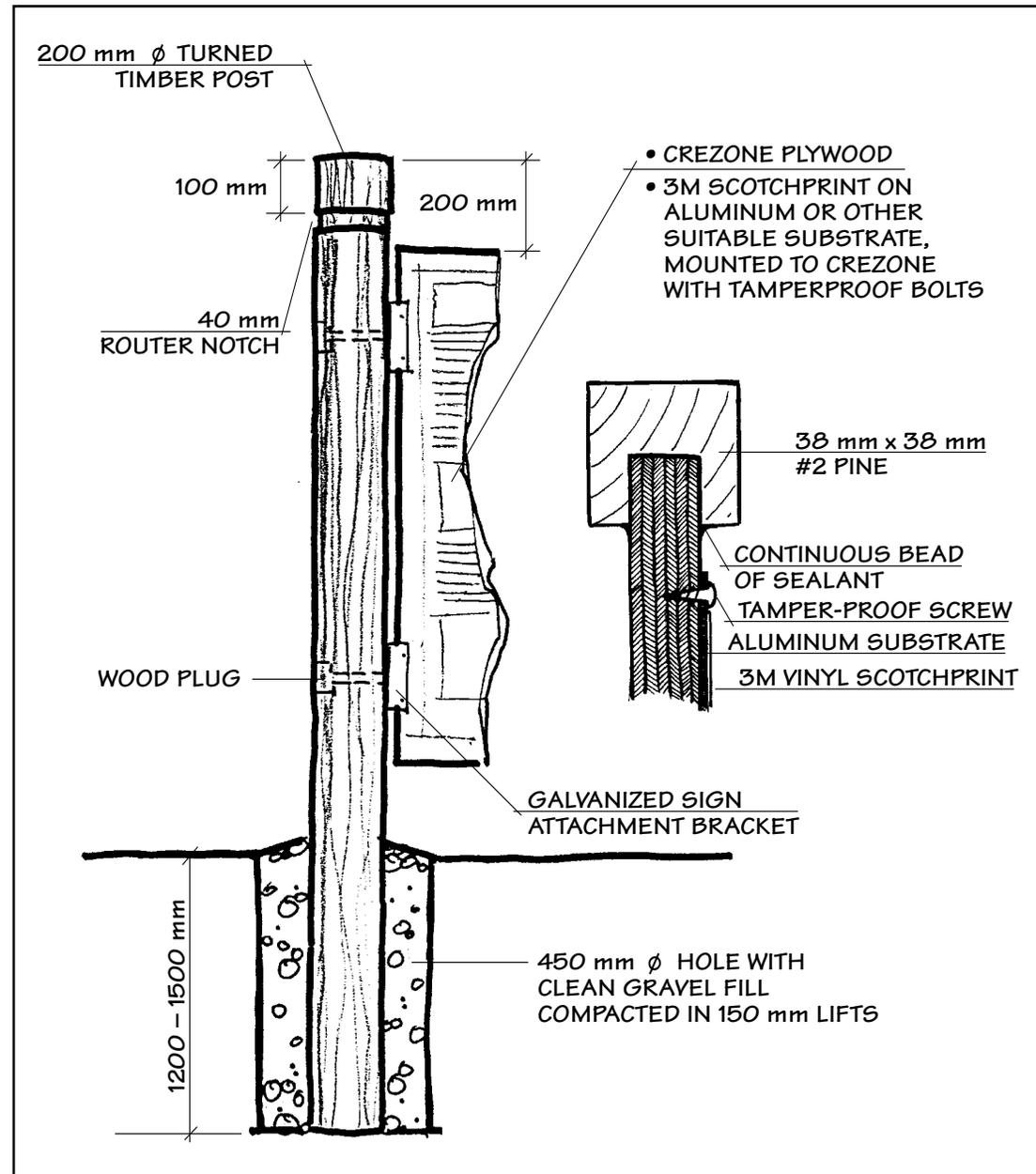
### Sign and Support Fabrication

All signs will be supported by 200 mm turned timber posts. These will be approximately 3500 mm in length, with 2200 mm above ground. A distinctive 40 mm notch is routed into the post 100 mm from the top, to a depth of between 13 and 19 mm. All notches will be stained a silver-gray. The top of the post itself should be slightly convex for drainage. Posts will then be treated with an appropriate clear finish, such as *Behr* brand *Rawhide*. The planted end will require a dip in an appropriate preservative solution.

Panels are of 19 mm crezone signboard (or equivalent) with 38 mm x 38 mm #2 pine let-in frames. These are held to the posts by galvanized bolt brackets, through-bolted and plugged.

Typical panel sizes are 915 mm wide x 762 or 1525 mm deep for minor sites. Major sites would employ groupings of panels on adjoining posts, all at 915 mm x 1525 mm.

Regional sites would employ groupings of panels with a dominant panel twice as wide, 1830 mm x 1525 mm. This dominant panel would contain the corridor identity image as a raised motif along the bottom. These raised panels would be fabricated of a dimensional aluminum bond material (*alucobond*, *alumicore*), crezone, HD exterior foam or other suitable material. The image itself could be painted, silk-screened or, most easily, output as 3M Scotchprint and adhered directly to the surface.



Post and Panel/Frame cross-section details

# 6.0 Implementation & Operations

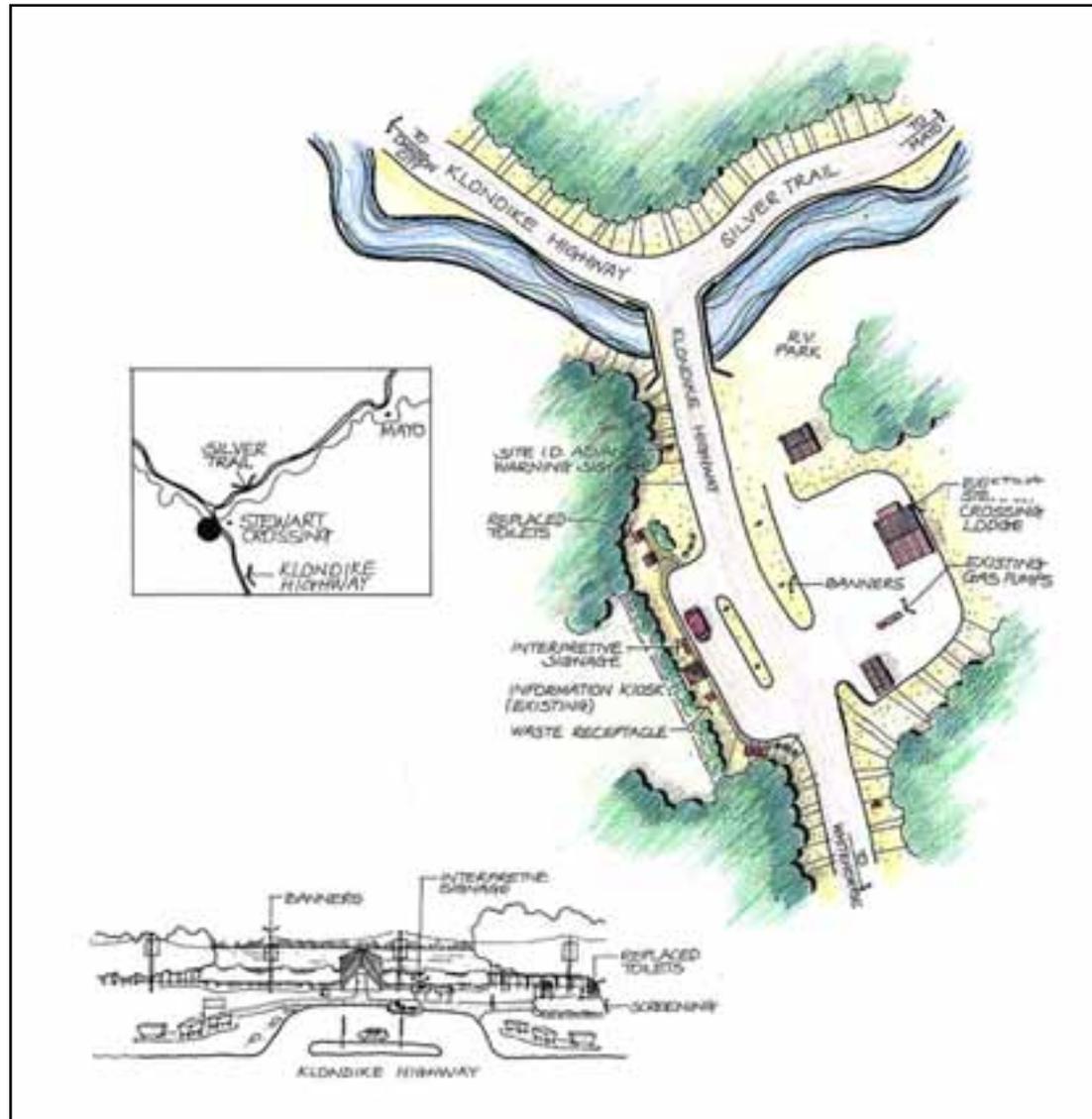
## 6.1 Recommended Priorities

The priorities listed below reflect the program deficiencies identified during this study. The existing signage on both the Silver Trail Highway and Duncan Creek Road are all nearing the end of their useful life.

There are a number of significant thematic gaps in the existing signage program which need to be resolved. This will result in the addition of some sites and the deletion of others. It is also worth noting that the Silver Trail Tourism Plan recommends additional signage and interpretive site development in partnership with a variety of other agencies. For example, the new Regional Tourism Plan recommends more trail head development in conjunction with the Parks & Outdoor Recreation Branch or an exhibit at the Mayo Dam in conjunction with Yukon Energy. The highway interpretive signage program proposed here has a much narrower focus which means some interpretive opportunities cannot be covered.

The Silver Trail is only one corridor within the Yukon highway network that requires significant investment in new interpretive signage infrastructure. The Department of Tourism Heritage Branch only has a limited amount of program funds and as each corridor plan is completed new pressing priorities will be identified. Given current visitation levels and available program funds, this Sign Plan will likely take 5-7 years to complete.

Based on the consultant's analysis of the issues and community feedback on both this proposed interpretation plan and the new regional tourism plan, upgrading the Stewart Crossing regional site should be the first priority.



Stewart Crossing—Regional Orientation Exhibit

Relocating the site to the north side of the highway is worth considering but may not be feasible in the short term (see illustration, previous page). Part of the regional orientation site function for south-bound travellers can be incorporated into the redevelopment plans for the Stewart River site.

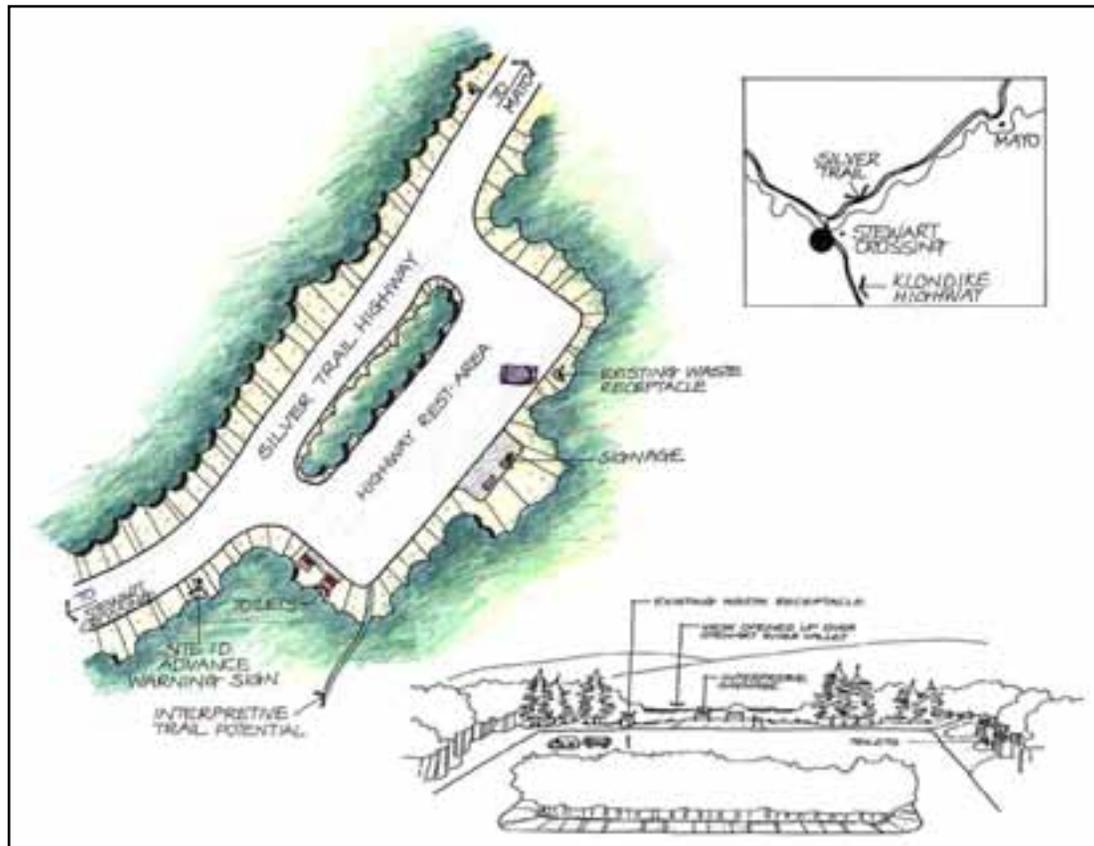
The next priority is to redress the imbalance in First Nation theme representation. While recognition of their traditional territory will be an equal part of the proposed sites, it should also be considered when existing signs are replaced. Adding the First Nation name for Stewart River for example, should be equally as important as explaining the English name.

The next site development priorities involve both new and existing sites. It makes sense to develop the Stewart Valley overlook site next because it only involves the addition of signage to an existing C&TS rest area. The Minto Bridge and Stewart Valley Overlook are sites that do not meet the general spacing criteria. They are examples of where exceptions need to be made because the thematic opportunities are exceptional. The Minto Bridge site offers a mix of general and natural history themes while the Stewart Valley overlook is an existing rest area that can easily be upgraded (see *illustrations* this and next page).

The Elsa rest area site is also a priority because of its significant interpretive potential. The general state of disrepair of this site undermines regional tourism promotion initiatives. The Duncan Creek Road site at Keno City is a situation where even relocating the existing sign would be helpful as it is intended as an orientation site to encourage travellers to take the road loop. It is also a good example of where inter-agency collaboration with Community and Transportation Services could provide better route definition at minimal cost.

### Sign Plan Implementation Priorities

Priority #1	Priority #2	Priority #3
Stewart Crossing	Minto Bridge	Wind River Trail
Elsa Rest Area	Devil's Elbow	Mayo Lake Fork
Stewart Valley Overlook	Duncan Creek/ Mayo Lake	—
Keno Hill	Duncan Creek Turnoff from Keno	—
—	Mt. Haldane/ Thermokarst Lakes	—



Stewart River Valley Overlook—Major New Site

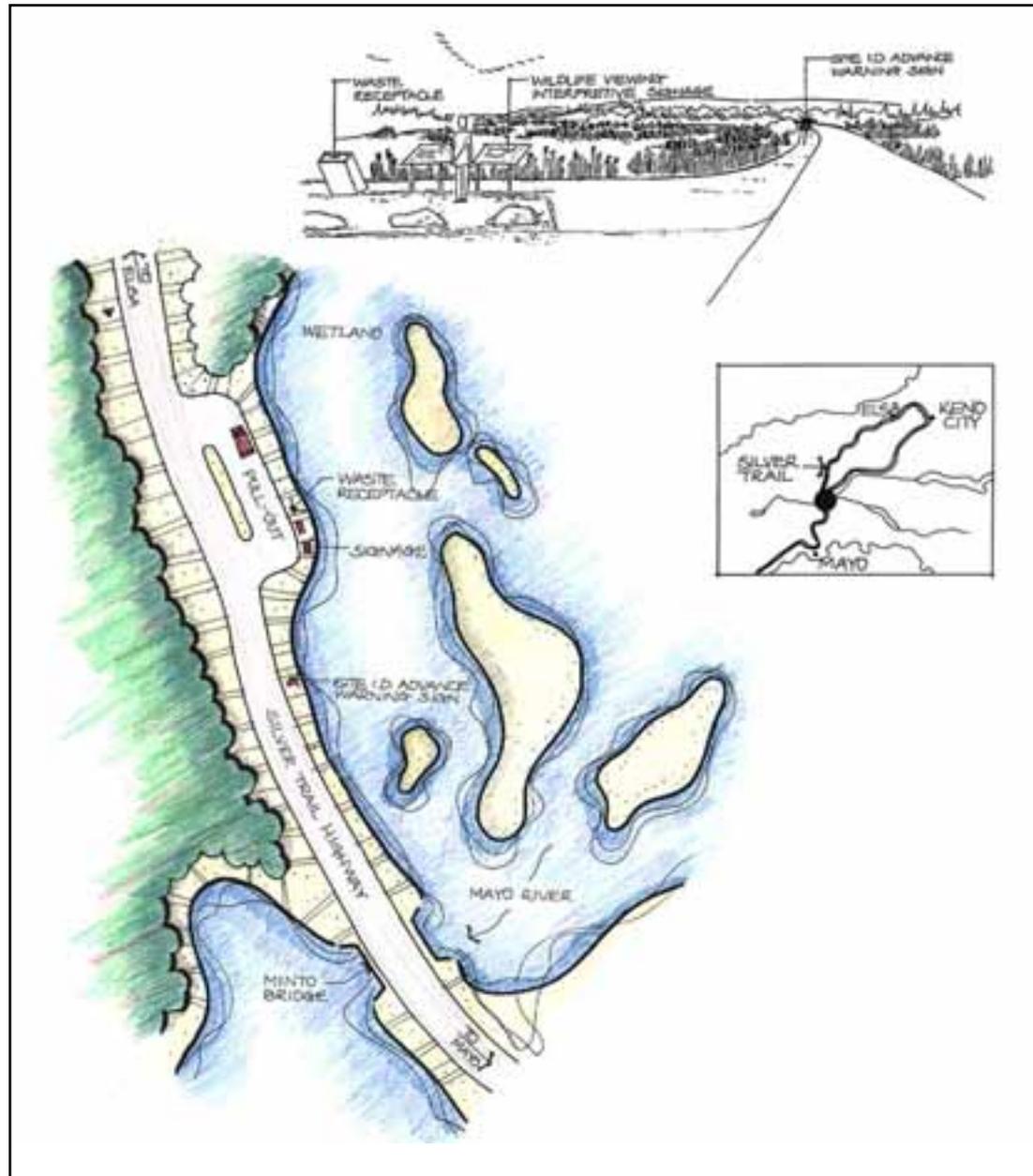
The priority #2 signage projects involve replacement of existing signs and establishing new sites at known points of interest. The third priority projects either involve minor site development such as sign replacement or signage relocation.

## 6.2 Directional Signs

Advance warning directional signs are used to provide the traveller with adequate time to slow down, identify the type of interpretive opportunity ahead and turn off the highway safely. Since completion of the Interpretive Signage Strategy report in 1995 which established an overall program framework, a discussion over the number, spacing, style and content of advance warning signage has arisen. Of particular concern has been the choice of symbols or wording to identify sites. There are at least 6 different types of signs in use ranging from word identifiers such as “point of interest” or “historic site” to symbol identifiers including the wildlife viewing binoculars and the camera. Parks Canada uses a symbol involving an adult and a child next to a telescope.

Problems arise when a site serves more than one purpose. For example at the Takhini Burn on the Alaska Highway both the binocular and camera symbol are used together. In many cases, it makes sense to combine functions to achieve cost economies such as adding an interpretive element to an existing rest area.

At this point in time there are no universal signing standards for interpretive sites and rest areas. Depending on which agency has program responsibility for different types of “points of interest” and their desire for individual expression, the signing policies followed can vary significantly.



Minto Bridge—Major New Site

To resolve this issue it is necessary to focus on the needs of the user and look at principles such as consistency, simplicity of management and practicality. The user needs to be able to see the sign, recognize its meaning and take the appropriate action. Thus consistent application, ease of recognition and comprehension of meaning are the key considerations. Road conditions, traffic speed and forward visibility of course are all factors to be considered as is site spacing since the objective is to encourage the highway traveller to stop.

The 1995 Yukon-wide strategy discusses site spacing distances and sets overall program standards for



site planning and sign design. The objective is to “communicate an accurate, balanced and representative story promoting the Yukon’s diversified natural and cultural heritage” This includes establishing a major and minor site hierarchy which is reflected in the level of site development. Logically, this hierarchy should also be reflected in the advance warning signage.

It is an accepted principle of traffic signage design that the importance of any specific sign should be reflected in its location, size, colour and message content. Consistency and simplicity are key objectives in the design, hence the trend towards the use of internationally recognized symbols whenever possible. Since no Canada wide standards for this type of tourist oriented signage exists, the Yukon is in the position to put forward recommendations in this regard.

There appears to be consensus on the following points. Two advance warning signs should be provided at a spacing distance of 2 km and 250 m for both major and minor sites.

The 250 m sign should include an arrow indicating which side of the road the site is on. There is agreement that a third sign marking the site entrance is generally not required except in those special circumstances where sight lines are restricted and these situations should be reviewed on a case by case basis. There is also agreement that there should be some differentiation between major and minor sites.

A trend towards the use of white lettering on blue background for this type of signage is also appearing. There is also a trend in western Canada and the United States to adopt the binoculars as the wildlife viewing symbol with the camera being used to denote a “scenic view”.

Since traveller recognition is the first priority and

there is not yet a universal understanding of the meaning behind various symbols, some jurisdictions are using a symbol/word combination as illustrated below.

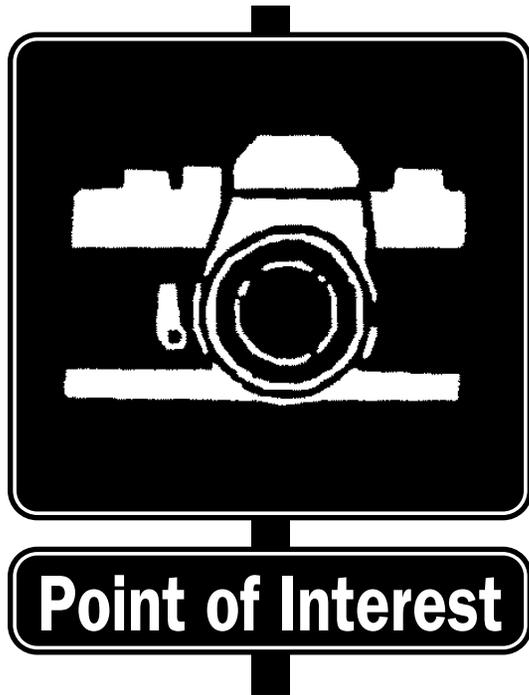
In the Yukon, there are three options which would work for our visitors but would not differentiate between major and minor sites. The first option is to use a common symbol and label such as “point of interest” on all advance warning signs for all sites. This would meet the objective of consistency and simplicity.

The second option is to use a single consistent symbol but add the word description tab on the first 3 or 4 signs after each point of entry into the territory and radiating out from the City of Whitehorse which is the point of entry for most air travellers. This would help to educate travellers to the sign meaning. This meets the simplicity objec-



tive but not the consistency one.

The third option is to use a single common term without a symbol. The most easily recognized term



would be “point of interest” because it is neutral and works equally well for historic sites, viewpoints or wildlife viewing sites. However it can present a language barrier and it takes longer to read and comprehend the meaning of words than a universal symbol.

It is recommended that a square camera symbol with a “point of interest” rectangular word tab would be the simplest solution for major and minor sites that would meet visitor and program manager needs. The dimensions and appearance are shown to the left.

**Site Differentiation**

Since there is interest in differentiating major sites from minor sites it would make sense to make the primary advance warning sign for a major site larger. Most jurisdictions use a large rectangular shape. There are several possible options for sign content.

The first option is to include only the site name and 2 km distance. The second option would include the site name and type (e.g. Minto Bridge Historic Site or Tintina Trench Viewpoint) which would allow for program differentiation. This is similar to what is permitted now for campground identification.

The third option is to include a symbol tab bar

similar to those found on most community identification signs. The tab bar would allow for the use of multiple symbols. The three main symbols would be for a garbage can, picnic table and toilets along with the universal camera logo. In this option, it would be possible to use more than one type of logo if the site served more than one purpose. The fourth option is to combine the highway corridor name in the underlying tab.

It is recommended that option #3 be adopted for the following reasons. First, naming the site and its function makes sense because many of the sites are listed in publications such as the Vacation Guide, Wildlife Viewing Guide and traveller guides such as Milepost Magazine. Second, naming the type of site and including its symbol if applicable, in the underlying tab reinforces the connection. Third this symbol tab approach is already commonly used across North America and easily recognized. The essential information is also communicated in an uncluttered fashion. Including the highway name is really redundant and past efforts to include a visual road identifier symbol have not been effective.

It is recommended that the white lettering on blue background be adopted for all advance warning

Option #1



Option #2



Option #3



Option #4



signage.

### Major Site Advance Warning Sign

The major site advance warning signs consist of two graphic elements. The upper section is based on Community and Transportation Services' (C&TS) guidelines for size and materials choice, using a two post format. The upper portion of the sign includes the site name, type and 2 km distance. The bay below the sign would usually include the camera, washroom and garbage can symbols. As shown below, where the site has another purpose such as wildlife viewing, or additional services are available those symbols may be added.



Major site advance warning sign, 2 km

### Minor Site Advance Warning Sign

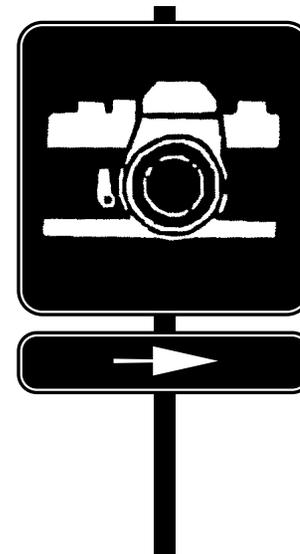
At minor sites, the 2 km advance warning sign would consist of the camera symbol and 2 km distance with a point of interest word tab below mounted on a single post. At 250 m the advance warning sign for both major and minor sites is the same with the camera symbol and directional arrow tab.

### 6.3 Capital and Maintenance Costs

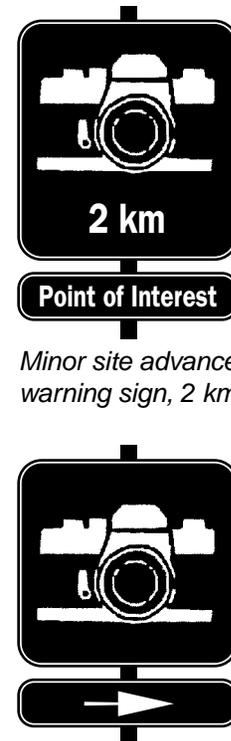
A preliminary estimate of site development and maintenance costs has been developed for the Silver

Trail corridor and Duncan Creek Road. The estimates and cost assumptions are based on costing information collected during research for the *Yukon Interpretive Sign Strategy* in 1995. This data included government budget and program development records, as well as data collected for similar projects in other jurisdictions.

A site by site development cost estimate is based on the cursory site inspections conducted during the field trip in June 1997. Maintenance costs are based on the standards recommended in the 1995 *Yukon Interpretive Strategy*. Obviously maintenance costs may vary considerably depending on the inter-



Major site advance warning sign, 250 m



Minor site advance warning sign, 2 km

Minor site advance warning sign, 250 m

# Appendices – Site, Capital & Operation Estimate



























