



President's Report

We have had a very unusual winter in the Willmore Wilderness area. Right after a very cold snap in January, we had spring showers, which created a hard crust on the snow pack throughout the mountain region. This made great hunting for the wolf populations and very difficult sloughing for the ungulates. The moose, elk and deer were easy prey, as they broke through the iced snow. It was impossible for the ungulates to out run the wolf packs. Luckily, in February, a month long Chinook blew into some of the mountain valleys and the snow pack was reduced.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has had a very busy winter and we are gaining momentum as an organization. In December we successfully hosted the Willmore Wilderness Winter Wingding and surpassed all expectations. Thanks to Brian and Deana Bildson, the convention organizers, we had 150 people in attendance. This included the Grande Prairie Mayor, who spoke to the guests. The night featured great PowerPoint presentations and an auction that featured 'unique mountain merchandise.' The Foundation has made a commitment to highlight 'mountain art, vacation packages and products' at all future conventions.

The Foundation hosted a dynamic Youth Trapper Education Course in February 2005. Our fundraising activities allowed the Foundation to sponsor ten youth to attend the Alberta Trapper Association course. There were three adults in attendance as well. It was good to see a new generation of young trappers take the program seriously.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has been very busy making PowerPoint presentations to the Honourable Gary Mar, Minister of Community Development; the Hinton Forestry School; the Municipal District of Greenview; the Town of Grande Cache; Foundation of North American Wild Sheep: Alberta Chapter; the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation; and Parks & Protected Areas: Hinton.

The Board of Directors has appointed Brian Bildson as the Executive Director of the Foundation. He is a trapper in Willmore Park and has ridden considerably in the northwestern portion of the park. Brian acts as an ambassador for the Foundation to business and government. He also provides business direction and assistance to the Board of Directors.

Our Foundation is planning another year of trail clearing initiatives. We had a meeting with Andy Van Imschoot, Conservation Officer of Parks & Protected Areas regarding the 2005 trail clearing initiatives. It is the Boards intention to finish some of the projects started in 2003 & 2004. We are all getting 'itchy feet', due to the warm weather and what appears to be an early spring. Everyone is waiting for the ice flows to melt so that we can get back on the trail again.

Happy Trails,
Bazil Leonard



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Special Points of Interest:

- The 2nd Willmore Wilderness Annual Fundraiser will be held at the Coast Terrace Inn in Edmonton on April 9, 2005.
- The Annual General Meeting will be held in Grande Cache on Saturday June 4, 2005. A notice of the meeting will be mailed to all members in good standing.
- The Willmore Wilderness Foundation will be hosting a Cowboy School in June of 2005. Dates of the clinic are set from June 14 to 22, 2005.
- The 2nd Willmore Wilderness Winter Wingding will be held in March 2006 in Grande Prairie.
- If you want to advertise in the Willmore Wilderness Newsletter please call 1-866-WILMORE and ask for the rate sheet.



“The Willmore Wilderness Foundation faces some big challenges in the upcoming year ... but from what I’ve seen of the quality of our volunteers, we’re up to the task.”

From the ... Executive Director Director’s Desk

Greetings. As I write this I’m sitting in my cabin along the Sheep Creek. As I look out my window at the wilderness that surrounds me, I’m reminded of what a gift we have in the Willmore Wilderness. There are not many places left in Alberta that are not impacted by roads, pipelines, cutblocks and other man made infrastructure. While I’m appreciative of the economic spin off from all this activity, a big part of me says too much, too fast.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation faces some big challenges in the up-coming year, but from what I’ve seen of the quality of our volunteers we’re up for the task. We’ve identified several main goals for 2005, namely securing sponsorship for our book “People and Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park”, as well as finding a home in Grande Cache for our administrative functions. Add in the trail marking and trail-clearing activities we have on tap for this

year and it’s easy to see it’s going to be a busy one.

The Foundation has already made significant progress in 2005 in raising the profile of the organization. We have made presentations to the Alberta Professional Outfitters Association and the Foundation of North American Wild Sheep. We will also have a presence at the upcoming Safari Club International Alberta Chapter Convention.

One of our most productive meetings was a presentation we did at the Alberta Legislature to the Honorable Gary Mar, the minister in charge of the administration of the Willmore Wilderness. Minister Mar was very receptive to the idea of co-operating with the Foundation and having us involved in the planning processes. He found the power point presentation to be very informative and expressed

an interest in seeing more of the Willmore Wilderness. He may also be attending our April 9th. Fund raiser in Edmonton subject to his calendar being open that day. We followed up our presentation to Minister Mar with a meeting in Grande Cache with his staff including Andy Van Imschoot who does the day-to-day management of The Willmore. Once again the value of the Foundations input was recognized and encouraged by Mr. Van Imschoot. Last but not least was a presentation we gave to the Mayor and Town Councilors of Grande Cache. As I mentioned at that presentation it was obvious that we were preaching to the converted, as most of the folks there had a love and connection to The Willmore. We have asked the town for assistance in securing some administrative space and are waiting for their response. In closing, I look forward to a busy and productive 2005 and hope to see you all somewhere in the backcountry!



“It is the intention of the Foundation to stay on top of the developments of the 5-year plan.”

Willmore Wilderness Five-Year Plan

Andy Van Imschoot District Conservation Officer, Hinton Office of Parks and Protected areas has advised the Willmore Wilderness Foundation of his Department’s intention to oversee a 5-year plan for Willmore Wilderness Park. Laura Graham is a Planning Team Leader and she works in the department that Mr. Van Imschoot oversees. Ms. Graham will coordinate and draft the 5-year plan.

It is the intention of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation to stay on top of the developments of the 5-year plan. The Foundation does not want to be reactive and try to make changes after the plan has been developed. Instead it is the Foundation’s mandate to become proactive and work with Laura Graham and Andy Van Imschoot in the development of the 5-year plan.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has many resources, contacts and a database that will benefit the development of the 5-year plan for the wilderness area. The Foundation Board of Directors feels it has valuable resources and points of view that will be critical to any future planning for this pristine wilderness area.



Meeting with the Honourable Gary Mar Minister of Community Development

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation met with Gary Mar, Minister of Alberta Community Development in February 2005. The Hon. Mar was shown a PowerPoint presentation of the 'trail clearing initiatives' which the Willmore Wilderness Foundation undertook in 2004. President Bazil Leonard and Executive Director Brian Bildson conveyed a message of creating a working partnership with the Government, so that it would ensure that the Willmore Wilderness Park would remain as a pristine wilderness area. Some of the issues that were identified as areas of concern are as follows:

1. Traditional trail networks are disappearing because of lack of maintenance and mapping:

There is little or no signage in the park and many users are unfamiliar with potential routes. This is an issue that the Foundation has begun rectifying through volunteer efforts. (Note that discussions are also underway with Parks and Protected Areas in Hinton regarding this same issue.)

2. Years of fire suppression have altered the landscape:

Habitat no longer supports the ungulate

population it once did. This is a landscape that has been shaped by fire since time began, and suppression of fire makes the park susceptible to catastrophic fire events. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation believes that there is an immediate need for controlled burns.

3. Pine beetle infestation has already occurred in the park and control efforts have begun.

As frequent users of the Park Willmore Wilderness Foundation members are in position to share any potential infestation sites with Government staff.

4. Lack of accurate information for potential park users.

Based on the volume of calls that the Willmore Wilderness Foundation receives, it is recognized that many potential park users are looking for a resource that they can access to determine current park conditions. Foundation volunteers are often asked about trail conditions, current weather, water levels, and river crossings. While willing to help, the Willmore Wilderness Foundation also wonders about potential liability to our organization when we provide this information.

5. Identification and GPS marking of historical and aboriginal sites.

Throughout the park there are many old cabins and grave sites from those who lived on the land before us. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation feels it is important to recognize and catalogue those locations before they are lost forever. The Foundation recognizes the sensitivity of many of the aboriginal locations and will continue working with local aboriginal groups and individuals to ensure our efforts have their support.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has already begun to resolve some of the issues

through volunteer efforts i.e. trail clearing and the marking of historical sites. However some of these issues merit more thought such as the controlled burns. It is the Willmore Wilderness Foundation's hope that Community Development Department will consider the merit of these points and that by working together we can make Willmore Wilderness Park a better place.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation plans to keep an open line of communication with Minister Mar and will keep his office apprised of the Foundation's progress.





How Willmore Wilderness Received It's Name!

“Norman Willmore set up the Alberta Trappers Association. The first meeting was held in Edson Alberta. ... We formed the Alberta Trappers Association in order that trappers would have a voice and that government would listen to our concerns.”

*Tom Vinson
Brule, Alberta*

In the book the ‘People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park, Tom Vinson, a retired outfitter who lives in Brule shed some light on the park’s name. The following is an excerpt from the book:

Tom Vinson: “Well, I think they named the Park after him (Norman Willmore), after he was killed (in a car accident). But that’s the way it (the park) started--the outfitters were pressuring Norman Willmore (to create a protected area). Well all the outfitters, like Hargreaves, Kitchen and Creighton and Larry McGuire and even a lot of the town people (were asking for a protected area). We got everyone behind us and everybody in this area knew Norman Willmore and knew he was a guy you could talk to.

“Norman was a guy that would listen to you. He tried to do the best he could. Well, he was busy as a Cabinet Minister when I got to know him. He went on a holiday with Fred Brewster (outfitter) and went into the Tonquin Valley. Fred was a personal friend of Willmore. I was freighting (supplies) into the Tonquin (near Jasper) with snow machines. Norman Willmore went in there with us and cross-country skied out. He had a hell of a trip in there. I asked Fred, I said, ‘I don’t know Norman that good. What the hell does a man talk to a politician about?’ Like, he was going to be there a couple of nights or so. Brewster said, ‘Just talk about anything but politics. When you want to talk politics to a politician go to his office, but don’t invite him out to go on a trip and talk politics.’

“Norman Willmore set up the Alberta Trappers Association. The first meeting was held in Edson Alberta. I still have the button that Norman Willmore gave us at that meeting. We formed the Alberta Trappers Association in order that trappers would have a voice and that government would listen to our concerns.”

Tom Vinson’s interview of Norman Willmore shows that this Edson Member of the Alberta Legislature has helped preserve a legacy for future generations. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation is currently soliciting funds to publish the ‘People and Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park.’ We hope to publish the 256-page hard-covered book in 2005 for the Alberta Centennial.

Sponsorship Levels of the Willmore Book



Sponsorship Levels	Number of Free Books	Sponsor Donation
Corporate Gold	250 books + six books signed by the living interviewees	\$20,000.00
Corporate Silver	175 books + plus four signed books by the living interviewees.	\$15,000.00
Corporate Bronze	125 books + two books signed by the living interviewees.	\$10,000.00
Patron	50 books	\$5,000.00
Sponsor	25 books	\$2,500.00
Supporter	10 books	\$1,000.00
Honourable Mention	1 book per \$100.00	Less than \$1,000.00



People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park

The pioneer outfitters in Alberta were men like Jack Brewster, Carl Luger, Tom Vinson, Glen Kilgour, Dave Simpson and Charlie Stricker. Guides like Larry Nelles, Tom Wanyandie, and Diome Findlay supported these outfitters, ensuring that their hunters got their 'full bag'. All of these men hunted Bighorn Sheep, along with other big game trophies in the Canadian Rockies area, now known as Willmore Wilderness Park. No camp was without a cook. Old time cooks like Dan Hallock and Rose Findlay are also featured. Interviews of these people provide details on the game patterns and the lay of the land, in Willmore Wilderness Park. The transcripts of the interviews are featured in a coffee table

book called the 'People and Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park: the Outfitters, Guides and Cooks.' Each person tells his story in his own words.

Alberta's one-hundredth Centennial is being celebrated in 2005. There is a great opportunity to remember the pioneers who started outfitting, as we know it today, in Alberta. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation is soliciting organizations for sponsorship for the publishing of this book. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has contributed most of the cost to prepare the manuscripts and photographs for print. Funding was received in part from the Alberta Community Initiatives Program.

Please be advised that some of the potential sponsors are the following organizations:

– Foundation for North American Wild Sheep

– Foundation for North American Wild Sheep: Alberta Chapter

– Safari Club: Alberta Chapter

– Hunting for Tomorrow Foundation

– Alberta Professional Outfitter Society

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation needs to raise \$60,000 in order to publish the hardcover book that outlines the transcripts of the oldtime outfitters, guides and cooks of Willmore Wilderness Park. Any financial contribution will be recognized in the publication.

Special Points of Interest about the book:

- The book is written in an interview style. Each person interviewed reviewed their transcript and signed it off as authentically their words.
- No other book has been written on the pioneer outfitters, guides and cooks of Willmore Wilderness Park.
- The outfitters provide a wealth of knowledge on the best hunting areas, the lay of the land and the changing patterns of wildlife.
- The outfitters featured in this book are some of the pioneers of outfitting as we know it today.
- Sponsorship levels are outlined on page four of this Spring & Summer Newsletter.





Trapper Education Program for Youth



Youth learned how to skin both small and large animals

“The course educated youth in skills that ensured a future generation of humane trappers.”

Trapping has been a traditional activity that has taken place in the Willmore Wilderness Park and surrounding area. To ensure that humane trapping continues in the Willmore area, the Foundation sponsored ten young people to participate in the Alberta Trappers Association's 28-hour program. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has actively been fundraising to host programs for young people.

The Trapper Education Program was offered five evenings and one Saturday during the first week of February. The experiential instruction provided participants with increased self-

confidence, and the ability to learn traditional skills in a safe structured environment. The program was designed to upgrade and standardize the knowledge and skills of trappers and to provide an update of the latest developments in the industry.

This year's program introduced the students to the main subject areas which focused on wild fur management. The course educated youth in skills that ensured a future generation of humane trappers. Many of the students had parents and forefathers who were traditional trappers. They came to the course with the intention of carrying on a tradition.

The program was a success in that ten youth and three adults received a certificate of completion.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation would formally like to thank Rod and Darlene Head of RODAR Construction for providing the facility to host the event. Their generosity has made this program viable and has contributed to the preservation and enhancement of old mountain knowledge.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation would also like to thank Dee Barrus of Cardston and John Prociuk of Westlock Alberta for their excellent instruction.

Willmore Wilderness Cowboy School



The Willmore Wilderness Foundation will be hosting a Cowboy School in June of 2005. The program will run with a local instructor despite the fact that Larry Nelles is unable to come to Canada at that time. Dates of the clinic are set from June 14 to 22, 2005. The clinic will run both during the day and evening to accommodate students. Students are encouraged to

bring colts and we will focus on how to communicate with horses in an unstressful way. Participants will experience a training technique that is pleasant and meaningful. Each person and horse learns at their own rate and achieves a level of education and knowledge individual to them.

The Mountain People were exceptional at moving through the rugged terrain

in Willmore's mountainous trail system. They traveled on horseback, carrying their gear and foodstuffs on packhorses. This mode of transportation was known as a packtrain. Horsemanship skills were essential for mountain survival and the Foundation wants to ensure that these skills are carried on into the 21st century. For more information call 866-WILMORE.



Leonard Honoured by Fellow Outfitters

Article by Arthur Veitch
The Grande Cache Mountaineer
Tuesday December 21, 2004

A life-time of wilderness wandering has brought Grande Cache top honours in his profession. Bazil Leonard was given the President's Award at the Alberta Professional Outfitters (APOS) Society annual banquet in Edmonton, on December 11, 2004.

A long-time Grande Cache became the fourth outfitter in Alberta's history to receive the award, given to those who champion both the profession and wilderness areas.

"Bazil is very philanthropic," says APOS President Don Ayers. "He has given money, time and expertise to help spread the skills needed to preserve outfitting in Alberta."

The 69-year-old began guiding

and outfitting 45 years ago in the Nordegg area. He moved to Grande Cache when the town was created at the feet of Willmore Wilderness Park in 1969 and started Leonard Outfitting the next year.

Mr. Leonard lived and breathed guiding and hunting. He took grizzly and black bear hunts in the spring. During the summer months he guided summer trail rides. In the fall he guided bighorn sheep, moose, elk, deer and bear. During the winter months he lived out of the back of his Suburban and hit the trade shows across eastern Canada and the USA. He lived out of grocery stores and used public washrooms to clean up in. In the spring, it was back to bear hunting season.

His passion for the mountains was tested when he was nearly killed in a car wreck in 1981.

Doctors said he would never walk again. This wouldn't do. Mr. Leonard discharged himself from the hospital.

"He left in a wheel chair and got his friends to drive him to Grande Cache and load him onto his horse," Ayers recalled. "They tied his legs into stirrups and make the 7-hour ride to sheep camp. Today, one leg is shorter than the other, and his knees often lock up on him, but nothing will stop him from enjoying his beloved mountains and horses."

To earn the President's award, an outfitter has to show more than pluck and dedication to his job. He needed to be politically and socially active.

Mr. Leonard is now President of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation. He was one of the first directors of APOS and has been actively involved with the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

"Bazil is very philanthropic," says APOS President Don Ayers. "He has given money, time and expertise to help spread the skills needed to preserve outfitting in Alberta."

— Don Ayers, APOS President

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WillmoreWildernessPark.com
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We welcome feedback to this publication and any suggestions or ideas for future articles. Contact our Editor at info@willmorewilderness.com

2nd Annual Willmore Wilderness Fundraiser

The 2nd Willmore Wilderness Annual Fundraiser will be held at the Coast Terrace Inn in Edmonton on April 9, 2005. The event will be held in the Ball Room.

The Convention Chairman for '2nd Annual Willmore Wilderness Fundraiser' is Dan McKinnon of Edmonton whose phone number is 780.913.8883. Mel Longden is the Vice-Chairman of the Convention. His phone number is 780-487-5215.

Dinner tickets for the 2nd Annual Fundraiser are \$40.00 per person.

This event will feature a banquet, live & silent auction, displays, a Willmore Wilderness PowerPoint presentation and more. Come and enjoy an evening of western hospitality. We bring the mountain spirit to our fundraisers. Cocktails start at 5 pm and dinner starts at 6 pm.

We will have lots of door prizes at the event. We depend on your support. Make sure you mark your calendar. We accept Visa and Master Card. For more information or to obtain tickets please call 1-866-WILMORE.

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