

Smells Like Yukon

“The Smell of the Yukon”

Production Script

[words; seconds]

From Day One, Smells Like Yukon has *doggedly* pursued its mission to celebrate the varied dimensions of Yukon life. Our motto: No subject is too sacred, irrelevant or stupid.

And yet, one listener feels pretty strongly that Mark and I have long overlooked a perfectly inane story that’s right under our noses....

[CLIP: MILES THORP your show is called smells like Yukon. But you’ve never done anything on it. There’s plenty of smells out there – get sniffing!]

That was my former boss, Miles Thorp. And, you know, he had a point.

Smells Like Yukon will never put its finger on the essence of the Yukon experience *unless... we take a moment to scratch and sniff its giant, pungent underbelly.*

As a bonus, this exercise appealed to our strong sense of public service.

If the Yukon has an official flower, official bird and maybe even an official opposition, our efforts could bequeath our beloved territory a much-needed official *smell*. We’d be the envy of every jurisdiction in Canada.

For me, the slightly salty smell of minus 40 air freezing my sinuses evokes a strong sense of Yukon. And for Mark, the sweet aroma of his ski gloves drying in the microwave reminds him of his favourite cross country trail.

But while these odours may have great personal significance to us, we weren’t sure that anyone else would rally around them as candidates for Yukon’s official smell. And so, we decided to ask other people about the smells that *speak* to them.

[CLIP: Mark asks question. Marsha answers “Yeah definitely. The smell of poplar trees in the spring totally smells like the Yukon.” SLY 3, TRACK 05: 02:33-02:42 = 9 seconds]

[CLIP: Kat “Ah, smell...ah... Deet, possibly.” SLY 2, TRACK 28: 02:34-02:39 = 5 seconds]

[CLIP: Johanna says “When you go into the boreal forest and there’s that pine-needly, burnt-needly, dry dry summer smell—that is a Yukon smell for sure.” SLYM1, TRACK 13: 01:07-01:17 = 10 seconds]

[CLIP: Sylvan says “Maybe the smell of dust.” SLY 3, TRACK 04: 01:43-01:47 = 4 seconds]

[CLIP: Mark’s mom says “High bush cranberries in the fall. They smell like bears.” SLY 3, TRACK 03: 03:46-03:49 = 3 seconds]

[CLIP: Laura Salmon says “Well, if you asked my husband, he’d probably say the asphalt plant upwind....I’d say it smells like... diapers.... That would just be coming from a mom, amongst

many moms. You can take that one or leave it." SLYM1, TRACK 14: 00:40-00:46 + TRACK 15: 00:08-00:13 + TRACK 15: 00:16-00:24= **19 seconds**]

We'll take it.... You see, the smell of diapers provides a perfect segue into the most frequently cited—and least popular—smell of all: that “spring is here, the snow is melting” kind of fragrance that only dogs seem to appreciate. But since no one used the radio-safe term “doodle”, we can’t actually share any of those clips....

As Mark and I considered these scents that evoke the Yukon experience, we felt some pretty obvious ones had been overlooked. Which is why we decided to, um, float some other options for Yukon’s official smell.

[CLIP: Mark asks “Porta Potties at Dawson City Music Festival, mouldy school or ATV exhaust?” Dylan replies “ATV exhaust.” Mark asks “Why do you pick that one?” Dylan says “It’s the happiest of the three.” SLYM1, TRACK 12: 00:05-00:14 = **9 seconds**]

[CLIP: Mark asks “Wood smoke, cigarette smoke or *other* smoke?” Chris replies “I think other smoke, especially in the summer.” Mark asks “Care to elaborate?” Chris says. “Not on public radio, no.” SLYM1, TRACK 14: 00:14-00:24 = **10 seconds**]

[CLIP: Mark asks “Kentucky Fried Chicken, neoprene, or these ski gloves?” Stephanie responds: “Ugh! Mark, get those gloves away from me!” SLYM1, TRACK 28: 00:05-00:08 + TRACK 29 00:00-00:03 = **6 seconds**]

Finally, we were getting somewhere. But even after all that consultation, our minds kept coming back to one suggestion that positively *reeked* of genius.

[CLIP: Amos says “When people are out camping, I think body odour is acceptable, but often you encounter it on downtown streets.... That’s the Yukon fragrance, really. We should try and bottle that.” SLY 3, TRACK 1: 07:43-07:59 + 08:01-08:05 = **20 seconds**]

As so often happens, Mark and I had started out with a great idea—and stumbled across a BRILLIANT one. No, we didn’t want to present BO as the official smell of the Yukon....

We’d found a golden opportunity to make a few bucks, so we paid a visit to Bev Gray at Aroma Borealis. Besides Mark and I, she may be the foremost expert on stuff that smells like Yukon.

[CLIP: “So, Jesse and I have been spending some time asking people about Yukon’s signature smells. At one point, we were even thinking about trying to name an official smell for the Yukon. Now, we’re thinking about coming out with a line of bottled Smells Like Yukon scents. Just wondering if that’s something you’d be interested in selling in your store?.... Do you have a line called Smells Like Yukon?” Bev replies “Well, we do have this, which is kind of like that, which is called Scent of the Yukon. So, I’ve already done it, so I might have the trademark and copyright on that, so my lawyer will talk to your lawyer and maybe we’ll come up with something....” SLY 3, TRACK 23: 00:06-00:22 + 06:10-06:30= **36 seconds**]

We were pleased that Bev indulged our best, half-hearted idea to date. But Mark and I always get a little twitchy when the word lawyer gets mentioned.

And there’s nothing more terrifying than a litigious Yukon herbalist. So, Mark and I quickly went back to our original plan: to name an official smell for the Yukon.

But now we had Bev’s expert opinion.

[CLIP: Bev replies “Really, if you go for a walk in the forest, spring, summer winter, fall... balsam poplar... aroma comes up and hits you in the face.... It’s awesome. So, I think, really, the balsam poplar should be the official smell of the Yukon.” SLY 3, TRACK 23: 02:28-03:00 = **32 seconds MAX**]

As it turns out, Bev even had a few products with the balsam poplar scent.

[CLIP: Bev asks “Would you like to smell them?” Mark says “Sure.... Let’s get the microphone in real close so everyone can smell....” Sniffing sounds. “Mark and Jesse say “That’s very nice... Oh, yeah. Poplarific.” SLY 3, TRACK 23: 04:28-05:03 = **35 seconds MAX**]

We had ourselves a winner.

[SFX: trumpets heralding?]

Yep, it’s time to climb the nearest spruce and shout the news for the world to hear: “I am Yukon, and I smell like balsam poplar!” And if you had your heart set on dog [SFX: bleep], crematorium smoke or some other delicious aroma as Yukon’s official smell, don’t worry—there’s a special therapy just for you.

Pull your radio close... turn up the volume... take a deep breath... and enjoy.

Possible Music Tracks:

SLYM1 (red minidisk) contains two music tracks that might be appropriate / funny:

Track 27: “Stop and Smell the Roses” – beautifully cheesy, might be good for beginning when our search begins...

Track 28: “Hard Nose the Highway” – Van Morrison tune. Nonsensical, but the chorus might be good....

Track 29: “Trees” by Pulp – might be good for the end?