

GCPS – NEWS RELEASE – February 9, 2017

By George Elliott

### Signs of Life Coming to Granite Creek

The 1885 Gold Rush in the Similkameen Valley centred on the tiny creek near present day Coalmont that was named Granite. A settlement grew at the site and miners arrived from as far away as California looking for new rivers and creeks to mine. Within two decades after being partially rebuilt following a fire in 1907, the community was largely abandoned and has been known as a ghost town since the 1930's.

The Granite Creek Preservation Society was formed in 2013. The group's mandate is hefty considering the historic significance of the once thriving gold town. The GCPS desires to protect the territorial integrity of the town site. Through their efforts they have worked to provide an understanding of the importance of the historical, archaeological and geological aspects of the ghost town and surrounding land. The group has taken on this task in order to encourage continued study of the significance of the historic gold mining town.

It took the GCPS 18 months of hard work to reach a major step in their preservation efforts. That was when they were granted a Licence of Occupation with the approval of the RDOS. The LoO is a requirement before any kind of physical preservation can take place at the town site. The GCPS has had a self-guided interpretive walking tour on their radar for years. The LoO allows them to proceed with a plan, with the assistance of the RDOS, to place a total of ten story boards/interpretive signs at Granite. Two will be in the area of the Granite Creek Cemetery with the remaining eight to appear within the footprint of the ghost town site.

Each sign will feature photos of landmarks or buildings as they once appeared and a documentation of what may have happened at the location during the height of Granite Creek's popularity. Signs will recount significant activities, identify key community leaders and important buildings adding to the experience of walking the streets of what was once one of the largest settlements in British Columbia.

Grant applications are currently in process to assist with funding this exciting development of bringing life to Granite.

### Cemetery Also Set To Come Back To Life

Prompted by contact by Consumer Protection BC, the GCPS is in the process of becoming the Operator of the Granite Creek Cemetery, which was closed in 2007. Although the group had been unofficially taking care of the cosmetic appearance of the Cemetery as well as researching and documenting burial records for the site, they recently opted to apply to become the official Cemetery Operator.

The process is complicated as it involves several steps, the first being obtaining a Lease for the property where the Granite Creek Cemetery sits. The goal of the Society is to reopen the Cemetery to allow for full body burials, cremated remain interments and the scattering of cremains for residents (and the families of residents) of Coalmont, Granite Creek and Blakeburn. The group is early in the stages to reopen the Cemetery and is hopeful they will achieve this goal within 2017.

Letters of Support for the GCPS becoming the official Operator of the Granite Creek Cemetery can be filed online at: <http://www.arfd.gov.bc.ca/ApplicationPosting/viewpost.jsp?PostID=52580> or comments can be mailed to the Senior Land Officer, Thompson-Okanagan, MFLNRO, at 441 Columbia Street in Kamloops, BC V2C 2T3.

You can also support the Granite Creek Preservation Society by becoming a Member. Membership is \$10 per year and you can join online at [www.granitecreekbc.ca](http://www.granitecreekbc.ca). Or if you prefer, you can just make a donation to support the efforts of the GCPS in preserving the ghost town and Cemetery.