

WALK WITH US

Respectful Travel Guidelines



**INDIGENOUS
YUKON**

We respectfully acknowledge that the Yukon is home to 14 First Nations speaking 8 languages. We celebrate their vibrant cultures, strength and resiliency, and recognize, with gratitude, their past and ongoing stewardship of these lands.



Ná t'sin t'ra

“hold everything up in respect”

Northern Tutchone

The Respectful Travel Guidelines are intended as an educational tool to build cultural awareness and understanding of the traditional values of Share, Care, Respect and Relationship Building as they relate to travel on and engagement with the land, water, culture, and communities. These ancestral teachings are common to all Yukon First Nations and are intended to help educate everyone including, but not limited to, visitors, Yukoners, and tourism service providers and their staff. These guidelines will give all people travelling in the Yukon an opportunity to build awareness from a Yukon First Nations perspective as a way of enriching their relationship to and understanding of this place.

As the Yukon tourism industry grows, these Guidelines can support the Territory in attracting the “right” type of visitor — someone who is conscientious and is inspired to listen, learn, and engage on a deeper level. While the Guidelines will be shared through a tourism lens, it is important to acknowledge that these teachings are applicable across sectors.

In early 2021, the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT) brought together Elders and Knowledge Keepers representing all 8 language groups for a 3-day gathering to discuss common values that could be used to develop the Guidelines. Elders shared stories and ancestral teachings about respect for land, water, animals, and each other. They spoke of our collective responsibility to honour all living things and to protect the natural world for generations yet to come. The Elders spoke of their responsibility and desire to share these teachings and pass them on. They stressed the importance of these Guidelines for everyone. The values highlighted in these Guidelines are shared by many non-Indigenous Yukoners, as well.

The culmination of this 3-day gathering was a What We Heard document and 10 teachings that would form the foundation for the Guidelines. Participating Elders reviewed these documents and encouraged YFNCT to move towards sharing them with a wider audience. YFNCT staff presented at the CYFN Leadership table and were encouraged to continue the engagement process, which was done between late 2021 and fall 2022.

These Guidelines are not final. They will evolve and change over time to adapt to a changing tourism industry and a changing planet. There will be opportunity for review and input in the coming years. The purpose of this document is to capture work done to date — to celebrate, with gratitude, this milestone that marks a culmination of many conversations, discussions, presentations, and contributions from all individuals involved. From here, we will share these teachings for the benefit of all beings and Mother Earth.

INDIGENOUS YUKON

Respectful Travel Guidelines

The Yukon is home to 14 distinct First Nations and 8 language groups. These guidelines have been shared by First Nations Knowledge Keepers to teach all people about how to show respect when travelling through the Yukon. Our land is beautiful and our water is clean. Our land is everything. We are the stewards of this land and we all have a responsibility to care for this land for future generations. We honour our ancestors who shared their teachings with us so that we can now share them with you. We care for this land — the plants, water, air and animals — by showing it respect and treating it as an equal. As you travel through our beautiful homelands, we invite you to

Ná t'sin t'ra

“hold everything up in respect”

Northern Tutchone

When travelling in our homelands, come visit us in our communities:

Our culture is rich and powerful — we are proud to share it with visitors who want to listen and learn in a respectful way. Our stories and knowledge can help visitors understand how we've lived on this land for so long, how we've kept it so undisturbed, how they can travel safely on it. This is an excellent cross-cultural learning opportunity for us and you. When you're in our communities, please visit our cultural centres, celebrate with us during our festivals, buy our art and crafts, listen to our stories, or go on a tour with a local First Nations guide. This helps support the well-being of our communities.



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We care for our land — we expect everybody to share this responsibility:

For over 10,000 years, these lands have sustained Yukon First Nations people. We continue to survive on this land through our beliefs, our respect, our honour towards all living things. The well-being of our people depends on the well-being of these lands. We must treat the land like we treat our own mother. We have ancestral laws to look after our land. We must always care for the land so that the land can care for us.



Alistair Maitland Photography

This land is our home – when visiting somebody’s home we follow respectful behaviours:

These are our homelands. When visitors come to the Yukon they will be visiting our home — a place that we love, rely on and feel connected to. When we visit people’s homes we follow learned behaviours — we knock on the door, we take our shoes off, we ask permission to come in. It is important to understand the customs of the place you are travelling to. Before you visit our communities, do your best to learn about our people and our cultures. This shows respect for Yukon First Nations people.

Keep the land and water clean:

Water is the best medicine in the world. Without water we cannot live. Keeping the land and water clean is essential for keeping our animals, people and environment healthy. Keep a clean camp. Please pack out what you pack in — don’t throw garbage on the land or in the water. This is a sign of disrespect to the land, to the water, to animals and to Yukon First Nations peoples. We must be diligent about caring for our environment for future generations.





Peter Mather

Respect the land and the land will respect you:

The land is deserving of the highest honour. Be mindful of your behaviour when travelling on the land. Give thanks to the land and the animals. Keep your mind clear and have good thoughts when you are out on the land. Don't make fun of animals or talk badly about them — they can hear you. We are lucky as a people — we communicate with animals and with the land. The land, water, animals — everything has a spirit. Travel with respect to ensure safety and good relations with the land. When you help the land and animals, it comes back to you in a good way. We are all equal as guests on this land — once we respect that everything will be good.

Be thankful for the land and all that it offers:

Our people rely on the land and all that it offers. The land is our grocery store, our pharmacy and our clothing store. We give thanks when we gather from the land. We take only what we need, we use all that we take, and we share what we have. You have to be careful — if you disturb the land, it's not going to come back again.

Peter Mather



Learn the history of this land – it is rich with our stories:

The history of this land is much older than the Gold Rush. Our language and stories are deeply intertwined with this land. It is important that visitors hear these stories. It is important that they hear these stories from us — the people who are deeply connected to this land. When given the opportunity, please listen and show respect to the Elders and First Nations people sharing their stories and knowledge. We encourage you to learn as much as you can before visiting these lands. The Welcome Guide produced by the Yukon First Nations Culture & Tourism Association is a great resource, as are the ancestral teachings you read here.

Peter Mather



Archbould Photography

Respect our sacred places and teachings:

Respect is the highest honour we can give. Our Yukon First Nations way is to respect all people and to help each other. Our teachings define our responsibilities to ourselves, to the land, and to our communities. Our teachings come from our ancestors who came before us. It is our obligation to pass on these teachings, but please understand not all of these teachings are for us to share. Some teachings should only be shared by Yukon First Nations peoples. We also have sacred places that are not meant for visiting. Please do not visit our spirit houses, graveyards or other sacred sites.

Respect and honour our culture – understand that our culture is not for sale:

Our culture is strong, based on knowledge handed down for more than 10,000 years. Our culture is our stories. Each community has its own stories, songs, ceremonies, and ways of doing things. Elders have taught us the importance of sharing our culture with the younger generations. We want to share our culture with visitors, too. We welcome you to watch and listen with respect, but visitors must understand that our culture is not for sale. Please do not copy our designs, songs or dances. They belong to our family members, clans and communities. We have been working hard to reclaim our cultures and languages for many years. We ask that you support this reclamation and revitalization.



Archbould Photography

Respect our ancestral knowledge, customs, and livelihoods:

Our people continue to practice subsistence lifestyles in today's modern world. As hunters, trappers, and other land users we are mindful of our harvesting practices and understand that animals provide sustenance for survival. We ask that visitors to Yukon First Nations lands not interrupt or interfere with our right to subsistence activities on our traditional territories.

Acknowledgements:

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Southern Tutchone

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Southern Tutchone

Eldria Christiansen

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Jimmy Johnny

Northern Tutchone

Johnny Sam

Northern Tutchone

Angie Joseph-Rear

Hän

Gladys Netro

Gwichin

Kaakligé / Norman James

Tlingit

Kooxuhan Georgina Sydney

Tlingit

Andrew Williams

Tlingit

Dakali / Hammond Dick

Kaska

Dorothy Smith

Kaska

We also wish to thank and acknowledge Copper Joe Jack and his Land and Peoples Reconciliation Model. YFNCT used this model as we sought to understand the ancestral teachings that participants felt were important to share. The model is based on values of Respect, Care, Share and Relationship Building. It honours a collaborative knowledge building approach that respects both Yukon First Nations' ancestral knowledge and Western knowledge.



Welcome

Nakhwanyàa'in geenjit shòh ìidìlii

Gwich'in

Dákwäní'j yū shä `w ghàniddhän

Southern Tutchone

Dahgáts'enehtän yéh gutie.

Kaska

Dàye yésóots' enindhän,

dàkhwäts'enè'in yū

Northern Tutchone

Nèkhwëtr'ënoh'ay häjit

shò tr'inlay.

Hän

Yak'ê ixhwsatìní

Tlingit

Nohts'eneh'jj tsin'jj

choh ts'eninthän.

Upper Tanana

Dahts'eneh'jh sùkùsen

Tagish



Yukon First Nations
**CULTURE &
TOURISM**
Association

Yukon

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