

# Heritage Conservation Management

## What is a Heritage Site?

A heritage site is land, including land covered by water, that has historical, cultural, aesthetic, scientific or educational value to British Columbia, a community or Indigenous people.

The BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) ensures the protection and conservation of heritage property in British Columbia in regards to oil and gas activities.

The Commission provides regulatory oversight throughout the entire life cycle of each oil and gas project to assist permit holders in achieving best practices when managing archaeological resources.

Oversight and compliance is ensured pre-permit, during construction and post construction through the Heritage Conservation Program branch within the Commission.

## How are Heritage Sites Regulated?

The Commission uses the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA) and Oil and Gas Activities Act (OGAA) to help make decisions when it comes to Heritage Conservation Management. This process starts before a permit is ever granted.

Company must hire a professional archaeologist permitted in B.C. to evaluate the proposed site for archaeology requirements.

Archaeologist will complete an Archaeology Information Form to determine if field work is required and submit to the Commission.

If field work is necessary, the archaeologist must submit an Archaeological Impact Assessment Report and include mitigation strategies to ensure artifacts are not disturbed. On occasion, a HCA section 12 Site Alteration Permit may be granted allowing excavation of the site.

The Commission's Heritage Conservation Management Program group reviews the Archaeology Information Form, Archaeological Impact Assessment Report and Mitigation Strategies prior to granting or denying a company a section 12 permit.

A Heritage Conservation Management condition is placed in all operational permits. This condition states if any heritage objects are found during construction, construction must stop immediately and the Commission must be notified.

## How is an Archaeological Site Investigated Post-permit?

Sometimes, archaeological sites are not found until construction begins. If any materials protected under section 13 (2) of the HCA are noted during any phase of the ground-disturbing activities, the company must immediately cease all work in the vicinity of the artifacts, features and materials and contact the Commission as soon as possible.

The Commission then sends a team of Heritage Conservation Management experts to investigate. A Heritage Conservation Act Ministerial Order must be granted in order for anyone, including Commission staff, to alter the ground or remove artifacts from any site.

Sites are investigated to ensure authenticity and establish the best mitigation strategies going forward.



### For Further Information

Email [ogc.communications@bcogc.ca](mailto:ogc.communications@bcogc.ca) or call 250-794-5200

24 Hour Incident Reporting for Industry 1-800-663-3456

This information is published by the BC Oil and Gas Commission and available online at [www.bcogc.ca](http://www.bcogc.ca)

## How are Companies Held Accountable?

It is the company's responsibility to ensure all legal and regulatory obligations are met, however, the Commission's Archaeology Audit Program evaluates the effectiveness of the company's performance by auditing their archaeology management system.

If companies are deficient or found in non-compliance with any of the audited criteria, the Commission works closely with them to ensure those matters are corrected.

Companies are also subject to compliance and enforcement inspections, and if are found in non-compliance with sections 13 (1) and (2) of the HCA or in violation of any permit condition are liable to a fine or imprisonment.



**The results of the 2017  
Archaeology Audit Program  
Report indicated an overall  
satisfactory scoring for most  
auditees.**

## What Guides the Commission?

The HCA is the legislation that protects heritage property in British Columbia. The HCA protects all archaeological sites whether on private or public lands.

### Under Sections 13 (1) and (2) of the HCA:

- Archaeological sites are protected against any damage. This protection applies to all sites, regardless of whether they are located on Crown or private lands.

### Under Section 36 of the HCA:

- Anyone found in contravention of sections 13 (1) or (2) is liable to a fine or imprisonment.



## Our Archaeology Branch's Responsibilities Are:

- ✓ To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process.
- ✓ Ensure compliance with applicable legislations (OGAA and HCA).
- ✓ Support company's in the fulfilment of their permit obligations.
- ✓ Manage archaeology resources by balancing and considering all land values.
- ✓ Guide, evaluate and provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of clients' management systems as they apply to archeological resources through the Archaeology Audit Program.

