



PEACE LIARD

REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

ALASKA HIGHWAY PUNK ART PROJECT



OBJECTIVE

The Peace Liard Regional Arts Council (PLRAC) is planning to create a permanent art object in celebration of 2017's 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway. We would like to request conditional approval (subject to the final product's success) to have this art piece located at the NAR (Northern Alberta Railway) Park. We see this as an ideal location as it marks the "Mile 0" of the Alaska Highway and is a location visited by community members and tourists throughout the year.

SUMMARY

The Alaska Highway Punk Art Project has its roots in the steam punk movement where past technology is modified and presented in alternative ways. In the spirit of steam punk, Peace-Liard Region artists will transform a Trencher (a piece of machinery used in the building of the Alaska Highway and donated to the PLRAC by Roger Gregoire, a local collector from Fort St. John) into a work of art. The art work will leave a legacy for our future by becoming a permanent art object, one which we believe will be innovative enough to have a national scope. The project will provide an opportunity for all regional artists (with an emphasis on Indigenous artists), to share ideas, both personal and historical, related to the building of the Alaska Highway. The project will include two youth Indigenous artists (under 35) with general advice and oversight provided by renowned international Indigenous artist Brian Jungen and

well-known local Rolla artists Emilie and Karl Mattson. All three of these artists have experience working with large scale sculptures. As well, the Mattsons have a proven track record, having already produced several commissioned pieces for the City of Dawson Creek.

TIMELINE:

- a. A call to all regional artists will be made in November 2015.
- b. Artists will be selected in January 2016.
- c. Artists will have from May – October 2016 to complete the project
- d. Each artist involved will receive a \$500 honorarium
- e. Art piece will be unveiled in May 2017

SAFETY/LIABILITY CONCERNS

We understand that the object being used for the art project does present concerns around safety/liability. In speaking with Emilie Mattson, she feels confident that any pieces on the trencher that present a hazard could be addressed either by removing the pieces or by rounding them off. The concept for the piece is to have it become more organic, so rounding off edges and sharp points is a part of the desired aesthetic. A chain link fence would also be installed around the art piece with a sign prohibiting the public from touching the object.

LONGEVITY AND MAINTENANCE OF OBJECT OVER THE LONG TERM

Additions and modifications to the trencher will largely be done using metals and welding. Like the trencher itself, this material will show little sign of deterioration over time. We will be incorporating the possibility of rust, etc. so that, should this occur, it will not detract from the overall design and aesthetic of the piece. In this way, we see very little maintenance being required, and we are confident that the piece will withstand the climate of northeast BC.

FEASIBILITY AND SUCCESS OF PROJECT

The art project is being overseen by artists with a long history in creating large sculptural pieces (Emilie Mattson, Karl Mattson, and Brian Jungen). Working with a group of selected artists from across the Peace-Liard region, the concept of the piece will be planned out on paper long before work begins on the piece itself (please see first draft of conceptual drawing).

The Peace Liard Regional Arts Council is applying for a number of grants to cover the costs of this project, so we feel the project is financially feasible.

The piece will speak to the experiences of the Indigenous people of our area as well as to the experiences of the pioneers and to those who built the highway. The first conceptual drawing

incorporates the use of the tracks of the trencher. In this initial concept, we see culturally significant designs or "tracks" being cut into the metal, reflecting the continuing movement and circle of life as well as the continuation of the diverse cultures of our region and its corresponding impacts. These two tracks will merge and connect into a collaborative object that will rise above the trencher. The nature of the object will be conceived by the participating artists, something original to both the pioneer and to the Indigenous people. In light of the truth and reconciliation hearings, all Canadians have been encouraged to begin the important work of reconciliation in our country. We feel strongly that this piece will add to that conversation and continue the dialogue long after the 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway.



February 18, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Moving a 1942 Machine into Gear

A trencher used in the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942 will be transformed into a piece of art after 75 years of being discarded in the bush. To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway, the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council plans to make a unique sculpture with the creative efforts of local artists. The first step is to transport the huge machine to a farm in Rolla where it can be worked on over the next 8 months. Tyler Kosick and company from Trans Carrier Ltd Oilfield Hauling volunteered to move the trencher from Fort St. John to Rolla in Northeastern British Columbia.

The sculpture is a collaborative project reflecting the perspectives of the Alaska Highway, of the people who built the highway, and of the pioneers and Indigenous culture of the region. A major aspect of the sculpture is to acknowledge the Indigenous history and culture in relation to the Alaska Highway from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous points of view.

The Alaska Highway theme and design of the sculpture will be created and carried out by artists **Emilie Mattson**, **Karl Mattson** from Rolla and **Adrienne Greyeyes** from Fort St. John. Internationally renowned artist, **Brian Jungen**, will provide overall advice and direction on the sculpture's development. Brian is originally from Montney and returns home to get his inspiration. As accomplished artists, they are approaching this project as an exploration of the reactions and impact the building of the highway had on the local population. The trencher was donated to the project by Fort St. John resident Roger Gregoire who has researched the history on all things about the Alaska Highway and trails throughout Northern BC.

Donna Kane, the Executive Director of the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council, is administering this one-a-kind art project. She has gained the approval of the City of Dawson Creek for the sculpture's to be displayed at Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway for the 2017 celebration year. Regular updates on the progress of the transformation will be available on the PLRAC website.

For further information: Contact Donna Kane at dkane@pris.ca 250-759-4993 www.peaceliardarts.org

Alaska Highway News

Work to begin on transforming historic trencher into art piece

Bronwyn Scott / Alaska Highway News

February 19, 2016 08:06 AM

A trencher used to build the Alaska Highway in 1942 was hauled from Fort St. John to a farm in Rolla Thursday morning as local artists get ready to turn the machine into a work of art in time for the highway's 75th anniversary in 2017.

A crew from Trans Carrier Ltd. loaded the trencher onto a truck at a Fort St. John property, and took it to the Sweetwater 905 site in Rolla, where it will stay for the next year as artists transform it into a work of art.

TCL General Manager Tyler Kosick estimated the trencher weighed between 8,000 and 10,000 pounds. He and his team used one of the company's articulating boom cranes to get the job done.

"It's kind of one of those 'feel good' projects in the community. It's good to work with the Arts Council and the different events that are going on," he said.



Brad Whiffin, a swamper with TCL, works to secure the trencher in place on a truck. - Bronwyn Scott

"It's just part of our social licence as a local business to try to help out where we can."

It took roughly an hour to get the trencher hooked up to the crane and lifted onto the truck bed, but Kosick said there was "nothing too out of the norm" in moving the old machine, aside from the fact that most equipment they move is operational and can be driven onto and off of the truck.

The rusted machine, owned by Roger Gregoire, had been discarded in the bush for 75 years. He donated it to the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council, which plans to make a unique

sculpture with the help of local artists.

The design and concept for the piece has not yet been decided, but the Arts Council is "hugely excited about it," said Rolla artist Donna Kane, who serves as the council's executive director. "It's just such a unique, innovative project," she said.

The sculpture will be a collaborative project that reflects the perspectives of the people who built the highway, pioneers and Indigenous people in the region, according to the Arts Council.

Emilie Mattson and Karl Mattson of Rolla and Adrienne Greyeyes of Fort St. John will create and carry out the design of the project. Internationally-renowned artist Brian Jungen will provide overall advice and direction on the sculpture's development. Jungen is originally from Montney, and regularly returns home for artistic inspiration.

Other local artists will have a chance to get involved as well.

"Once we've got the concept, then we'll be doing a call to local artists who can contribute ideas toward the design that's going into the trencher," Kane said.

"We're hoping that we include all interested artists in one way or another."

The completed project will have a permanent home at the Northern Alberta Railway Park at Mile 0 in Dawson Creek.

peacereporter@ahnfsj.ca

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Alaska Highway News

Sculpture to recognize Alaska Highway's 75th anniversary

[Jonny Wakefield](#) / Alaska Highway News

December 22, 2015 07:51 AM



Donna Kane, Emilie Mattson and Karl Mattson inspect a 40s-era Caterpillar trencher donated for a sculpture to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway. Photo By Supplied

Four Peace Region artists will team up to convert an old Alaska Highway trencher into a sculpture to commemorate the Alcan's 75th Anniversary.

On Monday, city council approved the sculpture in principle, setting aside a portion of the Northern Alberta Railway park at Mile Zero of the highway for the display.

It's one of several projects planned to celebrate the highway's construction, which began in 1942.

Donna Kane of the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council gave council details of the project at Monday's meeting.

Four artists will leave their mark on the sculpture—two indigenous and two non-indigenous.

The indigenous artists are Adrienne Greyeyes, a Fort St. John resident and Emily Carr University of Art + Design graduate, and Brian Jungen, a sculptor who grew up at the Doig River First Nation.

Rolla artists Emilie Mattson and Karl Mattson, who built metal sculptures for the Dawson Creek traffic circle and city hall, will also contribute to the project.

Kane said having artists of different ancestry will allow for varied perspectives on the highway's construction.

As for what the sculpture will look like?

"I can't tell you at this point what it's going to look like, it's a creative process," Kane told council. "I totally understand the city can't give approval to something (if) it doesn't know what it's going to look like."

The Caterpillar trencher donated by Roger Gregoire currently sits at the Mattson's Rolla property, where much of the work will happen.

It's one of four initiatives planned to mark the anniversary, including an Alaska Highway theme song contest. 2017 also marks the 150th year since Confederation, making it a potentially banner year for tourism.

Council will have a chance to review the sculpture before giving it the final nod.

The 1,300-mile highway was completed during World War II to connect Alaska to the contiguous U.S.

reporter@dcdn.ca

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PEACE LIARD
REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

Example

Peace Liard Regional Arts Council
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H: (250) 759-4993
C: (250) 719-9225

Website: www.peaceliardarts.org
Email: dkane@pris.ca

[Date]

[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Re: Peace Liard Regional Arts Council (PLRAC) Request for Support

The PLRAC wishes to request a meeting with [Name of Sponsor] to discuss an exciting initiative currently underway in celebration of 2017's 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway and the 150th Anniversary of Canada's Confederation.

We believe this project will be of particular interest to [Name of Sponsor] as it [rationale]. The sculpture will create a legacy for the community, emblemizing the perspectives of the region's pioneers, the people who helped build the highway, and the community's Indigenous groups.

The City of Dawson Creek, a partner in the project, has approved the National Alberta Railway (NAR) Park at Mile Zero in Dawson Creek as the permanent location for this sculpture.

Canada 150 and the McLean Foundation have also provided support, and we feel that adding [name of sponsor] to this project would have a long term benefit to both your [corporation, business, group] and to the sculpture.

Enclosed please find additional information on the PLRAC and on the project itself.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to call me at (250) 759-4993 or email at dkane@pris.ca.

Sincerely,

Sue Popesku, Chair
PLRAC



PEACE LIARD REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

Description of the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council (PLRAC)

Since its inception in 1989, the PLRAC, a registered charity (CRA Number: 891537060RR0001), has sought to broaden the opportunities for the development of and networking in arts, culture and heritage for the people of northeast BC. Through coordinated and first hand communication, sharing of resources, sponsorship of the Annual Regional Juried Art Exhibit (open to artists within the region) and other regional events, as well as administering several current initiatives related to 2017's 75th Anniversary of the building of the Alaska Highway and the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, the Peace Liard Regional Arts Council continues to support our diverse northern heritage and the significant cultures that exist within the regions of the Peace River and Northern Rockies.

Project for which the PLRAC is requesting Assistance

Title: 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway Public Art Sculpture

The building of the Alaska Highway is one of the most significant events in the history of northeast BC. The 75th Anniversary of the highway's construction will take place in 2017 as will Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation. The City of Dawson Creek has granted approval to the PLRAC for a 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway Public Art Sculpture to be permanently displayed at the National Alberta Railway (NAR) Park in Dawson Creek, BC. The grounds of the NAR Park, which also houses the Dawson Creek Art Gallery and The Dawson Creek Station Museum, is a prime location, marking Mile Zero of the Alaska Highway.

This public art sculpture will be created by transforming a Caterpillar Trencher used in the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942 into an art piece. The public art sculpture project is being led under the advisement and direction of Indigenous Fort St. John artist Adrienne Greyeyes together with descendants of the area's original pioneers, artists Emilie Mattson and Karl Mattson. Internationally renowned Indigenous artist Brian Jungen will guide the three artists throughout the process. Other regional artists will also have the opportunity to contribute to the sculpture's design.

The sculpture's unveiling will take place in July of 2017.

Supporters to this project will have their included on a plaque to be placed next to the sculpture on the grounds of the NAR Park, a prime location marking Mile Zero of the Alaska Highway as well as housing the Dawson Creek Art Gallery and The Dawson Creek Station Museum.

Donors will also be acknowledged on the PLRAC's website www.peaceliardarts.org, its Facebook page, in press releases, and, as a registered charitable organization, the PLRAC will issue a charitable tax receipt.