

Yukon Camping - Don't Knock It Until You Try It

By: Jayne Seagrave

“So is it your first time The Yukon?” the sparky hotel receptionist with the false eyelashes and the purple glittery bra straps said. I cast my eyes down and completed the registration card, glad of the distraction so not to stare at her attire. No, I replied, it’s our third. At this information she dropped her jaw and her pen. Her colleague, who up until this point had existed unnoticed intent on watering the house plants adorning the reception, withdrew her watering can and both receptionist and gardener said in unison “Why”? We are here to go camping I replied, which, if they had taken more than a cursory look at the dishevelled appearance of myself and my entourage would have been self evident. Interested in this revelation the receptionist enquired why we needed a hotel room if we had an RV, upon which I admitted we were tent camping. A stunned silence by both hotel employees to this fact prompted hasty elaboration. Following five days in a tent, I volunteered, my immediate family (consisting of two smelly teenage boys, an equally stinky spouse, three kits bags of soiled clothing and two cool boxes which were no longer cool) sought accommodation in an actual building. The young woman's silence and stares continued so I added we badly needed showers, restaurant food, laundry facilities and access to as much complimentary ice as the hotels four ice-making locations could procure before we embarked again on our Yukon camping sojourn. “Wouldn’t catch me in a tent or RV”, the colleague with the watering can chimed in “Not in a million years.”

At this point I collected our two room access cards, thanked the false eye lashed teenager, smiled at the gardener and fought my way through the group of American cruise ship patrons and their guide as my subconscious yelled “Don’t knock it until you try it.”

In my experience when it comes to camping there exists two distinct groups of people. Firstly those who enthusiastically embrace it, be it in the luxury of an RV, a practical tent-trailer or under canvas. A somewhat eclectic group spanning every age group and affluence level, this category shares one constant – a true love of the outdoors. Secondly there are those who have never tried it, will never try it and cannot understand why anyone in their right mind would do it. While I may be able to reluctantly accommodate the views of this later group who live in urban

centres and who may not have easy access to some of the most stunning camping locations on the planet, it is very difficult to take from two Yukon locals who have wonderful campgrounds on their doorstep.

Okay, so I may be going a bit over the top here in my exuberance for the camping lifestyle, but after three weeks in August 2013 experiencing some of the Yukon Government campgrounds (and one National Park) I am convinced these locations which have so far been somewhat of a well kept secret, are set to become international destination hotspots. Increasingly travellers want to explore untouched areas existing in a pristine state. If there is one group of individuals who yearns for this more than any other it is the camper, who strives to move away from mass development and experience the elements from either a palatial \$100,000.00 RV or small \$100.00 two-person tent. To this end the Yukon Territory and the campgrounds on offer deliver. Where is it possible to drive along a paved road for over thirty minutes on a summer afternoon and not see another vehicle only three bears and a moose? Where can you skinny dip in a 400 kilometre lake confident you are the only one there? And where else in North America can you travel along a highway and see a sign informing from this point onwards there is no 911 service? As developments in transportation and levels of affluence increase more people are seeking less crowded vacation alternatives. This suggests the Yukon is destined to become increasingly attractive to national and international tourists. It is particularly appealing to the camper.