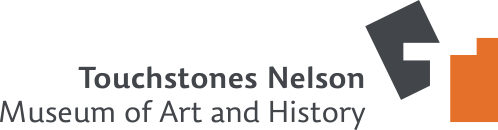
**Press Release**

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**For immediate release**

***History of railways exhibition is right on track at the Nelson MuseumImage***

**Nelson, BC (August 20, 2022):** From the copper mines of the Boundary District through to the coalfields of the Crowsnest, railways shaped the development of social, political, and economic life in the Kootenays. As the various and competing rail lines created a vast transportation network that connected east to west, it also brought calamity – cutting through Indigenous territories, causing environmental distress, and exploiting First Nations people and Chinese immigrants in work camps.

*Back on Track*, the latest history exhibition at the Nelson Museum, explores both the vast opportunities and the detrimental practices that accompanied the expansion of the railways in the west. The exhibition, which opens on Monday, September 19, features artifacts, photographs, maps, and other documents from museums, archives, and individuals around the region and beyond. A highlight of the exhibition is a working model train from the 1950s, which spans a 9ft x 5ft table.

“Railways have been a large part of the Kootenay story from the late 1800s onwards, involving sternwheeler fleets, tourist hotels, passenger services, and rival railway barons. The founding and location of so many of the towns and cities was largely due to the building of railways,” says Jean-Philippe Stienne, Nelson Museum Archivist and Collections Manager, who curated *Back on Track.* “However, there is another, less appealing side to the story, that we must never overlook: the huge land grants given to railway companies, the disregard for Indigenous land rights, the environmental destruction and pollution, the exploitation and dangerous labour conditions suffered by many of the railway labourers, and more. *Back on Track* captures a sense of the many sides of this fascinating and complex history, whose legacy touches our lives every day.”

*Locomotive and Group at Payne Bluffs Kaslo and Slocan Railway near Sandon, Trueman & Co. Photo, 1896. Image courtesy of the Shawn Lamb Archives at the Nelson Museum.*

The exhibition coincides with the first ever joint Canadian Pacific Historical Association and Great Northern Railway Historical Society Convention, being held in Nelson from September 17-21, when over 200 train and railway history enthusiasts will visit the region.

“*Back on Track* provides the Nelson Museum with another important opportunity to share the complexities of history through multiple lenses in order to encourage respectful critical dialogue, decolonization, and an expansion of the way in which we look to the past to inform our future,” adds Nelson Museum Executive Director Astrid Heyerdahl.

The material covered in *Back on Track* offers a wonderful opportunity for educators to explore the many historical layers and challenges of this important topic and is suitable for subjects from social studies to history to environmental science and more. School tours are available throughout the week and can be booked through the Museum’s website.

*Back on Track* runs September 16, 2022 to February 4, 2023. For more information about the exhibition and related school and public programming, visit touchstonesnelson.ca

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