



2019 SPIRIT HOUSE Project

OVERVIEW:

The following is an overview of the 2019 Spirit House project. All spirit house locations were accessible by horseback. The trail crew travelled a total of 42 days by horseback and pack horse.

A new grave that we worked on included an unnamed Indian girl's burial site, near the confluence of Pauline Creek and the Jackpine River. This grave is located near the British Columbia Border, and was a two-day horseback trip to access. This burials site is situated in the 2007 burned area in Willmore Wilderness Park, and the original gravesite was completely destroyed during the fire.

Tom Wanyandie first showed Basil Leonard the grave in the 1990s. Further collaboration of the existence of this gravesite was also shared by legendary trapper and outfitter Art Allen. The tale was detailed in an

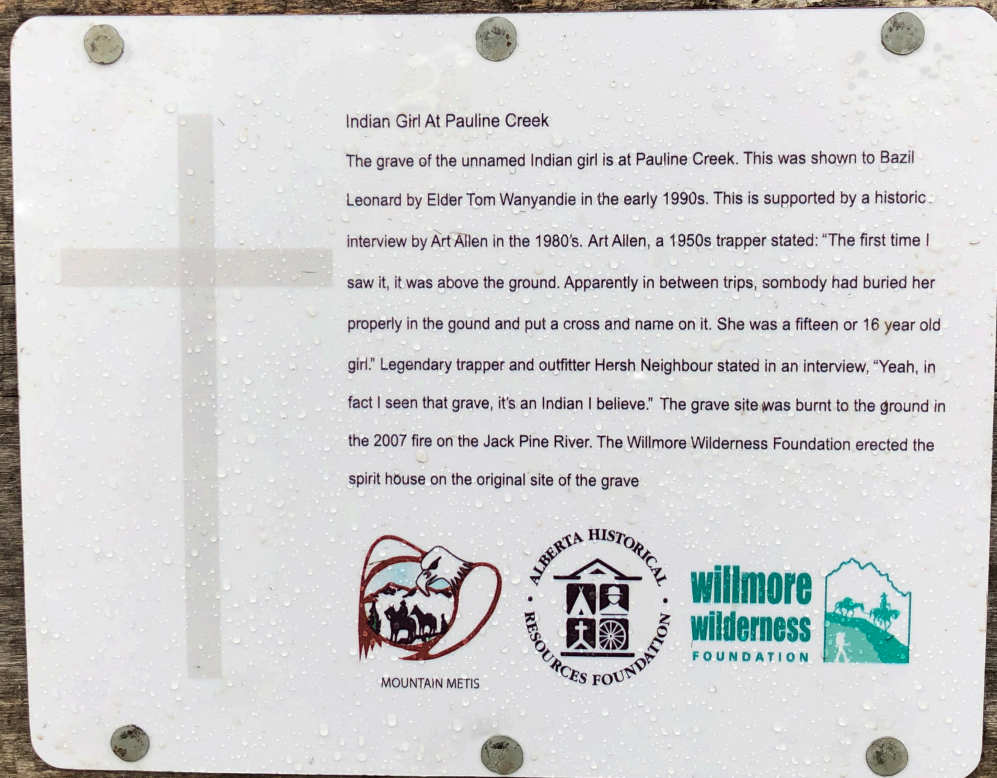
archived 1984 taped interview. A second trapper by the name of Hersch Neighbour also verified this in a 1980 taped interview, about the "Indian Girls Grave" at Pauline Creek.

The second gravesite that we worked on was that of George Hargraves who died in his sleep in 1936. He is buried at the base of Casket Mountain. This grave was a three-day horseback ride into Willmore Wilderness Park and was several kilometers from the Alberta/ British Columbia border. A metal fence was around Hargreaves grave. This gravesite was badly neglected and undergrowth had overtaken the burial site. A tree had fallen over the grave. The trail crew cleared brush and downed trees, and opened up George Hargreaves burial site. A trail was cut into the burial site from the main trail and the crews placed an interpretive sign to mark both the gravesite, and the junction pointing the way to the burial site.

Teenage wranglers assisted in the restoration of the gravesites. The youth included Payton Hallock (16), Ally Lamb (19), Marc Forquet (23), Marilyn McFadden (23) and Braiden Hallock (18), Kyle Leonard (25) and Paige Leonard (25) assisted Cree Elder Tom Wanyandie (88). Tom and Basil Leonard mentored the young trail crew over the past number of years.

Locating and building the houses required forty-two days in July and August 2019. Building the Spirit Houses helped to mark and preserve historical gravesites within the Park.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation donated all the horses and equipment needed to support the program. Alberta Historical Resources Foundation covered the cost of spirit houses, youth wages and food.



Front page:

Youth that were mentored:
from left to right:

Marilyn McFadden (23 yrs)
Jaely Willow Morbery (9 yrs)
Ally Lamb (19 yrs)
Kyle Leonard (25 yrs)
Paige Leonard (25 yrs)
Marc Forquet (23 yrs)

Pictured right:

Paige Leonard, Basil Leonard and
Kyle Leonard in front of the
the Indian Girls Grave at Pauline Creek.

Pictured on next page:

Unknown Trappers Grave on top
of the original gravesite.

Purpose & Objectives

The seven youth involved in the project gained a wealth of knowledge about the history of the area and their ancestors.

Youth had hands on experience building the Spirit Houses.

Youth experience the historic horseback culture that included training in basic horsemanship, saddling, packing skills and more.

Youth had hands on experience clearing trail, bucking up firewood and clearing garbage.

The youth learned the lay of the land, the trail networks and the locations of the graves.

Youth learned the history of the Rocky Mountains. This will ensure that the historic traditions are passed on for future generations.

Outcomes/End Product

Youth helped build two Spirit Houses that will remain in Willmore Wilderness Park.

Youth and Elders placed interpretive/memorial signage on seven gravesites located in Willmore Wilderness Park. This will ensure that travellers will learn about the men and women who are buried in this region of the Rockies.

Youth learned their traditions, which will be carried on and shared with future generations.

This project was photographed, filmed and the story was shared on social media. Youth learned the same skills and traditions that their ancestors used. Graves were GPS'd and archived for future reference.





Main Activities and Time/Task schedule; What Will Be Done and When.

Main Activities	Time		
Choosing of the youth	June 2019	Seven youth were chosen for this project.	Bazil Leonard
Choosing of Elders for this project	June 2019	Two Elders were chosen for this project	Bazil Leonard Tom Wanyandie
Pre-construction of Spirit Houses	May-June 2019	Construction of Spirit House Took place	Bazil Leonard made the Spirit House, allowing it to be packed by horse into Willmore Wilderness Park.
Purchasing of food and equipment	July 2019	Food and equipment were purchased.	Willmore Wilderness Foundation Staff coordinated this. Executive Director Susan Feddema-Leonard oversaw this project.
21- day packtrip	July 2019 Aug 2019	Youth and Elders moved to five different campsites in order to erect the Spirit Houses. Trails were cleared in order to access the Spirit House locations.	Outfitter Bazil Leonard oversaw this.
Social Media of the trip was posted		Social Media of the trip was posted	Executive Director Susan Feddema-Leonard oversaw this.
Final Report		A Final Report with photographs and GPS coordinates was be submitted	Heather Devoe, Chief Financial Officer prepared the budget. Susan Feddema-Leonard, Executive Director prepared the written report and promotional video.



Youth were taught the way of their ancestors. They were given hands on experiences in saddling and packing horses; using the age old “Diamond Hitch,” which is becoming a lost art. Youth were taught to look after the tack and gear and made sure that everything was in working order. They learned how to build camp with tents and a cook tent. They were instructed on how to erect the wood cook stove (the heart of the camp) and learned old traditions of helping the cook with wood and water. Youth were taught to hobble horses in the evening. They sent the herd out to pasture, and learned how to jingle horses back into camp in the morning.

Youth were taught their history through experiential learning. They saw the packtrails and camps their forefathers used. They saw the graves, and actively participated in putting the spirit houses on the sites so future generations will know about the early people of the Canadian Rockies. Youth were immersed in their history.

Youth travelled on horseback from two to six hours per day. Youth were awakened at 5 am and went with a guide to wrangle the horses. A cook prepared breakfast of bacon, eggs and toast; or pancakes and sausages. Youth saddle horses, as well as packed the horses with the spirit houses and supplies needed for the journey. Everyone travelled with a pack string of twenty-five horses to a remote camp. They unpacked the horses, hobbled them and turned them loose for the night. They helped set up the cook tent and the woodstove. The cook prepared a three-course meal for the crew, including dessert, which often included homemade pies.



Pictured on left page-6:
Braidon Hallock and Bazil Leonard

Picture above:
Tom Wanyandie and Payton Hallock

Pictured left:
Tom Wanyandie clearing brush at
George Hargreaves Grave. Payton
Hallock and Braidon Hallock are the
descendants of Alexander McKenzie's
guide Pierre Delorme.
Pierre successfully guided McKenzie
to the Arctic Ocean in 1789.





Pictured above:

Tom Wanyandie, Braiden Hallock
and Bazil Leonard
at the Kvass Flats grave
of Louis Delorme's sister.

Community Benefits

There were many benefits to this project, which included building pride in the history, culture and traditions of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The sites are visible for hikers and horseback riders to see. Fixing up the graves built self-esteem in the descendants, families and the mountain community as a whole.

Pictured on the right page:

Braiden Hallock and Bazil Leonard
at the baby's grave of Asa Hunting and
Mildred Shaw's grave on the
Muddy Water River

Credits

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation would like to thank the Mountain Métis Nation and Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for their support on this project. Thanks goes out to these valued partners.

