

Exploring the Egg Lake /?Eghés tu Landscape and the Lake One Trail

A Collaboration with Knowledge Holders in Wood Buffalo National Park

By

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Abstract

Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) was established in the 1920s as a bison sanctuary, and since then it has received major recognition for its wildlife resources, including designations as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Ramsar site. But, there has been no formal recognition of its significant cultural heritage. Yet the lands of the park are criss-crossed by multiple overland Aboriginal trails that link together the settlements and areas of land use in the region, and the region itself to other parts of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories (NWT). The goal of my research was to show how the park's cultural heritage and values are just as important as its natural values. I do this by using a collaborative approach with local Cree and Chipewyan residents and a Parks Canada archaeologist to document one of the traditional trails in the park and the cultural meanings and stories associated with it. My thesis will discuss this project, consider what this trail research can reveal about the Aboriginal cultural landscape of a northern national park, and more broadly, propose a framework for a revised UNESCO commemorative statement that includes culture.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Laura Peterson. As a collaborative project working with knowledge holders, the author's main objective was to listen and learn from the elder's, record their stories and experiences, and to share this information in the most appropriate and respectful way. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the participants. The author takes full responsibility for any errors that may be found in any part of the document.

The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “(Re)mapping Aboriginal land-use patterning on a cultural landscape by examining and linking the relationship between an historic overland trail and the broader network of trails in the region,” Study ID: Pro00039597, July 24, 2013.

Dedication

*Dedicated to the elders and knowledge holders who shared their stories and wisdom,
and always made time for tea.*



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I am grateful to the numerous people who contributed to this project. I am especially honoured to have worked with Lawrence Vermillion, Fred Vermillion, Charlie Simpson, Lawrence Cheezie and his late brother Philip Cheezie (1932-2014), knowledge holders who contributed many hours of their time. I am humbled by their gift of stories, teachings, friendship, sincerity, and most of all their patience. Also, a special recognition to the late Joe Vermillion (1943-2014), brother to Lawrence and Fred.

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Chapter 1 Exploring Historic and Present Day Wood Buffalo National Park

The primary goal of my research was to demonstrate that the cultural heritage and values of Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) are as important as the natural values for which it is celebrated. I do this by exploratory research that documents the past and present relationships that local Aboriginal Peoples have with the Lake One Trail and the Egg Lake landscape in the park. I was interested in learning about the trail's connection to the larger regional network of trails in order to contribute to our understanding of Aboriginal occupancy in the region. Outsiders to the park may not see these lands as "cultural," due to the lack of much obvious material or tangible evidence on the landscape (Buggey 1999:14). The Aboriginal cultural landscapes of Wood Buffalo National Park can mostly be considered an "associative" cultural landscape, and what Ingold (2000:42) defined as "dwelling" on the landscape. It is the human activities that give meaning to place and are evident in oral traditions, place names, and "ways of knowing" and being. For example, Philip Cheezie (2014) pronounced the Chipewyan name for Lake One as, ?Eghés tu pronounced ii-guess-twa which means "Egg Lake. "People go there to get eggs from geese and waterfowl," he said. Through people's relationship with the land, knowledge is gained by the direct experience of travel, by establishing a pattern of activity on the land that is seasonal in nature, and by engaging in a wide range of activities on the land. "Humans engage with other organism-persons and places through travel, therefore movement, or mobility, lies at the heart of Aboriginal cultural landscapes" (Andrews and Buggey 2008:65). The Aboriginal relationship to the landscape may also be "ancestral," in the sense that these

landscapes are characterized by complex interrelationships between the people and the natural environment from the past into the present and, one hopes, into the future.

This research on trails contributes to scholarship and the broader literature about Aboriginal cultural landscapes and “cultural constructions of place” (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003) in the following ways:

- It explores the Aboriginal people’s relationships to a cultural landscape and examines the ways in which people construct landscapes;
- It demonstrates the rich and multifaceted history and cultures associated with this park and the broader region;
- It bridges connections between historic and present-day uses of the landscape;
- It explores the way in which the inquiry into this trail and its associated cultural landscape can inform and broaden the ways of thinking about Aboriginal peoples and parks and create greater recognition and awareness about the cultural heritage of WBNP.

The study incorporates ideas from Claudio Aporta (2003, 2004, 2005, 2009) and his documentation of Inuit trails and wayfinding, while touching on the perceptions and value of “place” by Keith Basso (1996 a,b), Tim Ingold (2000), and Thomas King (2003). There is also literature about “associative” cultural landscapes and their connections to the natural environment in Canada (Buggey 1999; Andrews 2011; Andrews and Zoe 1997). Research from New Zealand and Australia discusses Aboriginal heritage and the concept of “ancestral” cultural landscapes (Durie 2010; Kawharu 2009; Lennon 2005; McBryde 1997).

The focus on trails in this thesis is important for the glimpse it provides into the rich knowledge about and abundance of trails that exist in WBNP, even in one small area. Trails play significant roles in linking people’s movements on the land to their resource harvesting

areas. They demonstrate how well-occupied the land within the park has been over time and how closely people are connected to the land even today, as an important part of their cultural heritage. The memories embodied in the land are cherished and fondly remembered. Trails teach us about individual connections to place and also about broader family and communal ties. Most importantly, the work for this thesis was about forming and respecting relationships while working together to reach a common goal – to access and tell stories that have been overlooked in the past history of park management.

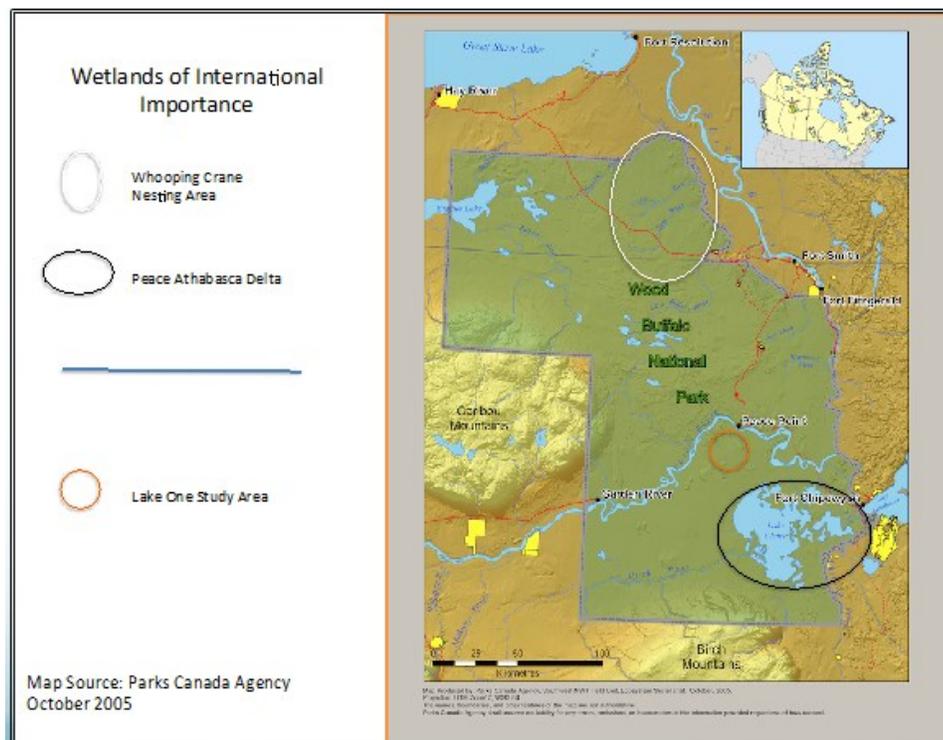
Conducting the study involved three areas of research: I recorded stories and knowledge related to the Lake One Trail by interviewing members of the families who historically travelled the trail. I did research in primary sources and used that information to augment the oral tradition. I worked with a Parks Canada archaeologist and several community members in walking the trail and bridging two knowledge systems in order to map the trail, along with additional trails connected to it within and outside the study area.

What I found was a trail that had been severely damaged by the effects of wildfires. However, by removing the wooded debris and getting through the first layer of fallen timber, I also found a trail that was still very much visible the more time we spent on the ground and through the stories one heard through this process. As Lawrence Cheezie (January 2014) explained, “the trail is well used because of the amount of wildlife in the area. A depression in the ground showed how well used it was.” When Lawrence walked the trail 30-35 years ago he could see a depression. Since then, the ground has been packed down, and the depression has become less visible. The changes in vegetation provide clues to locating the original pathway. The dense physical imprint of the trail is tied to a strong spiritual connection to the Lake One Prairie and to the trail itself through the story of The Little Man. Lawrence recalled the Chipewyan name for this site as *Deneza*, meaning “little

people living in hollow trees” (Lawrence Cheezie 2014). There are numerous stories about the “little people” who provided protection to this place, symbolized physically on the landscape by a carving on a tree stump. At this place, the traveller would stop and visit and show respect by leaving offerings for a safe journey through the country. The visitor asks for assistance or offers gratitude for a successful hunt by paying respect to The Little Man and leaving an offering of value. In return, The Little Man looks after this place, to ensure there is clean and adequate water and abundant natural resources. The Little Man can provide guidance to the people who travel the area but can also do harm if not respected or acknowledged appropriately. In addition to the offering site, there are other landmarks in the study area connected to the story of the “little people” where stories and teachings are shared.

Natural Resources and Wood Buffalo National Park

Map 1.1 Wood Buffalo National Park and Wetland Areas of International Importance



Source: Parks Canada Agency (2005) modified by Peterson

Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) straddles the Alberta – Northwest Territories border. It is predominantly boreal forest with extensive wetlands and prairies. It was established in 1922 to protect the last remaining herds of free roaming bison in Canada. Additional land to the south was annexed in 1926, resulting in a total area of 44, 800 km² (Map 1.1). In 1982, the park's two largest wetlands, the Peace-Athabasca Delta and the whooping crane breeding grounds, were declared Wetlands of International Importance under the RAMSAR convention (Parks Canada 2017a). WBNP has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983, for both biological and geological reasons:

[WBNP]...includes one of the largest free-roaming, self-regulating bison herds in the world, the only remaining nesting ground of the endangered whooping crane, the biologically rich Peace-Athabasca Delta, extensive salt plains unique in Canada, and some of the finest examples of gypsum karst topography in North America [Parks Canada 2017a]¹.

In short, there is significant international recognition of the park's natural resources,² but no formal recognition exists for the historic and contemporary cultural resources of the park.

Aboriginal Use and Occupancy in WBNP

In WBNP, as with the other early Canadian national parks, national interests in wildlife preservation and policy related to threatened and rare wildlife species typically took precedence over more local interests (Sandlos 2007:46-47), despite the fact that the park region had been occupied by humans for thousands of years. WBNP differs from most of the other early national parks in that it allowed, albeit reluctantly, some Aboriginal and

¹ The full UNESCO Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for WBNP is found in Appendix A (UNESCO 1983)

² The integrity of these resources has recently been called into question (UNESCO 2017).

other occupation and use to continue after it was created. Nonetheless, the intimate knowledge that Aboriginal users had of the land and its resources was mostly ignored and not considered relevant to the development of policies for this particular park (McCormack 2010: 245-246). Throughout the first half of the 20th century, WBNP managers hoped to eliminate the human users from the park in order to create a “natural” resource area and wildlife sanctuary, especially for bison, although ultimately they were unsuccessful in evicting all users. During this time, local Aboriginal groups and some white users were subject to the often oppressive forces of the enforcement of park and wildlife regulations and restrictions related to hunting and trapping (Sandlos 2007; Potyondi 1980; McCormack 1984). Many Aboriginal people were also displaced, pushed out of the park during its creation in 1922 and the subsequent annexation of lands in 1926. In addition, hunting and trapping permits were sometimes confiscated when people violated regulations, and some individuals were arrested and sent to jail. These events are documented in various warden reports from the 1920’s through to the 1960’s that are housed in the park headquarters in Fort Smith (also, see McCormack 1984).

Today, the park officials meet a number of times per year with representatives from the various Aboriginal groups as part of the “Aboriginal Committee for the Cooperative Management of Wood Buffalo National Park” (Parks Canada 2018). In addition, over the last 15-20 years, the park has taken steps to include traditional knowledge in various long-term monitoring programs and wildlife surveys, such as moose, bison and whooping crane surveys that now include community members in program planning and in the field counts. For example, the Peace-Athabasca Delta Ecological Monitoring Program (PADEMP) established in 2008 incorporates traditional knowledge related to people’s historic and present uses of the largest inland delta and wetland. It is especially interested in recording

historic flood events and their impacts on the fluctuating muskrat population. This knowledge, usually called traditional or ecological knowledge, is both individual and collective. It was acquired and expanded over time as a result of people's experiences on the land and the stories they heard. Thus, it represents the knowledge of not just the current generation, but also of many generations leading to the present, as stories are passed down from one generation to the next. It involves intimate knowledge of both the cultural and natural resources and their value to both humans and natural ecosystems. Traditional knowledge continues to be important today in providing historical information on natural resources and important ecosystem processes such as flooding and fire, in identifying safe and efficient travel routes, and in recognizing that the Aboriginal human use of resources can support ecosystem objectives.

The Lake One Trail Study Overview

My involvement with WBNP began in 1998 when I was hired as the Cultural Resource Management Advisor for the Southwest NWT Field Unit. I was based in Fort Smith, also the headquarters for WBNP. I am a member of the K'omok's First Nation on Vancouver Island and also have Tahltan and Southern Carrier ancestry through my birth family. When I moved to the NWT to join the Parks Canada team, I found myself in the midst of Dene, Cree, and Métis people. Much of my time was spent working with the various First Nation and Métis groups, which each has a unique history with the park. Part of my job, and of particular interest to me, was helping the park build relationships with these groups and supporting the interest of Aboriginal people in getting out on the land to promote traditional activities. In 2008, with support from my colleagues, we began a series of community workshops to assist us in identifying and documenting important places and

stories in the park with each individual group and establishing the next steps to take. A common topic of discussion with community members was their concern about the condition of traditional overland trails in the park. “People used to cut across country instead of going by river” (Interview, Joe Vermillion 2008).

These historic trails are disappearing, little information is recorded about them, and few have been mapped. Many routes are fading from living memory or have already physically disappeared, especially due to changing land uses, evolving travel technology, and decades of wildfires. Robert Moor’s (2016:2-3) book, *On Trails*, explores the various types of trails in North America and states that with European exploration came the widening of trail segments associated with Indigenous groups, “first to accommodate horses, then wagons, then automobiles.” While much of this trail network is buried, “remnants of the old trail system can still be found when you know where – and how – to look.” The same could be said for the important Métis cart trails in western Canada. In WBNP, there are few individuals today who hold knowledge about these overland trails, and even fewer who have experience travelling on them. The people who once traveled these trails are getting older, and many no longer have the physical stamina to reopen the trails (Pat Marcel, Chipewyan elder, personal communication 2014). With fewer people travelling on the land, the younger generation is not growing up learning about these trails, their family trap lines, or the knowledge associated with them. Economically, trapping, hunting and fishing are no longer viable as a means of full-time support, and most people must supplement land-based activities with other work. Many people have left their community to obtain employment, including jobs related to the oil sands operations south of the park. Some have moved permanently, while others move back and forth through a system of shift rotations.

Many projects proposed by industry are near the park, even encroaching on its borders, with adverse impacts on park lands. Travel into the park, even on traditional trails, is increasingly difficult. Forest fires continue to damage trails and trap lines, yet Parks Canada's mandate emphasizes that "fire is a natural part of the boreal forest ecosystem" (Parks Canada 2013). However, wildfire has very different impacts on park habitats than did the extensive controlled burning that was practiced until it was prohibited in the early 20th century (McCormack 2007, 2010). It is getting more and more difficult for people to maintain a meaningful connection to the lands within the park and to understand and respect the intimate ties this connection brings to Aboriginal culture and "ways of knowing."

Concerns for the overall biological health of the park were expressed in a petition to the UNESCO World Heritage Organization by the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta (MCFN 2014). The park and Fort Chipewyan are both located just downstream from existing and planned hydroelectric and oil sands development projects on the Athabasca and Peace Rivers. The petition expressed concern about the integrity of the park's ecological values, especially those listed as the criteria for its current world heritage designation, and proposed that these resources are currently being threatened within the park and its landscapes.³ MCFN proposed that WBNP be added to the "List of World Heritage in Danger" (UNESCO n.d.).

The research I conducted was exploratory, a pilot project to help us understand how we can study historic overland trails in the park and what can still be learned about them. It

³ A site must meet at least one of ten criteria to be considered for the World Heritage List. Criteria 1(i) – 6(vi) reflect a site's cultural values and criteria 7 (vii) – 10 (x) reflect natural values (UNESCO 2017b). WBNP is designated a World Heritage Site under three criteria (7, 9 and 10), each representing natural values (UNESCO 1983).

speaks to their links to both the larger network of trails and to the Aboriginal occupancy of the broader region and the cultural landscapes that Aboriginal Peoples created there, all indicating significant cultural values. With these points in mind, there were four primary objectives for my research.

The first objective was to document the Lake One Trail in WBNP by using the memories of those alive today to identify who travelled the trail, as well as how, when, and for what purposes. This work was done both by conducting formal interviews and by taking interviewees to revisit the trail itself. In doing so, the trail became a medium to help to elicit memories, tell stories, identify places, and understand how trails connect both the past and present uses of the study area to its Aboriginal users. The second objective was to develop a research process to study this trail. It focused on working with local people to re-open and re-connect to the trail. The third objective was to describe the Lake One Trail's contribution to the broader cultural landscape of the Lake One or Egg Lake region that Aboriginal people created, using the concepts of "landscape" as a cultural construct in relation to "place." I was especially interested in what trails can tell us about the cultural heritage and values of the park that may have been overlooked in the past and even today. The fourth objective was to develop a basis for a new UNESCO statement that includes both cultural and natural resource values. Today, the Lake One Trail is part of Group Trapping Area (GTA) 1209.⁴ It

⁴ A system of group trapping areas (GTA) was introduced along with the park's new game regulations in November 1949. One region was also turned into individual trap lines. They were established for conservation reasons and for the "trappers financial security" (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 2007). "Trapping areas were consolidated into 'Group Trapping Areas' and members of these groups were given influence over decisions affecting their area" (Notzke 1994: 246). Individuals, or in some cases a group of individuals, obtained a "certificate of registration" for a trapping area within the park. As a result, some trap lines were organized by family groups and/or local bands restricted to trap within their own group areas, unless permission was granted by the leader of another GTA in which they wanted to trap (see McCormack 1984).

lies within what was called the “new park,” the lands annexed in 1926 to the original park lands.⁵ It is used primarily by three local families: the Cheezie, Vermillion and Simpson families. I worked closely with individuals from these families who had used the trail and shared historical connections to the study area. As part of the collaboration, a segment of the Lake One Trail was cleared at its northern end, and I had the opportunity to walk the trail with family members and a Parks Canada archaeologist, Donalee Deck. Historic movements were recounted in the stories and recollections that have been passed down to present day trappers from their parents and grandparents. There are also records from explorers, surveyors, fur traders and geologists who travelled through the broader region (e.g., Hearne 1958; Raup 1935; Soper 1937). Together, the archaeological record, oral traditions, and other documentary evidence allowed us to glimpse an earlier time and talk about the Aboriginal people who came together in the Lake One Study Area.

The project emerged through seven phases: identifying existing information, working with community members to choose a trail to be studied, reviewing primary and archival materials, conducting interviews, clearing a section of the trail, walking the trail with two knowledge holders and surveying for archaeological features (done simultaneously), and analyzing the results. Table 1.1 shows the chronology associated with each phase of the project. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the research methods involved for each phase.

⁵ Between 1925 -28 over 6000 bison were shipped by rail to waterways and by barge downriver to the newly established park. However, by the winter of 1925-26, plains bison left the park, crossing the Peace River to feed on the lush meadows of the Lake Claire area, and the park was enlarged to afford them protection (McCormack 1984:140; Raup 1933:17; Rowan 1929:359; Leising 1959:66; Ogilvie 1979:47).

Terminology

In Canada, the term “Indigenous” has become more widely accepted and often is used as an alternative to the term “Aboriginal” when referring to First Nation, Inuit, and/or Métis people in general. For this thesis, I use the term Aboriginal, which at the time of this research (and even now) was widely accepted in the local communities.

I also use the term “First Nation” in place of “Indian” or “Native,” when referring to a specific Aboriginal group today. When possible, I use their specific names: Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) or the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN).

Thesis Overview

The thesis is organized by the following chapters. **Chapter Two** outlines the research methods used for the seven project phases. **Chapters Three and Four** provide background information about the park. Chapter Three offers a description of the evolving natural landscape, while Chapter Four provides a glimpse of the human history as it related to these changes and the cultural setting of the study area and the region. **Chapter Five** introduces the knowledge holders and their family connections to the Lake One Trail and Prairie and the collaborative work done with them. **Chapter Six** shares what was learned about the Lake One Trail and Prairie during the on-the-land activities. **Chapter Seven** contains a detailed description of the trail and the natural and cultural resources that help to provide an understanding of the importance of the Lake One Trail along with the stories and knowledge connected to them. This overview takes into account the seasonal round of Aboriginal users. **Chapter Eight** addresses the broader trail networks in the region and discusses the findings from WBNP in the broader context of other known trail studies in

Canada. **Chapter Nine** is about the Aboriginal landscapes in WBNP and how trails can play a role in documenting and understanding these landscapes. This information can contribute to future understanding about the park values, to include both the ecological and cultural importance of the study area. It offers a new commemorative intent statement as a more balanced approach, one that is inclusive of the cultural values and heritage of the national park. These may then be recognized and updated in the current World Heritage Site designation. **Chapter Ten** is a summary chapter with some final thoughts on lessons learned and concluding remarks, and it also provides recommendations for future work related to reconciliation.

Chapter 2 Research Methods

This chapter explains the methods and procedures followed for each phase of the research (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Phases of Research Project

| | Phases | Chronology |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Review existing information | June – September 2013 |
| 2 | Select the trail & identify the study area | September – November 2013 |
| 3 | Conduct primary document search | September – December 2013 |
| 4 | Conduct interviews | November 2013– May 2014 |
| 5 | Clear trail | Phase one: Feb – March 2014 |
| | | Phase two: May – June 2014 |
| 6 | Walk the trail with knowledge holders and archaeologist | October 3-9, 2014 |
| 7 | Do analysis | January – April 2015 |

The fundamental approach was community-based research, working in collaboration with local Cree and Chipewyan people, which meant engaging with knowledgeable and skilled members of the community from the inception of the project. A result of this approach is that many of the findings associated with the trail came directly from the participants' experiences and recollections that were documented both on and off the trail. The extent to which this collaboration was achieved varied among the participants and during each stage of the research process. Preliminary discussions helped to inform the methodology of the project in an iterative manner. It was supported by additional components from a literature

review of primary and secondary sources. The multiple methods provided a strong basis from which to plan and coordinate the trail clearing and trail survey and then to develop an analysis.

Phase 1 Review Existing Information

The first phase of the project involved laying the groundwork to gain an understanding of the trail networks in WBNP past and present and to plan the research project. This was achieved by researching and collecting materials in the park headquarters at Fort Smith and by doing preliminary community consultation. This phase began with one-on-one discussions with my thesis supervisor, fellow park staff, and community members. Each discussion included mention of specific trails, and I subsequently searched available park records, historic maps, and photographs in the Fort Smith office to identify the documentary record available for each trail. WBNP headquarters has an extensive library, as well as internal files and government correspondence. Most valuable to me were warden reports dating from the 1920's through to the present. These reports, especially the earliest ones, documented park warden interactions with local trappers in relation to their harvesting of resources. They are grouped together in the references under "WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith."

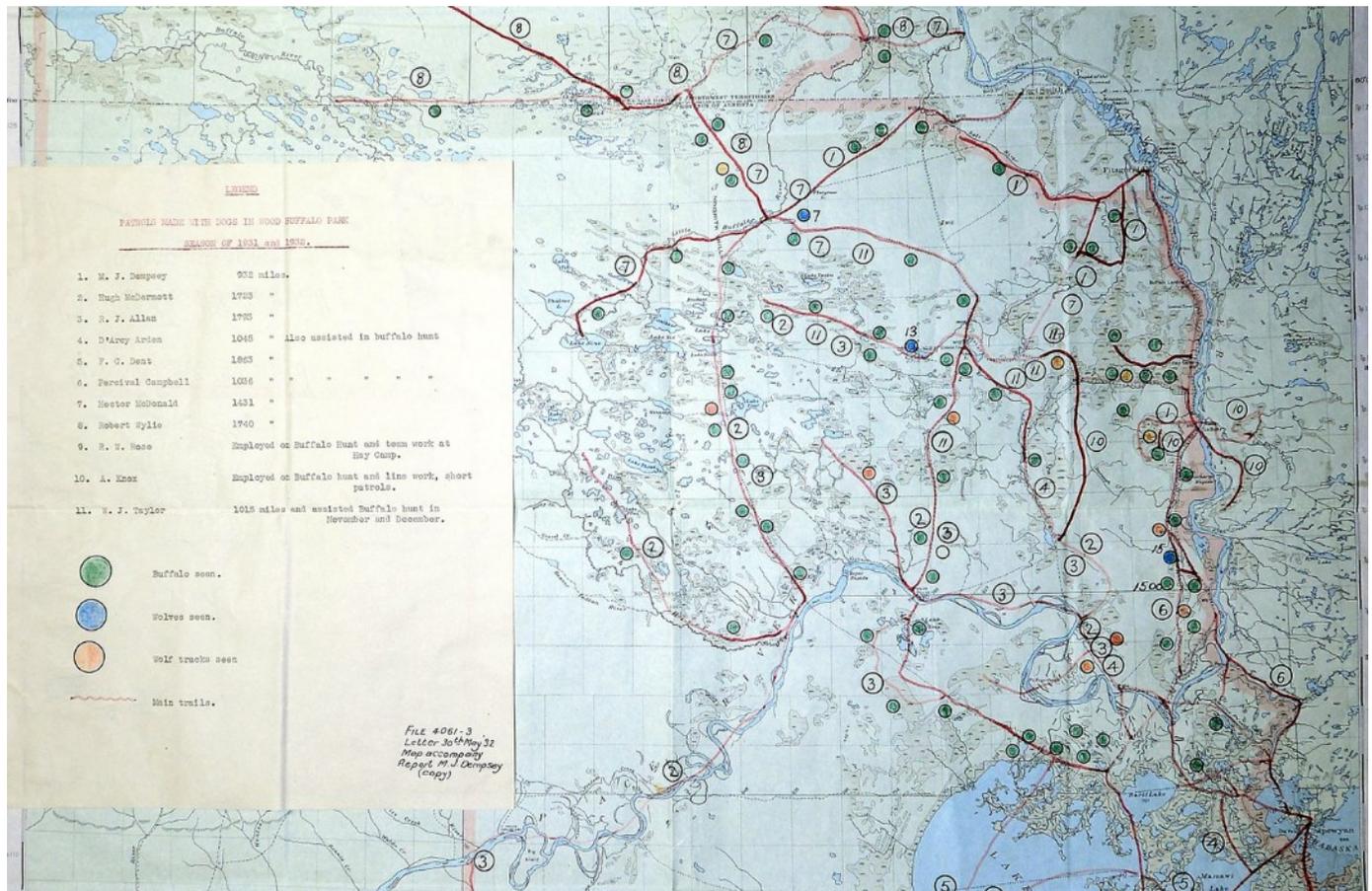
One of the key sources of information was a 1931 map (Map 2.1) held by the park that was hand-annotated to show 11 park warden dog team patrol routes marked as "buffalo ranger trails": "Patrols made with Dogs in Wood Buffalo Park, Season of 1931 and 1932" (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 1931). Later, a digital version of the base map was located at the University of Alberta (Department of Interior, Topographical Survey of Canada 1931). Wardens documented their distances during the 1931-32 winter patrols run

by dog team in the park. The sketched trails were considered main trails and provided the distances covered by patrols and information on where bison and wolf tracks were seen during the patrols. This map accompanied a report written by Chief Warden M.J. Dempsey to his superiors dated May 30th, 1932.

Matthew Whitehead, then a park employee and a member of Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN), wrote a report titled "Trails Inventory" (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 1989). The document includes a number of trails in the park that were drawn on photocopied sections of 1:50 topographic maps. While working for the park as a patrolman, Whitehead was tasked with documenting access routes and trails used by the wardens. The trails he recorded were all located in areas north of the Peace River and so were not directly relevant to the Lake One Trail and study area. However, included in Whitehead's inventory is an outline of the park boundary and dotted locations of all the trapper cabins existing at the time, including those south of Peace River, and cabins presume trails. The cabins are not named, and their precise locations are not clear on the map.

In the basement of the park administration office, I came across an extensive air photo collection for WBNP, with the earliest aerial photos of the Lake One Study Area dating back to 1945, 1955, 1966, and 1975 (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith). These photos were taken to map the natural resources of the park, as well as to create a record of the resources and landscape of the park that could be used to monitor vegetation change over time. The 1975 black and white and infrared air photos provided full coverage of the park at a scale of 1:60,000. These transects were taken using flight lines running in an east-west pattern across the width of the park. Photos were taken at specific intervals to give complete coverage of the park geography. There were also provincial air photo library websites

Map 2.1 Detail of 1931 Map Showing Winter Patrols Made with Dogs in Wood Buffalo Park, 1931-32



Source: WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 1932

containing digital photographs of the park from 1955 and 1988. Some of these photos were overexposed and difficult to interpret or had similar dates to the air photos I obtained from the park headquarters and were not used (Government of Alberta 1955; 1970; 1979; 1988). Others showed clear coverage of the cat trail sections, or as shown in Photo 2.1, the cleared area where the Simpson cabins are located on the Peace River (Deck 2017:16).

Photo 2.1 Close-up of Simpson Homestead and 30th Meridian Trail on 1955 air photo



Source: Deck 2017:16 based on a 1950 map by the Government of Alberta

Barry Potyondi's three-volume report (1979; 1980; 1981) interprets the administrative history of the park, including events leading up to its creation. This work provides context on the evolution of the park administration rather than direct information on trails. He touched on the fur trade impacts on the management of the park, including its influence on policy making, wildlife regulations and permitting leading up to 1965. As an internal document prepared for Parks Canada, Potyondi identified historical references and archival material most relevant to the parks administrative history that highlighted the

park's conflicting mandate between conservation of resources and northern economic development. Patricia McCormack's Ph.D. thesis (1984) provided a detailed examination of the cultural changes that took place in the Fort Chipewyan region, particularly in the nineteenth and 20th centuries. It provided a timeline of events leading up to the creation of WBNP as part of the "expansion of the Canadian State in the north" and the effects on the people who lived in the region. In the thesis and later article (1992) McCormack outlined the history of bison management in WBNP. She divided the history into four bison management periods extending over a period of 60 years and also pointed out that many of the management decisions reflected the current mindset of the day and the dual mandate of the park, which focused on economic development *and* wildlife conservation. Later, McCormack wrote two ethnohistories, one for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (2012) and one for Mikisew Cree First Nation (2010). Each provides a chronological historical overview beginning with the archaeological record, Aboriginal involvement in the fur trade, and government influences in the north region, leading up to the present day.

At the time of my study, traditional land use studies had been conducted by four Aboriginal groups in the vicinity of: the Katlodeeche First Nation in the NWT (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2008), Smith's Landing First Nation (2008) Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (Tanner and Rigney 2003; ACFN 2003) and the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN 2004) in northern Alberta. There is also a small number of Aboriginal traditional knowledge reports specific to the national park written in the 1980s and 1990s and housed in the park office in Fort Smith. Many of these were for areas north of the Peace River and were not directly relevant to the study area.⁶ However, more recent traditional

⁶ They include a traditional knowledge report written in 1986 by Francois Paulette (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 1986); an Elder's workshop summary titled, Traditional

knowledge studies conducted in the last 10-15 years have included portions of the park south of the Peace River. Collectively, these studies provide extensive background on the history of the Chipewyan and Cree people within the region of WBNP and northern Alberta, though I did not locate specific information for my study area. However, they document the extent of Aboriginal traditional territories and the idea of traveling great distances by foot, dog team, and watercraft.

The Dene Nation in the NWT conducted a traditional land use and occupancy study between 1974 and 1983. The project documented trails for all the Dene communities in the NWT in the 1970's and 1980's as part of the traditional use study and included parts of northern Alberta situated in WBNP. I wrote to the Dene National Assembly in Yellowknife requesting access. The Dene National Chief suggested that I contact the Aboriginal groups directly in Fort Smith and Fort Fitzgerald to obtain permission to access the maps and data specifically relevant to the Lake One Study Area. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain their consent in a timely manner and unable to travel to Yellowknife to view the maps. This collection of maps is housed at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, NWT.

Last but not least, I contacted the Provincial Archaeological Association of Alberta, where I obtained a copy of existing archaeological site data in and near the study area, including those sites bordering the boundary of WBNP in the northern region of Alberta.

Knowledge Study Project, Group Trapping Area 1210-1212, January 24-25, 1996 (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 1997b); Sweetgrass oral history project (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 1996); and "Traditional knowledge and History of Dene use in the area of Wood Buffalo National Park December 1996 – March 1997" by Salt River First Nation #195 (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 1997a).

However, most of the sites shown within the park boundary were the same as those listed in the park database, and none of these was useful.

Phase 2 Select the Trail and Study Area

During the process of reviewing existing information and the initial primary search, I had reached out to knowledgeable community members about possible trails to document, about who might have information about these trails, and about who would be interested and willing to work on this project. Site selection and research involved close collaboration with local Aboriginal people. As a researcher who also worked for WBNP, it was important to me to develop a collaborative approach to the research. I started by asking elders and others in the community about their knowledge of trails in the park and to identify trails that were important to them. It was especially important to identify individuals who used the trails both past and present. Chapter 5, “Engaging with Community Members,” expands on the community-based research. This community engagement was key in identifying one trail and region for the study, out of all the trails that existed. Community members identified different types of trails and often shared information about their locations and how to access them. That contributed to an understanding about how the trails fit into the larger region and cultural landscape. I continued to collaborate over the course of the study with some of the same individuals who were initially approached. They provided guidance and support throughout the different stages of the research project.

Once the Lake One Trail was chosen, a second and more specific search was conducted for primary documents, and community members who had specific knowledge of the trail were identified, then contacted for an interview.

Phase 3 Search for Primary Documents

In the fall of 2013, after having identifying the Lake One Trail for study, I visited the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. It houses the field notebooks of employees working as Dominion and Alberta Land Surveyors, initially working for the Department of the Interior, who conducted block surveys in the region of the park. They include detailed information about the vegetation and landscape features within each quadrant and range identified using the township system. Most if not all the illustrations show at least one “pack trail or old Indian trail.” One in particular, recorded by James Allan Fletcher in 1916, identifies the settlement at Peace Point on the north side of the Peace River and a “pack trail” connecting Peace Point with other places along the north side of the river while also crossing at least two “Indian Trails.” Fletcher described the area as “Gently rolling country, small poplar and willows with a few scattered poplar,” which dates to six years before the park was established (PAA, Fletcher 1916:51).

At the Provincial Archives of Alberta I located 19 maps that dated as far back as 1887 that showed wooded and prairie tracts in the region that later became northern Alberta and the present-day NWT. Along with highlighting geological and natural resources of the region, many show different types of trails (often wagon or pack trails, but also winter roads/trails and portages) and built features that include ranger cabins and fire towers in the park. The earlier maps have numbered lakes rather than names.

Two maps (PAA, GR1978.0191, item 193; GR1984.0111, item 50) dated 1929 and 1982 respectively, showed the same geographic area (84P) on a 1:250,000 map sheet. The earlier 1929 map in particular showed numerous trails and wagon roads in the park, especially in the northern sections of the park (see Appendix G). Both maps showed the 30th Meridian

Base Line trail.⁷ This was another important trail for traditional use within the study area. Two other maps from 1923 (adapted from a 1921 base map) and 1941 show Peace Point, Lake One, the 30th Meridian Base Line, and other trails, including a winter trail between the Peace River and Lake Claire (PAA, PR1971.0364, item 12 and GR1974.0437, item 69).

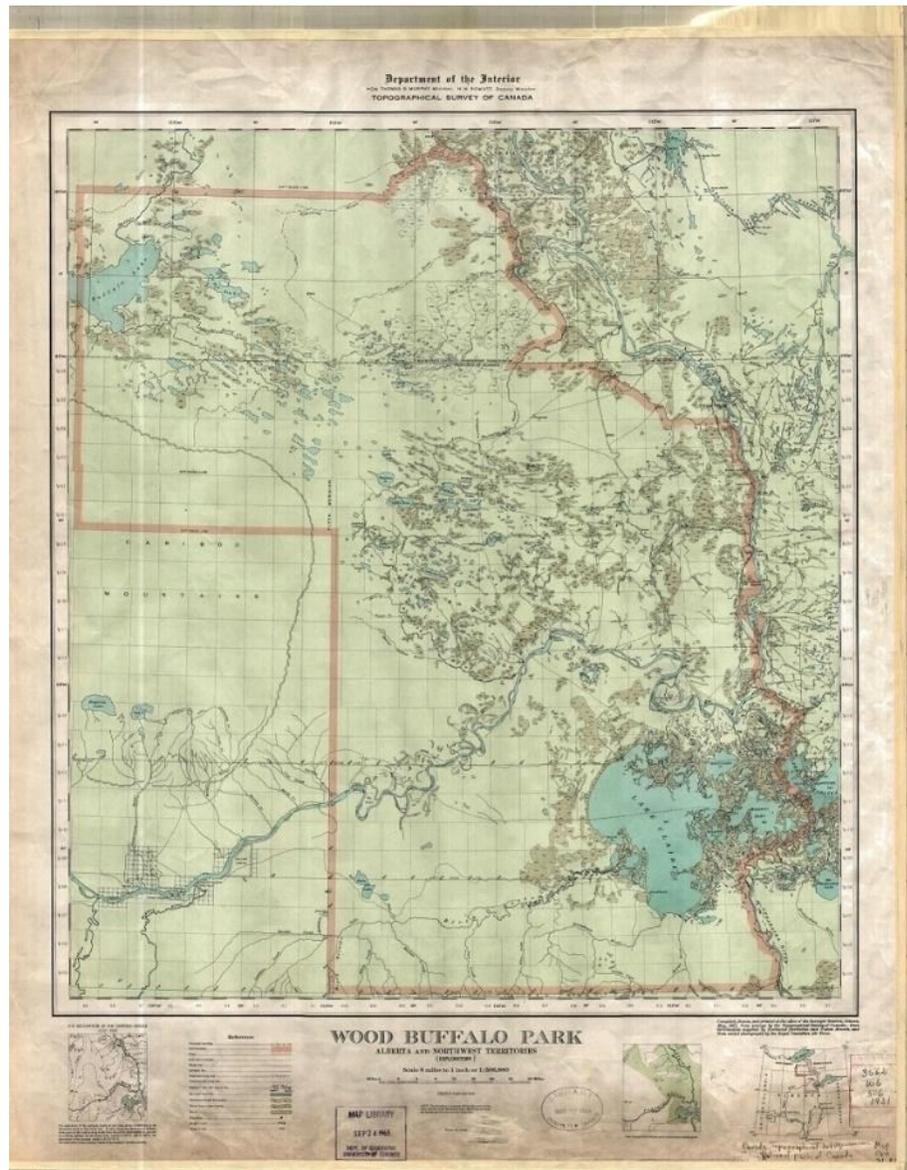
I reviewed maps at the University of Alberta (William C. Wonders Map Collection, Cameron Library), where I located a 1931 map from the Department of the Interior titled “Wood Buffalo Park” (Topographical Survey of Canada 1931) (see Map 2.2 below). It is this map that I had found in the Fort Smith park office hand-annotated with winter patrol information. The map clearly shows the entire park boundary and provides an overview of the landscape, naming rivers, creeks, the larger lakes and even marshy areas. Communities are named, including Peace Point. It marks ranger cabin locations that are connected to main roads, pack and winter trails, and/or portages.

A search was conducted in the Métis Archival Project Lab map collection at the Faculty of Native Studies at University of Alberta. It contains a number of maps of northern Alberta on microfiche from 1887 leading up to the creation of the national park in the early 1920s. However, I was not successful in locating any maps specific to my area of study.⁸

⁷ The 30th Meridian Base Line trail is one of many surveyed lines that were used to map out the country and divide it into ranges and meridians. Together with ranges, they provide a geographical grid for provincial lands.

⁸ This collection contains some maps of WBNP and northern Alberta, but they did not show specific details of the study area.

Map 2.2 Wood Buffalo Park 1931



Source: Canada Office of the Surveyor General, 1931. *Wood Buffalo Park, Alberta and Northwest Territories Canada (exploratory)*. Scale 1:506,880. Ottawa: Canada Dept. of the Interior Topographical Survey.

In 2004, WBNP hired a contractor (Joan Holmes & Associates, Ottawa) to identify maps in Library and Archives of Canada (LAC) that showed historic Aboriginal settlement and land use in WBNP. The result was a photocopy collection of 36 maps. Most were

related to areas of the park north of the Peace River and not specific to the study area, but many did provide brief descriptions of other trails in the park. For example, a 1909 sketch map (see Appendix G) drawn by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (RNWMP) showed their patrol route on the north side of the Peace River, a portion of which was described as “an old hunting trail that had not been used in three years” (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2004).

Described as difficult to traverse, the trail followed high ground and occasionally old bison trails. The accompanying report by Constable G. C. Bates to the commanding officer mentioned traditional camps and names of individuals encountered along the trail and what they were doing. Place names for lakes, ponds, hills and ridges were noted on the map, as well as burial sites. The map described some trails travelled by local people, how they were travelled, and the time it took to travel them.

The most relevant map within the area of new park is from 1926 (Map 2.3).⁹ The map shows a trail leading directly south from the Peace River at Peace Point through the Lake One Study Area and ending just south of Lake One Prairie. It also shows the 30th Meridian Base Line trail on the south side of the Peace River and other trails on the north side of the Peace River that lead east towards the Slave River.

The 30th Meridian Base Line trail is also shown on a 1927 map titled “Preliminary map of southern portion of Wood Buffalo Park” (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2004), along with a “pack trail” from Peace Point to Salt River (north of the Peace River). On this map, Lake One Prairie appears to be called Hay Slough, with a description of “spruce and

⁹ This 1926 map is annotated on the same 1921 base map as the 1923 map located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PR1971.0364, item 12).

tamarack, muskeg with hay sloughs separated by ridges of spruce and poplar” (see Appendix G).

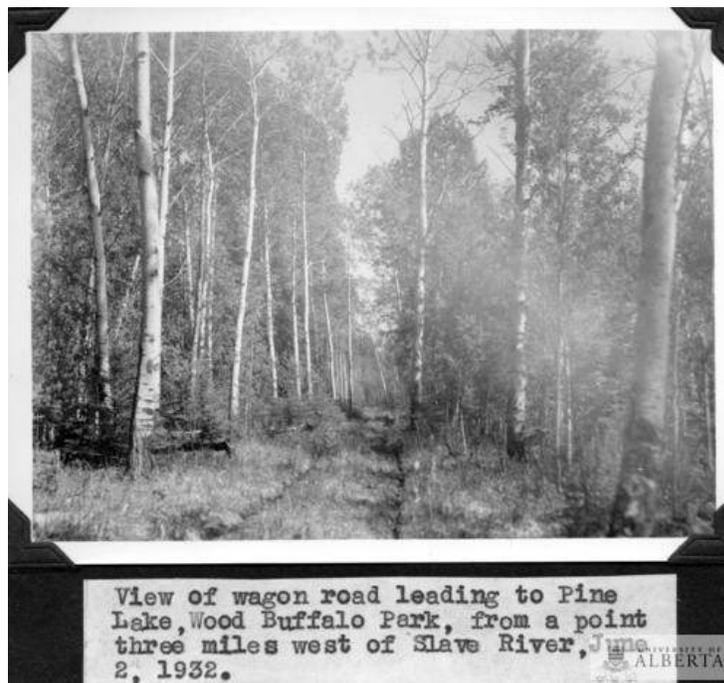
The same May 1931 base map (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2004) of the park showed trading posts then in operation and Aboriginal settlement locations (LAC, RG 85, v.152, file 420-2, Vol. 2; LAC, RG 85, v.345, file 46). Many of these maps, both topographic and sketch maps, show Peace Point along the Peace River and the trail between Peace Point and Pine Lake, but they do not give much detail for the Lake One Study Area.

Along with the maps, I conducted a brief search for photos. While the Provincial Archives of Alberta has several photos from Fort Chipewyan I did not locate any photos relevant to my study area.

I also researched historic photos in several other repositories on-line. There are many photos from the mid 1920's to the late 1930's, including 500 photos from the J. Dewey Soper Fonds at the University of Alberta Archives taken during his two-year faunal investigations in the park between 1932 and 1934 (UAA, Soper 1934). His photos include buildings and structures in the park such as park warden cabins and fire towers, topographical features, roads, trails and wildlife. These black and white photos (along with the journals) are useful for the amount of information they provide related to the early infrastructure of the park, such as the condition and location of the warden cabins, how they were built and the materials used. I was most interested in the photos taken showing various dog team, pack and wagon trails, as well as photos along the Peace and Jackfish Rivers depicting Aboriginal camps and activities. Soper spent much time travelling in the winter and summer months with park wardens, which is reflected in the number of photos of winter trapping trails, trapping activities, sled dogs, portage trails, the wagon road to Pine Lake, and well-worn bison trails. It is difficult to determine the exact location in the park of

most of the photos. However, they provide an indication of how people moved on the land and some of the differences between a pack trail,¹⁰ a wagon road and a dog team trail in WBNP. There were a few photos of spring and temporary camps, including trapper cabins and how they fit into the surrounding landscape.

Photo 2.2 Wagon Road to Pine Lake, WBNP



Source: UAA, Soper 79-21-35-266

¹⁰ A pack trail is defined as a trail widened by “white man” to cut the Base Line (such as the 30th Meridian Base Line) and used mainly by pack horses carrying heavy equipment (Lawrence Vermillion, personal communication, 3 May 2018).

Wood Buffalo Park was also included in a 1937 report written by J. Dewey Soper for the Department of Mines and Resources, summarizing the history, resources, population and administration of Canada's northern territories, based on Soper's two-year investigation (1937). An earlier article written by Maxwell Graham with nine other people, provided observations of the newly formed "Wood Buffalo Park" (the original name of the park) in 1923. It included a description of the buffalo, their habitat, range and threats, along with the flora and fauna of the park. Of particular interest was the reference to buffalo trails, including their extensive network in the park and their use as pack trails for warden activities (Graham 1923).

Photo 2.3 Dog Team Trail in WBNP (1932)



Source: UAA, Soper 79-21-35-418

Phase 4 Conduct Interviews

An important aspect of data collection was conducting formal and informal interviews with nine people. Five were representatives from the Cheezie, Simpson and Vermillion families. I had already contacted the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) to inform it of the project, as the study area is located within the traditional territory of its members. Most of the individuals with whom I worked with were also members of Group Trapping Area (GTA) 1209 in WBNP, which includes the study area. I tried to involve both men and women, but for a variety of reasons it was mostly men who were able to participate in this research. After initial contact with the group trapping area leader to inform him of the project proposal, I followed up with a formal letter that included a two-page project description and information sheet (Appendix B). The information sheet was given to each of the participants and interviewees to introduce them to the project. The other people interviewed were not members of the GTA but had a connection to and knowledge about the Lake One Trail. All of the interviewees agreed to be identified by name. A list of project interviewees and additional participants is included in Chapter 5 in Table 5.1. In addition, I transcribed and reviewed an earlier interview with Archie Simpson, the father of Charlie Simpson. Charlie gave me a copy of this audiotaped interview, which I returned to him along with a printed transcript and digitized version.

I contacted individuals by phone to introduce the trail project and to set up the interviews. I had previously interviewed some of the participants for other park-related projects and had met one interviewee while taking his snowshoe-making course in Fort Smith in the fall of 2013. I then asked to meet with them in person to explain the project in more detail and to conduct an interview. Most of the interviews took place in the home of

the person being interviewed, with a few exceptions. One person was interviewed at his place of work, one at the WBNP office in Fort Chipewyan, and one at Peace Point in the interviewee's cabin during the field survey. One interview took place at the Fort Smith Health Centre while the elder was waiting to move into the local senior's home. Each interview lasted from fifty minutes to one and a half hours.

All participants signed consent forms prior to their involvement in the research project (Appendix C). The consent forms were reviewed in detail with each individual. All participants spoke English.

I prepared a list of open-ended questions that served as an interview guide while conducting the interviews (Appendix D). This guide allowed some flexibility on the order in which the questions were asked. Each interview began with questions related to background information about the interviewee, including his or her full name, birthdate, birthplace, mother's and father's names, places of residence, marriage and education. Other questions related to how the trail was used, personal and family connections to the trail, personal and collective experiences and stories associated with the trail, spiritual connections to the trail and study area, and how the use of the trail had changed over time. There were specific questions to determine the interviewee's connection to the trail, such as: When did he travel on the trail and for what reasons? How did he travel and what types of activities did he do on the trail, and where were these activities located? Were there other names for the trail? I also asked about how decisions were made while traveling on the trail and how knowledge about the trail was/is passed on to younger generations. In short, I was interested in documenting the fullness of the individual's direct experience of travelling on the trail and the knowledge and stories about the trail that had been passed down from parents and grandparents. The narratives provided gave voice to a shared history of the

park and provided an opportunity to empower local community members to tell their stories. An unexpected outcome was that general discussions about this project with members of other WBNP Aboriginal groups prompted feedback and the sharing of information about other trails in the park.

As the project unfolded, it became apparent to me that the process of engagement was essential in soliciting stories related to the trail. By working together from the onset of the research project, I wanted to gain a better understand how the community may benefit from the research and most importantly, how it will be relevant and accessible. Luke Lassiter (2005: 82) identifies three main research principles that I endeavored to follow: to publish results in a timely manner, to ensure results are reader-friendly, to make results accessible to the community.

Lassiter (2005) also suggests a “reciprocal ethnography” when working with First Nations that emphasizes a collaborative approach to the writing process. The nature of this collaboration is a back and forth dialogue that may take more time but is intended to promote greater understanding and develop richer outcomes including that of stronger working relationships. It involves working side-by-side, which can go a long way to help alleviate power imbalances.

Today, there is greater emphasis on building relationships for research that is by and for First Nations, as opposed to research on First Nations. During the research and the transcription process of this study, I was guided by collaborative approaches described by Lassiter, who reflected on the role of the “informant.” Successful collaboration requires meaningful dialogue and on-going exchange between the ethnographer and the knowledge holders. It starts with the design of the project, incorporates the communities’ needs, and ensures that these continue to be represented in the developing text (2005:5-7). This

research required great flexibility to respect the needs and views of the First Nation community and to be able to engage with the participants long and often enough to build a relationship with each person. Logistically, this was challenging, because the participants and informants lived in both Fort Chipewyan and Fort Smith. I lived in Fort Smith and travelled to Fort Chipewyan to conduct interviews and to review draft transcripts. I took numerous trips to Peace Point to follow-up on the trail clearing and to visit with a knowledge holder at his cabin on the Peace River. The distance of travel contributed to the challenge of providing post-interview drafts of the interviewee transcripts and maps, and to review the transcripts with each individual. It often took several weeks to do so. However, it allowed me to connect to each participant and to build working relationships, thus promoting relationship building, acknowledging power imbalances, encouraging and keeping participation, influencing change and developing reliable and credible results (Grant et al. 2008: 5).

Acknowledging power imbalances meant talking freely and openly with Aboriginal participants about the individual and/or the collective relationship between the human community and the park, both in the past and present, including good and bad experiences. Using a collaborative approach meant respecting the visions and interests of community members so that the results would benefit the community in some manner. The nature of this collaboration during the interview process was a back and forth dialogue that took more time and required greater flexibility in planning both interviews and activities on the land. This approach continued from phase two to all later phases. As a result, it took longer than expected to complete the phases of the research, but it also allowed for greater understanding between the informants and the researcher. The degree of collaboration

varied with participants, but the overall intent was to ensure the research was relevant and representative of the community and that the results reflected local cultural perspectives.

Interviews with knowledge holders were conducted in advance of the field survey to begin to understand what they knew about the trail and the relationships their families had with it over their lifetimes. In turn, this information helped develop the project objectives and scope of the field survey in an iterative manner. Maps of the study area became an invaluable tool to reference during the discussion, as they helped to re-acquaint the elders and to introduce me to the trail. They provided a platform we could all use to understand or interpret what was being asked and shared. A current 1:50,000 topographic map sheet of the study area was used as a reference and focal point for the discussion in each interview. Interviewees mapped the Lake One Trail and other trails that lead to specific harvesting and fishing locations, cabin and tent camp locations, spiritual sites and picnic sites. The maps were an effective interview tool to stimulate interest, memory and dialogue. As a result, the interview collected information similar to a highly focused traditional land-use study for the study area. Each person agreed to have the interview digitally recorded, and most had their photos taken. They also had the opportunity to review and edit the draft transcript and interview notes before receiving a final hard copy. In transcribing interviews, I strived for clarification of content and interpretation of meaning before providing the interviewee with a final copy of their transcript.

I offered a pouch of tobacco or braid of sweetgrass and a small honorarium to each interviewee in appreciation of the person's time and sharing of knowledge. I also followed up with specific requests from interviewees to provide them with a copy of a park map, scans of particular photos, or digitized copies of previously recorded interviews. A final copy of the thesis will also be given to each interviewee.

Phase 5 Clear the Trail

Going out on the land and experiencing the trail allowed us to build on this information and fill in missing information or more detail about the trail. The more time we spent on the trail itself, the more I realized that interviews alone were not enough. But, to travel on the trail required first that the trail be cleared, though I little appreciated how difficult a task this would prove.

The logistics of trail clearing in an isolated area of the park posed major challenges. This research method can be considered a land-based intervention that involved looking at the land through the knowledge of individuals in the community as well as members of the group trapping area and locating the trail physically. It was difficult to find individuals available in the community who had the skills and interest in trail clearing. Those who did tended to be employed or otherwise not available.

Nonetheless, Park Warden Leslie Wiltzen, informed me that Clifford Antoine was living at Peace Point at the time, had knowledge of the Lake One Trail and was interested in the job of trail clearing. In January of 2014, Clifford tackled the first 400 meters of trail between the south bank of the Peace River to the end of the stand of old spruce, where the effects of the forest fire is first shown along the trail. I was able to pay him with funds from the Canadian Circumpolar Institute.

Unfortunately, he was not able to continue past this point. Subsequently, I was lucky to hire two local Métis brothers, Curtis and Tom Bourke, who continued to re-open the trail. Once these individuals were identified, together we discussed the purpose of the trail clearing and developed a plan to divide the trail clearing into two phases. The first phase of trail clearing occurred by skidoo during the winter months, with a focus on the beginning

Photo 2.4 Clearing the Cat Road, March 2014

Source: L. Peterson

of the trail in order to gain access into the Lake One Prairie. This section was also a “cat road” that partially followed an older traditional sled/walking trail. A “cat road or trail” means it was a trail or road widened with a machine known as a “cat,” short for Caterpillar. Cat roads are usually straight, which allowed other types of snow machines or trucks to travel on the trail and carry supplies and equipment. The cat trails were made in this locality in 1945 and 1965 as part of park administration of bison. This section of the trail was relatively easy to locate, as it was wider and more visible than other sections of the trail made only by dog team or skidoo. The Bourke brothers cleared approximately six kilometers of trail, from the Simpson Homestead to the Lake One Prairie, as shown as the

red GPS track line on the map in Map 2.4.¹¹ It took them about two weeks, or approximately half a kilometer per day. Curtis carried a Global Positioning System device (GPS) on the trail. He left the track log running to collect way points every 100 meters, which were then plotted on a topographic map. These markers helped to track the work and identified the distance and amount of time it took to clear sections of the trail. In hindsight, winter was not the best time to open up a trail; Curtis and Tom were only able to clear the top layer of deadfall when they brushed out the trail because of the amount of snow accumulation. The second phase of the trail clearing occurred in the spring after the snow melted, to clear the deadfall that was under the snow. This required an additional 14 days. More details are provided in Chapter 5. This phase was again led by Curtis, this time accompanied by his wife Lois and her brother Durwin Courtoreille.

During phase one, approximately 50-75% of the trail was cleared to Lake One Prairie following the 1965 cat trail and a dog team trail. The trail clearing also had other benefits. It provided a sense of the state or condition of the trail, identified major impacts to the trail, demonstrated the challenges related to trail clearing in winter and summer, and allowed me to collect traditional knowledge about trail clearing and navigating the trail, such as features to look for (e.g., changes in vegetation, landmarks, trail markings).

Besides relocating and re-establishing a section of the trail, the trail clearing facilitated *talking* about the trail with others. This introduced me to the trail and allowed me to get personal experience with the trail. I skidooed the cleared section of trail once with Curtis and Tom, an experience which complemented the trail knowledge I had gained from

¹¹ Global Positioning System (GPS) is a navigation system that uses satellite signals from space to determine the exact location of the user on the earth's surface through a series of points that can map out a route or measure the distance between points.

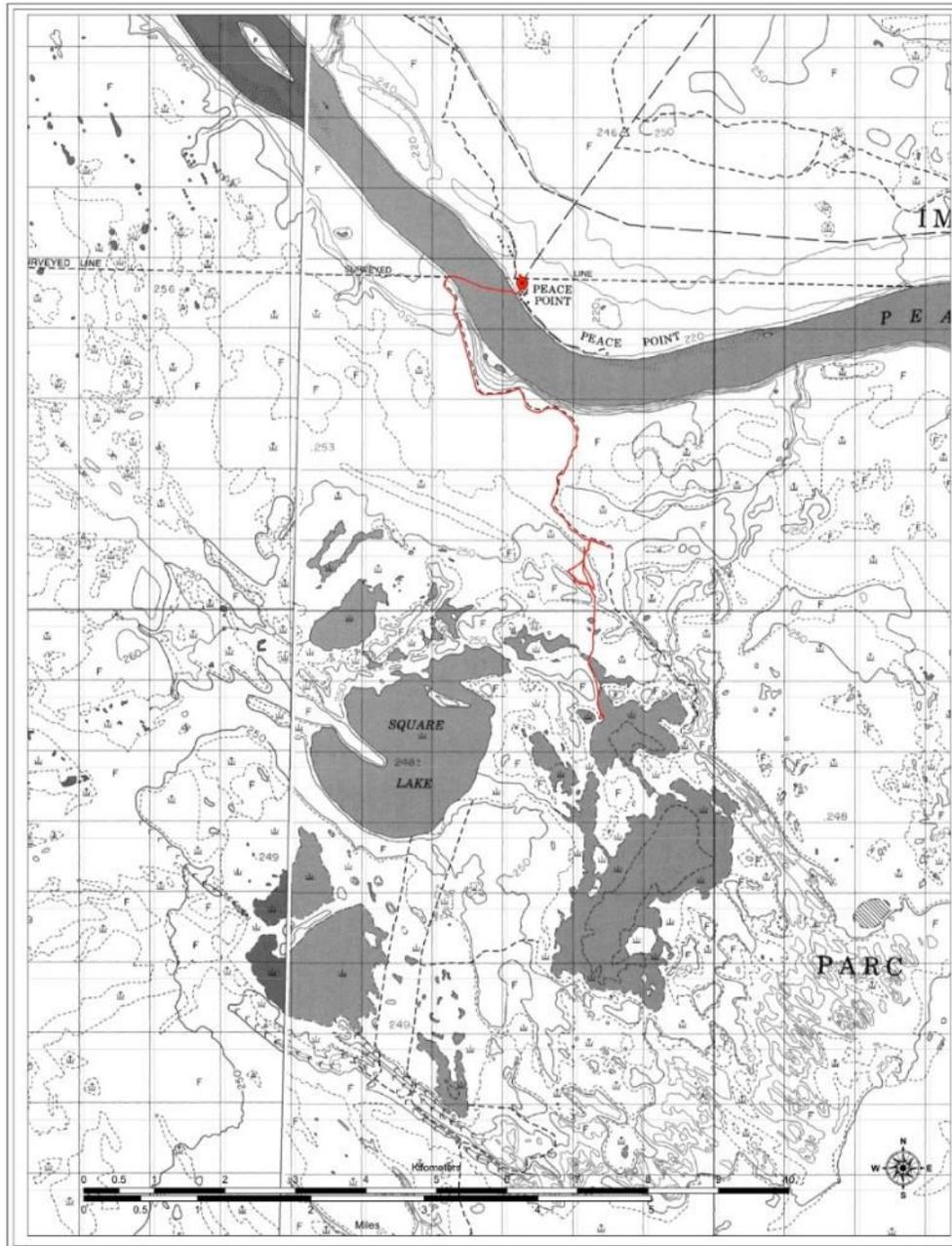
the maps and air photos. It helped me ask questions in any follow-up interviews based on my own knowledge and recollection (albeit limited) of seeing the trail in person. I could also visualize sections of the trail described by the trail clearers. This phase gave me an appreciation of the challenges and the degree of physical work required to clear a trail that had been little used for the past 10-15 years and was overgrown and affected by wild fires. The length of trail that was cleared was based on a number of factors that included the current condition of the trail when the clearing started, the small number of people hired to conduct the trail clearing, and the financial and time restraints of the project.

After the second phase of the trail clearing was completed, I conducted a formal interview with two of the individuals who had done the work, Lois and Curtis Bourke (2014). The interview provided a great deal of information about the state or condition of the trail and methods of trail clearing. In the process of trail clearing, they had learned a lot about the trail by getting to know the landscape, the terrain, the vegetation and the trail itself. In his updates on the trail clearing, Curtis would sketch out the cleared portions of the trail on a piece of paper, on the sand and sometimes on the ground with a stick or whatever was available to help describe the work that had been accomplished, creating a crude map based on his landmarks of navigation.

Between the winter and spring stages, it took approximately six weeks in total to clear a six kilometer section of the trail from the Simpson Cabin to the Lake One Prairie. This trail work was also funded by the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) with additional financial and logistical support from Parks Canada. I had learned that the best time to clear a trail was in the fall because of the milder temperatures and ample daylight. Initially, we had tackled the trail during the hardest time of the year, when there was a large blanket of snow covering the debris left behind from the forest fires. As a result, it took

much longer than usual to clear the section of the trail which we later walked during the trail survey. The entire trail could not be cleared, which meant that traveling the full length

Map 2.4 GPS Tracklog of Lake One Trail Clearing (2014)



Source: Track log imposed on map by J. McKinnon 2014

of the trail was not possible due to its poor condition in places. Some parts remained impassable. By the time we conducted the trail survey in October 2014, three months later, many more trees had already fallen across the trail, which demonstrates how quickly a trail can become unusable in a forested landscape. The main documentation of the trail took place during the field survey.

Phase 6 Walk the Trail: Conduct a Trail Survey

The idea of a trail survey was inspired in part by Tom Andrew's work with John B. Zoe and Tlicho knowledge holders, who documented the "Idaa Trail" in the NWT by canoe from Great Slave Lake to Great Bear Lake (Andrews and Zoe 1997). Andrew attested to the "learning linked directly to the process of travel and experience ... and a method of recapturing knowledge" (2011: 180-181).

The trail survey was done October 5-9, 2014, by a collaborative team under my leadership as the primary investigator. My role included all the organization and planning, the mobilization of park resources (including the helicopter), and ensuring the days proceeded as planned as best as possible. The team included Donalee Deck, Parks Canada archaeologist, who guided much of the data collection following standard archaeological survey methods. Other participants were Lawrence Vermillion and Charlie Simpson (interviewees), Dalton Vermillion (grandson of Lawrence Vermillion), Sharon Irwin and Katie White (Resource Conservation Officers, WBNP), Sandra Dolan (local historian and writer, one day), and George Peterson (my husband and ecologist, two days).

In preparation for the survey, I informed the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) that I had a research project taking place on its traditional lands in WBNP and that I was going to rent a cabin on its reserve land at Peace Point for the team. MCFN provided a written

response supporting the project, but it did not want us to conduct any excavations on reserve land. However, we had not planned to do so.

To reach the start of the trail on the south side of the river, Lawrence Vermillion provided a skiff (a type of handmade wooden boat) and ferried the team back and forth across the river. He had built the skiff himself based on the skills and knowledge he had gained from his mentor and boat builder Adam Dene. WBNP provided helicopter support for sections of the trail that were inaccessible by foot.

The trail survey entailed working with the knowledge holders to identify important places and resources along the trail and to document them by taking photographs, making measurements, providing descriptions and sketches, noting their condition, and mapping their locations. I made daily field notes and kept reflexive journals at the end of each day documenting the activities as they unfolded at Peace Point and on the trail itself. Details recorded included the date, weather, method of travel, travel routes, names of individuals involved, activities that took place and their length of time, stories shared about these places, and interactions among people. As well, I reported on key decisions that were made and the reasons why they were made, especially those that related to the field survey. As Wolcott suggests, “make a practice of including in your notes not only standard entries about day, date, and time...but also reflections on and about yourself – your mood, personal reactions, even random thoughts” (Wolcott 2005: 93). The process of recording observations and note-taking continued during the first few weeks after returning from the field while the experience was still fresh in my memory, and it included overall reflections on the results and how the survey unfolded. I also made audio recordings of the interviews on the trail, and two other people assisted with video recordings of portions of the trail work. These were all excellent ways to record the traditional knowledge of the trail as it

unfolded during the ground survey and allowed valuable visual and audio information to be captured. A park employee later assisted with ensuring that summaries were transcribed of the video clips noting the name of the recorder, the knowledge holder and the recorded date so that they may be acknowledged or credited for their knowledge in the future.

Thus, documentation incorporated traditional knowledge and oral history from the stories and experiences shared during the interviews conducted both on and off the trail. It provided a cultural perspective of the trail and the resources found along it, and provided an opportunity to observe the “transition of knowledge” on the land between elders and youth. The elders shared stories of travelling on the trail that had not arisen during the earlier interviews. This demonstrated the importance of Aboriginal traditional knowledge in the collection and interpretation of the archaeological past. They identified places of interest along the trail that may not have been visible from the trail or were difficult to locate without their guidance. This information guided the survey and identified priority sites to visit during the field survey. However, it was beyond the scope of the project to visit all the sites identified, as many more locations were indicated by the traditional knowledge information than could be verified during the time period and resources of the survey. The scope of the project was determined by the time and resources available to complete the work, the current knowledge available about the resources and their condition, and the limited access to certain areas.

The four-day survey included the northern portion of the Lake One Trail between the Peace River and the Lake One Prairie and included the trailhead of the 30th Meridian Base Line trail. A southern portion was surveyed along “Wolf Ridge” and onto the Lake One Prairie, as well as site visits to Peace Point and the Lake One Dune esker. A mobile mapper

was used to map the footprint of the trail and specific features and vegetation along it.¹² The mobile mapper facilitated detailed documentation of both cultural and natural resources in the two areas of the trail that were surveyed: at the north end of the trail (also a section of cat road) in the vicinity of the Simpson cabins and along the esker bordering the south end of the Lake One Prairie known as Wolf Ridge. The mobile mapper also allowed us to document changes to the vegetation or forest type as we walked along the trail. For example, we noted changes in vegetation along the portions of the trail that had burned. We named sections of the trail according to the vegetation type: spruce burn, spruce forest, and aspen burn were recorded. Bison wallows on the trail were also mapped.

Cultural resources identified along the trail included culturally modified trees, spiritual sites, campsites, garbage middens, depressions, and artifacts (e.g., stove parts, metal cans, metal squeeze chute, fuel barrel, mammal bone and lithic tools). These resources were all located with the help and knowledge of the local people, the skills of the archaeologist, and our own growing experience in “reading” the landscape as we went along the trail. As a result, six known cultural sites were revisited, and four new sites were identified and documented during the survey (see Table 7.1 in Chapter 7). Three of us took digital photographs during the trail survey. Photographs were very important in providing visual references for the cultural values along the trail.

During the survey, I learned that it is important to let go of preconceived ideas of how the fieldwork would unfold and to trust the process and those involved. “Rest easy,” as Harry Wolcott eloquently explained, as “no one about to undertake fieldwork can ever

¹² A mobile mapper is a device that allows the researcher to collect reference points (similar to a GPS), and to draw polygons or lines while moving on the land, which can then be plotted on a map. We used a Spectra Precision 120.

anticipate exactly what will be encountered or exactly what is to result from the experience” (2005: 88). At times during the fieldwork, I was concerned whether we as a team were on track, as our time was limited in the field, and I wanted to ensure we were collecting the essential information to document the trail adequately. Even with all the planning done ahead of time, including a contingency plan based on the understanding of the unknowns, it is still difficult to prepare for the unexpected. Uncertainty can range from changes in the weather patterns, wildlife encounters, and the availability of participants. For example, we had a black bear on the roof of the cabin at Peace Point! He walked around for awhile and it briefly crossed my mind that he might fall through. Thankfully he did not, climbed down the same way he had climbed up, before making his way to the front of the cabin. Sharon Irwin used a “bear banger” to scare the bear away, though he visited us again the next day but didn’t stay. I found that sometimes it is just a matter of letting go and trusting your instincts. Even with “... maintaining rapport, reciprocity, a tolerance for ambiguity, and personal determination, coupled with faith...there are no guarantees” (Wolcott 2005:95).

I discovered that I thrive on fieldwork and all the challenges that come with it, including the stress of overcoming obstacles that question your mental and physical abilities. Conducting the field survey turned out to be my favorite part of the research, personally rewarding and memorable. It was an important learning opportunity that I am grateful to have had: to be out on the land with the elders and youth and to share this experience with my colleagues, friends and family members – it couldn’t get any better!

Phase 7 Analysis

The analysis brought together all the different components of the research project. I used interviews to identify specific information about the cultural resources of the trail and

where they were located. Some of the main features of the trail were old cabin foundations, spiritual and burial sites, campsites and resource harvesting locations. Some of these features were noted by all the interviewees, while a few were noted by only a single person. I looked for themes relating to trails such as their use, navigation, naming of trails, resource harvesting and seasonality, spiritual and social aspects, and family histories. I looked for relationships and links among the different information provided by the interviewees.

The interview maps were helpful in comparing trail networks in the study area, especially as they pertained to the Lake One Trail. There were different trail sections noted by the interviewees depending on their history of travel in the area and different access points to the Lake One Prairie. The mapped trails provided information about trail characteristics, including their topographic, vegetation and landscape features. They also revealed concentrated areas of use and how trails connected with one another. The information from individual maps was plotted onto separate 1:60,000 topographic maps. Together, they showed the concentration of use within the study area, specifically where resources were harvested and the general footprint on the land for each individual person. The historic maps and other primary information provided additional contextual information, both historic and spatial.

Review of the maps was augmented by review of the air photos. The interview maps gave me a clear indication of how and where to orient myself to the air photos. I examined and compared the later air photos of 1988 with earlier air photo images of 1945 to see if there were any significant changes visible in the landscape. The air photos gave an indication of fluctuation in water levels in the lakes and any significant changes or impacts from the forest fire in 1953. I also saw vegetation and topographic landforms such as ridges and sand dunes. I focused on the study area and anything that looked to be “cultural” along

the trail and within the Lake One Prairie. Scanning versions of the air photos enabled me to zoom into specific areas of the air photo (the modern version of the magnifying glass), specifically certain sections of the trail and the location identified as The Little Man. I was able to print the zoomed-in areas of the air photos and review them with the interviewees.

The trail survey provided more detailed information from the interviews as well as a sort of ground-truthing. While walking the trail, locating and visiting the sites we were able to update the condition of the resources and the trail itself, while noting any changes. It gave me an understanding of the challenges of accessing the trail and an indication of the effectiveness of the trail clearing. The photos and videos taken during the survey provided a visual record of sites visited including aerial views of the landscape as a whole. The video recordings were also useful in the analysis of the air photos. The recent photos taken during the survey were compared with earlier photos (when available) for any obvious changes. Photos of the trail were also taken at various times of the year, providing a record of its condition in the fall, winter and spring.

An important part of the analysis was figuring out how to draft clear maps based on complex information and that showed what had been learned. I worked with a Parks Canada geomatics technician, Craig Brigley to create the maps in this thesis.

A Note on Method

Table 2.2 outlines some of the steps in documenting a traditional trail. This research is not prescriptive or set in stone but is instead a guide that can be molded or adjusted depending on the scope and objectives of the study. For example, gathering information and engaging with the community are likely to be on-going activities. The community's connection to the trail and associated landscape can change overtime. As well, there may be new information

that becomes available that speaks to other community connections and values to the place or trail that were not previously known. The physical and political environment in which the trail study takes place, as well as existing park agreements, accessibility of the trail, the length of the trail, and the human and financial resources, often determine how you go about the project and what steps will be taken. Researchers may find the need to shift back and forth between the research phases or components outlined below, adapting to local circumstances. Local community protocols will apply and require guidance and support from participants. It is especially important to remember that the loss of knowledge in the community about traditional trails is time sensitive. Cultural resources are not a renewable resource; however, they can be mapped and the knowledge about their values can be documented, working in collaboration with community members.

Table 2.2 Trail Documentation

| Steps | Considerations |
|---|---|
| Step 1. Engage the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have preliminary discussions about what we want to achieve. • Identify geographic areas of interest. • Identify associated communities. • Identify persons with an interest in trails. • Bridge ideas and shared interests. • Develop clear objectives for the project with the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing relationships and/or collaborative projects. Conduct formal and informal discussions • Travel to communities to meet in person • Identify how people want to be involved • What information can be shared? • Identify how information will be shared and reported back. |
| Step 2. Gather information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather existing information, including existing field study reports. • Identify community knowledge – talking to people, oral history and community workshops. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing research and what is known about trails and the area of interest; identify who travelled through the area and how the area was used in the past; note changes to use over time in the historic record. • Host an event in the park – e.g., picnic or tea in the park with community members, elders and youth- record stories and ideas. |
| Step 3. Identify trails and their values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify knowledge holders. • Identify trails and possible associated landscapes and their values; • Understand and document historic, cultural, social, scientific, associative and aesthetic values. • Identify what makes the trail or place unique, what its defining elements are. • Summarize trail information and identify knowledge gaps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity to share the research you are doing Consider a citizen science model • Collect primary sources, which may or may not be in archives. They include federal, territorial and provincial correspondence, maps, and photos. |
| Step 4. Conduct trail investigation <p>Identify scope of the fieldwork. Inventory may involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail clearing – Knowledge holder guides the work. • Identify steps and the trail sections to be cleared • Consider type of trail, logistics and access challenges Engage broader community • One day or multi-day trail survey • Elder and youth involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect local protocols –consider timing of activities and season. • Funds for field transportation, accommodation, food and honorariums. • Consider a prescribed burn of the trail as method of trail clearing. • Weather, terrain and wildlife encounters |
| Step 5. Monitor and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we accomplish what we said we would do? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there trails that can be accessed and experienced by visitors? |

Chapter 3 Environmental Setting

The WBNP Landscape

Wood Buffalo National Park (44,840 km²) straddles the boundary between the province of Alberta and the NWT, with approximately 80% of the park located within northern Alberta (Map 3.1). The park “protects and is a representative example of Canada’s Northern Boreal Plains” (Parks Canada 2017a).

WBNP is the most ecologically complete and largest example of the entire Great Plains-Boreal grassland ecosystem of North America, the only place where the predator-prey relationship between wolves and wood bison has continued, unbroken, over time [UNESCO 2017].

Wilson *et al.* (1994:34) described the major forest vegetation in the park as white spruce and balsam poplar on riverbanks; jackpine, white spruce and trembling aspen in higher elevations; and black spruce replacing white spruce in poorly drained areas; with extensive sedge meadows occurring in the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD), the southeast region of the park.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD) is located where waters of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers meet, and is the largest, fully contained, inland delta in the world (UNESCO 2017). Historically, the PAD was regularly impacted by large-scale flooding that recharged the lakes and wetlands and provided rich habitat for wildlife. This hydrological regime was interrupted by the Bennett Dam in northern BC, which began to impound water in 1968 (Flynn 1995:10). The harmful impacts of the dam to the water regime, plants, animals and people in the Fort Chipewyan region and specifically the Peace-Athabasca Delta, were documented in a series of studies conducted in the 1970’s prepared for the Peace-Athabasca Project Group (McCormack 1984: 488). These impacts have continued to

the present, and more documentation has occurred. The region is also being affected by other climatic changes.

The Peace-Athabasca Delta has now experienced 50 years of a drying trend. These changes in the delta illustrate the vulnerability of the habitats of many of the important animals of the delta, which still supports large populations, from fish and waterfowl to bison and moose (McCormack 1984: 491-494). Changing habitats, decline in animal populations, and lack of access in the 20th century all had significant socio-economic impacts on the Aboriginal people who utilized these resources (McCormack 1984: 496-497).

From 1928 to 1930, botanists Dr. Hugh M. Raup and his wife Lucy Raup conducted initial vegetation studies in the park, including the newly annexed area of the park south of the Peace River for the National Museum of Canada (McCormack 2007:22, Raup 1935:18). He noted that the banks of the large rivers were usually heavily timbered by mostly coniferous forests. However, he also described areas that were not heavily forested as “semi-open prairie country,” including the area around Peace Point (1935:42,47). At the time he did not realize that these prairies were actually the result of the burning practices of the Aboriginal people who occupied the region (McCormack 2007). In the 1980’s, archaeologist Marc Stevenson wrote in his field notes, “the large prairies along the north shore of the Peace River and that Peace Point itself was all prairie and scrubby brush” (Stevenson 1980).

The Caribou and Birch Mountains are located to the northwest and south of the park and study area respectively. The park contains two especially large and shallow lakes: Lake Claire is located to the south (in the Peace-Athabasca Delta), and Buffalo Lake is in the northwest corner of the park. There are five major river systems: the Peace, Slave, Athabasca, Birch and Little Buffalo Rivers. The western end of Lake Athabasca contains the

historic town of Fort Chipewyan and today penetrates the eastern edge of the park. Lake Athabasca is fed by the waters of the Athabasca River and the Fond du Lac River. The climate is typical of the subarctic region of Canada, characterized generally by cool and short summers and cold and long winters (Lewis 1982:14).

Pleistocene glaciation receded from this corner of northeastern Alberta between 12,000 -10,000 years ago (see Flynn 1995; Donahue 1976; Ives 1993, 2006). The study area that encompasses the Lake One Prairie was once submerged under pro-glacial Lake McConnell, which extended as far south as the Birch Mountains. Lake Athabasca is a remnant of that lake (Smith 1994:841). As it receded, it left deep glacial till deposits throughout the park, and it is thought that the area around Lake Claire may have been one of the last areas to emerge from the waters as the glacial lake drained (Flynn 1995:9).

The Lake One Study Project Area

The Lake One Study project area is about 15 kilometers² in extent. It is bounded on the north by the Peace River, including the Peace Point sites and the Peace Point Cree Reserve land on the north bank. To the south and west, the area is bordered by glacial deposits known as eskers that in part define the watershed boundary between the Peace River and Lake Claire, located approximately 25 kilometers south of the Lake One Prairie. On the west side, north of the obvious ridged topography bordering the prairie, there are no clear landscape features bordering the study area. I imposed an arbitrary boundary that takes into account any creeks that appear to drain into the Lake One Prairie and any connecting trails, which include their junctures with the Lake One Trail and into the prairie. A concentration of elevated land forms which include some longer narrow raised hill tops are located along the eastern edge of the study area. These raised terraces were once forested

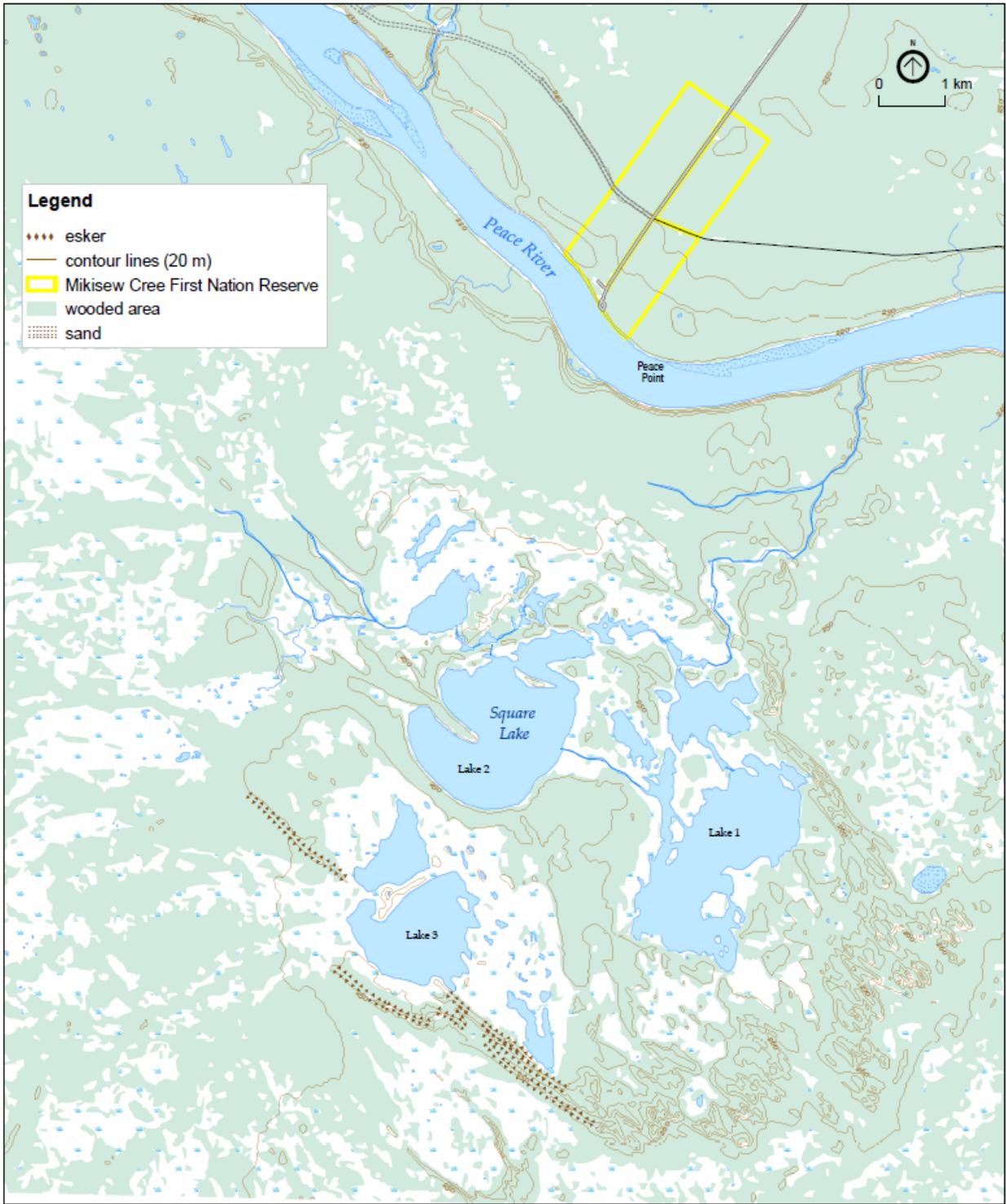
before being burned by forest fire. They provide a visual reference along the southeastern boundary. They become more sporadic further north between the Peace River and the Lake One Prairie. The overall topography of the Lake One Study area is relatively flat, with depressions where small lakes and wetlands are interspersed with eskers and a few rolling hills.

Under conditions of high water levels of the past, as witnessed by many of the interviewees, several of the lakes and meadows in this region would coalesce into a larger lake up to eight kilometers across known as “Lake One.” Now, thanks to the hydrological changes caused by the Bennett Dam, “Lake One was no longer inundated with water and as a result is no longer a lake ... rather, it is now a marsh or wet meadow” (Flynn 1995:10). I use the term Lake One “complex” to recognize that thanks to lower water levels, the former Lake One is now a collection of smaller lakes, the largest of which is Square Lake (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b). There are also several small creeks that flow eastward into this region. The names can be confusing. “Square Lake” appears on the topographical maps. Local people use “Lake One,” “Lake Two,” and so forth. The early topographical maps numbered all the small lakes, and these names are shown on my maps.

The Lake One Prairie can be described as a shallow three-sided depression in a flat landscape where water collects to form a myriad of shallow lakes and wetlands interspersed with wet and dry meadows.

The prairie is the low area within the study area that lies between the larger bodies of water that have been named in this study as Lake One, Two and Three (see map 3.2). The prairie has been described as the largest continuous meadow northwest of Lake Claire (Proch and Lee 1984:10). Lawrence Vermillion (2015b) described it as “having only wild grass growing on it with stubby little growth - like a tree growing here and there, and in

Map 3.1 Lake One Study Project Area



Source: Drafted by Craig Brigley based on information provided by L. Peterson

the springtime there was high water in the prairie.” It is a dynamic landscape that has evolved over millennia and witnessed many changes after deglaciation and human occupation.

At its northern edge, the prairie itself is bordered by a ridge that runs in a northeast direction. To the southwest, the prairie extends to a series of glacial features known as eskers that are well-defined and oriented in a northwest-southeast direction. One of these is called Wolf Ridge. These eskers contributed to the formation of dune features. Glacial till was impacted by pro-glacial lakes, and dunes were formed as a result of strong prevailing southeasterly winds during this process (Flynn 1995:12). Although the eskers rise above the surrounding landscape, it is difficult to discern whether they are part of the regional watershed boundary that separates waters flowing to different rivers and basins.

These prominent eskers run through the southern extent of Lake One Prairie and thus of the study area. The north part drains north to the Peace River, as evidenced by two small creeks to the northeast of the Lake One Prairie that meet and continue through the study area northward. They eventually empty into the Peace River approximately five kilometers to the north-northeast of the Lake One Prairie.

The southern portion of the study area contains a variety of surface water features, including the shallow lakes that formerly comprised Lake One, ponds, wetlands, and meandering creeks. However, at approximately five to ten kilometers further to the southeast, water begins to collect into small slow-moving streams that wind their way toward the northwest shore of Lake Claire.

The vegetation of the study area can be divided into two parts: the heavily-timbered northern part adjacent to the Peace River, and the wetter and more diverse southern portion of the Lake One complex associated with the prairie. Topographic and hydrological

variation produces a mosaic of vegetation communities that range from plants that are totally submerged underwater, to plants whose roots are submerged, and plants in terrestrial or dry shrubby areas interspersed with spruce and poplar islands (George Peterson, vegetation ecologist, personal communication, 2017). The wetland areas are important for fish, muskrats, beaver and migratory waterfowl, and the animals that prey on them.

Lewis (1982) argued that the diversity of vegetation communities that supports diverse wildlife populations is an important environmental relationship that was well understood by the Aboriginal people who occupied the region, past and present. For example, knowledge holders reported that before the Bennett Dam began to impound water, thousands of muskrats could be found in the lakes, along with an abundance of waterfowl, lynx, wolves, moose and bison, and according to two of the informants, even barren ground caribou on a seasonal basis.¹³ The caribou travelled from the “barrenlands” or transitional treeline areas to the Peace River on Lawrence Vermillion’s trap line and south of Fort Chipewyan (Lawrence Vermillion 2014a; Charlie Simpson 2014c), (however, the current absence of barren-ground caribou is not linked to the new water regime). Periodic river flooding produced high quality habitat for muskrat, beaver, and mink (PADEMP n.d.). The wetlands of the delta supported enormous numbers of migratory waterfowl. In addition, the north arm of Lake Claire in the PAD, is one of two major bison calving grounds in WBNP (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 2010). Prior to the importation of plains bison, and the still earlier decimation of northern bison, the Lake One area would have supported a large population of wood bison (Pollock 1978). Even today it provides excellent forage for

¹³ Known as barren ground caribou but referred locally as barren land caribou.

bison, thus contributing to the park's designation of international significance as a major calving ground for the world's largest herd of free-roaming bison. The land was and continues to be criss-crossed by bison migration routes (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b; Flynn 1995:10). In short, the amazing richness of the environmental resources supported long term human occupations, which began as soon as glaciation receded. Movements of the people were related to the locations of wildlife over the years (Philip Cheezie 2014). Fish were also abundant and were an important food resource to the people and their dogs who lived in and travelled through this area in the past. These food resources could be accessed via the network of ancient trails that emerged and fluctuated with the abundance and diversity of the resources in the study area.

Chapter 4 Cultural Setting

Human History in WBNP

Information about the human history in the study area comes from three sources. First, archaeological work done at the Lake One Dune Site archaeological site on the western edge of the Wolf Ridge esker and at Peace Point provides some understanding of the cultures that lived in this area for multiple periods, from 8000 to approximately 300 years before present. Second, accounts by European fur traders and explorers provide some information for the past 250 years. Third, contemporary inhabitants have rich oral traditions about their pasts.

The present day park has been home to at least four Aboriginal groups during the previous three hundred years. Initially, Dene people who were the ancestors of the Slavey (Dene Tha) and the Beaver occupied the region. By the mid-18th century, the Chipewyan (Dene Suline) and the Cree expanded into this area from the northeast and the southeast, respectively, some acting as middlemen in their growing involvement in the fur trade economy. Mixed-ancestry voyageurs arrived whose descendants contributed to the modern Métis population that resides in the area. Direct contact with Europeans occurred in 1778, when Peter Pond led a fur trade excursion to the Athabasca River.¹⁴

Aboriginal people in this region always had to travel widely to procure the resources they required to live. They used both waterways and overland trails that included the Lake One Study Area.

¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss details of this long and complex history. Many sources are available, including chapters in the Subarctic Handbook (Smith 1981a; 1981b; 1981c; McCormack 1988, 2012; Parker 1987).

Regional Archaeology of the Study Area

Three broad regional archaeological cultures are believed to have existed at various times and places in what is now the lands of the park: the Northwest Interior (i.e., Thaltheilei), the Western Shield, and the Plains Cultures (see Wright 1995, 1999; summarized in McCormack 2012; 2018b). However, the archaeological history of the region is complex and not fully known. The most important archaeological sites in the study region are at either end of the Lake One Trail: Peace Point and the Lake One Dune site. Both were occupied repeatedly over time.

Peace Point is historically significant as the location of a peace accord between the Beaver Indians and invading Crees in the pre-contact era, recorded through oral tradition by Alexander Mackenzie (Lamb 1970: 238; Proch and Lee 1984:11). David Penner first recorded the archaeological site there in 1972, after seeing many artifacts eroding out of the riverbank (Proch and Lee 1984). It is actually a cluster of sites concentrated along the north bank of the Peace River between the Boyer Rapids and Peace Point. Marc Stevenson conducted an excavation at Peace Point in 1981 and 1982, revealing a deeply stratified site with at least 16 distinct levels, spanning a 2,500 year period and occupied seasonally (Stevenson 1983; 1986). The artifacts recovered related to quarrying activities and the manufacturing of stone tools, though it contained very little diagnostic material, such as projectile points. There were rich faunal remains, including bison, moose, elk, caribou, black and grizzly bear, beaver, muskrat and waterfowl, represented at different occupation levels. The site contained two major settlement areas (Proch and Lee 1984: 12). The large variety of resources found at this site suggests that wildlife was plentiful locally and easily accessible to human users.

A recent report on the results of the Lake One Trail survey by Parks Canada archaeologist Donalee Deck provides an overview of the archaeological investigations at the Lake One Dune Site (2017:37-38) and reiterates the antiquity of the area, which dates to 8,000 BP. This early date is based on the presence of projectile points, specifically Northern Plano lanceolate points (Deck 2017: 37). Later dart and arrow points recovered from the site reflected both Plains and Boreal cultures (Proch and Lee 1984).

Peoples with various Plains cultures occupied lands as far north as Lake Athabasca (Wright 1995: 299). Their movements north and south are often thought to reflect climate change following deglaciation and the northern expansion and contraction of grasslands and forests.

Wright (1995:390, 389) argues that in the Mackenzie basin, including northeastern Alberta, there has been at least 6,000 years of cultural continuity by people of the Thaltheilei archaeological culture. Part of the broader Northwest Interior archaeological tradition, Thaltheilei was a development from Alaska and the Yukon, whose people eventually moved south into BC, east into the NWT, and southeast into northern Alberta, perhaps 500 to 1,500 BP. They were ancestral to modern northern Dene peoples, including Beavers and Chipewyans (Ives 1993; McCormack 2012).

Wright's Late Western Shield Culture originated in present-day Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Great Lakes. It led directly to the northern Algonquian-speaking peoples – Crees - who moved into portions of northern Alberta probably in the late pre-contact era (McCormack 2012: 45; 2018b).

Map 4.1 Lake One Prairie and Location of Archaeological Sites



Source: Deck 2017 modified by Peterson

European Contact and the Fur Trade

The proto-contact period occurred prior to Europeans entering the region but after Aboriginal people began to be affected by the European presence on Hudson Bay (late 1600's) and the Saskatchewan River (1730's or '40's). It was a period of indirect contact, which brought changes to First Nations that may not have been recognized or considered in written accounts by European explorers. These changes reflected Aboriginal exposure to attractive trade goods, firearms, warfare and possibly disease, although the first known smallpox epidemic happened after contact. Aboriginal movements for long-distance trade and warfare also began during this time.

Ives (1993:15) used primary accounts to suggest that in the early 18th century, i.e., early 1700s, Beaver and Slavey inhabited the larger region – the lower Peace River, the Slave River, the lower Athabasca River and the Clearwater River. Crees had moved as far north as Great Slave Lake by the 1770s, and Chipewyans were in the region as well (see Hearne 1958; Gillespie 1975: 369-374). In 1781-82, a smallpox epidemic coming from the south decimated the Cree, and to a lesser extent, the Chipewyan, which facilitated Chipewyan expansion to the south (McCormack 2012: 64).

In 1789, Alexander Mackenzie travelled from Fort Chipewyan to the mouth of the Mackenzie River. He noted that Cree people were trading down the Slave and up the Peace Rivers at this time, and he also encountered Cree war parties (Lamb 1970:233). They helped to displace the Beaver westward up the Peace River. By the late 1700's, both Chipewyans and Crees occupied the region between the Peace River and the Athabasca River, but their movements are poorly understood. Peter Fidler's account from 1791-92 states that the Chipewyan were travelling into the lands of WBNP and were already expert hunters in the boreal forest (Fidler 1934: Journal 8). Chipewyans and Crees who moved to

the Peace River region would have developed their own annual cycles and patterns of movement.

Following the establishment of Peter Pond's first trading post on the lower Athabasca River in 1778, a permanent fur trade post – Fort Chipewyan - was established on Lake Athabasca in 1788, and a temporary fur post in the region of Fort Vermillion, also in 1788 (Parker 1987). This time marked the beginning of a transition to a somewhat different way of life that was, in varying degrees, oriented around producing commodities – furs and food – for trade. Participation in the fur trade intensified in the early 19th century and eventually led to different patterns of resource use by Crees and many Chipewyans. Most Chipewyans still focused on caribou hunting, but there were some who now lived deep in the boreal forest (e.g., see ACFN 2003:42; McCormack 2010). Seasonal travel to trading posts to exchange furs and food provisions for imported trade goods became important to many Aboriginal groups (Parker 1987:6-11). People continued to travel great distances on the land, using their network of trails, especially in the winter when travel was easier with dog teams and snowshoes.

In the second half of the 19th century, many people began building winter settlements with log houses, suggesting less mobility than in earlier days, although they did not necessarily live at these locations all winter (McCormack 2012:121). For example, long before park establishment in the 1920s, Chipewyans had settled in areas around the lower Birch River and along the Peace River at Jackfish River and Peace Point, as well as at Baril Lake and other nearby locations on the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca.

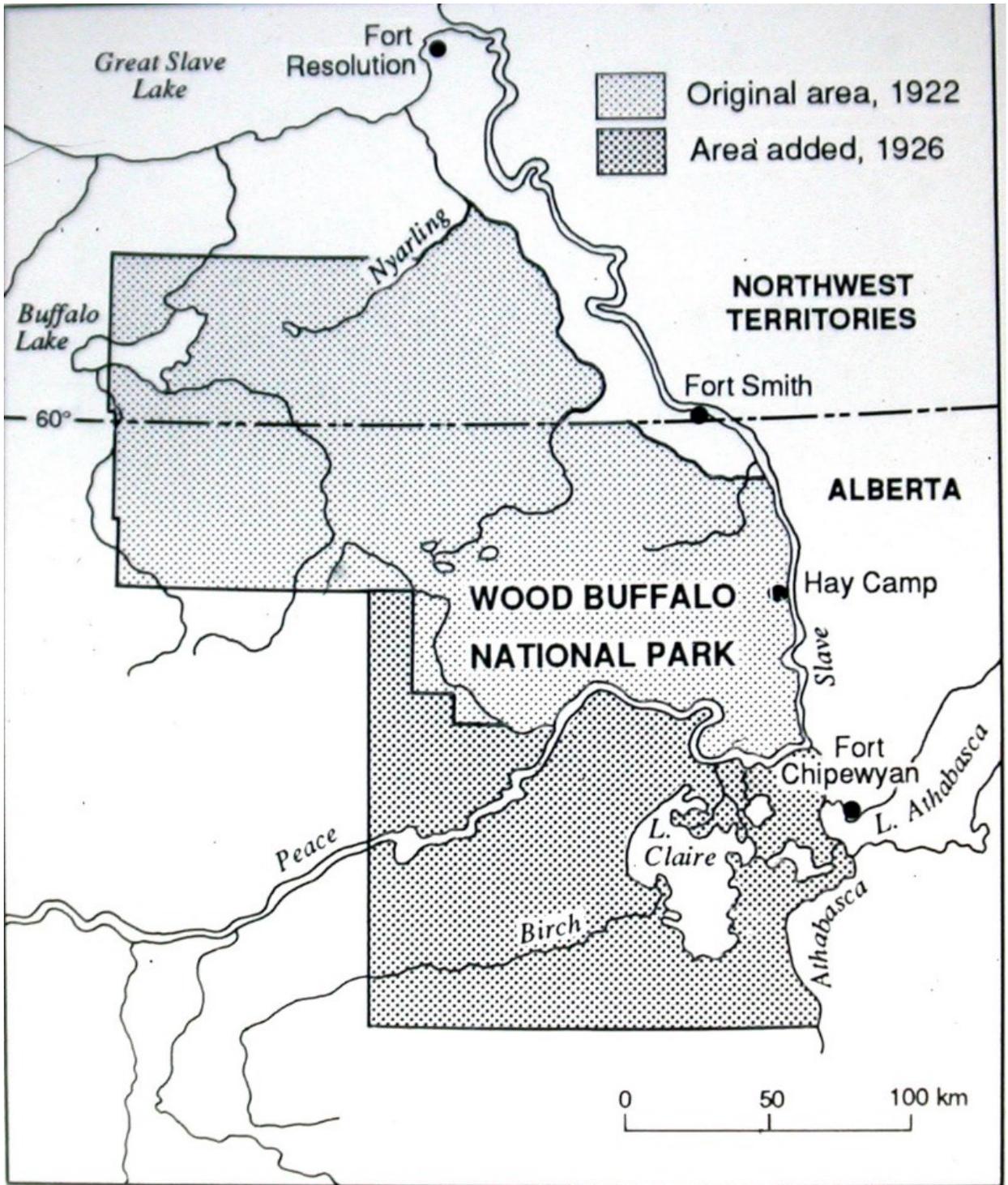
Establishment of WBNP

The park was established in two steps, in 1922 and 1926. The new northern park was created on December 18, 1922. It was administered by the NWT Branch of the Department of the Interior, not by the parks branch. It was intended as a bison sanctuary, which was different from previous parks that had been established up until that time, whose focus was more on tourism (McCormack 1984:123).

A few years later, the federal government decided to transport several thousand captive Plains bison from the Wainwright Buffalo Park to the new Wood Buffalo Park. This event had many implications that had not been thought through. Once released, the bison immediately migrated south of the Peace River, which at the time was the southern boundary of the park. These new bison introduced diseases and interbred with the wood bison. It also created conflict between the park officials and the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, who were concerned that the roaming bison were destroying muskrat houses used by Indian trappers (Potyondi 1980; 27).

In 1926, the federal government decided to annex the southern area to the park, to protect the bison there. Virtually all the Lake One Study Area, with the exception of the small part on the north side of the Peace River, is contained within the “new park,” the lands annexed in 1926 to the original park lands created in 1922 (McCormack 1984:140-144). The park expansion impacted the Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis people who were residing in the area. The park administration had allowed only Treaty 8 Indians to continue living in the original park. In the park annex, it allowed all individuals and their immediate families – First Nation, Métis, or European trappers and traders – who were living, hunting, and trapping in the area at the time of the park annex to continue to hunt and trap in the park, following the existing game regulations

Map 4.2 WBNP 1926 Expansion



Source: McCormack 1993:96

of that area. As a consequence, the Chipewyan people whose winter settlements were on the Athabasca River and at Old Fort and Big Point (locations not within the park expansion) were shut out of the park (McCormack 1984: 277). Those Chipewyans began to lose their familiarity with the park landscape, and eventually they obtained reserves at locations east of the park. Understanding the Chipewyan history in the study area became even more complex in the mid 1940's, when the members of the Chipewyan Band living in the park were transferred to the Cree Band. There were many reasons for this move, but it contributed to the Cree Band's request for reserve land within the park.¹⁵

There were many developments in the park over time, including small scale commercial logging and fishing activities, intermittent bison round ups and slaughters, new hunting and trapping regulations called WBNP Game Regulations¹⁶ along with the establishment of group trapping areas and individual traplines. Local Aboriginal people often worked seasonally for the park throughout much of its history, although for minimal wages. Beginning in the mid-20th century more Aboriginal men sought wage labor employment during the spring and summer months, as this would have helped to supplement income from a poor trapping season (McCormack 1984: 327-328). However, during the fall and winter months, and even into the spring, they would return to the bush, living off the land seasonally, where they hunted, trapped, fished, and gathered plant foods

¹⁵ For more information on the transfer of Park Chipewyan to the Cree Band see McCormack (1984:277; 1989).

¹⁶ Wood Buffalo National Park received its first game regulations in 1949. The current regulations (SOR/78-830) were established in 1978 (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-78-830/index.html>). They were last amended on 2017-02-13.

and medicines. Dog team travel was gradually replaced by skidoos after World War II (McCormack 1984:332).

Despite all these changes, traditional land uses are still practiced today by many First Nation (Treaty 8 members) and Métis people who are park users. Most of them now live in small communities on the fringes of the park. Supreme Court of Canada decisions, [R. v. Powley (2003) and Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada (2005)], has led Parks Canada to recognize that other Treaty 8 people and local Métis also have the right to harvest in the park. As a result, these individuals can apply for a permit to build a traditional use cabin within the park boundaries for subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing purposes. Prior to these changes the park considered these Aboriginal activities to be a “privilege,” not a “right.” The people who used the Lake One Study Area were mainly associated with the communities of Fort Chipewyan and Fort Fitzgerald.

This traditional occupancy of land by Aboriginal peoples in WBNP can be characterized in a general way as periodic visits to specific areas and sites for harvesting resources (e.g., fishing sites, lakes and wetlands habitually visited by waterfowl during spring and fall migrations, sites containing berries and medicinal plant materials) via an established network of travel routes, both aquatic and terrestrial. For Aboriginal people, the most important of these were productive hunting and fishing grounds where harvesting for food and fur was likely to be successful. However, areas where plant and even geological resources could be easily obtained were also important to consider. To them, the land was a cultural landscape whose key components are good habitats for plants and animals and the travel corridors that link them. Spiritually significant sites, including burial sites, can be found at multiple places and were also connected to trails, as Aboriginal people’s

relationship to the land is both spiritual and material. A new commemorative intent statement can draw from this wealth of cultural material.

Chapter 5 Engaging with Community Members

This chapter expands on the community-based research in which I was engaged. It introduces the knowledge holders I worked with and provides profiles of each individual and his family's connection to the study area. The preliminary discussions that began this project included conversations with elders and land users in Fort Smith and Fort Chipewyan. I learned about potential and known historic trails in the park and the individuals in the community who might have knowledge about them.

Because the park is large, and access to many areas is difficult, in choosing a trail to research I looked at areas that could be reached relatively easily. Charlie Simpson, a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, expressed interest in getting back into the park to clear his trap line trail and introduce it to his young nephews. I was excited to hear this, and it seemed that we had similar goals and interests. Charlie and I initially looked at an area north of the Peace River, but because of the length and condition of his family trail and the fact that the timing did not work out for him to clear that trail, it was decided that work on this more northern trail was not possible at the time.¹⁷ Charlie suggested we consider a trail south of the Peace River instead, still within his trapping area, which extended from Peace River to the Lake One Prairie. It was this trail that was chosen for this project, for three reasons:

1. Its accessibility,
2. Its significance as an historic overland trail, including two key archaeological sites situated at the north and south ends of the trail, and

¹⁷ However, it is a very important trail that should be studied in the future.

3. Its role as part of a larger network of trails in the region both within the park and beyond park boundaries.

These aspects all speak to its persistent use by Aboriginal people. I began to learn about the complex history of the Lake One Trail. “Many trails have started as walking trails, but they evolved into dog team trails, then skidoo and even cat trails,” explained long time former park employee Gordie Masson (2014). The Lake One Trail indeed was an old dog team trail that had been turned into a cat trail in 1965. Although previous archaeological investigations and traditional knowledge have indicated that this area has been used for thousands of years, my study focused on the time period from 1920 to 2015, the period of “living memory.”

Selecting Participants: Interviewee Profiles

Selection of people to be interviewed was determined by identifying those who had travelled the trail in their lifetime. They included members of the three families who have used the trail and others who travelled in the area in the past, including some park staff. The Aboriginal people with whom I worked self-identified as Chipewyan, Cree and Métis.

I developed brief profiles of each of the interviewees to provide the context for the knowledge each shared, which derives from their individual experiences. Knowledge about the trail and the area is not necessarily a collective knowledge, but one that is specific to each individual’s experience and his/her long-term connection to this place. In summary, a personal profile:

- Reveals where some of a person’s knowledge originates and how it has been passed on from an earlier generation to the present;

- Shows how the person is connected to the Lake One Trail and how this connection has evolved or changed over the years through past and present generations.
- Shows how a person is socially situated in the broader community.

In the end, the research participants included nine in total: five trappers, two other persons who conducted the trail clearing, and two former park employees. The trappers were interviewed more than once over a two-year period, and a brief biography was completed for each. Their summaries are provided in this chapter. Each man was born in a tepee or a tent out on the land. Four were born delivered by a mid-wife, and one by his grandmother. Three trappers spoke of spending time with their grandparents on the land when they were young, especially with their grandmothers, and they were able to share some of their knowledge of the old ways about living off the land. Some additional individuals became participants as the research developed, though they were not interviewed formally.

Biographical information and full personal profiles of each knowledge holder is provided in this chapter and provides a glimpse into the lives and experiences of the individuals interviewed about this trail. It points to a multicultural connection to the trail that exists in the profiles of the people who were interviewed. For example, in a 1993 interview, Archie Simpson said that he used both languages because his mom was Chipewyan and his dad was Cree. The knowledge of all these individuals demonstrates that a strong connection still exists to the Lake One Prairie area even though people may not have travelled in this area for many years. Based on my experience working with the communities over the years, it seems this is one of the last generations to have this knowledge – also known as “bush” knowledge.

Table 5.1 People Interviewed¹⁸

| NAME | AFFILIATION |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Lawrence Cheezie | Smith's Landing First Nation |
| Philip Cheezie (1932 - 2014) | Smith's Landing First Nation |
| Charlie Simpson | Mikisew Cree First Nation |
| Lawrence Vermillion | Mikisew Cree First Nation |
| Fred Vermillion | Mikisew Cree First Nation & Former WBNP employee (date) |
| Gordie Masson | Former WBNP employee (1961- 1988) |
| Don Huisman | Former WBNP employee (1981- 1989) |
| Curtis Bourke | Fort Smith Métis Council & fire crew, WBNP (2004-2016) |
| Lois Bourke | Fort Smith Métis Council |
| Archie Simpson (Transcript) | Mikisew Cree First Nation & former WBNP employee |
| | |

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Table 5.1 lists the individuals I interviewed and one interview transcript that I reviewed from a previous project. All of these contributed to the research in some way. Later, I completed brief profiles for each of the five trappers I interviewed, who are members of the three families of the GTA 1209. This broadened my understanding of their connections to the Lake One Trail and study area. I also spoke briefly on the phone to Gerry Cheezie (brother to Lawrence and Philip Cheezie) about known legends in the park, and Sonny Flett in Fort Chipewyan who had also worked for the park at Lake One. However, I did not use information from them. Unfortunately, no women were available to assist with this project.

Family History of Lawrence Cheezie and Philip Cheezie

Lawrence and Philip Cheezie's mother was Helene Aze, a Dene from Fond-du-Lac and Black Lake, Saskatchewan. Aze means 'small' or 'little' so she was known as "Little Helen." Her parents descended from the "Caribou Eaters," Chipewyans who continued to follow the barren-ground caribou.¹⁹ Their father was Louison Tchize, a Chipewyan from Garden River and Fort Vermillion whose parents were originally from the House Lake settlement at Birch River in WBNP. They married in 1924 (Pat McCormack, personal communication, April 2018). Louison's father was Michel Tchize whose last name spelled Tzhi'ze means "Little Lynx."

Photo 5.1 Philip Cheezie, 2014 (1932 -2014)



Source: L. Peterson

¹⁹ There are still descendants of the 'Caribou Eaters' in the smaller communities around the north including Fort Fitzgerald, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution and Fond de Lac, Saskatchewan (Sandra Dolan, personal communication 2018).

Philip Dolphus Cheezie

Philip was Chipewyan Dene and a member of the Smith's Landing First Nation in Fort Fitzgerald, AB. He was born on March 30, 1932 and delivered by a midwife at Johnson Lake on the Birch River in WBNP. From there his family moved to a settlement near the mouth of the Birch River (Delta) to a place he called *Chi la tua* meaning "Point Lake" in Chipewyan and also known as House Lake (Philip Cheezie 2010). His family lived at House Lake until he was three. His grandfather, Michel Tchize was the chief at the time and had a store on the Birch River. While living at House Lake, Philip had older siblings who passed away – 2 older brothers and one sister from the flu and smallpox epidemics. They moved to the Peace River in 1935. Many other families from House Lake also relocated to the Peace River, and eventually the House Lake settlement was abandoned.²⁰ His family followed a winter dog team overland trail from Lake Claire to Peace River. When he was ten years old, they travelled back to House Lake by dog team to trap muskrats, using similar overland trails on the shores of Lake Claire (Philip Cheezie 2010). Philip spent most of his childhood out on the land but also attended mission (residential) school for a short time in Fort Chipewyan. He almost died in the mission had his dad not taken him out to live in the bush on the Peace River with his parents trapping until he was 18 or 19 years old. In his younger days, he and his dad Louison were known to have the fastest dog team around. They had well trained dogs and took care of them really well (L. Cheezie personal communication, 2015). Later he also trapped in the French Lake area and travelled to Fort Chipewyan by dog team at Christmas and Easter; he described this trip as "a long ways to

²⁰ House Lake was the location of an early Chipewyan settlement near Birch River on the southwest shore of Lake Claire in the Peace Athabasca Delta. A survey was conducted of one of these settlements and the associated graveyard in 2010-2011.

[Fort] Chip – 2 days travelling by dog team from Peace River.” Philip remembered travelling to Fort Chipewyan from Johnson Lake on the Birch River when he worked for WBNP. In the 1960’s, he worked at Sweetgrass returning to Johnson Lake later to fight fires. He also told a story about landing on the Peace River in the springtime by Beaver [float plane] and boating to the Jackfish Cabin to stay the night while fighting fires with John Simpson.

Philip described the trail from Peace Point to Lake One as an ‘old old trail.’ He knows the trail from hunting at Lake One for rats [muskrats], wolves, lynx and moose and collecting eggs from waterfowl. He remembers traveling the trail by foot – portaging a canoe from their cabin on the Peace River to the trail to Lake One then paddling on the lake [Lake One]. Sadly, Philip Cheezie passed away in September, 2014.

Lawrence Cheezie

Lawrence is Chipewyan Dene and a member of the Smith’s Landing First Nation in Fort Fitzgerald, AB. He was born on November 28, 1946, delivered by his grandmother in a teepee near the mouth of Jackfish River on the Peace River. He remembers being at a place with a waterfall shaped like a horseshoe. Lawrence is one of 13 children, but all his siblings died except his older brother Philip during influenza epidemics in the 1920’s and 1930’s before his family moved to the Peace River. Lawrence’s paternal grandparents are originally from House Lake in WBNP, an historic Chipewyan settlement on the south shore of Lake Claire near the Birch River Delta. Michel was the chief during this time and had a North West Company store near the mouth of the Birch River. Lawrence is one of 13 children but all his siblings died except his older brother Philip during a flu epidemic in the 1920’s and 1930s. Lawrence’s mother had told him they left the Birch River area because of the loss of

their children. They left everything including their houses and moved to the Peace River in 1935.²¹ Alexandre Vermillion was already living at Jackfish, and he and Louison were close friends. Louison operated an HBC Store on the Peace River and people came through by dog team to buy groceries. Lawrence recalled spending time with his grandparents, “being packed on my grandmother’s back, fed caribou tongue and hung on a tree in a moss bag, while she collected firewood in a dress that hung to her ankles, wearing fancy moccasins that were pointed” (Lawrence Cheezie 2014a).

Photo 5.2 Lawrence Cheezie, November 2014



Source: L. Peterson

²¹ A number of factors may have contributed to the abandonment of the House Lake settlements including famine (between 1913 and 1922) and disease. Influenza and smallpox were both in the area between 1919-1922 (see McCormack 2010:261, 268-271). Around the 1930’s to 1940’s the Chipewyan relocated from the Birch River area to Jackfish River and Peace River due to epidemics. Birch River is still associated with sickness for many people, and possibly they abandoned the area as a result of their grief, an old Chipewyan custom (cf. Cameron 1919:111)

Lawrence attended the Holy Angels Catholic Residential School for 8 years until he was 12 years old and then moved to Fort Smith, NT where he has lived since 1958. He met and married Agnes Bruno, a Dene from Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan and they raised a daughter named Stephanie and along with other extended family as well. He has worked on the railroad and oil rigs in the north and also owned his own carpentry business. Since 1995 he has worked for the Government of the NWT as a carpenter and instructor at Aurora College. Lawrence is an expert snowshoe maker and shares this knowledge during an annual snowshoe-making workshop. During the 1960s through the 1980s, he travelled occasionally between Peace River and Lake Claire, including various trips to Lake One Prairie. The first time Lawrence travelled the Lake One Trail was in 1980 with his dad and his brother Philip to hunt muskrats for two weeks in March, trapping rats along with Simpson family. Lawrence quit trapping in 1983 because the fur prices were so low he could not make a living at it.

Family History of Lawrence Vermillion and Fred Vermillion

Lawrence and Fred Vermillion grew up with 11 other brothers and sisters. Joe Vermillion, one of their brothers who also travelled through this area, passed away in 2014. Their father was Alexandre Vermillion from Jackfish River area, who married Madeleine Tourangeau, a Métis from Fort Chipewyan, in 1936. Her parents were Pierre Tourangeau and Mary Rose (née Mercredi). Pierre was Métis from Red River, Manitoba, and spoke mainly French but also some Cree. Pierre passed away in 1958.

The Vermillion family was originally from House Lake (Pat McCormack, personal communication, May 2018). Their paternal grandmother Bienvenue Vermillion (née Cayen) and her children moved to the Jackfish River Chipewyan community on the Peace

River due to deaths in the settlement in the 1920s. Alexandre Vermillion and his brother Frederick were very young at the time. Their family lived a nomadic way of life, moving in an area from Poplar Island on Lake Mamawi to the Coupé River and Fort Chipewyan, before settling on the Peace River. Lawrence Vermillion had the opportunity to spend time with his paternal grandmother Bienvenue on the Peace River and various places around Fort Chipewyan, before she died in 1960. She enjoyed living in the bush where she could live off the land, snaring rabbits, shooting grouse, setting fishnets, and trapping for squirrels in the winter. She lived in a tent most of the time, near where Lawrence's family lived.

Lawrence Vermillion

Lawrence Vermillion is a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, AB. He was born on February 28, 1939, delivered by a midwife on the Peace River, just below the Jackfish River in WBNP. This area was a traditional spring and summer fishing and gathering place. It was also known for the abundance of large game in the area. Lawrence attended the Holy Angels Catholic School in Fort Chipewyan when he was seven years old and lived in the convent (i.e., the residential school). After attending school for seven years, at the age of 13 he returned to his family on June 30, 1952.

When he was 19 (1958), Lawrence was admitted to the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta, for treatment for tuberculosis. While in the hospital he met his wife Dorothy Alook, whose family was from Wabasca and Fort Vermillion, Alberta. Once recovered, they attended school together for two years and were married in Edmonton on December 30, 1961. Later, Lawrence worked for WBNP as a tower person manning the Peace Point Tower for two summers in 1967 and 1969 and was stationed at Carlson's Cabin in 1968. From 1969-1973, Lawrence apprenticed in carpentry. After receiving his

journeyman's status he was transferred to Cambridge Bay, NT, where he worked for the territorial government for two years, in Yellowknife for two years and in Fort Smith during the summer months. In 1978, Lawrence went back to trapping full-time and lived in the Jack Fish River area (GTA#1209) with his family. They lived there year round and continued trapping and hunting for a living until 1986, at which time he went back to work in Fort Chipewyan, AB. Lawrence later attended the University of Alberta for a couple of years.

Photo 5.3 Lawrence Vermillion Located His Grandmother's Water Pail, 2014



Source: L. Peterson

The first time Lawrence travelled on the Lake One Trail was in 1955. He made numerous trips to Lake One after returning to the Peace River area as an adult, trapping full-time in 1978-79. During this time he learned how to build skiffs from Joe Dene, a Dene tradesman and carpenter who lived in the Peace River area who built local trapper cabins in his early years until he moved back to Lake Claire area to trap. Today, Lawrence continues to spend time on the land at his cabin on the Peace River with his grandsons and his granddaughter. Today, Lawrence continues to spend time on the land at his cabin on the Peace River with his grandsons and great granddaughter.

Fred Vermillion

Fred Vermillion is a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, AB. Fred Vermillion was born on March 8, 1940 in Fort Chipewyan, with the help of Jenny Flett, a well-known and respected midwife. He grew up with 12 brothers and sisters, but one older brother was lost in the bush at two years of age and an older sister passed away when she was a baby.

Fred attended the Holy Angels Catholic School in Fort Chipewyan when he was five years old and lived in the convent for ten months of the year. During the summer months he was back with his family and traveled by boat out on the land. His grandparents travelled with them, and Grandmother Bienvenue taught him how to snare rabbits and skin a moose and other bush skills. By this time she was hard of hearing, which made it difficult to communicate with her. They would travel all over Lake Mamawi, Lake Claire and up the Peace River living on wild meat, bear and moose.

After attending school for eight years, he reached grade seven and returned to his family full time when he was 13, in 1953. At this time, Fred stayed home for a couple of

years trapping with his mom and dad in the bush until he got his first summer job at the age of 15. He called it bush work, cutting and clearing transect lines to build roads for Uranium City. The following year he got a job at Swanson's Sawmill (in WBNP) and worked every year after that. At 18, he started working in different communities in the NWT including Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife. The farthest north he worked was on Great Bear Lake at the Echo Bay Silver Mine in 1968. At the time he was working for Fort Smith Construction, which was asked to renovate the camp buildings. He worked at Swanson's again for two months and then for the Government of the Northwest Territories Highways and Forestry living in Fort Smith for approximately five years.

Fred returned to Fort Chipewyan in the spring of 1972, trapping in the winter at Jackfish River and working in the summer months for WBNP. During this time he manned a fire tower in WBNP for seven or eight summers among other jobs in the park and also worked at Lake One building bison corrals. He travelled long distances by foot and dog team in the park as a trapper and park employee.

The first time Fred travelled on the Lake One trail was in 1953, the same year he came out of the convent. He travelled with his family by dog team leaving their cabin on the Peace River, travelling along the 30th baseline trail to Peace Point, up Lake One to Lake Claire, Hay River (Prairie River) and then on to Fort Chipewyan arriving home for Christmas. He made numerous trips to Lake One after returning to the Peace River area as an adult. Today, Fred still enjoys spending time on the land at his cabin on the Peace River with his family.

Photo 5.4 Fred Vermillion, 2015



Source: L. Peterson

Family History of Charlie Simpson

Charles Willard Simpson is a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. He was born November 28, 1948 in Fort Chipewyan, delivered by a midwife. Charlie's mother was Cecelia Cardinal, a Métis from Fort Chipewyan, AB. Her father's family had followed the fur trade to this area from Lac La Biche, Alberta. Her parents were David and Madeline Cardinal. Charlie's father, Archie Simpson was born in 1917, and was a

well-known Chipewyan trapper and hunter. He married Cecelia in 1944 (a short bio of Archie Simpson follows).

Charlie's paternal grandfather, Isidore Simpson, was a member of the Fort McKay First Nation until he and his family moved to the Peace River area and transferred to the Chipewyan Band.²² When the park expanded south of the Peace River in 1926, he then became a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in order to continue trapping ²³. He married Corone Benwoit, a Chipewyan from Fond de Lac, Saskatchewan and they had ten children. In the family tradition, Archie would say to Charlie that your "Mushum" (grandfather) was a good "hunter" and "provider."

Charlie is the oldest of five children who were all raised at Peace Point, at least until grade nine, when some of Charlie's siblings moved to Fort Smith to finish grade 12. At the age of six, Charlie began to attend residential school at the Holy Angels Catholic Church in Fort Chipewyan. He was there for ten years and lost his ability to speak the Cree language. During this time he was home only during the summer months, so he did not have many opportunities to go out on the land. In 1964, he attended high school in Grouard, Alberta.

Charlie's first time on the trap line was in the spring of 1968 when he was 19 years old. At this time, he did a spring hunt with his father and spent one month at Lake One trapping muskrats. They travelled together on the Lake One Trail by dog team for about three years. In 1974, Charlie moved to Fort McMurray to work for the oil industry. In the

²² Archie's father Isidore Simpson was a Chipewyan headman in the park until the transfer of park Chipewyan to the Cree Band in the 1940's (McCormack, personal communication 2017). The researcher transcribed an interview of Archie Simpson conducted for the "Fort Chipewyan Way of Life Study" (Adams and Associates 1998). He recalled his travels in the park growing up and raising a family at Peace Point. He was also a former WBNP employee.

²³ The 1926 expansion of WBNP greatly impacted trapping and access to the park south of the Peace River (See McCormack 1984).

late 1970's he moved back to Fort Chipewyan and married his wife Margaret (Maggie) Gladue. From 1978 to 1981, Charlie and his wife lived at Peace Point while their three children attended school there. At that time there were approximately ten families living at Peace Point.

Most of Charlie's time on the land was spent on his dad's trap line known as "Archie's Road," originally blazed by his grandparents in the 1920's. It follows the Garden River winter road bed west from Peace Point on the north side of the Peace River before diverging north to Robertson and Conibear Lakes (see map 8.1). At one time, Charlie had four or five uncles who trapped in the Lake One area. The last time he travelled on the trail to Lake One was in 1999 with his uncle John Simpson. John Simpson worked for WBNP in various capacities and was the last one to live at the Simpson homestead. He travelled the Lake One Trail often but died in the winter of 2003 when he had a surprise encounter with a buffalo while skidooing on the Lake One trail.

Archie Simpson

Archie was born in Fort McMurray or Fort MacKay in 1916. When Archie was 11 years old his family moved to the Peace River area in WBNP (1927). Initially, they stayed at Jackfish Creek and Robertson Lake travelling in the bush for six winters, while they lived in a tent before settling into a log cabin across from Peace Point. Archie was one of ten children raised in both the Cree and Chipewyan languages. He started trapping when he was 15 year old along with all his brothers.

Photo 5.5 Charlie Simpson, October 2014



Source: L. Peterson

Archie's mother was Coronne Benoit, a Chipewyan from Fond de Lac, Saskatchewan. Archie's father was Isidore Simpson Sr. originally from Fort Mackay, Alberta. He was a well-known Cree trapper and hunter. Archie married Cecelia Cardinal, a Métis from Fort Chipewyan in 1944. They had five children who grew up at Peace Point and understood the Cree language.

Archie trapped for approximately 59 years of his life, eventually moving back to Fort Chipewyan in 1987. He also worked at the sawmills on the Peace River, worked as a fire fighter for the park, built corrals at Sweetgrass and Lake One for the park, and helped to dispose of buffalo during an anthrax breakout. Sadly, Archie died in a house fire at Peace Point in 1996.

Table 5.2 Additional Participants²⁴

| NAME | AFFILIATION |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Donalee Deck | Parks Canada Archaeologist |
| Dalton Vermillion | Mikisew Cree First Nation |
| Sandra Dolan | Local Historian and Writer |
| Sharon Irwin | Resource Conservation, WBNP |
| Katie White | Resource Conservation, WBNP |
| George Peterson | Instructor, Environment and Natural Resource Program, Aurora College |
| Leslie Wiltzen | Park Warden, WBNP |
| Clifford Antoine | Mikisew Cree First Nation |
| Tom Bourke | Fort Smith Métis Council |
| Durwin Courtoreille | Fort Smith Métis Council |
| Joe Vermillion (1943-2014) | Mikisew Cree First Nation |

²⁴ Table 5.2 lists all the individuals who contributed to the project in some way and includes those who participated in the trail clearing and field survey.

Chapter 6 Studying the Lake One Trail: Learning From Being On The Land

The trail clearing and later trail survey provided opportunities to learn about the trail. The simple act of spending time on the land and on the trail facilitated memory recall and brought elders and youth together to learn directly from their experience of travelling together on the land. It revealed information about the trail that may not have otherwise been included. The trail itself was thus a medium or tool to help bring out the memories, stories, and knowledge of the trail and study area by people who had travelled the trail in the past. The act of trail clearing and documenting the condition or changes to the trail first hand based on previous travels can also be a source of information on climatic and environmental changes to the landscape over time (Gearheard et al. 2011: 43). In case of the Lake One Trail, we were able to see the impacts of forest fires.

What We Learned From Clearing the Trail

Prior to the trail clearing, a helicopter reconnaissance was conducted over the trail on March 21, 2014, to identify visible sections of the trail. Members of the group trapping area and parks staff took part. Participants were Fred and Joe Vermillion, Charlie Simpson, Park Warden Leslie Wiltzen, and me. Even with the spring snow covering much of the trail, this trip was helpful in locating the trail and getting a sense of its condition, especially the extent of the damage from forest fires. Large sections of the trail were hidden from the air by thick brush and thick standing trees. Those portions of the trail could only be studied on the ground.

The section of the cat road that was the focus of trail clearing was part of an area that had burned in 2005 and 2007. The relatively straight sections of the cat road, which

paralleled the south bank of the Peace River, helped to identify it. Between the helicopter's on-board global positioning system (GPS) and my hand held GPS unit, we recorded a track log which was a series of way points that recorded our flight path over a section of the trail. The elders pointed out particular points of interest along the trail. The information collected from the flight was then compared to existing maps and air photos to determine the location of the trail and the landscape of the Lake One Prairie.

The trail clearing itself consisted of two phases. The first phase of the trail clearing occurred during February and March 2014 and included locating and establishing the trail route. Initially we had hoped to clear a trail north of the Peace River in the fall with Charlie Simpson, but when that did not happen, we turned our attention to the Lake One Trail in the winter in order to utilize a funding grant I had been awarded that expired at the end of March. Clifford Antoine began the work but did not continue. Luckily, Curtis and Tom Bourke, two brothers, were available, and willing to do this work.

The trappers had suggested that the trail be cleared from the trailhead on the Peace River as far as the area known to contain the site of The Little Man. This spiritual site is located near the trail about halfway between the Peace River and the Lake One Prairie. The trappers felt it was important to locate and document the site to determine its condition. They feared that the site and its associated items had been burned or scavenged by people travelling through the area.

Curtis and Tom Bourke had never travelled on this trail before. Their first challenge was to find the trail after it had overgrown and been damaged by forest fire.

There was lots of deadfall and windfall²⁵, especially where it had burnt...lots of dry or burnt trees that had fallen down on the trail made it difficult to find the trail. At first the trail was not navigable and after chipping away at it each day for two weeks, running the skidoo over the trail back and forth, we packed down the trail and the snow...there is usually lots of snow this time of year...three feet of snow under the trail so it was difficult to maneuver the skidoo and it would often get stuck [Curtis Bourke 2014].

They cleared the top layer of snow and widened it to be able to take a skidoo to the start of the Lake One Prairie. In the process of navigating the trail, they were also creating their own landmarks that provided them a good sense of distance and understanding of how far they had cleared each day.

Photo 6.1 Phase 1 Cleared Section of Cat Road, February 2014



Source: L. Peterson

²⁵ Often used interchangeably, deadfall and windfall can be described as a tangled or scattered mass of fallen trees and branches. They are usually dead trees that have been blown down by wind.

To help organize the trail clearing work, I was guided by the information collected during the informant interviews, including the hand drawn and archival maps showing this area, Google Earth and the air photos collected of the area. These sources helped me to orient to the trail, to understand its length and the complexity of the trail network, the topography of the landscape, and landmarks along the trail. When I provided updates to the trappers about the status of the trail clearing, they also shared some of their recollections and what we might expect to find along the trail terrain.

The second phase of the trail clearing involved clearing a section of the trail wide enough to use an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and long enough to be able to walk a section of the trail with the elders. This phase of trail clearing occurred in late spring and summer, June 2014, three months after the first phase. The debris left behind after the snow melted was cleared. Curtis spoke about the signs that he looked for to find the trail:

Looking for the ridge of the old growth forest, which are the taller trees, whereas the trail itself would consist of mostly young willow and poplar growth. Red willow was also growing up on the actual trail itself. I looked for axe markings on the large trees, and these markings would often kill the tree itself leaving a dead standing dry tree [Curtis Bourke 2014].

Curtis also looked for cut stumps along the trail. He pointed out that the trail markings made in the past by an older generation are different from the ones he sees today and also from the ones he creates himself. Today, he uses “ribbon” (colored flagging tape) to mark the trail, as opposed to an axe, which is often used during survey work for marking trails.

Curtis Bourke (2014) commented, “it is hard physical work brushing and clearing a trail, it helps to get a system down [devise a system] – each person chooses a specific job or role.” Charlie Simpson (personal communication, November 13, 2013) spoke about the challenge of clearing his trail north of the Peace River with a skidoo and not

Photo 6.2 Phase 2 Cleared Section of Cat Road, June 2014

Source: L. Peterson

making very much progress even when cutting all day. When he would look back to see how far he had cleared, it was only a short distance. It is difficult to know how long it will take to clear a trail until you get out on the land and see how much deadfall and vegetation is there. Both Lawrence Vermillion and Leslie Wiltzen, experienced trail clearers, stated that the best time to clear trails was in the fall. The weather is cooler, there are no mosquitos, and there is little or no snow.

What We Learned From The Trail Survey

Information learned from the trail clearing was then considered in the actual work of the trail survey. The trail clearing made the survey possible by giving us access and an understanding of what to expect and how to manage logistics. Once we were walking the

trail, we continued to conduct some more clearing as we walked the trail. I began to learn that trail clearing is not just a one-time event, but a continuous activity, at least in forested areas.

During the survey, there were times when we stopped to build a fire, make tea, and have lunch. At these times, people told stories and shared their experiences of travelling; I documented these. For example, at the north end of the trail, the two standing Simpson cabins and their associated features were mapped and documented by the archaeologist. The elders spoke about their historic and cultural connections to the place. During this time, one of the elders immediately started to clear the vegetation away from around the perimeter of the Isidore Simpson cabin, in addition to stacking wood that was found during the process. It didn't take long before a brush pile was made of cut and broken branches, and it was a perfect opportunity to build a fire and boil some tea while recording informal interviews with the elders.

I saw how the elders interacted with each other on the land, observing how they responded or reacted to being on the trail. After spending a short time at the site, it was not long before people mentioned that there were other cabins in the area, which prompted us to head into the bush to look for the cabin footprints of three more cabins located east of the Simpson cabins, which we mapped. The trappers had not realized initially that we would be interested in knowing about them and that they were also important to the documentation of the trail. Most traditional land use studies are done

**Photo 6.3 Lawrence Vermillion Pointing to Location of Cabin Foundations
October 2014**



Source: D. Deck

in communities using maps; we discovered how inadequate they are when compared with being out on the land itself. It is more than simple “ground-truthing”; it is being oriented to the cultural landscape and hearing the oral traditions that go with places.

My own role was one of “participant-observer.” Wolcott reiterates that the key to participant observation is to focus on participating more, and “we find that we do many things.” “Be guided by intuition and common sense ... as fellow human beings, participating in the activities of others in the hope that those others would participate in their [our] research” (2005: 94-95). A good example of this principle in action occurred when participants helped to tidy up around the Simpson cabin, clearing vegetation from the cabin

and later covering the roof of the cabin with a tarp. Such activities are rarely planned but occur as people spend time on the land and become inspired to work together.

While in the field, I took note of my own observations about how the survey unfolded and how people moved on the landscape, observing them on the trail and how comfortable they seemed in the environment. For example, I saw the efficiency of people on the trail, their ease of navigating the trail and comfort moving around in the bush, making decisions and finding the resources in a way that seemed effortless. I was also interested in the interactions between people and witnessed the transfer of knowledge between Lawrence Vermillion and his grandson, Dalton (as well as to the rest of us). This was a clear benefit of walking the trail and supported the transmission of knowledge to all of us.

Photo 6.4 Speaking with Charlie Simpson at the Simpson Homestead, October 2014



Source: D. Deck

Chapter 7 Lake One Trail Attributes

This chapter presents what was learned about the Lake One Trail and associated cultural resources, based on the oral history interviews, trail clearing, trail survey, and primary sources. It was not feasible to study the entire network of trails within the Lake One Study Area, so it was decided to focus on the 10 kilometer length called “Lake One Trail.” It was also not feasible to study even the entire length of this trail, because only a portion had been cleared. In the end, we walked two sections. The first section was at the north end where the original trail had started as a dog team trail and then had been bulldozed by park staff to become a cat road. We walked approximately three and a half kilometers from the trailhead at the Peace River to the end of the cleared section of trail. This brought us to within two kilometers of the Lake One Prairie. The second section was the southern section within the study area called Wolf Ridge, thanks to transport by a parks helicopter. We walked along Wolf Ridge from the Lake One Dune site to the squeeze chute on the prairie and then, back onto the ridge to the parks historic tent camp site. The trail itself continues on to more southern locations. While we were unable to survey the middle section of the trail, we flew over the trail in this area and other trails in the Lake One Prairie.

As shown on the Lake One Trail study map (Map 7.1) there are multiple cultural resources on or in the vicinity of the trail and other secondary trails in the study area. These were identified during the interviews and also during the survey. We located and visited some of them. The range and number of cultural resources identified within the study area point to the multi-generational and multicultural use of the trail over time by both First Nations and park staff. As a synopsis of the natural attributes observed by the knowledge holders at the Lake One Prairie is provided later, which indicates the types of resources

harvested within the study area by Aboriginal occupants. This summary of resources supports the seasonality of the trail and indicates the season the resources were harvested and their location. When known, it also gives a date of when they were harvested or observed in the area.

The chapter ends with an account of how the Lake One Study Area relates to the seasonal cycle – a typical year – of the First Nations who used this trail. It is based on the memory and experiences of the informants, especially Lawrence Vermillion, who talked about the first time he travelled through the area with his family in the 1950's.

As described, the Lake One Trail study is divided into three main segments: the northern section, the middle section and the southern section (Map 7.1). The *northern* section begins at the trailhead on the Peace River and includes A, B and C sections and their associated resources surveyed within these segments (see Map 7.3). The *middle* section of the trail was the unsurveyed group of trails referred to as the D section, and it includes the junction where the dog team trails branch off the cat trail. This large area encompasses the Lake One Prairie and includes the three shallow lakes labeled Lake One, Two and Three; the earlier cat road segments of 1945; and the sites known as The Little Man and the Wolf Observation Tower. It ends where the two dog team trails merge as one on Lake Three, and includes the resources listed as D. The *southern* section is labeled E and is the south section of trail walked during the field survey (Map 7.5). It includes resources documented along Wolf Ridge and those in the prairie just south of the ridge.

The Lake One Trail: A Brief Overview

This trail account begins at Peace Point and then moves south across the Peace River to the trailhead. It ends at the west end of Wolf Ridge. The description will include information

about the trail in earlier years, from the 1950s to the 1980s, before the forest fires of 2005 and 2007 burned it. Charlie Simpson, Lawrence Vermillion, and Lawrence Cheezie all described the Lake One Trail as a main artery or highway, which intersected many other trails. The trail is mainly oriented in a north-south direction between the Peace River and Lake Claire. Other trails branch out from this main trail and connect with more distant trails in all directions, which means that there was more than one access point to the Lake One Prairie. One of the main challenges of mapping the Lake One Trail was the difficulty of documenting only one trail without referring to all the others. The majority of the trails mapped were winter trails; however, they also include walking trails used at other seasons. Today, these trails are commonly referred to as trap lines, because trap lines are all situated with respect to trails.

From the air photos and the topographical maps, I could see that the Lake One Trail starts at a higher elevation near the banks of the Peace River, where it is mainly forested, and then moves to lower flatter areas dominated by muskeg and grassy prairies. Topography relates to vegetation and habitat: “[On] higher ground you find spruce, poplar and jackpine, and the lower areas consist mainly of muskeg with tamarack, willow and poplar” (Lawrence Cheezie, personal communication, April 2015). The eskers are raised features with their own vegetation. They appear to make up a portion of the watershed boundary of the Lake One Prairie and were clearly visible in some of the air photos.

While the exact age of the trail is unknown (and probably unknowable), it was remembered as being used by Charlie Simpson’s grandparent’s generation, which takes the

trail back in time to the late 19th century, and possibly much earlier.²⁶ For the purposes of this study, it dates back at least to the time of Treaty No. 8 in 1899.

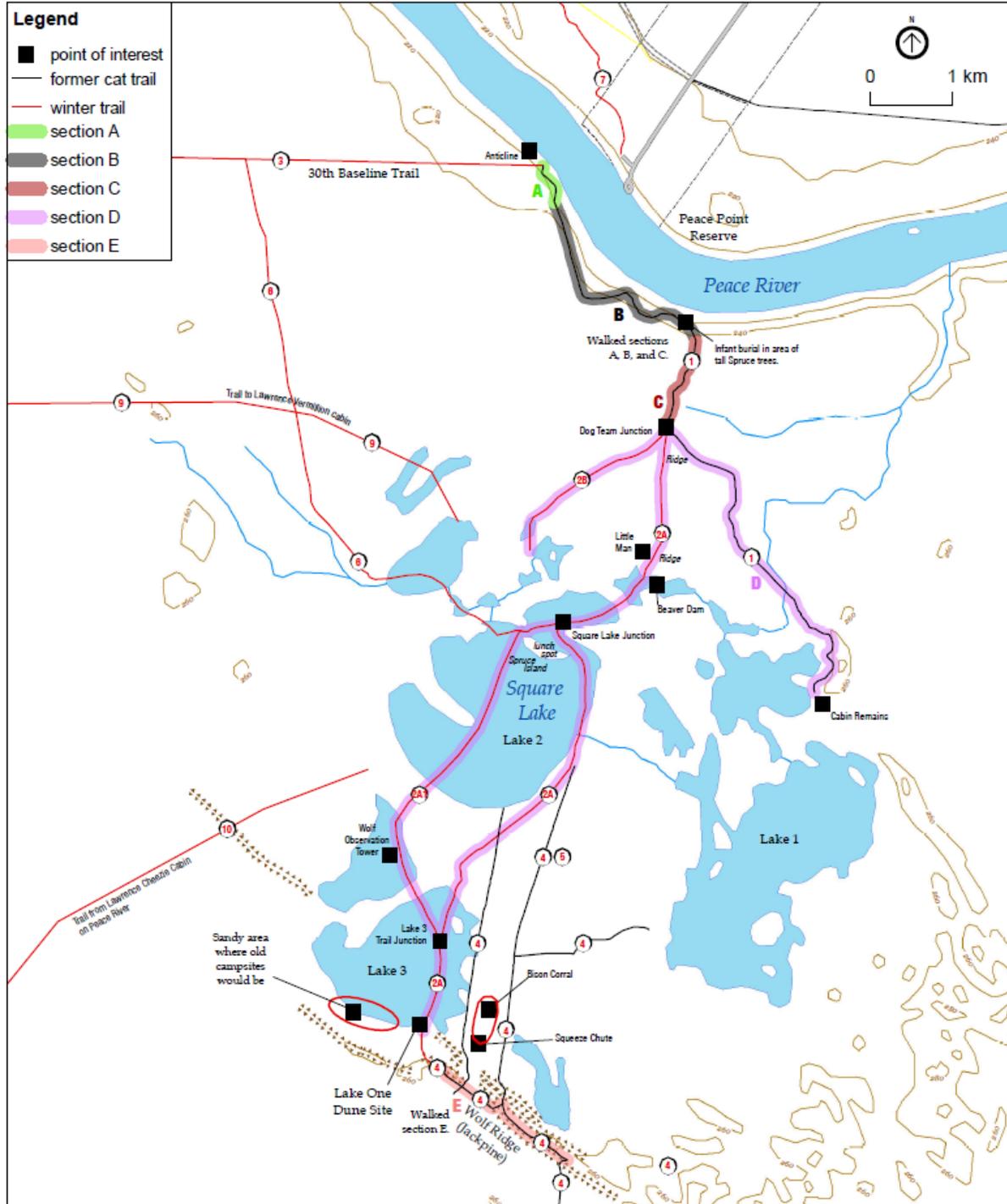
During the time of the informants' parents and grandparents, about 20 families would camp around Lake One in the springtime. "People camp any place – usually the higher poplar ridges" (Fred Vermillion, personal communication, 2014). "People just camped all over ... they were mostly Chip [Chipewyan] but also Cree. There was lots of muskrat and lots of trappers long ago. My dad and uncle trapped here" (Lawrence Vermillion 2014b). Fred Vermillion also talked about old campsites located on the sand hill along the south shore of Square Lake (personal communication, 2014).

Peace Point

Although Peace Point is not on the trail we surveyed, the trail continues north of the Peace River from Peace Point to other locations. Peace Point contains an important archaeological site, was an important historic winter settlement location, and was chosen in 1986 by Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) for one of its reserves. Today, there are no permanent residents at Peace Point; however, eight buildings still stand, and some cabins are used seasonally. Peace Point is linked to Fort Smith by the Pine Lake Road, an all-weather road. The highway also connects to a winter road to Fort Chipewyan.

²⁶ Isidore Simpson was born or baptized in 1889 (Pat McCormack, personal communication, May 2018)

Map 7.1 Lake One Trails in the Study Area



Source: Drafted by Craig Brigley based on information provided by L. Peterson

Legend: Lake One Trail sections (north A-C; middle D; south E): (1) Lake One cat trail; (2A) Lake One trail winter trail; (2A1) Lake One trail winter loop; (2B) Dog team trail to lakes north of Square Lake; (3) 30th Base Line trail; (4) 1948 cat roads; (5) Section of L. Vermillion's lynx trail that follows cat road; (6) L. Vermillion's road; (7) 1958 winter road; (9) Trail to Lawrence Vermillion's cabin; (10) Trail to Lawrence Cheezie's cabin on the Peace River. Trail 8 is not situated in the study area. For full trail descriptions see Trail Table 1 in Appendix H.

In the mid- 1950's, Peace Point was known locally as "Prairie Point" (Fred Vermillion 2015). This succession of prairie to forest began before Raup's (1935) visit to the Peace Point area in 1928. However, the rich archaeological evidence at the Peace Point site along with the present MCFN Peace Point settlement is a strong indication of the long history of occupation at this location along the Peace River. Thus, it is appropriate to begin with a brief description of the archaeological site.

The field team located the block excavation of the Peace Point archaeological site done by Marc Stevenson in 1981 (Stevenson 1986:43-44). It was an opportunity to look at the condition of the site and also provided a learning opportunity on how to identify and record additional artifacts found *in situ* (Deck 2017:12). (The research team did not do any excavations.) It appeared that the excavated area had not been backfilled, which is standard practice today. The straight edges of the rectangular block made it easy to locate along the riverbank even with the vegetation growth. Artifacts were found eroding from the riverbank east and west of this block. Archaeologist Donalee Deck noted that 11 organic layers were exposed along the riverbank. The artifacts we found included medium/large mammal bone, debitage (stone flakes left over from making stone tools), and a variety of stone tools including scrapers, a graver (wood/bone working tool), and cutting implements (a biface or stone knife and utilized flakes). The stone materials included both locally available Flint Creek chert and a salt and pepper quartzite thought to originate west of the park in northern Alberta.

The exposed layers along the edge of the riverbank examined by Deck correlates to the cultural layers described by Stevenson during the 1981 excavation. A small number of faunal remains and a variety of stone flakes also correlate to Stevenson's findings and

interpretation of the site as being a workshop and stone-tool manufacturing site (Stevenson 1986:40-41; Deck 2017).

The Lake One Trail: North Section

This section is divided into three segments, labeled A, B and C, containing sub-segments.

A. The Lake One Trailhead

The trailhead is on the south side of the Peace River. There is a gradual climb up a rocky beach from the boat landing to the trail. It is located within a partially cleared area of poplar stand, an opening within a few smaller stands of spruce trees that helps to identify it along the riverbank. A number of cultural and natural resources are associated with this location.

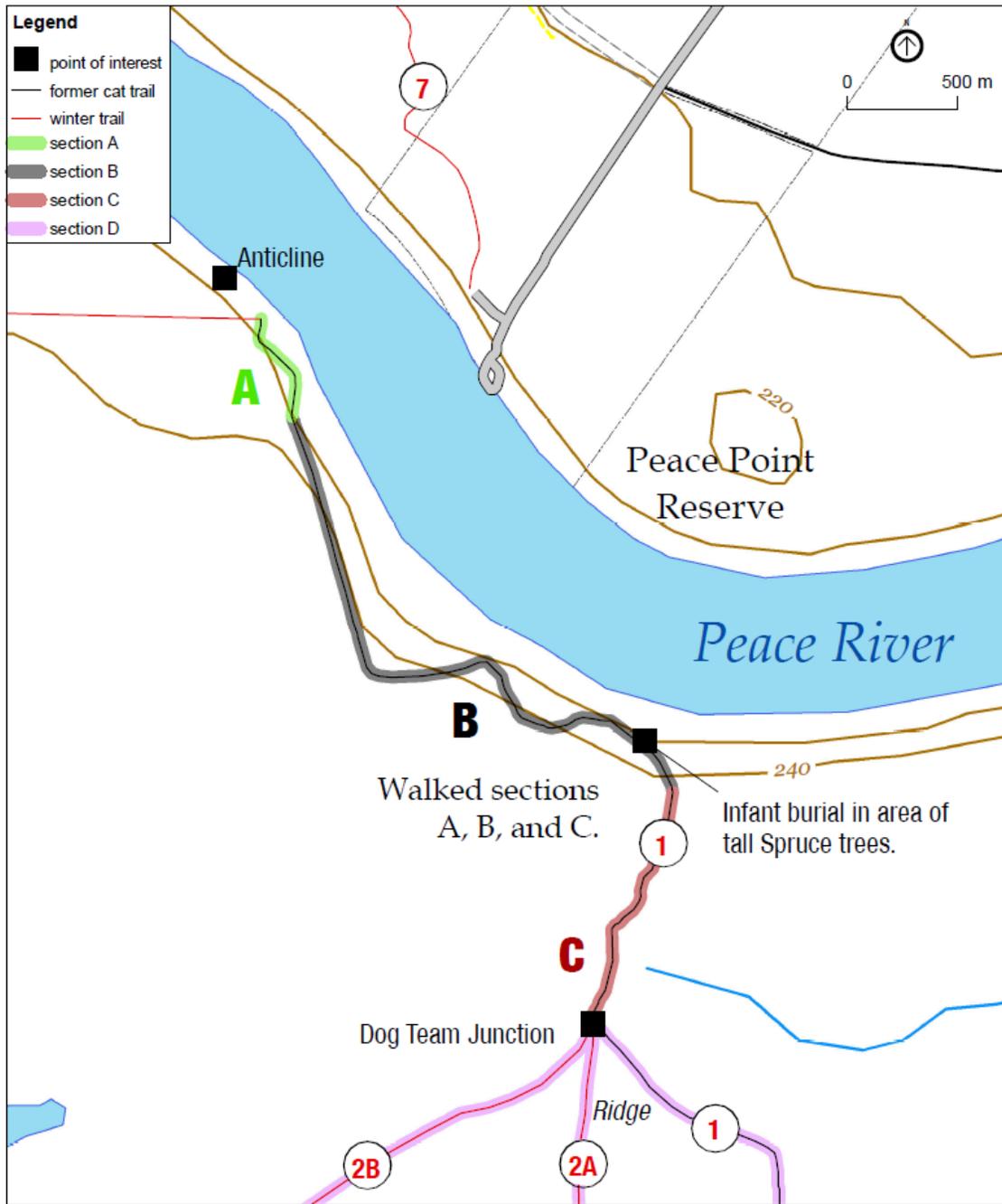
A.1 Karst Anticline and Red Rock Island

Looking across the Peace River from Peace Point, one cannot help but notice the unique geological formation known as a karst anticline noted on the south bank of the Peace River, just 100 meters up river from the Simpson Homestead. It is a feature made out of sedimentary rock that is banded with light and dark lines. Known locally as “the church” for its odd shaped cathedral door and majestic appearance on an otherwise ordinary section of riverbank, it is considered to be a reverent spot.

Philip Cheezie, Fred Vermillion, and Don Huisman recalled stories about it.

Huisman described the story of “little people” who came out of the anticline. Apparently, if you stare into the bottom of the anticline long enough, at the little circle (Huisman 2014).

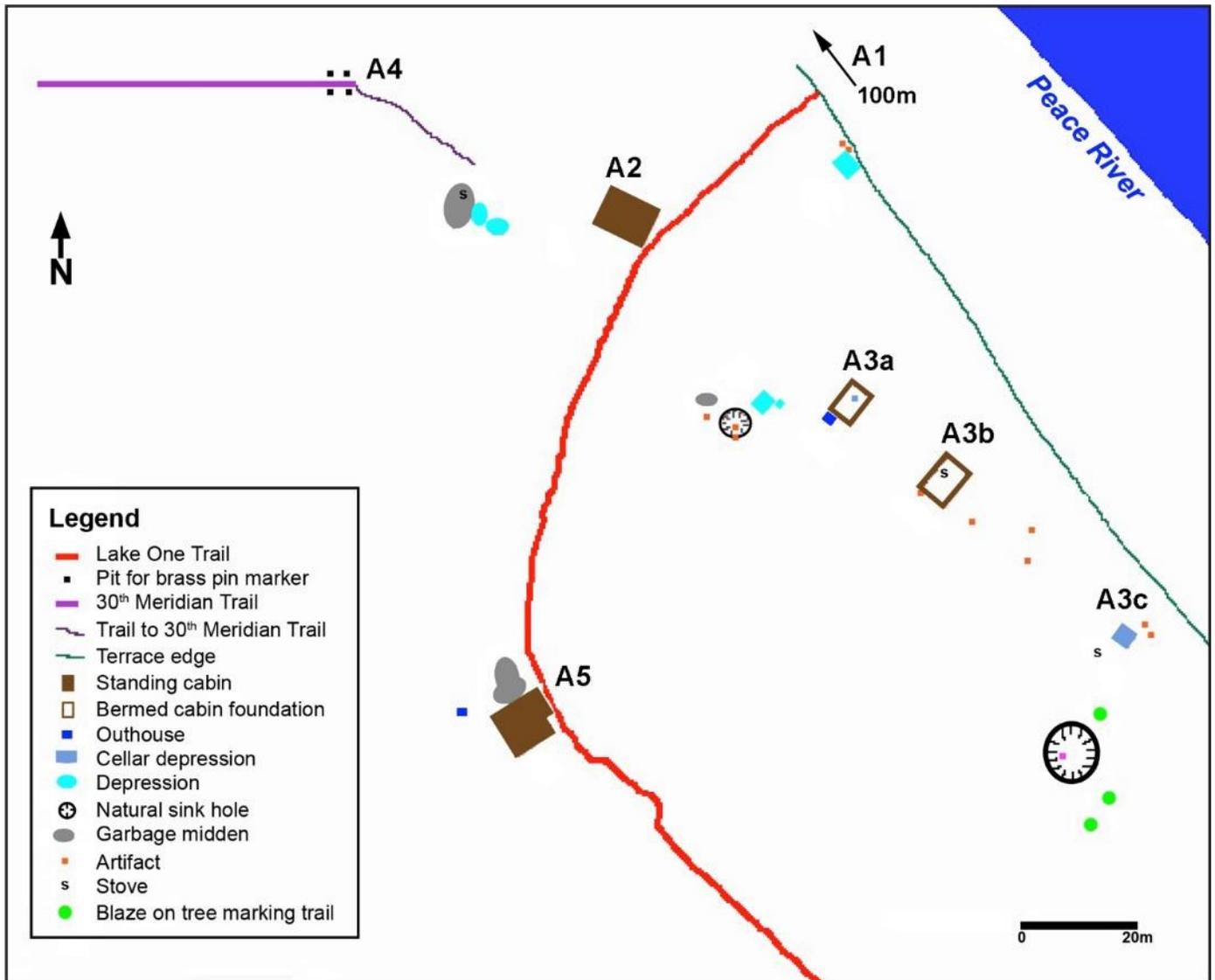
Map 7.2 North Section of Lake One Trail



Source: Drafted by Craig Brigley based on information provided by L. Peterson

Legend: Lake One Trail north section A, B and C: (1) Lake One cat trail; (2A, 2B) Dog team trails leading onto prairie and trail section D.

Map 7.3 Lake One Trailhead



Source: Deck 2017 modified by Peterson

Legend: Simpsons cabins site (34R197) along the Peace River and Lake One Trail (2469R): (A1) Karst Anticline; (A2) Isidore Simpson cabin; (A3a) Archie Simpson cabin foundation; (A3b) Billy and Pauline Simpson cabin foundation; (A3c) Bienvenue Vermillion cabin foundation; (A4) 30th Meridian Base Line Trailhead; and (A5) John Simpson collapsed cabin.

“little people” will appear especially at dawn or dusk, and they will give you advice (Huisman 2014). Fred Vermillion’s uncle told him a story that relates to the anticline and another spiritual site three kilometers up the Peace River known as “Red Rock.”²⁷ A single paddler was chased by two people from this island to the “church”. However, the paddler was able to escape from the bad people by entering the “church,” because the bad people were not able to enter. It is unclear whether he equated the bad people with the “little people.”

Photo 7.1 Anticline (1932)



Source: Soper fonds, University of Alberta Archives, 79-21-35-418

²⁷ The island is known locally by a few different names, including “Drum Island”, “Red Stone Island,” and “Firestone Island” (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith 2012).

A.2 Isidore Simpson Log Cabin

Several features associated with the trailhead are collectively referred to as the “Simpson Homestead” (A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5). Isidore Simpson’s one and a half-story cabin is well known. It is located 40 meters from the riverbank. Adam Dene and Isidore Simpson built it in 1933, using axes and dovetailed construction (with the help of Isidore’s sons who lived nearby).²⁸ They were replacing an older cabin that was destroyed by a flood in 1932. It sits directly on the older foundation. Adam Dene was a Chipewyan who lived just up the Peace River beside the Cheezie cabin on the north side of the river. He was considered very skilled with an axe, and the cabin has been described as “well built by a local carpenter who took the time to do a good job” (WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2000). Known locally as the Simpson Cabin, it is one of only two historic cabins from this time period that we know are still standing today in the park²⁹. Today, it is surrounded by poplar trees, but in the past the area was cleared and had a clear view of the river from the cabin.

In Donalee Deck’s description (2017:6):

The [Simpson] house had an extension on the west side that was used as a porch and storage area. At the back of the house was an L-shaped garden for potatoes, carrots and turnips. Other features associated with the Isadore Simpson cabin included an outhouse, warehouse (identified by Lawrence Vermillion), garbage midden (post-occupation, west of the cabin), a second garden area, stage for hanging fish for the sled dogs, garbage midden in a sink hole and an unidentified depression.

Isidore Simpson and his wife Couronne (née Benoit) had eleven children – eight boys and three girls – who grew up in this house. Later, Charlie himself and ten other

²⁸ A dovetail is a special kind of tight interlocking joint.

²⁹ Another historic cabin is the Jackfish Patrol cabin, up the Peace River approximately 25 km from the Simpson cabin.

Photo 7.2 Isidore Simpson Log Cabin, October 2014

Source: L. Peterson

brothers and sisters all slept on the upper level, and he spent time here until he was six years old (1948-1955). In 1955 his family moved out, and he “never returned to this house as a child.” Later, Charlie built a house across the river at Peace Point where he lived in 1977-78 with approximately 10 other families. Fred Vermillion lived with Archie and John Simpson in the Simpson cabin when he was between the ages of 20-25 years old because he didn’t want to stay alone at Jackfish when his uncle was away. This was before John Simpson built his own cabin in the area (Fred Vermillion 2015). Isidore Simpson’s son (and Charlie’s uncle) Billy and his wife Pauline (née Cheezie or Aze) and their large family were the last to live in the Simpson cabin.

A.3 Three Cabin Foundations

Charlie Simpson and Lawrence Vermillion pointed out that there were three other cabin foundations in the vicinity of the Simpson cabin “in a line somewhere here” to the east of Isidore Simpson’s cabin, along the Peace River. We located these foundations, which were associated with a couple of large depressions, one filled with metal artifacts or refuse, and the other containing bison bones.

A.3.a Archie Simpson Cabin Foundation

Archie’s cabin is located about 150 meters east of the Simpson cabin. There was a bermed foundation, where the earth had been piled up around the base of the logs for warmth. Inside the foundation was a cellar depression. The foundation was overgrown with trees and other vegetation. The exact date the cabin was built is not known, but Lawrence Vermillion recalled that the cabin was already built when he travelled through the area for the first time when he was 12 years old. This cabin along with Billy’s cabin stood until at least 1968.

A.3.b Billy (Archie and John Simpson’s brother) and Pauline Simpson Cabin Foundation

This feature was located about 20 meters east of the Archie Simpson cabin. It also had a bermed foundation (20’ x 30’) overgrown with trees and vegetation. A cast iron stove was located within the foundation, and there was a scatter of metal cans to the east of the cabin, which included two Rogers Golden syrup cans (Deck 2017: 18). Rogers Syrup was a very popular food in the past to eat with bannock (Pat McCormack, personal communication, May 2018).

A.3.c Bienvenue Vermillion Cabin Foundation

This cabin was 40 meters farther to the east and belonged to Frederick and Lawrence Vermillion's grandmother. The only visible evidence was a cellar depression. The cabin was 12'x14' and built in 1953. According to Lawrence Vermillion, the cabin was here only two years before it was dismantled and floated down river to Baril Creek, where Bienvenue's grandson, Albert Gladue, was living. Lawrence explained that an Indian agent at the time built her cabin with the help of Isidore Simpson, but that they had built the cabin in the wrong location. Bienvenue wanted to be closer to her family at the mouth of Jackfish River where she had a tent, and she only spent a few months in the newly built cabin.

Lawrence pointed out his grandmother's water pail and Fred's chainsaw blade hanging in a tree north of the cabin foundation. There were also axe cut blazes on three trails southeast of the foundation/cabin, which marked where she set rabbit snares, which would have been used all year round. The rabbit snares defined a small trail. Bienvenue was a capable bush woman in her own right. She caught her own food and knew how to set and make rabbit snares and traps along with many other skills. Lawrence described in detail how she made the snare a particular way and how it killed the rabbit quickly and therefore the meat tasted better. In answer to my question about how she learned these skills he replied, "she must have been raised that way as daughters were taught how to set snares and catch squirrels in the winter." Lawrence also raised his daughters this way.

A.4 30th Meridian Base Line Trail³⁰

The last feature in this vicinity is the access to the 30th Meridian Base Line trail, about 50 meters behind and to the west of the Simpson cabin. The access point is still visible, though it is overgrown with vegetation. Lawrence Vermillion guided us to this trailhead and he called the trail his “road,” which also meant his trap line. This trail leads to his cabin just above the Boyer Rapids on the Peace River. He also referred to the trail as a “portage” between his cabin and the Simpson homestead. It is the “main road” from Lawrence’s cabin and runs straight “across country.” Philip Cheezie (2014) described this trail as “a nice wide trail but the trail is gone now, it burnt. Before the fire, you could travel all the way to Fort Chipewyan in the wintertime from my cabin on the Peace River [using a portion of the 30th Meridian Base Line trail].” Government surveyors cleared the trail when Lawrence Vermillion’s father was 17 years old (c. 1919), just after the First World War had ended. During the field survey we located a long brass pin with a flat circular top in the middle of the trail and around the pin were four deep holes marking its location. As described by Lawrence Vermillion (2014):

They surveyed a brass pin every mile using six horses packing their supplies and equipment and cleared the Base Line 10-12 feet wide. The [original] purpose of the trail is still unknown, but trapping was good some years on this trail for lynx, marten, and fishers. It was also a good area to find cranberries and moose berries [also known as highbush cranberries].

Lawrence was the last person to clear this trail, 20 years ago. At the time he also cut a “road” or trap line from the Base Line trail directly across to Lake One. Lawrence Cheezie (2015) told a story about how his father once left him in the sled on the 30th Meridian Base

³⁰ The 30th Meridian Base Line trail was a segment of a proper Dominion Land Survey (DLS). There may be more information about this trail in the Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Line trail while he went looking for a lynx trap. Apparently a caribou had stepped in their lynx trap, and his dad found the trap in the bush. The trail was described as having lots of lichen – a rich winter food source for caribou before it was destroyed by forest fires.

Leaving the Simpson cabin, the trail leads south and rounds its first corner into an older growth of spruce and poplar stands where we came across another cabin that was built by John Simpson. This collapsed cabin was also documented.

A.5 John Simpson Collapsed Cabin

The remains of John Simpson's cabin were 100-200 meters further along the trail from Isidore Simpson's cabin. It was a more recently built cabin located on the trail itself. John was Charlie's uncle and another of Isidore's sons. He built this saddle-notched log cabin himself in the 1980's.³¹

Photo 7.3 John Simpson Collapsed Cabin, October 2014



Source: Deck 2017

³¹ Saddle-notching refers to the way in which logs had rounded notches cut into them, which makes each notch look like a saddle.

Today, the roof has collapsed into the interior of the cabin, and the logs are rotting from water damage from a flood that took place in 1986. The cabin was abandoned, and John Simpson moved across the river to Peace Point. Lawrence Vermillion recalled having stopped at the cabin on his way back to his own cabin on the Peace River, either to sleep or have supper with John and his wife Annie (née Gibot). Annie was well known for her cooking. While listening to the stories I got a sense of how easy it was for Lawrence to pull up on his skidoo at the doorstep of these cabins. The importance of visiting was conveyed: enjoying the warmth of a home cooked meal and a good conversation after many hours alone in the bush. The trail continues south past the cabin along the 1965 cat road through a beautiful old stand of tall spruce trees.

B. Section Follows High Bank of the Peace River

Moving 400 meters up the trail, one has to climb a hill that is fairly prominent in this area. It was described as high and difficult to cut in years when there was lots of windfall. Navigating up this steep hill was one of the first challenges of trail clearing because the forest fire in 2007 had caused so much windfall; trees had falled over year after year. This section of the trail was once heavily timbered, but much it is now a mix of standing burnt spruce and aspen. For these heavily impacted areas after the forest fire, the trail would have been impassable without having been cleared. At the top of the hill, the forest becomes a predominantly deciduous forest, mainly poplar and aspen. It is all new growth since the forest fire, with an understory of thick windfall, including

Photo 7.4 Cat Trail Following High Bank of Peace River, October 2014

Source: L. Peterson

large spruce trees. The trail has fairly straight sections after the big hill, continuing over some small rolling hills. There is one sharp bend to the east, where the cat road levels off heading southeast, paralleling the high bank of the Peace River through thick forest. There are still sections bordering the high bank of the river that were not touched by forest fire and are still intact spruce. At some places along the way one can glimpse the Peace River. Both Lawrence and Charlie commented that before the forest fires, there were more large spruce trees as well as some jackpine found along the river. In other areas, a few more trees had blown down over the trail since the trail clearing just three months prior, including some of the large spruce.

B.1 Infant Burial Site

Along this section of the trail we looked unsuccessfully for an infant burial site. Charlie Simpson had mentioned how they would pass his cousin's gravesite when they walked along the trail on the way to Lake One. The burial was near the trail east of the Simpson's cabin – described as “somewhere in the tall spruce” just off the cat trail. He was buried in the late 1940's or early 1950's as a very small child. Charlie was not sure how he died but stated that at the time people were just buried where they died out on the land. We were unable to locate the gravesite, due to the thick understory of fallen tree debris from the forest fires. The trail passes through mostly spruce and poplar at this section of the trail, which follows the high bank of the river heading southeast.

Photo 7.5 Walking with Lawrence Vermillion Along Lake One Trail, October 2014



Source: Deck 2017

C. Section of Standing Burnt Jack Pine

The trail makes a wide bend and then heads south as it leaves the spruce forest that is still intact and enters another burned area. Most of the new growth since the fire is jack pine, “it’s all jack pine country...jack pine with spruce. It continues in a southwest direction for approximately one kilometer, and then approaches the first major jack pine ridge bordering the Lake One Prairie” (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b).

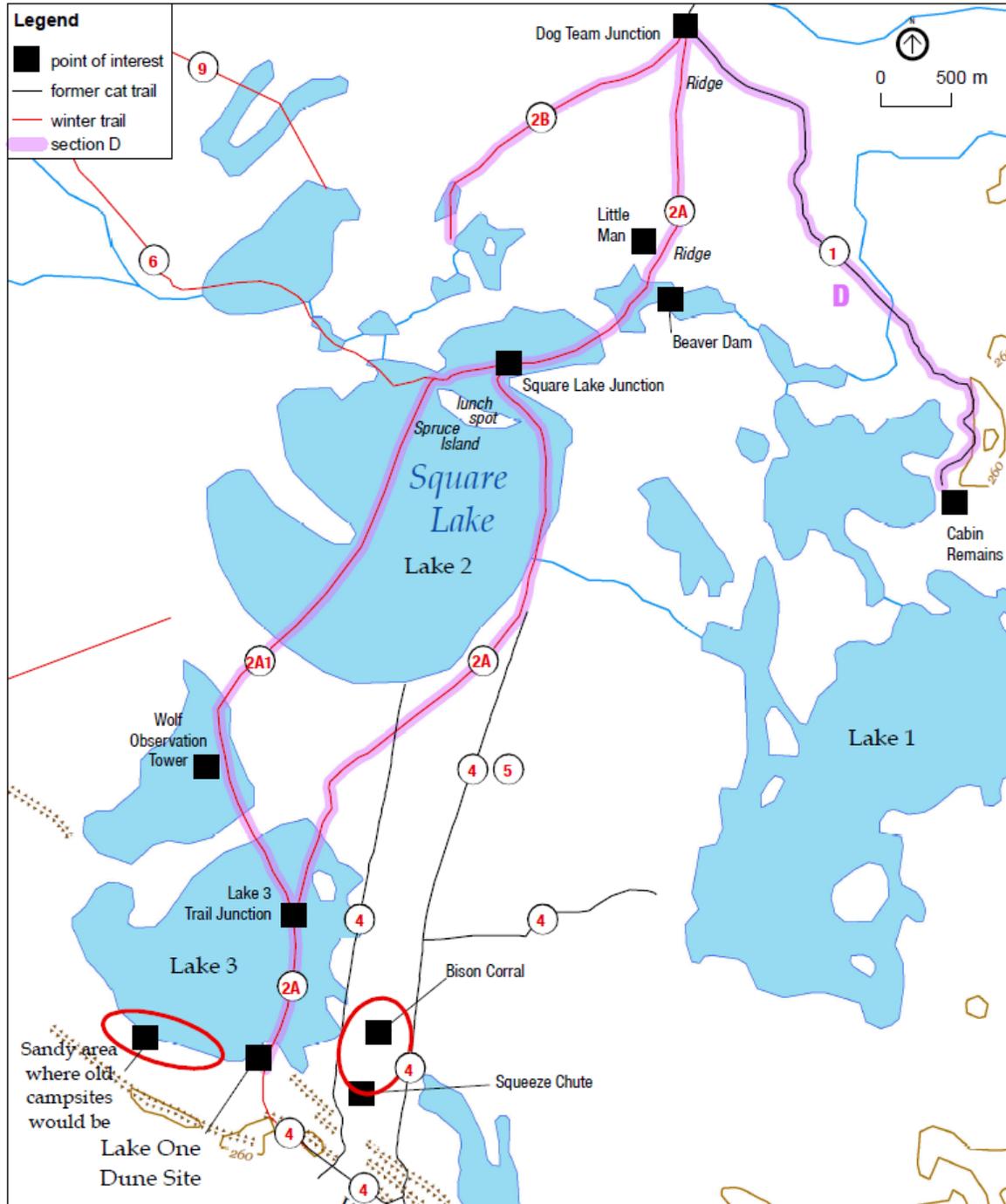
The Lake One Trail: Middle Section

There was a lengthy and complex set of trails and features that we were unable to survey directly. These are all contained within Section D. Information about them is based on maps, the fly-over, and local knowledge. The Lake One Trail (trail 2) is mapped and described in more detail, including both branches of the dog team trail that are actually the same trail that can be travelled in two different directions, form a loop and come together again and are considered the same trail. Other trails and resources noted and mapped in the area were informant based and are not described in the same detail.

Charlie Simpson spoke of travelling with his dad another four to five kilometers along the cat trail to trap in 1968, which led them to the eastern edge of the prairie and what appears on the topographic map to be the end of the cat trail. The cat trail continues southeast along a definite ridge that borders the northern edge of the Lake One Prairie and clearly differs from the dog team trails. It is much wider, straighter and more visible. One can follow the cat road along this ridge in a southeasterly direction.

Both Charlie and Lawrence Cheezie commented that it was easy to walk this section of trail, which may be because it became a cat trail in recent historic times. It was good walking in the springtime through spruce, poplar, and jackpine.

Map 7.4 Middle Section of Lake One Trail



Source: Drafted by Craig Brigley based on information provided by L. Peterson

Legend: Lake One Trail middle section (D): (1) south end of Lake One cat trail; (2A & 2A1) Dog team trails on the prairie; (2B) Dog team trail to lakes north of Square Lake; (4) Older 1948 cat trails; (5) Section of L. Vermillion lynx trail follows the cat trail; (6) Section of Lawrence Vermillion Road; (9) Trail to Lawrence Vermillion's cabin.

“The trail was on high ground so it was good walking. It was a well groomed trail – no deadfall, kept trail clean” (Lawrence Cheezie 2014). There were bison wallows along the trail, so the wildlife also used the trail to some degree, perhaps as a travel corridor. “This section of the Lake One Trail [along the cat trail] was also abundant with berries – saskatoon, blueberries, mooseberries [highbush cranberries], wild raspberries and juniper” (Charlie Simpson, personal communication, 2014b; 2014c). Following the cat trail will take you to the eastern edge of the prairie and the remains of two older cabins (see resource D.1).

Photo 7.6 Cleared Segment of Trail Surrounded by Dead Standing Trees, October 2014



Source: L. Peterson

D.1 Remains of Older Cabins and Semi-Subterranean Dwellings

Charlie Simpson mentioned remnants of two very old log cabins that date back before his dad Archie's time, on the eastern side of Lake One Prairie. In 2001 or 2003, they were still a few logs high. Semi-subterranean dwellings were also supposed to be in the vicinity. None of these features was located during the trail survey. However, Charlie remembered them well, because the two cabins were located half way to Lake One and were used as a navigation marker.

Don Huisman (2014), who worked for eight years in the 1980's as a park naturalist and warden for WBNP, described looking for three to five structures or pit houses buried in the ground in a row just off the main (cat) trail. He described them as situated on a sand ridge just before the low area of Lake One Prairie. Archie Simpson had told Huisman that three White trappers had occupied the 12 by 5 feet wide semi-subterranean cabins before the park was created and had been in the area only a year before they found out that the Great War was on and left (c. 1915; see McCormack 2010:266). They left all their valuables at The Little Man site. It is probable that Huisman is describing the same cabin remains as Charlie, but it would require further investigation to confirm.

Fred also described a similar dwelling that he came across in his travels made by a non-native trapper, where they had dug a hole in a sand hill and then "flocked" it up with logs, as opposed to building a berm.

The location of these two cabin remains is where the cat trail is shown to end on the 1,50,000 topographic map sheet. Looking at the map as well as on Google Earth, it was difficult to follow the trail past this point, because it became less visible as it approached the

northeast corner of the prairie. It appeared that the trail led to Lake 1 (as numbered by the informants), and this section of trail was not mapped or surveyed as part of the study.

D.2 Dog Team Junction and Associated Trails

Returning back to the where two narrow dog team trails branched off from the cat road, there is a split in the trail called a junction, which allows access to trails that branch south and southwest off the cat trail into the Lake One Prairie (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b). These trails leave jackpine forest and descend into an open meadow approaching the northern extent of Lake One Prairie. One of these dog trails (labeled as 2B on map 7.4) heads southwest to the smaller lakes north of Square Lake. The other dog team trail (2A) heads straight south over the ridge of spruce and poplar trees into low shrubby country and then onto a long prairie of willows and grasses. This prairie is fairly narrow for approximately one and a half kilometers, described as only 30 or 40 feet wide. The “road” goes right through it, bordered by spruce and poplar on both sides. After the long prairie the trail crosses the east end of a small spruce and poplar ridge. This ridge is also associated with the site of The Little Man.

D.3 The Little Man site, “Deneza”

Stories about the Lake One Trail are often associated with The Little Man. When asked about the site, Lawrence Cheezie (2014) recalled how the old people talked about it. He referred to it as *Deneza* in Chipewyan, meaning “little people living in hollow trees.” Three different people in the community told the story of The Little Man to Don Huisman (2014). The individuals all explained how their grandfather had walked in to Lake One to get food and had met a small short man halfway. This was The Little Man, who walked single file on the trail and led a group of seven to eight people. Their grandfather stopped to

talk to The Little Man about hunting, and in return The Little Man requested that they “save a little piece” for him.

Photo 7.7 Dog Team Trail Imprinted on the Lake One Prairie Landscape, October 2014



Source: L. Peterson

Legend: Lake One Prairie: (A) Flying over the Lake One Prairie (Section D); (B) Close-up of dog team trail; (C) Close-up of bison on the prairie.

These stories were handed down to Lawrence Vermillion from generations of his grandfather and uncles, who left offerings at the site before or after hunting. The reason why people left offerings was to make sure the water levels remained high and clean for the animals at Lake One, especially for the muskrat. Anything of value could be left as an offering, “some people would leave a trap or two, a nice butcher knife, cups or dishes and even their guns after a spring hunt” (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b). Fred described the feature as a wooden stump with stones laid around it, similar to a burial site. When resources were scarce, Lake One was a reliable place to get food, and people would place objects at the base of the carving prior to or after trapping and hunting in the area. Charlie remembers seeing remnants of a couple of canoes at the site in the late 1960’s. Charlie’s dad Archie had said that people offered rifles and things to The Little Man (Charlie Simpson 2014a). Objects made of metal such as guns, knives, axes or coins seemed to have the best luck (Fred Vermillion 2015). It was also a way to say thank you and show respect and gratitude. Although the Simpsons were Chipewyan, Crees are known for similar “offering poles” known as *manitohkan* (Mandelbaum 1979:226-7). Deck (2017:15) notes there are similar places and carvings by Crees in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, referred to as Kepochekan (also Kapoochican or farting god) along trails that have been documented (see Riddle 2000). A common thread to the stories associated with the face carvings is that individuals left offerings at the base of the carving for reasons such as safe passage on the lake, safe passage over rapids or a successful hunt.

A 1994 Parks Canada memo indicates that The Little Man was located approximately five kilometers north of the Lake One Dune site, based on information provided by John Simpson and parks staff Earl Wilson and Gord Antoniuk:

On May 10, 1994, the three of us located The Little Man, it is a stump approximately two feet high which has fallen over. In a ring around it are numerous pots, cups, live rounds of ammunition etc. which are still exposed. John Simpson told us that there were probably many other artifacts including rifles, traps and possibly a canoe or two under the moss covering most of the site [Wilson 1994:1].

Lawrence Vermillion (2015b) described the location of The Little Man along the trail. “The trail does not pass directly by the site but over the south end of a ridge. The Little Man is straight west of the trail where there is a ridge and when you come to that ridge you know from there, where The Little Man would be.” The Little Man is located on the north end of this ridge.

However, Lawrence Vermillion (2014) did not think that there would be anything left of The Little Man site after the forest fires. He also believed that over time, people may have taken the items left at the site. There is even speculation that the carving itself may have been taken and possibly sold. Don Huisman (2014) heard that “ ‘Wolverine’ [Archie Simpson] sold it in the early 1970s to Americans visiting the area ... this is how the story ended.”

D.4 Small Lake with Beaver House

Leaving the ridge and site of The Little Man, the trail leads towards a small spruce island just north of Square Lake. Travelling through a small prairie that led to this island, Lawrence Vermillion remembered seeing lots of buffalo here, and often. The trail went around the spruce island as opposed to over it. Soon after the island the trail leads to a small lake with a beaver house. Square Lake was often referred to as Lake Three by the interviewees, with the other two large lakes referred to as Lake One and Lake Two (Lawrence Cheezie 2014; Lawrence Vermillion 2015b). Lawrence Vermillion noted the tall grass growing over Square Lake.

D.5 Square Lake Junction

As a winter trail, the Lake One trail crosses Square Lake and shortly after divides into two dog team trails. The two dog team trails make their way around the east and west points of another spruce island in Square Lake.

D.6 Lunch and Picnic Site on Square Lake

This triangular shaped spruce island was identified as the place where Lawrence and his family had lunch one year on their way to Fort Chipewyan by dog team. He described it as a big island full of spruce, birch and poplar. It is located just south of where the trail divides.

Back to the description of the Square Lake Junction, the two trails, 2A and 2A1 on the Lake One Trail map (see map 7.4) form a loop; the trails will re-connect approximately four kilometers to the south. For the purpose of this trail documentation, I consider both branches of the dog team trail as part of the Lake One Trail, for they are the same trail that can simply be travelled in different directions. The two trails come together again at a more distant point.

The eastern dog trail heads around the eastern tip of the spruce island before heading to the south eastern shore of Square Lake. When describing the trail the first time he travelled it in 1954, Lawrence Vermillion and his father Alexandre Vermillion had trouble following this trail because they didn't know the "road" yet. Lawrence was referring to the existence of an earlier cat trail built in 1945 that also connected to their dog team trails and ran alongside the eastern shore of Square Lake for approximately half a kilometer. "It was a cat trail, from Lake Claire up to Lake One" (Lawrence Vermillion 2015b). As Lawrence described, by 1954, it wasn't very visible anymore, "but once you got into the spruce and

poplar trees along the eastern shore of Square Lake as you travelled south along the trail it was easy to follow.” This stand of forest was not burned by the forest fires. It stretches along the south shore of Square Lake and includes a large area of forest in the center of the Lake One Prairie, situated between the three larger lakes. At this point the trail comes off the cat road as a dog team trail travelling southwest over a poplar ridge onto a wet meadow that was once a lake.

The western dog trail actually divides into two trails. One leads north, and the other heads almost straight south across Square Lake, passes by the tip of a peninsula, and continues to the southern shoreline of Square Lake. It then crosses over a poplar ridge that separates Square Lake (Lake Two) from two wet meadows that are directly south of it (the two together were referred by the informants as Lake Three). This second dog team trail then leads to a former location of a wildlife viewing/observation tower.

D.7 Wolf Observation Tower

The observation tower is associated with a wolf biologist named Lu Carbyn³² in the 1980’s who was studying wolves in the area. It was described as a 20-foot tower with a cupola. Observers could sit up there and observe the wolves and their pups. Lawrence Vermillion stopped there in 1981 and said he could have lived in it, as it was completely set up for living, including propane for cooking and foam mattress beds. When the tower was abandoned, people from Peace Point heard about it and took everything, including the tower (Lawrence Vermillion 2014).

³²Lu Carbyn is an internationally recognized expert on wolf biology and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta.

D.8 Lake 3 Trail Junction

The two dog team trails eventually join up on “Lake Three” to become one trail again before continuing straight south to reach the western edge of Wolf Ridge, also the location of the Lake One Dune site.

The Lake One Trail: South Section

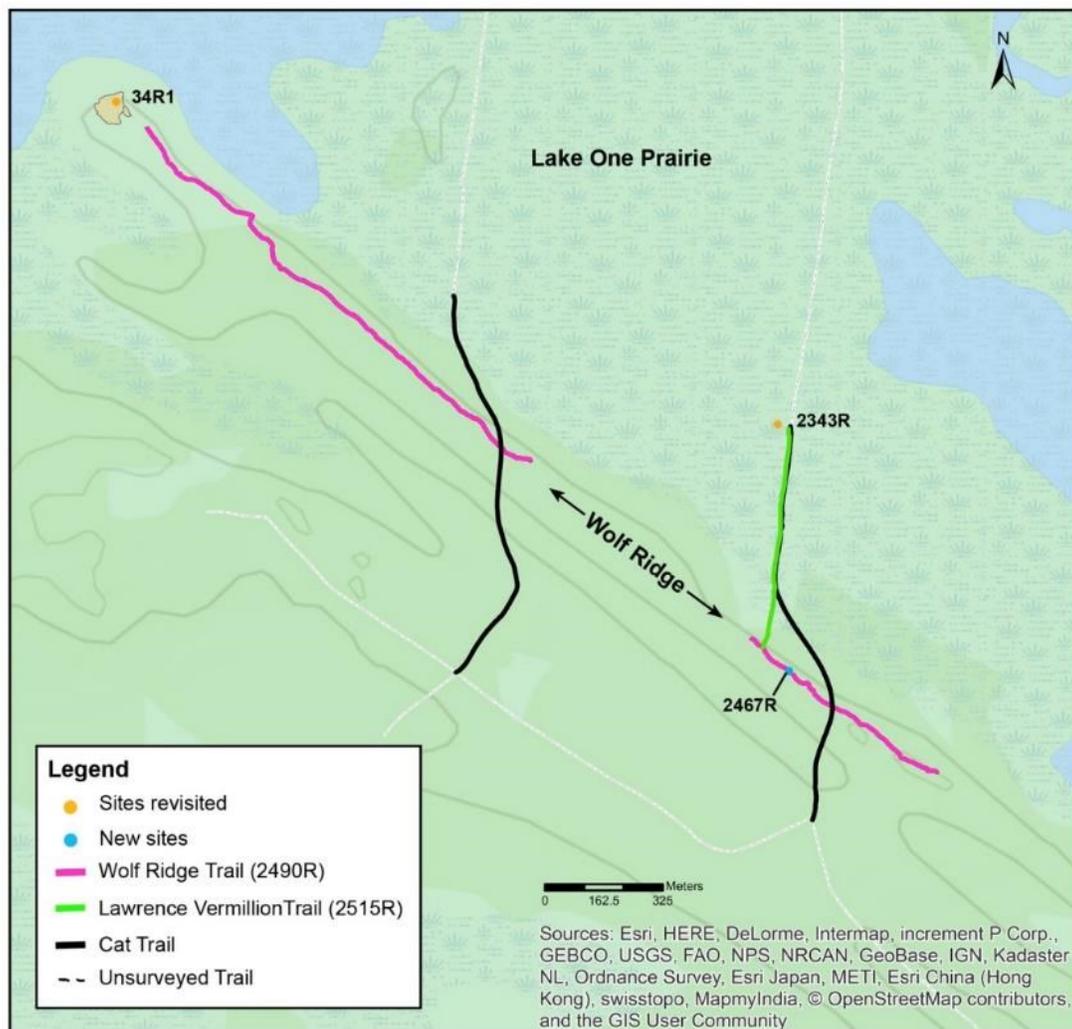
E. Wolf Ridge

Wolf Ridge is an esker about eight kilometers south of the trailhead (segment A). It is at this point that we began the trail survey again. Lawrence Vermillion thinks this esker is called Wolf Ridge because it was a good place for wolves to raise pups. It is the only prominent exposure in the area above one of the largest standing marshes characteristic of the Lake One Prairie (Proch and Lee 1984:10).

Lawrence Vermillion described how he would travel along the southern edge of Wolf Ridge until it connected with the cat roads from the north. The trail also continued south towards Lake Claire, passing by “Chipewyan Lake” where Lawrence’s trail turned west towards the Peace River.

We walked east on Wolf Ridge following an animal trail that runs along the top of the ridge, where there are also bison wallows. We came to a burned section of the ridge that forced us to walk along the northern base of the ridge and onto the prairie. When we left the ridge to walk out onto the prairie, we came across an empty fuel barrel and also a cat trail (see trail 4 on Map 7.5) that crossed the ridge in a north south direction, heading east along the ridge before turning south towards Lake Claire.

Map 7.5 Southern Section (E) of Lake One Trail



Source: Deck 2017

Legend: Lake One Trail south section of surveyed trail (E): (2490R) Wolf Ridge trail (also referred to trail no. 4) ; (34R1) Lake One Dune site on west end of Wolf Ridge; (2515R) Lawrence Vermillion trail and section of older cat trail; (2343R) Squeeze chute on the prairie north of Wolf Ridge; (2467R) Parks tent camp site on Wolf

This trail is the first of two sections of cat trail that cross the ridge and run in a north and south direction through the prairie. The second cat trail that crosses the ridge is part of Lawrence Vermillion's trap line, where he trapped lynx. This cat trail is the earlier cat trail

built in 1945 described by Lawrence and Fred Vermillion. In 1965, it was widened to bring in supplies to build the Park's tent camp and the Lake One bison corrals for bison roundups and slaughters (see McCormack 1984). It was easy walking along the cat trail, which was used as a bison trail and was very straight and well defined. It led directly to the remains of a bison squeeze chute.

E.1 Lake One Dune Site

This important archeological site is also called a blowout site because over time, the site has been slowly eroding due to the wind. Eroding out of the dune are lithic flakes, mainly of Flint Creek chert, and bird and mammal bones that are scattered across the site. We were able to recover an end scraper made from Flint Creek chert, the tip from a large quartzite knife, bifaces, graters, utilized flakes, and debitage from flint knapping. In all, we collected 125 artifacts.

The Lake One Dune site was first documented by park staff in 1977, with formal investigations conducted by Marc Stevenson (1981, 1983, 1986) and by national park archaeologists Gary Adams (1993) and David Hems (1994 a,b,c). The 1994 excavations found charcoal samples of a burn layer from a forest fire dated to about 300 years before the present (Flynn 1995:6), suggesting that occupation of the site stopped after this time. Between 1977 and 2014, 2,705 artifacts were collected at the site, from surface collection and excavation. The artifacts date back to the Northern Plano period and indicate considerable antiquity of use by Aboriginal people over time. The major impacts to the site were wind erosion, bison trampling and wallows, and other animal trails (Deck 2017:37 and 30).

Neither Charlie nor Lawrence were aware of this site, even though they had both travelled through the area many times. Their lack of familiarity with the site also supports the interpretation that the site was abandoned, though that does not mean that Aboriginal people stopped using this rich region (Deck 2017:38).

Photo 7.8 Sand Blow Out and the Location of Lake One Dune Site at the West End of Wolf Ridge, October 2014



Source: L.Peterson

E.2 Bison Corral Posts and Squeeze Chute

From the cat trail on the prairie just north of Wolf Ridge we reached the metal squeeze chute frame, which was once part of a corral system built to round up the bison for slaughters and to inoculate them against anthrax. Welded into the squeeze chute was the name “Steed 1965,” the name of the person – Harold Steed – who helped build the early roads in WBNP and whose family continues to reside in Fort Smith (Steed 2009). We

located the base of some of the corral posts and fragments of the posts lying on the ground nearby. Out on the prairie the ground was flat and easy walking even in the tall grass and sedges, now a golden brown in October. Because of the wind that day, the grass swayed in the wind; I was in awe of the sounds and beauty of the prairie landscape. On the south side of the ridge, this [cat] trail continues towards Chipewyan Lake. Before leaving the ridge, we visited the remains of a tent camp associated with the park and the bison corral.

E.3 Parks Temporary Camp

WBNP built a temporary camp during the construction and operation of the bison corral at Lake One in 1965. It was located on Wolf Ridge along the east side of Lawrence Vermillion's cat trail. The camp consisted of five tent frames made out of lumber, one large tent frame for the cook shack and the remaining for bunk beds. The lumber to build them came from Swanson's Sawmill Camp 6. It was hauled to Sweetgrass and then flown by helicopter to Lake One (Fred Vermillion 2015). Features recorded at the tent camp during our survey included two old tree blazes, two metal artifacts identified as a stove element cover and a bombardier track, and two depressions, whose purpose was unknown (Deck 2017:26).

Fred Vermillion worked at Lake One in 1965 and helped to build the tent camp. He remembered the time that about 3,000 bison were "chased" from French Lake all the way to Lake One; many of them suffered and died in the corrals from lack of water and food. His job also entailed hauling and burying the dead bison, and he explained how they buried approximately 300-500 bison in the sand along the base of Wolf Ridge.

Comparing the Trail to the Historic Maps and the Air Photos

After documenting the trail and its features as they exist today, I compared them to the information I found in the historic maps and the air photos. In particular, I was interested in identifying the Lake One trail sections in the annotated map from 1931 that shows the patrols made with dogs in Wood Buffalo Park during the 1931-32 winter season. Many of these trails traverse water bodies including a similar trail to my Lake One Trail from the north bank of the Peace River south through Lake One and joins up with the winter trail that runs in a northwest and southeast direction connecting to a network of trails north of the Peace River and south towards Fort Chipewyan, Lake Claire and the Peace Athabasca Delta. There are two trails connecting the Lake One area to what looks like a well-established long distance winter trail that traverses across the park. Bison were seen in the Lake One area in a location similar to the area where Lawrence Vermillion commented seeing bison often. It is interesting to note that the individual who conducted this patrol through the Lake One Prairie had patrolled over 1700 miles by dog team during that one winter in the park.

Two maps in particular covered the Peace Point area (map sheet 84P) at a 1:250,000 scale: a 1929 map (PAA, GR1978.0191, item 193), and a 1982 map, (PAA, GR1984.0111, item 50). The later map clearly shows a cat trail following the exact same pattern to my Lake One Trail (as it follows the high bank of the Peace River), and leads directly south in a direct line through what appears to be remnants of Lake One and the associated prairie. Very little water is shown at Lake One Prairie compared to the earlier map. No trails are shown within the Lake One Prairie on the 1929 map, but Lake One is clearly marked as "One Lake," with all the water bodies practically merged together. Other topographic features shown on this

map include the areas of marsh and open prairie. The 30th Meridian Base Line trail is clearly marked on both maps and in slightly different ways. On the 1929 map the trail is shown as a surveyed line but looks more like a trail, and in the 1982 map the surveyed line is much thicker shown more as part of the township grid system rather than a trail. The 1929 map shows buildings at Peace Point, various fire towers within the park, and numbered ranger cabins along the main river corridors. Two other ranger cabins are shown north of the Peace River along a trail that parallels the Pine Lake trail for a short distance. The 1982 map shows a “hamlet” at Peace Point and a “truck trail” identified as the winter road between Peace Point and the Cree community of Garden River. At Peace Point an “improved road” parallels the Peace River east towards the Slave River. Today, I believe this is known as a portion of the winter road to Fort Chipewyan and was documented as a “pack trail” during Fletcher’s survey in 1916 and on other early historic maps.

A 1921 map titled “Map of Slave River, Chipewyan to Ft. Smith” (PAA, PR1971.0364.12), showed a trail on the south side of the Peace River, across from the site known as Peace Point. The trail led south through the middle of some small lakes, but they are not labeled on the map. Other pack trails, winter trails, wagon roads and portages were also shown on the map.

Many of the air photos showed various segments of trails in the study area, especially the more defined cat trails. The air photos from 1945 and 1950 show the 30th Meridian Base Line trail clearly, but it is difficult to see the Lake One Trail and the trailhead because of the forest canopy. However, it is difficult to see the 30th Meridian Base Line trail in the later 1974 and 1988 air photos. They clearly show the cat trail segment of the Lake One Trail, as

well as many of the trails that branch off from this trail and continue to the Lake One Prairie and beyond.

Probably the most interesting air photo was from 1950-51, photographed at a 1:40,000 scale (Government of Alberta, 1950). It showed the north-eastern segment of the Lake One Prairie, possibly taken in the fall or spring. I used a digital version to zoom into the area known as the location of The Little Man site. It includes a small ridge that bordered the Lake One Prairie wet meadow in the spring and reveals a circular feature with a diameter of approximately 80 meters. The feature clearly contrasts to the surrounding area, because of its complete circle and what appears to be snow cover on the ground. Based on the location identified for The Little Man site on the topographic map by project participants, there is a chance that some of this treed ridge was not touched by the forest fires that went through the area. The faint outline of what looks to be part of a trail crosses the east end of this same small ridge and continues through the meadow (or prairie) before crossing in the centre of a small wetland located on the north side of a small island.

Summary of Cultural Attributes: Egg Lake/?Eghés tu and the Lake One Trail

In total, 25 distinct cultural resources were recorded by the informants based on the information collected from the interviews and the trail survey. This number includes Peace Point. They included archaeological sites; dwellings and their foundations; ancient, traditional, and historic campsites; settlements; lunch and picnic spots; spiritual sites; and other trails in the study area. There is a traditional settlement at Peace Point and at the mouth of Jackfish River on the Peace River just on the outer margins of the study area.

There were also intangible aspects of the trail such as stories, and these are interwoven into the documentation of the trail.

Approximately 50% (n=12) of the sites were new or previously not documented by the park. Of these, nine were visited during the field survey.

Table 7.1 Previously Known Sites Revisited during the Trail Survey

| Site no. | WBNP Site Name |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 30R1 | Peace Point archaeological site |
| N/A | Peace Point settlement |
| 34R1 | Lake One Dune archaeological site |
| 34R197 | Simpson cabins |
| 2343R | Bison squeeze chute |

We were unable to revisit the Little Man site (Site no. 2338R), which we could not find. We were also unable to revisit the Lake One Cabins (Site no. 34R86), a site described as having the remnants of two or three cabins. Its location was too distant from our trail survey.

While we flew over the area, we could not see its features due to the dense forest and landscape to verify its location. Almost half (n=12) of the cultural resources identified by the informants were remains of historic cabins. These do not include the cabins and residences at Peace Point or at Jackfish River; however, these two sites are known as important gathering places and are considered part of the broader Aboriginal cultural landscape. A warden cabin was known to have existed at Peace Point but we did not locate its footprint.

Table 7.2 Cultural Attributes of Egg Lake /?Eghés tu and Lake One Trail

| Cultural Attributes in the Study Area | Quantity |
|--|-----------------|
| Precontact Sites | 2 |
| Lake One Dune (34R1) | 1 |
| Peace Point (30R1) | 1 |
| Cabins | 8 |
| John Simpson Cabin (34R197) | 1 |
| Lake One Cabin Remains | 6 |
| Isidore Simpson Cabin (34R197) | 1 |
| Cabin Foundations | 4 |
| Simpson and Vermillion cabin foundations (34R197) | 3 |
| Peace Point Cabin also known as Cabin #2 | 1 |
| Historic Settlements | 2 |
| Peace Point Settlement | 1 |
| Jackfish Settlement | 1 |
| Historic Tent Camps | 2 |
| Parks Tent Camp (2467R) and Traditional Tent Camps | 2 |
| Camp associated with families who trapped at Lake One long ago | Unknown |
| Lunch or Picnic Spot | 1 |
| Rest stop on the way to Fort Chipewyan by dog team | 1 |
| Semi-subterranean Dwelling | 2 |
| Pit House or Dwelling | 2 |
| ³³Spiritual Site | 4 |
| The Little Man (2338R) | 1 |
| Child's burial | 1 |
| Anticline; “the church” | 1 |
| Red Rock Island; Drum Island; Red Stone Island; Firestone Island | 1 |
| | |
| Total | 25 |

Source: Participant Interviews

³³ For the purposes of this study, I have included burial sites under spiritual sites based on my discussions with participants, as well as from my experience working with individuals in the local communities.

Historic Cabins

In summary, as many as eight cabins and four cabin foundations were recorded in the study area. Many of these were noted in the interviews and their locations were marked on the topographic map. They dated from the park era, with the earliest cabin built in the 1930's, and the latest, in the 1980's. The two cabins we visited and three foundations were associated with the Simpson family, and the remaining six cabin remains (not located) were associated with non-Aboriginal trappers who trapped in the area for a brief time. These cabins were all in proximity to Lake One Trail.

Spiritual Sites

There were four points of spiritual significance. The first was the burial site of a child situated along the trail, which we were unable to locate. There were other deaths in the area, which means that there could be other burials.

The three other spiritual sites shared a common theme, which was their association to stories about “the little people” at Lake One, Lake One Prairie and the Lake One Trail that connects them. They included an anticline feature, an island on the Peace River and The Little Man site. Stories of The Little Man are still known by Crees and Chipewyans in Fort Chipewyan and Fort Smith, and especially by those who have used and travelled in the Lake One area. However, these stories were not known by all community members. For example, the people who had never been to the area but did the trail clearing did not know these stories. That suggests the importance for transmission of land-based oral traditions

for people to continue to spend time on the land. Otherwise, these important traditions may disappear.

Archaeological Sites

Two known precontact archaeological sites were visited during the field survey, each located at opposite ends of the trail. The Peace Point site was more well-known by local people than the Lake One Dune site, probably because of the excavation that occurred there over a two year period in the 1980's, which involved some of the local trappers and hunters who were living at Peace Point or nearby, including Archie Simpson and his family. While it is suggested that both the Lake One Dune site and the Peace Point site may be among the earliest known sites in the region (Stevenson 1983:2), the two sites are very different types of archaeological sites. The structural integrity of Peace Point is seen through its layers of occupation, and most of its artifacts were debitage related to the manufacture of stone tools. The Lake One Dune site did not have any structural integrity; its long history of occupation is represented through the artifacts that were either partial or finished stone tools. Natural erosion processes have impacted both sites. The impacts of the freeze and thaw cycle and the constant erosion of the riverbank have damaged Peace Point on the north bank of the Peace River. Wind erosion and constant wildlife trampling have impacted the Lake One Dune site on the esker overlooking the Lake One Prairie.

Campsites & Tent Frames/ Lunch & Picnic Sites

The trappers camped on the trail and at Lake One and often went back to the same campsite. Many campsites were scattered throughout the Lake One Prairie from different time periods; these were documented. Tent frames were popular and an efficient way to

travel. These shelters were made by building a tent frame structure using cut poles and a canvas tent cover secured to the poles (e.g., see Plate 16 and Artifact 27 in McCormack 1988; the tent was fashioned by a Chipewyan elder and erected by a former park user). A small sheet metal wood stove is frequently used, and the traveller is usually able to carry everything with him and set up camp when needed. This type of camp was used on the land for temporary use by many generations. Poles are often left on site for future use or can be cut again when needed.

Lawrence Vermillion (2014) described travelling with his dad on the land. After his dad shot and killed a bear, they stopped and made camp and dried meat right at the kill site. They would stop whenever or wherever they killed something. When Lawrence Cheezie (personal communication, April 2015) trapped muskrats and beavers in the springtime with his dad, they slept on spruce boughs in a tent.

Charlie Simpson said that many older campsites could be found at a notable sand dune located at the base of an esker immediately to the southwest of the Lake One Dune site. It is slightly higher in elevation than the adjacent lake, and provides a view over nearby wetland areas. While it was beyond the scope of the field survey, it would offer a good opportunity for archaeological survey.

WBNP built the tent camp associated with the Lake One Bison Corral that was abandoned after one year. Later, local trappers used these structures for their traditional use activities. Memorable lunch or rest spots were pointed out on the map along with the reasons why the trapper might stop at a particular place along the trail, often for the shelter it provides or perhaps as a lookout.

Other Trails

During the field survey, portions of four trails were documented that include the Lake One Trail (2469R), 30th Meridian Base Line trail (2470R), Wolf Ridge trail (2490R) and Lawrence Vermillion trail (2515R) (See Table 1 in Appendix H).

Resources and Harvesting In the Vicinity of the Lake One Trail

A dominant theme in all the interviews was the topic of seasonality and harvesting. Spring was one of the main seasons to use the trail and the Lake One Study Area for trapping and other resource harvesting. Historically the trail has been used year round to access a variety of resources, but more often during the spring to hunt muskrats and to collect eggs from migratory waterfowl. There are also stories of the trail being accessed by anyone in need of food at times when resources were sparse (Huisman 2014).

These resources were often mentioned and interwoven in the stories of traversing the trail either by walking or by dog team and later by skidoo. Close to 75% of the resources (n=50) were documented as being harvested or observed during the spring and winter seasons (see Table 7.4). Often both seasons were mentioned together during the same narrative of travelling on the trail.

The main types of resources acquired at Lake One in the spring were muskrats and beavers, ducks and goose eggs. However, other resources included bison (before park establishment), barren-ground caribou, moose, black bear, deer, grouse (known as chickens), migratory waterfowl (ducks, geese), fish, and an abundance of fur bearing animals in addition to beaver and muskrat, that included wolves, wolverine, lynx, fishers, marten, mink, rabbit, and squirrel. Both high and low bush cranberries, raspberries, saskatoons and blueberries were also known to have been collected along the trail. There

were medicinal plants along the trail such as labrador tea and pitch from spruce trees, but these were not mapped in this study.

Overall, nine different resource types were identified, based on just over 71 recorded occurrences shared by six knowledge holders. The most abundant resource harvested in the Lake One Study Area were those of furbearing animals. Ungulates or large game (moose, bison and caribou) were the second most abundant resource noted during the study. They were followed closely by waterfowl and their eggs. Fish, berries, mammals, game birds (grouse), fresh drinking water and materials harvested from trees were the third most abundant noted, but they were not the main resources obtained at Lake One (Figure 7. 1). In addition, the Table 7.3 provides a detailed list of the major faunal resources mentioned in the study area.

Figure 7.1 Resources Harvested within the Study Area

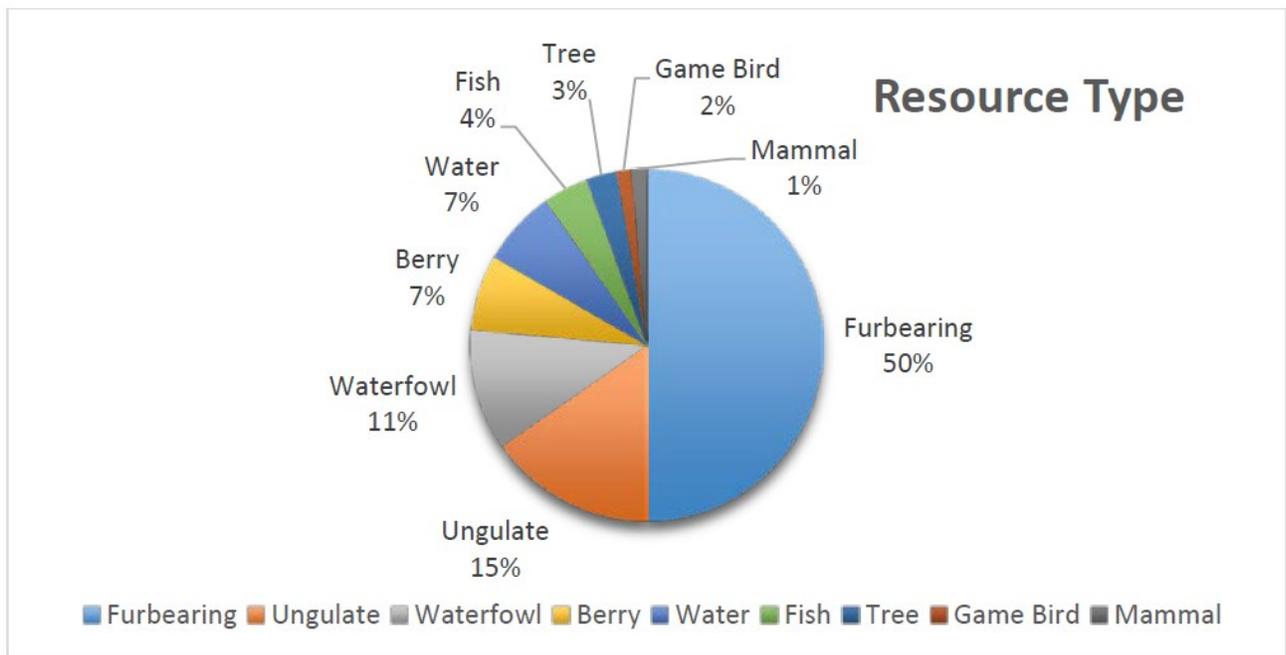


Table 7.3 Major Faunal Resources in the Study Area

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Large game | Moose | <i>Alces alces</i> |
| | Bison | <i>Bison bison</i> |
| | Woodland caribou | <i>Rangifer tarandus caribou</i> |
| | Barren-ground caribou | <i>Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus</i> |
| | White-tailed deer | <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> |
| Small game | Muskrat | <i>Ondatra zibethicus</i> |
| | Beaver | <i>Castor canadensis</i> |
| | Porcupine | <i>Erethizon dorsatum</i> |
| | Snowshoe hare | <i>Lepus americanus</i> |
| | Red squirrel | <i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i> |
| Carnivores | Grey Wolf | <i>Canis lupus</i> |
| | Lynx | <i>Felis lynx</i> |
| | Wolverine | <i>Gulo gulo</i> |
| | Black bear | <i>Ursus americanus</i> |
| | Brown bear | <i>Ursus arctos</i> |
| | Fisher | <i>Martes pennant</i> |
| | Mink | <i>Neovison vison</i> |
| Upland birds | Grouse, species not specified | |
| Migratory waterfowl | Canada goose | <i>Branta Canadensis</i> |
| | Lesser snow goose (white wavey) | <i>Chen caerulescens caerulescens</i> |
| | Ducks, multiple species | |
| Fish | Goldeye | <i>Hiodon alosoides</i> |
| | Jackfish | <i>Esox Lucius</i> |
| | Pickrel | <i>Sander vitreus</i> |
| | Suckers | <i>Catostomus sp.</i> |

Approximately 60% (n=42) of the resources documented were accessed at Egg Lake /?Eghés tu including the three large lakes that encompass Lake One Prairie and along the Lake One Trail (including the cat road sections). Another 18% (n=13) of the resources were

described as found along the Peace River, and 10 % (n=7) within the Lake One Prairie. The remaining 12% (n=9) of these resources were found along connecting trails leading to areas adjacent to the study area.

Table 7.4 Summary of Resources Harvested by Season in the Study Area

| Location and Resource | Fall | Spring | Summer | Winter | Year Round |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Egg Lake / ?Eghés tu | | | | | |
| Beaver | | 5 | | | |
| Duck | | 5 | | | |
| Geese and waterfowl eggs | | 3 | | | |
| Mink | | | | 1 | |
| Muskrat | 1 | 9 | | 1 | |
| Water | | 1 | | | 2 |
| Lake One Cat Road | | | | | |
| Blueberry/Raspberry/Saskatoon | | | 1 | | |
| Cranberry (low and high bush) | 2 | | | | |
| Lynx | | | | 1 | |
| Marten | | | | 1 | |
| Moose | | | | 1 | |
| Rabbit | | | | 1 | |
| Lake One Prairie | | | | | |
| Buffalo | | | | | 3 |
| Moose | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Wolverine | | | | 1 | |
| Wolves | | | | 1 | |
| Lake One Trail | | | | | |
| Fisher | | | | 1 | |
| Grouse | | | | 1 | |
| Lynx | | | | 2 | |
| Marten | | | | 1 | |
| Rabbit | | | | 1 | |
| Squirrel | 2 | | | | |
| Wolf | | | | 1 | |
| Total | 3 | 23 | 2 | 15 | 6 |

Source: Participant interviews.

Each of the knowledge holders spoke about the decline in many of these resources during their lifetimes, especially the bison, caribou, muskrat, fish, and waterfowl. They believed that the decline of the muskrat was caused by increasingly low water levels in the study area over time. Trappers recalled declines in other resources. For example, Fred Vermillion (2015) recalled that there was “no fine fur up at Jackfish there, so that is when I stayed with them [at the Simpson Homestead] in 1965 and when I moved and trapped at Lake Claire for muskrats in the fall.” He also commented about the population cycle of muskrat: “maybe they are coming back because every so often they come back and there is lots and then they die off again.” Recounting the low number of fur-bearing animals on the 30th Meridian Base Line trail one particular year, Lawrence Vermillion (2014) decided to use a different “road” or trail to head home, which he called “Archie’s Road.” (See trail table 2 in Appendix H.)

Trappers also spoke of the decline of the health of the fish runs in the spring and fall, due to low water levels. Lawrence Vermillion (2014) witnessed the absence of barren-ground caribou in the study area after 1953, including the decline of their habitat: “caribou were coming south to the Peace River every year up until 1953. People would come from elsewhere to hunt them for a week or ten days.” This was the last time Lawrence Vermillion saw them on the Peace River. Both Lawrence Vermillion (2014) and Philip Cheezie (2014) commented on the woodland caribou outside the study area. They saw them further north near the base of the Caribou Mountains and on Highway 5 between Hay River and Fort Smith, NWT.

Two of the trappers had mentioned that there were not many buffalo before the shipment of bison from Wainwright in the 1920’s. “There were woodland buffalo but not

many” (Philip Cheezie 2014). Lawrence Vermillion (2014) commented, “we hunted moose but didn’t see buffalo at that time, not before the Alberta Government brought buffalo on the barge. Most of the early bison were north of the Peace River. Buffalo [outside of the park] and moose may be hunted all year round, especially moose that could be made into dry meat” (Philip Cheezie 2014). They also remembered bison drowning in the strong river currents. Lawrence Cheezie (2014a) recalled 300 bison drowning at one time in the Peace River. Fred Vermillion (2014) recalled many buffalo dying from anthrax in 1964-65, when he was working for the park to build the bison corral at Lake One.³⁴ He noted the bison were all around the park’s temporary camp, and at least ten died from anthrax in the lake right in the prairie. Both Vermillion brothers commented about the park chasing nearly 3,000 bison from Lake Claire or French Lake to Lake One in that spring in order to round them up. Many of the young ones died on route, possibly up to 200, while many more died from the heat and dehydration when nearly 1000 bison were corralled. Fred was one of five people left behind to bury approximately 300 bison right along the base of Wolf Ridge on the edge of the Lake One Prairie.

Lake One Annual Round

Fall

In August, goldeye go all the way up the Peace River, and the Vermillion family would start their journey back to their cabin on the Peace River by modern skiff, pulling two canoes behind them. “We lived off the land hunting bear – living on bear meat, smoked meat and fish” (Lawrence Vermillion 2015a). On their way to the trap line or settlement, they stopped on large sand bars at Point Providence to hunt birds usually for one week or until they had a

³⁴ More information about this event can also be found in McCormack (1984)

good supply for the winter. They lived in a tent during this time travelling the Peace River to prepare for winter. Fishing was good on the Peace River, mainly goldeye that could also be fed to the dogs. Fish were an essential resource, as described by Lawrence during his family's fall travel to their cabin in the 1950's:

By October we would be at the cabin on the Peace River and start getting ready for winter. We fished for dogs [dog food] and hung fish for dog feed for winter. We set nets by boat and fished for a long time – a minimum of 10 days and we had a few thousand fish, at least two thousand or more (mostly goldeye, jackfish, pickerel and burbot [ling]).

Lawrence never trapped muskrat in the fall because “they are not fully grown and the skin is not as good yet.” He explained that “paper rats” referred to those muskrats that live on riverbanks or low water all year round. He described them as being skinny and having thin fur or hides. The whole family would take day trips to pick blueberries and cranberries. By mid-October it was moose season, but one year they ate goldeye three meals a day because there were not many moose.

Winter

Archie Simpson (1993) recalled staying in the bush for six winters beginning when he was 11 or 12, travelling with his family north of Peace River towards Robertson Lake (also known as Lake Four) and then returning to the Peace River in the spring. During this time on the trap line, their main source of food was moose, as fish was not available on their trap line. He makes a comment that later in life he didn't like to eat moose meat because of the fact that he had eaten so much of it during his time in the bush.

Archie also recalled that people were used to travelling, and travelled as a family to their trap line, sometimes as many as 15 family members travelling all winter, returning to Fort Chipewyan in the summertime every year to go fishing. “Otherwise they are in the

bush all the time and stayed in the bush,” meaning they went back on the trap line and stayed there all winter. Before travelling to their trap line for the winter, Charlie Simpson (2014b) remembered how his family prepared food for their dogs and for themselves in the fall. They hung fish to freeze, they snared rabbits, and they hunted moose. “We trapped all fall for squirrel [to have to sell] for Christmas time. That’s how young guys got started, with squirrels.”

Philip Cheezie’s family moved to Peace River when he was three years old. They followed a winter trail from House Lake on the shores of Lake Claire to Peace River in 1935 (Philip Cheezie 2014). This long distance route may have included the Lake One Trail. There was no store on the Peace River at that time, and his family would go to Fort Chipewyan at Christmas time and Easter. “It was a long ways to Chip [Fort Chipewyan], about two days of travelling by dog team from the Peace River.” Lawrence Cheezie said that his dad always visited people at Peace Point and Big Slough, going back and forth in the winter: “We used to go dancing there, in a drum dance.”

Barren-ground caribou and white-tailed deer were in the area only in the winter months. The caribou came in November after freeze-up, moving into the forest to feed on lichens and take shelter from the wind. “They [the caribou] came down from Pine Lake and Peace Point and we didn’t have to [travel to] hunt them. In March or April they went back to Peace Point going north” (Philip Cheezie 2014). Along the 30th Meridian Base Line trail, the hills were covered with lichen, good winter habitat for barren-ground caribou, “When the caribou came we shoot them right from our cabin, my mother [Madeleine, née Tourangeau] was a good shot with a .30.30” (Lawrence Vermillion 2015a).

Lawrence also explained: “During the winter we trap fine furs such as wolf, lynx, marten, fishers, minks, squirrels and weasels. Fine furs are also known as long-haired fur.”

“Sometimes we would see moose when we were setting traps, but we ate all kinds of different meats, including porcupine.” Occasionally his dad would travel alone to Fort Chipewyan, especially during specific times of the year: Christmas, the end of February, Easter, and in May. They sold furs and bought a few goods. The major sale of their winter furs was at Christmas time, then at the end of February after trapping season closed for fine fur. After trapping for muskrat in March, the fur was taken to town at Easter, and once again in May after the season closed for muskrats and beavers. Lawrence sometimes accompanied his Dad on the trip to Fort Chipewyan at Christmas and Easter.

Charlie mentioned that in the winter, members of the three families at Lake One had their individual trap lines where they harvested fine fur such as lynx, marten, wolves, fisher and wolverine. Rabbits could also be snared all year round.

The seasonal nature of this way of life is imprinted on the land by the numerous trails leading to camps and resource harvesting areas that all contribute to telling a fuller story of this place.

Spring

When families returned to the Peace River in the spring, they had access to fish such as goldeye into the summer and fall.

The spring muskrat trapping season was described as lasting anywhere from two weeks to a month, with the season starting as early as March. Lawrence Vermillion (2014) recalls trapping muskrat at Lake One right until May 10th, when the season closed. “In March the muskrats are fully grown and fat with thicker hides, thicker fur and sold for a better price.” Muskrat and beaver hunting took place in the springtime or after open water. “Besides trapping we would also shoot muskrats with a .22 rifle. However, trapping the

muskrat meant that they drowned right away and were better eating and good for dry meat.”

Lawrence said that his father, Alexandre, used a 12-foot spruce framed canoe, also known as a “rat canoe,” for hunting in the lakes and sloughs for muskrat. Alexandre walked or carried the canoe one way, from the Peace River to Lake One to hunt ducks and collect eggs. Then he waited until the spring thaw before being able to paddle on the lake when the water levels were at their highest. He also anticipated the return of the waterfowl with spring migration and warmer temperatures. After open water, his family travelled to Lake Claire by boat to “catch the thousands of birds in the bays.” They hunted ducks, geese, and waxies. His family also planted a garden in the spring at their cabin along the river, consisting of potatoes, carrots and turnips. He remembers hauling water from the river “pail after pail” up the big hill to water the garden.

Charlie Simpson’s uncle, John Simpson, used to collect eggs at Lake One in the spring. Charlie had four to five uncles who trapped on the same trap line at one time. Charlie also remembers spring muskrat hunting with his dad at Lake One for a month in May, trapping when the ground was still frozen and portaging a canoe. They walked the trail in the early spring, walking behind dogs pulling a sleigh. Some dogs carried packs (e.g., Plate 18 and Artifact 33 in McCormack 1988:57). During the spring hunt they stayed in a tent. Charlie recalled use of the trail mainly for trapping, and not as much use of the trail in the summer. Usually his dad Archie was working as a seasonal labourer for WBNP in the summer months.

The Simpsons and Cheezies would visit back and forth with one another while they were trapping muskrat and beaver during the spring hunt. Lawrence Cheezie hunted rats at

Lake One for two weeks in March with his brother, along with the Simpson family, “We would leave our cabin and go to the spring camp for muskrat and beaver. You could walk between the two [locations] in a couple of hours. Lots of muskrat in late spring [mid-april] to the end of May. The whole family would be at the tent camp. They also camped on the trail and would usually go back to the same site, usually close to water or a drinking source on the lake” (Lawrence Cheezie, personal communication, May 7, 2015). While camping at Peace Point in the spring and summer, families would travel and hunt from this location into the Lake One Prairie and as far as the Caribou Mountains (Philip Cheezie 2014).

Summer

Lawrence and Philip Cheezie’s father, Louison Cheezie, spoke of the Lake One Trail to them. While he lived at Jackfish, a settlement at the mouth of the Jackfish River, he would cut across the land to Peace Point by foot. On at least one occasion in the summer he walked all day from Jackfish to Lake One, carrying his 12-foot long birch canoe and his dogs carrying packs along the 30th Meridian Base Line trail into Lake One. The weather determined whether he would stay overnight at Lake One and how long he hunted or trapped. The Simpson, Vermillion and Cheezie families occasionally hunted at Lake One in the summer time. The abundance of fish in the Peace River may have been one of the main reasons for travel in the study area throughout the summer, especially goldeye in August. It was a staple food available also in the spring and fall. People fished for goldeye in the Peace River at Peace Point and also at the mouth of Jackfish River (Lawrence Vermillion 2015a). The Jackfish River was considered a traditional gathering place in the spring and summer for this reason. Trappers from all over, but particularly from Lake Claire, Hay River (also known as Prairie River) and the Peace River areas, spent late spring and summer in Fort Chipewyan, at Quatre Fourche, and at Lake Mamawi fishing for whitefish and making dry

fish. This was also a time when Lawrence's dad might travel to Edmonton for a month or more in June or July to visit friends. He travelled by boat to Fort McMurray and then by train.

Archie Simpson (1993) recalled that later in his lifetime, people occasionally traveled to Fort Chipewyan from Peace River at various times of the year, including Christmas and Easter, when they would also go to church. They also attended Treaty Days in June, where they would have the opportunity to visit or get supplies that might be needed in the bush. In later years, when the trapping slowed down trappers started to take on seasonal work for the park in the summer: fighting fires, building corrals for the bison round ups, or working for the sawmill camps located in the park.

The seasonal nature of this way of life is imprinted on the land by the numerous trails leading to camps and resource harvesting areas that all contribute to telling a fuller story of this place.

Chapter 8 Trail Networks

The Lake One Trail is part of a larger network of trails which no one has yet tried to document. The extent of such trails are suggested, but barely, in Map 8.1. Even within this immediate region, there is more than one trail to the important harvesting area of the Lake One Prairie, and there are different types of trails leading off the main Lake One Trail, for walking, dog teams, skidoos, portages, and rabbit snares. Some trails were used year round, while others were (and are) seasonal, relating to resource availability. The enormous complexity of the trails reflects the decisions made by people as they used the bush day after day, season after season, year after year. Today, the Lake One Trail is part of a group trapping area, criss-crossed by multiple trap lines that provide access to specific resources. Both trails and trap lines are commonly referred to as “roads” and often associated with a particular trapper or family. This chapter describes the variety of trails known in the park, many of which are still there today. It then considers some of the broader literature related to trails. Last, it provides a list of recommendations for future trail research.

The uses of some trails with long histories such as the Lake One Trail may have evolved from much earlier times. The trail can show layers of use over time and includes older and newer sections. The antiquity of the trail and the amount of use affects its visibility, including the resources associated with it. When only some sections of a trail are visible, the trail may not seem continuous, even when it is. Trails described as trap lines and mapped in this study tend to run from lake to lake, which indicates that they are used between freeze-up and break-up. People may also utilize other types of water bodies such as sloughs, creeks and rivers. Determining the beginning or the end of a trail can be subjective. People’s movements on the land vary, and they may not always follow the same route. People often made adjustments along the way due to environmental and

topographical features. They might take a short cut in response to locating a particular resource. The more time people spend on the land, the more they get to know it and begin to expand their footprint from one main trail to a number of smaller trails that branch off to other areas of the landscape.

It is common for people to adapt cut lines, pack trails and roads established by the park for their own uses (for example, the Parsons Lake Road and Sweetgrass Trail). In the early years of the park, warden staff utilized existing Aboriginal trails to navigate and access areas of the park. Much later, some dog team trails were enlarged into “cat roads” for specific purposes, as demonstrated by the Lake One Trail. Conversely, longer overland trails were typically used by many people and were well established routes that involved long distance, multi-day travel. This chapter describes the variety of trails known in the study area, many of which are still there today.

Types of Trails in the Lake One Region

Dog Team Roads

The earliest uses of the Lake One Trail were for walking and then for travelling with dog teams. In the era before the development of dog team use, the trails were only used for walking, although people would have had their dogs with them, carrying packs. The frozen ground in winter made all areas accessible. At that time of year, women were known to pull the sled, although a single dog, or possibly two at most, may have been hitched occasionally to the sled (e.g., McCormack 2018a). In the late 19th century and until the advent of snowmobiles, teams of dogs that pulled sleds were in common use throughout the region.³⁵ When there was a lot of snow cover, a person on snowshoes would run ahead of the dogs to

³⁵ Dog team use in this region originated in the fur trade (see McCormack 2014a; 2014b)

break trail. Yet, winter dog team trails are not particularly visible on the land. They are more likely to change so are more unpredictable, and there may be more than one trail branching off a main trail. Winter trails may also have increased in number when people added trapping to their economy. Walking trails are not highly visible either, unless they are used over and over again. People made adjustments to the trails they use according to the purpose of the travel, the weather conditions, and their own inclinations. “Dog team trails are much narrower, and would never go in a straight line, always zigzagging through the bush to follow the easiest route, especially while cutting of the trail. Once the trail was cut we would use the same trails” (Charlie Simpson, personal communication 2013). This could mean that such trails are more difficult to find or follow from the air and may not appear in air photos. They are also difficult to find on the ground unless they are used regularly. The WBNP 1932 map that shows the buffalo ranger patrols by dog team in the park gives a sense of how numerous the trails were:

I hear stories about these old wardens, patrolmen, they used to travel by dog team all over, any place they go by dog team, like all these places [referring to a large area on a map of WBNP]...there are dog roads all over right to Little Buffalo [River]...the whole area used to be dog roads [Fred Vermillion 2015].

Gordie Masson (2014) began working for WBNP in 1961 and retired in 1988, after 27 years. He was in charge of the fire crews for many years. Gordie observed that in the early years, at least half the trappers were “walking around their trap lines” in the 1960s as they could not afford to keep dogs all summer. He commented that John Simpson walked the Lake One Trail in 1963 because he didn’t have a dog team at the time. Perhaps as trapping slowed down, some people couldn’t afford to keep their dogs all year round, especially if they were not using the dogs as much, and they may have been working for the park or elsewhere during the summer months. Families that kept dogs fished for dog food, and

there were a couple of good locations where this was done, including Quatre Fourches and Dog Camp in the Peace-Athabasca Delta.

Lawrence Vermillion recalled using dogs on the trap line until about 1980, when snowmobiles became more common. He described one of the first snowmobiles to come out in the 1970's as a single cylinder trapper's model that was very slow. Then in the 1980's a small lighter model came into use, which he described as "fabulous." Soon, the snowmobile became more popular and eventually essential for winter bush travel. As a result, dog teams became more of an icon and connection to the "old ways."

Don Huisman (2014) remembers how people, especially the elders, talked about dogs with reverence, along with life on the land. Many older people regretted having to leave the land. Even in the 1980's, people longed for the days of the dog team because it kept the younger generation on the land longer. Even at this time, few young people were interested in going out onto the land. People's love of dogs and looking after them kept them on the land longer, and they had the added assurance that dogs always brought you home, as described by one trapper. Lawrence Cheezie (2015) mentioned his dad, Louison, had well trained dogs that were very well looked after. By this he meant that the dogs slept on spruce boughs and it was obvious how happy the dogs were. Dogs who were well-treated may not have needed to be tied up and knew where the trail was, aiding in winter navigation, avoiding hazards such as open water.

Trap Lines and Loop Roads

A common feature noted with many trails and especially trap lines was that they followed a loop. For example, starting at his cabin on the Peace River, it would take Lawrence

Vermillion a whole day to check his traps by skidoo on his trap line. At the end of the day, he was back where he started at his cabin, and did not have to spend time backtracking.

Rabbit Snare Trails

Rabbit snare trails are different from all other types of trails mentioned, in that they are short trails used to set rabbit snares. They are walked. Lawrence Vermillion spoke of his grandmother's rabbit snare trail, which was on a small trail that led off the main trail (such as the Lake One Trail) and was situated adjacent to her cabin. Both Lawrence Cheezie (2014) and Charlie Simpson (2014) mentioned that blazes cut on trees along the trail mean there is a snare or trap located there.

Long Distance Trails

Some overland trails are associated with longer distance travel, often related to multi-day travel to distant destinations. People may still hunt and harvest other resources en route. Such trails may be more direct as they cut across country, tending to have straighter sections or routes with less deviation from the main path. They may follow rivers. They tend to connect and provide travel between major water bodies, lakes, and watersheds in the region.

These trails provided access to areas outside the immediate hunting or trapping area. It is common for an overland trail of this kind to intersect with both major and minor trails heading in many locations. Lake One Trail is one of these long distance trails, considered a main highway that connects the Peace River to Lake Claire and areas further south and also to lakes and rivers and other areas north of the Peace. These trails may help to understand the boundaries of the cultural landscape and how and where the trails extend beyond the boundaries of the landscape.

Broader Trail Network Mapped

Map 8.1 is a regional map showing a broader trail network that was mapped during the Lake One Trail study. It is not intended to be complete, but it suggests the local and regional complexity of the trail system used by Aboriginal people.

Comparative Trail Research

There are few comparable existing trail studies in Canada. More often, historic trails have been documented and commemorated that represent the European and Euro-Canadian footprint on the land and movements related to European settlement and colonialism. They may be identified as wagon or cart roads, pack trails, gold rush trails, portages, and other terms. In Canada, some Aboriginal trails have been studied in northern Alberta, BC, Yukon, NWT, Ontario, and Nunavut (Meyer and Russell 2004; Oetelaar and Mayer 2006). The famous Métis cart trails are little researched. Two trail studies from the United States (Platt 1992; Ferguson et al. 2004) reiterate similar challenges in the documentation of Aboriginal trails as well as the benefits of doing so, especially as they relate to archaeological interpretations.

These traditional trails were the conduit for historic movement over the land, as demonstrated by the trail studies that provided an opportunity to travel on the trails as a way to document Aboriginal relationships to the land. The trail research conducted by Claudio Aporta (2003, 2004, 2005, 2009) and Tom Andrews and John B. Zoe (1997) have attested to this benefit. Their traditional trail surveys in northern Canada included multi-day trips. The importance of trails for other groups has been stated by Brody (1981), Lewis (1977, 1990), Lewis and George (1991), and Myers (1986).

Aporta's trail work provided guidance on the type of information to collect about trails including characteristics of trails, and how trails are perceived and used both in the past and the present.

I was especially influenced in my own research by the regional trail studies conducted by Andrews and Zoe (1997; Andrews 2011), who demonstrated the role of Tlicho (Dogrib) traditional knowledge in the documentation and interpretation of the past. The Idaa Trail was a partnership between the Tlicho community and Tom Andrews, the territorial archaeologist, to document an all-season traditional trail in the Northwest Territories between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake. The study construed the Idaa Trail as a network of overland and water trails that was travelled by both dog team and canoe, depending on the time of year. This project demonstrated an important link among trails, place names, and narratives. The study also showed what can be achieved when working together in partnership while meeting the interests of both parties. It involved numerous on-the-land multi-day trips by canoe and the "learning linked directly to the process of travel and experience" (Andrews 2011: 180-181). The work by Andrews and his collaborators provided a strong example of how information can be collected about trails working in close collaboration with Aboriginal users. Together, they documented 350 traditional place names and 282 archaeological sites along the Idaa Trail, including burial locations, abandoned villages, quarry sites and sacred sites (Andrews and Zoe 1997: 165).

The Lake One Trail study was not the same kind of multi-day trip, which would have been valuable but beyond the scope of the project. Rather, as a pilot study in WBNP, it provided an opportunity to re-open and re-establish one section of a trail revealing the Elders and youth walked the section of the trail together and gave us an indication of the rich traditional and cultural knowledge associated with the trail while learning what it was

like to travel and experience the trail in their lifetimes. The short amount of time actually spent on the trail limited the amount and type of information collected, such as specific place names and site information that would more accurately reflect the number of sites associated with the trail.

Claudio Aporta's trail work with Inuit (2003, 2004, 2009) is about trails in the Canadian Arctic. He noted their physical characteristics and features and how the trails were perceived and used in the past and also in the present. Aporta defined the term "trail" as "visible tracks broken on the snow by a traveller handling a dog sled or a snowmobile and who follows well established routes" (2009: 134). He explored the difference between land routes and sea routes and described one particular trail as a meandering course that favored smooth water and frozen water surfaces (rivers, creeks and chains of lakes) (2005:228). He described trails as "ephemeral." The arctic trails can become concealed and may not look like permanent features on the landscape, much like a dog team trail. He used an example of how a blizzard can cover the sled tracks on the trail so it disappears visually, and how in spring the evidence of the trail disappears with the melting of snow and ice. These arctic trails may not have been studied or been the subject of academic research because of their ephemeral nature (Aporta 2009:132). However, Aporta pointed out that the trail can still exist within the navigator's memory, who can then be the next trailblazer to help produce the trail once again (2009: 131-132).

Many winter trails in WBNP are similar to those Aporta discussed. They may cross wet areas such as lakes, rivers, open meadows or sloughs. The Lake One Trail crossed water bodies in the winter, even though trappers often try to avoid some ice in the winter for safety reasons. These areas can be temporarily hidden by recent snowfall or from winds that create snowdrifts and change the shape of the landscape. For these reasons, landscape

features and markers were often used along the edge of water bodies as navigation markers at such crossings.

Platt's case study (1992:68-69) pointed to the difficulties of identifying an Aboriginal trail in the Bighorn Mountains area in Wyoming and touched on the importance of trail research in understanding the archaeological record. He pointed out the difficulty in identifying trails, which have been obscured by more recent uses. While the physical evidence of trails is often limited and discontinuous, Platt described the wealth of information that may be obtained from successfully identifying trails. They have the potential to link together various types of archaeological sites that may not have otherwise been linked. Trail data can also help archaeologists understand land use, resource exploitation, seasonal movements and trade. Overall trails can help archaeologists better predict site locations.

Ferguson *et al.* in their study of Hopi trails in the United States also touched on the challenge of identifying segments of trails. Their methods described the use of air photo interpretation, ground verification, and ethnographic research (2004:5-8).

The challenges to identify trails can also be applied to my research on trails in WBNP, where the Lake One Trail was very old and had not been used or maintained much in recent years. Thus, sometimes only a portion of the trail was visible initially. This reminded me of flying over the Lake One Trail in the fall, I noticed one section of skidoo trail that led into the prairie that could be seen from the air (Photo 7.7); it left an impression or rut on the ground and provided evidence of the trail on the landscape. It was also suggestive of how much the trail was used. However, locating the rest of the trail may depend upon collecting more information about its use from local oral histories and/or

other historical sources such as maps and survey reports. McCormack (2017: 123) echoes the importance of trails to archaeologists, as invaluable information that will help guide and inform their survey methodologies by providing what she calls the “geographic framework” for understanding Aboriginal land use within the larger cultural landscape, and how people define their relationship with the land. This work also led me to make the following recommendations for future park trails.

Recommendations for Future Work with Park Trails

- Continue to clear sections of the Lake One Trail and work with local knowledge holders to provide opportunities for visitors to experience the trail;
- Develop interpretive signage along the trail and share this information on the park website and at the park visitor centre;
- Monitor the Lake One Dune and Peace Point archaeological sites;
- Conduct consultation to designate the Lake One Prairie, including Wolf Ridge, the archaeological sites and the trails within it as an Aboriginal cultural landscape;
- Review Wilson (1994) data ³⁶ and air photo documentation to re-confirm location of The Little Man site. Follow-up with a site visit with knowledge holders to verify the condition of the site;
- Re-assess the condition of the Simpson Cabin and collaborate with the Simpson family and the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) to preserve and interpret the broader Simpson Homestead site (34R197) as part of the Lake One Trail (2469R);

³⁶ This data was in park correspondence on file at the Winnipeg Parks Canada Office. It provided a description and location of The Little Man site visited by John Simpson and park staff.

- Collaborate with local Aboriginal groups on future trail research to identify trails to be documented, re-established and/or shared or interpreted to park visitors and the public; also identify trails to be used for traditional use purposes and to access areas for cultural camps and future gatherings;
- Develop a database of traditional trails which can be considered in future land and water management of the park;
- Promote and integrate traditional knowledge in all aspects of trail work;
- Conduct additional archaeological investigation of cultural resources and features along the Lake One Trail.

Chapter 9 WBNP Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes

The trails in WBNP are part of broader Aboriginal cultural landscapes. Where outsiders see only “vast wilderness” which they believe to be or untouched and “natural,” local Aboriginal people see landscapes with rich associations with their land uses, cultures and histories.

“Wilderness” is associated with national parks in North America, including Wood Buffalo National Park, the largest such park in Canada. However, there is a “sense of place” that is cultural in this vast open space that can be explored and documented. This chapter considers the idea of Aboriginal cultural landscape in relation to place-based theory, and especially how people relate to or assign value to a particular place. “Place” is not the same thing as “location.” Places are defined or described through the values that have developed through the people’s relationship with the land and are reshaped over time. The cultural landscape and people’s sense of place help to bridge the people’s past and present relationships with the land.

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 (UNESCO 2005) placed cultural and natural heritage on the world stage. It pointed to the threats of destruction to cultural heritage and natural heritage and the need to preserve parts that are of the “world heritage of mankind.” The concept of cultural landscape has continued to evolve over the last two decades and now is widely used internationally. Although most of the heritage sites in Canada are not UNESCO sites, UNESCO defined three cultural landscape categories that have been adapted to the Canadian landscape (Buggey 1999:13; Taylor and Lennon 2011:538-539):

- Those intentionally created by man for aesthetic reasons
- Organically evolved landscapes, and

- “Associative” cultural landscapes

In 1999, Susan Buggey (1999:29-30) provided an overview of the types of cultural landscapes found nationally and internationally. She offered a definition of “Aboriginal cultural landscape” and guidelines for their identifications:

An Aboriginal cultural landscape is a place valued by an Aboriginal group (or groups) because of their long and complex relationship with that land. It expresses their unity with the natural and spiritual environment. It embodies their traditional knowledge of spirits, places, land uses, and ecology. Material remains of the association may be prominent, but will often be minimal or absent [and see Ryden 1993].

As Thomas King wrote,

Association between person and place can sometimes grow deeper roots, through generations and over time become known by a family, group or a community. What’s relevant about the place is how they are perceived by these individuals or communities that hold them dear [King 2003:4].

To King, “perhaps one only needs to ask the question to those who live in the area, whether there are things about the area important to the community, and that its members don’t want to lose” (2003: 130-131).

This discussion considers how we might recognize or experience the “sense of place” and Buggey’s “associative” values embodied by the Aboriginal cultural landscape of the park, through an Aboriginal lens, and how our present and continued use of a traditional trail can nurture and rekindle peoples’ connections to the land in order to continue to find meaning in place and add to the stories of specific places that will continue into the future. The association between the three families and the Lake One Prairie that has been shown in this study is a good example; members of these families have a strong relationship with the area over time and between generations.

Richard Nelson (1983) has touched on this concept of inscribed meaning when he described the Koyukon imprint on the land in Alaska as quite different from the one we might initially think of as a tangible or physical sign on the land. He defined it more as something intangible that lives in the minds and hearts of the people, who have a reciprocal relationship with the land that over time has shaped both the people and the land, making them both what they are today:

Despite continuous and intensive human activity, the country remains essentially pristine. The only tangible evidences of this lengthy occupation are scattered campsites, narrow trails through the thicket, the widely dispersed village clearings, and the overgrown remnants of abandoned camps or settlements. And even these are difficult to see amid the vastness of forest and muskeg [Nelson 1983: 242].

From Nelson's point of view, such landscapes were unique to the people who were the caretakers and stewards of the land over many generations. Their legacy was not stone or log monuments or ruins, but rather their contributions to the conservation of this land (1983:242-246). This contribution can be defined through their long-term stewardship practices on the land and the sustainable way in which they managed and harvested the resources over generations. It is supported by the evolving nature of the traditional ecological knowledge that was tried and tested over time and guides their movements and actions on the land. Aboriginal people's historical stewardship of the park lands is often reflected in the tangible evidence that is found on the landscape, both past and present. Such evidence might be cabins or campsites, obvious trails, and burial sites. But like the Alaskan Koyukon, their stewardship can also be recognized and understood through their ongoing traditional practices, reflected through intangible aspects of their relationship with the park lands. This relationship exists in the minds of the people in the form of knowledge and traditions that are passed down between generations and whose relationship evolves

through the time and experiences of those who spend time on this landscape (see also Ingold 1993, 2000; Ryden 1993; Andrews and Buggey 2008; Basso 1996a; Pandya 1990).

It was interesting to note that, in the process of studying the trail, the focus of our discussions shifted from the trail itself to the individuals connected with the trail and those who had knowledge of the trail. Through the process of speaking with these specific knowledge holders, the focus shifted to one of strong family connections and the historical relationship with the physical trails and the Lake One Prairie, and the broader region that encompasses the study area within the national park. Thus the trail reflects a “living” or evolving relationship between Aboriginal people and the land.

It is well known that landscapes evolve and people’s relationship with the landscape also changes and evolves. Aboriginal cultural landscapes are described as living landscapes by Andrews and Buggey (2008:64): “while cultural landscapes change so do the cultures that commemorate them.” That is, cultural landscapes evolve due to the changes among the various people who occupy them over time. The culture of a group is not static, and this is demonstrated in the way the group changes its activities over time. They find more different ways to conduct these same activities, and the tools with which to do them also change. The practice or custom may change but the group remains true to whom they are, their identity and relationships with the land and what they believe. Thus, a living landscape is always “authentic” without being locked into the past.

Closely tied to associative cultural landscapes are those described as “ancestral landscapes” by Maori writer Merata Kawharu (2009). Kawharu emphasized the important connections between the ancestral past and those who are the descendants today. I am inclined to describe the Lake One Prairie as “ancestral” landscape for the strong connection

shown between its past and present use, even though the Aboriginal societies are not lineal clans. The Lake One Trail demonstrates these links and associations with the ancestors - those who have used the trail in the past, along with their descendants, and the collective relationship to a geographic area of land. And, the Lake One Trail is not just a physical trail that leads from one place to another, but a trail that transcends time and space and is not bounded by one generation. The Little Man is one specific place associated with the ancestors who walked the land in the past, and its meanings and values helps to bridge connections to the present. The concept of “ancestral landscapes” underwrites the local cultural interpretation in WBNP of values important to place and a better understanding of the cultural, social and political dimensions.

Keeping in mind this living landscape concept, McCormack (2017:120) has written about the unbroken history of land use in northern Alberta. This region was known to have been occupied by mainly Chipewyan, Beaver, and Cree at the time of European contact, but it was also occupied by many groups before them. Each group is known to have followed other groups immediately before them, and all of the descendants from these groups have learned land uses from those who came before them as well as from their own experiences. McCormack further states that collectively and over time, all these groups have contributed to construction and maintaining the landscape, and she identifies three ways in which this was achieved. The first was by extensive travel across the land by foot, creating a network of ancient trails that show regional patterns of land use. The second was through the use of controlled burning (Lewis 1982; McCormack 2007), which was used to modify the landscape to attract certain plants and wildlife and to maintain trails, giving access to ecologically rich areas. The rich knowledge surrounding controlled burning was demonstrated in Henry Lewis’ work regarding Aboriginal burning in northern Alberta. He

referred to the making and maintaining of trails and described how the trail network usually followed meadows, sloughs and streams and was maintained by prescribed fire. The types of vegetation found along these corridors were typically burned in the spring (1982: 39-40). The third is described as the way in which Aboriginal groups ascribe meaning to place, informing their distinct cultures and identities through the process of experience and knowledge obtained from their intimate and continuous relationship with the landscape. Without access to this knowledge and the personal connections through individual and family histories, the land seems empty to outsiders. For example, to the unfamiliar eye, the Lake One Trail and its region seems unaltered and lacks visible signs of human activity.

Aboriginal cultural landscapes help to bridge the connection between the ancestors or those who walked the land before us and those using the land now. As an “associative” landscape, the Lake One Prairie and study area contains some physical objects and structures left on the land (the tangible) and the stories and place name information that may not be obvious but that give meaning to the multiple values of these places that are natural, cultural, and spiritual (the intangible). Stories passed on through oral traditions and the traditional knowledge closely tied to the land are revealed through language and the place names that describe the landscape features and resources found within it. These remain as a legacy of those ancestral footprints and also highlight the importance of “relationship to place” and the role of “experience” or movement in the landscape, an empirical dimension.

Movement on the Landscape

Being mobile was a large part of the trapper’s family history, and often their knowledge related to mobility on the landscape. This was evident throughout their lifetimes but also in

the past, demonstrated by the grandparents' generation, when they relocated their families, adapting to social changes within their societies or environmental changes around them. Mobility has always characterized the hunting peoples of northern Canada, and it is how these families came to be at Lake One in the first place, following others who may have gone before them to gain access to important resources in order to sustain themselves and their families for months at a time. There were stories associated with traveling on the trail and the interactions and activities that occurred within the area, including human, animal and non-human or spiritual interactions. Thus, a trail within an Aboriginal cultural landscape can be used as a cultural lens to help us understand the important link between the culture and the land, allowing us to see the landscape through the individual's or group's point of view, literally, and by connecting places and providing important links that may not have been recognized otherwise.

The act of moving through the landscape and the interactions that occur in the process allow the traveller to create knowledge of the trail on which he or she is travelling. That may include knowledge about plants and animals and spiritual aspects. Conversely, activities and movements produce patterns on the land. These patterns contain layers of information that can demonstrate how the place was used by different people at different times, either as physical layers recognized as archaeological sites, including trails and other features, or as stories told about places. Named places may convey additional information about the uses and meanings of landscapes that say much about how people moved on the land (NWT Cultural Places Program 2000:14-15).

The Lake One Trail survey helped me understand the importance of accessing the Lake One Prairie through the process of travelling on the trail itself. Those of us who

walked the trail learned much more than we could have sitting in Fort Smith or Fort Chipewyan looking at maps with knowledge holders, or looking at air photos and archival maps. I got a feeling for the place, especially the prairie landscape and the very nature of the trail itself. It allowed me learn about additional sites and stories associated with the trail. The physical traces of the trail provided a tangible connection to place both past and present that elicited memories and information about additional trails and their associated cultural resources and about the people who used them. Walking the trail was more than simple “ground-truthing.” It pointed to understanding the “meanings” of the trails and features and how they tie into the broader cultural landscape.

In a sense, the Lake One Trail has become the keeper or placeholder of the stories, lessons and history of the land, shared through the memories of travelling and experiencing the trail. It is the link to the experience that is tied to that place and the teachings that it provides as we interact and move within that place, such as the experience of navigating a trail and making adjustments or decisions as we travel from one place to another. The outcome of this experience is the creation of our own site-specific knowledge related to traversing the landscape and developing a relationship with the place in order to survive and even thrive in that place. Ingold (2000:369) has described the strong association between “experience” and the construction of knowledge. He touched on the importance of wayfaring and movement of learning and practice. Learning through practice becomes a skill which shapes knowledge. This is what I would call the “construction” of knowledge that is specific to the individual and possibly shared more broadly as a cultural feature. Ingold used an example of following trails in a landscape and having to continually negotiate our path, making adjustments as we go in order to keep our course. These variations or alterations may reflect how we see the world or may be influenced by things

out of our control such as weather, time of year or encounters with wildlife. Each time we walk the trail we may need to negotiate it differently, which adds to our experience, offering a new way of seeing the land and the trail. New perspectives are gained from experiences and the decisions that are made as we travel along the trail and through the place which contribute to our repertoire of new skills and knowledge (Ingold 2014). People who navigate trails in this way may also use the trails as guidance for navigating different social, political, and economic landscapes, though little information is known about such connections.

Revisiting the Park's Commemorative Intent Statement

The Lake One Trail project demonstrated that a wealth of cultural and ecological knowledge comes from documenting even one short trail. It provided opportunities for exploring how trails can help us start to understand an Aboriginal cultural landscape within WBNP. Working with knowledge holders in a collaborative way, numerous places and resources were identified along the trail through the stories and experience of travelling on the land. They provided an important context for the cultural, ecological and spiritual values embodied within the study area. The trail study clearly showed the balance and interrelationships between the natural and cultural values, which together make up the Aboriginal cultural landscape of the Lake One Trail.

In their discussion of authenticity of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, Andrews and Bugey (2008: 65) draw on the work of Barbara Bender a British anthropologist who refers to these landscapes as living landscapes and how “landscapes like time, never stand still ... and landscape as land-use speaks of things done to the land – action and movement, the effects of historically specific social/political/cultural relationships” (2002:103). Bender is

concerned more with the values associated with landscapes than with their physical features. Understanding how people's relationship with place has been shaped over time helps to understand how the place is valued in the past and present. And the concept of change does not just reflect previous relationships but one that is constant that continues in the present and the future. This can help promote and understand continued use, especially where it relates to traditional stewardship of the land and its resources, and understanding how this change in use, both from governance park structure and cumulative impacts from industry has affected the landscape and the people who are associated with it.

Adding "cultural landscape" elements to the commemoration statement would recognize and give meaning to the living cultural traditions associated the Aboriginal peoples connection to this area across the generations, as well assert the importance of sustainable use related to both ecological and cultural values. One such commemoration was recently inscribed to the World Heritage List in 2018. Known locally as Pimachiowin Aki, this cultural landscape of the boreal forest in Manitoba and Ontario ties together four First Nations and their patterns of traditional land use across generations. As stewards and caregivers of this place, the Anishinaabeg people are "keepers of the land" to ensure the health of the ecological processes that have sustained them for millennia (UNESCO 2018).

A recent article by the Government of Canada emphasizes the commitment by Parks Canada to working with Aboriginal peoples and invites all Canadians to celebrate Aboriginal cultures at Parks Canada. It states, "Parks Canada is committed to a system of national heritage places that commemorates the contributions of Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, as well as how Indigenous Peoples take pride in being stewards of the land" (Parks Canada 2017b). So far WBNP has been recognized by UNESCO for its natural values, but these are not celebrated or linked to its amazing human history, one that encompasses the

cultural values and stewardship mechanisms that draw from cultural traditions that have shaped this landscape in the past and continue to do so today. The human element of the landscape has existed “for time immemorial,” for thousands of years since the recession of the glaciers and throughout the history of the park itself.

As documented in the Lake One Trail Study, the individual’s strong connection to and knowledge about the trail were gained both from their own travel and from the ancestors who went before them, demonstrating unbroken ties to this land and providing an example of the rich and deeply held values tied to this place and how important the area is to their families and communities. This high value placed on the park landscape is also demonstrated through the recent petition by Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) to include WBNP on the “List of World Heritage in Danger” (UNESCO n.d). Although the park is protected to some extent, impacts from hydroelectric dams and existing and proposed oil sands projects have shifted the park’s current designation under UNESCO as potentially threatened. This thesis lends support by arguing that the *cultural* integrity of the park is also at risk and should be given consideration if not equal value in the assessment or understanding of the “state of conservation” of the park.³⁷ Developing a revised UNESCO World Heritage statement for WBNP that reflects cultural values along with the threatened natural features will afford a more holistic view of the park that can then be assessed in light of the current threats. It will mean a more balanced approach to evaluating the health or state of park resources. It will also acknowledge the historic and present relationships that people have with the lands of the park.

³⁷ State of conservation (SOC) is a UNESCO term used to evaluate or assess the current or present state of the resources listed in the designated site’s statement of significance (UNESCO 2017a).

The reactive monitoring mission report (UNESCO 2016) requests Canada to immediately develop a “structured and adequately funded action plan” guided by the 17 mission recommendations. These are broadly grouped under park management and Indigenous engagement, monitoring and science, flow regulation and water withdrawals, environmental assessment and buffer zone land use planning (Janet Mercer, personal communication, May 2017). This would then provide a greater incentive to build on more trail work in the future to help enhance appreciation of the Aboriginal cultural landscape elements of the park that have been long overlooked. The following draft statements highlight potential commemorative elements derived from the results of the Lake One Trail study:

- *Continuity of access* to these places (Egg Lake/?Eghés tu and the Lake One Trail) allows for *sustainable use* of key resources for food and material needs and is supported through *maintaining a trail network* connected to seasonal movements on the landscape. Thus, the Lake One Prairie is a *living landscape*. Change is integral to the *evolving relationship* people have with this place.
- *Access to knowledge* is supported through activities on the land and the *interaction of elders and youth to reconnect on the land* and at traditional meeting and gathering places. By fostering the intergenerational transfer of knowledge at these places through oral tradition, storytelling, observation and traditional knowledge, and personal experience, we promote *respect* for the land and its resources and sustainable use of the plants and animals for all time.

Chapter 10 Lessons Learned

From the beginning, the study had elements of cultural revitalization and cultural reconciliation, as I worked with local Aboriginal people to identify trails in the national park, to re-open the trail, and to document its features, and especially to appoint overall cultural significance of the park. These elements gained momentum as we moved into each new phase and culminated when we walked the trail in the company of Aboriginal elders and youth. The trail became a medium for sharing traditional knowledge and place names, telling stories, and demonstrating connections that people have with the study area.

Without exception, these stories expressed a deep connection to the land through long-term use by the Aboriginal communities, participants, their parents and grandparents. Taken together, they revealed elements of an Aboriginal cultural landscape. As a pilot project, the trail study brought people together in multiple ways and especially on the land itself to show the value of doing this work and to provide a model for future research of trails and other cultural landscapes.

This project showed the rich results from working closely with local Aboriginal people and demonstrating respect for their land-based history. It also showed how different their histories are from those of mainstream Canadians. There is a lengthy relationship between the park managers and the Aboriginal users, not always a happy one. Work with trails and cultural landscapes may shed some light on aspects of that history. Also, it is important to recognize that the Cree, Chipewyan and Métis relationships with the park continue today, along with other First Nations who are park users, and ideally the park will find ways to work with all these different groups in a supportive manner into the future. Trails are just one aspect of this important relationship. Getting to know the unique history

that each group has with the national park can then help to guide present and future discussions and park policies – what is their vision for how they see the park in relation to future generations. For instance, as Thomas King has suggested, (2003:174), one might ask whether the place (in this case the national park) plays “the sort of role in a community’s cultural integrity that people says it does.” That speaks to issues of authenticity and finding ways that allow the Aboriginal groups in the WBNP region to take more ownership of the park. Ideally they will do so in harmony and not in isolation from each other. There is a need to think “outside the box” to change the way the largest park in Canada is managed, which may require identifying a new path forward that represents the vision of how the Aboriginal communities see their connection to the lands of the park, now and into the future, for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Parks Canada is in a good position to be a leader in working collaboratively and engaging with Aboriginal people. Parks Canada has the land-base that allows for these discussions to take place in a meaningful and collective way, but it requires political will to do so.

Trail Considerations for Reconciliation and Repatriation

Reconnecting with the trails is an obvious means to this goal. We can talk about “repatriating” a trail by documenting trails before the knowledge is lost, by re-opening important trails, and by getting people back onto the trails. Trail research can be a physical starting point to begin the journey to the trail of the ancestors. As well, travelling on the trail challenges people mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Unfortunately, there is a long history of power imbalances between the park and the local Aboriginal communities, and it will take time and persistence to build trust and overcome them. In the process, the park could support access and maintenance of the

trails through building capacity in the community for trail building, while learning bush skills, including how to travel on the land in order to preserve the knowledge related to trail use, or even how to build a log cabin. Such knowledge is critical interpretive knowledge for the park, in that the trails each tell stories of the people who used them over time. It would be ideal to protect trails so that 100-200 years (and more) in the future we can still point out the trails and talk about all those who have used it, including those using it presently, who continue to help to maintain the cultural connections to trails and places. Hence, the trails allow people the opportunity to walk in the footsteps – literally – of their ancestors, providing a link to the past, and reminds us of what is important about the place.

From a WBNP perspective there are many practical benefits to trails. Trails provide a way of opening up the land and experiencing the park in a different way. Trails can help facilitate uses of the land in ways that are conducive to national park mandates, conservation, and the protection of cultural landscapes. Use and establishment of trails have less impact than the building of roads or highways and can provide benefits such as greater access and monitoring of resources. Having traditional users on the trails will support monitoring of the park resources while building and promoting the creation and use of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge, including general observations such as water levels and flood cycles. In these ways, the park managers might support traditional knowledge while making the park more accessible to the community. Trails can provide opportunities to collaborate with traditional users who use the trail in ways that meet the needs of both the park and the community. This includes building on the traditional knowledge of trails that can help to identify trails and where they lead. Knowledge of a good camping spot might inform where the community hosts a traditional camp for elders and

youth. Such knowledge can also support cross-cultural purposes between the park staff and the traditional users of the park.

The stories from the elders of the struggles they endured and the teachings that are passed down, go beyond the ancestral physical existence/experience. The trail provides opportunities for teachings and time to think about connections between our lives and the ones who have gone before us. Together they contribute to the traditional knowledge of the trail by conserving and promoting the transfer of older knowledge and at the same time, creating new knowledge.

Trails may also provide a crucial link that allows the park to work with different groups, such as members of different Group Trapping Areas (GTAs) or of different political jurisdictions. The Lake One Trail is situated within GTA 1209 but connects with neighboring areas. The park lies within both the Northwest Territories and Alberta, and the trails move across a number of jurisdictional boundaries.

A broader study of regional trails would be a starting point in creating a cultural landscape atlas of the park and adjacent northern Alberta and southern NWT. As McCormack has suggested, once the locations of trails are known, then one can layer on the traditional uses of those lands and how different First Nations define them (2017: 124), building on what I have done for the much smaller Lake One Trail study.

In summary, what I discovered from the Lake One Trail study was that a wealth of trail knowledge still exists, that there are considerable threats to this knowledge and to the trails themselves, and the risks and benefits related to the physical work of trail clearing and on-the-ground documentation.

Much of the information and results obtained about the natural and cultural resources associated with the trail was obtained from the stories collected with elders including those who walked the trail and those stories collected before/after the field survey. The field survey was guided by the cleared sections of trail and key cultural resources situated along it, in order to locate and document sites of cultural importance along the way. The field team surveyed the northern and southern portions of the trail, but was unable to access the middle sections, which is still unsurveyed. There is an important spiritual site along the trail and also archaeological sites.

In addition, while walking the two portions of the trail with two elders and one youth, the team documented traditional knowledge and personal perspectives and experiences, especially as they pertained to the trail's cultural resources. Through traditional knowledge, I learned that physical objects to be carried with you while you are mobile are few. More important were the intangible knowledge associated with way finding, intimate knowledge tied to the environment such as the animals and their behaviour, and technology and tools used that you could access within the environment.

As Julie Cruikshank (1998:102) has understood, being mobile on the land, what she called "portability" in the subarctic environment of the Yukon Territory, was facilitated and supported by being able to carry this traditional and local knowledge around with you. This intimate knowledge of the land and its resources was conveyed by the trappers at Lake One through the stories and recollections they shared, which demonstrates specific knowledge of how and where to set lynx sets and rabbit snares, where to find good camping or tenting sites with a water source, how to hunt and process muskrat, where and how to hunt moose, understanding the caribou migration routes, where to hunt waterfowl and collect their eggs, where to pick berries, when and how to dry fish to preserve for the winter, and familiarity

with the odd behaviours of the wolverine. The oral history shared by the trappers on the trail at Lake One helped to bring out important stories that were recorded and shared with youth present. This allowed for a greater access to this knowledge that may not have otherwise been available. Having interactions between elders and youth can help facilitate the transfer of this knowledge and ensures that the family connection will have a greater chance of continuing and evolving from the present into the future.

The Lake One Trail includes all the values that make up the landscape, including people, cultural, natural and spiritual aspects. It is a good example of how a trail can make connections to a larger cultural landscape, one that is part of a seasonal cycle related to the harvesting of specific resources. Revealing that one relatively small area of WBNP can have ascribed elements of an Aboriginal cultural landscape in the park.

As I reflect back on this trail study: the initial goal was to identify a trail, and thus to explore broader relationships between Aboriginal people and the land, both spatially and over time. I wanted to show how important the cultural side the park has been in the past and still is today. Thanks to the study of a specific trail I learned much about the utility of working through trails to provide the documentation needed to support the broader focus on cultural significance. Locating a trail and why it exists is only a first step, though important, can be a catalyst to create a path to move forward together by Aboriginal people with one another and also with WBNP staff. Knowledge of the trail follows with an obligation to ensure we continue to use the trail and that it becomes part of the living knowledge, a way of life, ultimately having a role to play in the present and the future.

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|--|---|---|--|
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| Philip Cheezie (1932 - 2014) | February 27, 2014 May 10, 2010 | Fort Smith, NT Fort Smith | Laura Peterson Laura Peterson |
| Charlie Simpson | February 11 2014a May 16, 2014b October 7-9, 2014c | 1 st Interview – Fort Chipewyan, AB 2 nd Interview Field Survey | Laura Peterson (and Donalee Deck during the field survey) |
| Lawrence Vermillion | October 7, 2014a Oct 7-9, 2014b Feb 2, 2015a October 11, 2015b | Peace Point, AB Field Survey Fort Chipewyan, AB Fort Smith, NT | Laura Peterson (and Donalee Deck during the field survey) |
| Fred Vermillion | August 2015 | Mikisew Cree First Nation & Former WBNP employee (date) | Laura Peterson |
| Joe Vermillion (1943- 2014) With Fred And Lawrence Vermillion | August 2008 | Jackfish Patrol Cabin, WBNP | Laura Peterson and Libby Gunn |
| Gordie Masson | June 23, 2014 | Phone Interview | Laura Peterson |
| Don Huisman | May 29, 2014 | Phone Interview | Laura Peterson and Donalee Deck |
| Curtis Bourke | August 29, 2014 | Fort Smith, NT | Laura Peterson |
| Lois Bourke | August 29, 2014 | Fort Smith, NT | Laura Peterson |
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Personal Communication

Participants

Charlie Simpson, Project Participant
 Fred Vermillion, Project Participant
 Lawrence Cheezie, Project Participant
 Lawrence Vermillion, Project Participant

Other

Sandra Dolan, Local Historian and Writer, Fort Smith, NWT

Patricia A. McCormack, Native Studies Professor at the University of Alberta and my Supervisor.

Janet Mercer, Environmental Assessment Specialist, Natural Resource Conservation Branch, Parks Canada Agency.

George Peterson, Ecologist and Former Environment and Natural Resource Instructor at Aurora College, and my Husband.

Pat Marcel, Member of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

Appendices

A: UNESCO Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for WBNP



Wood Buffalo National Park



Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Wood Buffalo National Park is an outstanding example of ongoing ecological and biological processes encompassing some of the largest undisturbed grass and sedge meadows left in North America. It sustains the world's largest herd of wood bison, a threatened species. The park's huge tracts of boreal forest also provide crucial habitat for a diverse range of other species, including the endangered whooping crane. The continued evolution of a large inland delta, salt plains and gypsum karst add to the park's uniqueness.

Criterion (vii): The great concentrations of migratory wildlife are of world importance and the rare and superlative natural phenomena include a large inland delta, salt plains and gypsum karst that are equally internationally significant.

Criterion (ix): Wood Buffalo National Park is the most ecologically complete and largest example of the entire Great Plains-Boreal grassland ecosystem of North America, the only place where the predator-prey relationship between wolves and wood bison has continued, unbroken, over time.

Criterion (x): Wood Buffalo National Park contains the only breeding habitat in the world for the whooping crane, an endangered species brought back from the brink of extinction through careful management of the small number of breeding pairs in the park. The park's size (4.5 million ha), complete ecosystems and protection are essential for *in-situ* conservation of the whooping crane.

Integrity

Wood Buffalo National Park straddles the boundary between the province of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and encompasses 4.5 million hectares of forest, wetland and prairie, including the majority of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. The size of the park allows for the protection of entire ecosystems and the ecosystem features that are the basis for the park's Outstanding Universal Value. The park's size, remoteness, very low human population density and the absence of resource extraction activities minimize human-related stress within the property, resulting in a high level of integrity. Bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis are present within the wood bison population in and around the park. The actual and potential impact on the delta from stressors originating outside the park, such as flow regulation, water withdrawals, industrial discharge and climate change, is monitored by the park and by working in collaboration with a network of partners to monitor and manage impacts from upstream development.

Protection and management requirements

The *Canada National Parks Act* provides effective legal protection for the park. Under the requirements of the legislation, a park management plan was approved in June 2010 and provides direction for protecting the features of the park that are the basis for its Outstanding Universal Value, and for providing opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the park. The park's two largest wetlands (the Peace-Athabasca Delta and the whooping crane nesting area) have also been declared Wetlands of International Importance under the RAMSAR convention.

Park managers work with 11 Aboriginal groups for whom Wood Buffalo National Park is an area of significant cultural value to cooperatively manage the park, as each group carries out traditional harvesting and other cultural activities within the park boundaries. Endangered species and their critical habitat, including the breeding grounds of the whooping crane, are protected under provisions of Canada's *Species at Risk Act*. Park staff also work with Environment Canada, international crane preservation groups and U.S. government agencies to ensure the long term viability of the park's whooping crane flock.

Park staff closely monitors upstream development on the major rivers that flow into the park and work closely with local Aboriginal partners, other government agencies, stakeholders and industry to maintain the ecological integrity of Wood Buffalo National Park. The park management plan commits park managers to developing an Area Management Plan for the Peace-Athabasca Delta to address the challenges of managing the delta's ecological and cultural values in cooperation with partners and stakeholders. The Peace-Athabasca Delta Ecological Monitoring Program, a multi-stakeholder group made up of Aboriginal representatives, government and non-government organizations, is a cornerstone in developing and implementing this plan.

Special attention will be given over the long term to monitoring and taking appropriate actions related to a number of factors in or near the property. Specifically, attention will focus on the actual and potential impacts of upstream development and climate change.

B: Research Information Sheet

Title of the Project – Mapping an historic overland trail in Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP)

Researcher: Laura Peterson
Wood Buffalo National Park
PO Box 750
Fort Smith, NT XOE 0P0

Supervisor: Dr. Patricia McCormack
Professor Emerita
Faculty of Native Studies
University of Alberta

Who is the researcher?

My name is Laura Peterson and I am a member of the K'ómoks First Nation from Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and live in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories with my husband George Peterson, daughter Amber and son Niklas. I am a student in the Master of Arts program at the Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta. I am conducting this research project in collaboration with community members who reside in Fort Chipewyan, AB, Fort Smith, NT and Parks Canada.

1. What is the research study about?

My chosen topic of research is to learn the history of a traditional overland trail in WBNP and its link to the larger network of trails that speak to the Aboriginal occupancy and cultural landscape in the region. Knowledge about these trails is disappearing. This project will collect and preserve the stories and knowledge related to the trail that leads from Peace Point on the Peace River to Lake One in WBNP. This information will be used to complement an on-the-ground survey of the trail with local knowledge holders and the help of an archaeologist and GPS. The first phase of the project will be conducted in February and March 2014, with a second phase to follow in the spring or summer. The result will be maps and stories that represent the cultural footprint on the landscape in WBNP within living memory. In addition to the survey, historic documents and maps associated with the trail will be collected from provincial and territorial archives and libraries.

Other research objectives include:

- To increase understanding, recognition and respect for the Aboriginal land-use of WBNP, both past and present;
- To show the rich and diverse history and cultures associated with WBNP by recording important places and stories along the trail including place names, settlement sites, cabins, harvesting locations, gravesites and stories and knowledge associated with them;
- To identify the historical, cultural, social, physical and spiritual values associated with the trail;
- To develop a research model for future documentation of traditional trails and cultural sites in the national park;
- To support a revised UNESCO World Heritage statement of WBNP that reflects cultural and heritage values.

2. What will be requested of the participants and how long will it take?

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to take part in this study. Your involvement is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to do so. As outlined in the consent form you are free to withdraw from the project at any time by informing the researcher. You were selected because of your relationship/connection with the trail of interest and the knowledge you hold regarding the history of this area. You will be asked to take part in an interview (maximum of two interviews) that will last from 45-60 minutes, with a follow-up meeting to review and make changes to the interview transcript. This interview may be conducted in a place where you will be most comfortable and/or could also take place during the field component of this study (approx. 5-7 days). The field component will consist of an on-the-ground survey of a section of the trail being studied in WBNP. The first phase will take place during the winter months and may require use of a snow machine and/or snowshoes, while recording a portion of the trail through stories and visiting specific sites along the trail. It is anticipated that the interviews and field component will be conducted during the upcoming winter and spring of 2014.

3. Benefits and Risks

The information collected from this study may contribute to understanding historic land-use patterns and past and present life ways in the national park, while creating awareness and understanding of the rich cultural heritage of the park. It is hoped that you will find involvement in this study valuable as a way to reconnect with the historic trail and the stories connected with it. On completion of your interview you will be offered an honorarium based on the recent guidelines developed by WBNP. This is shown as the amount of \$40.00 per one hour of interview. Other benefits include the identification and documentation of historical, written and oral history and knowledge related to your specific ancestry that could potentially be lost if not documented.

Risks of the research are discomforts associated with the field component of the study such as cold and unpredictable weather patterns and basic discomforts while travelling in the remote backcountry by foot and other modes of transportation in order to access the trail. Risks will be addressed by adhering to the WBNP's Visitor Risk Management Plan (draft 2008) for back-country travel.

4. What will happen to the information collected?

The results of this study will be used in support of my MA thesis (research paper) and in publications. On request, you may receive a copy of the report of the research findings. Research material arising from this project may also contribute to future interpretation about the history and current relationship between Aboriginal people and the national park and may be in the form of posters, community presentations, articles or shared on the website. All the data will be preserved by Parks Canada as a permanent public reference resource for use in research, publications, education, and lectures about the history of the trail and Aboriginal land-use. Upon request, your identity may be protected by placing restrictions on access to the research material as outlined in the attached consent f

C: Participant Consent Form

Title of Study: Mapping an historic overland trail in Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP)

Researcher/ Interviewer: Laura Peterson
 Wood Buffalo National Park
 PO Box 750
 Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0
 Phone: (867) 872-7936

Signature:

Participant/ Interviewee: (Name and Address)

Phone:

Email:

1. As a knowledge holder/interviewee, I have been fully informed of the following points before proceeding with the interview or other involvement with the researcher:
 - My participation in this research is completely voluntary. I have read the Research Information Statement, and/or the research study has been explained to me verbally and I understand the intent and purpose of this research.
 - If I decide to participate and then change my mind I am free to withdraw from the project at any time. I have the right to refuse to answer any question. The interview will be recorded, but if I feel uncomfortable with the recording, I have the right to ask that that portion of the recording be deleted and to know that the interviewer has complied with my request. The latest date I can withdraw information from the study is upon first review of the research material at the conclusion of the field component. Withdrawal from the project or withdrawal of information will be communicated orally to the researcher who will document the changes in writing.
2. I understand that the information collected from this project will be stored at the WBNP office at Fort Smith, in a locked cabinet and password protected computer, with the file encrypted, where the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Advisor will have access to my data. I am aware that the data may also be stored at the Parks Canada office in Winnipeg, where it may only be accessed by Parks Canada archaeologists/researchers, and if requested by restricted access.

I am willing to have the information stored at Fort Smith, NT ____ Yes ____ No

I am willing to have the information stored in Winnipeg, MB ____ Yes ____ No

3. Acknowledgement and anonymity:

I am willing to be acknowledged by name as the source of this information (with exceptions as noted) ____ Yes ____ No

(Or) I want my identity to be kept confidential, and my name not appear on any materials (with exceptions as noted) ____ Yes ____ No

4. Additional conditions for my participation in this research are noted below:

I am willing to have this interview recorded ____ Yes ____ No

I would like to have a copy of my recorded interview returned to me ____ Yes ____ No

I would like to receive a copy of the transcript and transcript summary __ Yes__ No

I am willing to be photographed as part of the interview process ____ Yes ____ No

5. Other Conditions relating to Confidentiality and Storage

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature

Date

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

D: Interview Guide

A. Personal & background information

1. What is your full name
2. What is your birth date and place of birth
3. Mother (maiden) & father's full name and their birthplace
4. Father and mother's work
5. Siblings
6. Places of residence
7. Marriage (date, spouse, where met)
8. Children – names and date of birth
9. Are you affiliated with a local First Nation or Métis group
10. Can you tell me more about your First Nation or Métis heritage, for e.g. where were your grandparents from
11. How much time did you spend on the land as a young person or as a child growing up? How much time were you able to spend with your grandparents?
12. Education background
13. Have you ever worked for WBNP
 - a. What type of work did you do - job title
 - b. How long did you work for the park

B. Personal & background information

- What is the name of this trail and how did it get this name?
- Is it known by any other names?
- How long has this trail been in use?
- How was this trail created and why? What was the trail used for? When did it have the most use? Was it used in the summer as well as the winter?
- Do you know of any prior use of the trail before your family used the trail?
- Did other groups or families use the trail?
- How did most people travel on the trail? Has the type of travel changed over time?
- How long is the trail? How much time would it take to travel the trail?
- From your experience, what was it like travelling on the trail?
- Has the trail route changed over time, within your lifetime or during previous generations? Why or how has it changed?
- How well known was the trail? And how well known is it today?
- How did you and your family come to use this trail?
- What was your grandmother's or mother's relationship to the trail?
- Do you remember the first time you used the trail? How did you come to know this trail?
- When was the last time you used the trail?
- What kinds of objects (cultural resources) did you come across on the trail?
- What can you tell me about animal uses of the trail e.g. wolves or bison?
- Any information about the construction of the trail?
- Were there other trails leading off or connected to this trail. If so, to what areas and why?

- Are there any other unique features or sites that you remember in this area?
- If people are not using the trail today, what are some of the reasons why they are not using the trail?
- Are there any well-known stories about the trail?
- Are there specific areas along the trail that you know that represent important harvesting or settlement locations?
- Any particular stories that you would like to tell about your experience and time spent travelling on the trail or in Wood Buffalo National Park?
- Are there any other events related to the trail?

C. Settlement or camp locations

- Where did people live or camp when they were using the trail? Approx. how many camp sites are there?
- Are there any campsites in particular that you would like to talk about? When did people live at this campsite (time period)?
- How many people would have been camped here?
- Was the camp spread out over a large area?
- What time of the year was the camp used?
- What were they doing? Why were they living/camping there?
- How long have they used this camping site or area?
- Are there any photos that exist of these places and the trail?
- What do you think is important about these locations?
- Any comments on the number of buildings or other locations? What kind of buildings or dwellings did they have?
- Was the area cleared of trees when people lived there?
- Are there other important place names along the trail? Are there any related to specific events? What language are they in?

D. Present and future use of the trail

- What do you think is important to know about the trail?
- How would you describe your connection to this trail? What does it tell us about who you are and your culture - to be Cree, Chipewyan or Métis?
- Would you like to continue using the trail or have future generations use the trail?
- When or why did you decide to re-open this trail? How long have you been thinking about this? Other reasons for re-opening the trail?
- What is the purpose or value of re-connecting with the trail?
- Is there something you would like Parks Canada to do to protect / respect the use of the trail?
- Would you like the Park to interpret trails like this one? Website?
- Do you think local school groups should learn about the trail? What is most important about this trail that should be shared with the younger or future generations?

E: Ethics Approval

Notification of Approval

Date: July 24, 2013
 Study ID: Pro00039597
 Principal Investigator: Laura Peterson
 Study Supervisor: Patricia McCormack
 Study Title: (Re)mapping Aboriginal land-use patterning on a cultural landscape by examining and linking the relationship between an historic overland trail and the broader network of trails in the region.
 Approval Expiry Date: July 23, 2014

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Approved Consent Form: | Approval Date | Approved Document |
| | 24/07/2013 | Draft Consent Form_ LPeterson.docx |
| | 24/07/2013 | DraftInfoSheet_LPeterson.docx |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--------|
| Sponsor/Funding Agency: | C/BAR NSTP Northern Scientific Training Program | C/BAR NSTP NSTP | Canada |
| Sponsor/Funding Agency: | New Relationship Trust Foundation Parks Canada - Wood Buffalo National Park | | |

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 1. Your application has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee.

A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Approval by the Research Ethics Board does not encompass authorization to access the staff, students, facilities or resources of local institutions for the purposes of the research.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Dunn

Chair, Research Ethics Board 1

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

F: Parks Canada Research Permit

**PARKS CANADA AGENCY
RESEARCH AND COLLECTION PERMIT
(NOT TRANSFERABLE)**

PERMIT No.: WB-2014-17296

START DATE: 2014-10-02

EXPIRY DATE 2015-10-02

Project Title: Mapping an historic overland trail in Wood Buffalo National Park

Principal Investigator Name: Peterson, Laura, L

Address: Wood Buffalo National Park PO Box 750 Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0

Telephone: Office: 867-872-7936

Email: Laura.peterson@pc.gc.ca

Affiliation: Laura Peterson, Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP); Donalee Deck, Terrestrial Archaeology Branch, Cultural Sciences, HCCD (Winnipeg); WBNP Support Staff TBD; Community Knowledge Holders, Fort Smith, NT and Fort Chipewyan, AB. Is hereby authorized to conduct the research project entitled "Mapping an historic overland trail in Wood Buffalo National Park " , Research and Collection Permit Application Number 21397, In Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada, subject to the terms and conditions set out below and/or attached to and forming part of this Research and Collection Permit.

Members of Research Team:

Donalee Deck, Cultural Science Branch, HCCD, 145 McDermot Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0R9.

Restrictions:

The Superintendent may suspend, cancel, or restrict the scope of the permit.

The permit shall cease to be valid if the fieldwork is not started within six months of the date of issue.

Other Acts and Regulations:

The Principal Investigator must abide by applicable regulations and all other federal, provincial, territorial or municipal regulations applying to the Heritage Area.

If requested by the Superintendent, an authorized Heritage Area staff member, or police constable, the Principal Investigator or any team member will identify themselves and show the permit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities :

A site, or site component(s) that has been excavated or disturbed shall be restored or conserved by the Principal Investigator to the satisfaction of the Superintendent.

The Principal Investigator must advise the Research Coordinator of any adjustments in work location, research plan and methodology, implementation schedule, or main personnel, etc., during the course of the research.

Unless otherwise negotiated, Researchers working in a Heritage Area are required, as a condition of their permit, to submit:

- a) A report of progress sixty (60) days following the completion of the field season, unless otherwise agreed with the Research Coordinator;
- b) A final report, one (1) electronic copy and three (3) hard copies, no later than eight (8) months following the completion of the field season, unless otherwise agreed with the Research Coordinator;
- c) Submission of an online Investigator's Annual Report (IAR) within one year of signing the permit. In the case of a multi-year permits, the principal investigator will submit an IAR for each year of the research.

The reporting requirements above do not replace any reporting requirements set out in any contract between Parks Canada and the Principal Investigator.

The Principal Investigator will be responsible for all members of their party. All field assistants must observe any general or specific conditions of the permit.

The Principal Investigator shall at all times indemnify and save harmless the Crown from and against all claims, demands, loss, costs, damages, actions, suits, or other proceedings, by whosoever made, sustained, brought or prosecuted, in any manner based upon, occasioned by, or attributable to, anything done or omitted by the Principal Investigator or the project personnel in the fulfillment or purported fulfillment of any of the conditions of the Permit.

General Conditions Governing Archaeological Research:

Issuing Authorities and Terms and Conditions:

Permit issued pursuant to:

National Parks General Regulations: Section(s) __7(5), __14(2)

Special Conditions:

1. This permit allows the collection of: Cultural/archaeological resources that are threatened with destruction.
2. Where possible, Wood Buffalo National Park staff will accompany and assist researchers in their fieldwork.
3. Park staff may take photographs and/or video of researchers working in the park. This footage will be used in a variety of ways including public outreach presentations, on the Parks Canada website and in park publications.
4. Researchers will be required to work with Wood Buffalo National Park staff to engage local residents, where possible, in the planning of field research in the areas of study design, travel, safety and logistics of working in a remote area.
5. Over the course of their research in the Park, permit holders are required to provide some form of public outreach (a public presentation, newsletter or other format targeted to a lay audience) to inform the local communities on the significance of their work. The primary investigator or associate will be requested to participate in a Wood Buffalo National Park Science Forum when scheduled.
6. A field report with a summary of annual results is required at the end of each field season for use in the park research newsletter. This is due 2 months after the end of the field season.
7. A helicopter landing permit is required and must be carried by the researchers during this activity.
8. Helicopters are required to fly at least 1,500 ft. AGL between landing sites and 2,000 ft. AGL over the Whooping Crane Nesting Area. Landing is not permitted in the Whooping Crane Nesting Area.

National General Conditions:

Failure to comply with applicable Heritage Area regulations or the conditions of the permit may constitute grounds to cancel or suspend the permit, refuse to issue future permits, and may be considered as grounds for prosecution under the applicable Act(s) or Regulation(s).

All permit holders must be in possession of a valid permit before the fieldwork commences and at other periods as stated on the permit.

Permits are not transferable and each member of the field work team must have a copy of the valid permit in their possession.

The permit is valid only for the geographic location, the time period, the activities, and under the terms and conditions described on the permit, unless amended and revalidated by the Superintendent.

The Principal Investigator must participate in or directly supervise a minimum of 75% of the archaeological research project's field operations.

The Principal Investigator must ensure that the latest Parks Canada archaeological site and object numbers are used for recording purposes, as specified in the Parks Canada Archaeological Recording Manual: Excavations and Surveys.

The Principal Investigator shall use archival quality recording materials (e.g., paper, ink, pencil, film) for all field recording.

Following completion of the archaeological research project, the Principal Investigator must submit to the Superintendent:

a) The originals of all Archaeological Records: Any written, graphic, visual and electronic record that is prepared and assembled that relates to the identification, evaluation, documentation, study, preservation, or excavation of an archaeological site or resource.

Moreover, all data submitted must comply with Parks Canada's archaeological data and metadata requirements.

The Principal Investigator and his or her crew shall use the Parks Canada Archaeological Recording Manual: Excavations and Surveys in the conducting of archaeological research activities.

Archaeological Objects:

All Archaeological Objects:

Remain the custodial responsibility of the of the Crown unless specified otherwise within a final comprehensive land claim agreement;

Are considered to be on loan to the Principal Investigator until the research on the site assemblage and final archaeological research report(s) are completed in accordance with the allotted time period specified on the approved Archaeological Research Permit Application and on the Archaeological Research Permit;

While in the possession of the Principal Investigator, the archaeological objects will be made available to Parks Canada for research and display purposes; and,

All excavation units, archaeological objects and records will be recorded and identified using the Parks Canada archaeological provenience system, and according to Parks Canada standards and procedures.

Where an Archaeological Resource requires special treatment (e.g., unique, sacred, fragile, requiring immediate conservation assistance), the Superintendent shall be immediately informed for direction on how to proceed.

Conditions regarding the management, conservation, and the disposition of the collections(s) into a mutually agreed upon Parks Canada repository may be changed as circumstances warrant by the applicable Superintendent, on the advice of the appropriate Service Centre Director.

Human Remains:

Where human remains and/or funerary objects are accidentally encountered, the activities in progress at the site must be suspended immediately and the Superintendent notified. The Principal Investigator will await further direction from the Superintendent.

Human remains and funerary objects recovered from an archaeological context should be treated separately from archaeological objects. Human remains cannot be the subject of property. When human remains are found on federal Crown land administered by Parks Canada, the Agency has a custodial responsibility. The human remains are in the care and custody of the Crown.

Principal Investigator Signature

I, Peterson, Laura, L , the Project Principal Investigator, accept all the stated Research and Collection Permit terms and conditions.



Signature

2014/09/26

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Approval:

Permit issued/approved by:

STUART MACMILLAN

Resource Conservation Manager Name (Please Print)



Resource Conservation Manager Signature

2014/09/29

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

ROBERT KEAT

Superintendent Name (Please Print)



Superintendent Signature

Oct 01, 2014

Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Permit Number WB2014-018 Issuing Office: Fort Smith Resource Conservation Of

Function: CRM Program: Traditional Use

Permit Type: RESTRICTED ACTIVITY Date of Issue: 04-Aug-14

PERMIT INFORMATION:

Research Permit #: WB-2014-17296

Special Activity: LAND HELICOPTER

Route: Ft.Smith-Peace Point-Lake One area

Purpose: To transport elders across the river from Peace Point to Lake One area

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Company Name: Wood Buffalo National Park

First Name: Laura Last Name: Peterson

Mailing Address: Box 750

City: Fort Smith Province/State: NT Postal Code X0E 0P0

Phone Number: (867) 872-7936 Fax Number: (867) 872-3910

VEHICLE/AIRCRAFT INFORMATION:

Type: HELICOPTER Model: A-Star Colour: _____

Aircraft Registration: _____

Company Name, Address and Phone Number: Wood Buffalo Helicopters, Ft. McMurray

Commodity Carried People

Comments and/or Special Conditions:

Permit Valid From 02-Oct-14 Permit Valid To: 10-Oct-14 Delivered by: IN PERSON

Permit Issued By: Sharon Irwin

Authorization Signature: *[Signature]*

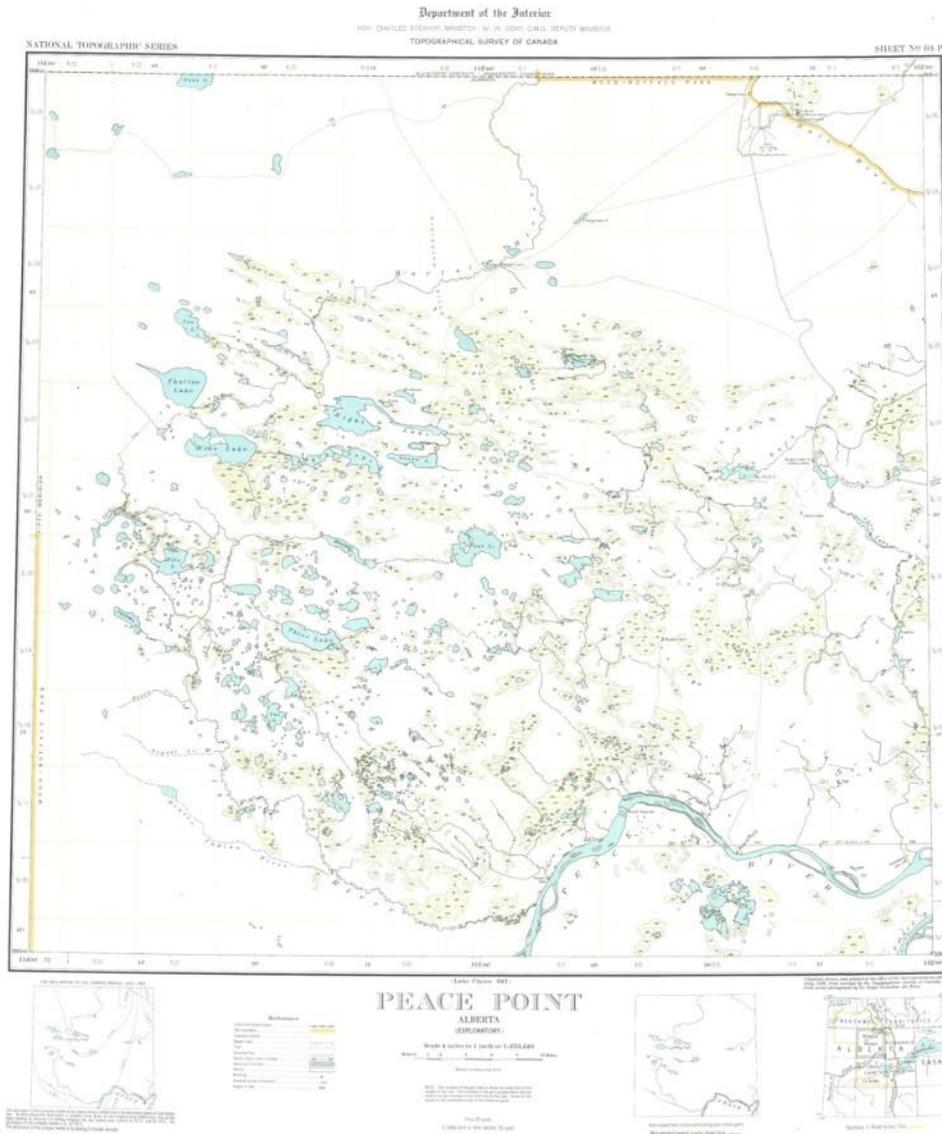
Applicant Signature: *[Signature]* Date: Sept 30, 2014

NOTE: SPECIAL CONDITIONS APPLY TO THIS PERMIT

1. The Canada National Parks Act and Regulations apply.
2. The permit must be carried by the permit holder and shown to a Park Warden or Peace Officer on demand.
3. This permit may be cancelled at any time by written or verbal notice.
4. This permit is valid only for the dates and locations shown.
5. This permit is not transferable.
6. If fire permit, all fires must be kept under control and supervised at all times.
7. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this permit, the permittee shall indemnify Parks Canada Agency from any and all liabilities, costs, damages, claims, suits or actions arising from:
 - a) any damage to property; or
 - b) any injury to a person or persons including death occasioned by the permittee in his/her use, occupation or by his/her activities resulting from this permit.

G: Historic Maps

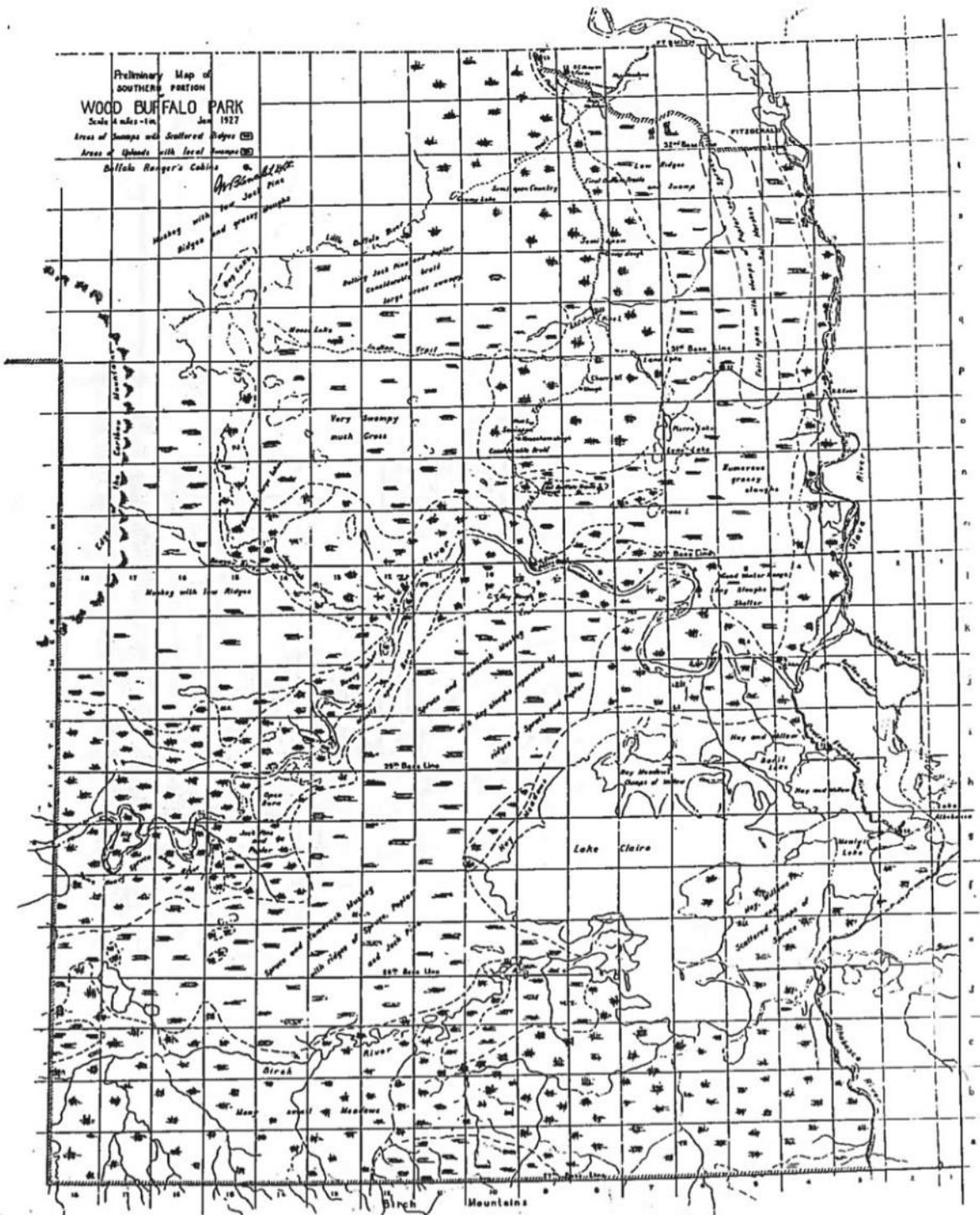
Peace Point 84 P (1929)



84 P (1929)

Source: Provincial Archives of Alberta, Accession no. GR1978.0191, item 193

Preliminary Map of Southern Portion of Wood Buffalo Park, 1927



Source: LAC, Natural Resources Canada, CLSR 35318. Located at the WBNP Headquarters, Fort Smith, 2004.

H: Lake One Study Trail Tables

Trail Table 1 –Lake One Trail Descriptions in the Study Area

| No. | Name | Type | | | | | | Description | Identified by | Year | Length (km) | Comments |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|---------|----------|-------------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---|
| | | Cat Road or Cat Trail | Skidoo | Dog team or Dog Road | Walking | Cut line | Winter Road | | | | | |
| 1 | Lake One Trail : Cat road | | | | | | | From the Simpson Cabin follow the cat road southeast towards Lake One for approx 4 kms. At the junction where two dog team trails branch off, the cat road continues along a northern ridge bordering the Lake One Prairie. It eventually reaches the location of two cabin remains at the north eastern edge of Lake One Prairie. Before the cat road was built, this trail was originally used as a walking trail and a dog team trail. | Charlie Simpson | Built in 1965 | 6 | |
| 2A and 2A1 | Lake One Trail : Dogteam trail | | | | | | | Tw dog team trails (2A & 2B) branch off the cat road over a ridge south onto the Lake One Prairie. 2A continues past the site of 'The Little Man' travelling southwest - this trail branches off in two directions (2A & 2A1) going around the most east and west points of a Spruce Island on Square Lake. 2A heads to the south eastern shore of Square Lake and follows some of the 1948 cat trail before portaging over a poplar ridge onto prairie towards Lake One Dune Site. 2A1 leads straight south across Square Lake, portages over the same poplar ridge into a prairie, past the former location of an "Wolf Observation Tower" continuing towards the Lake One Dune site on the south side of Lake 3. This trail then continues east along "Wolf Ridge" connecting to Trail 4. | Lawrence Vermillion | Used from 1954-2000 | 8 | First time Lawrence V used the Lake One trail was in 1954 by dog team with his family. Parks Canada site number 2469R |
| 2B | Lake One Trail : Dogteam trail | | | | | | | This dog team trail leads in a southwest direction and provides access to smaller lakes in the north east region of the Lake One Prairie north of Square Lake. | Fred Vermillion | | 2 | |
| 3 | 30th Meridian Baseline Trail | | | | | | | Located behind Simpson homestead, this section of the surveyed 30th Meridian Baseline leads west to Lawrence Vermillion's cabin on the south side of the Peace River. | Lawrence Vermillion | Built 1919 | 16 km (10 miles) | Initially built when father was 17 years old (built in 1919), just after the war ended ; reopened in the 1940's by park warden and 1978 by Lawrence Vermillion, main road to L. Vermillion cabin. Parks Canada archaeological site number 2470R |
| 4 | Older Cat Roads | | | | | | | Consists of two cat trails parrelling each other running in a north-south direction between Square Lake and Wolf Ridge, it runs along the ridge, before continuing south to Chipewyan Lake and Lake Claire. The northeastern section of the cat trail continues east towards the lake labeled Lake 1, and a southern section of the cat trail continues to the eastern edge of 'wolf ridge' and loops around north back to the Lake one Prairie. | Fred Vermillion | Built 1948 | ~ 30 | Earlier cat road built to support a buffalo slaughter at Hay River (also known as Prairie River) |
| 5 | Lawrence Vermillion Lynx Trail | | | | | | | From 'Wolf Ridge', the trail follows a section of the #4 cat road north through the Lake One Prairie, following alongside the former location of the Lake One bison corral. Heading north it eventually meets up with the Lake One dogteam trail 2a and continues around the perimeter of Square Lake. The trail eventually meets up with the 1965 cat road that leads back to the Simpson Homestead and the Peace River. | Lawrence Vermillion | | | A section of the trail follows the older cat road #4 |
| 6 | Lawrence Vermillion Road | | | | | | | From cabin on Peace River travel sw (near river) to slough, follow slough and continue sw towards inland channel on the Peace River. Then se approx 13km to small lake before turning east towards cat trail for approx 20km. From cat trail #4 turn north to Wolf Ridge (approx. 7km), follow along ridge west to Lake One Dune site and connect to Trail 2. Follow Lake One Trail (#2) north to NW shore of Square Lake, portage north to smaller lakes then straight north to 30th Baseline Trail. | Lawrence Vermillion | Used up until 1986 | ~ 80 | Originally Alexander and Uncle Magloire's trail to access lakes for muskrat, Lawrence V. started to cut it open in 1978-79 and it took him 4 years. |
| 7 | Winter Road | | | | | | | From Peace Point west to Match Creek follow old "Winter Road" bed along north side of Peace River. Continue past Boyer Rapids to 'fork' in the trail and turn south off winter road towards river to Fred Vermillion's present cabin. Continue west to Jackfish Cabin and eventually to Garden River. | Lawrence Vermillion | 1958 | ~25 | The winter road was open for one winter 1958-59. The road was 150 ft wide when built. Approximately 25km marks distance to Jackfish cabin |
| 8 | Trail | | | | | | | Fred's trail from south side of Peace River to slough and east to Chipewyan Lake where it meets with the cat trail (no. 4) and continues south to Lake Claire. Trail also links up with trail no. 6 before branching off to meet trail no. 4. | Fred Vermillion | | ~30 | |
| 9 | Trail | | | | | | | From Lawrence Vermillion Cabin on the south side of the Peace River straight across to Lake One Study area. | Fred Vermillion | | ~15 | |
| 10 | Trail | | | | | | | From Lawrence Cheezie cabin on Peace River to Lake One | Lawrence Cheezie | | ~35 | |
| 11 | Road | | | | | | | From Lake One to Lake Claire to Hay River (Prairie River). | Fred Vermillion | | Not mapped | One of 'five roads' between Peace River and Lake Claire |
| 12 | Road | | | | | | | From the Cheezie cabin on Peace River branches off of trail #10 southeast towards Lake Claire and south to French Lake continuing to the Birch River. | Fred Vermillion, Lawrence Cheezie | | | One of 'five roads' between Peace River and Lake Claire |
| 13 | Road | | | | | | | Fred Vermillion Cabin via Lake One to Lake Claire | Fred Vermillion | | Not mapped | One of 'five roads' between Peace River and Lake Claire |
| 14 | Road | | | | | | | HBC Post on Peace River to Lake Claire | Fred Vermillion | | Not mapped | One of 'five roads' between Peace River and Lake Claire |
| 15 | Road | | | | | | | Jackson Whiteknife's (trapper) cabin to Lake Claire | Fred Vermillion | | Not mapped | One of 'five roads' between Peace River and Lake Claire |

Trail Table 2 – Broader Trail Network

| No. | Name | Type | | | | | Canoe | Description | Identified by | Year | Length (km) | Comments |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------|---------|---------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------|------|---|----------|
| | | Skidoo | Dogteam or Dog Road | Walking | Portage | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Trail (s) | | | | | | Between Peace River and the Birch River | Philip and Lawrence Cheezie | | | Not mapped | |
| 17 | Archie's Road or Simpson's Trail | | | | | | Peace Point along the winter road north to Robertson Lake and on to Lake Seven. West to Lake Six then north to Conibear, portaging to Little Buffalo River. Follow alongside Little Buffalo River SW to Thultue Lake. Then portage SE to Lake Nine and east back to Lake Six and Seven. Forms a loop around these northern lakes. | Charlie Simpson and Fred Vermillion | | | Built by Charlie's dad and grandfather. Fred trapped on this line in the 70's for 5-6 years | |
| 18 | Trail | | | | | | From Fred's cabin head north to Merryweather Lake. Continue north and set up tent camp at unknown lake. Travel SW to small lake where birch bark canoe was built before portaging to Nash Lake and on to Knights Creek. Eventually leave Knight's Creek to return to cabin. Also forms a large loop trail following the rivers. | Fred Vermillion | | | Loop road | |
| 19 | Portage to Jackfish River | | | | | | Thultue Lake portage to Jackfish River and travel down the Jackfish river in the spring by canoe to the Peace River | Charlie Simpson and Fred Vermillion | | | Note - large loop connects trails 17 & 19 | |
| 20 | Trail | | | | | | From cabin on Lake Six travel straight south to small lake, cross lake continue south and cross Kennedy Lake. Over a hill, continue south and cross bigger lake known as Buffalo Lake. Come to a creek flowing from Merryweather Lake travelling SE to Island Lake. Also joins trail no.18 at the south end. | Fred Vermillion | | | Island Lake consists of a bunch of islands on the lake | |
| 21 | Trail | | | | | | Pine Lake travelling west to McNeil Lake. Continue to Robertson Lake (Lake 4), Merryweather Lake and on to Isidore Lake. | Fred Vermillion | | | Cross country trail | |
| 22 | Pack Trail | | | | | | Fort Fitzgerald to Conibear (Moose) Lake | Sandra Dolan | | ~70 | Not shown on map | |
| 23 | Trail | | | | | | Fort Fitzgerald to Pine Lake | Francois Paulette | | ~20 | Not shown on map. See WBNP CRM Project File in 2002 | |
| 24 | Trail | | | | | | Murdock Creek along Hornaday to Pine Lake | Chief Andrew Wanderingspirit | | | Not shown on map | |
| 25 | Travel Route | | | | | | Little Buffalo River north to Great Slave Lake | | | | By canoe - not shown on map | |
| 26 | Trail | | | | | | Originating from the Peace River or the winter road (trail no. 7), follow trail north to Lake 4 (Robertson's Lake). Continue north to Conibear Lake (Moose Lake). Then follow trail west to Thultue Lake (Bog Lake) and continue northwest to Omnos Lake -which then meets up with other trail (networks) north. | Fred Vermillion | | | | |
| 27 | Trail Access | | | | | | Cheezie Cabin on south side of Peace River to old winter road bed access on the north side of the Peace River | Lawrence Cheezie | | ~ 10 | | |
| 28 | House Lake Trails | | | | | | Birch River cross country to the Peace River | | | | Trails not mapped | |