

proposed reservoir of Site C.” He says BC Hydro’s plan will put the archaeological and historical riches of the region under water. When Hadland approached BC Hydro staff about the issue, he says Hydro said they will “mitigate” the situation.

David Conway from BC Hydro says the Rocky Mountain Fort site, near where the Moberly River meets the Peace, was discovered by an archaeological survey done by BC Hydro in the 1970s. Conway argues that everything of value has been learned from the site, and preserving the location does not accomplish anything. He says the location “is not accessible by anyone,” and the value is in what has been gathered and taken away.

Evidence shows that humans have been living in the Peace River Valley for thousands of years. Arthur Hadland regularly finds artifacts on his farm. Most of them are typical of the Clovis culture, who were believed to have dominated this area as far back as 10,000 BC. Rocky Mountain Fort is recognized as the oldest European settlement in the province.

The Peace River valley was explored in the late 18th century as Europeans made their way toward the Pacific. Heather Longworth, Curator of the North Peace Museum in Fort St John explains, the Fort was established soon after. “Well, I guess 1793 is the first date, with Alexan-

der Mackenzie coming on his way to the Pacific coast by land and water.” She says “it was his idea to that there should be a fort somewhere in the Taylor flats—Fort St. John area.”

The Rocky Mountain Fort site is difficult to access. It has been quietly sitting on the western bank of the Peace River. The site has been quiet and relatively undisturbed since the mid-1980s.

Hadland wants protection for both the Rocky Mountain Fort, and Rocky Mountain Portage Fort—near Hudson’s Hope. Hadland points out that Fort St. James, which was built in 1805, has National Park status.

Rocky Mountain Fort itself operated for 11 years, between 1794 and 1805. The Fort was replaced by Fort D’Epinette, further downstream in 1806. That fort was renamed Fort St. John after the Hudson’s Bay company took over the Northwest Company. That Fort was abandoned in 1823, and traders did not return until a new Fort St. John was built in 1860, in what is now Old Fort.

Hadland says he will follow up with the Federal Ministers of Heritage and the Environment in the New Year, in hopes of giving history in the Peace region the recognition and protection he feels it deserves.

BC Heritage + BC Hydro = a marriage of convenience?

“Energy. We need it to move, to see, to stay warm, to cook, and just to have fun. Without it, we couldn’t work, build or grow. We need energy to live.”

(<http://www.heritagebc.ca/heritage-week-2012>)

Heritage Week 2012, which took place across the province during February 20-26th, was themed “Energy in B.C.: A Powerful Past, A Sustainable Future.” It should hardly be any wonder, then, to find that Heritage Week was sponsored this year by BC Hydro. As communities all over British Columbia organized events to celebrate their local heritage, it seemed that BC Hydro wanted to remind citizens of what should really matter most to them: BC Hydro.

Actually, “The Heritage of Power Generation” was the theme encouraged by the Canada Heritage Foundation, a national charity mandated “to preserve and

demonstrate and encourage the preservation and demonstration of the nationally significant historic, architectural, natural and scenic heritage of Canada with a view to stimulating and promoting the interest of the people of Canada in that heritage” (<http://www.heritagecanada.org/en/about-us/what-we-do>). Since, they claim, “Canada is the world’s second-largest producer of hydroelectricity, and our per-capita power consumption is among the highest in the world” (<http://www.heritagecanada.org/en/visit-discover/heritage-day>), power is obviously a foundational part of Canadian national identity.

(Meanwhile, in Ontario and New

Further Reading

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The Site C Dam Project:

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I.R. Wilson Consultants Ltd. 2009. Peace River Site C Hydro Project—Archaeological Site Reconciliation, Peace River Fort St. John to Hudson’s Hope, B.C.

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Site C Commentary:

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Church, M., N. Dusyk, M. Evenden, K. Forest, M. Griffin Cohen, A. Nether-ton and A. Peacock. 2009. FORUM: Site C: Considering the Prospect of Another Dam on the Peace River. *BC Studies* (161):93-114.

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Brunswick, Heritage Week focused on the bicentennial of the War of 1812—a period of history that ensured Canada would not become the northern-most American state.)

In light of the Site C Dam and Rocky Mountain Fort situation—and, indeed, the ever-increasing number of CRM projects undertaken in advance of hydro-electric development in British Columbia—is there perhaps more than a hint of irony in this unlikely marriage of heritage and hydro?

Find out more about recent events here: <http://www.heritagebc.ca/heritage-week-2012>

Marina La Salle, Editor