

Report of the

**Yukon Council on the Economy
and the Environment**

April 1995 - March 1998

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**YUKON COUNCIL ON THE ECONOMY
AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Yukon Government Executive Council Office
P.O. Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

The Honourable Piers McDonald
Government Leader
Government of the Yukon
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

October 30, 1998

Dear Mr. McDonald:

I am pleased to provide you with this report, which summarizes the activities of the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment. This report covers the three year period from the April 1995 to March 1998, since the last report of the YCEE, which covered the period from October 1993 to March 1995.

As required under the *Environment Act* s. 42 , this report details the activities and expenditures of the Council during this period. It also provides information on the background and goals of the Council.

Since receiving new direction on priorities in November 1997, the Council focused on fulfilling its mandate as legislated under the *Environment Act* and the *Economic Development Act*. This has included reviewing the Yukon government's implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy, reviewing the 1997 *Interim State of the Environment Report*, and developing regulations to govern the Council under the *Environment Act*.

Over this period, the Council has benefited both from the experience of members who have served throughout this period and from the fresh perspectives offered by newly-appointed members to the Council.

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The balance of perspectives and experience on the Council – representing the wide range of interests in Yukon society – is its most important asset. The ability of members to consider different perspectives and achieve consensus provides a strong sense of optimism that as a society we can rise to the new challenges we face in the future.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Mauro
Chair

Background and Goals of the YCEE

The Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment was established in November 1989 and was the first legislated round table on the economy and the environment to be established in Canada.

The Council was created to advise the Yukon government and encourage non-governmental organizations, individuals and businesses to adopt practices and approaches that will further the goal of sustainable development in the Yukon.

The *Environment Act* (s. 41) outlines the duties of the Council in more detail:

41. (1) The purpose of the Council is to encourage sustainable development in the Yukon.

(2) Without restricting the generality of subsection (1), the Council may

(a) undertake and encourage public discussion of the economy and the environment and their inter-relationship;

(b) review the policies of the Government of the Yukon and evaluate their implementation in relation to the objectives of this Act;

(c) conduct research on the economy and the environment; and

(d) promote public awareness of the importance of sustainable development.

The membership of the Council is, by legislation, drawn from a wide range of interests in the Yukon, including: First Nations, business or industry, labour, environment, municipal and women's organizations. Members are nominated by organizations in these sectors and appointed by Cabinet.

The Council was also given a number of specific responsibilities it is required to fulfill under the *Environment Act*. These include:

- Table an annual report to the Legislative Assembly detailing its activities and expenditures;
- Conduct an annual review of the performance of the Government of the Yukon in the implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy and report its findings to the Legislative Assembly;
- Review the triennial Yukon State of the Environment Report and submit a report of its review to the Legislative Assembly; and
- Review, report on, and make recommendations regarding complaints submitted under s. 22 of the *Environment Act*.

The *Economic Development Act* (s. 10 (1)) outlines additional functions for the Council. These include:

- (a) review policy, strategic, legislative, and program initiatives and provide advice about them to the Cabinet;
- (b) monitor progress on the implementation of the Yukon Economic Strategy;
- (c) encourage environmentally sound economic development by industry, government, labour, and aboriginal and non-governmental organizations;
- (d) at the call of the Minister, arrange public symposiums on major economic issues;
- (e) promote public awareness and understanding of the links between the environment and economy, and the importance of integrating economic and environmental policies and sustainable development;
- (f) recommend research on the economy or links between the economy and the environment;
- (g) carry out or supervise projects assigned by the Commissioner in Executive Council;
- (h) review and comment on any reports that address the state of the Yukon economy;

During the 1989 to 1992 period, the Council was involved in a broad range of activities. These included organizing public speaker series on different issues; holding annual conferences and workshops on a number of topics; reviewing the *Environment Act*, *Employment Standards Act*, *Economic Development Act* and *Beverage Container Regulations*.

The Council was also involved a number of special projects which included the development of an Environmental Report Card for households, initial work on the development of supplemental economic accounts, and identification of the linkages between the land-based economy and the environment, as well as reviewing a number of policy issues for the Yukon government.

During the 1993 to March 1995 period, the Council adopted a workplan which included public consultation on expanding the availability of gambling and video lottery terminals in the Yukon; review of the State of the Environment Report; review of the draft Yukon Industrial Support Policy; review of proposed amendments to the Environment Act; and the organization of a sectoral conference on Mining.

Activities of the Council April 1995 - March 1997

During the April 1995 to March 1997 period, the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment initiated a range of activities. These included:

Energy Conference

The Council organized a public conference entitled "Energy for Tomorrow" in Whitehorse in April 1995. The conference involved discussion on a wide range of energy issues, including coal generation, alternative energy sources, demand side management and wood as an energy source.

Forestry Conference

The YCEE organized and hosted a conference on "The Future of Yukon's Forests", held in Watson Lake in November 1995. The conference attracted over 100 people. Conference participants advocated establishing small, locally owned forestry industry, completing forest inventories, devolution of responsibility for forests to the Yukon, establishing a board to build a common consensus on a vision for the forest sector, and develop and eco-system management plan for the forests.

Making Progress: Implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy

With the assistance of the Department of Renewable Resources, the Council reviewed Yukon government's progress in implementing the Yukon Conservation Strategy. The report of this review, entitled *Making Progress: Yukon Government Implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy 1990-1995*, estimated that 95% of Yukon government commitments under the Yukon Conservation Strategy had been met or were being implemented and that further implementation was dependent on the settlement of land claims and the transfer of federal programs such as forestry.

State of the Environment Report

A subcommittee of the YCEE assisted staff from the Yukon and Canada governments to develop a State of the Environment Report, which was subsequently published in 1996.

During this period, the Council also:

- Produced a report on *Yukon Mining: The Next Century*, based on the sectoral conference on mining, which had been held in November 1994.
- Established a Forestry Sub-committee of the YCEE to follow up on the recommendations of the conference on forestry.
- Reviewed the contribution of the Arts community to the Yukon economy.

Financial Information 1995/96

Funds Available		\$30,000.00
Expenses		
Honoraria and Member's Expenses	\$3,700.00	
Travel Expenses	4,520.46	
Meeting Expenses	3,022.32	
Contracts	14,286.85	
Administrative Expenses	1,356.44	\$26,886.03
Balance remaining at March 31, 1996		\$3,113.93

Financial Information 1996/97

Funds Available		\$30,000.00
Expenses		
Honoraria and Member's Expenses	\$1,100.00	
Travel Expenses	251.85	
Meeting Expenses	271.35	
Contracts	0.00	
Administrative Expenses	434.81	\$2,058.01
Balance remaining at March 31, 1997		\$27,941.99

Activities of the Council 1997/98

After a period of dormancy, the Council became re-invigorated in late 1997 with the appointment of a new chair and group of new members.

The Government Leader requested that the newly-appointed Council give priority to the following tasks:

- Fulfill the YCEE's legislated mandate as outlined in the *Environment Act* and the *Economic Development Act*,
- Review the Yukon Conservation Strategy and the Yukon Economic Strategy and consider whether their underlying principles are still relevant and up-to-date;
- Work with the Department of Economic Development to develop an economic diversification strategy for Yukon; and
- Stimulate public interest in the ideas of Sustainable Development through public education.

At its February 1998 meeting, the Council adopted a workplan for 1998 reflecting these priorities, which was later tabled in the Yukon Legislature.

Annual Review of the Government's Performance in its Implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy

Council members established a working committee to work with staff from the Department of Renewable Resources to prepare a review of the Yukon government's performance in its implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy.

Council members determined that the process used in the past both to develop revisions to the Yukon Conservation Strategy and to review the government's implementation of the Conservation Strategy did not provide a strong link between actions and objectives. The working committee started work to develop a set of indicators designed to provide a more effective and objective review of progress.

Review of the Yukon State of the Environment Interim Report 1997

At the request of the Department of Renewable Resources, Council members reviewed a draft of the *Yukon State of the Environment Interim Report* and provided recommendations to the Minister on the draft report. The 1997 report focused on air quality and climate change and was released April 28, 1998.

Development of an Economic Diversification Strategy

Council established a working committee which developed a definition of a diversified economy and set of objectives for diversification which were subsequently accepted by Council.

Council members and staff also started to develop a preliminary set of indicators by which the level of economic diversification could be gauged. Council reviewed material prepared on the topic by staff from the Department of Economic Development and discussed different issues which required more in-depth research.

Development of Regulations to Govern the YCEE

The 1997 *Report on the Audit of the Yukon Government's Performance under the Environment Act* reported that regulations to govern the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment, which are required under the s. 41 (4) *Environment Act*, had not been enacted by Cabinet.

The audit noted that regulations would have clarified the Council's priorities regarding the responsibilities specified in the Act versus other activities that may be assigned.

Council members worked with staff from the Department of Renewable Resources to draft regulations to address the requirements under the Environment Act and reviewed these draft regulations at the Council's February 1998 meeting. As required under the *Environment Act*, the department then made plans for proceeding with a public review of the draft regulations, prior to final approval by Cabinet and subsequent enactment.

Revision of Operating Procedures

The newly-appointed Council reviewed and revised the Council's operating procedures in order to make them consistent with the proposed draft regulations and to include a section on conflict of interest guidelines.

The conflict of interest guidelines were developed with the assistance of the Yukon's Conflicts Commissioner Ted Hughes and were composed in general terms so they could be considered for adoption by other Boards and Committees.

Planning of Public Education Activities

The Council began plans for organizing public education activities including organizing public speaking sessions featuring participants invited to the Circumpolar Conference on Sustainable Development in the Arctic, held in Whitehorse in May 1998.

Meetings

At their initial meeting in December 1997, members of the newly appointed Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment decided to hold at least four two day meetings per year, with two meetings to be held in communities outside of Whitehorse.

The purpose of the meetings in communities outside of Whitehorse is to both find out about the concerns and views of people and organizations in communities outside Whitehorse and to inform them about the Council's activities.

The YCEE held two full Council meetings during the 1997/98 year:

- December 2, 1997 Whitehorse
- February 13/14, 1998 Whitehorse

In addition, the Council established working committees on the following areas:

- Annual Review of Implementation of the Yukon Conservation Strategy Working Committee
- Economic Diversification Strategy Working Committee
- Regulations and Operating Procedures Working Committee

Members of these working committees held a number of meetings during the year.

Financial Information 1997/98

Funds Available		\$40,000.00
Expenses		
Honoraria and Member's Expenses	\$20,389.25	
Travel Expenses	3,611.70	
Meeting Expenses	964.00	
Contracts	1,020.00	
Administrative Expenses	836.73	\$26,821.68
Balance remaining at March 31, 1998		\$13,178.32

Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment

Membership 1997/98

Chair: Jennifer Mauro

Vice-Chair: Daryn Leas Council of Yukon First Nations

Members:	Dave Austin	Yukon Chamber of Mines
	Louise Bouvier	Yukon Indian Women's Association
	John Carroll	Yukon Chamber of Commerce
	George Johnson	Council of Yukon First Nations
	Ralph Nordling	Member at Large
	Louise Ranger	Yukon Federation of Labour
	Lucy van Oldenbarneveld	Yukon Status of Women's Council
	Kathy Watson	Association of Yukon Communities
	Andy Williams	Yukon Conservation Society

YCEE Contact Information:

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Secretariat:

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Karen Sparrow	Economic Development	(867) 667-5997