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15th Anniversary: 2002 - 2017



2017- Annual Newsletter

Photo courtesy of Arthur Veitch

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February 2017

Willmore Wilderness Foundation

Annual Newsletter

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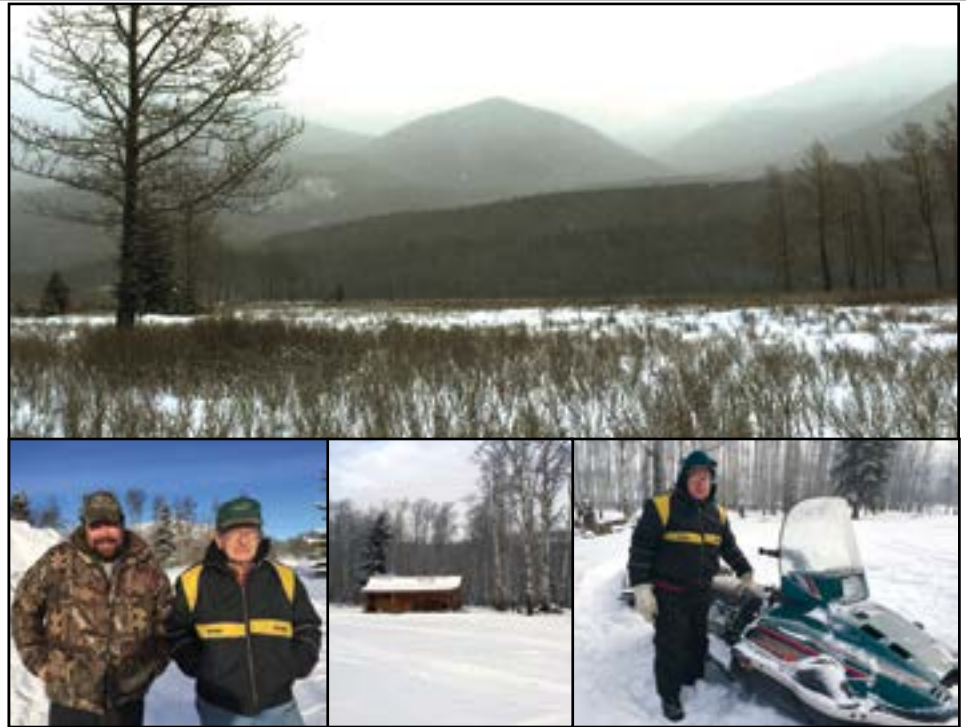
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Susan trekked through the deep snow up to the spring for water, while I made a big fire in the heater stove—and another one in the cook stove. We both crowded up against the wood stove, attempting to thaw



Photos courtesy of Susan Feddema-Leonard

The wind howled all night and we really knew that nature was in charge. We could barely see our tracks the next morning, and I wasn't anxious to trek back across the meadow to dig out my Skidoo. I phoned my son Logan to see if he could find someone to help. He called my trapping partner Chris Dzorec, however both were unavailable, and we were completely out of luck. I sat sipping a coffee beside the warm heater stove, wondering who I could call when my cell phone rang. Chris had contacted Landon Delorme, a neighbouring trapline holder and told him about our plight. The power of the moccasin telegraph

Settling at the cabin has given me time to reflect on the past year, which has been a tough one for both Susan and myself. We were hit with a blow when we lost Estella Cheverie from cancer, which seemed to come out of nowhere. Estella volunteered countless hours on behalf of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation. She edited everything that left the office, including four books, newsletters and all outgoing correspondence. She was much loved, and leaves a big hole in our organization, and in our

... continued on page 4



President's Report .. continued from page 3

Pictured above:

Left: Basil Leonard at Surprise Pass on the Alberta British Columbia border in August 2016.

Basil oversaw the trail clearing and youth mentoring initiative.

Picture Right: Tom Thackeray

Tom is the Chairman of the Board for the Arts and Heritage St Albert, a non-profit society and Registered Charity. He brings a lot of experience to the Foundation, as he was past Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Culture, Community, and Voluntary Services. Tom was on a Willmore Wilderness Packtrip in 2015 and 2016.

Photos by Susan Feddema-Leonard

hearts. Sadly a few months later her husband Hank Cheverie passed away. Hank was a long standing Board of Director, who spent many volunteer hours on behalf of the goals of the Foundation. Our dear friends will be greatly missed. Board Member Ed Regnier was also hospitalized for illness which was a huge blow to both the outfitting community and eastern slopes community. Eddie was a well-respected outfitter, Willmore Wilderness Foundation Board of Directors, and a personal friend of mine. He was a highly respected Big Horn sheep guide in Alberta. Ed is one of the trail hands featured in the upcoming film production called ***Mountain Men ... Ways of the Trail***. Eddie shares the story of the biggest ram he guided for.¹ Glen Kilgour and Bobby Turner, have also ridden across the Great Divide. We know that they are only a blink away, finding new

horses; and places to hunt and trap. Our friends will be missed.

In February, I personally suffered a stroke to the left side of my body. Thanks to our excellent health care system and the rapid response time, I have completely recovered. I spent the summer on the trail, and rode over 1000 km of incredible Rocky Mountain trails. Sitting here at the trapline cabin, I think of how lucky I am to ride the Rockies, as well setting traps for unsuspecting martin.

There have been a lot of positives in 2016. We were excited when Tom Thackeray joined our Board of Directors in June. Tom is the Chairman of the Board for the Arts and Heritage St Albert, a non-profit society and Registered Charity. He brings a lot of experience to the Foundation, as he was the past Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of Culture, Community, and Voluntary Services. Tom is a tremendous asset

¹ Go to: willmorewilderness.com/shop to purchase a DVD and or books.

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Left to Right: Mark Engstrom, Ali Klassen, Shane Ramstead, Mike Ewald, Lance Wanyandie, Martin Hallock, Bazil Leonard, Susan Feddema-Leonard, Chehala Leonard and Payton Hallock
Photo courtesy of Mark Engstrom

... continued from page 4

that will be valuable in the future regarding his connection to databases of historical archives. It is a marriage made in heaven so to speak, for the Willmore Wilderness Foundation and Arts and Heritage, St Albert. I am personally very honoured that Tom agreed to sit on our Board. I know the rest of the Executive feels the same.

We carried out our annual trail clearing and youth-elder mentoring expeditions during the summer of 2016. We worked on some of Canada's most scenic Mountain trails. The Foundation initiated restoration work on seven campgrounds leading up to and along the world famous Continental Divide Trail. We cleaned garbage from these historic campsites, hauling out many packhorse loads of trash.

The Great Divide Trail traverses the boundary between Alberta and British Columbia, wandering through the vast wilderness of the Canadian

Rocky Mountains for more than 1200 kilometres. It is one of the most spectacular and challenging long-distance trails on the planet. It was a pleasure to travel the Continental Divide Trail with Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officers Shane Ramstead and Mike Ewald. Shane is the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officer in the Northwest Region, and is based at the Grande Cache Ranger Station. Mike is the Regional Problem Wildlife Specialist for the Northeast Region and is based out of Barrhead. Shane had travelled with the outfit over 25 years ago as a young Fish and Wildlife Officer. We were grateful for his expertise, as he has an intimate knowledge of Willmore Wilderness Park and the traditions. Mike is also very knowledgeable about the Park, having spent many years travelling the historic pack trails, by horse and by foot. Shane and Mike are seasoned trail hands and were a valuable addition to our trail crew. Stay tuned

for the stories about our trail clearing initiatives, and the Spirit House replacements later in the Newsletter.

Throughout the summer and fall months Susan continued to film and photograph our adventures. I might be a bit biased, but her shots of the wildlife, landscapes and trail activities are absolutely stunning. She is also working with Arthur Veitch who has won numerous provincial and national photojournalism and newspaper awards. He is an accomplished wildlife photographer and cinematographer, with images of cougars, lynx, bears, and wolves published in magazines like National Wildlife and Canadian Geographic. Arthur was the winner of the 2013 BBC Wildlife Camera-Trap photo of the year. He won runner up with two photos under the Animal Portraits category. I am very proud of our talented team.

... continued on page 20

The Moccasin Telegraph *by Susan Feddema-Leonard*



Pictured above:

Susan Feddema-Leonard

Filming Grumpy Old Trailmen

on the Continental Divide Trip, in August 2016,
at Copper Kettle Camp on upper Sheep Creek

Photo by Chehala Leonard

Our team has been fortunate in that the Series has been nominated for eight (8) Alberta Film and Television Rosie Awards, over the past four (4) years.

Behind each mountain is a story—with something new to experience, and see. I constantly dream about filming and photographing more of the secret places in Willmore Wilderness Park. For the past thirty-five years, I have always carried a still or video camera. The yearning to photograph the incredible energy I was so blessed to visit, is never satisfied. Travelling the alpine peaks and pristine valleys creates a feeling of wanting to grab as many shots as I can. I often feel pressured for time, and will forgo my lunch in order to get the images of some of the most superb and spectacular places on the planet. Like a robber, I bring out loot for the world to see. The power of being a documentary filmmaker is to capture a few minutes of exquisite beauty, and the authentic stories, to allow others to enjoy.

The journeys over the years have been extraordinary, and I know how fortunate I am. I was lucky to travel the trails, sharing the experiences of amazing mountain men and women. These people had a mental strength that has allowed them to transcend great difficulties; and they have all possessed an extraordinary physical ability. Travelling with these trail hands has allowed me to experience a different sense of time, along with the old-time sense of trail values. Life has brought me a special gift, allowing me to work with such extraordinary characters, in such a spectacular environment.

When I moved to Alberta's eastern slopes in 1977, I looked at the vast landscape of mountain peaks

and wondered about the mysteries they held. I wanted to know more, and I was surprised to learn that there was very little written about the area. Only a smattering of film footage existed, and virtually no publications were available detailing the history, culture and traditions of the Canadian Rockies. This concerned me, because as human beings we express our culture through the stories. There was an oral history, however, few were taking the time to film or record the true essence of the old-time mountain society.

As time has marched on, it has become harder and harder for our traditional stories to survive the bombardment of the modern day media, internet and television. These new mediums are, in many cases, distorting the original stories.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation's mission is to preserve the history, traditions, culture, and trail network of Willmore Wilderness Park. We are preserving the "story," through the books and films that have been produced by People & Peaks Productions, a company owned and operated by the Foundation. We have been sharing the mountain stories, using various multimedia and transmedia disciplines.

Our production team has been fortunate to travel and learn, in order to find a new way to impart these amazing tales in today's world. They have ventured to the Banff World Media Festival, The Story Summit in Banff, and March Madness in Edmonton, to name a few events. Our organization is also

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2016 Banff World Media Festival at the Banff Springs Hotel

Pictured from left to right:

Chehala Leonard: Associate Producer
People & Peaks Productions

Monika Iley: Executive Director of
Programming and Scheduling at APTN

Jesse Szymanski: Executive Producer of
Modern Muse Media Ltd.

Jean LaRose: CEO at APTN

Susan Feddema-Leonard: Producer/Director
People & Peaks Productions

a proud member of the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC), Alberta Media Production Industries Association (AMPIA), and Women in Film and Television Alberta (WIFTA).

People & Peaks Productions has published four books detailing the mountain culture. We have also produced the Canadian Rockies Series; 6 X 60' HD · Documentary. Our team has been fortunate in that the Series has been nominated for eight (8) Alberta Film and Television Rosie Awards, over the past four (4) years. Laura Vinson and Dave Martineau were nominated for the Best Original Musical Score for *Wildie*, *Women of Willmore Wilderness*, *Ancestors Calling*, and *Mountain Mustang* in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Jerry Woolsey was nominated for Best Overall Sound for *Mountain Mustang* in 2016. Arthur Veitch and Susan Feddema-Leonard were nominated for Best Cinematographer for *Mountain Mustang* in 2016. Susan Feddema-Leonard was nominated as the Producer for the Best Documentary

for *Women of Willmore Wilderness* in 2014, and for *Mountain Mustang* in 2016.

The Canadian Rockies Series has aired to a national audience on Wild TV - Canada's Hunting and Fishing TV Network. Canamedia is distributing the Series worldwide, including television networks from New Zealand and Russia. Despite all odds, we are getting our "story" out there. We are a small production company with ambitious goals. We have had over 102,000 views of our vignettes on [Vimeo.com/PeopleandPeaks](https://www.vimeo.com/PeopleandPeaks) from 127 different countries around the world.

Our production crew plans on travelling the trails this year again, with skilled mountain men. Youth will be mentored, and the traditions will be passed along. We will attempt to capture the stories and heart of life in the Rockies. These narratives have power. They help us understand. They imprint a picture in our minds of our history, and a hearty way of life.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 29, 2017 at 10:30 am

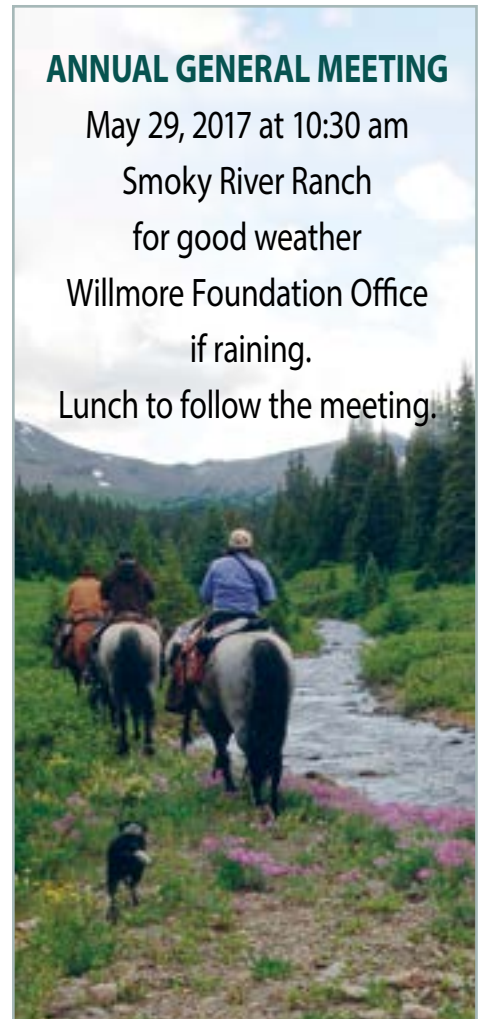
Smoky River Ranch

for good weather

Willmore Foundation Office

if raining.

Lunch to follow the meeting.



From Willmore's Wild Camera



Pictured above:
Laura and Arthur Veitch
Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

**I love the fact we
have big predators,
like cougars, living
almost in our back-
yards. And I love to
photograph them**

Lynx make tracks like no other cat. A lynx is so densely furred that even the bottoms of its feet are shaggy. Imagine a huge cotton swab dabbing the snow. The impressions of the heel and toes are barely discernible. In contrast, a cougar's print reveals sharply defined toes and heel pads.

Finding these vague prints is usually the only way to know these shadow-loving cats are around. Imagine how thrilled I was to be only a metre away from one; close enough to see its thick pelt ripple like grass in the wind and the sunlight sparkle in its eyes.

Just before Christmas I inspected a road-killed deer that I had dragged into the trees. Lynx tracks surrounded the carcass. It was time to bring in the video camera trap. I set it up quickly and returned the next day. With my fingers crossed, I knelt down to inspect the day's video. I looked up and there was the cat, sneaking toward me to get another meal. It glanced at me before tearing into the deer, plucking the hair from the body as cats do.

I replaced the card and hurried to set up the camera trap again. And then the metaphorical light bulb blinked on over my head. "What am I

doing?" I thought, giving my head a shake. "I'll just turn the camera and its light toward the cat and record it old school, without the infrared sensor." And that's what I did.

After several minutes of filming I accidentally dropped the clear plastic bag that protects my video light. That caught the lynx's attention. It crept around the deer and slunk within a metre away from me and the bag. It was too close for comfort so I stood up and said, "Really? I'm way too big for you." The lynx shrunk away, looking appropriately chastised and went back to eating the deer.

Twilight had set in and I had to finish resetting the camera trap. I aligned the light and camera before leaving the lynx to its meal.

That night, a cougar dragged the deer under a big spruce. The next day, I swapped out the video camera trap for a still one. That night, I made dozens of images of the cougar and then the lynx feeding on the deer.

It was an incredible opportunity that would have continued if the weather had not dropped to almost minus 40 degrees Celsius. The deer became a frozen hunk of meat. It was abandoned by both cats.

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I can imagine that they both needed to find living food rather than risk breaking their teeth on the deer-cicle. Only wolves and a wolverine could find a meal in here. And that's what happened. A week later, a couple of wolves swung through and salvaged what was left of the deer.

This was probably a good thing for the lynx. In my experience, they don't do well when their bigger cousins are around. Twenty-five years ago, when I first started tracking critters, lynx could be seen just

about everywhere and a cougar track was a rare find. The tables have turned now. While cougar numbers in Grande Cache are still not as dense as they are in other parts of Alberta, they have increased while lynx have been noticeably absent. Twice I have found the remains of lynx killed and eaten by cougars. In one instance, the cougar climbed a tree to grab the much smaller lynx. Without any defensible science to back me up, I firmly believe the decline in lynx is directly attributable to the increase in cougars.

I love the fact we have big predators, like cougars, living almost in our backyards. And I love to photograph them. I also love to back the little guy and the shy, inoffensive lynx is certainly the underdog in any clash of predators. With their elfin ears and big eyes, I find them, well, adorable. I hope they can stay out of the reach of cougars and still wander in front of my camera.

Photo courtesy of
Arthur Veitch

TALL TALES OF THE TRAIL

by Susan Feddema-Leonard



Pictured above:

Top: Upper Sheep Creek Valley seen from the shoulder of Casket Mountain.
By Susan Feddema-Leonard

Middle: East shoulder of Casket Mountain.
By Susan Feddema-Leonard

Bottom: Featherstonhaugh Pass
By Chehala Leonard

Pictured on right page:
Left: leaving Forget-me-not Pass and headed towards Featherstonhaugh Pass.
by Susan Feddema-Leonard

Right: Morkill Pass
By Chehala Leonard

The Continental Divide Trail

The Continental Divide Trail is a magnificent wilderness horseback and hiking route through the deep recesses of the Canadian Rockies. The trail closely follows the Great Divide between Alberta and British Columbia, weaving back and forth across the headwaters of many rivers. This rugged route has spectacular terrain and breathtaking scenery. Backpacker Magazine's Long Trails edition awarded the Great Divide Trail the title of "Wildest Thru-Hike." The Continental Divide Trail meanders through the immense wilderness of the Canadian Rocky Mountains for more than 1200 kilometres. It is one of the most spectacular and challenging trails on the planet.

One of Willmore Wilderness' best kept secrets is that the Continental Divide Trail is accessible from the trailhead at the Sulphur Gate Staging Area, which is located in the Municipal District of Greenview. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has spent 15-years restoring the historical trails that in-part form a circle route around Mt. deVeber. The massive complex is comprised of the spectacular twin peaks that can be seen up the Smoky River Valley from the Town of Grande Cache. The route goes to upper Sheep Creek Valley, Surprise Pass, down to Casket Mountain, Forget-Me-Not Pass, over Featherstonhaugh Pass and Morkill Pass. The trail forks half a kilometer from Morkill Camp. The south fork goes to Big Shale Hill, and the east fork takes travellers to the headwaters of the Muddy Water River and over to the headwaters of Bazil Creek. This summit is an expanse of high alpine meadows with very soft ground in places. The Foundation hopes to drive posts in the ground with some type of signage, to make the trail more discernable. This path moves south and traverses the southwest arm of Mt deVeber, high above the creek, and down to the confluence of Bazil Creek and the Jackpine River.

The Great Divide route allows adventurers to navigate the same paths of the original explorers and mountain men of yester-year. This historic packtrail is a network of trails that saw heavy horse use in days-gone-by. There is a lack of signage on the Continental Divide Trail, making it indiscernible in places, as the visible path evaporates into the muskegs of the alpine expanses.

One of the best books that gives insights into the Great Divide Trail is **Women of Willmore Wilderness**.¹ The publication details journals of four women who accessed the Continental Divide Trail from Jasper, Mt. Robson and Grande Cache, in 1915, 1936, 1942-1946 and 2011. The private journals share an intimate look at the Continental Divide Trail over a 100 year period, detailing campsite locations, trail routes, trail conditions, weather patterns and game. The journal of Ishbel (Hargreaves) Cochrane is included in the book, which details a 1943 Jack O'Connor hunt from her eyes as the cook. Jack was a world famous author and outdoorsman, best known as a writer for Outdoor Life magazine, where he served as Shooting Editor for 31 years.

¹ **Women of Willmore Wilderness** is also a 45-minute documentary, which is on DVD and can be purchased from willmorewilderness.com/shop/

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The Willmore Wilderness Foundation Trail Clearing Crew has had to deal with numerous obstacles over the years refurbishing the historic Continental Divide Trail. This is the same route that early guides, cooks, outfitters and hunters freely travelled. Our modern day trail hands had to cut through the 2002 Smoky River burn, as well as the 2007 Jackpine River and Sheep Creek Valley burns in order to access the Continental Divide Trail. This resulted in grueling dirty work, which requires deep resolve, dedication and perseverance to achieve.

During the summer of 2016 the Foundation's goal was to restore historic back country campsites, utilizing their Youth-Elder Mentoring initiative. This resulted in the commencement of campsite restoration at seven campsites including Kvass Flats, Muddy Water River, Sheep Creek airstrip, upper Sheep Creek called Copper Kettle Camp, Morkill Camp, Jackpine Camp and Boulder Creek Camp. This year's goal focused primarily on campsite cleanup and garbage removal.



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period, detailing campsite locations, trail routes,
trail conditions, weather patterns and game.**

willmorewilderness.com/shop/

Trail Clearing Trip #1

Clearing up and over Copenhagen Hill

July 3 to 10, 2016



Our first project tackled the trail up Mt. Stearn, which allows easy access into the alpine areas of Lightning Ridge and the Blackhole region. This historic packtrail ascends Davey Creek and loops over Mt Stearn, descending to the gravel pit on the Sulphur Gates access road. Climbing to the top of Mt. Stearn allows travelers to view the Smoky River Valley, the town of Grande Cache, and Mt. Robson on a clear day.

The second trek focused on restoring the trail from the Muddy Water River, up Copenhagen Hill, through the 2002 Smoky River Burn, and over to Boulder Creek. It is a particularly steep ascent up from the Smoky River to the Copenhagen Hill climb; which is an exceptionally vertical scramble, but is mitigated by switchbacks. The Copenhagen route is an alternative way of going up the switchbacks west of the Muddy Water River, to the Jackpine Junction east of Height Creek. The Copenhagen Hill course saves travelers approximately 1 ½-hours enroute to Boulder Creek and the Jackpine River.

Our crew consisted of Outfitter Bazil Leonard, Elder Tom Wanyandie, Mark Engstrom, Kelly Warnock, youth mentee Martin Hallock, and cook/cinematographer Susan Feddema-Leonard. There was a lot of heavy clearing through the 2002 burnt out area on the plateau above Copenhagen Hill, as there was plenty of downed charred timber from the winter winds. Second growth pine and spruce are growing back with vengeance, so this section of the trail will need some serious work in 2017.

The trail hands took a day off to replace the spirit house at the grave of Louis Delorme's sister. Ishbel (Hargreaves) Cochrane had previously reported that there was a wooden spirit house on the gravesite when she was there during the 1940s. The elk and weather had destroyed the spirit house, so nothing of the original structure remained. Both Martin Hallock and Tom Wanyandie were related to the girl who was buried on a lovely plateau overlooking the Smoky River. Check out this story later in the Newsletter.

Campground cleanup was done on the lower flats of Kvass Flats, on the historic site near the mighty Smoky River. A big thanks goes to Shane Ramstead and Dan Downy, Alberta Fish & Wildlife Officers for their tremendous support on this clean up. They packed a large quantity of garbage from the site, which has been accumulating over the years. Our trail crew also cleaned up the historic Muddy Water Camp. Garbage had been strewn around the site by previous campers.

Goal Achieved & Distance:

Cleared winter deadfall up the trail to the summit of Mt. Stearn – **7 km**

Trail Clearing from the base of the Switch Backs at the Muddy Water River over to Boulder Creek, through the 2002 burn – **15 km**

Pictured top: Tom Wanyandie with a cast
Middle: Copenhagen Hill above the Smoky River
Bottom: Martin Hallock, cutting trail

Pictured on Right Page:
Tom Wanyandie & Gordon Leonard & the trash

Photos by Susan Feddema-Leonard



Trail Clearing Trip #2

Ptarmigan Lake Trip

July 27 – August 11, 2016

We got off to a rough start on our next trip, as four of our horses crossed the Smoky River, creating a challenge for our trail crew. Gord Leonard and Martin Hallock were successful in getting the horses across the glacial fed waterway using a Zodiac, after many futile attempts. Our trip was delayed even further when Mark Engstrom took 85-year-old Tommy Wanyandie to the Grande Cache Hospital. The old-timer had fallen on a rock as he helped pull a horse across the dangerous river. An x-ray determined that his wrist was fractured, however Tom returned to camp a few hours later with a cast on his arm, ready to head to the Jackpine River camp. There is no holding him down.

Our crew consisted of Outfitter Basil Leonard, Tom Wanyandie, Susan Feddema-Leonard, Payton Hallock, Mark Engstrom, Alison Klassen, Gord Leonard, Martin Hallock, Rosie our dog, and twenty-two head of horses. We travelled up Copenhagen Hill, through the 2002 burn, and made camp at Boulder Creek. Luckily Martin had the chainsaw lashed to his saddle horse, as we needed to re-cut downed timber because of high winds. *(Anyone planning to travel this route should always have a chainsaw easily accessible.)*

We made a comfortable camp at Boulder Creek. Basil, Alison and Gord did a lot of cleanup. They crushed burnt out heater stoves, stove pipes, tin cans, and packed up a variety of bottles and garbage. They burnt off a lot of litter and trash that was strewn around the camp, and organized



bundles of junk to pack out on horses during the return trip. We ended up with five packhorse loads from that campsite alone, with two more loads ready for the 2017 expedition. Mark Engstrom headed out while the others were cleaning garbage. He decided to clean the trail that forks from the Sheep Creek Trail Junction, over to Dave Simpson's Moose Horn Camp. He cleared and blazed the trail from the Moose Horn Camp and down to Boulder Creek.

After three nights we left Boulder Creek Camp and headed over to the Jackpine River. We stopped on our way to erect a Spirit House over a nameless trapper's grave at Barry Lake. We had also erected a spirit house over an unknown baby's grave on the Muddy Water River.²

We settled into the Basil Creek Camp and decided to break everyone into different trail crews to save time. The first group restored the trail through the 2007 burn to Ptarmigan Lake. Our youngest crew mentee, Payton Hallock, threw logs off for the chainsaw men. A second trail crew cleared from the confluence of Basil Creek to the headwaters, which

connects to the Continental Divide Trail. A third crew cleared from Basil Creek back to the avalanche, on the trail to Boulder Creek. There is a steep creek crossing, at the slide area that was extremely dangerous. The trail hands dug out the access to the creek making it safe to traverse, and much more manageable. During the rainy days, our crews packed more bundles of garbage, cleaned the campsite, and split a pile of wood. Benches were built and placed around the fire ring.

We returned to Grande Cache by way of Boulder Creek. The packstring headed back to Kvass Flats, and home to pay bills and resupply for the Continental Divide Trip.

Goal Achieved & Distance:

Sheep Creek Trail Junction to Moose Horn Camp and to Boulder Creek – **8 km**

Trail Clearing from Boulder Creek to Basil Creek – **16 km**

Trail clearing from Basil Creek to Ptarmigan Lake – **10 km**

Trail Clearing from the Jackpine River to the headwaters of Basil Creek that leads to the Continental Divide Trail– **16 km**

² These stories are shared later in the Newsletter.



Top Photo:
Caroline Hinman and Mary Jobe
v282-pg.23

Middle Photo:
Crossing the upper Sheep Creek in 1915,
P.24 and v282-pg.78
courtesy of the Whyte Museum
of the Canadian Rockies

Bottom Photo:
Crossing Sheep Creek Valley
August 2016
Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

Trail Clearing Trip #3

Continental Divide Trip

August 17 – August 31, 2016

Everyone was looking forward to a fifteen day trip along the Great Divide Trail. Our crew consisted of Outfitter Bazil Leonard, Susan Feddema-Leonard, Payton Hallock, Mark Engstrom, Ali Klassen, Lance Wanyandie, Martin Hallock, Chehala Leonard, Fish & Wildlife Officers Shane Ramstead and Mike Ewald, twenty-two head of horses and Rosie, our dog. We spent one night at Kvass Flats and moved immediately to the Sheep Creek Airstrip camp. We made the trip in 8 ½ hours with one repack and a sprinkle of rain, which lasted a short time. The weather was cool, which was great for the move. We had supper in no time, and served smokies, which everyone cooked over an open camp fire, with brown beans, potatoes salad, buns and assorted cookies. Dinner was a hit and the cowboy coffee tasted great.

A trail clearing party went out over the next two days and cut through the 2007 Sheep Creek burn, past Cote Creek, to upper Sheep Creek. Some of our crew stayed in camp and cleaned up garbage, which was placed in an Alberta Government shed for a helicopter to pack out at a later date. We were happy we didn't need to pack this garbage by horse.

We stayed at Sheep Creek airstrip for three nights and were on the move again. We travelled upstream to the headwaters of Sheep Creek to Copper Kettle Camp. The camp was named after Carolyn Hinman; whose journal was published in **Women of Willmore Wilderness**. She wrote the following:

Sunday, July 18, 1915 – Clear – Rain – Clear

I awoke to find the mountains clear against the sky with the sun blazing and everything sparkling. I was up about 6:30 a.m. I dried out things in the sun, packed up and took pictures. I cached a copper cover of an old Hudson's Bay kettle that the Indians used to buy, which Curly picked up last night. I cached it under a log back of our tent, which opened onto the Sheep Creek Trail. We marked the log "HERE CP-J-H 7/18/15" (Curly Phillips-Jobe-Hinman).³

Shortly after we reached this camp, it started to pour. We were lucky that we had pitched the cook and sleeping tents. We threw up a lash rope and pulled a big blue tarp over the open fireplace, so we were comfortable and dry. We cleaned up garbage, built corrals, a big stone fireplace, and started cutting up the deadfall that was left by the pesky pine beetles. We cut and left ridge poles erected in the trees, and firewood for future campers. We made the camp comfortable for those who want to explore the Great Divide Trail. The rain lifted and our crew decided to spend a day riding up to Surprise Pass. We didn't have much time, but did a rough cut of the trail, which hadn't been properly cleaned in many years. There is certainly more work for us in 2017.

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We left Copper Kettle camp after three nights. We started moving over the east shoulder of Casket Mountain, however our packstring was halted by deadfall. Our crews completed rough cut through the downed timber to make the trail passable. We travelled past Casket Creek Camp and headed up to Forget-Me-Not Pass. We ascended Featherstonhaugh Pass and over the steep climb to Morkill Pass. We arrived at Morkill Camp at 6:46 pm—7 ½ hours after leaving Copper Kettle Camp. It would have been a 6 ½ hour move if the trail had been clean.

Everyone was exhausted, and we were lucky to get the camp set up minutes before a heavy rain, spending two nights in this location. Susan and Chehala made three huckleberry pies, thanks to all the berries that Shane Ramstead and Mike Ewald picked. We even had enough berries for huckleberry pancakes and muffins. Our crew built a big fire ring, and benches for future travellers to enjoy. They cleaned up the area, packing unsightly garbage into the empty pack boxes.

We left Morkill Camp at 11:20 am on a sunny morning, and took the junction east to the headwaters of the Muddy Water River. We traversed the soft alpine meadows and descended Bazil Creek to the confluence at the Jackpine River by 5:10 pm. It was a five hour and forty-five minutes ride. This section of the trail needs a lot of work, as the muskegs make the trail hard to see. The soft ground can be dangerous for horses, as they can easily get bogged down. The Foundation's trail crews will need to find a way to mark the hard to find portion of the trail for future travellers.

We spent three nights at the Jackpine Camp and left after breakfast on August 29, 2016. We were packed up and gone from our camp at 9:30 am. We arrived at Kvass Flats 7:15 pm. It was a ten-hour move, including our stop over at Boulder Creek, where we packed up five loads of garbage. Everyone was exhausted from the long move. The ladies served a wonderful supper and hot coffee, which made everyone feel like royalty.

The Continental Divide separates the waters that flow into the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans from those that flow into the Pacific Ocean, and connects Canada to Mexico through Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico. The trail network is accessed by both hikers and horseback riders. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation is working at trail restoration initiatives for travellers who want a safe trail to travel on, not only for today, but for future generations.

We would like to thank Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) for the support in the restoration of the world famous Continental Divide Trail; a place where history stands still, where travelers can connect with nature, and where horsemen and hikers can still travel freely.

All in all, we were able to travel and clear 177 km of Rocky Mountain wilderness trails during the summer of 2016. There is still an unbelievable amount of trails to clear. Susan Feddema-Leonard filmed and photographed the excursions, as well as keeping detailed journals. Our trail crew had a wonderful summer, seeing lots of amazing country.



Top Photo:

Building a corral at Copper Kettle camp.

Middle Photo: Travelling along the headwaters of the Muddy Water River.

Bottom Photo: Mike Ewald, Shane Ramstead, Bazil Leonard, Mark Engstrom, Payton Hallock, Lance Wanyandie, Martin Hallock & Ali Klassen
Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

Goal Achieved & Distance:

Trail Maintenance from Muddy Water to Sheep Creek Air Strip – **20 km**

Trail from Sheep Creek to Copper Kettle Camp on upper Sheep Creek – **18 km**

Trail from Copper Kettle Camp to Surprise Pass – rough cut – **8 km**

Rough cut of trail from Copper Kettle Camp on Upper Sheep Creek over the east shoulder of Casket Mountain to Casket Lake Camp – **7 km**

Maintenance of trail from Casket Lake to Morkill Camp – **30 km**

Rough cut of the trail from Morkill to Bazil Creek Camp – **22 km**



Spirit House Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project erected three different Spirit Houses in the Willmore Wilderness Park. The area was only accessible by horseback. The graves are located at Kvass Flats, Muddy Water River, and at a remote location at Barry Lake at the base of Mt deVebre. Elders and youth spent 23-days travelling on a packstring in Willmore Wilderness Park. The dates were as follows: July 3 to 9, 2016 and July 27 to August 11, 2016.

The young girl was the granddaughter of Pierre Delorme, who is buried at Big Grave Flats in Willmore Wilderness Park. We also believe she was a descendant of an earlier Pierre Delorme, one of the "Canadian Voyageur's" who travelled with Alexander McKenzie to the Arctic Ocean in 1789. The late Ishbel Hargreaves Cochrane, remembered an original spirit house when she travelled to the area in the 1940s.



The youth were mentored on the traditions of the Rockies by two Elders. The Spirit House erection helped mark and preserve historical gravesites within the Park. Trail staff GPS'd, filmed and photographed all gravesites. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation donated "in kind" horses and equipment.

In the fall of 2015 backpackers took the stones from the gravesite and built a fire ring, for camping. They burnt some of the logs that were located at the grave. The campers did not notice a handmade cross that laid beside the grave. Ashes of a Cree elder were laid to rest at the same location in 2010, with a metal memorial, so it was hard to understand the desecration of the little girl's grave that was located so close to the memorial.

Spirit House #1

Location: Kvass Flat

The first Spirit House was erected at Kvass Flats. The grave was that of a young girl about 12-years of age who died of pneumonia. She was the sister of the late Louis Delorme, and was buried at the Kvass Location in the early 1900s. The grave is situated in a picturesque bench overlooking the winding Smoky River valley, with a breathtaking mountainous backdrop.

Elder Tom Wanyandie blessed the grave with Holy Water that he obtained from Lac St. Anne. He also said a prayer after the cross was erected on the grave. Two teenage boys were hired as trail hands by the Willmore Wilderness Foundation. Martin Hallock (17-yrs) and Payton Hallock (13-yrs) were selected as they were both related to the little girl. Elder Tom Wanyandie was also a member of the extended family of the young girl who was buried at the gravesite.



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Spirit House #2

Location: Muddy Water River

The second Spirit House was that of an infant. It is situated in a secluded but stunning location overlooking the Muddy Water River. It has a spectacular view of Turret Ridge, in Willmore Wilderness Park.

No one who is living has any memory of who the infant may have been. There was one old story where an older man from Grande Prairie had abducted a young girl, and disappeared into the wilderness during the World War 11 era. In the mid-1940s, Elder Emil Moberly noted some smoke across the Muddy Water River and arranged for someone to report the incident to the RCMP, as they were making the 100-mile trek to Entrance, Alberta located near the present day town of Hinton. The RCMP travelled to the Smoky Region with a dog team, and went to

the Muddy Water River, where they found the older man and the young girl. They charged this man with the abduction, and he was sentenced to a stint in prison. The girl waited for the man to be released, and the pair were married. They had a family together, and a fulfilling life as a couple. It is possible the grave could have been that of a young baby or it could have been a still born infant of the couple when they were hiding in their winter camp on the Muddy Water River.

Elder Tom Wanyandie blessed the baby's grave with Holy Water. He also said a prayer after the cross was erected on the grave. Martin Hallock and Payton Hallock were also in attendance. The teens assisted with the cleaning of the gravesite and erecting the Spirit House.

... continued on page 21



The Runaway Lovers of Nose Mountain

* My daughter Jaeda Feddema showed me this story of Bill Scott's after our 2017 Willmore Wilderness Foundation Newsletter went to press. Years ago, Jaeda had coincidentally written a play about the same tale. There is no proof that the baby under the Spirit House we erected on the Muddy Water River is a newborn of Asa Hunting and Mildred Shaw, from their 1913 stay; however, the similarities in the stories are remarkable. Emil Moberly's first language is Cree, and I may have misunderstood him about some of the details. His father could have reported the sighting of the smoke on the Muddy Water River to the RCMP during the World War 1 era. If anything further develops we will print an update in the 2018 Newsletter. We have included an insert of *The Runaway Lovers of Nose Mountain*, which was written by Bill Scott of the Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune.

* Note written by: Susan Feddema-Leonard, Editor 2017 Willmore Wildernes Foundation Newsletter

The Runaway Lovers of Nose Mountain

By Bill Scott, Grande Prairie Daily Herald Tribune
Thursday, January 16, 2014 3:54:58 MST PM

SOUTH PEACE REGIONAL ARCHIVES Lake Saskatoon was a bustling community in 1914, rivalling Grande Prairie in many respects. It was the headquarters for the Royal North West Mounted Police, the home base of Sgt. Charles Harper, the officer in charge of the search for Asa Hunting and Mildred Shaw.

Each month during this centennial year celebration of Grande Prairie's incorporation as a municipality, when it became a village, Potpourri will look back to the way we were 100 years ago, taken from the pages of the weekly GP Herald.

...

No news was feared becoming bad news in early January 100 years ago, but just as the Royal North West Mounted Police were forming a search party to head south into the bush in the dead of winter to seek two of their own, the "lost" arrived back home safe and sound.

And, in storied Mountie tradition, not empty-handed.

Tracking the whereabouts of Asa Hunting and Mildred Shaw in the rough foothills southwest of Grande Prairie was a tale combining adventure and romance – and near tragedy – in the late fall and early winter of 1913.

Ultimately, in mid-1914, it had a happy ending.

It conceivably all began in 1911 when Bob "Pegleg" Shaw, his wife Fern and his 13-year-old step-daughter Mildred travelled into the Peace Country, taking a break from the rigours of the Edson Trail at Asa Hunting's stopping place at the west end of Sturgeon Lake.

FAMILY LOST

Hunting was a 37-year-old U.S.-born widower who had ventured north to forget the raw deal life had dealt him: One account has it that he had been a successful engineer in the States but a dam he'd worked on had burst. Among the victims of the ensuing flood were his wife and young family, number of children unknown.

The Shaws were homesteaders bound for a quarter section one-mile north of what became Halcourt, southwest of Beaverlodge.

Hunting's stopping place was just that. A contemporary account describes it as consisting of one building, mainly a stable but with a section partitioned off for human use.

It wasn't much: No furniture, hay strewn around the earthen floor for sleeping on if you chose to stay over, and a basic fireplace for heating and cooking.

Hunting was described as “looking like Rip van Winkle with his long straggly hair ... he wore a big black Stetson ...he moved around in a slow, morose manner and scarcely talked ...”

Two years later, he was staying at the Shaw homestead, most likely as a hand hired by the one-legged settler. Some accounts say he was a neighbour but there's no record of him homesteading in the Halcourt district unless he'd bought a quarter from an original settler.

COUPLE DISAPPEAR

In any event, everything was seemingly hunky dory – until July 1913 when Asa, now 39, and Mildred, 15, disappeared.

Mrs. Shaw subsequently accused Hunting “of the grave misdemeanour of inducing Mildred to leave her home.”

It didn't make major headlines in the weekly Grande Prairie Herald until December when the newspaper reported that, acting on a tip, RNWMP Sgt. Charles Harper, Constable Stephenson and guide Richard “Diamond Dick” Harrington had set out for the Nose Mountain area southwest of Grande Prairie almost two months earlier and nothing had been heard from them since.

Nose Mountain, along the old Hinton Trail, was usually a 25-day round-trip. They were four weeks overdue. It was feared they'd met with foul play.

But just as Mountie searchers were gathering in January, the Harper party returned – riding in with Asa and Mildred.

They'd covered 800 miles since they'd headed out.

A hearing on a charge of abduction was held Feb. 7 at the RNWMP barracks at Lake Saskatoon.

Harper testified they'd found Mildred alone in a makeshift camp, not much more than a flimsy teepee covered with spruce boughs and a tarp, along the Muddy River near Nose Mountain. They later surprised Asa on Dec. 22 at a trapline camp further along.

He and Harrington didn't think the couple would have survived the deepening winter in the middle of nowhere. Hinton was the closest community, a 10-day ride at best.

ABDUCTION DENIED

Hunting did not testify. But Mildred did, and to everyone's surprise said she had not been abducted.

She wanted to leave what she called an unhappy and abusive home and had induced Hunting to take her with him when he'd gone to set up his trapline.

Nevertheless, Justices of the Peace Milton White and Alex Craig found him guilty and ordered him to trial at Grouard.

Three days after that hearing, a warrant was issued for Pegleg Shaw on a charge of rape laid by Mildred. A subsequent seven-hour trial found him not guilty.

In April, Mildred was committed to two years at the home for delinquent children in Edmonton. I don't know her step-father's ultimate fate but her mother later was a well-known Lake Saskatoon resident involved with local restaurants.

There was a happy ending: At Hunting's trial at Grouard in July, attended by both Mildred and her mother, Justice William Simmons suspended sentence and released him pending further investigation.

Said Simmons: “As this girl and this man wish to be married, I think, Mrs. Shaw, that you will appreciate that though the accused is guilty of taking the girl away from your home and as they have evidently been living as man and wife, that this is the best cause to pursue.”

Asa and Mildred were reportedly married that very day. Could Justice Simmons have put his jurisprudential stance into effect and performed a civil ceremony himself? I don't know.

In the 1916 national census, the Huntings and their 11-month-old daughter Cora were living in the Valleyview area.

There is no record of them in the 1921 census.

It seems the Nose Mountain lovers had disappeared again.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	0.00	109,315.15
Accounts Receivable	930.48	16,527.96
Security Deposits	200.00	200.00
	<u>1,130.48</u>	<u>126,043.11</u>
Capital Assets		
Building	287,000.00	287,000.00
Equipment	13,855.19	13,855.19
Office Equipment	3,984.20	3,484.94
Camera, Video & Film Equipment	64,371.22	64,371.22
Computer	50,167.75	50,167.75
Furniture & Fixtures	14,427.26	14,427.26
	<u>433,805.62</u>	<u>433,306.36</u>
Less: Accumulated Amortization	<u>105,265.24</u>	<u>92,670.67</u>
	<u>328,540.38</u>	<u>340,635.70</u>
	<u>329,670.86</u>	<u>466,678.81</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Bank Overdraft	19,669.38	0.00
Accounts Payable	56,754.93	43,906.95
	<u>76,424.31</u>	<u>43,906.95</u>
Long Term Liabilities		
ATB Mortgage Payable	<u>0.00</u>	<u>111,395.36</u>
	76,424.31	155,302.31
Equity		
Retained Earnings	<u>253,246.55</u>	<u>311,376.50</u>
	<u>329,670.86</u>	<u>466,678.81</u>

Thanks to the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI)
for supporting infrastructure improvement in
Improvement District #25 aka Willmore Wilderness Park;
Alberta Multimedia Funding Agreement;
Travel Alberta: Cooperative Marketing Funding;
Alberta Historical Resources Foundation



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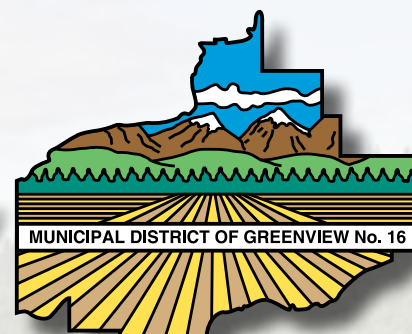
WILLMORE WILDERNESS PRESERVATION AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATION STATEMENT OF EARNINGS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
REVENUE		
General Sales	80.00	350.00
Grants	200,773.51	270,140.73
Memberships	2,046.96	3,847.25
Book Sales	12,159.72	24,851.63
DVD Sales	632.50	748.19
Donations	12,565.00	3,469.70
Training & Clinics	0.00	3,150.00
Fundraising Proceeds	0.00	9,893.83
Interest	40.70	90.39
	<u>228,298.39</u>	<u>316,541.72</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Accounting & Consulting	4,310.62	3,073.65
Advertising & Promotion	9,824.63	15,409.95
Donations	135.00	0.00
Amortization	12,594.57	17,866.14
Fundraising Costs	0.00	10,415.48
Bank/Credit Card Charges & Fees	4,226.04	3,026.78
Insurance	2,233.00	3,969.00
License, Fees & Permits	1,610.70	929.90
Loan/Mortgage Interest	1,219.06	5,366.79
Supplies	4,395.33	6,768.03
Conventions, Banquets & Meetings	2,834.83	402.00
Training & Clinics	13,989.50	19,490.43
Office	19,018.30	24,845.48
Utilities	4,177.01	5,724.78
Property Taxes	1,205.81	7,839.47
Book & Film Production Costs	26,443.82	38,294.49
Telephone & Fax	2,844.00	3,593.31
Maintenance & Repairs	149.08	261.52
Travel	7,180.78	20,090.73
Wages & Benefits	91,517.41	73,129.58
Contract Services	76,518.85	85,824.93
	<u>286,428.34</u>	<u>346,322.44</u>
EARNINGS (LOSS) FROM OPERATIONS	<u>-58,129.95</u>	<u>-29,780.72</u>



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President's Report

.. continued from page 5

**We paid off the
Willmore Wilderness
Foundation building
... lock, stock
and barrel
... so we have no
mortgage payment!**

Pictured above:

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation wagon won first prize for non-profits in the Grande Cache Canada Day Parade. Logan Leonard led the outfit, followed by Basil Leonard and Martin Hallock

Susan is the Producer/Director for People & Peaks Productions, which will be airing **Mountain Men ... Ways of the Trail** this spring on Wild TV.

I decided to save the best news until last. **We paid off the Willmore Wilderness Foundation building—lock, stock and barrel—so we have no mortgage payment.** We own the 4800 newly renovated building, and are very proud of our accomplishments. We are celebrating our 15th anniversary in 2017 and will have a formal event later this year to commemorate this milestone.

I feel fortunate to have been able to serve the Willmore Wilderness Foundation, an organization that the late Julian Kinisky helped conceive and build. We have certainly come a long way over the past fifteen years. The Willmore Wilderness Park is gaining local, national, and international recognition as a result

of our film productions, social media and transmedia promotions. We have very solid footings under us, thanks to the countless volunteer hours of many individuals; and to our in-house professional staff. I am very grateful for the accomplishments and impacts that the Willmore Wilderness Foundation has had in our community, provincially, nationally and internationally.

Four days out on the trapline has been a wonderful gift for me. I am looking out of my cabin window, as we ready to leave back to Grande Cache, I know I am at peace with myself, nature and the Universe. We have been subjected to howling winds and blowing snow most of our time here; and I am grateful for the warmth of the fire, the simplicity of life and for being given a second chance to make a difference out here—in Willmore Wilderness Park.

.. continued from page 17

Photos of Spirit Houses courtesy of
Susan Feddema-Leonard

Spirit House #3

Location: Barry Lake

The third grave was located on a small beautiful mountain lake that mirrors a reflection of Mount deVeber. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation named Barry Lake after Dr. Barry deVeber, the grandson of Senator Leverett George deVeber, for whom the mountain was named. Four mountains were named after the first four Senators of Alberta. They include: Mount Hardisty, Mount deVeber, Mount Talbot and Mount Lougheed.

There is a very clear dilapidated Spirit House located on the shore of Barry Lake. It was made of logs and is about 6-feet in length. The Elders and youth were only able to pack in four foot lengths of board on horseback,

and placed a new spirit house directly over the old log one.

Elder Tom Wanyandie believed the grave was that of a trapper. It is located on a travel corridor that goes from the mouth of the Jackpine River and over to Me and Charlie Creek, and on to the Dry Canyon and Sheep Creek trails.

Elder Tom Wanyandie blessed the trapper's grave with Holy Water and said a prayer. Martin Hallock left tobacco and said a prayer as a tribute to the trapper. Payton Hallock was also present and assisted in the clearing, building and blessing of the grave.

Thanks to the Alberta Historical Resource Foundation for their support.



Willmore Wilderness Foundation

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Web Pages:
WillmoreWilderness.com
PeopleandPeaks.com
Great Divide Consulting Inc., Publisher
Estella Cheverie, Editor

Annual General Meeting in June of each year.
An independent newsletter published in
January of each year.

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circulation 2500

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- \$35.00 Family Membership **or** \$140.00 for five years
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- Corporate Membership \$100.00
- Youth Fees are 1/2 price
- Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Debit, Interac, PayPal, & Cheques

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