

Willmore Wilderness Newsletter



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Presidents Report

Bazil Leonard, President

It has been a busy summer, and we were able to scout and clear trail for a total of forty-six days during the 2008 season. Some of the trail systems that we encountered were in terrible shape due to years of neglect by the government. In August we worked on a twenty-one day loop from Grande Cache to Big Grave, to West Sulphur and Hardscrabble, then back around to Winifred Lake and over to Big Grave and Grande Cache. We were able to scout the trail from Hardscrabble down to Smoky and found a portion of it in good shape; however, the historic packtrail goes through second growth and still needs a lot of clearing. A large portion of the trail from Winifred Lake to Big Grave Flats was also thick with second growth spruce and needs future attention.

In September we traveled on a fourteen-day pack trip from Grande Cache to Sheep Creek airstrip, to Continental Divide and down to the Jackpine River, then back to Grande Cache. The trail between Sheep Creek airstrip and Casket Creek was bad due to the 2006 wildfire. Portions of the trail where there was heavy fallen timber were hard to find. The ridges and mountains were covered in burnt pine and spruce. However, the riparian willows remained untouched leaving the Sheep Creek River surrounded with heavy willows and buckbrush. The old pack trail between Sheep Creek airstrip and Casket Creek needs a lot of work. The portion of the trail from the headwaters of Bazil Creek down to the Jackpine River needs clearing. There is one bad section where an avalanche hit the trail that needs special attention, as there is a lot of muskeg to contend with.

In October we traveled on an eleven-day trip from Grande Cache to upper Smoky and back. We did quite a bit of clearing, but there is need for a lot more work. We found the old crossing on the Smoky River and located the trail that

went up a pine bench along the Smoky and over to Hardscrabble Creek. This trail had a lot of blow down due to high winds in the past few years.

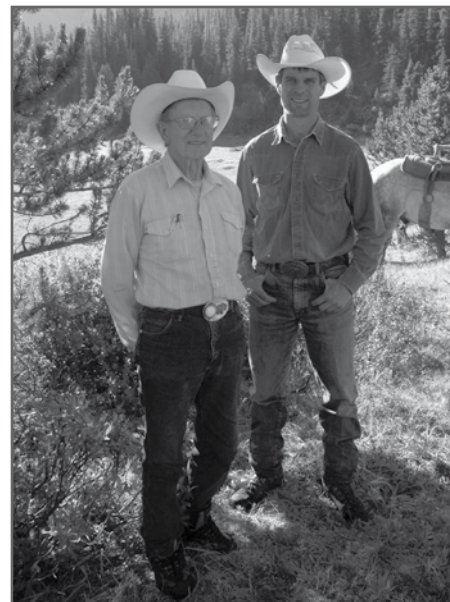
In April of 2008 the Willmore Wilderness Foundation commenced collecting data for a Grizzly Bear Survey. We had requested that all our members and other interested parties forward Grizzly Bear sightings to the Willmore Wilderness Foundation. At present we have well over 400 sightings—with some in groups of six bears together. In fact, when Minister Ted Morton was on a five-day sheep hunt in the Willmore, he observed five different grizzlies on a hillside one afternoon.

Most of the reports are from Highway 16 North, although some are from more southern parts of the province. As a result of our work, the Foundation's position on the status of Grizzly Bear population in Alberta is that there is a healthy population, which is increasing. We believe that the Grizzlies could well stand a sustainable harvest.

According to a government study with Biologist Gordon Stenhouse, there are only 230 Grizzlies south of Highway 16 and a projected number of forty bears north of Highway sixteen. Stenhouse believes that there is another projected number of twenty grizzlies north of Grande Prairie. These numbers just don't add up when you compare them to the Foundation's count.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation believes that there are enough bears for a sustainable harvest. We would recommend at least twenty resident tags with a review in two years to see if this can be expanded.

During the past summer and fall, Willmore Wilderness Foundation



Bazil Leonard & son Dan Leonard, a well-known expert mountain guide

21-day Trip in Willmore 2008.
Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

hosted two specific programs that were targeted to youth. The Alberta Trapper Association course was held at the Willmore Wilderness Foundation office from November 3-10, 2008 and sponsored three youth to attend. We also hosted a horseshoeing clinic in June 2008 with licensed farrier Dale Printup. The Foundation sponsored two youth to attend the workshop.

Last but not least, please remember our fundraiser dates. We look forward to five live and silent auctions in 2009 that will take place in Drayton Valley, Edson, Grande Cache, Grande Prairie and Edmonton.



Views from Sheep Creek

Brian Bildson - Executive Director

Greetings Willmore supporters. It is always a pleasure when one of our members receives an accolade, or some other well deserved recognition. While our volunteers are motivated by their passion for the Willmore, it's nice when an outside organization recognizes their efforts. Fittingly enough, two of our most active Willmore Foundation members have recently been recognized for their efforts.

It gives me great pleasure to report that Basil and Sue Leonard were awarded the 2008 Award of Merit from the Alberta Trappers Association at this summer's convention. This award is given in recognition to those individuals who have contributed greatly towards promoting the trapping industry, specifically someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty. I can't think of two more deserving candidates than Basil and Sue. We are lucky to have these two involved in the Foundation.

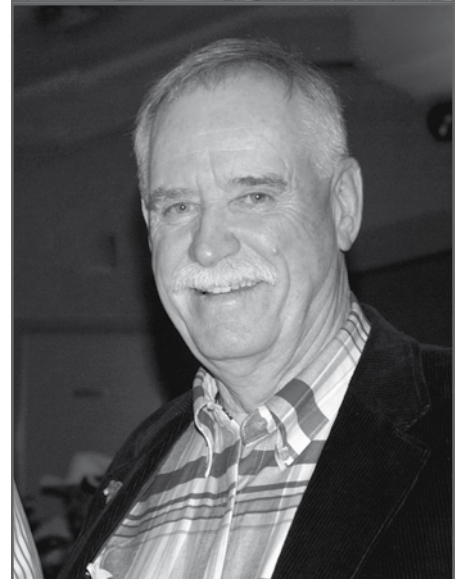
Basil was also the topic of a recent article in *Outdoor Canada*. Well known outdoor writer T.J. Swanky profiled Basil and spoke of the respect Basil has earned

from his peers over his long career. Some well deserved recognition.

And speaking of recognition, Sue's recent book "People and Peaks" is well on its way to being a sell out. We have a few copies left so if you've been thinking of picking one up, contact our office soon. They make great Christmas presents.

On another note, there has been a lot of controversy regarding the Grizzly Bear population in Alberta. As most folks are aware, the provincial government has been conducting research to determine the actual number of bears in Alberta. The Foundation also conducted a survey of bear sightings over the last bear season and is releasing its results. Hopefully our survey will assist in determining the actual number of grizzlies on the landscape. A big thanks to all those who sent in their bear sightings.

As we draw closer to the holiday season, I'd like to wish you all the best from the Foundation. Here's hoping you have a chance to spend some quality time with your family and friends.



Brian Bildson learning
'the ropes' from
Cree Elder Tom Wanyandie
August 2008

Pat Long Joins the Team as Vice-President

Pat, born and raised in central Alberta, has been a life long outdoors man with a longstanding attachment to Alberta's high country. His first experience with the Willmore involved a backpack sheep hunt many years ago. While that first of many backpack and horse trips did not produce a sheep, it fostered the beginning of a longstanding understanding and appreciation of how special the Willmore really is and the need for maintaining its uniqueness and the natural state of the land base.

Pat retired in 2002 after 31 years with Alberta Fish and Wildlife. In his own words "I was dedicated to the cause but not to being a good bureaucrat". Pat presently resides in Peace River when not operating his fishing camp on Lesser Slave Lake, guiding fall hunters or managing his small farming operation. Besides serving as Vice-President of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation, Pat is currently Vice-chair of the Alberta Conservation Association and President of the Alberta Chapter, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

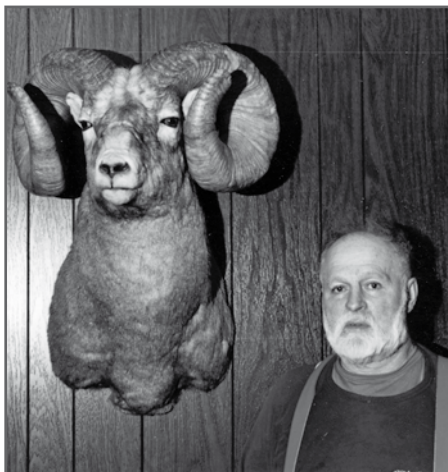
Pat Long at the
Willmore Wilderness Foundation
Grande Prairie Convention 2007

Photos by Susan Feddema-Leonard



Charlie Matheson – Mountain Man

by Jim Babala



Author Jim Babala

Photo courtesy of Jim Babala

Jim guided hunting parties in Willmore Wilderness Park until 1972 when he took his outfit north to the Yukon. Jim still lives with his wife in Whitehorse Yukon.

Many People when speaking of old mountain men refer to them as having “been around the mountain.” When speaking of Charlie Matheson one could say he has “been around the mountain” many times. In fact, one could say he has done it all. He was a veteran of the First World War, a surveyor, a homesteader, National Parks warden, a guide, outfitter and dude ranch owner. These were many of the jobs Charlie did during his colourful life.

Charlie was born in Manitoba, Canada in 1888. He came to Alberta in 1911 and worked with the survey crew in the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. He settled and homesteaded in Grande Prairie in the Peace River country. He worked the homestead for a few years then joined the Canadian Army and served overseas during World War One. Upon his discharge from the military, he returned to his homestead. But not being satisfied, he sold it in 1919 and moved to Jasper, Alberta. Jasper was then known as Fitzhugh.

Charlie went to work for the Brewster organization, working as a guide and packer for the government survey crews that were very active at that time. While working for the Brewsters, he met his wife Mona who also worked for the Brewsters. They were married in 1927. In 1930 he hired on with the National Parks as a warden. He stayed with the Park Warden Service until 1937. He then bought and upgraded a Jasper Park Pony Barn business and started outfitting. He operated the Pony Barn business until 1940 then sold it and moved out of the Park.

Charlie built a dude ranch, the Circle M Dude Ranch a short distance from the east gate of Jasper on Drystone Creek at the base of Folding Mountain. He built his home across Highway 16, now known as the Yellowhead route. The home was a small, well built log cabin. Mona decorated it inside and also gave the exterior her own personal style, giving the whole cabin a picture-book appearance. During the early '60s, the Mathesons sold the Circle M Ranch but kept their home. Charlie died in the early 1970s.

What I have just written is only the statistics on Charlie; however, there is much more to him. I had known Charlie for a number of years, having had a few beers with him on different occasions as well as having met him on the trail. I learned much about Charlie and his life during the summer of 1958.

At one time, I had a coal survey party of six geologists who were studying and reporting on the deposits and coal seams of Folding Mountain. I provided a complete tent camp, pack and saddle horses, cook, camp hand and myself as a packer. I kept my truck at Charlie's ranch. Every few days I would go into Hinton to purchase fresh supplies. Charlie made these trips to Hinton with me. I would spend the night at his ranch, pack up next morning and return to the mountain camp.

During these drives to Hinton and the overnight stays at his ranch, Charlie told me many tales of his old trail days and old times. The coal survey party eventually rented Charlie's ranch as it was easier to



work from the ranch while surveying the west side of Folding Mountain. While at the ranch, the party chief declared a few days of summer break since the geologists had built up a bit of extra holiday time while working from the tent camp. They worked every day of the week as there was nothing else to do out in the bush. All of the biologists were American except one Canadian who flew home for a week. The Americans got together, rented cars and toured Banff and Jasper Parks. For the first two days, the biologists, Charlie and my crew took in the Jasper Park Rodeo. My staff included our cook Jack Fregren and camp hand John Haggblad. We all had a great time. The three biologists continued to tour the Parks after the rodeo, but two student biologists came back to the ranch with us as they found it too expensive to continue the tour. They were saving to further their education.

The two students told Jack Fregren they would do their own cooking and look after themselves; so Jack and I would team up and do the hotel bars of Hinton and Jasper. John Haggblad and Charlie stayed at the ranch, both drinking whiskey and beer while talking over old times. They both had served in the same regiment in the Canadian Army, giving them much to talk about. John and Charlie never left the ranch for four days, and we kept them supplied with refreshments on our return trips from Hinton. During these four days of talks and drinking, many stories were told by John and Charlie.

Jack and I missed out on most of these stories as we spent our own holiday time mostly in Hinton. The

two student biologists were awed by the stories they heard. One of the stories told by Charlie, I had heard before but it was a bit different version. However, I didn't know that Charlie was the one who had been involved.

This particular situation happened in June 1937. Ed McDonald a fellow park warden of Charlie's was on his way back to his cabin on the Medicine Hat River. His horse got wind of a grizzly and spooked, throwing Ed off onto a log and breaking his collarbone.

Ed lay there for two days hoping to improve enough to get to the cabin half a mile away. His dog stayed by his side all this time and the bear, he believed to be a sow with cubs, stayed in the bush all this time as well. Ed thought that the dog barking and standing over him was what kept the bears away from him. He finally got enough strength back to crawl to the cabin, the bears following just off the trail. The dog kept barking and guarding Ed while he crawled. He believed that the barking dog was what kept him from further problems.

He crawled all day and got to the cabin after dark. He used the broom to push the phone off the hook and Charlie Matheson was on the line at the time. Ed told Charlie he was hurt and needed help; so a rescue party was formed and they rode all night to get to the cabin. They brought Ed out on a travois. He recovered and continued working as a warden. Ed was 57 years old at the time and died at the age of 93 years.

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The Moccasin Telegraph

What is Mountain Culture?



Susan Feddema-Leonard

August 2008

at Art Allen's trapline cabin
at the junction of the
Hardscrabble-Winnifred Lake trail
about an 18 to 20-hour ride from the
Cowlick Creek Staging Area
near Grande Cache.

Photo by Basil Leonard

I recently attended the Banff Adventure Filmmaker's Workshop which has helped me take the Willmore Wilderness Foundation's filmmaking to a new level. The first-class program overwhelmed me. Michael Brown one of my instructors filmed and directed **Farther Than the Eye Can See** about blind climber Erik Weißenmayer's historic ascent of Mt. Everest. Michael also acted as the Mountain Unit Director of photography on the recently released IMAX film **Alps: Giants of Nature**. Keith Partridge was the second instructor. He had accomplished filming the Eiger's North Face, the Arctic, Alaska, to the whitewater caves of Papua, New Guinea. Both men are masters of their craft.

I was in awe when I found out that our sound instructor was Mark S. Wilsher the Musical Director for the **Lord of the Rings** movie. He was really inspiring and I wished we could have had a longer class than the half-day that we were allotted with him.

The Banff Film Festival itself was quite interesting. There was a strong Yellowstone to Yukon presence and there were a lot of anti-hunters and anti-trappers in the crowd. I guess I must have brought an interesting perspective to my class because I was an advocate of a balanced approach in dealing with the environment—and my instructors supported that stance.

During my weeklong workshop, National Geographic offered three information sessions to filmmakers, writers and photographers. I attended a National Geographic open session that outlined its Expedition Council

Grant Program. Officials stated that their mission was to "inspire people to care about the planet." In order for young aspiring artists to get funding, they need to adopt the mission. One official for National Geographic stated that once you receive a grant, "you are in the family." Once 'in the family' it is easier to get other things. Another official stated, "If you have conservation interests, your application will shine." I could see there were many talented artists at the meeting who were trying to become 'part of the family.'

The main organizations that seemed to support the Banff Film Festival included North Face Clothing, National Geographic and Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y). If I were younger and less informed, I too might have been swept into the whirlpool of energy and the seduction of National Geographic which announced how it had influenced the establishment of an African park as a result of its work. For example, it was noted that the Society was instrumental in the creation of the 26,000 square kilometer (10,000 square miles) Gabon Park in Africa. I read National Geographic's online article by J. Michael Fay regarding Gabon Park. Fay who is employed by the Wildlife Conservation Society stated, "I also thought about all the other resource extractors I've met in central Africa over the years—loggers, hunters, miners—all taking, taking, taking." What about the traditions and culture of the African people whose lives could be deeply affected by Mr. Fay's actions? It would appear to me that the 'green-thinkers' are painting hunters and trappers with the same brush as industry.



Activist Wayne Sawchuk's new book *Muskwa-Kechika* was featured at the event. He dedicated his life to working to ensure the Muskwa-Kechika area is PRESERVED. A Banff Rocky Mountain Outlook newspaper dated October 30, 2008 printed, "In 1992 Sawchuk teamed up with George Smith who was the National Conservation Director for CPAWS at the time, launching the Northern Rockies Totally Wild Campaign." Sawchuk sees this as a "key link for the animal migration through the Y2Y corridor." Sound Familiar?

Sawchuk lobbied National Geographic two years ago and got the publishers to buy into the Muskwa-Kechika Park in B.C. You can find his story in the November 2008 National Geographic Magazine where Harvey Locke, the founder of the Y2Y concept stated, "He (Sawchuk) wasn't the only guy, but boy oh boy—without him, I don't know if it would have happened." Harvey Locke was referring to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area. A Y2Y map on page 143 shows the area encompasses not only the Willmore and Kakwa areas but Grande Prairie and towns west of it. The Y2Y region goes as far east as the outskirts of Calgary and as far south as Wyoming.

I observed many people who were genuinely trying to "SAVE" the planet using their artistic talents. Some were VERY gifted at their craft. I saw these people like the well-meaning missionaries trying to save the indigenous peoples of the world, where there is no regard to the local culture and traditions. These artists are passionate about saving the planet; they are organized and are bringing their values to the table—no matter what may be traditional of an area.

During the festival, I heard about 'mountain culture' which seemed to be defined as exotic extreme sports—with

no mention of the history as I knew it. I watched documentary after documentary about climbing rock-face cliffs and overhangs, heli-skiing from severely steep peaks, kayaking trips in remote places like Papua New Guinea, climbing in remote places like Patagonia, base-jumping into a huge crater in China, and other sensational feats. Terms like the world's best, the biggest, and most extreme were bandied around so much that I was confused as to whom and what were the 'biggest and the best.' There were booths with Himalayan trinkets and sound—but sadly NO 'mountain culture,' as I knew it. I even offered a retail book outlet a copy of *People & Peaks of Willmore Wilderness Park* and was given it back and told that they would not retail a publication of that type.

I didn't mention to my filmmaker classmates that we had recently finished a documentary film of the Grande Cache Métis Youth on horseback in Willmore Wilderness Park. Teens were living a traditional lifestyle, trapping, cleaning and eating gophers like their ancestors. I could see how the 'mountain culture' that I have come to know and love would not be seen as 'mountain culture' in Banff. In fact the only mention of horses during the eight days that I attended the festival was regarding Wayne Sawchuk's book on the Muskwa-Kechika Park.

I was totally dismayed when I read another article in the Banff Rocky Mountain Outlook dated October 30, 2008. The headline read, "Illegal Trail Decommissioned." The article stated, "A well-worn illegal bike trail near Grassi Lakes has been dismantled thanks to a group of volunteers and Alberta Parks Officials. Alberta Parks Biologist Steve Donelon said volunteers and Parks staff dismantled the illegal trail on Saturday." I immediately recognized Steve Donelon's

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Teens were living a traditional lifestyle, trapping, cleaning & eating gophers like their ancestors.



What is Mountain Culture? - continued from Page 7

A lot of people think that programs such as Special Places 2000 or various wilderness management plans are driven by our provincial governments. They are NOT. “The Special Places initiative originated from the World Wildlife Fund Canada Endangered Species Program, which was endorsed by the federal and provincial governments.”¹

¹ The Alberta Forest Services 1930-2005
Page-300: by PJ Murphy, RE Stevenson,
D Quintillio and S Ferdinand.

name and pulled out some May 15, 2007 meeting minutes I had on the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site Proposed Extension. Steve Donelon was a committee member looking at the UNESCO proposed extension for Willmore, Kakwa and other areas of Alberta. Other committee members included Heather Lazaruk, Wayne Stetski, Greg Chin, Ken Morrison, Alex Kolesch and Mike Murtha.

I was disturbed when I thought about the illegal bike trail—and wondered—what’s next? I thought about the recent meetings that the Mountain Métis had with Andy Vanlmschoot of Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR).¹ Bazil Leonard who was present at the Métis meeting stated, “Andy informed the group of Elders they could NOT remove firewood, medicinal plants, berries or even flowers—on ANY land under Tourism, Parks and Recreation control.” In fact, we are aware of one native man who was chastised by TPR staff for snaring a gopher to eat. Gophers have been long used as a food source for the mountain people.

I left the Banff Film Festival disturbed at the lack of true cultural expression that was commonplace in yesteryear on Alberta’s eastern slopes. The mountain culture that our ancestors enjoyed was rich and connected to the land. I was emotionally spent from my eight days in Banff trying to understand what appeared to be foreign, imported traditions—which they now called MOUNTAIN CULTURE.

A lot of people think that programs such as Special Places 2000 or various wilderness management plans are driven by our provincial governments. They are NOT. “The Special Places

¹ Mountain Métis is also known as the Grande Cache Métis Local 1994.

initiative originated from the World Wildlife Fund Canada Endangered Species Program, which was endorsed by the federal and provincial governments.”² Preservationist groups, on behalf of international interests, push many similar initiatives.

Our stories and myths have shaped our society since the beginning of time. The new filmmakers, writers and photographers will influence public opinion. I spent eight days learning with some of the best in the world. There were twenty-seven filmmakers who were my colleagues that were primarily ‘left’ in their thinking—and I was the only one who saw the world differently.

This is a David against Goliath battle—and we must stand up for our way of life and culture. We no longer use bows and arrows—or guns and ammunition. We are in a ‘war of thought’ with multimedia as the weapons of choice. We need to shape our stories and share our way of life. We hold dear to our hearts the right to hunt, trap, fish, use horses and seek recreation in our chosen way. Our culture is part of our essence, and we deeply respect the earth that we interact with. We need to shine a light, sharing our legendary mountain culture with the world. This is a call for action to our poets, writers, photographers, musicians and filmmakers. We need to organize our talents and illustrate the unique tapestry of our mountain way of life.

It is time for hunters, trappers and outdoor enthusiasts to WAKE UP!

By Susan Feddema-Leonard

² The Alberta Forest Services 1930-2005
Page-300: PJ Murphy, RE Stevenson,
D Quintillio and S Ferdinand.



What is Mountain Culture to a Trail Hand?

Mountain culture is good hospitality. It is sitting down to a home cooked meal made on a wood stove or over an open campfire with freinds.

It is the ability to live in the mountains for a portion of the year—in comfort and harmony. It is knowing that you have a good horse under you—or a dry tent or tepee when you get back to camp.

It is the willingness to help your neighbour.

It is using good bush ethics & expertise to manage the wildlife resources wisely—in trapping, hunting & gathering.

It is a feeling that one gets when you feel the spirit of trailmen from long ago on the mountain packtrails.

It is humility knowing that this earth allows us to experience her magnificent landscape and beauty. It is trusting natural law, knowing that the greater Power watches over us all.

Pictured above:
Tyler McMahon, Hon. Ted Morton,
Bazil Leonard and Pete McMahon at
Corral Creek Camp
in Willmore Wilderness - Aug 2008.

Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard.



Thanks,

Alberta Conservation Association
for your contribution towards our
2008 Trail Clearing Initiatives.



TALES & TRAILS IN THE WILDERNESS: *Part 5- by Ethel Miller*

Chapter Five: Nick's Trip

A story by Ethel Miller of Hinton (deceased), printed by permission of her husband, Charlie Miller (since deceased in 2007). The story will be continued in succeeding issues of this newsletter.

In the early seventies, we built a cedar log house on our acreage. We bought the cedar logs but constructed it ourselves. A friend Nick spent many hours helping as we built the house. Since he was an avid fisherman and hunter, we decided to take him on a hunting trip, once the season opened in September, to try to repay him for some of his time.

Nick did not ride horseback regularly, so we thought he would have to ride Joe. Joe was an excellent saddle horse except he was not as well neck-reined as he should have been. He had served as our pack horse and was well adapted to the bush trails. We had to borrow four pack horses for this trip as we were going to take along more supplies than usual. By this time, we had purchased a sail-silk lean-to Baker tent of our own, because we had encountered too many rain storms where our sheet of plastic did not hold water too well. With the four pack horses, we certainly could travel with more supplies and luxuries than we were used to.

The plans were all set that we would take off on Sunday morning—and no doubt we would have—but on Saturday night we got together with Nick to check out our plans. Unfortunately, Nick had brought along some wine. It was homemade

wine and pretty potent. I don't think Granny Clampet's wine would have been much better than this! It wouldn't have been so bad if we had quit right after the wine, but another friend came along with some Scotch. After that was done, we walked over to our neighbour's where they were having a "Re-introduction to Booze" party. They had not been drinking for a few months because of a bet, so when the allotted time was up, they decided to have a party. Well, "wasn't that a party!" As daylight was breaking, we decided we had better postpone the trip. Nick had not gone home to bed, and much to our relief, he also had a roaring headache. So the trip was put off until Monday morning.

Early Monday morning, we hauled the horses out to the Big Berland River campground which is about forty miles up towards Grande Cache. We unloaded the horses there and let them have something to eat before we packed them up. Charlie gave Nick a quick lesson on how the packs were put on and tightened down with the tarps in place. The four pack horses usually travelled well together, and once we were on the trail, they soon had their spots picked. One horse, Spotty seemed to balk at the position she was getting and was determined to go back or cause a disturbance. It was not long before Charlie and I changed horses so Charlie could lead Spotty to keep her from acting up. Casey had never been broken properly so that you could lead a horse from him. If he ever got a rope under his tail, he immediately bucked, and it was a bad habit that he never got over. With

We went up the Berland about three miles and then turned left by a creek which Charlie thought was the south fork of Berland. We climbed up along this creek for about five miles and came to a nice big open meadow.



Spotty in tow, we made it to the Adam's Creek campground that day without any more delays. Snow was laying low out in the hills and a definite feeling of fall was in the air. Once the camp was set up and horses put out in the meadow to feed, we tried a little fishing; but they were not biting that night, so we had to settle for supper from the panniers.

Nick had brought along a little tent and was not going to sleep in the bigger tent with Charlie and me, where we had the cook stove set up. The next morning after spending a miserable cold night in his tent, he decided he would share our tent after that. Charlie was always up early in the morning to check on the horses and get a fire going, coffee on and breakfast started.

I was never one to get up early in the bush, and I hated the cold mornings. So to get me going, Charlie always brought me a cup of steaming hot coffee before I made the effort to get out of the sleeping bag. With the aroma of fried bacon, potatoes and onions drifting in my direction, I would make my way out of the sleeping bag and into the cold clothes that were not too far away. After a quick wash and the rude awakening of the cold water, I was ready for the events of the day.

Charlie did most of the cooking while we were on trips, and it was my responsibility to get the bed rolls made up, panniers etc. shaped around for packing. As we used stuff out of the pack and the panniers got lighter,



.... Crossing the North Fork of the Berland River
courtesy of Nanette Hamilton Moseley

the remaining supplies had to be evenly sorted so the panniers would be approximately the same weight to ride evenly. It was not too long before I could get them pretty even in weight and ready to be packed. I also had the chore of doing up the dishes, pots and pans. When you cook over a grate on an open fire, sometimes the pots and pans are not the easiest things to clean. It didn't matter how careful I tried to be, I always ended up with some soot on the tea towels or worse yet, on myself. At times when we had the stove set up in the tent, cooking and cleaning was made easier. Our tent stove came apart and made a flat top pack. The stove pipes telescoped and were not too bad to pack when you had extra horses to pack the load.

The crisp morning found us planning to go up to Pope Creek.

The horses seemed to be ready to get on with the trip. There were no problems with Spotty that morning, and she did not have to be led; so Charlie and I rode our own horses. We went up the Berland about three miles and then turned left by a creek which Charlie thought was the south fork of Berland. We climbed up along this creek for about five miles and came to a nice, big open meadow. There we took the nose nets off the horses and let them have some grass. Nose nets were used on the pack horses so they couldn't stop and eat while on the trail. They could, however, drink water with them on.

After the horses had fed for a while, we proceeded on about another two miles before Charlie realized we were on the wrong



TALES & TRAILS IN THE WILDERNESS: *Part 5- by Ethel Miller*

.... continued from Page 11

creek. We should have gone another six miles up the Berland through a canyon with numerous river crossings, until we came to the forks of the Berland, before turning left. We had been through the area before but had always thought the fork in the Berland was the junction of the Berland and Sunset Creek. After realizing we were on the wrong trail, we turned around and went back to the big meadow and camped for the night. We hobbled the horses and turned them out in the big meadow to get their fill. As we sat around camp that night, we could spot sheep up on the mountain to the west of us. The evening was mild with a gentle breeze blowing—quite a peaceful spot.

The next morning while Charlie made breakfast, Nick went to bring in the horses. Much to his dismay, the horses were “a long ways up the side of the mountain.” The night before, as we hobbled up the horses, Nick had felt sorry for them having to take little steps as they moved around and appearing to be quite confined in their movements. However, after Nick had gone up the mountain and brought the horses back down, his feelings changed somewhat. The horses proved that they could travel well with hobbles on, even if it was upwards.

Now the problem was whether we should backtrack the way we came and then go up the south fork the six miles, or just climb over the mountain ridge. Actually we were only about six miles from where we wanted to be if we climbed over the ridge. We decided we’d go over the ridge, even though there was no trail—not even a game trail. We then selected

a draw and small creek to start the climb. After about a half mile, the small ravine got so narrow there was no place to go, so we had to get out of it. We had to switchback on the side of the ravine. That was when the problems started! As Charlie started back along the side of the ravine, he was higher up than the pack horses. That was when one of the pack horses, Super decided he would take a shortcut straight up the side and get right in behind Charlie’s horse. In doing this, he collided with two of the other pack horses that were ahead of him. The collision caused his pack to be knocked back and, of course, when this happened, the back cinch on his pack saddle became a flank strap or cinch, just like the ones used on bucking stock in a rodeo to get the stock to buck harder and kick higher.

Well the rodeo was on, and we didn’t even have to pay admission! Super came bucking down into the ravine, right into the willow brush. He came down the same trail as we had gone up, and by the time he reached the bottom, he had bucked off everything. Nick and I were coming up behind the pack horses, and Charlie hollered for us to catch Super while he caught the other three. Nick and I jumped off our horses and tied them up. We caught Super and took him up to where Charlie and the other horses were. Charlie had to fix the pack saddle and get the basket and lash ropes straightened out. While he was doing that, Nick and I went looking for Super’s pack that was strewn among the brush all the way down the ridge. We finally found the two panniers and the top pack and carried them up to the other pack horses.

After everything was packed up again, Nick and I went back down to get our saddle horses. When we got to where we had tied them, Sandy was there patiently waiting, but there was no Joe—just a hole in the ground where the little pine tree had been that he was tied to. The look on Nick’s face was priceless! Where was his horse? I’m not sure if Nick was wishing he was somewhere else at that time because I heard him muttering something about “a sunny beach.”

I guess with all the brouhaha going on, Joe decided to leave, taking the tree with him. So Nick and I went back up to where Charlie and the pack horses were. We didn’t think Joe could be too far away, seeing he was dragging the tree and hopefully would get tangled up before then. The problem would be just to find where he was. My saddle horse Sandy had always been very observant and noticed things much quicker than the other horses usually did. So we took him with us and just left the other pack horses tied up. We took off down the trail looking for tracks. There were a few game trails and it was kind of hard to spot any tracks. We had gone about four hundred yards with no sign of horse tracks, when all of a sudden Sandy threw back his head and gave a big whinny and was looking up the sidehill. Sure enough, there was Joe standing in some scrub spruce. All you could see was his head between the trees. He would have been hard to find if it hadn’t been for Sandy’s keen horse sense. Joe was still attached to his little scrub tree. So after we rescued him, we returned to the pack horses which had had a little rest after the rodeo.



We got organized again and headed back up, destined for the camp spot over the ridge. By the time we reached the top of the steep ridge, packs were beginning to shift and loosen, so Charlie figured we should do a re-pack just to be on the safe side and not attempt the steep decline with packs not "just right". So right on top of the ridge, we stopped. One thing for sure, the view was certainly getting better than it had been down in the hole where Joe had taken off!

Cream, a Pinto horse cream in colour with a few brown spots, was the first pack horse to get re-packed. Nick had brought along a few bottles of wine, just in case we had to celebrate something, and lo and behold, they were packed on Cream. When we pulled off her pack and checked it, much to our relief, they were all intact. So nothing doing but we had to sample one bottle, just to make sure the wine was still okay after that trip up the side of the mountain. As we sampled the wine and had some lunch, we enjoyed the view from the top of the mountain. Once we were sure that the wine had survived the trip okay, Charlie and Nick re-packed the other horses, and we were ready to carry on down the ridge.

The ridge was a lot steeper than it looked. One thing though, it was downhill all the way to the Berland. We led our saddle horses, and the pack horses picked their way down very carefully. We eventually got to Berland River that afternoon. We camped about three miles above the fork of the Berland on the south fork, as it was a good camp spot. We swore right then, we would never come over the mountain again. It was

not until later that we discovered one of Nick's duffel bags was missing. He had personal items in there, but we were not going back up that ridge to look for them! A couple of years later though, Charlie and I rode into the area and after retracing our earlier trip, we found Nick's duffel bag. Everything was still in the bag: money, toothpaste, clothing, etc. The duffel bag and clothing were somewhat covered with mildew, but we were able to recover the bag and gave it back to Nick. I guess not too many people had come through that way in the mean time!

The next day we did not move the camp. Charlie and I kept watch over the horses, as they seemed to want to move on. Nick went out on foot and did some hunting. He was lucky and got a deer, which gave us fresh meat in camp that night. We had done some fishing too; so we had a real variety that night.

The next morning we were planning to head into the Berland and then home. It had been chilly at night, and sometimes the horses get a little rambunctious, especially if they are hoping to head home. After the pack horses were all saddled up, cinched down and just waiting to go, Nick was saddling up Joe. As he cinched him up, Joe decided the cinch was just a little too snug! Well, Joe took one jump back and pulled Nick right through the fire pit. The fire was still smouldering, as we had not doused it yet. Nick did not wear cowboy boots but rode in runners, and he was doing some fancy steps as he came through the pit. He hung right on to Joe's halter shank and did a few dances as Joe bucked. I just stood there watching

and wishing we had the movie camera along! Sometimes when one horse starts to buck and act up, it can cause the rest to act up too, but not so this morning. Once Joe got settled down and saddled, he was a model horse, and we got away from camp and made good time back into the Berland campground where our truck and trailer were.

The weather for our trip had been chilly at times but still was pretty good for the time of the year, and we had no precipitation. Nick was able to bag a deer, but we never did see the sheep again—just from a distance, that one night. To Nick it no doubt was a learning experience, and he was a very good learner—and also a good sport. However, I'm not sure if he would recommend Joe to anyone as the best saddle horse.

THANK YOU,

Community Initiatives Program
for your help towards the
2007 & 2008
Trail Clearing Initiatives





What Happened to Rock Lake?

by Susan Feddema-Leonard

The Kakwa-Willmore Interprovincial Agreement was signed with NO public consultation during the changing of the Premiers in November 2006. At the same time, many secret Orders in Council were signed, which created Rock Lake Provincial Park, Pierre Grey Lakes Provincial Park, the Sulphur Gates Recreation Area and other provincial parks. Hunting was completely banned in all these parks. This was done under the radar of the West Yellowhead MLA, Ivan Strang and was also done without ANY public consultation. Outfitters, guides, hunters and Native people were affected as a result.

In January 2007, the Willmore Wilderness Foundation and the Grande Cache Métis Local wrote letters of inquiry to the government expressing concern about the underhanded way the Interprovincial Park and Rock Lake Provincial Park were created. In the spring of 2008, Tourism Parks and Recreation (TPR) decided to launch a public hearing in order for Albertans to FINALLY provide input into the Rock Lake designation. Many dozens of letters and emails were sent to TPR staff requesting a reversal of the Rock Lake Provincial Park status. There were several public meetings in which citizens drove many miles to attend. There was overwhelming support demanding a complete reversal.

In the summer of 2008, TPR staff came to Grande Cache and FINALLY met with some of the indigenous people of the region who have used the Rock Lake area for generations. Basil Leonard was present at the Mountain Métis meeting.¹ He stated, "Andy (Vanlmschoot) informed the group of Elders they could NOT remove firewood, medicinal plants, berries or even flowers—from ANY land under Tourism, Parks and Recreation control."

This was a big blow to some of the Elders in the Grande Cache area who enjoyed going to Rock Lake area to gather various natural goods from the earth. In fact, we are aware of one native man who was chastised by TPR staff for snaring a gopher to eat. Gophers have been long been used as a food source for the mountain people—and people still spend July harvesting a supply to be used in the winter months.

Basil Leonard emailed Kyle Clifford, Acting Director Fields of Parks Division on October 23, 2008. He asked what the status of Rock Lake was, since we had heard nothing after the extensive consultations and input that Albertans had provided TPR staff.

On October 24, 2008, Mr. Clifford replied stating, "With regard to Rock Lake - the consultation phase has taken longer than expected, but a few days of on-site meeting with First Nations representatives next week will conclude that phase. We will then be able to complete the analysis of the consultations and present the summary with recommendations for boundary adjustments. We would have liked to have this completed as originally planned in early September."

On October 27, 2008 Basil responded to Kyle Clifford and asked, "What First Nations representatives were you meeting with?" Andy Vanlmschoot promptly responded by stating, "For the sake of expediency, I am responding to your inquiry as I believe Kyle is away from his office. Parks staff is meeting with all First Nations that consider the Rock Lake Area part of their traditional territory. We are currently consulting with Alexis First Nation representatives and elders. We hope to be able to complete the analysis of the

consultations and present the summary with recommendations for boundary adjustments soon."

Basil replied to the email by stating, "Thanks for the clarification. Does the Alexis Band have a formal land claim which Includes Rock Lake?" Andy responded by stating, "It is considered part of their traditional territory."

The BOTTOM LINE is that seven Orders in Council were passed in November 2006, which created MANY Provincial Parks in Alberta when there was NO public consultation. Rock Lake was one of the casualties of this non-transparent signing of Alberta's Lands into Provincial Park status. TPR staff have since clearly advised the people of the eastern slopes that they cannot pick, gather or practice their age-old traditions—including taking of wood for use to heat their homes.

We applaud TPR for allowing hunters to take out a Special Discharge Permit in the Sulphur Gates Area near Grande Cache, which allows them the right to hunt again in that area. The knowledge that one could obtain a Special Discharge Permit was made known *late* in the hunting season. We encourage TPR to continue issuing these permits in the future, as it is better to harvest elk legally than to have them end up as road kill.

Despite this one positive action that TPR has made, we still wonder what has happened to the countless hours of public input regarding Rock Lake? Why has there been NO announcement of the reversal? We MUST keep the civil servants accountable for their actions and SILENCE ON AN ISSUE is not acceptable. I encourage everyone who reads this to contact your MLA and DEMAND ANSWERS.

¹ Also known as Grande Cache Métis Local 1994



Passing on Traditions & Mountain Skills

by Susan Feddema-Leonard

Willmore Wilderness Foundation's Mission is to preserve the history of the area, focus on the advancement of education of the park, restore historical packtrails and sites, and enhance use of Willmore Wilderness Park for Albertans and visitors. The goal is to provide workshops and seminars on traditional activities in the Willmore Wilderness Park such as humane trapping, improving horsemanship skills, gathering edible and medicinal plants, etc. Another main goal is to keep alive traditional skills, which were used to survive in the mountains. Education programs have a special focus on teaching youth—and the young at heart—old knowledge and the mountain way of life.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation has fostered these important goals of the Foundation in the 2008 year. In June a Youth Horseshoeing Clinic was hosted under the tutelage of Farrier Dale Printup. In July and August of this year, adolescents joined the Foundation on the trail—'learning the ropes' of the mountain trade. In November the Willmore Wilderness Foundation hosted the Alberta Trappers Association School and sponsored youth to attend.

We were also proud to send the Foundation's young staff members, Heather Devoe and Chehala Leonard

to attend the Dreamspeaker's Film Festival in Edmonton. The pair learned to pitch a film idea on the Willmore to some professional TV and Film producers. Special thanks goes to the Grande Cache Métis Local for helping to financially sponsor these two women.

In November Heather Devoe was also sponsored to attend the Banff Adventure Filmmaker's Workshop 2008, where she put into practice her 'pitching' skills for Willmore film ideas. A special thanks goes to ConocoPhillips for sponsoring Heather and me to attend this amazing workshop.

Chehala has left the Foundation for four and a half months to travel to Finland, where she is teaching mountain and traditional culture to high school and elementary students. She has taken Willmore Wilderness Foundation Film Productions to Finland and will share the unique way mountain people live.

The Jasper, Willmore and Kakwa areas have a unique tapestry of traditions which have elements of aboriginal, trappers, guides, outfitters, mountain men and women. We MUST preserve our culture and history—as this is our legacy. I encourage anyone who has a talent to share, to bring it to the table and work collectively to build OUR STORY.



Top: Farrier Dale Printup & son Ivan.
Middle: Humane Trapping Education.
Bottom: Chehala Leonard
& Heather Devoe.

Photos by Susan Feddema-Leonard

Thanks,

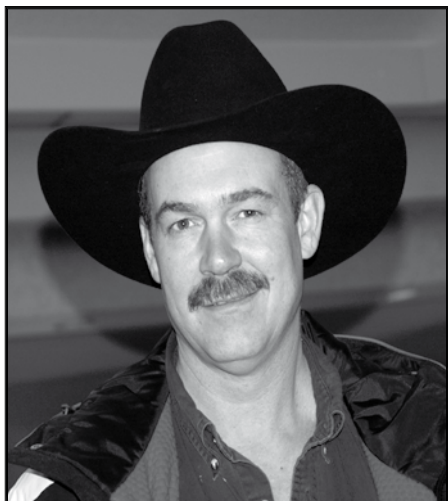
ConocoPhillips
for sponsoring our staff
to attend the
Banff Adventure Mountain
Film Festival


ConocoPhillips



Willmore Wanderings

By Mark Engstrom



Mark Engstrom 2007
Photo by Susan Feddema-Leonard

The goats had seen us, and were watching us; so we went back down the basin until we were out of sight. We then proceeded to climb up the mountain and back across the top towards the goats. We had thought we could run the ridge when we got to the top, but the top was sheer cliffs on the other side.

My 2008 Alberta Mountain Goat Hunt

The last two hunting seasons were exciting ones for me. I was able to accompany lucky Albertans drawn for mountain goat hunts three times, once in 2006 and twice in 2007. The 2006 hunt was with an acquaintance who was looking for someone to help him on his quest after getting the elusive lottery goat draw. I was happy to accompany him on his week-long adventure. We worked hard at finding him a goat, but the weather was against us. After passing up a small billy goat, he never got another chance and ended up an unsuccessful Alberta goat hunter—as I'm sure many others have been since the lottery draw was started. Last year two friends of mine were drawn, and I was fortunate enough to be able to go along on both hunts. Both hunters were successful in taking goats on their respective hunts. I gained a lot of experience during those hunts, and it made me want to harvest a goat more than ever.

I've applied for the lottery goat draw every year since it was created in 2003 and it has been the one draw I have hoped for the most. Being part of three goat hunts in the last couple years only fuelled my hope that I would get drawn. I logged on to the Alberta Outdoorsmen forum in August of this year, and saw a thread that the antelope draws were available on Alberta RELM. Knowing the goat draws came out at the same time as the antelope draws, I excitedly entered the website, and to

my surprise my draw application for mountain goat said I was DRAWN. I let out a whoop my wife could hear outside the house! Not really believing I had been drawn I refused to exit the website, until I had printed off the page I saw before me. I then phoned my brother and told him the news. We were both in disbelief, but very excited!

My brother and I had already planned a sheep hunt for the opening of the sheep season at the end of August. Finding out I had been drawn for goat, in early August, put an end to those plans. I really, really wish all the draws would take place in June! We quickly re-arranged our plans, which meant having to reschedule work commitments and other plans to accommodate for the opening of the goat season on Sep. 10th. Missing out on the opener of sheep season almost seemed to be a blessing. The Willmore seemed to be very busy, and the weather wasn't the greatest, either. I've always enjoyed hunting away from the crowds, so it seemed fitting that I was unable to hunt the Park during this time, especially as horse trailer after horse trailer started vacating the staging areas a week to two weeks after the sheep opener.

We had planned to leave on the goat hunt on September 5th, but a series of horse troubles and a couple false starts featuring a lame horse and a pack horse wreck pushed our departure back almost a week. However, this seemed another blessing as the weather was wet, rainy and snowy the whole time. Finally, on Sep 11th, we made our start, my brother and I and four horses.



The zone I had been drawn in is a two-day horseback ride into the Willmore Wilderness. Those first two days were wet, and our patience was tried. On the third day, however, we were deep into my goat zone and spotting goats. The weather had turned for the better, and we were enjoying an Indian summer. For the next few days we rode, spotted and travelled to new locations spotting for goats. We spotted a couple billy goats in the zone, but in an in-accessible spot, so kept moving and looking for more goats. We also spotted a couple goats in an adjoining zone. They would easily have made Boone and Crockett. What a sight!

On day six of our hunt, we rode up into a basin where we had heard there were goats in during the sheep season. I had hunted and taken a non-trophy sheep there before, but my brother had never been there. It is a beautiful, large, wild basin. We tied the horses and walked up into the basin and set up to spot. Almost immediately my brother spotted three goats, a nanny and kid, and a lone billy on the same mountainside. I wasn't too excited as I didn't expect a good billy up with the nannies. We had a look at him however, and decided he might be worthwhile. He was quite a ways away, so we moved up the basin to get a better spot on him. We set up again, closer to him and checked him out through the spotting scope and finally decided that he was an 8 to 9-inch goat. I had originally set my goal at a ten-inch goat, but seeing this one in a good spot, I decided that we would make a play on him, and if we could get close enough, I would take him.

So we were forced to descend the



mountain somewhat, and then find a way over a couple cliffs on outcrops between us and the goats. After climbing the first big cliff, we found ourselves 150 yards above the nanny we had spotted. She was standing and looking directly away from us, studying the bottom of the valley. This enabled us to sneak over another cliff. I scrambled up first and peeked over, and sure enough there was my billy. I came back down and told my brother he was there. He went up and put the rangefinder on him and got 262 yards. We then went up together, made sure it was the billy we had spotted earlier, and I got ready to shoot. I lined up and my brother said, "Make sure you quit breathing hard before you shoot. We have lots of time". I waited a minute or so and got my breath. The goat was lying down, quartering towards us. My gun was zeroed at 300 yards, so I took a breath and aimed dead center on his shoulder. I shot, and lost the goat in the scope. As I started to cycle another round into

Front: Mark Engstrom of Grande Cache, Alberta with his brother Terry (Toe) Engstrom from Airdrie, Alberta.

the chamber, my brother interrupted and said, "Nope – he's dead!" The 140 grain TSX had hit him just in front of the inside shoulder in the lower neck, had exited dead center on the far-side shoulder, and killed the billy instantly. Two and a half hours had passed since we started our stalk, and now we were celebrating!

We quickly repacked our stuff and side-hilled over to the goat. What a beautiful animal! I find mountain goats a marvel, and had now taken one of the truly special animals on my own very special hunt. We took some pictures, tagged the goat and then began the job of caping and deboning the prize. We finished loading our packs with the bounty and headed down the mountain. By the time

.....continued on Page 23



Charlie Matheson – Mountain Man - cont from Page 5

by Jim Babala

Charlie and John told the biologists many more stories of trail and army days. Charlie and John both served under a Col. Rogers who was commander of their regiment. Col. Rogers eventually became superintendent of Jasper National Park and hired many men from his old regiment as Park Wardens and for other positions. He had hired Charlie. John knew many of the men Col. Rogers hired.

Charlie got to telling many more incidents of the depression years known as the "Hungry '30s." He told of the extra money that park wardens and others tried to make by trapping marten and other fur bearers in the park. He told of one incident where two wardens, while drinking, got into an argument regarding trapping. Both were brought up before Col. Rogers who suspended them for a time but rehired them both later.

Another tale Charlie told was about a well known character of the times by the name of Bruce. This incident also took place during the depression years. Bruce was well known for trapping in the Park. On this occasion, he was trapping beaver. The wardens were aware of this and were watching him closely. They found where he had made several beaver sets and had caught a number of beaver. They figured all they had to do was stake out the place and wait until Bruce came to claim his catch. They set out the stakeout and worked on shifts, but Bruce never showed. They thought somehow Bruce must have gotten wind of their plans. Bruce was asked by the wardens sometime later why he had not returned to the sets to pick them up along with the beavers. His reply was, "Hell, I never intended to return. I made them sets especially for you guys. I knew you would find them, and this would keep you busy, and I would know where you guys were. I went a few miles further upstream and took a real nice catch—caught over a

dozen blanket beaver and a lot of smaller ones as well."

This incident was talked about, laughed about and retold many times. Bruce was later made a job foreman by the Parks Department. The old saying "if you can't beat them, join them" was a fact in this place. The Parks Department eventually joined up with Bruce by adding him to their personnel. There were many stories of trapping in the Parks during the "hungry '30s."

One story I will remember to the end of my days goes like this. During the 1950s people were allowed to use bait while hunting grizzly. It was the practice to put out an old or crippled horse for bear bait. I had a hunter that was returning to hunt a particularly large boar grizzly that ranged the south fork of the Wild Hay River. He suggested that I set out an old horse for bait in advance of his arrival, which I did. A sow and two large cubs, as well as the large boar found the bait. The bait was completely devoured in three days' time.

I went to the Entrance store to put in my grocery order and also to try to buy another old or crippled horse, but without success. While I was there, Charlie Matheson dropped in and I told him about the bears and of my need of another horse for bait. I told him I was going to the Coal Branch to buy a bait

Charlie said to me, "Before you drive to the Coal Branch, drop over to the ranch; I might have one for you. We have an old critter on the ranch that is near the end of his days. He ranges along the highway and stops in at the ranch every few days. The wife feeds him a little oats. I'm sure I can have the horse in a couple of days. Drop over in the morning."

I was at Charlie's ranch early. He was up in the corral and had an old black gelding. I could see the horse was on his last legs. Charlie said, "Hell, Jim, when I drove home last evening, he was here in the yard, so I put him in the corral. When are you going back out to camp?" I told him that I was going back this morning, and all I had to do was stop in at the Entrance store to pick up some supplies.

"Jim," he said, "take this horse out right away so the wife doesn't know I'm doing away with him. It's a sort of pet with her. We sold him years ago to some people down the road at the saw mill. The horse kept coming back here. The people left the country so they gave the horse to the wife. She fed him last winter and now he won't stay out on the winter range with the rest of the horses, as he knows he would never make it. He can't even follow the trail riders who ride the Folding Mountain Trail. He leaves with them when they start off—but comes back in a few minutes. He can't follow them up the steep part of the climb. He is done. He won't make it, even if we feed him next winter."

We loaded the horse and Charlie said, "You say you are going to stop at Entrance for a while? I better camouflage the horse some, as many people know the horse. It's best the wife doesn't know I sent the horse out. She will think he just died out on the range."

Charlie went into the house and came out with a can of shoe polish. The horse had a white strip on his face and Charlie blacked this out with the shoe polish. As well as the horse had a lot of grey around the ears and cheeks as old horses do. Charlie blacked this as well. Then Charlie said, "That should do it. No one will be able to tell a thing when you are driving by."



The horse had Charlie's Circle-M brand on him. I asked Charlie how much he wanted for the horse but he told me just to take him out of there. I insisted Charlie take \$25.00, telling him that the horse was worth it to me and that the hunter was paying for it. He also saved me a long drive back to the Coal Branch.

I left with the horse, stopping at Entrance only long enough to pick up the supplies, then continued on to our main camp on the Wild Hay River. Jack Fregren and John Haggblad were in camp. John commented that I had gotten a bait and then he noticed the Circle-M brand on the horse.

"You got him from Charlie." I told him yes and then told him about camouflaging the horse with shoe polish. John laughed saying, "Charlie has a lot of experience at that game, more mule money for Charlie."

During John and Charlie's army days, a saying was started between them, which was "the last of the mule money." John told me that the saying was started when an army mule strayed from the army stables. The mule had been missing for seven weeks when word was received that a mule was found on a farm some miles away.

Charlie and John and another soldier were assigned to check on this mule and bring it back to the army stables. When they got to the farm, they found a mule that was in very poor condition, much thinner than it was at the army stables. As Charlie was familiar with the mule, he thought the mule even looked smaller. Only Charlie's familiarity with it and its markings helped him to identify the mule.

The farmer said the mule was found in a part of his fenced land that had very little grazing on it. The mule had eventually had a hard time while in this small, enclosed

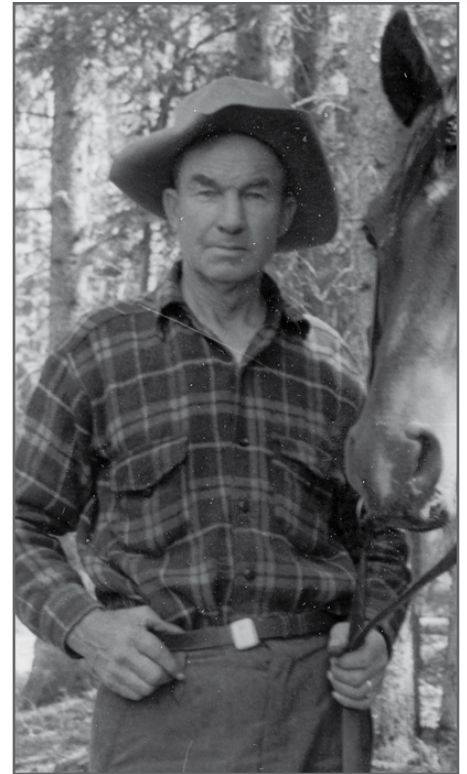
area. He definitely would have died soon if some children hadn't found him. By this time, it had recovered somewhat as the farmer had been feeding it.

Taking the mule with them, Charlie said, "The hell with it, the stable master will never recognize this animal. I'll work on it and disguise it some. We'll show it to the stable master and I'm certain he'll turn it down, as the one we lost. We can sell it to some farmer."

Charlie then got some kind of coloring and went to work on the mule and clipped it as well. When he had finished the disguise, John said it was an entirely different looking animal and in very poor condition. They took the mule to the army stables; the stable master glanced at it and ordered them to get the animal out of there before it contaminated the rest of the animals there.

Charlie, John and the soldier sold the mule to an English farmer for about half what it would have brought in better condition. They got enough money to party over the weekend along with a number of others from their regiment. Charlie was the banker and when he bought the last of the drinks with the remaining money, he commented, "That's the last of the mule money."

The stories about Charlie as a remarkable mountain man were many, and I'm sure there were many more interesting stories during his army days as well.



...Charlie Matheson,
courtesy of his son Glen Matheson.

"Jim," he said, "take this horse out right away so the wife doesn't know I'm doing away with him. It's a sort of pet with her. We sold him years ago to some people down the road at the saw mill.

The people left the country so they gave the horse to the wife.



Willmore Wilderness Preservation And Historical Foundation

Balance Sheet

As At December 31, 2007

	2007 \$	2006 \$
Assets		
Current		
Cash	56,046.42	21,497.96
Accounts Receivable	6,255.94	3,021.43
Prepaid Rent	3,303.46	3,291.27
	<u>65,605.82</u>	<u>27,810.66</u>
Capital		
Equipment	11,808.03	9,834.49
Computer	19,791.25	5,305.20
Furniture & Fixtures	1,800.00	1,800.00
	<u>33,399.28</u>	<u>16,939.69</u>
	<u>99,005.10</u>	<u>44,750.35</u>
Liabilities & Equity		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	<u>445.07</u>	<u>1,196.77</u>
Equity		
Retained Earnings	<u>98,560.03</u>	<u>43,553.58</u>
	<u>99,005.10</u>	<u>44,750.35</u>

MOUNTAIN MÉTIS



Thank you,

Mountain Métis
Grande Cache Metis Local 1994

for sponsoring our staff to attend
the 2008 Dreamspeakers Film Festival

**Willmore Wilderness Preservation And Historical Foundation**

Financial Statements - For the Year Ended December 31, 2007

	2007 \$	2006 \$
REVENUE		
General Sales	1,222.72	-
Grants	111,000.00	3,750.00
Memberships	4,740.00	4,490.00
Book Sales	47,795.90	1,050.00
Training and Clinic Reimbursements	-	1,400.00
Donations	12,948.00	1,657.17
Fundraising Proceeds	95,590.53	169,718.77
Intersest	54.83	5.76
	<u>273,351.98</u>	<u>182,071.70</u>
OTHER EXPENSES		
Accounting	1,000.00	750.00
Advertising & Promotion	6,571.84	1,703.53
Donations	3,982.95	10,516.67
Fundraising Costs	61,860.10	108,978.75
Bank/Credit Card Charges & Fees	1,667.76	1,738.10
License, Fees & Permits	574.27	125.00
Supplies	6,784.78	2,266.11
Equipment & Trail Costs	563.91	-
Conventions, Banquets & Meetings	1,552.88	850.00
Training & Clinics	1,551.82	2,685.88
Office	10,256.28	4,175.33
Book Supplies, Editing & Printing	75,951.52	2,143.38
Telephone & Fax	2,899.61	1,924.67
Rent	11,020.51	6,582.62
Maintenance	-	112.84
Travel	6,264.29	3,443.64
Wages & Benefits	2,713.28	-
Sub-Contracts	24,740.00	-
	<u>219,955.80</u>	<u>147,996.52</u>
EARNINGS (LOSS) FROM OPERATIONS	<u>(53,396.18)</u>	<u>(34,075.18)</u>



Willmore Wilderness Foundation

a registered charitable organization
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Web Pages:
WillmoreWilderness.com
WillmoreWildernessPark.com
WillmorePark.com
MountainSolstice.com

Whitefox Circle Inc. Publisher
Estella Cheverie, Editor
Brian Bildson, Regular Columnist
Mark Engstrom, Regular Columnist

A person may become a member
by a favorable 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.

\$25.00 per year.
Life Time Membership is \$500.00
Corporate Membership is \$100.00 per year.
The membership year runs from June 1 to May 31.
Annual General Meeting in June of each year.

An independent newsletter
published in December & June.

ADVERTISING RATES:
full page ad B & W - \$295.00
full page colour - \$500.00
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1/4 page ad B & W - \$80.00
1/8 page ad B & W - \$45.00

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We welcome feedback to this
publication and any suggestions
or ideas for future articles.

Contact our Editor at
info@willmorewilderness.com

**willmore
wilderness**
FOUNDATION



Join Our Membership -

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 1 to May 31.

Yearly Membership is as follows:

- \$25.00 Individual Membership
- \$35.00 Family Membership
- Life Time Membership \$500.00
- Corporate Membership \$100.00

company	
name	
address	
city	
postal code/zip	
country	
tel	
fax	
email	
website	
amount enclosed	
year	
date	



Willmore Wanderings

by Mark Engstrom



.....continued from Page 17

we reached the bottom, our legs were rubber, and our toes felt like hamburger. We dropped the packs on level ground and walked the mile or so back to our saddle horses, then rode back to the packs and hooked them onto my horse's saddle horn. Not having brought a packhorse, we walked the horses back to camp some three miles down the valley in the light of an almost full moon. We were beat by the time we got back to camp, but elated. We hung the meat in a tree, ate a quick bite and celebrated with a couple stiff shots of rum that my brother had brought just for that occasion. Goat heart and steaks awaited us the next day.

The goat was a little bigger than we had judged, the longer horn was just over 9 1/2". His total score is around 46" to 47", right at the minimum needed to make the Alberta record book. It matters not to me if he makes the book or not; he will always remain one of my prized hunting trophies. The memories of the trip will always be special ones. I am so thankful I could share it with my brother Terry (Toe for everyone who knows him). He was a huge part of the hunt, and he helped make it the best hunt I've been on ever.

Pictures: Mark Engstrom
Board of Directors
Willmore Wilderness Foundation
Photos by Terry (Toe) Engstrom



2008 fundraising auction dates

- Drayton Valley Roundup - January 31, 2009 - Drayton Valley Max
- 3rd Annual Edson Shindig - February 7, 2009 - Edson Royal Canadian Legion
- 3rd Annual Grande Cache Gala - February 21, 2009 - Grande Cache Metis Hall
- 5th Annual Grande Prairie Rendezvous - March 7, 2009 - Quality Inn
- 6th Annual Edmonton Roundup - March 28, 2009 - Chateau Louis Hotel

featuring Laura Vinson & Dave Martineau in Edmonton



Traditional Knowledge - Alberta Grizzly Survey

In April 2008 and after a lot of thought, the Willmore Wilderness Foundation decided to gather as much grizzly bear information from traditional sources as we could. This Grizzly Bear Survey would be used to supplement the data gathered by Tom Archibald of the Foothills Research Institute.

We requested that our members and other groups who spent considerable time on the eastern slopes and in the foothills regions forward any sightings of grizzly bears. We hoped to glean as much information as possible: i.e. colour; sows with cubs; age of cubs; whether the bears were alone or with a group; the bears' activities; and whether there were collars or ear tags. Individual traditional land users forwarded their information to info@WillmoreWilderness.com.

The Foundation had three persons on staff who took the sightings information and created a database, which included detailed descriptions, some GPS locations of bears, photographs and contact information of every report for further follow-up. After eight months of collecting data, we had close to five hundred bear sightings and dozens of reports of tracks where the bears were not seen. Most of the sightings were from Highway 16 north; however, there were some from as far south as the Montana border.

Our statistics included the fact that there had been three grizzly attacks west of Calgary over the past twelve months, which resulted in two deaths. This spring one oil and gas sector worker was also mauled in the Kakwa Region by a grizzly. We also had a report from a former Alberta Forest Service Ranger that his horse was killed by a grizzly—just west of Edson. We had numerous reports from oil field workers that grizzlies were seen

well east of their usual habitat. One grizzly bear was live trapped near the schoolyard in Susa Creek, a remote community near Grande Cache. We also received reports of grizzly sightings on other Native Co-ops near Grande Cache where children play. One Grande Cache man reported that a grizzly charged his truck, while a local woman described how a grizzly boar charged her car. Biologists from the University of Laval have been doing goat studies on Caw Ridge for the past fifteen years and have seen a steady increase in sightings—from one in 1994 to a high of fifty-one in 2006.

This many sightings and the areas they were reported in (*many kilometers east of their habitual range*) suggests to us that the bear population is expanding and more bears are being pushed out of traditional areas. We realize that with this type of survey, there will be a percentage of overlap where people at different times have seen the same bear or bears. However, there is also the fact that for every bear that is seen, there are five to seven bears that are not seen.

The conclusion we have reached is that there is a very healthy and huntable population of grizzlies in Alberta. Our recommendation to government will be to issue twenty resident tags for a spring season, with a review in two years.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation will continue with its yearly Traditional Knowledge Grizzly Survey. We expect many more sightings next year since more people will be aware of the survey—especially from Grande Prairie north where historically there has been a very healthy population of grizzly bears.

Thank you Alberta Fish & Game Association and President Maruice Naedau towards sponsoring the Traditional Knowledge Grizzly Bear Survey

Bazil Leonard, President



Top Photo by: Andrew Shirk

Middle Photo by: Mike Ewald, Grande Cache

Thank you

Alberta Fish & Game Association
and President Maruice Naedau
for your support towards sponsoring the
Traditional Knowledge Grizzly Bear Survey