

Willmore Wilderness Newsletter

President's Report

Spring is finally coming in the mountains after a long, deep winter. It was a welcomed change after record snowfalls in this area.

Changes seem to be coming fast and furious from our new government under Premier Ed Stelmach.

Let's take a few minutes to consider the Land Use Framework Workbook, available at www.landuse.gov.ab.ca or MLA offices—and at many provincial government or municipal offices. The deadline is June 15, 2007, so there is not much time left.

Remember this will be the template for land use in Alberta for years to come—so let's look at it carefully.

First, there are more than 520 Parks and Protected areas in the Province with more in the planning process. This means more lost hunting opportunities, such as the recent creation of the Rock Lake Provincial Park. It seems that the emphasis is on Protectionism rather than Management. For example, Part III in the Workbook regarding: "limits"—the questioning is, would you accept "limits"—meaning more government intervention, policies, and regulations? Limits to what and against whom? I



really feel we have enough of "limits" and protectionism already. This is a —"When did you stop beating your wife?"— type of question.

There are many more instances of questions, which bend the answers to more—not less—government intervention, and more preservationist agendas. I would strongly encourage each of us to go to the meetings and express our opinions and concerns. It is too bad the government doesn't use the Willmore Wilderness Act as a model for new parks.

Remember, in a Democracy, the decisions are made by the 10% who care enough to show up and get involved. As the saying goes, "Vote early, vote often."

Bazil Leonard, President

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Photos top left & centre courtesy of Susan Feddema-Leonard.
Photo top right, Preston Berry & George Hargreaves courtesy of Ishbel Cochrane.
Photo of Bazil Leonard courtesy of Susan Feddema-Leonard.

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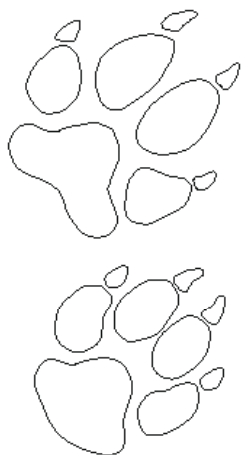


Join Our Membership -It's Renewal Time

June 1 to May 31

Find out about what's happening in Willmore. Get the latest news, issues and developments! We will keep in touch with our members in a newsletter twice during the year. We keep you up-to-date on important events and information. Articles or letters to the Editor are always welcome. Join today!

A person may become a member by a favourable vote passed by a majority of members at a regular meeting of the Foundation, and upon payment of the fee. Written notification will be sent to accepted members with a membership card. Membership renewals will be sent out 14-days prior to this meeting, along with a formal notice. The membership year runs from June to June.



Find out about what's happening in Willmore Wilderness. Get the latest news issues & new developments! We will keep in touch with our members in a newsletter twice during the year—in January and in June.

Yearly Membership is as follows:

- \$25.00 - dated from now to May 31, 2008
- Life Time Membership is \$500.00
- Corporate Membership is \$100.00

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Views from Sheep Creek

Brian Bildson - Executive Director

Greetings to all our Foundation supporters. Spring has finally arrived after a long, cold winter with record snow falls. The melting snow will assist in recharging our water resources, and the spring floods will flush out our river systems. There are few places left on this planet where nature still plays out its natural rhythm like in Willmore Wilderness Park.

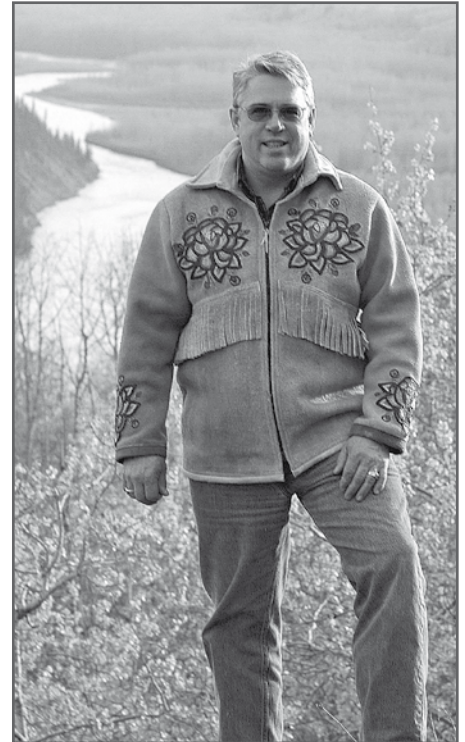
The Foundation has just finished its busiest winter ever. The amount of work completed by our volunteers is astounding. One of the highlights of the past season is the completion of our book *"People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park"*. The book is out for printing and will be available for purchase within weeks. You can contact the Foundation for purchase information. If you're looking for a way to support the Willmore, the purchase of this book is a great way to start. Not only do you receive a world class publication chock full of stories and exceptional photos, your purchase goes towards continuing our work in the Park.

The Foundation has also put on three fund raising banquets—Grande Prairie, Grande Cache, and Edmonton. A lot of fun was had, information shared, and money raised at the events. In total we had over 500 attendees at the banquets. A big

thanks to all the folks and businesses who donated items.

On the political front we have been working diligently to protect our interests. Myself—and President, Bazil Leonard attended a meeting with Minister Goudreau and Minister Morton at the legislature in April. We accompanied other outdoor groups who share our vision, and together delivered a strong message to the ministers that we want to be part of an effective consultative process. We brought up examples from last year such as the Rock Lake Park changes, and the M.O.U between B.C. and Alberta regarding Willmore Park, Kakwa Wildland Park, and B.C. Kakwa Park as illustrations of significant changes being made without public consultation. The Ministers seemed to be receptive to our concerns but only time will tell.

In closing, I have one recommendation for all of us. Take time this year to recharge yourself and spend some time in the outdoors. Hopefully you can visit the Willmore but, if not, find your own little piece of paradise wherever you can. A day spent in the bush has a way of changing how you look at the world. Have a great summer!



Brian Bildson, Executive Director
at his home on the Wapiti River.

Photograph courtesy of
Brian Bildson.
May 2007

Watch our website for our 2008 Convention dates:

Edson - February 2, 2008 at the Edson Royal Canadian Legion

Grande Prairie - March 1, 2008

Grande Cache - To be announced

Edmonton - To be announced.



Willmore Wanderings

By Mark Engstrom



Mark Engstrom

Photograph courtesy of
Susan Feddema-Leonard

Well, spring is here again. Possibly the finest season, to my way of thinking; in close competition with fall. After a long winter, it's always so nice when spring finally arrives. I love spring. Saddles and tack get repaired and oiled, horses get their long winter hair brushed out, and there is a strong anticipation of rides into the Willmore.

After a few days of preparation, I was ready to go. On May 4th, a couple friends and I headed out, destination—Big Graves. We went with one riding horse and one packhorse each—loaded with lots of grub for both riders and horses. We took it easy the first day, traveling from Grande Cache to Cowlick. We knew by the amount of snow we could see on Hayden's Ridge from town that it was going to be a chore to get over. I had heard stories from Basil when he outfitted in that area, of his spring trips. Some years when there was high snowfall over the winter, he told of having to break trail over Hayden's Ridge in snow up to six feet deep. With near record snowfall in 2006-07, I knew we may have trouble.

After an easy and uneventful trip, we made it to the south end of the meadows at Cowlick where the trail heads up Hayden's. We unpacked, tied the horses and gave them their ration of cubes for the day. We then set up camp and had a quick bite. The only thing that put a damper on the day was what we had noticed on arrival and now, looking closer, saw more of.

Very obvious in the meadow was a large set of numbers made of small poplar cut in half, spray painted orange and set in a six-letter/number

combination, the type generally used for helicopter landing sites, commonly for seismic operations. Also obvious was flagging tape marking what appeared to be recently surveyed seismic lines, marking chainsaw trails through the willow, and further up the hill, lines cleared through the trees with a saw. Occasional marker flags taped to eight-inch nails lay scattered about. In a gully beside camp, I found an empty orange spray paint can.

Now this camp is just outside the eastern Willmore Park boundary, where the border of the Park jogs in and out west of A la Pêche Lake. Still, it was disappointing to see the mess left behind. I'm not sure if it's just me, but seeing flagging tape flying everywhere in the bush really makes me mad. Many people traveling through here believe they are in the Park here, even though the trail briefly ventures outside the boundary. You would think cleaning up this type of mess would be a priority when it's so close to the Park.

The next morning we packed everything back up, saddled up and headed up Hayden's Ridge. It was a beautiful, sunny, warm day. Patches of snow were common in the lower elevations, and as we rode higher we encountered more and more snow. About halfway up we were riding in snow steadily, and it became apparent when it reached the horses bellies, that we weren't going to make it to the top. Disappointed, we headed back down. We decided to stay for a couple more days and do some riding in and around Cowlick. We set up camp back at the same spot, and spent the afternoon walking the



meadows and hillsides on Cowlick Creek. We located the old pack trail that heads over to A La Pêche, and talked about trying it the next day.

The third morning, with the weather looking to be good again, we decided to try the trail over to A La Pêche Lake. None of us had been there before, but then again I had heard no one had traveled that trail for a long time. We set out, bringing along one packhorse loaded with chainsaw and enough food and refreshments for the day. The trail appeared not to have been traveled much for a couple of years. We pretty much had to walk and clear the first half of the trail to just before where it comes out of the Park. There we hit a quad trail, which has been being used, and is in good shape. The Park boundary is marked there clearly, but the quad trail runs about a kilometre into the park to a nice open meadow. This trail led us directly to A La Pêche Lake. The lake was still covered in ice, with some open water near the edges. Very nice location, I heard the fishing there used to be fantastic. We had lunch and a drink at the lake, relaxed for a bit, and then headed back. There were lots of sign of recent surveying activity along the trail. Another thing we noticed was horse droppings on top of the snow. Talking to Basil later, he confirmed there are wild horses in that area. The two-hour ride back to Cowlick seemed short, as it took us five and a half hours to get to the lake, clearing trail.

As we sat around the fire that night, we bantered about maybe riding out to Muskeg on the trail through A La Pêche, and trailering the horses

back to town. The next morning we decided to give the horses a rest and head home the following day. So we spent the day exploring upstream on Cowlick Creek. That evening, it started to rain. In my tent that night, I could hear the rain all night. We awoke to more rain. We sat under a tarp around the fire for the morning, hoping the rain would let up—it did a couple of times. During one of these short intervals, we packed up. Deciding to head straight home instead of to Muskeg, we set out. Cowlick Creek was flooding, higher than I had ever seen it, and there was water running down the trail in spots where I had never seen water before. The last hour of the trip, it snowed fairly heavily, and it was nice to get back to my barn, where I quickly had a fire going. We unpacked, hung our wet gear out to dry, and celebrated a successful trip!

Editor's Note: Mark Engstrom is on the Board of Directors of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation.



Pictured above:

Top: Helicopter landing pad

Bottom: Orange spray paint can.

Photos by Mark Engstrom.

Willmore Wilderness Websites

www.WillmoreWilderness.com

www.WillmoreWildernessPark.com

www.WillmorePark.com

www.MountainSolstice.com



The Moccasin Telegraph

Willmore Wilderness Under Siege

by Susan Feddema-Leonard



Susan Feddema-Leonard
May 3, 2007 at the Brule Rodeo.

Photo by Jaeda Mae Feddema

Unfortunately, the hunting provision was not written into the final Special Places agreement. Somehow this important consensus of the Grande Cache Special Places Committee was missed in the fine print of the final document. This omission would cost the Grande Cache hunting community.

I was most impressed with a book that was published last year, called "The Alberta Forest Service 1930 – 2005." This fine book was written by P.J. Murphy, R.E. Stevenson, D. Quintilio and S. Ferdinand. The publication details the history of protection and management of Alberta's forests. As I read the book I came upon a part on "Special Places" on page 300 to 302. I was quite surprised when I read, "*The Special Place initiative was originated from the World Wildlife Fund (Canada) Endangered Species Program, which was endorsed by the federal and provincial governments.*"

Special Places 2000 involved many stakeholders who met in committees throughout Alberta, to debate a special land base and make recommendation to nominate an area for a *Special Places* status. One example of a *Special Place* is the Sulphur Gates Staging Area adjacent to Willmore Wilderness Park. I was on this *Special Places Committee*, as I was the President of the Grande Cache Chamber of Commerce at that time. The committee was made up of many representatives including the Town of Grande Cache, the M.D. of Greenview, the Grande Cache Trappers Local, the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada, and a local Alberta Fish and Wildlife representative. Many arguments ensued around this land base—with one thing being VERY clear! Everyone on the committee wanted to ensure that the traditional rights of hunting and trapping would continue should they nominate the area for a *Special Places* status. This was the unanimous consensus of the group.

After heated debates, it was agreed to nominate the Sulphur Gates as a *Special Place*—with some caveats. **Hunting and Trapping should still be allowed.** However, it was agreed that there would be no hunting within 100 meters off the road.

Everyone seemed happy with this nomination. The Grande Cache locals could hunt in the Sulphur Gates area after work. There was a large population of elk, and hunting kept the herd culled down to a manageable size. Hunting was deemed by the locals to be a far better way to cull these majestic animals than having them vehicle-killed. It was a win-win situation for animals and humans alike. BUT THIS WAS NOT SO! Unfortunately, the hunting provision was not written into the final *Special Places* agreement. Somehow this important consensus of the Grande Cache *Special Places Committee* was missed in the fine print of the final document. This omission would cost the Grande Cache hunting community.

In 2002, Parks and Protected Areas of Community Development took over the *Special Places* management. They also took over the management of Willmore Wilderness Park along with other Alberta parks. Unbeknown to the Grande Cache locals, Parks and Protected areas put a hunting ban in the Sulphur Gates *Special Place*. The *Special Places* boundary somehow got expanded to include all of the land to the height of Mt. Stearn down to the Smoky River.



Sadly, the hunters lost their right to harvest game from this area.

This winter there was a huge road kill of elk adjacent to the Sulphur Gates Area. There were more than ten elk carcasses along a one-mile stretch of Highway 40 between the Blue Bridge and Number One Mine Flats, which is about four kilometers.

Since 2002, Parks and Protected Areas have been rapidly increasing their management over large tracts of land in Alberta. In the fall of 2006, this Department orchestrated a secret signing of the Willmore/Kakwa Inter-Provincial Park, during the changing of the Alberta's Premier. The parks involved included Willmore Wilderness Park, the Kakwa Wildland Park and the B.C. Kakwa Provincial Park. As none of the local or regional groups had been consulted regarding this Inter-Provincial agreement, I set out on a mission to find out all I could about the MOU and their new partners—with a specific focus on the B.C. Kakwa Provincial Park.

I decided to do a web search and find out about what the Ministry of the B.C. Environment had to say about the Kakwa Provincial Park Management Plan. (www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/kakwa/kakwa.html.)

The alarm bells rang loudly, when I discovered that the B.C. Management Plan had a stated goal to make application for World Heritage Site status. My next step was to find out

who governed the World Heritage Sites. I found out that UNESCO manages “their properties” or “World Heritage Sites” out of their headquarters in France. (www.oneworld-heritage.com). I also discovered that most of the Continental Divide is already designated as World Heritage Site status. Areas include Waterton National Park, the contiguous National Parks of Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho, as well as the Mt. Robson, Mt. Assiniboine and Humber Provincial Parks.

Mt. Robson Provincial Park was an area where traditionally horse use, hunting and trapping were all practiced historically. Mt. Robson, and other World Heritage sites, allows NO hunting, trapping or horse use. These sites appear to limit human use. As Gordy Klassen, President of the Alberta Trappers once stated, “*Their idea of hunting and trapping would be to hire actors to entertain paying visitors into the World Heritage Site areas.*”

With the B.C. Kakwa Provincial Park making application for World Heritage Site status, I got the uncomfortable feeling that the **only two** Rocky Mountain Parks in the Alberta Rocky Mountain chain that are **not** under UNESCO's umbrella are Willmore Wilderness Park and the Kakwa Wildland Park. These two small parks, comparatively speaking, now appeared to me to be under siege.

While everyone was embroiled in an Alberta leadership race late last year, many Orders in Council

(OC) were secretly signed. Seven of these were signed on November 22, 2006 creating new Provincial Parks. Hunting in most of these Provincial Parks is not allowed, while trapping remains an allowable activity—for the moment. Two of the newly created Provincial Parks included Rock Lake Provincial Park and Pierre Grey Provincial Park. Both of these land masses are located adjacent to the Willmore Wilderness Park. Albertans have now lost the right to hunt in the Rock Lake Provincial Park. This is another notch in the belt of those trying to stop traditional activities. Like *Special Places*, they are “*Eating the elephant one bite at a time.*”

The next alarm bell rang when I recently became aware that on March 19, 2007, the Civil Servants quietly signed another Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will greatly impact trappers, outfitters and hunters alike. The MOU was again quietly signed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) and Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture (TPRC). This MOU carves the Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMA) and Wildlife Management Units (WMU) into two separate areas. One is for RFMAs or WMUs inside of Alberta Parks—and the other is for ones outside of these boundaries. It gives TPRC control over licensing of the RFMAs—as well as managing and applying “*any conditions that TPRC may prescribe for access.*” Worse yet, the RFMA's

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Gourmet Cooking on the Brazeau River

(As told to me by John Haggblad & Bill Hughes)



Author Jim Babala

Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

February 2007

Jim started professionally guiding and outfitting hunting parties in 1946 in the Cadomin-Luscar area, with brother, Bill. In 1949 he ventured out in his own business and outfitted a party to the Hay and Sulphur Rivers—on his first trip into what is now Willmore Wilderness Park. He guided hunting parties in this area until 1972 when he took his outfit north to the Yukon. Jim still lives with his wife in Whitehorse Yukon.

During the 1930s the Haggblad Brothers outfitted many wealthy nobleman clients from Europe and England. On this particular occasion, they had out a Duke and Duchess from Europe.

They were hunting the South Esk and Brazeau River areas of Alberta. John and Nick Haggblad had hired George Woods, an Englishman who was among the finest of gourmet cooks. George himself had come from a wealthy English family, but had been banished by his family and sent to Canada as a remittance man. This was because of his drinking habits and the wild women he associated with while drinking. Once George got started drinking, he kept it up for a month or more.

In the mining town of Luscar, he was known as the “remittance man” and received an annual payment from his family. The payment always started George off on a long drunk.

George was always hired as the cook when the Haggblads had hunts of noble birth. George was a fussy person when it came to cooking and serving people, and became the perfect gentleman at those times. He always served people of distinction in their own tents, separately from the guides and other help of the hunting camp. He took along with him special trays, tea pots and tea cups, extra coffee and other dishes. He did everything up very elegantly on those occasions.

On this particular trip, Bill Hughes, a Welsh miner and no practical joker, from the mining town of

Luscar, accompanied the Haggblads. Bill had gone with the Haggblads on many of their past hunts. He didn't work for wages but came along for the fishing and helped the cook and wrangler with their daily chores. In return, Bill got all the food he could eat. He always brought along his own saddle and packhorse, tent, sleeping bag and, of course, his personal belongings.

Bill enjoyed fishing and kept the camp supplied with all the fresh fish they could use. He also dried and smoked fish and meat on these hunts and there was always more than enough meat in camp so he had plenty for drying and smoking. In return for the meat, he helped with the fleshing and caping of the trophies, drying them out and getting them ready for the taxidermist for mounting.

On this hunt, Bill had skinned out a sheep head and asked George to cook the tongue and kidneys for him. At supper time when Bill asked George where the tongue and kidneys were, George had his answer ready. He told Bill that the Duke and Duchess had seen him with the tongue and kidney and said they would like to try to eat them. So he cooked them up for the Duke and Duchess, saying they enjoyed them very much and added, “You know Bill, the Duke and Duchess come first in this camp.”

Bill grumbled something like, “I like and respect my stomach as much as they do theirs.”

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During the next few days, a deer and a coyote were brought in for skinning. Bill skinned out the deer head and the coyote hide. He took the deer tongue, put it in a pot and hid it in his tent. Then he put the coyote tongue and deer kidneys on a pie plate.

He was attending to some fish he was smoking when he noticed George pick up the pie plate and take it over to the cook tent. He tended to his smoking for a few more minutes and then walked over to the cook tent. George was busy skinning and slicing up the kidney telling Bill he always like to soak the kidney in salt water and vinegar for a few hours before cooking.

Bill commented, "It's up to you George, you're the cook." George answered, "I'm going to make a fine sauce to go with the kidneys and tongue, a sauce I haven't made for years." Bill then said, "George, I need an onion and some spice. I'm going to boil up some meat. I'm tired of canned meat. I'm going fishing in the morning too, for a change so I'll take some bread and butter. Don't bother with lunch for me. I'll make a sandwich and have a cup of tea in my tent."

Bill left George busy preparing the tongue and kidneys. As usual at suppertime, George attended the Duke and Duchess first. Bill and the rest of the crew came into the cook tent for supper and Bill said, "Any kidney or tongue left, George?" George very apologetically replied, "I'm sorry Bill, there's none left. The tongue was rather small and if it hadn't been for the kidneys and

the extra portion of sauce I made to go with them, there would have hardly been enough for the Duke and Duchess. In fact, they even remarked they could have eaten more, and that it all tasted better than the sheep tongue and kidneys. I told them once they got their moose, I would cook up a large amount. There will even be a feed for you."

"That's quite alright, George. I understand the Duke and Duchess come first. I enjoyed a fine feed of deer tongue at lunch time along with a piece of boiled shank meat. I had a good feed. In fact, I have some tongue and boiled shank left for tomorrow," answered Bill. Then he added, as if in afterthought, "The small tongue you served the Duke and Duchess was coyote tongue you know."

George looked at Bill, horror stricken. "Heaven forbid!" he said. "You must be jesting!" "By no means," said Bill. "That dish you cooked up for the Duke and Duchess was genuine coyote tongue and deer kidneys."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Bill replied, "George, you know, yourself, you said the Duke and Duchess come first here and you never even asked me for the tongue and kidneys. You just come over and took them and I was keeping them for myself, so I kept the deer tongue for myself. It was the only way I was going to get any of it. Come and see for yourself. As I said, I still have half a tongue left and some shank meat."

George walked over to Bill's tent and looked at the tongue and said, "At

George looked at Bill, horror stricken. "Heaven forbid!" he said. "You must be jesting!" "By no means," said Bill. "That dish you cooked up for the Duke and Duchess was genuine coyote tongue & deer kidneys."



Willmore Wilderness Act remains the most critical piece of legislation and we need to vigilantly watch over it.

As long as we have this Act, we will be able to use Willmore Wilderness Park in traditional fashion—however, it appears to be a target of those who seek to remove or limit hunting, trapping, outfitting, trail riding and horse use from the Park.

The Moccasin Telegraph

Willmore Wilderness Under Seige

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boundary will be changed and re-aligned with the lands under TPRC's control. The MOU outlines that SRD will establish separate WMUs for each class of Parks and Protected Areas. This will give TPRC the right to control and manage park access by hunters, outfitters, trail riders and trappers alike.

I believe that this MOU was signed in contradiction to the Alberta Wildlife Act. It is my belief that it was signed with the understanding that the Civil Servants would have the Wildlife Act changed to suit the terms and conditions outlined in the MOU. I ask you, who is in control of our province's land? Do our politicians realize that the bureaucrats have a hidden agenda, in which they write the agreements and then ask for amendments to the law?

Now this new division of authority with respect to RFMA's and WMUs appears to create two standards! There is one standard for trappers and hunters who use lands under TPRC's control and another standard for those outside of Alberta's Parks.

It seems to me that our Civil Service appears to be serving an internationally focused "green" agenda to take away traditional rights of Albertans. The historic rights of hunting and trapping are being denied to Provincial residents, as a result of secret and behind-closed-door agreements. This appears to be anything but transparent.

I somehow feel like we are caught in the middle of a marital dispute. One partner, industry, is

ravaging the country at an unbelievable pace. The other partner is the environmentalist, who wants no human impact on the land. Both of these partners are to the extreme right and left. Members of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation are the third party caught in the middle of this ugly battle. We agree with the environmentalists' principles to protect the land, however, with a BIG CAVEAT. We want to practice the rights of our forefathers—to hunt, trap, outfit and use horses in Willmore Wilderness Park. The goal of a World Heritage Site would compromise these traditional activities. Our only hope is to keep the Willmore Wilderness Act intact. Hopefully, we will be able to withstand the siege around this Park.

The Willmore Wilderness Act remains the most critical piece of legislation and we need to vigilantly watch over it. As long as we have this Act, we will be able to use Willmore Wilderness Park in traditional fashion—however, it appears to be a target of those who seek to remove or limit hunting, trapping, outfitting, trail riding and horse use from the Park.

I implore anyone who reads this to become active and let your MLA know what is happening. Premier Stelmach needs to hear what is going on behind closed doors. The International mandate to create a human-free land base, along the Rocky Mountain corridor and in other key locales, will potentially violate the traditional hunting and trapping rights of Albertans.



BACKPACKING IN THE WILLMORE

- A Great Adventure



To Whom It May Concern:

My husband talked to one of the "Friends of the Willmore" a couple months ago regarding our trip and it was suggested we send a brief description and a few pictures. The pictures we included are "Approaching Casket Pass in the Snow", "Wading Pauline Creek" and "Jackpine Pass". We started our trip the very end of July. We live in North Central Washington and enjoy hiking, climbing and skiing in British Columbia and Alberta. We really enjoyed the Willmore and appreciate the information you have made available on the area.

Sincerely,

Maribel & Curt Johnson

(Excerpts from an email sent to the Willmore Wilderness Foundation on January 1, 2007.)

BACKPACKING IN THE WILLMORE A Great Adventure

If you enjoy solitude, spectacular views and challenge consider the Willmore. We spent fifteen days backpacking from Kakwa Lake to Mt. Robson and did not see another person from the time we left Kakwa Lake until we hit the North Boundary trail one day away from Robson. Most of that time was spent hiking through the western end of the Willmore and we felt like we had found true wilderness.

We used Dustin Lynx's guide for the Great Divide Trail and followed the main route which travels from one river valley to the next. Stream crossings were frequent so water was never a problem but since there are no bridges that also meant wet feet the majority of the time. As far as we could tell the trails are "maintained" by the passing

of horses, hikers and game so you need to allow time for route finding. We were surprised by an early snow storm and spent two days hiking through the snow. However, the cold weather meant fewer mosquitoes—a definite plus. We saw several white tail deer, a huge bull moose and numerous birds. Other than the two to three days spent hiking up the Jackpine River Valley, we hiked over one or two passes each day. Each pass led to a new drainage system and new vistas. The most spectacular was at the top of Jackpine Pass where we felt like we could almost touch the Resthaven Icefields.

We have barely started exploring the Willmore Wilderness. We definitely plan to come back.

*Pictured top left: Jackpine Pass
Pictured right: "Approaching Casket Pass
in the snow."*

Picture bottom right: "Wading Pauline Creek."



TALES & TRAILS IN THE WILDERNESS

This is the first part of a story by Ethel Miller (deceased). It is printed by permission of her husband, Charlie Miller. The story will be continued in succeeding issues of this newsletter.

Chapter One: Small Beginnings

Just like all good things in life, horseback trips into the mountains come to an end, sometimes sooner than one plans, but nevertheless, they do end. The time had come to sell our saddle horses, and having found a buyer for the two of them, we thought it was great they could stay together. We were down to only two saddle horses but, in earlier years, we had as many as five horses to take us out into the mountains on many an adventurous trip. Now we were not riding them as often as we should have been, and as we were getting older, sometimes thoughts of getting bucked off and really getting hurt were creeping into our minds. Horses had been in our lives for many years, and with a lump in my throat as the trailer left the yard with our saddle horses, I felt like I was losing part of my family—and another phase of my life was coming to an end.

In 1965, we moved to the Hinton area, and horses were not one of our reasons for moving there. But it was not long after our move that we met Carl, a fellow who had been involved with horses for many years and had been an outfitter. He knew the trails and countryside in the Hinton-Jasper-Grande Cache area like the back of his hand. At the time we met him, he still had quite a string of horses and pack rigging. He was not in the outfitting business anymore but was not afraid to lend his horses and rigging or share

his great knowledge of the trails, muskies, river crossings, horse packing, shoeing or whatever a “greenhorn” needed to know about this part of the country. We were soon to learn about the adventuresome trips that could be experienced—if a person wanted, and was so inclined to get out and see the scenery and wild animals that roamed the vast land. Sometimes the weather could be quite a factor in how a trip would turn out, and we had some trips that will be well remembered because of the weather. If everything goes well on a trip, it can be quite a bonus, but one also recalls some of the “not-so-good times”.

The first few years before we got our own packhorses, we borrowed packhorses and rigging and set out to see what this was all about. We both worked at the Pulp Mill so were only able to get away to do trips while on vacation or on long weekends. We both had originally come from a farm so horses were not something to be afraid of, but we never had good saddle horses on the farm, just driving horses or workhorses. It was a new experience to have shoes on your horse while on trips. It was not long before Charlie had picked up the knack of shoeing the horses, tying the “diamond hitch” and putting in long days while out in the bush or on the trail.

The first few trips out, we traveled with heavier loads and were taking along more luxury items than we did later—after a few trips. I remember one trip in particular where we took along a slatted table. It had to be the worst thing, as it would not stay in the pack very well and kept slipping out from under the tarp. The table consisted of a sheet of canvas with

wooden slats glued to one side. The canvas was rolled up while it was on the pack. When it was to be used as a table, you had to cut two poles, each approximately six feet in length. These two poles were then tacked onto four three-foot pegs that were pounded into the ground. Then the canvas with the slats was spread over the table frame. It made a pretty sturdy table but if it had been ours, it no doubt would have been used for firewood on that trip! We got it back home successfully but swore it would never be taken on another trip. That was when we could see that we would rough it—and use a stump as our table while out in the bush.

A lot of the outfitters used wooden pack boxes. We did not use them though, as we used canvas panniers. In each pannier, there were a couple of thin boards to hold the shape of the pannier better. Quite often, these thin boards would serve as a tabletop or cutting board. The canvas panniers traveled much better than the wooden pack boxes. They were lighter and a lot of supplies could be packed in them. The only disadvantage was that sometimes the bread got a little bent out of shape, but never so bad that it wasn't edible. If a packhorse happened to hit a tree, the wooden ones could take a beating. Most packhorses soon learned how to wind their way among trees without rubbing their loads. If they were acting up though, their judgment of distance seemed to be turned off and showed little respect for the packs on their backs.

Chapter Two: Rock Lake

Rock Lake was one of our favourite areas to haul our horses to, and start a trip from. Rock Lake is approximately



forty miles northwest of Hinton. In earlier years, before the Grande Cache highway was paved, a gravel road wound its way towards the Muskeg-Grande Prairie area. About twenty miles out, there was a turnoff towards Rock Lake. The road got narrower and the gravel was pretty sparse. Some hairpin curves greeted you along the way. Willow, spruce and pine trees lined the edge of the road. Cut lines criss-crossed the road every so often, which gave you a chance to see some game feeding on the cut lines at different times.

Once you got to Rock Lake, you could unload and camp anywhere with your horses. There were many spots with a good supply of feed and water right near by. In the earlier years, you had to ride about three miles, from where you camped, to the Willmore Wilderness Park Gate.

Later, a vehicle road was put right to the Gate and a better staging area was developed. Once you got to the Willmore Wilderness Gate, no motorized vehicles were allowed, except by authorized personnel. Sometimes those three miles back from the Gate to your vehicle seemed pretty long, after a hard trip. The horses always knew when they were heading home and were inclined to trot for miles. If you were a little "saddle weary," you certainly counted and felt the miles too.

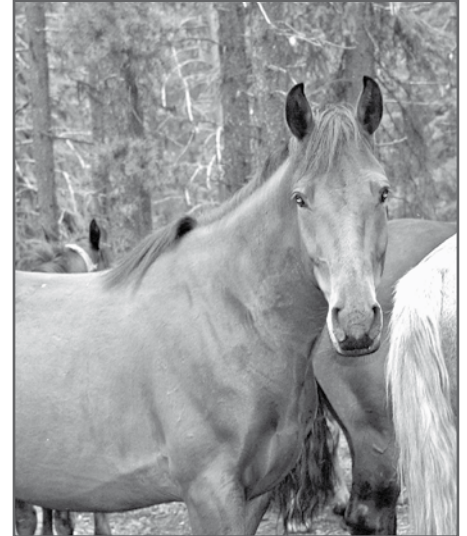
Some of our first trips out, we had several packhorses borrowed and these horses had been out in the Rock Lake area many trips. They would hang together and just by being hobbled would stay in the area. We would bell a couple of them and that was a comforting sound at night when you woke up and heard that bell close to your tent.

On one trip, when we were hunting in the Rock Lake area and after not hearing the familiar bell, Charlie decided he'd better go and see where the horses were. His unloaded rifle was leaning against the tree near the tent, as he was getting ready to go. He was going to take it but on second thought, "Why bother dragging it along out in the swamp looking for horses?" So with that thought, he left and, as he got near the swamp, saw a couple of horses right in the thick of the swamp grass and was cursing under his breath that they would have gone across the creek with their hobbles on. But on a better look, he realized it was a couple of moose standing there with their heads down, browsing in the swamp grass. That was when he thought of his rifle leaning against the tree back at the tent. The horses had gone off in another direction, and the moose, sensing there was a human nearby, soon lumbered off deeper into the bush. "Moose track soup" was about all we got for supper that night.

On another trip when we were in the same area, the horses were hobbled and were not too far from camp, when someone came along at night and took the hobbles off. They just hung them around the horses' necks. The horses had traveled that area and they definitely knew the way home. Quite a few hours of tracking were spent the next day before we were able to locate them and get them back to camp.

Horses travel pretty well with hobbles on; but they make really good time without them, especially in the direction of home.

Author, Ethel Miller



"Rock Lake was one of our favourite areas to haul our horses to and start a trip from."

Quote by Ethel Miller



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Gourmet Cooking on the Brazeau River - Continued

....continued from page 9

the time I was preparing it I thought the tongue looked rather small, compared to the sheep tongue." George was silent as they walked back to the cook tent and when they went in, the crew sat looking at George, all smiling.

One of the gang said, "Hell, George, don't let it worry you. The Duke and Duchess enjoyed it and even asked for more. Nothing wrong with feeding coyote if it's done up right."

George looked at the crew and said, "Not a word of this to the Duke and Duchess or you will all be do-

ing your own cooking, and God only know what you guys will be eating!"

The crew kept the secret because George, as cook, held all the aces. John Haggblad said it was the best kept secret he ever heard of. Although after the Duke and Duchess had left, everyone heard about the coyote tongue, cooked gourmet style, and said that the sauce George cooked up must have been extra tasty.

By Jim Babala.

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Observations of an Editor



Estella Cheverie of Grande Cache.
Editor of "People & Peaks
of Willmore Wilderness Park."

Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard.

I've been asked to share my observations about our book, *People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park: 1800s to mid-1900s*. I say "our," which is to include the author, the interviewees, our families, friends, members of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation and all our respective supporters. This has truly been an experience shared by many, in many different ways—right down to the final anticipation of the finished product—by everyone.

It has been an interesting four (I think) years of a wild gamut of mixed emotions, learning, enjoyment and satisfaction. Like the author, this is my first venture into the literary world of writing and publishing.

Personally, I have always loved books, and seem to be a collector. In reading a book, I don't read fast but rather feast on the words and pictures they portray in my mind. I used to enjoy writing descriptive letters—when we used to write letters! I also wrote some poetry as a girl and young adult—it was a way to present my experiences and share my philosophical views. On the other hand, when I read books or papers, errors seem to jump out at me. That's my meticulous, mechanical characteristic showing.

My part in this undertaking started as a proofreader, from which everything else blossomed. My involvement became deeper as we progressed in the transcription of interviews, to the layout, which then included appropriate photos, and the painstaking refinement of those images. Patience and tolerance was required when we started having yesterday deadlines, especially in face of the

fact that life had to go on at the same time: Foundation fundraisers, newsletters, day-to-day, time-consuming office routine, not to mention, home and family life.

When we thought we were finished, then came the publishing process—time spent on research of the *what-to-dos* and *hows*. This included trips to Edmonton to meet with professionals in various categories of involvement. It was a case of being open and just absorbing when it came to new avenues in which we were novices. What an education!

When the time came that we got to see what the final product would look like, (before it went to the printers) what a rewarding experience it was to see the culmination of all our endeavours before us! I thought it was beautiful! I'll admit, at that moment, we enjoyed and reveled with delight in the satisfaction derived from the fruits of our labour. However, neither of us takes sole credit for this endeavour. We appreciate all the help and input from all our sources. The success of this publication is the result of a labour of love, by many.

It has been a great adventure and now that I've "got my feet wet," it will be difficult not to be hooked into future developments that will inevitably evolve from this project.

Estella Cheverie, Editor
People & Peaks
of Willmore Wilderness Park

newly released

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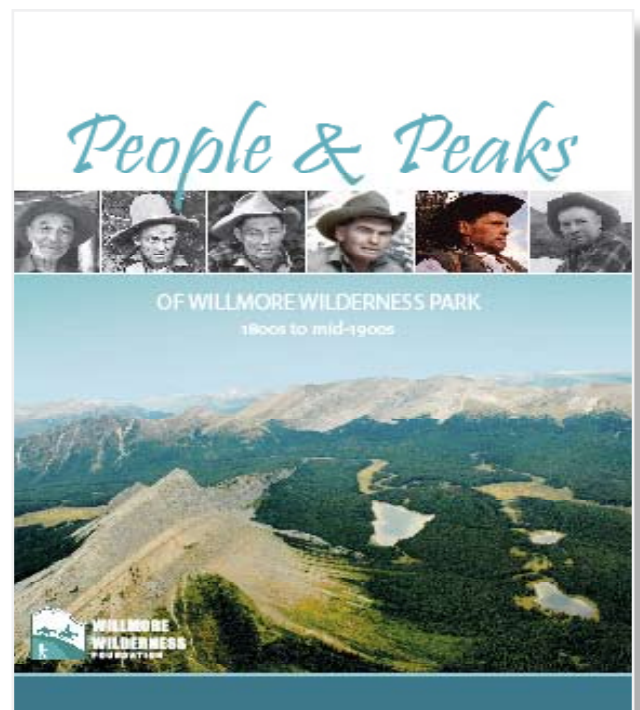
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