



NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER GUIDE

MOUNTAIN TO PRAIRIE
A LIVING LANDSCAPE

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN WATERSHED ALLIANCE



WELCOME

The North Saskatchewan River stretches across the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. It flows out of the ice fields in the Rocky Mountains, down through the foothills and across the prairies. On most of its east - west journey it separates the great western plains to the south from the boreal forests of the Canadian north. This unusual geographical position allows it to shelter a wide diversity of plants and wildlife, some of the species at the southern end of their natural range and some species at the northern end.

It is no secret that water is the lifeblood of the land. Nor is it surprising that fresh water on our planet is a commodity under great pressure. We believe that a river without friends is in danger of being damaged by that great pressure. This river guide is designed to emphasize and reinforce the long and noble relationship that humans have with the North Saskatchewan River. It is designed to remind us of its significant cultural, historical, recreational and environmental value. It is designed to bring us down to the river again and to reintroduce us to its wonders...

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**THE CITY OF EDMONTON
EPCOR
EDMONTON COMMUNITY LOTTERY BOARD
PARTNERS FOR THE SASKATCHEWIN RIVER BASIN**

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RIVER RULES

- If you are new to your watercraft, travel with experienced boaters.
- **WEAR A LIFE JACKET WITH A WHISTLE.** It is a smart move and it is the law.
- Always have a bailing device and an extra paddle.
- **RIVER WATER IS COLD** – even in the heat of summer. Take an extra set of dry clothes and matches in a waterproof container.
- Be watchful on the river. Log jams, overhanging branches, protruding rocks, sandbars and other watercraft can appear suddenly.

GENERAL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE RIVER

WATER LEVELS

Spring run-off or heavy rain can significantly change the water level of the river. The Bighorn Dam, on the river west of Nordegg, operated by TransAlta Utilities, can also affect the water level. Once in the spring and once in the fall the hydroelectric plant is shut down for safety reasons. This activity lowers the water level for up to 15 hours at a time. Before going out on the river call TransAlta at: (780) 721-3700.

RIVER INFORMATION

We have tried to include useful suggestions and tips in this guide but we can take no responsibility for the quality of your river adventure or for your safety while on the river.

Poor skill and/or poor judgement cause most accidents on the river. Please take the time to become adequately trained and well informed so that your river adventures are great ones.

1:50,000 scale maps were used to create the maps in this guide and care has been taken to ensure accuracy. Please alert us to any mistakes you find and we will correct them for the next printing. We also invite river comments and river observations. We, too, want to learn more about our river and we welcome additional information about Who's Who and What's What along the river.

Please send your comments to: water@nswa.ab.ca

RIVER/LAND ETHICS

- Go gently on the river – protect the natural areas where you travel.
- LEAVE NO TRACE OF YOUR PASSING.
- CARRY OUT WHAT YOU CARRY IN.
- Respect other river users.
- Minimize the use and size of campfires and make sure your campfire is completely out.
- Respect private land by staying off or asking permission for access.

REACH 01

The first 15 km of this reach has spectacular scenery, which can be viewed from hiking trails on Parker Ridge along the Columbia Icefields Parkway, but it is not navigable due to waterfalls and difficult rapids.

GOLD FACT - Gold-colored minerals are often found in rock along the river. Pyrite, chalcopyrite and weathered muscovite are beautiful, but in the precious metal world – “fool’s gold.” Most real gold is alloyed with silver and to a lesser extent, copper. Gold panning will sometimes reveal tiny ruby-coloured garnets.

A broad, braided river channel area - the “Graveyard Flats” is found at the river’s confluence with the Alexandra River.

There are two distinct layers of volcanic ash in the riverbanks east of the Howse River confluence, deposited during volcanic activity, 6,000 years ago.

Starting points for down-river canoe trips are all highway accessible sites: one near Mount Coleman, a second at Rampart Creek, a third opposite Arctomys Creek and a fourth at Saskatchewan River Crossing.

The high cliffs along the North Saskatchewan River headwaters provide a breeding area for golden eagles.

CANOE FACT - The run from Alexandra River to the Big Horn Dam takes about 1.5 days. The rapids range from Grade II to VI, (minimum intermediate canoeing skill).

BIRD FACT - **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) have a wingspan of over two meters and can see four times farther than people. The Bald Eagle is a practical bird, feeding primarily on fish, aquatic birds, and mammals, which it may take alive or find dead. Most live prey is taken from the sick and wounded. The nest is the largest of any bird in North America (one found was 3 m tall and 6 m across).

PLANT FACT - **Common Juniper** (*Juniperus communis*) One of the most widely distributed trees in the world. Common juniper was used by Native North Americans as a blood tonic as well as to treat colds, flu, arthritis, muscle aches, and stomach problems. Juniper berries, in a concentrated extract, was used by Europeans to make gin and to preserve meat.

THE SIX DIFFICULTY CLASSES FOR RAPIDS

CLASS I – Easy. Some fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Obstructions obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight and self-rescue is easy.

CLASS II – Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels that are evident. Trained paddlers easily avoid rocks and medium sized waves. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance is seldom needed.

CLASS III – Intermediate. Rapids may be difficult to avoid and may swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvering in fast current and around ledges is often required. Strong eddies may be encountered. Large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided.

CLASS IV – Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids may be present requiring precise boat handling. Large, unavoidable waves, holes, constricted passages may be present requiring fast maneuvering under pressure. Scouting is necessary for the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high and self-rescue may be difficult.

CLASS V – Expert. Long, obstructed, violent rapids that expose paddlers to above average danger. There may be drops with large, unavoidable waves; holes; steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools demanding a high level of fitness. Scouting is mandatory but difficult. Swimming dangerous and rescue difficult even for experts.

CLASS VI – Extreme. The run is extremely difficult, unpredictable and dangerous, consequences of error severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only.

ALL RIVER ADVENTURERS MUST:

- Ensure that their equipment is in good repair and in working order
- Make sure that their personal river savvy and the savvy of the group with whom they travel is equal to the challenge they choose.
- Evaluate water conditions continually.
- Pay close attention to weather conditions.

From 1872 to 1876, Sandford Flemming, engineer-in-chief of the Transcontinental Railway, spent over 3 million dollars surveying passes through the Rockies. He eliminated all passes except the Howse Pass at the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River and the Yellowhead Pass. The Yellowhead Pass was eventually chosen against the advice of Flemming who thought the Howse Pass better. In October 1880, Sir John A. Macdonald gave the entire railroad project to a group of industrialists who created the CPR and went through the Kicking Horse Pass instead.

Surveyor H. A. F. McLeod, who wanted the Transcontinental Railroad to cross the Rockies by following the North Saskatchewan River upstream, then up the Brazeau, then up the Maligne River into the Jasper Valley, conducted a reconnaissance survey in the area in the summer and fall of 1875. He reached what is presently called Maligne Lake, named it 'Sore-foot Lake', and pronounced the route unusable.

June 24, 1907 - Mary Sharples Schaffer & friend Molly Adams with guide William Warren and cook & packer Sidney Unwin "reached the dangerous, glacier fed North Saskatchewan River." They camped on the river under shadow of Mt. Wilson. During this trip Mary Schaffer named Panther Falls.

In 1810, at Saskatchewan Crossing, David Thompson (*Koo-Koo-Sint* – one who looks at stars), a North West Company surveyor, was attacked by a Peigan war party, and saved by the sudden appearance of three grizzly bears.

There are many good viewing sites along the David Thompson Highway where the river runs close to the road.

ANIMAL FACT - Silver Haired Bat (*Lasiorycteris noctivagans*) Only the most fortunate get a glimpse of this handsome but shy, non-colonial woodland bat. It is abundant in the mountain areas of this reach, where it exists on an insect diet of mainly flies, beetles, moths and tree larvae.

"Camping beside the river near the headwaters, I realized for the first time how much we need this river to be healthy and how the river needs us not at all."

Billie Milholland, summer student, 2001, NSWA



1:50,000 Maps: 83 C/3, 82 C/2, 82N/15

FISH FACT - Alberta cold-water sport fish belong to the trout and salmon family (*Salmonidae*). They prefer a water temperature between 5 - 18 degrees Celsius (40-60 degrees Fahrenheit). In warmer water their reproduction reduces and sometimes ceases completely. Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) have been introduced into the Ram River and a few other small, cold streams tributaries to the North Saskatchewan River. The cutthroat prefers colder water than do their cousins, rainbow trout. These fish spawn as late as early July in high mountain streams.

CAMPING - Within the park boundary there are two riverside campgrounds: Cirrus Mountain and Rampart Creek. There is also a youth hostel at Rampart Creek. Primitive camping is not permitted along the river.

ECO-TIP - Biodiversity is nature's way. In order for all life on earth to be healthy, there must be a great variety of genes, a variety of species and a variety of ecosystems. The more variety, the more flexibility, at all three levels. The North Saskatchewan River system still supports a significant biodiversity.

"There is a point on a river trip where the river's will becomes your own. It is the will to flow effortlessly over and around obstacles, taking something of everything you encounter without being slowed. In doing so it provides life to the living and beauty to the landscape. In the end, this is what I want to do." Joel Vander Schaaf, canoeist, fall, 2001

ECO-TIP - If you want to know how long it is until the sun sets, when you are walking along the river... Extend your arm towards the sun with your thumb pointed up (handshake position) and then count the number of fingers between the horizon and the sun. For each finger it is approximately 12 minutes until the sun sets.

In 1787, surveyor David Thompson, wintering with the Blackfoot, mentions the Kutenai people who used to live and hunt from the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan right down into the western plains.

Alexander Henry the younger, during the winter of 1811 - 1812, mentions Kutenai Camps between Whirlpool Point and the present location of the Big Horn Dam. Peter Fidler, in his 1792 journal, also mentions the existence of these people in this area.

A quick archeological survey, taken in the 1970's, before flooding this area for the Abraham Lake reservoir, recorded 61 Kutenai Campsite locations.

In the early 1800's, fur traders on the Upper-North Saskatchewan River noticed old campsites of the Kutenai people as well as those of Flathead and Shoshoni who had been driven over the mountains by mounted and armed Blackfoot.

In September 1907, Mary Sharples Schaffer and her crew followed the Cline River out to the "golden plains of the Saskatchewan River" where they came upon the teepees of two Stony Indians, Silas Abraham and Jonas Sampson. These men were pleased to see their old friend Mary, whom they called "Mountain Woman."

FISH FACT - Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) This species is the official provincial fish of Alberta. It is one of two char species native to Alberta. Bull Trout grow slowly and spawn at a much later age than other trout. When trees are removed along streambeds, the water warms and the habitat of these cold water fish is compromised. By the time Bull Trout spawn they are very large (over 30 cm), and are vulnerable to capture by bears, ospreys and people. For this reason the Alberta Natural Resources Service has a zero possession limit on this fish. All bull trout that are caught must be released.

ECO-TIP - Never feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife endangers their health, alters their natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators.

In 1806, Jaco Finlay built a fur trade supply post on the North Saskatchewan River up stream from the Kootenay Plains.

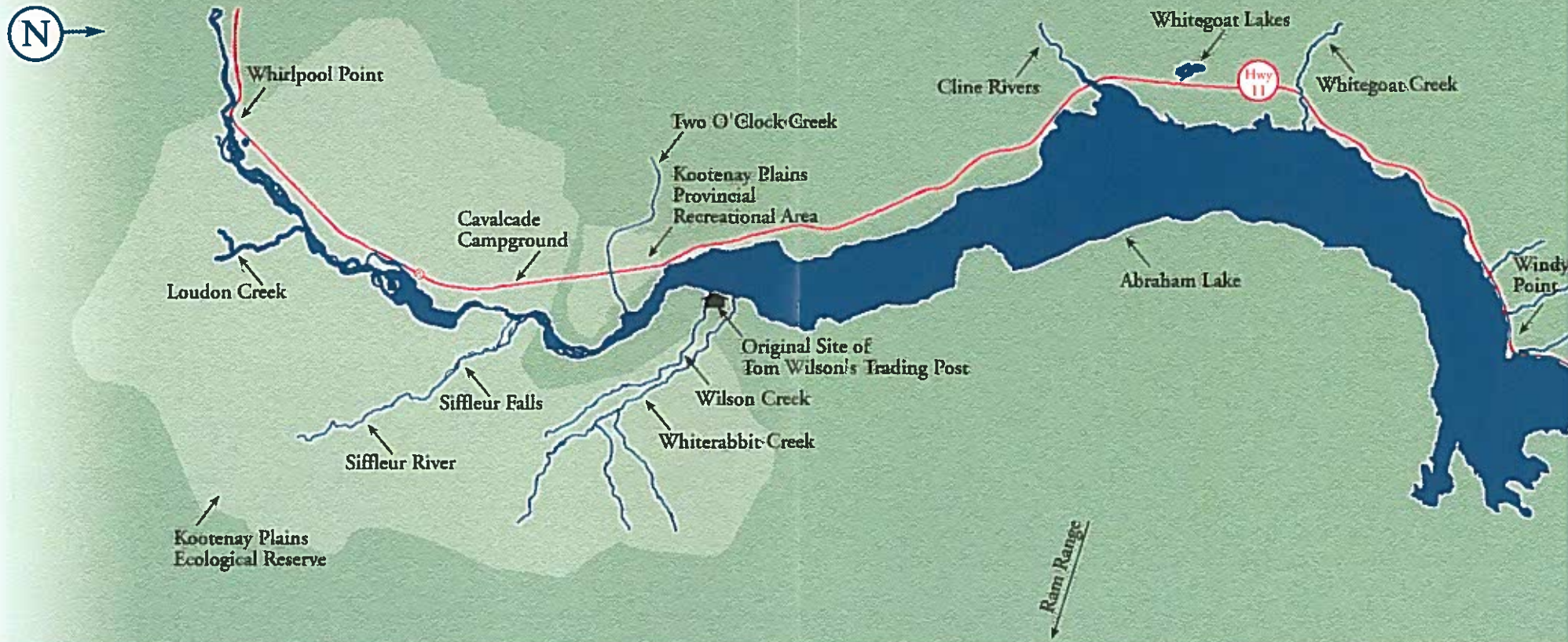
In May of 1807, David Thompson, guided by the Kootenay people, traveled up the North Saskatchewan River valley to Howse Pass. He traveled along the river by pack train and his wife and children went up by canoe. They reached Kootenay Plains on June 3rd, and what is now known as Saskatchewan Crossing, on June 6th.

There was no great gold bonanza on the North Saskatchewan River and no railroad along its upper reaches. This helped preserve the upper reaches of the river in a relatively unspoiled state until the last part of the 20th century.

DID YOU KNOW? The David Thompson Highway (Highway 11) took 17 years to build. It was started in 1958 and opened on August 3, 1975.

DID YOU KNOW? The North Saskatchewan River basin, in this area, provides habitat for every species of trout found in Alberta. Brook, Brown, Cutthroat and Rainbow all range in the main river, along with Rocky Mountain Whitefish. Rare Golden Trout are found in a few lakes in the region.

BIRD FACT - **Mountain Chickadee** (*Poecile gambeli*) is distinguished from the black-capped chickadee by a white line over the eye. It is seen only in the mountain reaches of the river, where it lays its eggs in natural cavities or in abandoned woodpecker holes. The chickadee eats insect eggs, larvae and pupae (insects in the torpid stage), weevils, lice sawflies and many other insects, as well as spiders. It feeds in such large quantities that it is easily one of the most important pest exterminators of the forest. The Mountain Chickadee has adapted to cold environments. The soft down next to the skin provides good insulation, and their outer feathers are tight and waterproof.



1:50,000 Maps: 83 C/1, 83 C/8

PLANT FACT - Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*) is at the northern most part of its range in this region. 35 km upstream from Whirlpool Point, clinging precariously to cracks in a massive riverside rock, grows a Limber Pine estimated to be at least 1000 years old. Limber pine is a five-needled pine, well adapted to dry and windy conditions. It is an important food source for many wildlife species. The grizzly bear raids middens of cones stored by red squirrels. The 'flexilis' part of its scientific name comes from the fact the twigs are flexible enough to be tied in a knot.

ECO-TIP - When constructing and lighting a campfire, always have the wind at your back so that a draft blows through your fire when it is lit.

DID YOU KNOW? The tributary valleys of the upper North Saskatchewan River system are the product of more than 60 million years of the earth's geological history.

CANOE FACT - Boating on Abraham Lake is dangerous and not recommended.

"From a jet-boat within Edmonton City limits we saw three coyotes sauntering along the North Saskatchewan River shore. Upstream from Lake Abraham in the Kootenay Plains, we were transfixed by the sight of Sundance Lodees, having hiked to them a short distance from our voyageur canoes . . ." Charles Labatiuk Outdoor enthusiast and Environmental Engineer

GOLD FACT - Sir James Hector, the geologist & surgeon with the Palliser Expedition (1857-1860), was the first to report gold being recovered from North Saskatchewan River. Gold and Platinum can still be panned in small amounts from the black sand in the North Saskatchewan River but it only occurs in a thin flake form, which floats on water and is difficult to recover.

February 4th, 1811 - Alexander Henry, the younger, mentions Brewster Flats, just west of Forestry Trunk Road 940, as river meadows excellent for pasturing horses. Later, during the settlement era, these flats provided winter range for packhorses for the Brewster and Moore Freighting and Packing Company.

In 1840, about 15 miles west of the present town of Nordegg, Man-Who-Walks-Against-The-Wind (Peter Wesley), later known as He-Who-Provides, was born in this reach. The people who followed him became known as the Wesley Band.

The Big Horn Dam is a 300-foot (91 m) earth-filled dam on the North Saskatchewan River. This hydroelectric dam creates Alberta's longest man-made lake. Abraham Lake is named after a long-time resident of the area, Silas Abraham, a member of the Stony Nation.

In the Abraham Lake reservoir area, ancient Aboriginal campsites are recorded. Early sweat lodge locations are also known from the presence of fire-broken rock piles, stone cairns and fire pits.

"Wild men of the Woods" have been part of Native folklore for centuries. Since the late 19th century there have been over 300 eyewitness reports of the Sasquatch. Sasquatch sightings happen most frequently in the Windy Point area, west of Nordegg, in the upper North Saskatchewan River corridor.

PLANT FACT - Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) When a small insect touches the trigger on a "ready to bloom" Bunchberry flower, the petals bend backward, the anthers spring out, and a load of pollen is flung into the air and onto the insect, which carries the pollen to another flower. The centre of the flower develops into the bright red, bunched berries, which are eaten by deer, grouse and sometimes people. The berries are edible but not very tasty. The tiny seeds, however, are pleasantly crunchy and very much like poppy seeds in flavour.

BIRD FACT - Of the five loon species, the **Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) is the species best known to most of us. When alarmed the loon may slowly sink until only its head and neck are visible above the water. Many bones of the loon's body are solid, rather than hollow like most other birds. This makes it easier for it to dive. Favorite food for loons is fish, frogs, snails, salamanders, and leeches. Their life expectancy is between 15-30 years.

On the east side of Allstones Creek there is a rigorous climb that goes up above the tree-line to spectacular scenery.

From the mouth of Dutch Creek, just downstream from the Bighorn Dam, the river flows in a distinctive wide braided channel until it reaches the 'Gap' in the Brazeau Range.

In 1808, fur trader Duncan McGillibray, of the North West Company, came along this reach on his way to see the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River.

Between 1886 and 1906, Coal Collieries opened in the Nordegg foothills along the North Saskatchewan River.

In 1909, Stanley Washburn, who had explored the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan in 1898, returned after university graduation to discover a great interest in the coal deposits in the area. He met a German mining engineer, Martin Cohn, (later to be known as Martin Nordegg).

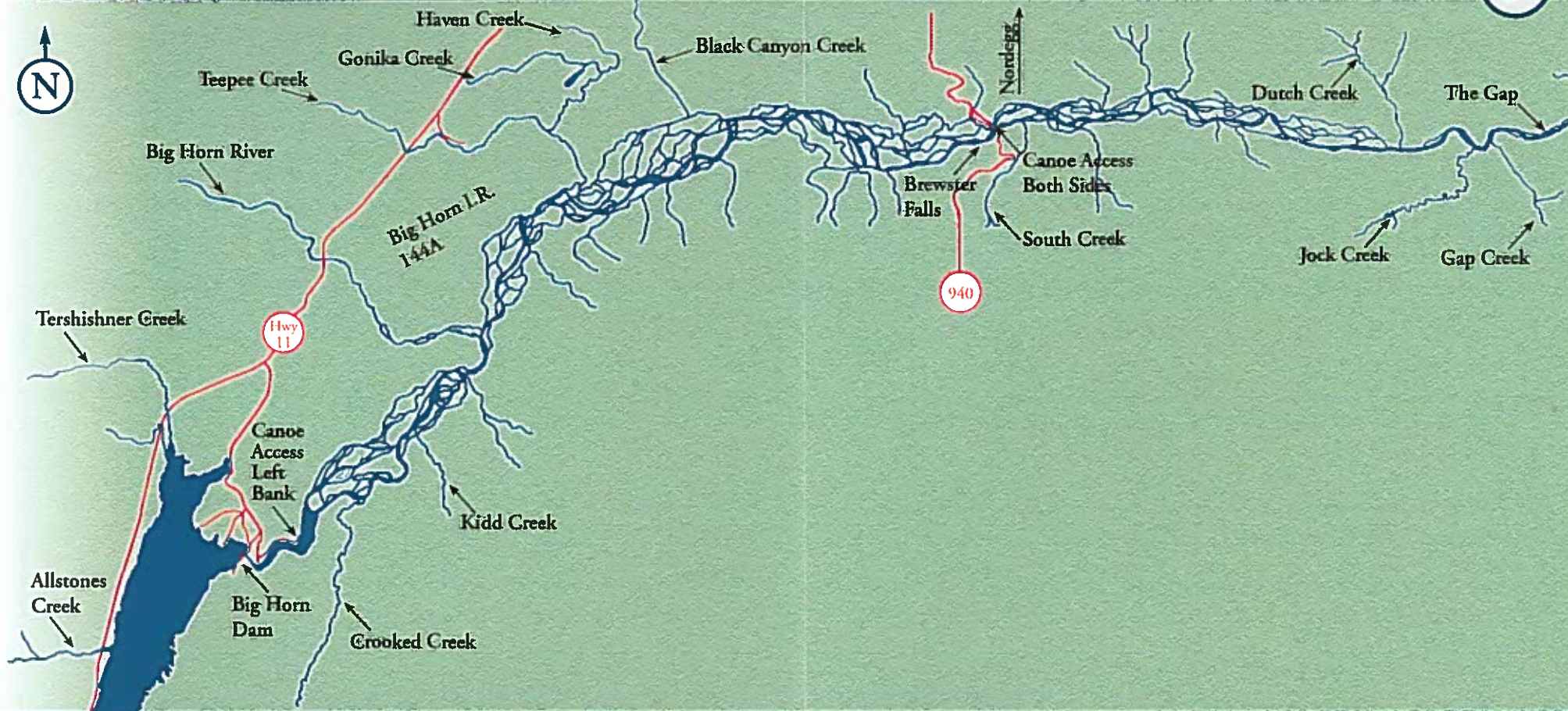
DID YOU KNOW? After the Big Horn Dam, the North Saskatchewan River tributaries triple the volume of water in the river until it reaches Edmonton.

DID YOU KNOW? Gonika and Haven Creeks provide important habitat for Bull Trout and Brook Trout, significant spawning areas for Char and excellent habitat for all stages of salmonid growth.

FISH FACT - Mountain Whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*) have large scales, no spots and small mouths with no teeth. In Alberta, this fish is often called Rocky Mountain Whitefish or (incorrectly) Grayling. They move in large schools from pool to pool. These delicious fish are more adaptable than other cold-water sport fishes. Large hydroelectric reservoirs often provide suitable habitat for them. Mountain Whitefish feed primarily on bottom-dwelling aquatic insects, but will also eat terrestrial insects on the surface, other smaller fish and even fish eggs.

"I'm paddling in my drinking water!"

12 year old James O'Neill
on his first canoe trip, Summer, 2001



1:50,000 Maps: 83 C/8, 82 B/5

ANIMAL FACT - Cougar (*Felis concolor*), also called mountain lion, is, after bears, the largest predator in the North Saskatchewan River watershed. A male can measure up to 2.5 m and weigh up to 90 kg. It hunts large mammals (it can bring down a 600 pound moose) but will also eat mice, rabbits and birds. Black cougars are very rare but there is a recorded sighting in central British Columbia. White cougars are also rare but several have been spotted along the Rocky Mountain eastern slopes. Cougar kittens have black spots and ringed tails until they are about 6 months old. Cougars were once common throughout most of North America but now are most often found in remote areas, especially in the mountains.

CANOE FACT - Overall river Grade I rapids in this reach, with some rapids up to Grade III. From Nordegg to Rocky Mountain House is a very popular run (a 3 - 5 day paddle).

CANOE FACT - Dutch Creek marks the beginning of the "Gap" rapids. Beware of a single large rock in midstream, opposite the mouth of Dutch Creek.

"We're commonly taught that rivers were always Canada's highways, but on the prairies this was only true once the fur trade arrived. For nomadic people of the plains, rivers were as much an obstacle as a source of water. A good ford was a focal point in their lives and travels." Brian Mazza, Editor, The Mountaineer, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

ECO-TIP - Report unique geological, palaeontological and mineralogical occurrences, particularly fossil vertebrate finds, to your nearest museum, university, or the Geological Survey of Canada.

Shunda Creek, flowing out of an area of muskeg and swamp, was favoured by early people for hunting and fishing. This tributary basin used to be rich in moose and deer and it sheltered bison herds in the winter.

Shunda is a Stony word for mire or swamp. This stream has also been called Big Fish Creek or Fishing Creek, and David Thompson called it North Brook.

The stretch of river between Terkishner Creek and Shunda Creek used to be a tough section for water travel, with high canyon walls bracketing fast, rough water. In the winter, when it froze over it did provide an ice highway for dogsled travel.

In June of 1801, James Hughes and David Thompson, of the North West Company, camped at the mouth of the Ram River for a few days. They built a birch canoe to take them upstream. Only Thompson attempted the hazardous journey on the river, which was swollen with rain and melt water. Thompson and his crew traveled on the river for two days before trying to continue over land. They made it as far as Saskatchewan Gap before being stymied by 300 to 500 foot canyon walls and having to turn back.

BIRD FACT - The Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) is the best known wild duck in the world. It is a surface-feeder, a dabbling. It is often seen in the tipped-up position with its head under water and its tail in the air. Emergent weeds, roots of plants that grow in shallows, and small swimming invertebrate animals or larval stages of insects that occur in a muddy bottom, comprise its main food sources, although it will not ignore grain if it is handy. They are sometimes called 'puddle duck' because in the spring they can be found in very small sloughs and pot holes. Mallards eat the roots of wild lilies, reeds and cattails, duckweed, and seeds from wild millet, rice, smartweed and other plants. It also eats insects, including mosquito larvae.

High Quality Pemmican - dried meat strips pounded into powder and mixed with marrow oil and dried berries (usually Saskatoon or Chokecherry).

Rubaboo - chunks of pemmican made into a stew with whatever else was handy (wild onion, meadow lily root, fireweed shoots, cattail corn, seeds) and thickened with flour.

Richeau - fried pemmican slices.

In 1784, at age 14, David Thompson was apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1785 he was given a trunk, one handkerchief, shoes, shirt, a gun, some black powder and a tin cup and sent off to the forts on the Saskatchewan. For the next 28 years he explored and surveyed along the North Saskatchewan River and beyond.

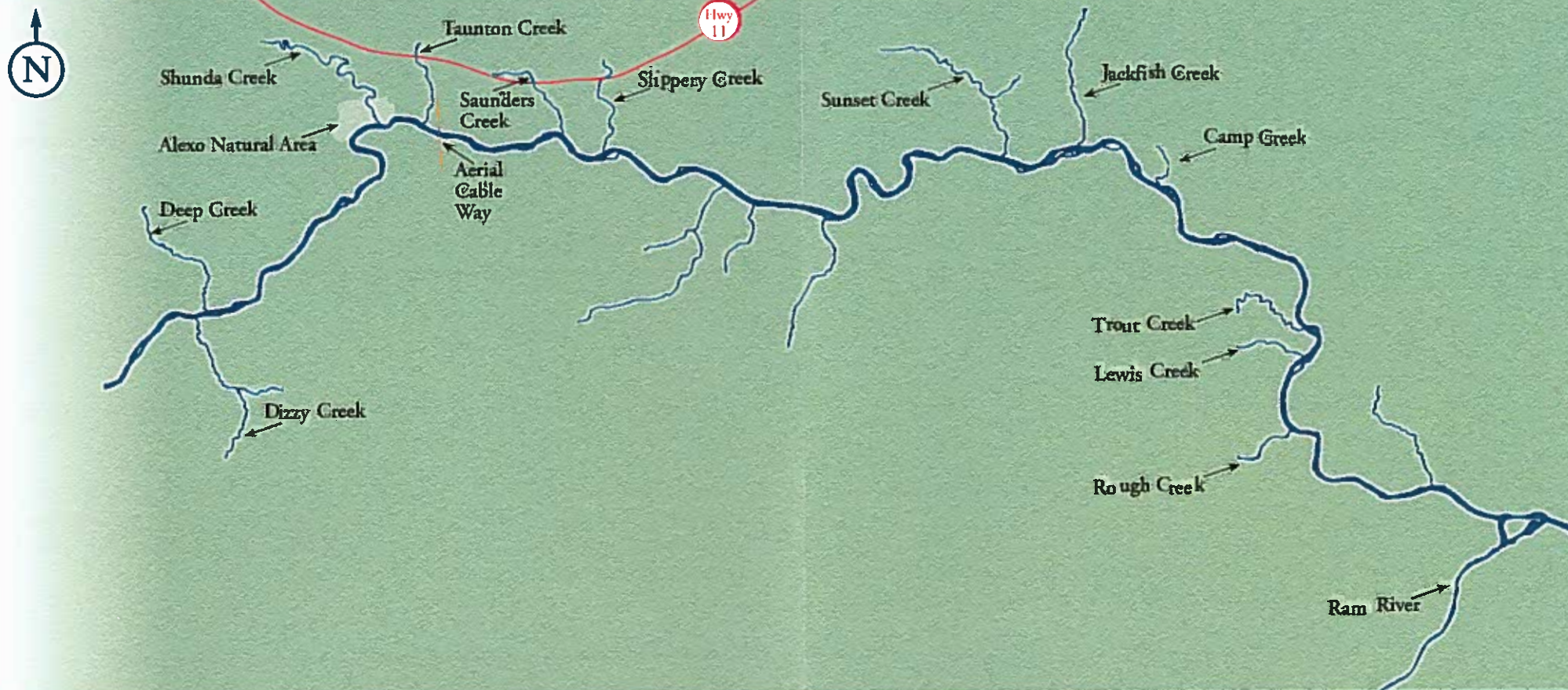
Early people made use of many riverside plants for food and beverages: Cattail – roots, shoots, leaves, pollen and flowering and seed heads; Reeds – shoots, roots and stems; Birch trees – sap, buds and new leaves; Spruce – sap and buds; Berries and berry blossoms; river meadow roots (many from the Lily family).

In the summer of 1800 Duncan McGillivray of the North West Company traveled along this reach from Rocky Mountain House on his way to see the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River.

BUG FACT - Thousands of species of invertebrates live in the North Saskatchewan River. They feed on organic matter in the river, they feed on each other, and they are, in turn, food for fish and birds.

PLANT FACT - A rare moss – (*Miebachhoferia macrocarpa*) was first discovered in the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan River by Thomas Drummond, the assistant naturalist with the second Franklin expedition of 1825 – 1827.

FISH FACT - **Cutthroat Trout** (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) get the name from a bright red-orange streak in the skin-fold under the mouth. These trout have been introduced into the Ram River and a few other small, cold, streams, tributary to the North Saskatchewan River. Cutthroat are a coldwater fish.



1:50,000 Maps: 83 B/5, 83 B/6

PLANT FACT - Wild Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) Compound, fleshy berries grow on thorny branches. They are full of vitamins and minerals as well as fruit sugar. Disturbed areas of the aspen forests along the river are often colonized by wild raspberry. Raspberry leaves were used for centuries, by both Aboriginal peoples and European peasants as both a refreshing and a medicinal tea. A stiff tea makes a great morning gargle. Early pioneers used raspberry syrup on their toothbrushes to reduce tartar on their teeth.

DID YOU KNOW? In bright light or when looking across water or snow, objects look nearer than they actually are. In the shade or at dusk, or when looking across a valley where the colors are all similar, objects look farther away than they actually are.

CANOE FACT - Downstream from the mouth of Shunda Creek, beware of strong eddies and boils after the next left corner.

DID YOU KNOW? Ducks are divided into 4 groups: surface feeding ducks like the Mallard and the Pintail; diving ducks like the Bufflehead and the Lesser Scaup; fishing eating ducks, of which there is only one species in the North Saskatchewan River basin - the Common Merganser, and stiff-tailed ducks like the Ruddy Duck, which can swim with only its head above water.

"Each individual residing within the watershed needs to know how precious this source of water is, and how they can influence its quality for good or for bad."

Dennis Perrin, summer student, 2001 for the NSWA

GOLD FACT - In the 1860's, Tom Clover, coming back from failing to strike it rich in the Cariboo, panned the North Saskatchewan River upstream from Rocky Mountain House and found enough gold to live on.

In 1780, Alec Kneau, one of many free independent traders, came upriver ahead of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company and built a cabin near the confluence of the Clearwater and the North Saskatchewan River.

In September of 1799, John MacDonald of Garth came upriver from Fort Augustus to build Rocky Mountain House Fort for the North West Company.

In 1799, Acton House was built close to the North West Company fort by the Hudson Bay Company.

Near the present Historic Site location there were three HBCo Fort locations, one from 1835 to 1861, one from 1864 to 1868, and the last one from 1868 to 1875

In January 1858, a few members of The Palliser Expedition, including naturalist, geologist and medical doctor James Hector, spent time at Rocky Mountain House. In those days this fort was only operated during the fall and winter. Hector thought this area preferable to Edmonton for settlement since he thought the climate and soil more suitable for human expansion.

In the riverbank strata, upstream from the old fort site, is a light gray stone tinged with yellow and white that fur traders used for sharpening axes and knives.

BIRD FACT - Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) Blue Jays have a variety of calls, from the "unrelenting steel-cold scream," as Thoreau expressed it, to a mellow whistle, "kloo-loo-loo". They belong to the crow family or Corvidae and are very ancient birds. Fossil remains of corvids have been identified from Miocene deposits 25 million years old. They are omnivorous, eating wild fruit, hazelnuts, seeds and insects, and are one of few birds that will eat the tent caterpillar. Their bad reputation as destroyers of the eggs and nestlings of other birds is exaggerated. Blue Jays derive only a small percentage of their food from these sources.

During the first years of the Rocky Mountain forts, about 300 yards below the fort site, coal fell into the river where water undercut the bank. It was easily gathered and used by the blacksmiths, mixed with charcoal from birch and aspen.

In the winter of 1830-31, the Crow ambushed the Peigan on their way to Rocky Mountain House and made off with 2,000 Beaver pelts, which they took south to American Traders.

In the winter of 1870, Father Lacombe traveled upriver by dog team from St. Albert to Rocky Mountain House to preach to the Blackfoot Nation.

In the winter of 1865, George McDougall, a missionary from Victoria Settlement, came up river by dog team to meet Stony Indians. He was able to travel about 60 miles a day.

On November 1810, Alexander Henry the younger had 720 beaver pelts, 33 grizzly pelts, 20 buffalo robes, 300 muskrat and 100 lynx skins in storage.

In the 1850's a Metis hunter, who came to trade at Rocky Mountain House for powder for his old muzzle-loading musket, never traded for any lead shot or ball. He made his own shot by melting down gold nuggets, which he preferred over the more cumbersome ones made from poured lead.

Alexander Henry the younger describes the first set of rapids, west of where the river turns north, as "the first significant interruption in approaching the mountains."

In the 1840's and 1850's William Gladstone was a master York Boat builder at Rocky Mountain House.

PLANT FACT - Labrador Tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*) is usually found in moist coniferous woods near swamps, muskegs and bogs, though it may be found in drier, rocky places in the mountains. The presence of this plant indicates wet, usually acidic organic soils. It makes a very tasty tea and was widely used as a beverage during the fur trade. People have also used it as a substitute for bay leaf in camp cooking, and in marinades for wild meat. Because the leaves are astringent, a cooled tea of them makes an excellent after-facial splash.

"Do you ever sit at "The River's" edge and listen, and wonder at the stories it could tell?" From the Bicentennial theme song of Rocky Mountain House written by Marg French & Lynn Scott



1:50,000 Maps: 83 B/6, 83 B/7

PLANT FACT - Pangman's Pine - 4.5 miles upstream from the mouth of Clearwater River, in 1790, fur trader Peter Pangman carved his name and the date into a mature pine tree. It continued to grow there until it was logged in 1923.

Upstream of Pangman's Pine is fine white clay in the riverbank that was used to whitewash early log structures.

CANOE FACT - About 1 km below the mouth of Cow Creek is the Upper Fisher's Rapids, the most technical rapid to paddle in this reach.

In the 1920's and 30's the Phoenix Lumber Company had a sawmill along the river in the Horburg area, where it employed over 200 workers.

In 1967, The Great Centennial Cross Canada Canoe Race began at Rocky Mountain House, on Thursday, May 25. It was a 3,283-mile journey involving 10 teams and 540 hours of paddling time.

Due to its location on the boundary between Blackfoot and Cree territory, Rocky Mountain House was often the scene of violent battles and was burned to the ground three times. By 1869, the fur trade had diminished and the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned the trading post for the last time.

"Sometimes when I visit the river I can almost hear the strokes of the voyageurs straining against the current, approaching the "Mountain House" - almost hear the faint echo of their singing, "Enroulant ma boule..." I can almost see David Thompson, his wife Charlotte, and his children in a big voyageur canoe anticipating the end of another journey." Pat McDonald, author of "Where the River Brought Them" 2001

ECO-TIP - If you have to pole your canoe with your paddle or hold it steady in one place, save wear on the blade by turning the paddle upside down and pushing with the handle.

In 1751, *Chevalier de Niverville* and 10 men traveled 300 leagues up the Saskatchewan to build *La Jonguiere*, perhaps somewhere in this reach. (One French league is equal to about two and a half English miles.)

In 1751, it is possible that explorers from New France, under the direction of *Le Gardeur de Saint Pierre* established a fort in the vicinity of present day rocky Mountain House. He had been directed by the French government to find a route to the great "Western Sea".

Right into the 1950's, at Rocky Mountain House, people cut river ice to pack into sawdust-filled icehouses that served as big walk-in refrigerators during the summer months.

1944 - the Sunchild Reserve was formed on 12,800 acres, in vicinity of the Baptiste River to accommodate Cree from North Battleford and Pigeon Lake.

Spear points and arrowheads found in this reach date back to 6500-7000 BC.

In the middle of the summer of 1862, 60 men from the group of 'Overlanders' abandoned the notion of heading for the Caribou to look for gold and instead, traveled upstream to the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan to do their prospecting.

BIRD FACT - Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) also known as Whiskey-Jack. Wherever black spruce grows around bogs and muskegs, and wherever white spruce and balsam fir stands are dense, this inquisitive gray jay glides silently from tree to tree. It will eat most anything. Beetles, caterpillars, grubs and ant eggs are favourites. This Jay can pick insects out of the air like a flycatcher. It will eat carrion, its own infertile eggs, berries in season and needles and buds of firs.

PLANT FACT - Common Bearberry; Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) Black Bears eat these in the autumn, but they are especially important to bears in the early spring. The Indigenous peoples used Bearberry alone or with tobacco and other herbs in their ceremonial pipes. It was in this form, that it was called Kinnikinnick. Many people also made a delicious tea from the leaves and berries which was used to treat inflammation of the urinary tract.

ECO-TIP: Winds can blow up suddenly along the river and spread an unattended fire. Before leaving, **MAKE SURE YOUR FIRE IS COMPLETELY OUT!**

Underground tree roots can continue to smolder. Use lots of water on your fire and its surroundings until you can put your hand in the ashes. Remove all traces of the fire and restore rocks and logs to more natural positions.

During the flood of 1915, many settlers along Buster Creek had to move to higher ground. Some houses sat in as much as four feet of water.

Along this reach, watch for Sandhill Cranes, Boreal Owls, Northern Pygmy Owls, Greater Yellowlegs, Western Tanagers and Solitary Sandpipers, as well as Northern Bog Lemmings and Water and Pygmy Shrews.

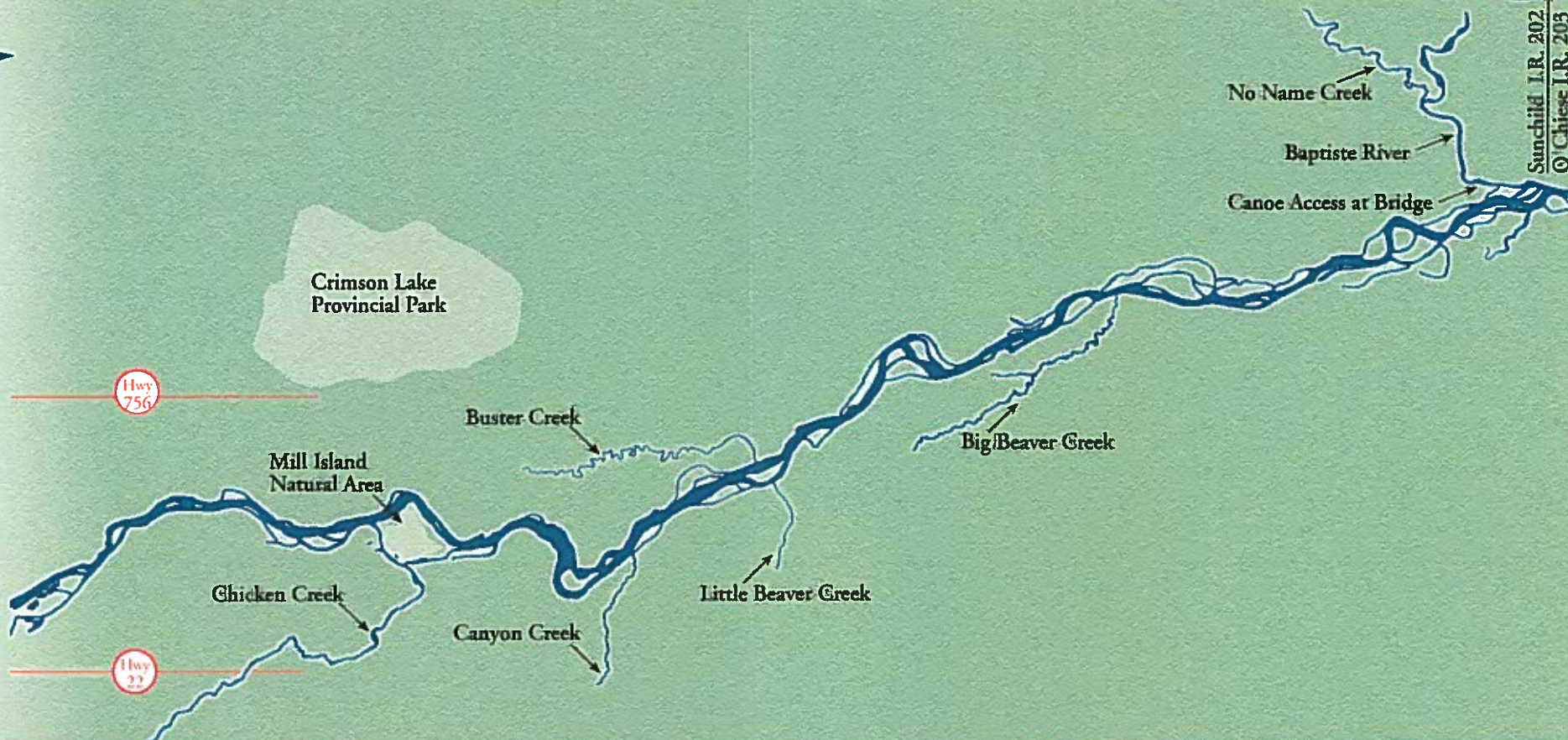
GOLD FACT - In the 1870's news about gold in the West spread rapidly. Gold had been found along the sandbars, especially at the inner curves of the river's meanders, where particles of heavy gold drop down into the gravel. Panners working the river from Rocky Mountain House to east of Edmonton, even as late as the 1950's, were able to make about \$5.00 a day in their search for gold, based on a gold price of \$40.00 per troy ounce. This gold often had traces of iron making it reddish in color.

PLANT FACT - **Lodge Pole Pine** (*Pinus contorta*) also known as black pine, scrub pine and mountain pine, is the official tree of Alberta. It is a short-lived tree, not often reaching 200 years. In early summer, a yellow-green scum is often seen swirling in quiet river pools. This is pine pollen which does not seem to bother people with other pollen allergies. The tough resin that coats the pinecones must be melted by fire to release the seeds. Pine needle tea is rich in Vitamin C, however, evergreen tea must always be taken in moderation and never by women who are pregnant.

FISH FACT - **Fathead Minnow** (*Pimephales promelas*) You will have to look hard in shallow river pools to see one of these tiny fish. They do exist in the North Saskatchewan River but are very rarely sighted.



Sundhill I.R. 202
©/Chiese I.R. 203



1:50,000 Maps: 83 B/7, 83 B/10, 83 B/11

BIRD FACT - Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) used to be widespread in Alberta, throughout the prairies, the aspen parkland and the foothills. By the 1980's loggerhead sightings were rare. Efforts are now being made to increase their population. Because they are a migratory bird, they are protected by a treaty between Canada, the United States and Mexico, which makes it illegal to harm the adults, young, eggs, or nests anywhere in these countries. This helps to insure that these little birds receive protection during their winter vacation.

ANIMAL FACT - Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) has a distinctive, aggressive chatter often heard by river travelers. The smallest of North American tree squirrels, it builds a nest in the branches or cavities of trees or stumps. The red squirrel is able to rotate its hind feet 180 degrees, allowing a good grip on tree trunks where it can cling upside down with ease. Food stored during late summer and fall feeds the squirrel all winter. Spruce and pinecone caches are often found containing hundreds of cones.

CANOE FACT - From Rocky Mountain House to the mouth of the Baptiste River is a pleasant one day paddle.

CANOE FACT - Always stay alert for logjams and sweepers when boating on the river.

"To touch the river is to connect with our past and to glimpse our future. It is to renew an ancient relationship with this fluid, timeless resource and to realize that it may not be as renewable as we think."
Adele Mandryk, Manager, NSWA, summer 2001

ECO-TIP - After a picnic or a camp out along the river, always carry out all of your garbage. This includes orange peel, cigarette butts, half-burnt foil and tins from fire-pits.

GOLD FACT - In 1870, Sir William Francis Butler, on a tour of the North Saskatchewan River, observed a great number of gold prospectors along the Upper North Saskatchewan Corridor. He predicted that gold would soon be found on the North Saskatchewan River and was concerned that Native Peoples would be harmed by a sudden influx of frantic miners.

James Hector, surgeon and geologist to the Palliser Expedition from 1857 to 1860, spent many months on the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan River. He named the Brazeau River to honour Joseph Edward Brazeau, a man from a prominent Creole family in St. Louis, Missouri. Brazeau entered the fur trade in 1830, serving as postmaster and clerk with the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Edmonton, Rocky Mountain House and Jasper House.

Red-haired Joseph Brazeau was a fur trader on the Yellowstone and the Missouri Rivers in the 1830's before joining the Hudson's Bay Company. Of Spanish-French extraction, he looked more like Zorro than a typical Bay man. He roamed the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan River in a long flowing cloak and a flat, black Spanish hat. A linguist who spoke 9 languages, he was a great help to the Palliser Expedition. A flamboyant man, he named his son, George Washington Brazeau.

The O'Chiese Indian Reserve was formed to accommodate the Chipewa People who had been wandering for 50 years.

BIRD FACT - The **Great Horned Owl** (*Bubo virginianus*) rarely bother to build their own nest. They usually usurp a nest of some other raptor, such as a Red-tailed Hawk, or that of a crow or magpie. They will also nest on rock ledges or in crevices of large dead trees. Great Horned Owls are very early nesters, with egg laying and incubation underway well before the snow disappears, sometimes as early as the end of February. Rabbits, grouse, ducks, mice and voles are their main food sources.

ANIMAL FACT - **Wapiti** (*Cervus elaphus*), more commonly known as Elk or as Red Deer in early Canadian fur trade journals, is one of four subspecies found in North America. Before European settlement, over 10 million Elk populated the majority of North America. Elk are mixed feeders, able to switch from grass to forbs to browse, so they have been able to adapt to a wide variety of vegetation profiles.

ECO-TIP - If you are lost, stay in one place; if possible in an open space so that people can find you more easily.

Brazeau Dam: A 400-foot dam on the Brazeau River just southwest of Drayton Valley.

CANOE INFORMATION: Water levels for canoeing and kayaking are good throughout June, July and August, but low levels may pose a problem in the upper and lower reaches of the river towards September.

CAUTION: Many wild plants are edible but be careful:

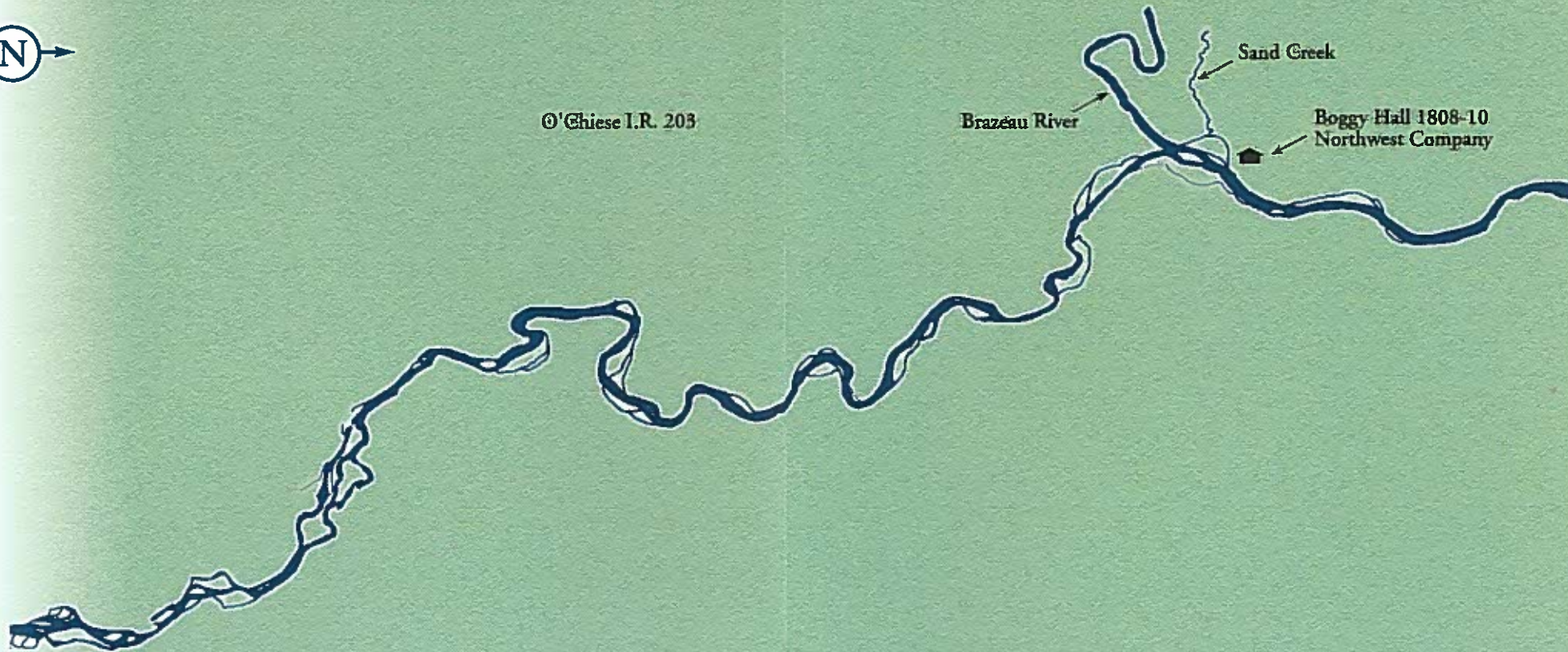
1. Learn how to identify plants correctly.
2. Eat new food in small amounts in case you have an allergic reaction.
3. Do not remove plants from their natural habitat unless they are very abundant and you are in an area where picking is allowed.
4. Never pick plants in National, Provincial or Municipal parks.

The Brazeau reservoir houses the greatest concentration of osprey nests in Alberta — approximately 15. Artificial nesting platforms built on power poles have been placed in the water with the aid of a helicopter.

Because mosses are small they are often overlooked. Recent studies have determined that mosses are the most important factor controlling nutrient flow in the boreal forest. There are about 500 species of moss in Alberta and Saskatchewan; many of them growing along the North Saskatchewan River.

ANIMAL FACT - Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) likes to travel alone. Young bears will follow their mother for about a year then will strike out on their own. These bears have a good sense of smell, excellent hearing, but poor eyesight. When very young, bear cubs cry when afraid and hum when contented. 75 percent of a bear's diet is vegetable matter, 15 percent carrion, and 10 percent insects and small mammals. The only creature that worries a Black Bear is a Grizzly.

PLANT FACT - Golden Rod (*Solidago canadensis*) are cheerful, yellow autumn flowers, growing in small colonies on river flood plains and meadows. The small galls, often found on the stems of some golden rod, house a small grub that makes excellent fish bait. It can be removed in all seasons.



1:50,000 Maps: 83 B/11, 83 B/14

BIRD FACT - Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) In 1987, the peregrine falcon was listed as an "endangered animal" but, by 2000, efforts to increase the population were successful and their status downgraded to "Threatened". Peregrine falcons prefer to nest on cliffs close to riparian or marsh habitats. In recent years they have been sighted in the North Saskatchewan River valleys. During migration, anatum peregrines from Alberta, as well as anatum and tundrius peregrines from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska, gravitate to areas such as Beaverhill Lake where migrating shorebirds and waterfowl are abundant.

PLANT FACT - Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) also known as Serviceberry, Juneberry, Shadberry and Indian Pear. These juicy berries have been picked along the North Saskatchewan River for thousands of years and are still prolific from June until August. These were favoured for making pemmican, as well as a special berry sausage that was stuffed into intestinal casings, boiled and dried for winter. Early peoples also crushed the leaves, mixed them with blood, dried the paste and used the resulting powder to make rich broth in the winter.

DID YOU KNOW? Bull Trout isn't really a trout? Instead, it belongs to a branch of the trout family called "chars," along with the Lake Trout, Brook Trout, and Dolly Varden (which was once thought to be the same species as Bull Trout).

GOLD FACT - In 1872, gold miners ranged up and down the North Saskatchewan River for about 70 miles on either side of Edmonton.

By 1776, the North West Company had begun to travel up the North Saskatchewan River to give competition to the Hudson's Bay Company and in 1798 the XY Company joined the competition. It is impossible to count the number of individual free traders who traded up and down the Saskatchewan in the intervening years until the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

During 1857 – 1858, Captain John Palliser (sent by the British Government), wildlife enthusiast Eugene Bourgeau, geologist James Hector, and astronomer Thomas Blakison traveled the river in this reach on their way to Rocky Mountain House. Their mission was to “explore the country between the west of Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains.”

During the winter of 1907-8, the Edmonton Lumber Company logged in the Rocky Rapids area.

In 1913, upstream from Rocky Rapids, Edmonton Hydro-Electric Power planned to build a dam; but it was funded by a British syndicate and all funding stopped with the outbreak of WWI. The great flood of 1915 wiped out all evidence of dam building.

Drayton Valley was formerly known as Power House.

PLANT FACT - **Balsam Poplar** (*Populus balsamifera*) also known as Black Poplar, has large, resinous buds, which early peoples used to make a gargle tea for sore throats. Bees use the sticky resin to glue together and waterproof their hives. The bud resin mixed with blood makes a permanent black ink, used by early peoples to paint records on hides.

FISH FACT - **Walleye** (*Stizostedion vitreum*) is the largest member of the perch family, with two distinct fins on its back, the first featuring large spines. Sometimes incorrectly called, 'pickerele', the walleye is named for its big eyes. Annual migrations of Walleye to and from spawning grounds can cover thousands of kilometres during the life span of a single fish. The walleye eats other fish and minnows, as well as insects, snails, frogs and small mammals. The northern pike is its chief predator. Walleye are highly valued as a sport and commercial fish in Alberta.

ECO-TIP - Anchor your watercraft from the bow - never the stern!

In the first two decades of the 20th Century, trappers shipped their furs downstream to Edmonton in the spring on rafts. They came back to Rocky Mountain House by train and made rafts to come downstream back home.

Pioneer Newt Dodson and his wife moved back to Virginia in 1922 but moved back to Drayton Valley the next year because, according to Dodson's wife, "*We couldn't settle back there. We had drunk North Saskatchewan River water and could not be satisfied with anything less.*"

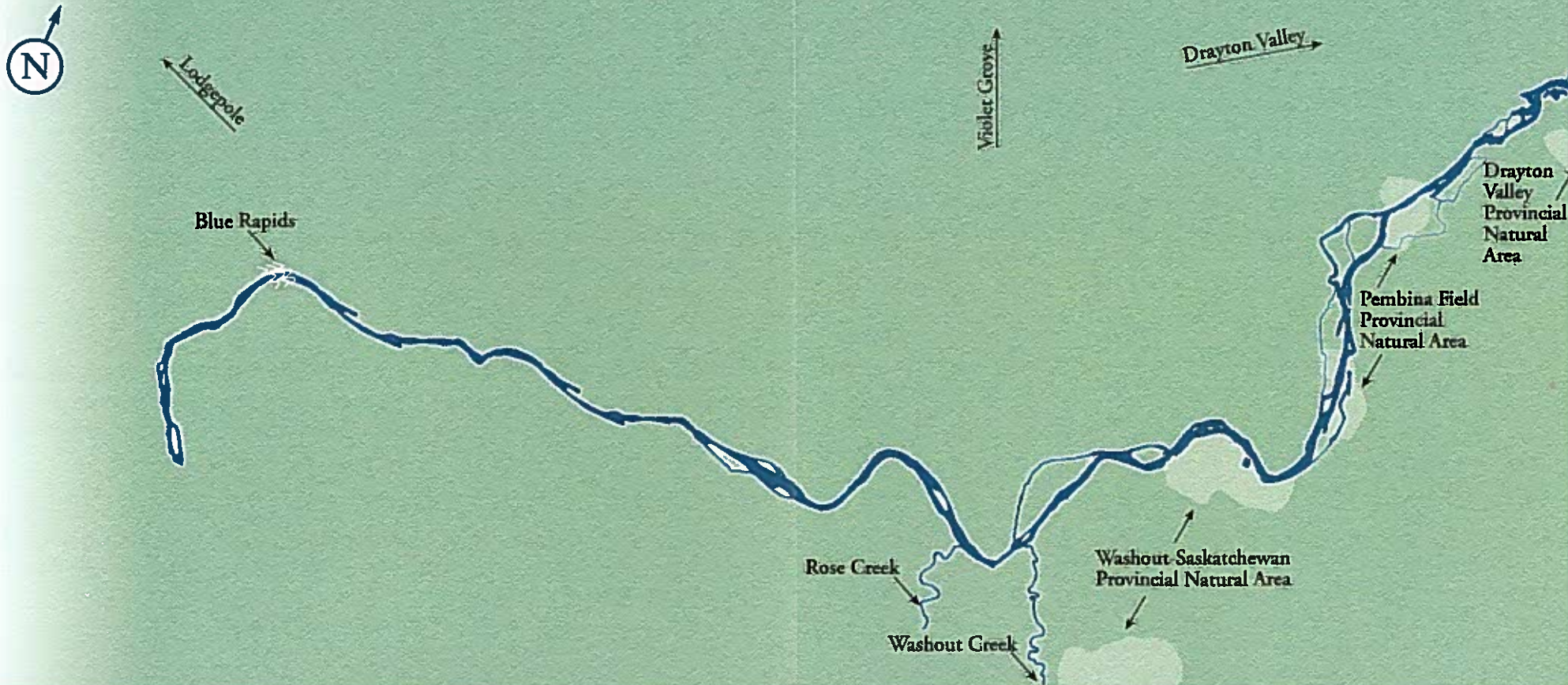
In the 1920's and 30's when people in this reach craved the excitement of the bright lights of Edmonton, three or four would build a raft, drift the one day journey down to Edmonton and after a few days of frolic come back home with the mail carrier.

In the 1930's, near Rocky Rapids, coal from the seams visible in the riverbanks sold for 2.50 a ton and slack for 75 cents a ton. (Slack was the soil removed to get the coal.) It was fed to pigs as a mineral supplement.

GOLD FACT - A Metallic and Industrial Mineral Licence is required to sluice for gold in Alberta rivers and streams. The license costs \$50, is valid for five years and allows an operator to work any one location for a maximum of 14 days at a time. In Alberta, gold is almost always found as tiny particles mixed with streambed deposits of sand and gravel. These deposits are called "placers". A Metallic and Industrial Mineral Lease is required to produce provincially owned gold and other placer minerals from sand and gravel deposits.

ANIMAL FACT - **Northern Long-eared Bat** (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – The North Saskatchewan River is the southern most boundary for this small mammal, found west from Victoria Settlement to Drayton Valley. These bats look much like little brown bats except they have long ears that extend up to 4 mm beyond the end of the nose. When feeding they can take insects right off the surface of leaves or tree branches in mid-flight.

PLANT FACT - **Fireweed** (*Epilobium angustifolium*) is one of the first plants to colonize recent burn sites. The spring shoots were prized by Aboriginal people and by the voyageurs as a nutritious potherb. In fact, the intrepid French Canadian fur traders called it *asperges* (asparagus).



1:50,000 Maps: 83 G/3, 83 G/2

ANIMAL FACT - Red-tailed Chipmunk (*Tamias ruficaudus simulans*) is one of several species of chipmunk that look similar. Chipmunks spotted along the river are most likely this species since they prefer low to mid-elevation coniferous forest locations and riparian communities. They are most often seen at forest edges, where shrubby undergrowth is abundant. Nests are made under fallen logs, in crevices in old stumps or in underground burrows. They eat seeds, berries, leaves and flowers of various forbs, as well as mushrooms. Like other chipmunks, the red-tailed chipmunk is active from April to October; although they sometimes wake up in winter to feed from their food stores.

PLANT FACT - The riparian zone is the green, vegetated corridor adjacent to river and streams. This natural barrier discourages land-based pollution from entering the larger watershed ecosystem. It is a transition area, sometimes called an ecotone. A healthy riparian zone is critical to maintaining biodiversity of the adjoining uplands. The plants and trees in a healthy riparian zone act as a unified filtering system that stops sediment and contaminants, from washing into the river. Plants in the riparian zone stabilizes many different types of soils, reducing erosion. Non-native plant species are not immediately useful when they stray into the riparian zone. They discourage broad plant diversity and seldom provide good food or shelter for birds and wildlife. The 'green' zone and the river belong together. We all suffer when this important relationship is interrupted.

"In this river valley I met my wife; it is here that I work and my children play. We hope that many people get to know the river as we do." Doug Frost, Park Ranger Supervisor

ECO-TIP - When starting a fire NEVER peel live birch bark off trees. The birch tree needs its bark. Use only dead bark from fallen trees or from designated park woodpiles.

Early campsites dating back 5,000 years are found in this reach. Archeological evidence has revealed bison bones and spear and arrow points. A bison backbone with a piece of spear point in it from the Mewassin area dates back 8,000 years.

When the Klondike Days Canoe race was a professional marathon race, from Drayton Valley to Devon (134 km) it was 1 day to 2-day race. A weekend paddler today may expect about a 4-day trip.

Majestic Burtonsville Island was formerly known as Goose Island. It is a big island at the confluence of Shoal Lake Creek and just below the mouth of Tomahawk Creek. It is set aside for educational, recreational and conservation purposes, and has been a Provincial protected area since 1987, conserving a diversity of natural habitat: dogwood, paper birch, balsam poplar, white spruce and a variety of under-story shrubs and plants.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Burtonsville children came down to the river in the spring to watch the big log drives being guided downstream from the Drayton Valley area to Edmonton sawmills. Behind each boom came men and horses on large rafts pitched with tents. These conveyances are called 'wannigans'.

FISH FACT - **Burbot** (*Lota lota*) also known as freshwater cod or ling cod, is a strange-looking but very good tasting fish. It has a slim, dark brown body with smooth skin and flat 'Barbels,' or filaments of tissue, hang from its lower jaw and nostrils. These provide a sense of touch and smell. Burbot spawn under the ice in the winter and early spring, and are extremely productive. Large females can lay up to one million eggs.

PLANT FACT - **Wild Strawberry** (*Fragaria virginiana*) used to be so abundant that early families dried enough to eat every week during the winter. Fresh, they have more Vitamin C than an equal weight of oranges. The garden strawberry was developed in France from the North American wild strawberry and a wild variety from Chile.

The sternwheeler, S. S. Strathcona, was used as a wannigan in its waning years. It made its last trip in this reach in 1914, taking the wrong channel around an island south of Mewassin and lodging in a gravel bar.

In the spring of 1926, Dried Seneca root from riverside meadows brought sixty-five cents a pound. These were traded by both Aboriginal people and early settlers to merchants in Edmonton in exchange for groceries.

In the 1930's farmers, for personal use, mined coal outcroppings along the river in the Burtonsville area. A prominent outcropping along a high riverbank, called the 'Coal Arch', was a landmark for early river travelers.

Good places to put in canoes along this reach:

East of Berrymoor Bridge #759 - Old ferry Access - either bank.

Burtonsville Island Natural Area - left bank (not the best access)

FROG FACT - In January 1997 the **Northern Leopard Frog** (*Rana pipiens*) became legally protected as an "endangered" species under the Alberta Wildlife Act. It is apparently now absent from the entire North Saskatchewan River drainage system. This beautiful frog requires a mosaic of habitats in order to go through its life cycle. Usually it needs separate sites for breeding and for over-wintering. It used to be common in this reach.

ANIMAL FACT - **Wolverine** or **glutton** (*Gulo gulo*) are at home in several different ecozones, including the boreal forest, tundra, and subalpine regions. The fur consists of thick under-fur from which long straight guard hairs stick out. The structure of the guard hairs makes them exceptional at keeping the fur frost-free and for this reason, early peoples favoured Wolverine fur for trimming winter hoods.

"Burtonsville Island is a place to share, to share the love of the outdoors, to share the skills of camp life. to share a place of quiet and beauty." Mark Lund, Canoeist, September 2001



1:50,000 Maps: 83 G/2, 83 G/7, 82 G/8

PLANT FACT - Wild Mint (*Mentha arvensis*) is found all along the river, usually in wetlands around the mouths of the creeks and streams that flow into the North Saskatchewan River. Early people make good use of this plant in tea, soup and to flavour pemmican and other dried meat mixtures. Mint contains menthol, which is an antibacterial agent. Applied externally, it can relieve minor pain, cool the skin, and increase blood flow to the area. Internally, it is often used against indigestion.

ECO-TIP - Wood that crumbles is rotten and will not burn well. Do not use it in your campfire. It can smolder long after you are gone and increase the risk of forest fire.

The North West Company Quagmire House and the Hudson's Bay Company Bucklake House icons are in the general area thought to be the position of these early 19th Century forts. Bucklake House was built specifically for trading with the Assiniboine people.

From Drayton Valley to Devon is a pleasant 4 day paddle.

"I remember, when I first came to Edmonton, being immediately impacted by the river and its park's system. I was so grateful to find respite from the city, to see and to be near moving water."
 Sharon Willianen, NSWA Manager, 2002

ECO-TIP - When walking off the established pathways along the river, step gently; trampling damages ground flora, reduces soil porosity and exposes the area to erosion. Your footprint makes a difference.

GOLD FACT - In 1872, people who panned for gold on the North Saskatchewan River sand bars made about four dollars a day, but since five dollars a day was general wages at that time, there were only fifteen miners on the river.

1810 - Upper White Earth Fort was built on the north bank of the river between two creeks emptying into the river at the Devil's Elbow, NE 30-51-2-W5. There was another fort at the mouth of White Whale Creek, also known as Wabamun Creek.

Before bridges and roads were constructed, supplies came upriver to this reach on the stern-wheeler, the S. S. Minnow.

In 1907-08, there was a rock quarry a few miles west of Lamoreaux Landing. The stone was floated downstream to Edmonton on one of John Walter's scows.

In the 1930's, people who panned for gold in this reach could exchange the dust for groceries at Percy Faulk's in Duffield, at T. J. Hardwick's in Stony Plain and at Adrian Tuttle's at Genesee.

One mile downstream from the Genesee Ferry site is the old site of Fraser's Dump, where logs were piled up all winter until spring when they were rolled into the water to float downstream to the sawmills in Edmonton.

ANIMAL FACT - **White-tailed Jack Rabbit** (*Lepus townsendii*) often sighted in the North Saskatchewan River Valley from The Forks in Saskatchewan to just west of Edmonton, is at the most northern part of its territory. This 'rabbit' is actually a hare, having longer hind legs and ears than the cottontail. In summer, the fur is a mottled brownish-grey and in winter, the coat changes to pure white, except for black tips on the ears.

ANIMAL FACT - **Tiger Salamander** (*Ambystoma tigrinum melanostictum*) is a boreal forest dweller, keeping to moist areas near water. It is the most widespread salamander species in North America. It often uses abandoned burrows to over-winter. Feeding on invertebrates, tadpoles and small fish, it is most often spotted in the evening after a rain or during spring migration.

In 1913, Doug McDougall and four men in a rowboat came down river towards Lamourie's Landing (Holborn Ferry site). Near the mouth of Strawberry Creek they had to turn around and pole the boat back upstream to aid with a 60-foot scow that had hit a rock and tipped into the river. They built a small pole raft to get the cook from the scow back to Edmonton.

In the flood of 1915, the river was four miles wide on the flats over to Genesee Hills.

In 1925, the last log drive came downstream through this reach on its way to Edmonton.

In the early 1900's, anyone mining coal was supposed to register under the Coal Mines Regulation Act but because coal was visible all along the riverbanks, local people easily removed it with sledgehammers, shovels and pails. During the hard times of the 1920's and 30's this free coal warmed many homesteads.

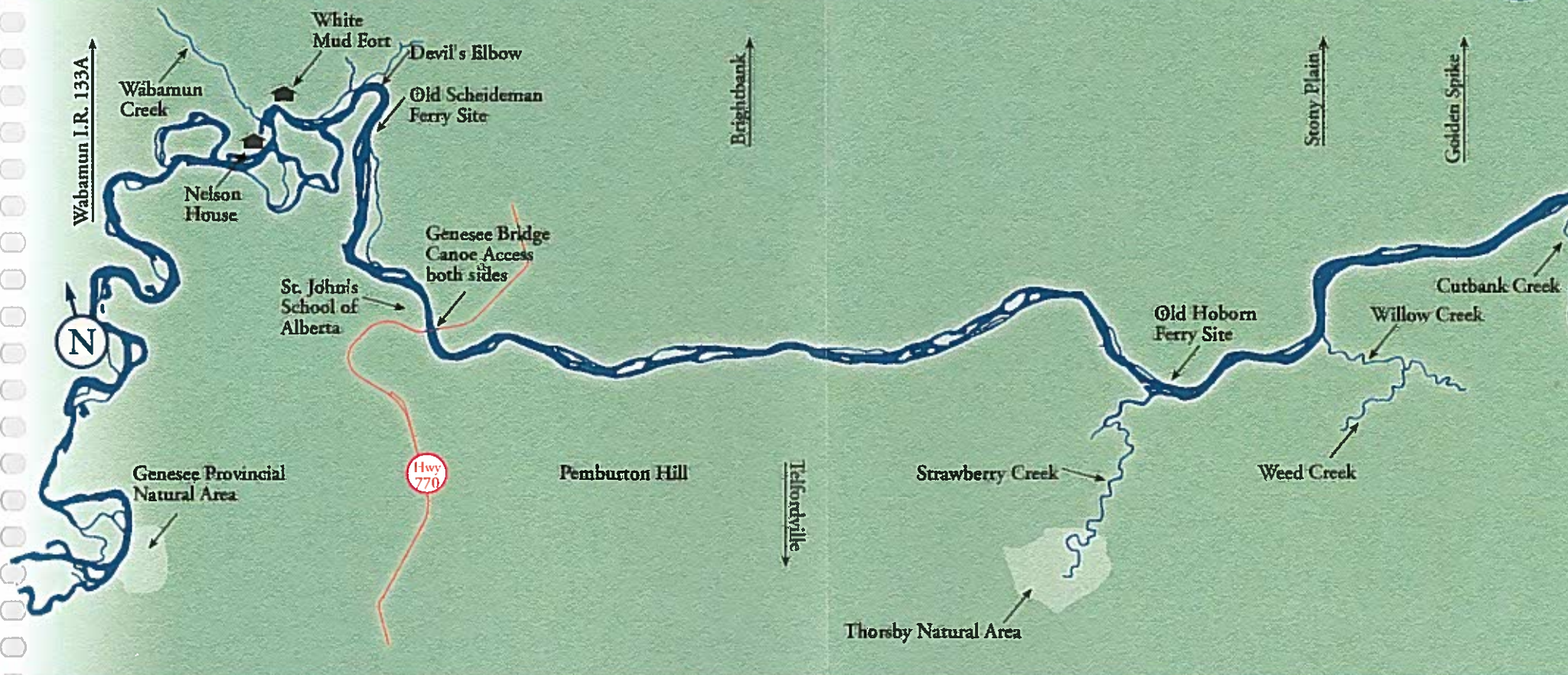
Sometimes sawmills in this reach would saw logs into lumber in the winter, pile it along the river and hire someone to raft it downstream to Edmonton in the spring. The contractor would be docked for any lumber spoiled by water, fire or horse manure. (There was always a fireplace on the raft.)

Lumber rafts could be as long as 260 feet, complete with a stall for two horses and a fireplace made of flat river rocks and sand. From within this reach, to Edmonton, it was about a two-day journey if nothing went wrong.

David Thompson often stopped at Quagmire House, on the left bank of the river about 1.5 km upstream from the Barrymore Ferry. He called it 'Fort Muskey'.

PLANT FACT - Beebalm (*Monarda fistulosa*), also known as wild bergamot, horse mint, and Oswego tea, is the unique flavour found in Earl Grey Tea. It gets the 1st part of its scientific name from Nicholas Monardes, a Spanish doctor who wrote about plants from the 'New World' in the 1600's. Early peoples chewed this plant raw and made tea from it. They also dried and powdered it for use as perfume. The oldest leaves are the strongest and make the best tea.

BIRD FACT - Great Grey Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) is the largest of all the owls in Alberta (75 cm, 29 in. long). They live in mixed wood forests where they usually nest in trees, often in discarded nests built by other large birds. Here they lay from 2 to 5 eggs. The Great Grey Owl hunts during early mornings and late evenings, swooping down from a tree branch to catch small mammals and birds.



1:50,000 Maps: 83 G/8, 83 H/5

PLANT FACT - Wolf Willow (*Elaeagnus commutata*) is a common river-side shrub, often called silver berry due to its pale, silvery green, dusty berries. The fruit is mealy and dry but completely edible. It was used by early people in soup and stew and sometimes preserved in fat as a winter treat. The large, oval, stony seed has an attractive striped pattern that can be emphasized by soaking it in bleach water. In early times it was prized for making necklaces and decorating clothing.

Nelson House was also known as Upper White Earth House. It and White Mud Fort operated during the early 19th Century.

BIRD FACT - Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) nests in colonies on big lakes. In this reach, Lake Wabamun is a nationally important nesting area for these birds. Grebes are ancient diving birds, rarely flying except to migrate. They build floating nests in stands of emergent aquatic plants in vast colonies that used to number in the thousands.

Place names change over time; in some early documents Wabamun Creek is known as Whitewater Creek or Whitewhale Creek. The Hoborn Ferry site was once known as Lamareaux Landing.

"Growing up on the river near Fulton Creek meant hiking, exploring islands, building tree forts and playing shinny hockey in the winter on a long ice channel between a big sand bar and the bank."

Jim Eckert, Edmonton City Employee

ECO-TIP - Emissions from propane and kerosene burners cause ecological damage to sensitive forest plants, especially lichens. Keep portable BBQ's away from trees and shrubs and use them sparingly in the wilderness.

Between 1796 and 1799, over 42,000 Made Beaver (1 Made Beaver/MB was equivalent to 1 beaver pelt or other fur in beaver pelt equivalencies) were shipped east from Fort Edmonton.

Upstream from the E.L. Smith Water Treatment facility and across from the Windemere Golf Course is Big Island. "Big Island is 16 mi. up the river (from Edmonton), one of a series in a twisting stream between Edmonton and Devon. There's Midnight Island, Fraser's Island and Big Island...70 acres - 12 city blocks...Just before WWII there was still a grove of 80' poplar growing there." Tony Cashman in "The Best Edmonton Stories".

During the 1880's and 90's Big Island was the main picnic excursion site from Edmonton. Families would plan to spend the whole day and half the night there. Children and toddlers would be put to sleep on coats and blankets on the upper deck of the sternwheeler and the adults would continue their festivities into the night.

In 1895 Rose Hill School was build out of logs on the rose covered banks of Conjuring Creek.

In the first decade of the 20th century, a settler living up Conjuring Creek needed a cow; so he walked seven miles downstream to the North Saskatchewan River every day and washed gold until he had enough money to buy the cow.

During the 1920's there were plans to build a prison on Big Island.

FISH FACT - **Silver Redhorse**, (*Moxostoma anisurum*) in Alberta, are found only on the North Saskatchewan River between Devon and the mouth of the Sturgeon River and on the South Saskatchewan near Medicine Hat.

ANIMAL FACT - **Muskrat** (*Ondatra zibethicus*) are aquatic rodents about 60 cm long and weighing about 1.5 kg. Good swimmers, they can travel 90 metres underwater and stay submerged for more than 15 minutes. They build houses out of bulrushes, weeds and mud, with separate sleeping platforms for each member of the family. They also dig dens in the riverbank with the entrance underwater. They are aggressive creatures, even attacking humans without provocation. They feed on freshwater mussels, frogs and other aquatic creatures.

During the 1950's, Edmonton drilled for oil on Big Island but came up dry.

The North Saskatchewan River winds through Edmonton for 48 Km along the largest and most continuous area of urban parkland in North America, encompassing 7400 hectares and 160 km of trails along the river.

Edmonton's first water treatment plant was built in 1903 and connected to a water distribution system. This system eventually replaced the horse drawn wagons and carried water directly into homes in Edmonton on the north side of the river and to Strathcona homes on the south side.

About 6800 years ago, Mount Mazama (now Crater Lake in Oregon) exploded. The whole top of the mountain blew off sending ash into Central and Southern Alberta. This ash is still visible as a pale beige streak in the riverbank strata in Edmonton.

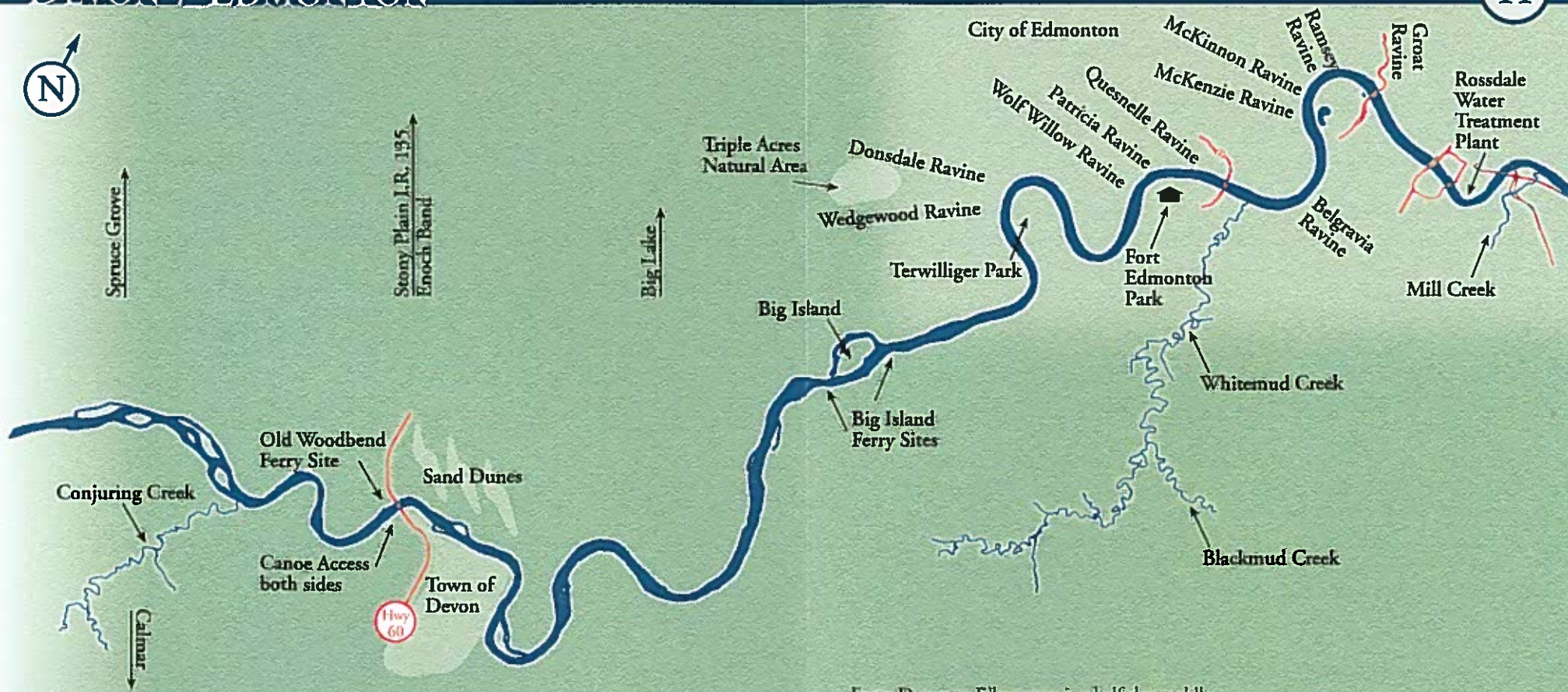
"Tis a river that literally loiters over golden sands and anyone may garner the grains for the mere sifting of them." Emily Murphy in her book "Janey Canuck in the West" describing the view from the hill that overlooks Clover Bar.

Southwest of Terwilliger Park is a noll called Rabbit Hill. It was created about 12,000 years ago by meltwater from receding glaciers. Artifacts dating back 5,000 years have been found here.

In 1812, at Fort Edmonton, along with the regular load of fur and pemmican shipped in the fall was 1296 swanskins and 450 hundred weight of swan quills.

BIRD FACT - Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) also known as the fish hawk, arrives in Alberta in late April and begins its way back to the wintering grounds in Central America in October. Feeding exclusively on fish, it dives from 15 to 60 m (50 to 200 ft.) above the water and often disappears right under the surface of the water. It builds large sprawling nests are built on the tops of tall dead trees, telephone poles, or cliffs overlooking water. Like eagles, the osprey returns to the same nest every year each time building it a little bigger.

"Being a fisheries biologist and having surveyed many urban streams across Canada, I am constantly impressed with the degree to which Edmontonians have preserved the river valley for both nature and human uses." Jan den Dulk, B.Sc., R.P. Bio. Fisheries Biologist



From Devon to Edmonton is a half-day paddle.

1:50,000 Maps: 83 H/5, 83 H/12, 83 H/11

ANIMAL FACT - Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) is black with bright yellow stripes, usually about 60 to 80 cm and rarely over 135 cm long. It eats earthworms, frogs, fish, and sometimes mice. In the fall it migrates to cracks or fissures (often in the riverbank) beneath the frost line, where it hibernates with thousands of other garter snakes. The young are born live, usually 20 to 40 to a litter, but there is a record of 98 born at one time. The garter snake smells with its tongue, which is why it must continually flick it in and out.

PLANT FACT - Tinder Fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) is usually found on dead or wounded trees, especially birch and aspen. It looks like a half-round awning, pale gray or brown and sometimes several will be stacked one upon another. These make great tinder for fire starting as well as an excellent smudge for repelling mosquitoes and flies.

6800 years ago, Mount Mazama, in what is now southwest Oregon, erupted, dispersing over 70 cubic km of debris over the landscape as far away as present day Edmonton. This volcanic ash layer can be seen in the North Saskatchewan River banks especially in the south bank in the vicinity of the High Level Bridge. It is pinkish-white and gritty with crushed volcanic glass.

DID YOU KNOW? The very slippery mud on some of the river walking trails is actually very ancient volcanic ash. Today we call it bentonite clay and it is used in drilling mud in the oil industry. In the early days of Fort Edmonton, people used this gooey mud like soap for washing heavy woolen trade blankets.

DID YOU KNOW? The sand dunes north of Devon were formed by fierce northwest winds sweeping off the retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age.

"I find it amazing that water so milky at its source arrives downstream brown and silty." Abigail Vandberghe, summer student, NSWA, 2001

ECO-TIP - Riverbanks and gravel bars may be nesting sites for shorebirds or may be near spawning areas for fish. Please go gently along the river.

Early Albertan toolmakers camped regularly in Rundle park as early as 5,000 years ago, manufacturing stone tools from quartzite. This river rock is harder than steel.

Aboriginal peoples built canoes at "Birch Hills" near the mouth of the Sturgeon River long before Anthony Henday stopped there in 1755, on his way back to York Factory.

March 1755, Anthony Henday and his crew crossed the river to the north shore from near the mouth of Old Man Creek to harvest birch rind to build canoes to carry him and his harvest of furs downstream to the Hudson's Bay.

In 1760, Henday left this reach with 61 canoes laden with fur to take back to York Factory.

Francois and Joseph Lamoureux settled on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River near the present site of Fort Saskatchewan in 1872.

In 1872, the Flemming scientific expedition crossed "Sturgeon Creek" and noted that twenty-five pound fish were often caught here.

In 1875, the North West Mounted Police built a fort on the south side of the river.

ANIMAL FACT - Porcupine (*Erethizone dorsatum*) are heavy lumbering creatures, large males weighing up to 18 kg. The back and tail are covered with as many as 30,000 thick, sharp, barbed quills, interspersed among stiff guard hairs and soft under-fur. Each modified hair is tipped with a microscopic hook that continually drives deeper into the muscle of predators. "Porkies" are vegetarian, living on evergreen needles and the cambium layer and inner bark of trees in the winter. In the spring and summer, they eat buds, roots, stems, leaves, flowers, berries, and nuts. They will also chew on discarded bones and antlers for trace minerals.

"June 29, 1876, Colonel MacLeod asked for \$1,000 to complete Fort Saskatchewan." According to Col. Greisbah, "At first the fort was commonly called Sturgeon Creek Post, but soon received the more appropriate title of Fort Saskatchewan."

By 1885, Fort Saskatchewan became the headquarters of 'G' Division of the North West Mounted Police.

During the building of the NWMP barracks, the men lived on pemmican and mountain trout, the smallest fish weighing over five pounds and many weighing over twelve pounds.

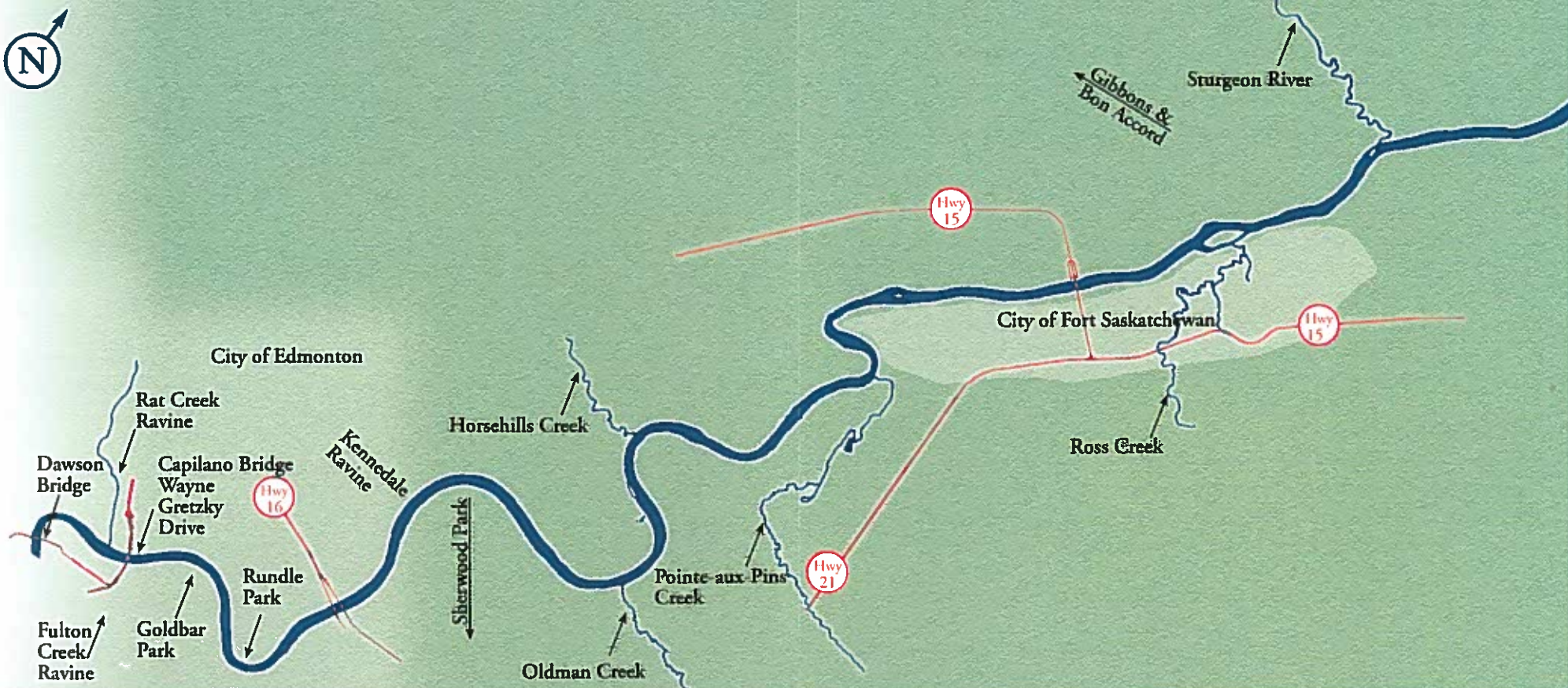
On Victoria day at Fort Saskatchewan, in 1911, the celebrated Aboriginal runner from Ontario, Tom Longboat came to race. That day a young Cree runner, Alex Decoteau, from the Edmonton City Police Force, raced against him. Decoteau defeated the Mohawk champion and went on to become part of the Canadian Olympic team in 1912.

Lord and Lady Rodney farmed just across the river from Fort Saskatchewan from 1919 until their retirement in 1960. Lady Rodney knew little of cooking, farming or housekeeping when she and her husband came to settle on land just east of Lamoureux near the site of old Fort Augustus. They spent their first winter in a tent, and daughter Diana wrote later that they held nightly bed bug spearing competitions using hatpins.

The original Gaol Cemetery was situated on land required for the construction of Highway 15 and a new bridge over the North Saskatchewan River. Remains from eighteen burials were moved to a site immediately east of and overlooking the new approach to Fort Saskatchewan.

ANIMAL FACT - Cottontail Rabbits (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*) are smaller than hares, seldom weighing more than about two and half pounds. Cottontail fur is grizzled brown on top, grey on the sides and rump, and white underneath. They do not change color in winter. These rabbits may breed three or more times a year in coulees and river bottoms where they prefer to live. The cottontail is the only species of wild rabbit found in Alberta.

ANIMAL FACT - Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) are slightly larger than white-tailed deer; bucks weighing about 100 kg (220 lb). They have long, mule-like ears and are more inquisitive than their shy, white-tailed cousins. Deer spotted drinking at the river are most often 'mulies'. They run with a springy four-footed bound called stotting. It looks like they are using pogo sticks.



1:50,000 Maps: 83 H/11, 83 H/14

BIRD FACT - the **Great Blue Heron** (*Ardea herodias*), is magnificent, standing at least 1 m (3 ft) high. In flight, the neck is bent and the head rests back against the shoulders. It feeds on small fish, shellfish, insects, rodents, amphibians (mostly frogs), reptiles, and sometimes, small birds. The Great Blue Heron has a fascinating fishing technique. It stands still, its neck stretched out about 45 degrees to the water, only its head and eyes moving. When a meal approaches it folds its neck back, moves one leg towards the prey and suddenly its head plunges into the water. It scoops up the catch, flips it quickly so that it can be swallowed headfirst.

PLANT FACT - **White Spruce** (*Picea glauca*) and **Black Spruce** (*Picea mariana*) are often mistaken, one for the other. White spruce are triangular shaped like traditional Christmas trees and black spruce are tall and slender. White spruce has long, sharp needles with a strong spruce fragrance and Black spruce has short, blunt needles with a more subtle smell. The hardened pitch from either tree can be chewed as a refreshing campers gum; its antiseptic properties is an added benefit. Fur traders often made spruce beer from spruce buds to augment their meager supplies of rum and other spirits. Spruce buds are very high in vitamin C and have a faint, but pleasant citrus taste in the spring.

From Fort Saskatchewan to Victoria Settlement is a 3 day paddle.

ECO-TIP - "Running a two-stroke motor for two hours generates the same amount of air pollution as driving from Vancouver to Montreal and back!" Warren Bell from "Fun on the Water...At What Cost?"

DID YOU KNOW? Although fur trade journals do not suggest that river clams were eaten, archeological evidence suggests that clams were collected and used for something at the early forts.

In 1907, the old Victoria Ferry was moved to near the post office settlement of Eldorena. It was often referred to as the Skaro Ferry. There it operated until 1967.

Prior to the advent of the ferry, John Domsy on the east bank of the river and Nick Kuchmak on the west side of the river, cooperated in the operation of a raft ferry which was attached to a cable strung across the river and pulled across by their oxen.

In the great flood of 1915, whole houses that had floated from Edmonton were sighted and some of them retrieved in this reach.

In earlier times when there were no bridges, people had to be very careful crossing on river ice in early spring and late fall. Every river crossing had at least two long thick poles on each bank. People would position the poles parallel to each other across the ice and walk between the poles moving them as they went along.

ANIMAL FACT - The Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) was the first natural, river-related resource to be exploited by Europeans. The beaver had become almost extinct by 1930, but conservation measures have restored their population to relatively healthy levels. They are now commonly seen along the river even in the middle of urban areas. Beavers build strong lodges from sticks and caked mud into which even black bears have trouble breaking.

BIRD FACT - Cliff Swallow (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*) is distinguished from other swallows by its blunt-ended tail. Like the barn swallow it builds mud nests, but in colonies around bridges and river cliffs that are considerably larger than those of its pointed tailed cousin. Its diet consists mainly of flying insects, which it catches on the wing, although it will sometime eat berries. It also drinks on the wing. The Cliff Swallow is the legendary species that returns every spring to the Capistrano mission in California.

Heavy river clay mixed with straw and manure made a strong, smooth plaster for both exterior and interior walls of log homes.

In 1887, settlers from England, France, Poland and the Ukraine created the small settlement of Eldorena.

Two miles south and about one mile west of Eldorena, along the old Victoria Trail, is the Sekersky Archeological site, excavated in 1956, revealing evidence of human activity along the river about 10,000 B. P.(before present)

Ukrainian fry bread (po-lon-net-see) was often cooked over campfires beside the river while people waited for the ferry.

In January 1917, on Epiphany Day, Father Ruh performed the ceremony of blessing the water right on the river, near Eldorena.

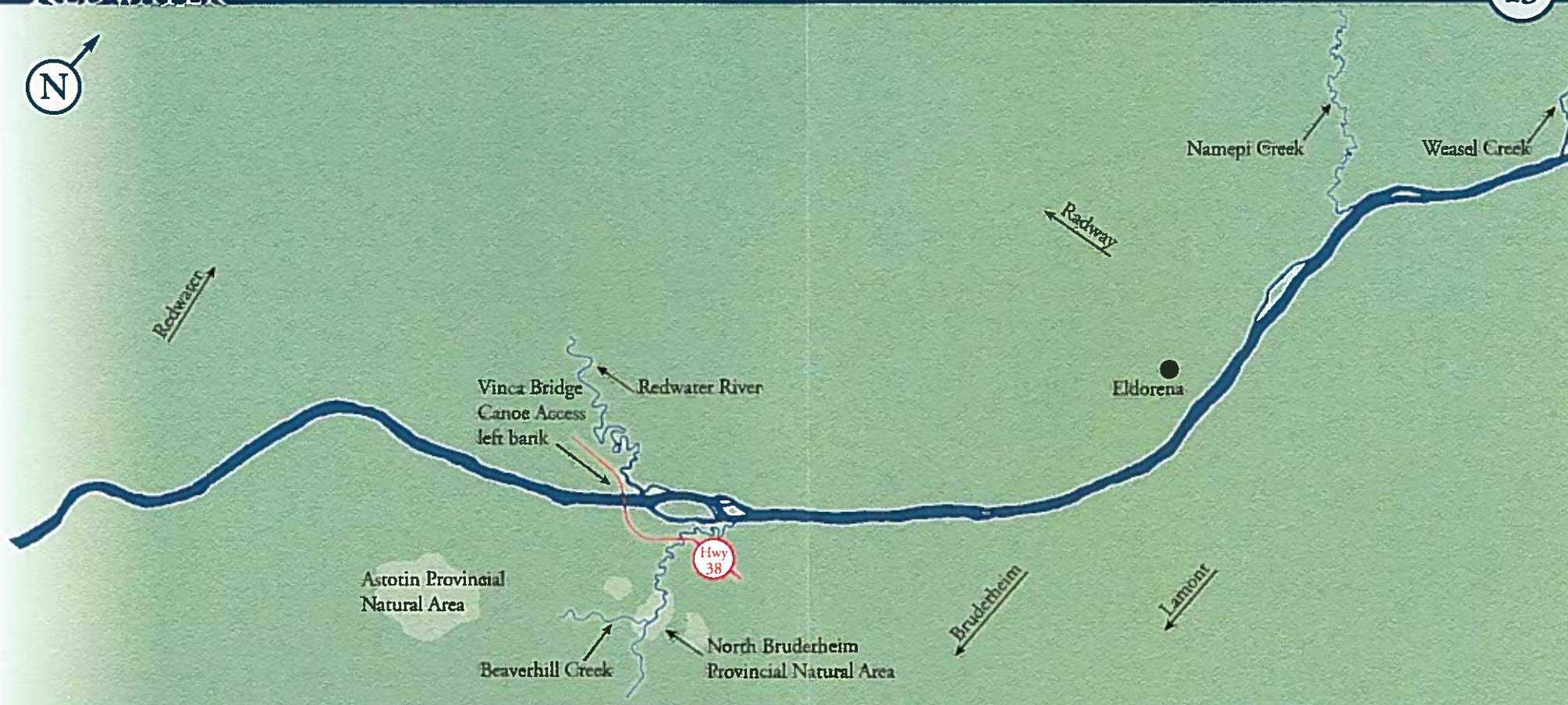
In the winter of 1960, a meteorite fell in the vicinity of Bruderhiem. It is a stony meteorite, a chondrite. It is now in the University of Alberta collection.

DID YOU KNOW? A fur trade labourer had to eat at least eight pounds of meat a day, but could work just as well on a pound to a pound and a half of pemmican a day.

FISH FACT - Sauger (*Stizostedion canadense*) is a member of the perch family. It is golden olive on the back, with silver-yellow sides and a white underside. It has distinct rows of spots on its dorsal fins, and usually three or four dusky vertical bars on its body. This species is found in the North Saskatchewan River, but not in any Alberta lakes. It tolerates silty water. The sauger eats small fishes, leeches and insects.

"Paddling leisurely downstream of Edmonton's industrial heartland, a person could be miles from anywhere, seeing pelicans flying elegantly overhead. All this on our back doorstep!"

Alison Dinwoodie, canoeist, summer 2001



1:50,000 Maps: 83 H/14, 83 H/15, 83 I/2

PLANT FACT - Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) aggressively colonizes disturbed areas along the river. Tea made from this pesky, prickly plant has a gentle anti-inflammatory effect and blood pressure-lowering abilities. Canada thistle does best in disturbed areas but also invades wet areas with fluctuating water levels such as stream bank sedge meadows and wet prairies. It was introduced to North America, by accident, in the early 1600's. It is a member of the aster or sunflower family.

DID YOU KNOW? The beaver hat became "a social necessity" from the mid-1600's until the 1830's, changing in style with the moods of fashion. Unlike the traditional fur hat, such as the raccoon skin cap, the beaver hat was a felt hat. Beaver was a "staple" fur of which only the underlayer of fur-wool (already separated from the guard-hairs and the pelt) was used to make felt.

"The North Saskatchewan River flows through the lives of the Kulka family like the blood that flows through our veins. In the spring it flows swiftly, turbulently, sweeping everything in its path. By summer it crests and becomes stable. In the fall its urgency expended pools and eddies form as the water level drops and the river becomes tame. It flows gently awaiting the renewed surge of energy that spring brings. So with the Kulka family."

DID YOU KNOW? Swanskins commanded a good price in London during the early fur trade. Alexander Henry records 40 swanskins brought to Fort White Earth on July 24, 1810. Bones of Trumpeter Swans (*Olor buccinator*) found during archeological excavation at Fort White Earth are described by Isobel Hulburt in a 1977 occasional paper.

In 1810, Fort White Earth was built by the North West Company, downstream from the site of Victoria Settlement, on the north bank of the river southeast of Smoky Lake. Sometimes this fort was called *Terre Blanche* or New White Earth House. This is also the site of the 3rd location of Edmonton House also known as the Saskatchewan Factory. These were provisional forts, providing pemmican supplies for the rest of the fur trade.

In 1862, George McDougall established Victoria Mission and in 1863, the Hudson's Bay Company built a post nearby.

January 1867, at Fort Victoria, Sam Livingston and Jimmy Gibbons, two gold miners, greeted Father Lacombe as he arrived on the river from Fort Edmonton by dog sled, having given a ride to free-loader Jimmy McCarthy from Cork, who wanted to go back to Red River.

Water bodies in the early days that were named 'Egg Creek' or Egg Lake may still be favourite nesting areas for waterfowl. Early settlers were grateful to discover the spring bounty of freshly laid duck and goose eggs to augment their meager late winter fare.

During fur trade transportation only two stretches of river required tracking (this is where the men must get out of the boat and pull it along with ropes while trudging along the shore). One of these stretches was at Victoria mission.

BIRD FACT - **Northern Flicker** (*Colaptes auratus*) is a quiet, shy woodpecker, distinguished in flight by flashes of yellow from under the wings and tail, and by its conspicuous white rump. It will nest in a tree cavity, in cracks in power poles, in holes in the riverbank or even in nest boxes. With strong, sharp claws and stiff tail feathers, a flicker can climb and cling to tree trunks, where it picks out grubs and insects.

In 1872, the Sanford Flemming scientific expedition camped in the vicinity of Fort Victoria on the way to Fort Edmonton. When they passed the mouth of Waskatenau Creek they spelled it Wessetenow, indicating that it is a Cree word describing an opening in the bank.

Waskatenau Creek was also known as Hollow Creek, Hollow-in-the-hill Creek and Hollow Bank Creek.

May 17, 1889 the Bear's Ears Reserve 126 was established along the North Saskatchewan River in the area of Waskatenau Creek. Sometime during 1891 and 1892 the band was moved to Saddle Lake but the complications of the move were not completely worked out until 1900. Six family groups called this Reserve home: the Jack family (now Jackson), the Wasahatinaw family, the Nayiwatahtik family (now Brernton), the Wihpemes family (now Halfe), the Maskohtawakay family and the Matosk family (now Cryer).

Iron Creek meteorite - A 165 kg iron meteorite, with a profile shaped like a human face, used to sit on a rise where Iron Creek empties into the Battle River. In 1869, missionaries moved the stone to their mission site at Victoria Settlement. The Aboriginal People worried that the removal of their Manitou Stone would bring disaster upon them. Some years later, after the missionaries shipped the stone east to Toronto, the buffalo disappeared from the plains and disease and poverty decimated the warriors of the plains.

In the early days of settlement people crossed the river near the present Highway 831 bridge by means of Harry Rozak's rowboat. The local people built their own ferry in 1919 and the government took it over in 1921.

ANIMAL FACT - River Otter (*Lutra canadensis*) is a web-footed weasel with a thick layer of insulating fat under its short, dense fur, allowing for year-round activity in cold water. Few people have seen a river otter, although some do still exist in the river. Sometimes in the winter their tracks may be seen along the frozen riverbed where they move from ice-free hole to ice-free hole to catch fish, fresh-water clams and other aquatic animals.

"As we explored the wonders of the river, each of us expressed our appreciation in different ways. Some of us were captivated by the alpine meadows along the river, some of us were amazed by the geographical features of the basin and others were fascinated with the cultural and historical richness in the watershed." Stacy Bajema, summer student, 2001, NSWA



1:50,000 Maps: 83 I/2, 83 H/15, 83 I/1, 83 H/16

BIRD FACT - High Bush Cranberry (*Viburnum opulus*), often called Pembina berry (anglicized Cree) or Kalyna (Ukrainian), has spectacular white blossoms in the spring, juicy red berries in the late summer and crimson leaves in the late fall. It is very common along moist riverbank areas. Although the berries have a peculiar smell (hence the nickname – dirty sock berry) they make exceptionally tasty jelly and syrup. Early settlers flavoured the berries with molasses and Scandinavian settlers used the high bush cranberry to make wine, sometimes mixing it with birch sap wine. The bark, often called 'cramp bark', was used medicinally both in the old world and the new.

In 1934, on a trip to Yellowknife, the plane flown by bush pilot Wop May blew a piston. He worried about getting stuck in the mud flats on Smoky Lake so he landed on the river.

In the fall, the Waskatenau Ferry became a dance platform. The rough planks were scrubbed off and people gathered in the evenings on the bank for bonfires, corn roasts and to dance on the ferry to mouth organ and fiddle.

Weasel Creek is aptly named. As late as 1939, a trapper sold 100 weasels which he caught along Weasel Creek.

In the first decade of the 20th century a Norwegian settler, Vete Hovden washed gold in this reach and made enough to keep himself in groceries and small necessities.

ECO-TIP - River corridors are narrow strips of land and water where there is not much space to disperse human impact. They are fragile environments, which require our thoughtful care and consideration. To minimize impact, camp on beaches, sandbars or non-vegetated sites below the high waterline. These sites are more resistant to permanent impact, and during spring floods, signs of your stay will be swept away.

DID YOU KNOW? Birch bark was not only used to build canoes, it was also used to fashion sturdy baskets of every size, from lightweight tubes for carrying precious medicinal roots to giant baskets big enough to hide a child. The big baskets were filled with dried hazelnuts or dried berries or even dried food roots, sealed with pine pitch and buried for future use.

When geological surveyor George Dawson traveled this reach in 1879, he called the Victoria Trail a poor rough-cut trail for use of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In July 1875, the sternwheeler *The Northcote* steamed by here on her maiden voyage from Lake Winnipeg to Fort Edmonton. She was 180 feet long with two boilers and two tall smokestacks. The Hudson's Bay Company paid \$50,000 to build her. In her 'hey-day' she made five round-trips per season from Fort Garry to Fort Edmonton.

ECO-TIP - Big orange garbage bags don't take up much room on a hike and can be used for rain gear, wind shelter and if you get lost they can make you easier to spot.

BIRD FACT - **American White Pelicans** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) Although they were removed from the national list of threatened species in 1987, are still considered endangered in Alberta. Of the 20 known nesting islands before 1950, only 4 were found in 1970 and 6 in 1993. Pelicans do not eat many game fish; they prefer sticklebacks, salamanders, frogs, water bugs and minnows. Bachelor Pelicans (those who don't have a mate this year) are often seen in small groups on the river during the summer.

ECO-TIP - When camping, use biodegradable washing detergents. Wash dishes away from the river by at least 100 feet.

In the spring of 1905, people along this reach watched many long cumbersome rafts float by carrying bridge timbers from Edmonton down to Battleford.

Before the Shandro Ferry went in, people relied on Maria Solowan and her rowboat to get them across the river. She charged five cents a trip.

In 1906, a ferry built by John Walter's Boat Building Company in Edmonton floated downstream to Shandro Crossing where it operated until 1962.

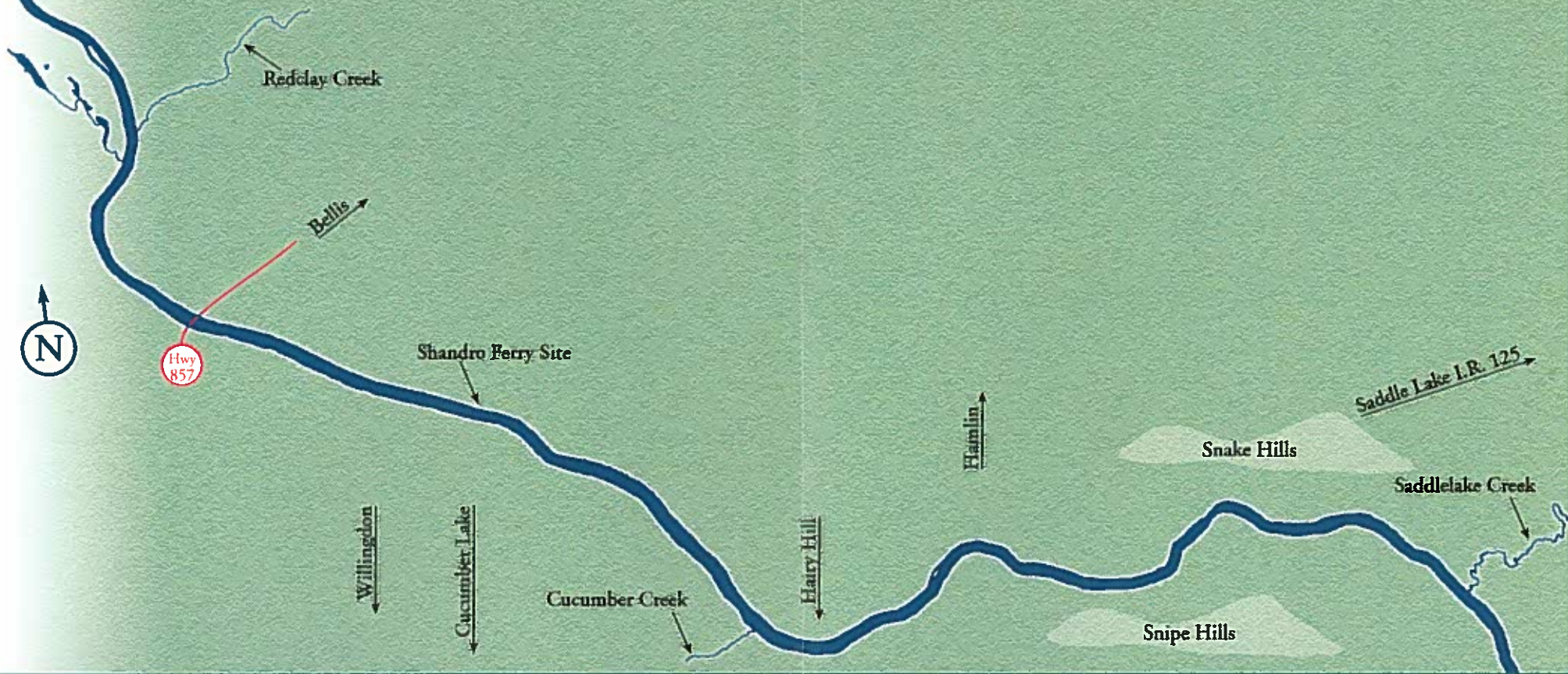
Cattail, bulrushes, sedges and reed grass are called emergent macrophytes. They root in or near water, providing nesting habitat and shelter for waterfowl and other birds like black-birds and Bitterns. Some fish like Northern Pike spawn in the underwater stem forest. Tiny organisms live on the stems and leaves, providing food for bigger insects that are then food for fish and birds and amphibians. Muskrats feed on cattail and bulrushes.

DID YOU KNOW? A "Lobstick" is a landmark created by removing all the branches from the tallest tree in the area, except for the branches at the very top. A Lobstick was often created as a guidepost for river traffic or to mark the location of a special event.

Plants use carbon dioxide (CO₂) as food. Burning fossil fuels releases CO₂ into the atmosphere. The more trees and green plants we have, the more CO₂ can be put to good use.

ANIMAL FACT - The Mink (*Mustela vison*) is a semi-aquatic weasel. It hunts at night, eating muskrat, fish, ducks and other small birds and rodents, seldom far from watercourses. Mink use musk to mark its territory and although the musk smells worse than that of a skunk, it cannot be sprayed. Mating generally occurs in March and five to six young are born in May, usually in an abandoned muskrat den.

"When I was a kid the North Saskatchewan River was my Mississippi; anything that Tom Sawyer or Huck Finn could do, I could do better." Steve Allan, Word Data Clerk



1:50,000 Maps: 83 I/1, 83 H/16, 73 E/13

ANIMAL FACT - White-Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are shy, graceful creatures that flip their tails from side to side over their rump as they bound away. This reveals the tail's distinctive white underside as well as white buttocks. Whitetails have been seen drinking at the river but this is a rare occurrence. Twin fawns are born at the end of May or beginning of June. Triplets and quadruplets do occur but very rarely.

ECO-TIP - When hiking along the river, tie fruit, snacks and sandwiches into a big bandana handkerchief. A handkerchief is handy for dipping into water to cool off face and neck, for use as an emergency bandage or for carrying home small treasures found along the way.

ECO-TIP - Keep fires small. Only use dry sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, and then scatter the cool ashes.

In the spring of 1755, Anthony Henday and his Cree guides camped along this reach on their way downstream back to the Hudson's Bay.

In this reach several islands that were submerged each spring by high water were called Gold Islands or Gold Bar Islands. Apparently when the water receded a little gold dust could be panned. No one got rich but many were able to make a little cash during hard times.

In 1799-1800, three forts were built on an Island near the present day town of Myrnam by the XY Company, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. They are all referred to as Fort de L'Isle or Island Fort.

In 1923, a herd of about 100 cattle needed to cross on the ferry to get to Vegreville. The ferry could carry only 15 head at a time. All went well until about 70 head stood on the other side of the river. Then one old cow decided to swim back over and the whole herd followed her and the ferrying process began again.

The St. Paul Provincial Grazing Reserve is situated within a low-aspen parkland ecosystem. The site is a mosaic of developed tame pastures and deciduous upland forests growing over gently rolling to moderately rolling slopes, with several strong slopes. The reserve is primarily south facing and runs along the North Saskatchewan River, the southern boundary for the reserve.

FISH FACT - Goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*) These fish have a lengthy river migration which can exceed 1000 km (620 miles). They lay semi-buoyant eggs in the river near Edmonton in the spring and these float downstream into Saskatchewan where they hatch and remain for about three years until they migrate back upstream to the Edmonton area. The prominent bright yellow eyes are specially adapted for dim, dark waters. They prefer the quiet, slow-moving waters of the lower reaches of the North Saskatchewan River. Goldeye have higher mercury levels than other fish in the river. They used to absorb mercury from the chlor-alkali plants in Saskatchewan. Since these plants closed in 1978, the mercury concentrations of goldeye in the North Saskatchewan River have dropped.

The Thorhild Provincial Grazing Reserve is on the south side of the river within a low-boreal mixed wood forest ecosystem. This site is a mosaic of developed tame pastures and deciduous upland forests. The topography features gently rolling to moderately rolling slopes, with several strong slopes present. A large portion of this reserve is not used for grazing. A number of environmentally sensitive areas are left as habitat and to protect the watershed. The area between the west boundary of the reserve and Long Lake Provincial Park is held under the Ministerial Order to protect the steep slopes of Long Lake and White Earth Creek. It has been designated as the White Earth Natural Area.

In 1924, a gold dredge broke loose from moorings in Edmonton during spring high water. It sheared off 15 ferry cables before, finally being stopped by the Brosseau/Duvernay Ferry.

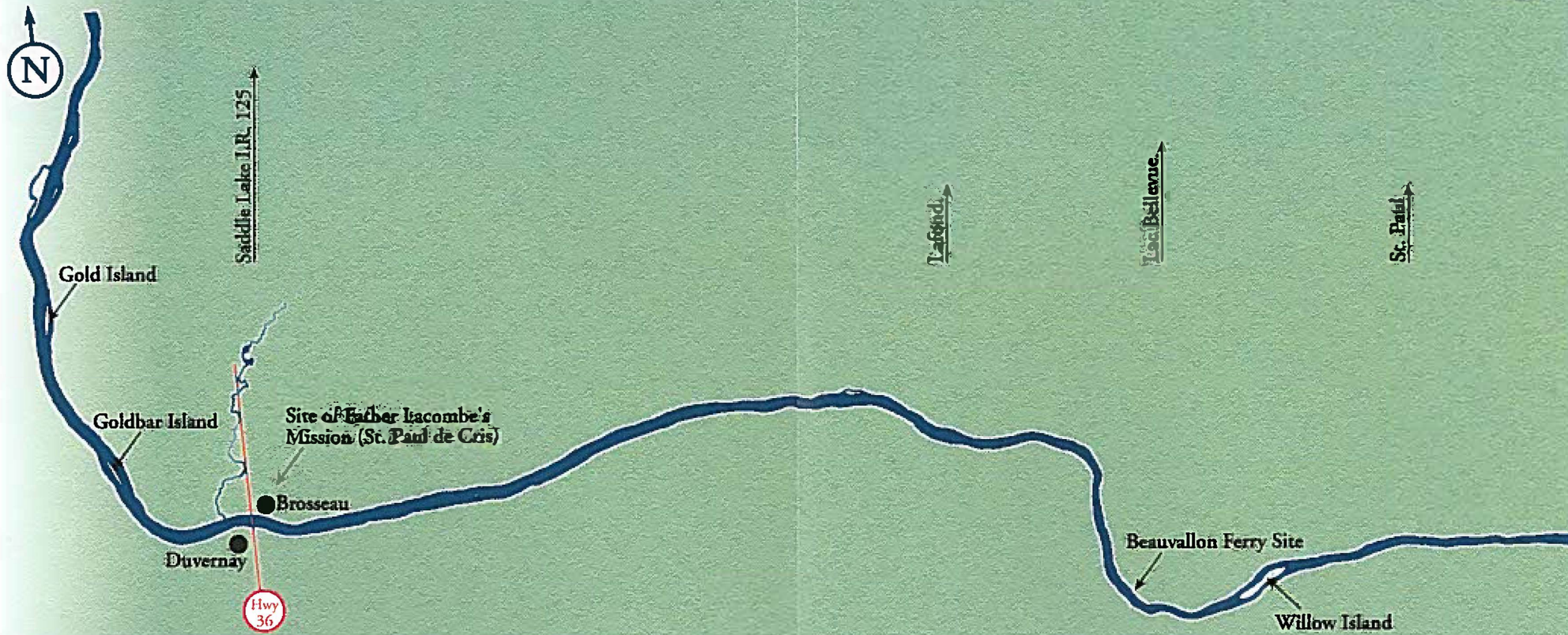
In 1929, a survey showed that 35,000 vehicles crossed on the Brosseau Ferry that year. This ferry was government operated from 1907 to 1930 but private operators ran ferries here before that.

During the early settlement era, Omer Theroux and Sylvie Oullette cut ice from the river for local icehouses. They sold the ice at the river for ten cents a block.

BIRD FACT - Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) is the largest Canadian woodpecker measuring up to 47 cm long. It hollows out large cavities in tall snags (standing dead trees). Because it makes many cavities before it creates one that is suitable it leaves high quality nesting habitat for many other creatures. Their rapid hammering can be heard throughout the forest.

"I want to be able to care for the river as if it were my own life's blood."

Sherree Dallyn, summer student, 2001, NSWA



1:50,000 Maps: 73 E/13, 73 E/14

PLANT FACT - Purple Aster (*Aster puniceus*) blooms with delicate, mauve, daisy-like flowers in the late summer. The blossoms used to be brewed as a headache tea and the roots chewed to relieve sore throats.

FISH FACT - Early people caught fish by constructing weirs made of saplings pushed upright into the river mud, close enough together to let water pass through but not good size fish. Upstream from this construction they made a funnel-shaped V with more saplings to guide fish into the enclosure.

FROG FACT - You can mimic frog song by running your fingernail along the teeth of a comb.

ECO-TIP - If lost, in order to stay warm in the bush, do not lie directly on the ground. Put insulation between you and the earth. You can use leaves, pine branches, grass, pine needles, etc. Collect some to lie on, and cover your body with the rest.

During the morning of May 3, 1755, Anthony Henday and his crew passed by the mouth of Atimose Creek on their way downstream to the Hudson's Bay.

In the spring of 1792, Angus Shaw of the North West Company and his men came upstream from the Forks to build Fort George. Some months later William Tomison and his crew, including Peter Fidler, arrived to build Buckingham House right across the ravine from Fort George. This location attracted a wide variety of peoples: Woods and Plains Cree, Assiniboine, Blackfoot, Peigan and even the Blood. Orkneymen ran Buckingham House while Fort George was staffed by Highland Scots, Canadiens from Quebec, and Métis employees.

The Cree called themselves Nehiyawak or "exact people."

The Assiniboine people (also known as Stony or Nakoda) are a branch of Yankton Sioux who used to live in Minnesota where they hunted deer and buffalo and engaged in some horticulture.

The Blood are a plains people who called themselves Kai-nau or "Many Chiefs."

The Blackfoot, also known as the Siksika, were also a plains people.

The Northern Peigan are the smallest Blackfoot tribe to sign a treaty in Canada, but with Southern Peigan in Montana they form the largest tribe within the Blackfoot Confederacy.

PLANT FACT - Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) Cattails provide shelter and food for wild waterfowl. Every part of it is edible for humans. It was known in early European settlements as "Cossack Asparagus". The cattail marsh provides excellent cover for waterfowl and wild animals like raccoon, muskrat, mink and otter. Muskrats prize the plant for food and use the stalks in ledge construction. During World War I, cattail fluff was used in life jackets and to manufacture artificial silk, as a substitute for cotton. Cattails are often called the 'one-stop-shopping-centre'. The roots can be gathered in the winter for a rich, starchy porridge that looks and tastes a bit like pale pink cream of wheat. The pollen is a vitamin-rich addition to biscuits and bread. It is used in China as medicine.

From the early 1790's to the beginning of the 19th century, winter dog sleds from Fort George and Fort Vermilion transported sacks of pemmican north to Isle a la Crosse to supply the fur traders on the Athabasca.

During the season of 1800 - 1801, David Thompson wintered at Fort George.

In 1809, when Alexander Henry wintered his horses at the site of Fort George/ Buckingham House and camped in the area to build York Boats, all he found left of the two forts was the chimney at Fort George.

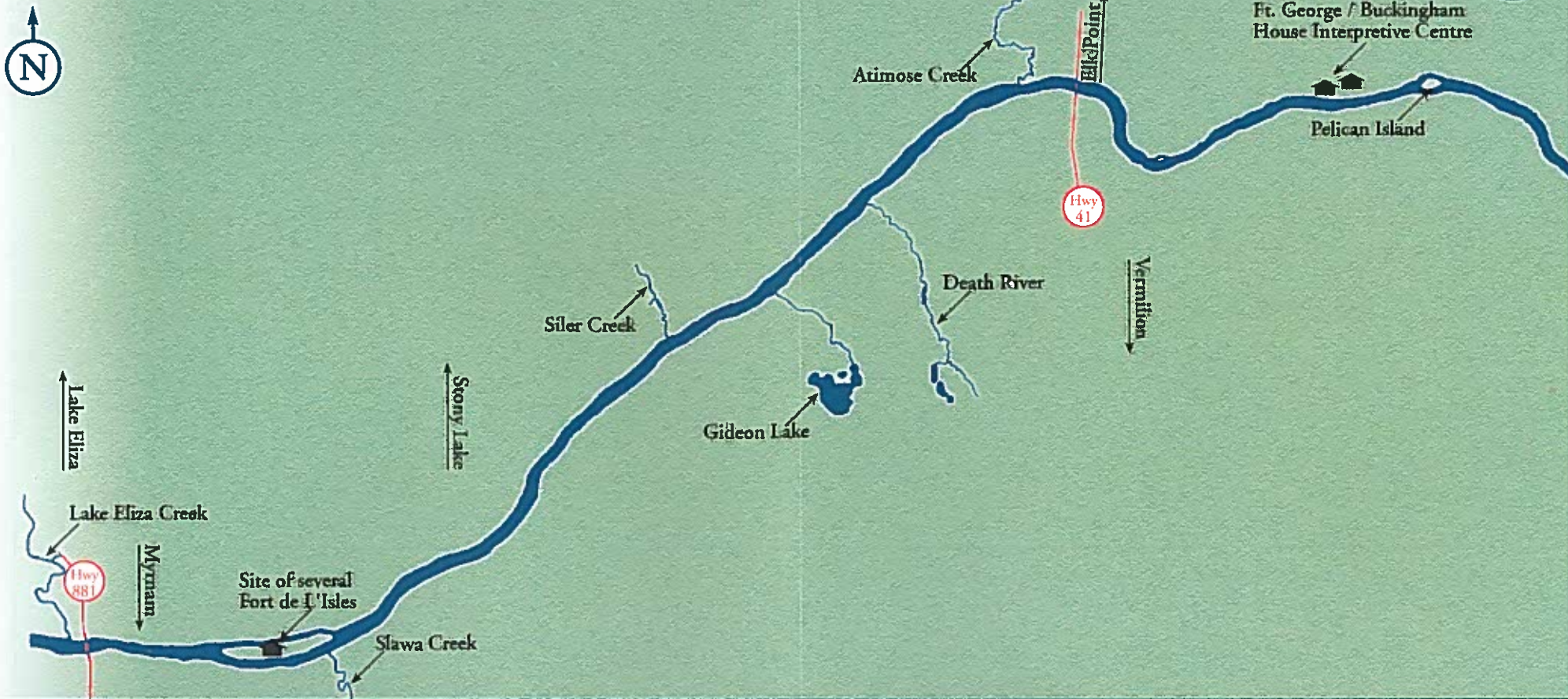
DID YOU KNOW? The last York Boats on the river were taken out of service in 1912.

In 1862, missionaries George and John McDougall mention passing Frog Lake, Frog Creek, Moose Creek and Dog Rump (Atimose) Creek on their way up stream to establish Victoria Mission.

In July 1876, the Victoria Trail that runs parallel to the north bank of the river was made official route for the 'Royal Mail' to Edmonton.

DID YOU KNOW? The river trail that came to be known as the Victoria/Fort Pitt Trail was established long before Europeans needed a river and route. Peter Fidler used it in 1793 from Buckingham House to the mouth of the Sturgeon River.

BIRD FACT - Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) prefers moist environments in bushes, around swamp edges, streams and in the shrubbery along the riverbank. It feeds on insects, mostly caterpillars, some spiders and occasionally berries. The cowbird, which likes to deposit its eggs for other birds to raise, is often not successful with the Yellow Warbler. When the female recognizes cowbird eggs, she builds a new nest over all the eggs, including her own. She will then lay a new clutch of eggs.



1:50,000 Maps: 73 E/14, 73 E/15

ANIMAL FACT - Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) are intelligent, shy and nervous creatures often seen at the river catching and eating aquatic insects. In the winter they eat small mammals (mice, squirrels, rabbits) and in the summer insects, crayfish, and berries. Foxes dig dens three to nine m long in sandy or gravelly soil with two or three separate entrances.

DID YOU KNOW? Historical documentation emphasizes the pivotal position of the North Saskatchewan River as the main transportation and communication route from eastern Canada to the Rocky Mountains, from the middle of the 17th century to the middle of the 20th century.

"When my daughter Jordan lost a friend in a car accident she went to the river. Whenever life hands her an insurmountable challenge, just like her grandfather before her, she knows to find solace and strength by the river." S. D. Milholland, textile artist and writer, spring 2002

ECO-TIP - Always assume that wilderness water is infected and use a good method to disinfect it. Boiling drinking water is always a good choice.

In 1784, the North West Company built Fort Umfricvilles on the north side of river about 12 miles upstream of Fort Pitt.

At sunset in September 1808, Alexander Henry the Younger sighted the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vermilion, which was built on a long, flat meadow-bottom directly opposite the mouth of the Vermilion River. His North West Company fort was close by.

April 2, 1885 – Henry Quinn, nephew of the Indian Agent who was killed that day at Frog Lake Settlement, was warned of impending trouble by his friend Mondion. Moments before the shooting began he jumped on his horse and rode the 60 km along Victoria Trail downstream to report to Inspector Francis Dickens, the NWMP officer in charge at Fort Pitt.

Seneca root was picked and sold from this region from the late 19th century right into the 1970's. In the 1960's and 70's green root sold for \$1.50 a pound and dried root brought \$5 – 6.00 a pound. Seneca grows best along the fringe of aspen groves in sheltered river meadows that are moist in the spring.

FISH FACT - **Lake Sturgeon** (*Acipenser fulvescens*) In 1991, a 178-centimeter (5'9") sturgeon, about 62 years old, was caught in the North Saskatchewan River. The oldest recorded sturgeon caught in this river was an 80-year-old female that weighed 105 pounds. Sturgeons spawn only once every 4-6 years and not until they are 20 years old. Sturgeons are prehistoric; they not related to any other present day fish. They have no scales and have cartilage instead of bones. In 1996, it was estimated that there were only about 1000 sturgeon in the river and most of these were immature.

The Cree name for Seneca is Winsikis. Early settlers called it rattlesnake root because it was considered an antidote for snakebites. Another common name for it was Indian headdress because of the way the flower stems grow in a circular pattern resembling ceremonial head regalia.

The species name, *senega*, refers to the Seneca Indian tribe of western New York state who were among the first native people to demonstrate the medicinal use of the plant to early colonists.

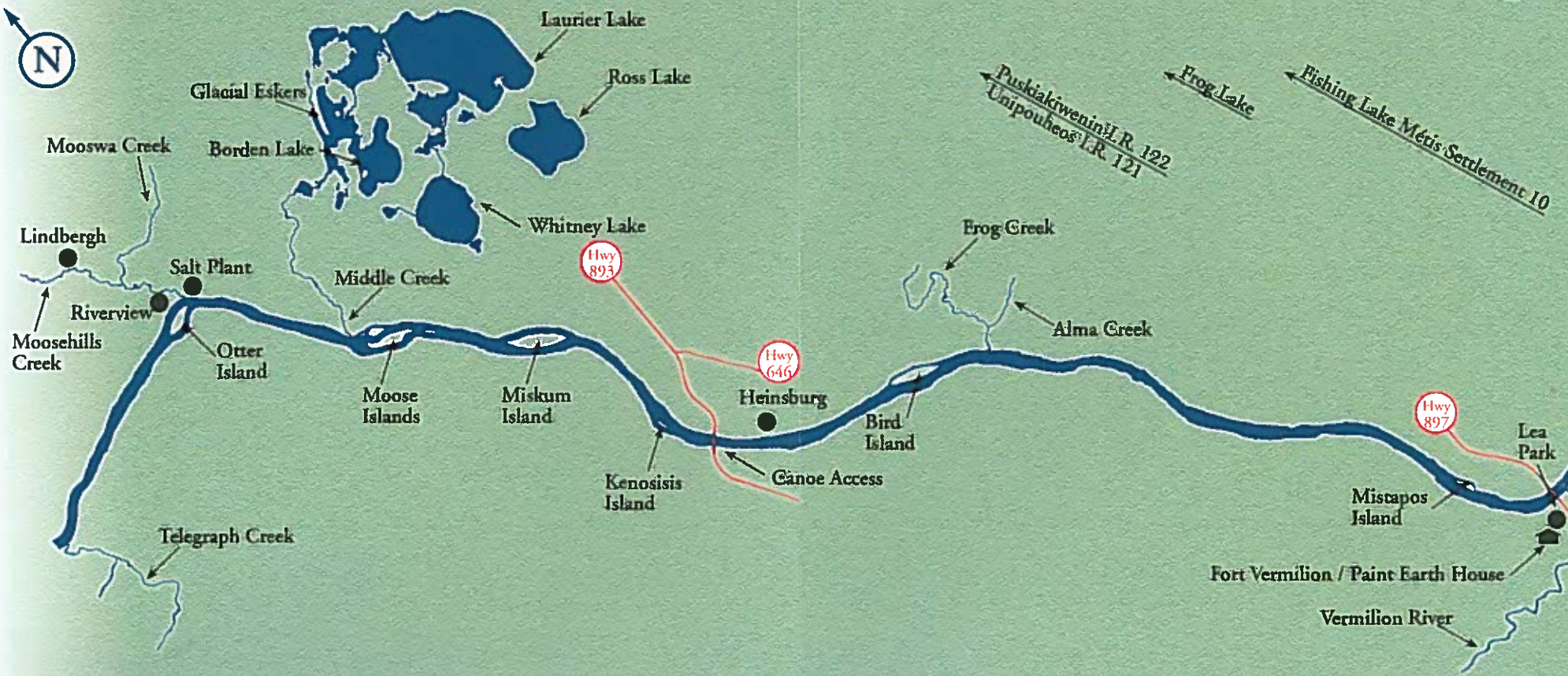
The Lea Park Ferry operated in this reach between 1911 and 1963. With the arrival of settlers in the area after the turn of the century, a post office and store were established on the south bank of the river and the settlement named Lea Park, allegedly after Tom and Bill Lea, two of the first settlers. At this time, the little town of Kitscoty to the south was the nearest point where the farmers could sell produce and buy groceries, so a ferry was installed in 1908. It was listed as "N. of Kitscoty" by which name it was shown in the annual reports until 1923, changing to Lea Park in 1924.

The ferry was used extensively for crossing herds of cattle in the spring and fall, as many community and private pastures were located on the north side of the river.

The Heinsburg Ferry, established in 1914, was named after the first postmaster John Heins. It operated for nearly 50 years and was often so busy that it required as many as three ferrymen.

BIRD FACT - Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) weaves a pouch-like nest from plant fibres, string and hair in deciduous trees, often along the riparian zones of the river and its tributaries. Both male and female participate in constructing this hanging nursery, which they suspend by its rim from a tree branch. After they line it with fine soft grass, hair and wool, the female lays 4 - 6 pale gray eggs, drizzled with black, pale purple or brown lines. The young can fly within 12 - 14 days after hatching.

"It was an amazing experience, canoeing the North Saskatchewan River for a whole month. The landscape changes continually, providing an awesome view around every corner and wildlife all around." Eric Feddes, canoeist, fall 2001



1:50,000 Maps: 73 E/15, 73 E/16, 73 E/9

FISH FACT - Suckers have no teeth. They vacuum the bottom of rivers and streams, sucking up invertebrates. They usually travel in large schools, so if you see one sucker, there are most likely many more close by. Two types of suckers common to the North Saskatchewan River system are: the **Longnose Sucker** (*Catostomus catostomus*) and the **White Sucker** (*Catostomus commersoni*).

ECO-TIP - When putting out your fire, let it die down completely, pour water on it, stir the coals and ashes and pour on more water. If you have no water, put on sand or dirt and stir thoroughly.

"It is naïve for people to point their fingers at the dams or the clear-cuts or the cattle or the cities or the paper mills. It is everything we have done; it is all of us. We need to point our fingers at ourselves."
Valerie Rapp, from *What the River Reveals: understanding and restoring healthy watersheds*

ECO-TIP: The average use of water per person per day in North America varies between 200 and 500 litres. Only 8 litres of this is used for drinking and cooking.

In 1830, the Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Pitt, which remained an important outpost until it was abandoned in 1885.

Fort Umfrevilles was built by the North West Company in 1784 and abandoned in 1794.

In the late winter of 1848, Upper Canadian artist Paul Kane, discussed theology with famous Cree Chief and warrior Maskipiton at the Chief's traditional stopping place, upriver from Fort Pitt. This is the same Cree Chief who had been painted by American artist George Catlin in 1832, who corresponded using Cree syllabics with Reverend Robert Rundle, and who hunted along the North Saskatchewan River from Fort Pitt to the Rockies.

On January 15, 1848, Artist Paul Kane arrived at Fort Pitt, accompanied by Mr. Rowand Jr. (Factor at Fort Pitt) and his bride (they had wed at Fort Edmonton) via dog sled along the frozen river. "Within the whole distance we had traveled on this journey we were never out of sight of large herds of [buffalo] and we had not found it necessary to go a step out of our direct course to find more than we required for our use."

August 2nd, 1859 (from the Earl of Southesk's journal) "Reached Fort Pitt at 4:00 pm. The fort stands within a hundred yards of the river, which is here deep and rapid, free from sandbanks and about 300 yards wide. These last two days I have noticed a few spruce firs amidst the eternal poplar, but none of any size.... A tree 30 feet high and four feet around seems a giant here and is rarely to be met with..."

PLANT FACT - Fire Cherry – also known as **Pin Cherry** (*Prunus pensylvanica*) occurs on sunny banks along the river. It establishes quickly in waste and burnt areas protecting the soil until larger trees can establish themselves. The fruit: Small, round, bright red cherries, with a sour-tasting flesh, 5 millimetres in diameter. The berries are a favourite of bears, foxes, chipmunks, squirrels, mice, and up to 84 different species of birds. Pin Cherry is mostly a northern species growing in a wide variety of soils including infertile rocky ledges, sandy soil and rich loam. It is a short-lived shrub, seldom growing older than 30 years, but its fruit production is high. 15-year-old, trees can have a fruit production of 2,762,500 fruits per hectare

On August 21st, 1872, at Fort Pitt, there are still enough buffalo to be used for tent construction. George Grant of the Fleming expedition describes the tent of the horse keeper as, "a roomy lodge, called 'a fourteen skin,' because constructed of so many buffalo hides stretched and sewed together; the smallest lodges are made of five or six and the largest of from twenty to twenty-five skins."

April 1885 - Mr. McLean was factor of Fort Pitt when he and his garrison of twenty-three men faced three hundred Indians. When the Indians began to attack Mr. Mclean left the fort unarmed to parley with them. It was agreed that if he and his family submitted as hostages the NWMP in the fort could leave. The McLean family agreed, allowing Geoffrey Dickens, son of author Charles Dickens, and his men to escape down river in a scow to Battleford. Fort Pitt was then looted.

In 1885, there was a lot of action along the North Saskatchewan River in this reach. Between April 30th and May 13th, General T. B. Strange at Fort Edmonton built barges to transport 224 men and one gun down river to the Fort Pitt area to help with Northwest Rebellion.

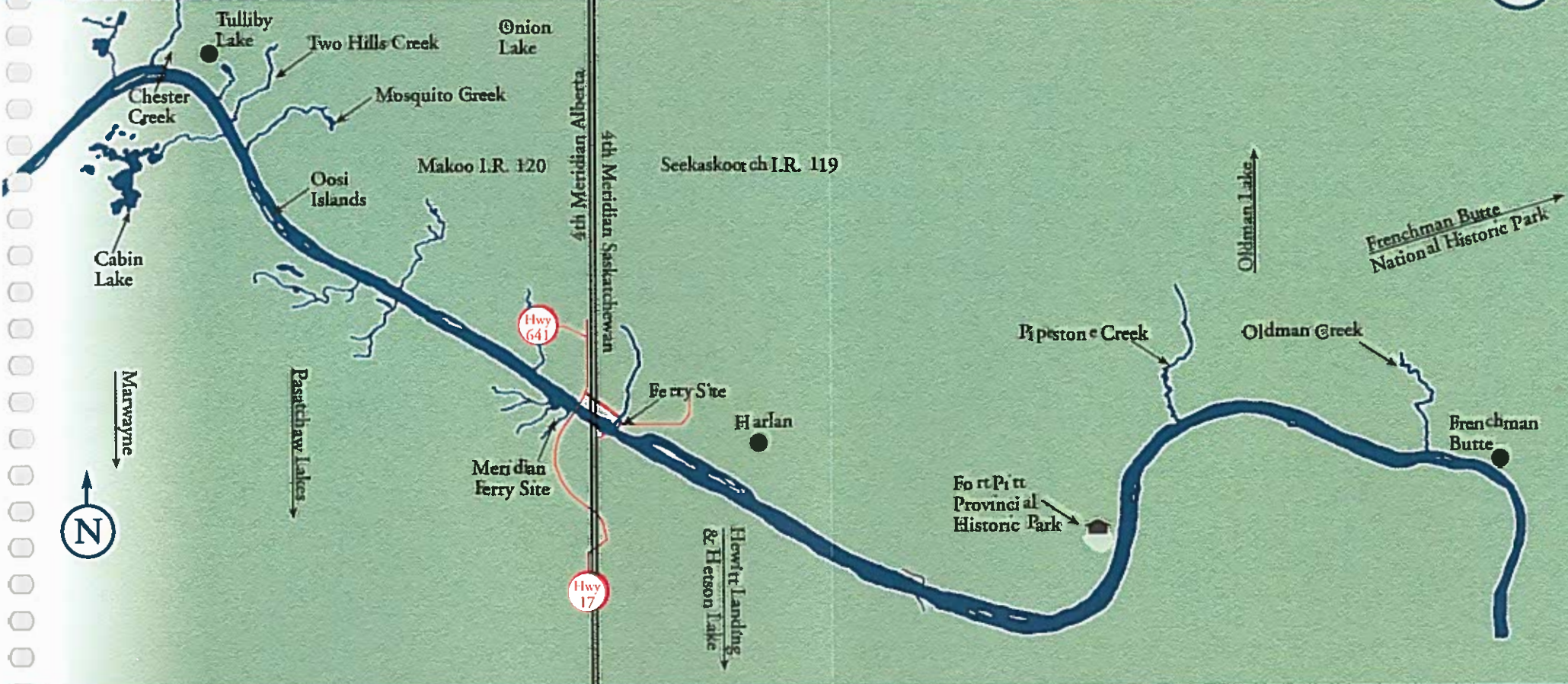
From May 13th to May 24th, General T. B. Strange and his men traveled on the river to Frog Lake where they buried the people killed at Frog Lake.

May 27th, from the south bank of Red Deer Creek at Frenchman Butte, General Strange fought the 'Battle of Frenchman Butte' against the Metis and their Aboriginal supporters.

June 22nd, at Fort Pitt, on the Sternwheeler *The Marquis*, the McLean family have their first bath and change of clothes since they became hostages 2 months prior. From here they travel by sternwheeler down to Prince Albert.

BIRD FACT - Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) male, from a great height, dives towards the ground and then suddenly, thrusting his wings forward in a braking action pulls out of the dive. This wing movement produces a deep, hollow 'frooming' noise often heard on warm summer evenings. Its repetitious nasal peent call precedes often the wing noise. It catches insects in flight; eating mosquitoes, beetles, flying ants, moths and other winged bugs.

"So let's leave some blue up above us, Let's leave some green on the ground, It's only ours to borrow, let's save some for tomorrow. Leave it and pass it on down." - Chorus to "Pass It On Down" by the country music group "Alabama"



July 4th, at Fort Pitt, on board the sternwheeler *The North-West*, Colonel Arthur T. H. Williams dies of Typhoid Fever.

4th Meridian Ferry – ran from 1919 till at least 1986. It was moved to east of the 4th meridian in 1920 to avoid shifting sandbars. After 1935, it was moved several more times to avoid sandbars. In the 1960's, a 350 foot grade was built of stone, clay & gravel to make the crossing narrower. In 1974, it carried 26,000 vehicles and 1,600 loose animals.

In the summer of 1885, William Cameron, one of the survivors of the Frog Lake Massacre, put a brass key in a discarded pair of trousers. These he hung in a Poplar Bluff near Frenchman's Butte, two months after the incident. He wrote later, "It was the sole substantial relic to escape destruction of what has been the Hudson Bay Company's trading post at Frog Lake".

1905 - Onion Lake - Dr. Elizabeth Scott Matheson was the first woman doctor in NWT. She worked at the mission hospital with her 2 oldest daughters as nurses.

In 1903, Isaac Barr of the Barr Colonists instructed a merchant from Edmonton to float a scow loaded with \$2,000 worth of potatoes downstream to the meridian crossing. When Barr did not meet him the merchant floated the potatoes on down to North Battleford where the Barr Colonists had no money to pay for them. Reverend Lloyd, Barr's successor put up his Canadian Council of Church Society wages as collateral for a loan to pay for the potatoes.

From the turn of the century to around WWI, early settlers in this area arrived by train in Edmonton, purchased lumber, built a large and sturdy scow, loaded their families, livestock and farm and household effects and steered down river to Hewitt's Landing (also known as Lloydminster Landing). Here they would dismantle the scow and salvage the lumber to build their first house.

ECO-TIP: Keep an eye on the sky; it is unsafe to be on the water during electrical storms. Boating conditions on the river vary greatly with changes in weather conditions and water level. Know your boating skill level and be familiar with the section of river you paddle.

In 1849 to 1850, there were already tourists on the river: James Carnegie, sixth de facto and ninth de jure Earl of Southesk, “had a taste for adventure...was a passionate sportsman... (he brought along) a portable table, ... camp stool and an India-rubber-bath”. His journey along the North Saskatchewan River began at Fort Carleton in July of 1859, and by August 2nd he had reached Fort Pitt. On August 9th, he met another tourist going the other way along the river trail, “Met an American, Mr. Hind, with a Saskatchewan man driving pack-horses, on his road from Edmonton to Carleton”.

In 1862, other English tourists traveled along this reach: Young aristocrat William Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, the Viscount Lord Milton, with his friend, Dr. Walter Cheadle traveled upriver to Fort Edmonton.

Pemmican – “For first-class pemmican, the marrow of many buffalo bones was taken, the whole put in a sack of the animal, the hair outwards, and well mixed together...sewn up with threads of sinew. The second-class pemmican was composed of meat of the same quality, but mixed with the best of fat melted, while the third-class was of meat not quite so good nor so finely pounded; but it was mixed with melted fat...” Sam Steele from *40 Years in Canada*.

PLANT FACT - Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a prolific plant along the whole river system. Its pungent odor (not evident until crushed) comes from a concentration of camphors, oils and aromatics. This makes it a popular folk remedy for colds and flu. It also has a hemostatic characteristic, which makes it a good bush medicine for stopping or slowing bleeding from small cuts, and the crushed leaves are soothing against muscle aches and pains. This is an ancient soldier's herb, used by Greek and Roman armies and mentioned in Greek mythology where it is into a yarrow bath that Achilles' mother dips him to protect him from enemy arrows.

ECO-TIP: To find your direction in the woods without a compass, use a stick. Find a flat piece of ground. Drive a three-foot-long stick into the ground. Cut two other sticks about a foot long and drive one into the ground at the tip of the shadow cast by the three-foot stick. Come back 20 minutes later and insert the remaining stick at the tip of the new shadow. Now use a direction pointer stick. Put it against the two sticks with the marked end against the second stick. The marked end points east. The unmarked end points west.

The marshlands around Englishman River are a birder's paradise. It is a major flyway for migrating birds and waterfowl and the spruce, tamarack and jack pine forests provide food and shelter to a wide diversity of birds.

ECO-TIP: Never eat or use any wild plant material unless you are familiar with it. The information in this guide is for interest sake only. There are many good plant books from which you can get more specific information.

GOLD FACT - North Saskatchewan River gold is 'flour' gold (minute flakes between 0.1 to 0.5 mm in diameter). Most gold found in nature is alloyed with silver, but gold from this river is relatively pure.

FISH FACT - Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) are large, aggressive, solitary hunters, and well known to anglers for a fierce fight when hooked. Some times called jackfish, the body of the pike is long and slender with a big, flat head. Its mouth is large, with many small, sharp teeth along the jaws and on the roof of the mouth.

BIRD FACT - Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) digs into the riverbank to make a nest. It can burrow as deep as 2m (6 ft). With its great head and distinctive blue and white feathers, the Kingfisher is hard to miss. It is also distinguished by its peculiar call that sounds very much like a teacup being rattled on a saucer. From a tree perch or from a hover it will dive headfirst into the river, catching fish at depths of up to 61 cm (2 ft). It also eats aquatic invertebrates and tadpoles.



1:50,000 Maps: 73 F/12, 73 F/5, 73 F/6

ANIMAL FACT - Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) is a relatively large member of the weasel family, equipped with a gland that emits a musky odour when it is excited. It makes a sharp warning sound when anything approaches and growls and chatters if provoked. If it is chased it will dive into its den, quickly covering in the hole behind it. It lives in a burrow that may be as long as 9 m and up to 3 m deep with grass-lined sleeping chambers at the end. Large males may weigh up to 11.4 kg. Badgers are not very agile, running close to the ground with a trotting movement when pursued. Their normal gait is a leisurely waddle.

DID YOU KNOW? The "beaver," as the beaver felt hat became known, was hand-made by a complex process. The foundation of the hat was a felt made from the wool of the rabbit, hare or coney. The beaver wool was applied to the rabbit wool with the cut ends of the wool penetrating and fixing themselves in the felt body, giving the hat, after several finishing steps, its "furry" nap. The finished "beaver" was cool, light and durable, but expensive.

"The river's graceful flow invites a wanderer on a meandering path, guiding, pulling, synergizing - swallowing a person completely. Now I understand why rivers have been metaphors for life as long as we have borne metaphor." Ian Moodie, canoeist, fall 2001

ECO-TIP - When travelling along the river, avoid dehydration by drinking lots of water. Urine color can be an indicator of dehydration. The darker the urine, the more dehydrated the person.

DID YOU KNOW? The riparian zone (the strip of plants along the river shoreline) is a giant green sponge, sucking up extra water from rain and spring runoff. This helps prevent flooding and makes moisture available during dry periods.

In 1848, four days journey below Fort Pitt, a war party from the Blackfoot Confederacy stopped to camp and engage in “a horse race, to which they are very partial, and at which they bet heavily; they generally ride on those occasions stark naked, without a saddle, and with only a lasso fastened to the lower jaw of the horse...” Paul Kane sketched this scene – it is represented in *Sketch No. 16*.

Fish are not warm-blooded. Environment regulates their body temperature, a characteristic called ectothermy. Fish that live in the very cold water have the ability to increase their body temperature by constantly moving their muscles. This movement produces heat as a by-product of cell metabolism.

ECO-TIP - Never build a fire near the base of a tree where the heat may kill the roots.

PLANT FACT - **Stinging Nettle** (*Urtica dioica*) prefers damp, sheltered areas and are most often found along creek beds and in seep areas. It can grow up to 7 ft tall in communities connected by underground roots. Except for its tiny and very irritating stinging hairs, nettle is a very useful plant. Powdered nettle leaves are very high in chlorophyll, protein and useful minerals. It also has strong fibres, which makes good paper and fabric similar to hemp cloth. People have been using nettle since pre-historic times. When pounded in water, tough nettle fibres emerge. These can be twisted into string and woven into ropes and strong fishing nets. In fact the word 'net' comes from the word nettle.

ECO-TIP - Make your own firestarter: Cut waxed milk cartons into strips for kindling. Put tape over one end of paper towel or toilet paper rolls, stuff with shredded newspaper and tape to hold stuffing.

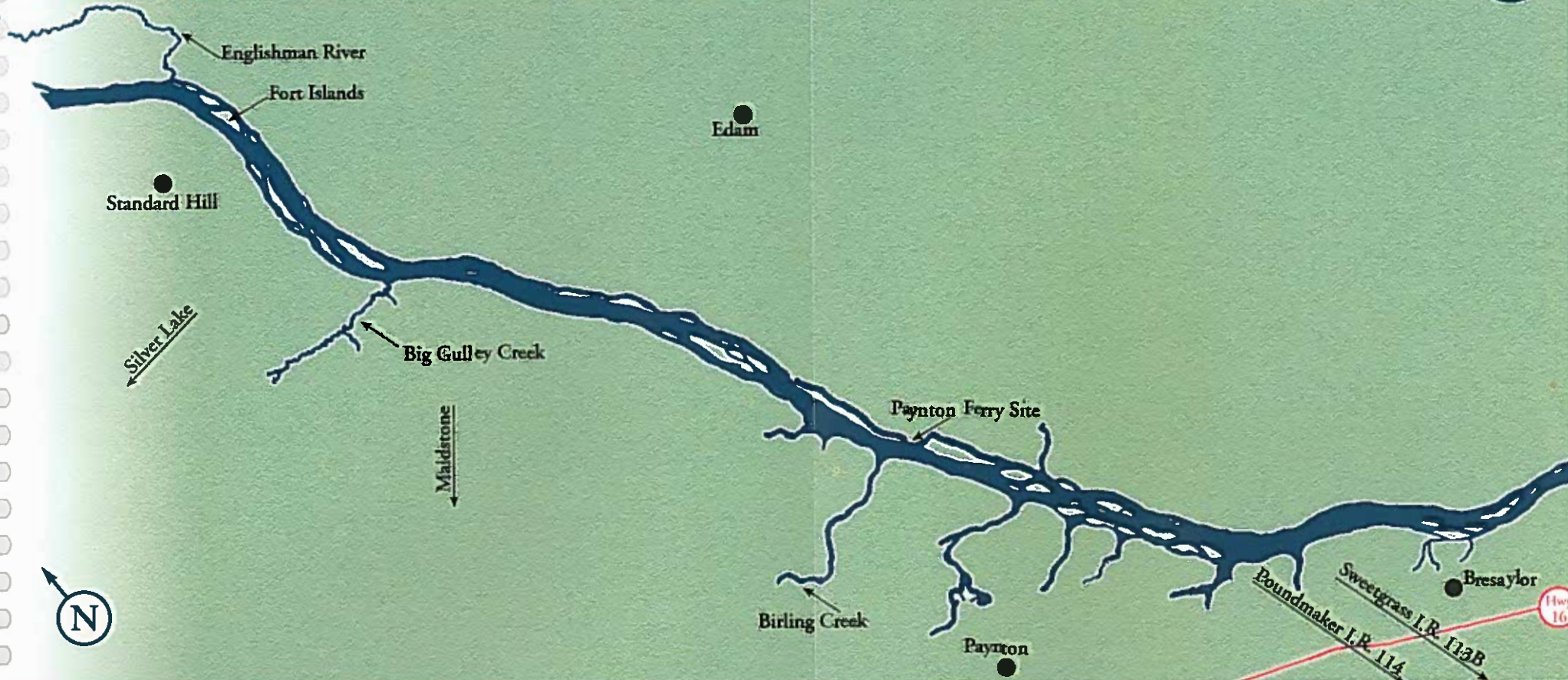
DID YOU KNOW? *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle) is very efficient at filtering metals, minerals and waste materials out of contaminated water, storing these substances in its plant fibers thereby cleansing water supplies. It is an excellent candidate for organic waste treatment and detoxification systems. Many of the materials it collects can be recovered from the dead plant matter.

The average York Boat had a 28 ft. keel and when carrying 4500 – 6300 pounds of freight, drew only about 2 ft of water.

GOLD FACT - Gold production peaked on the North Saskatchewan River between 1895 and 1897, when 7500 troy ounces of gold were removed from the river (worth \$3 million circa 1998).

BIRD FACT - **Rufous Hummingbird** (*Selasphorus rufus*) likes to build its nest in dense shrub stands like willow bushes. Its tiny cup nest is constructed out of plant fluff, spider webs, lichens and leaves. They are important plant pollinators as they visit flowers for nectar, spreading pollen from one flower to another. It prefers the nectar of red flowers but will also eat small insects and tree sap. The whirring sound made by rapidly beating wings is often heard before the tiny bird is spotted.

"The river moves like piano music. A minor chord, anticipating resolution, sustained in the whirling eddies. I find myself reflected in the still waters along a gravel bar." Josh Krikke, University student. 2002



1:50,000 Maps: 73 F/6, 73 F/3, 73 F/2, 73 C/15

ANIMAL FACT - Coyote (*Canis latrans*) is an intelligent, social creature often seen and heard along the river. It lives on small mammals (mice, hares, gophers), carrion, and some vegetation. It is possible for Coyotes to interbreed with wolves and produce fertile offspring. However, this occurrence is very rare; wolves view coyotes as competition and usually kill them if they can.

FISH FACT - A fish swims by moving its body from side to side. The dorsal fin (along the back) and the anal fin (on the underside near the tail) act as keels; the paired fins along the sides are used for steering and for brakes.

"Never in his life had he seen a river before -- this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free and were caught and held again." The mole in Kenneth Grahame's, "The Wind in the Willows"

ECO-TIP - Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Avoid wildlife completely during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young and during winter.

In 1775, William Holmes built a trading post on the south bank at the Battle River confluence.

In 1782, Mitchell Oman wrote to David Thompson about traveling on the river in the fall in the area around the Battlefords where, "the Bisons were crossing the river in vast herds."

In 1832, just up river from the mouth of Turtlelake River there was a fierce battle between the Cree and Blackfoot that was still remembered when the Fleming expedition pass by there in 1872, "forty horses were killed, an extraordinary number..."

In 1872, the Sandford Fleming expedition, "The Jackfish-lake River runs, through a beautiful park-like country from this point, into the Saskatchewan...[the lake is] filled with jackfish or pike, and with whitefish, - the finest freshwater fish, perhaps in the world."

In 1872, the Sandford Fleming expedition followed river trails in the vicinity of Jack-fish Lake, "The road followed the high lands where the streamlets or 'creeks' that flow into the Saskatchewan, take their rise. George Grant, the secretary of this expedition also noted: On the Jackfish-lake River where, "on a little hill, near the stream, a great annual "pow-wow" is held in the spring..." (This site is near where the Jackfish River enters the North Saskatchewan).

PLANT FACT - Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) - Chokecherries blossom from the first week of May to the first week of June. Sometimes the flowers are so thick that a grove of chokecherry bushes will look like it is covered with a lacy white curtain. Game birds, songbirds, raccoons, deer, coyotes and bears eat these cherries. Sharp tailed grouse depend on the buds as a winter food source. Elk, deer and moose browse the branches during the fall and winter. They are so abundant along the river that there are plenty to spare for anyone who wants to make the world's best pancake syrup.

1876 – NWMP established a district headquarters at Battleford, the 5th NWMP post in the West. It began as 4 log buildings and 1 brick building.

In August 1876, at Fort Carleton and Fort Pitt, Treaty 6 was signed with the Cree. The Commissioners from Winnipeg traveled up the river by way of Battleford. Bishop Grandin of the Roman Catholic Church, “traveled from Edmonton to Fort Pitt and Battleford to see the Commissioners and assure them of his good will.”

1877 – Battleford became the capital of the North West Territories and the Lieutenant Governor and his family moved into Government House.

At the end of March 1885, Chief Poundmaker (*Pitikwahanapiwiyin*) and his Cree followers, as well as a group of Stoney Indians, came to Battleford. He came to negotiate fairer implementation of treaty terms for his hungry people. The Indian agent refused to come out of the fort to speak with the chief and some of the frustrated young warriors ransacked and burned houses in Battleford before returning to Poundmaker's reserve.

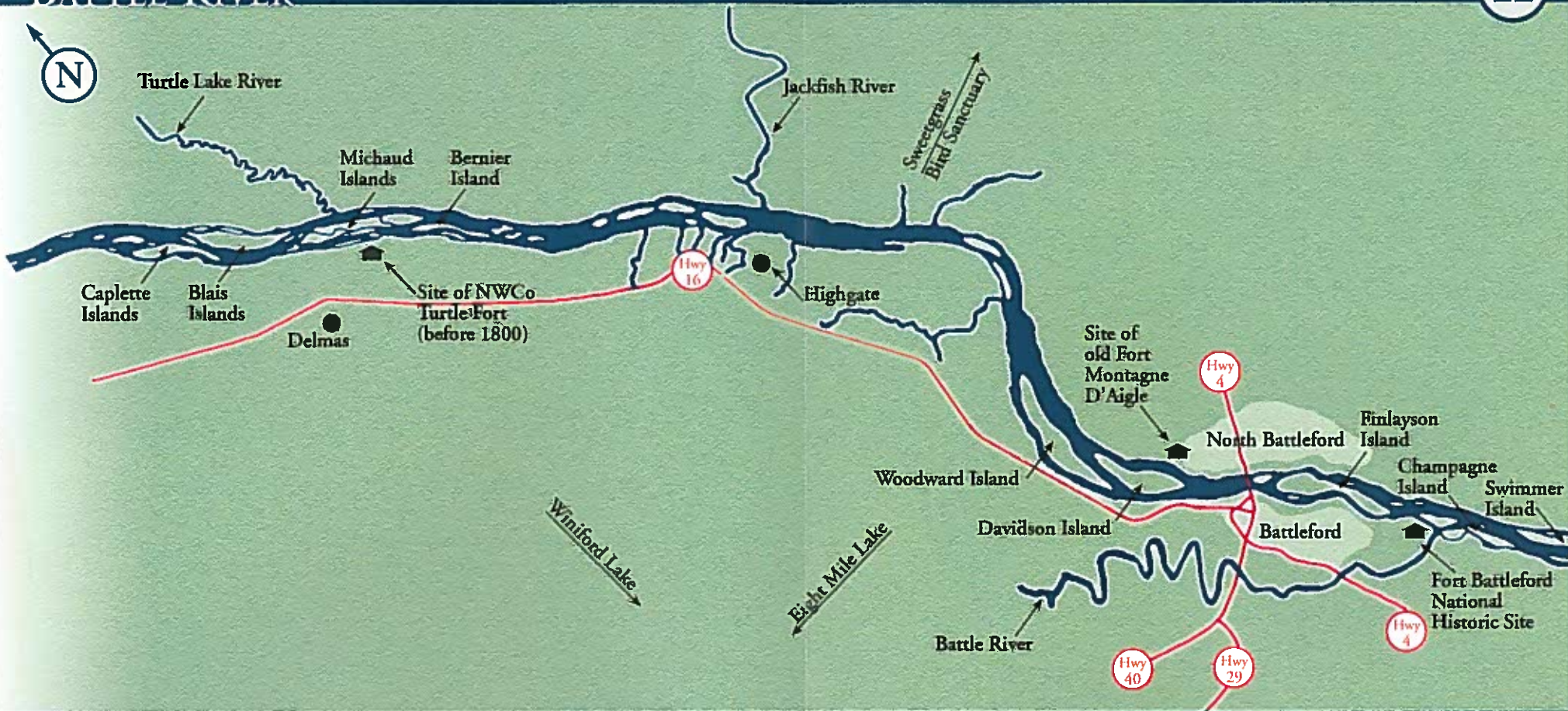
1885, May 26th, at Battleford, Poundmaker, “delivered himself up voluntarily...to stop the bloodshed and re-establish peace in the country.”

In the North Saskatchewan River around the mouth of the Battle River, “in the spring and early summer walleye of exceptional size are caught...” This is a very important sport and commercial fish. The North Saskatchewan River has produced some of the largest walleye in the province.

BIRD FACT - Magpie (*Pica pica*) is a handsome, expert scavenger often found around campsites looking for garbage. It also eats insects, carrion and will pick grubs and ticks off big ungulates. It builds a large domed nest in tall trees or shrubs, often lining it with mud. The magpie is the only member of the jay family that lives in both the north and the south hemispheres. Magpies lay 6-9 blotched greenish eggs in a tidy cup nest inside a large, messy, domed structure made of twigs, often with a double entrance.

“The river has a different personality in January, crystalline magic on a crisp winter morning. I pause on the walking bridge in awe of orange sunrise over frozen ribbon - and the glitter of hoarfrost on riverbank trees. But open water grows every winter on the river, it seems, with freeze-up later, and breakup sooner...”

Peter Mahaffy, Professor of Chemistry, The King's University College



1:50,000 Maps: 73 C/15, 73 C/16, 73 C/9

FISH FACT - Early people made fishnets from woven split tree roots or plant fibres. If they were in a hurry and had no time for the intricate task of delicate weaving, they cut many holes in a hairless hide.

- Many early fur traders built posts in this area around the confluence of the Battle River:
- Independent traders – 1785-1794
 - Northwest Company – 1805-1822
 - Hudson's Bay Company (north side) – 1805-1822
 - Hudson's Bay Company (south side) – 1822-1885
 - The North West Mounted Police established their post, Fort Battleford, in 1876 and used it until 1924.

DID YOU KNOW? When silk hats replaced the beaver hat in popularity in the 1840's, the Hudson's Bay Company was frequently unable to sell much of its stock of beaver pelts on the London market. Fortunately for the company, other skins native to North America increased in demand and value. During the mid-19th century, buffalo robes and marten pelts traveled the North Saskatchewan River highway to reach the markets of Europe.

DID YOU KNOW? Battleford was the capital of the Northwest Territories until 1883, when land speculators succeeded in having the capital moved to Pile-O-Bones (Regina).

Five original buildings still exist at Fort Battleford National Historic Park.

ECO-TIP - A campfire must be a safe one. Always find out if fires are allowed where you hope to camp and what the forest-fire index hazard ratings are in your area.

Before European exploration, the area along this reach and beyond was populated by the *Se-pe-wen-o-wuk*, the Rivers People (now known as the Sweetgrass Cree). As Sylvia Weenie writes about her ancestors, "Food was usually plentiful; war with the Blackfoot made life interesting. The people were content."

In 1778, independent trader, Peter Pangman, built a trading post downstream from North Battleford directly south of the present village of Denholm, Saskatchewan. This Eagle Hill's post did not last long. An Aboriginal Chief died after drinking trade rum at the post; and in a later incident, a trader at the post was shot in an altercation involving a horse. Not knowing how to mediate the resulting unrest, the traders gave the Native people several kegs of rum and escaped down river in the middle of the night. They did not return to rebuilt Eagle Hill's post.

One of the cultural misunderstandings of the fur trade was in the perception of what constituted a 'chief' in the Aboriginal world. In the European world, a chief was a man at the top of a hierarchical ladder. Often he was born to the position or appointed by others in power. In the Aboriginal world, a chief was a leader by virtue of his courage, his hunting competence, his sense of humour, but most importantly his unreserved generosity and hospitality. Lazy or incompetent men had no status. When Aboriginal people came to the river posts to trade, the man elevated to the position of 'chief' by Europeans may not have enjoyed that status with his own people.

FISH FACT - **Quillback** (*Carpoides cyprinus Lesueur*) The northern-most range of the quillback is the North Saskatchewan River from Edmonton downstream into Saskatchewan. The quillback can reach 200 mm (20 in) long and can weigh up to 2.7 kg (6 lbs). They live for about 10 years vacuuming up the riverbed, consuming all kinds of bottom detritus (decaying matter), plant matter, and insect larvae, especially midge larvae. Larval quillbacks begin life eating waterfleas and other small plankton (floating microscopic plants and animals) from the water column. They are a turbid river fish. Called *Sugkarp* in Sweden and *Vantuzlu baligi* in Turkey, these medium-sized fish prefer quiet river pools and backwater.

ECO-TIP - Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary. In popular areas: Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites. Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

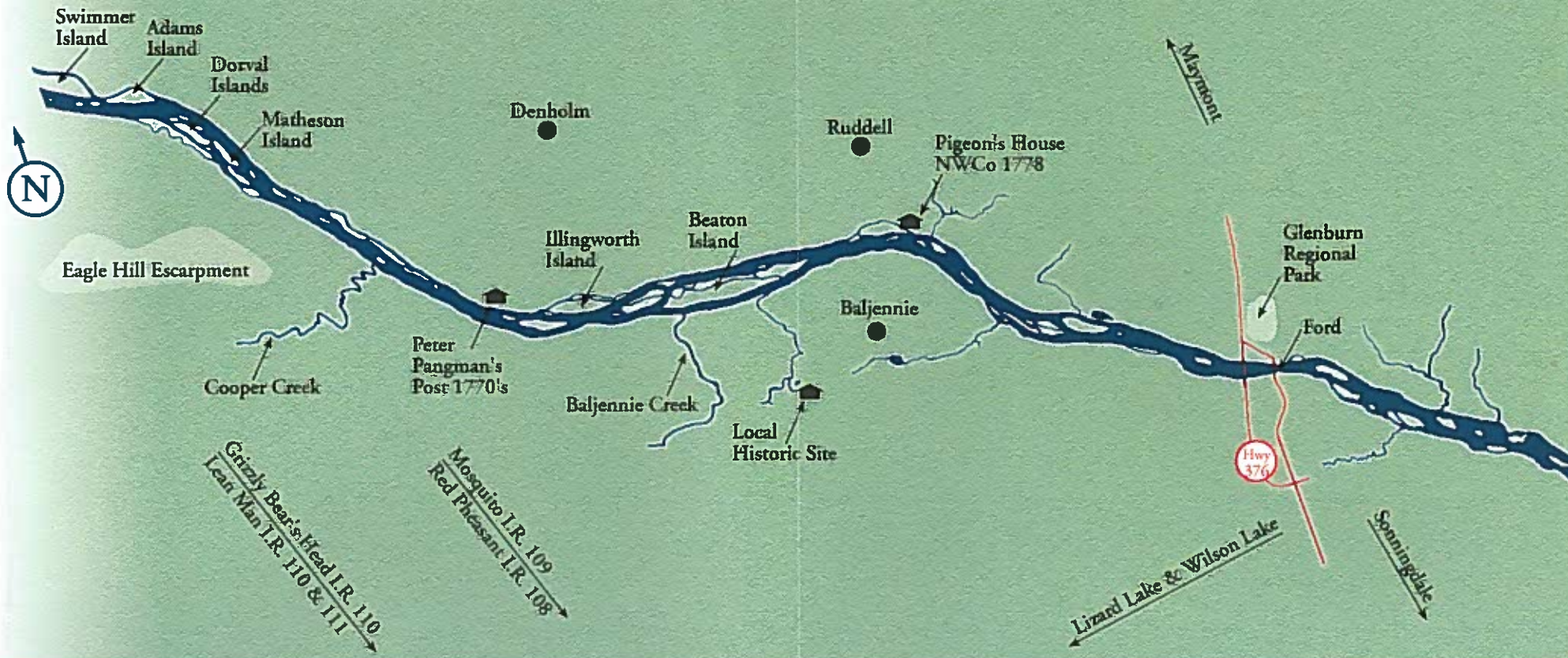
The Cree called a man who had been made chief by the Europeans, "*Okimab kan*" or "make believe chief". The chief who gained his status through respect from his people was called "*Okimawak*" or "real chief".

September 14th, 1846 - Paul Kane describes wildlife along the North Saskatchewan River, "*Saw an immense number of cabrees, or prairie antelopes.*"

May 14, 1885 - 30 loads of provisions were seized by the Indians on Red Pheasant's Reserve while trying to pass through the Eagle Hills. These supplies had been sent to provide for the soldiers engaged in the North West Rebellion. Included in provisions taken were 20 yoke of cattle and 10 teams of horses.

ECO-TIP - Make your own fire starter cubes: Put a piece of charcoal in each section of a paper egg carton. Cover with melted wax. Tear apart and use as needed. You can use sawdust, rolled cardboard, dryer lint or Pistachio shells instead of the charcoal.

ANIMAL FACT - Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) is the size of a medium cat, with a stout body, small head, short legs, and a bushy tail. It has long, straight claws for digging out mice and ripping apart logs to get at insect grubs and larvae. The skunk's sticky, smelly spray is easily avoided. It is not an aggressive creature, preferring to retreat if it is able. A distressed skunk growls and hisses, stamping its front feet rapidly. It may even walk a short distance on its front feet with its tail high in the air. It cannot spray from this position. In order to discharge one of about six potential stink bombs it usually humps its back and turns in a U-shaped position so that both the head and tail face the enemy.



1:50,000 Maps: 73 C/9, 73 B/12, 73 B/5

PLANT FACT - Manitoba Maple (*Acer negundo*) often grows on large river islands and it was from these that Aboriginal people tapped the sap. Manitoba Maple sap flows prolifically in the spring and, although it has 2% sucrose versus about 4% in the Sugar Maple it makes a refreshing drink and pleasant tasting syrup. Aboriginal people tapped river island maples every spring right until the turn of the 20th Century. This maple species has ash-like leaves ash but produces key-like fruits like the maples. It is sometimes called the ashleaf maple. The seeds, which remain on the tree over winter, is an important winter food source for birds and mammals.

BIRD FACT - Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) eats just about anything organic: carrion, small vertebrates, other birds' eggs and nestlings, berries, seeds, invertebrates and human garbage. They are watchful, intelligent birds capable of solving puzzles. A flock of crows is called a 'murder', however they gather to roost at night, not to hunt in a group. Crows and ravens are often mistaken for one another although crows are smaller and have a distinctive "caw-caw" sound, while the common raven's call is a varied, deep, guttural croaking, "wonk-wonk".

"I have a new appreciation for the North Saskatchewan River. The story it has to tell is so intriguing and it has been rewarding to be able to develop a finished product worthy of telling its tale."
Ken Iurina, President, Too Draw Inc.

ECO-TIP: Minimize Campfire Impacts - Use a lightweight stove for cooking and a candle lantern for light. Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires. Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Bones of many ancient creatures have been found up Eagle Creek, including those of plesiosaurs, which were water dwellers that lived in the Inland Sea that covered this area millions of years ago. On Eagle Creek near Hershel, Saskatchewan there are ancient petroglyphs, four etched stones on a site that is at least 1650 years old.

The earliest European settlers along Eagle Creek were Russian Mennonite Brethren who came in 1897 from Kiev in Ukraine. Others followed in 1902.

The globally and nationally endangered Whooping Crane stops at Radisson Lake during both the spring and fall migration. Whooping Crane population was 183 as of winter 1998/99. Piping Plovers (designated vulnerable and nationally endangered) nest along the shores of Radisson Lake. Tundra Swans stop here during both spring and fall migrations where as many as 2,500 birds (over 1% of the estimated North American population) were counted in one day. Also, over 20,000 ducks (several different species) have been recorded, along with over 7,000 Snow Geese.

ECO-TIP: In the bush, an environmentally friendly toilet hole is six to 8 inches deep and a minimum of 200 feet away from a water source. An environmentally friendly toilet is not on a drainage path to the river.

PLANT FACT - Bulrush-Cyperaceae (*Sedge Family*) "Sedges have edges." Remember this when identifying members of Cyperaceae. They all grow in wet areas, if not right in streams and ponds, which is another clue. Stems are usually solid and three-angled (those edges - you may have to slice it toward the base to really see it). The sedge family provides a good food source to people who are lost or stranded. The pink-coloured base can be nibbled raw or added to soup or roasted on hot coals. The inner core of the bulrush is edible and so are the pollen and seeds. Egyptian papyrus was made from sedge plants. In Mrs. Grieve's old English herbal it states that sedges were used for "*food and fuel, sails and cordage, blankets and sieves...*"

June 6th, 1848, at Fort Carleton, Paul Kane mentions an Indian battle at a ford (somewhere in this reach) between 90 lodges of Cree and the 1,200 lodges of the Blackfoot confederacy. The Cree lost 14 warriors and suffered 40 wounded. The Blackfoot lost less than a dozen. The Cree were forced to flee their camp, leaving their tents behind with “*two old enfeebled chiefs*” remaining at the best lodge, “*having dressed themselves in their gayest clothes and ornaments, painted their faces, lit their pipes, and sat singing their war songs, until the Blackfeet came up and soon dispatched them*”.

The Redberry Biosphere Reserve, UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located just west of the North Saskatchewan River, southwest of Blaine Lake and west of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. It received this designation in 2000. It is primarily a wildlife sanctuary that has been protected since 1915. Although Redberry Lake is not a feeder lake for the North Saskatchewan River, pelicans, herons, crested cormorants and other water and shore birds from this sanctuary come to the North Saskatchewan River to fish since Redberry Lake is saline and does not support game fish. Redberry is an important nesting area for the endangered piping plover, the boreal forest outlier and is also home to the gray squirrel.

From the Borden Bridge, downstream to the end of this reach, is an interesting phenomenon: the soil on the west side of the river is class 5 soil (rocky, stony land) and the soil on the east side of the river is class 1 soil (soil with no significant limitations to crop production).

PLANT FACT - Beaked Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*) A much branched shrub that produces nuts inside coarse haired bracts. Nuts are 26.6% protein, 62.4% fat and provide some vitamin B complex as well as Calcium and iron. These were collected by early peoples, roasted, ground, boiled and the fat skimmed to be used as nutritious flavouring, then the meal dried and saved for soup or travel cakes.

BUTTERFLY FACT - In the summer along this reach it is possible to see Black (Kahli) Swallowtails, Anise Swallowtails as well as Western Tiger Swallowtails.



1:50,000 Maps: 73 B/5, 73 B/6, 73 B/7, 73 B/10

BIRD FACT - Redwing Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) is a colony nester, joining other blackbirds in cattail stands and in shoreline shrubs where it weaves a nest from dried fronds, leaves and grass, and lines the nest with fine grass and other soft material. It has a varied diet that includes seeds, waste grain, invertebrates, insects caught in flight, as well as berries. The genus name *Agelaius* is from the Greek word *agelaios*, meaning to feed in large groups; the species name *phoeniceus* is from Greek word *phoinikos*, meaning crimson-red, which, of course, refers to the male's red shoulder epaulets.

ECO-TIP - A big coffee tin makes a quick camp stove that can cook a pancake or brew a small amount of water for tea with just a handful of thick twigs. Cut a square hole that will look like a door when the can is set upside down. With a nail, punch a dozen air holes in the back. Make a small fire under it. Grease the top for pancakes. Keep the fire small and feed it steadily with twigs.

"I have sipped of her, swum beneath her, died within her and was given a second life because of her. Please tell my mother not to worry, for my lady the river is taking care of me now."

Travis Boonstra, NSW summer student, 2001

ECO-TIP: Take only photos. Leave only footprints. Resist the temptation to remove things for souvenirs.

BETWEEN THE TWO SASKATCHEWANS – between the Liard area and The Forks there are peculiar sand dunes deposited by post-glacial winds. These sand dunes are the most northerly until the massive sand dunes south of Lake Athabasca in Northern Alberta.

During the fall and winter of 1766 and 1767, four Hudson's Bay men wintered along the North Saskatchewan River. When they returned to the Bay, the men commanded 156 canoes heaped with fur - 31, 640 'made beaver'. The next year, William Pink brought 240 canoes of furs from the Saskatchewan to the Bay.

In 1797, *La Montee*, meaning a stopping place, was built by the North West Company in the vicinity of the later Fort Carleton. Corn was grown beside the fort in those early days.

In 1810, the Hudson's Bay Company built a fort on opposite side of river from *La Montee* and three miles downstream. It was first known as Carleton House.

In 1819, and 1820 the scientific expedition of John Franklin wintered on the North Saskatchewan and traveled up and down the river past Prince Albert during their exploration of the river about twenty years before Franklin tried to find the North West Passage.

In 1820, the two forts amalgamated. Fort *La Montee* was dismantled and its logs floated down river to Carlton to build more buildings.

ANIMAL FACT - Moose (*Alces alces*) is the world's largest member of the deer family. A moose can measure 2 m (6 ft) at the shoulder and weigh 450 kg (1000 pounds). The word moose comes from an Algonkian word meaning twig-eater. They prefer the tips and leaves of deciduous trees as well as aquatic plants like yellow pond lily (*Nuphar sp.*) and pondweed (*Potamogeton sp.*). Except during breeding season moose are very silent animals, feeding in the cool shadows of the forest. Baby moose can browse and follow their mother by the time they are three weeks old and are completely weaned at five months, however they stay with their mother for at least a year, until the next young are born.

In 1856, Carleton House was renamed Fort Carleton. The Cree continued to call it *Pa-hon-an-ik* (a watching place).

In October 1857, explorer Lieutenant Thomas Blakiston, of the Royal Artillery, assigned to the Palliser Expedition into Rupert's Land, wintered at Fort Carleton where he set up a small magnetic recording studio. "*He was the first scientific man to ascend the Saskatchewan River and comment on its suitability for steam navigation.*"

August 6, 1876 - *Mistawasis, Star Blanket, Strike-Him-On-The-Back* & other Indian leaders signed Treaty 6 at Fort Carlton.

Blaine Lake is an important shorebird habitat and whooping crane migration stopover.

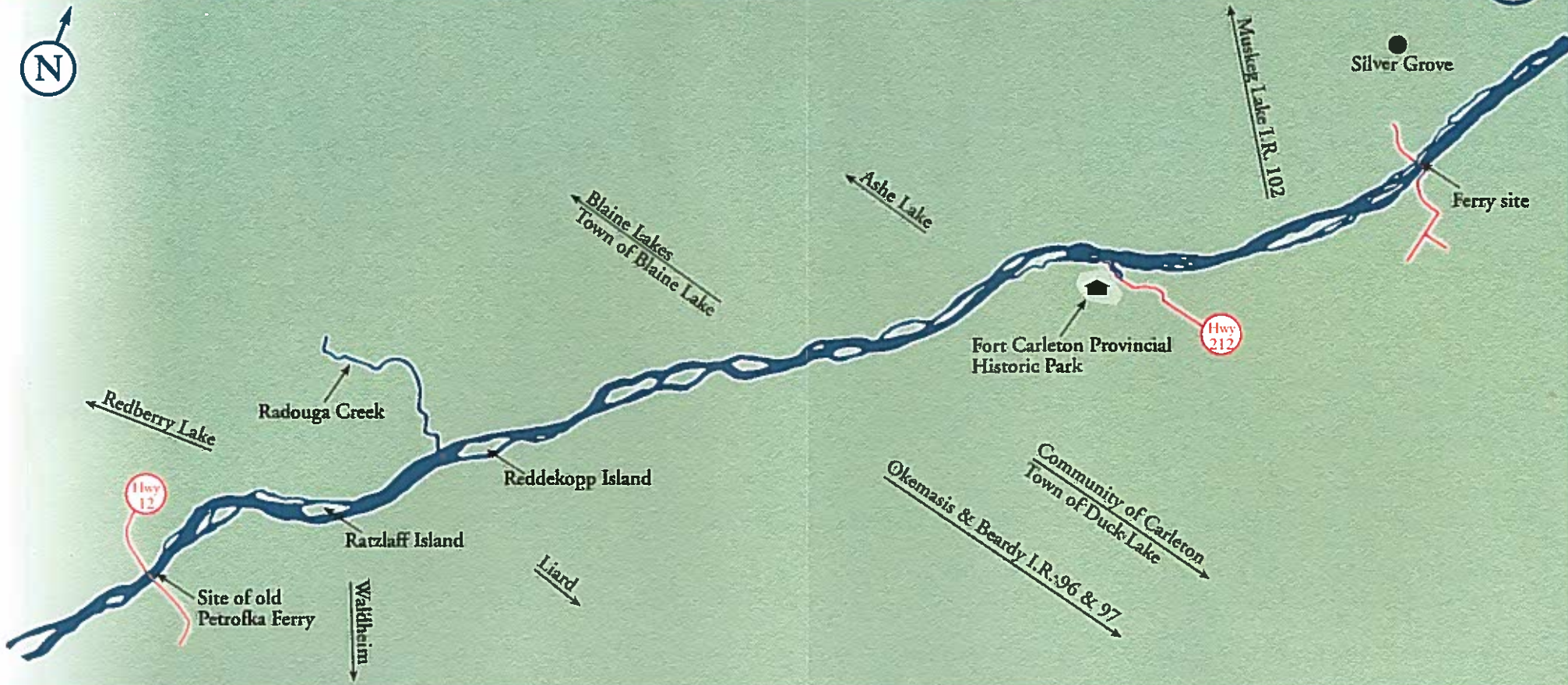
Records of drilling in Saskatchewan indicate that the Geological Survey of Canada drilled the first well at Fort Pelly in 1874/75 and the second at Fort Carleton, on the North Saskatchewan River, in 1875.

In December 27, 1884, 20 North West Mounted Police, with their wives and children, under Superintendent L. F. N. Crozier, arrived at Fort Carlton from Regina.

During the night of March 27-28, 1885, Fort Carlton burned to the ground. It was not re-built. All the people stationed there moved downstream to Prince Albert.

July 2nd, 1885 - At Fort Carlton, Big Bear and his young son, Horsechild, surrendered.

BIRD FACT - Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) In 1950 there were about 1 million Canada Geese; in 1965, 1.5 million; in 1999 over 5 million. Canada Geese mate for life, and family groups stay together for several months after the young hatch. The wings of a gander protecting the nest deliver blows of great force. Canada geese migrate in large V-shaped formations, honking loudly as they fly. They migrate at a slow pace, stopping many times along the way. There are at least 40 subpopulations of this species so a Canada Goose in one region may look different from a Canada Goose in another. They are hardy birds, putting on a thick layer of fat during the early stages of their migration so they can easily stay grounded during extended periods of severe weather.



1:50,000 Maps: 73 B/10, 73 B/15, 73 B/16

PLANT FACT - Saskatchewan and Manitoba hold the last remaining significant colonies of the great historical plant **SENECA ROOT** (*Polygala senega*) also known as Snake Root – Snicker Root – Medicine Root.
PLEASE DO NOT DIG THIS ROOT.
 Once an abundant cash crop for Aboriginal peoples and pioneers along the river, it has been eradicated from most areas all over North America.

In 1880, *The Lily* traveled upstream six times, her cargo including a steam gristmill, a sawmill, a threshing machine for Fort Edmonton, and on a return trip down river, she “carried coal to be tried as winter fuel at Carleton House.”

J. G. MacGregor mentions two old Buffalo pound locations on the river still known in 1949, one on the north side of the river at Fort Carleton, Saskatchewan and the other on the south side of the river in the Hairy Hill area in Alberta.

Firewood is usually in abundance on the upstream side of islands. When water is high, the river deposits drift wood of every sort.

“The North Saskatchewan River is both mysterious and magnetic. It is full of mysterious stories and every time we see something washed up on an island we wonder how far it traveled before coming to rest there. An irresistible magnetic pull brings us back for another canoe trip.” Don and Charlene Dubyna, Saskatchewan canoeists

ECO-TIP: Keep an eye on the sky, it is unsafe to be on the water during electrical storms. Boating conditions on the river vary greatly with changes in weather conditions and water level. Know your boating skill level and be familiar with the section of river you paddle.

August 14th, 1774 - Samuel Hearne, traveled on the "River Theiscatchiwan to a little creek, which is said by the Natives to abound with fish [and] we found a ware (weir) ready built for ketching them..."

In 1775, free trader Peter Pond, with six men, entered the North Saskatchewan River basin, searching for new fur territory. They built a fort on the river near the present site of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. This is usually referred to as the first Sturgeon River Fort.

In 1776, J. G. MacGregor mentions net fishing in the Sturgeon River around this time when the river was known as Net-setting River.

Between 1776 and 1798, five different Fort Sturgeons were built in the area around present day Prince Albert by the North West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company and the XY Company.

In June 1862, the first documented settler, James Isbister, a Metis trapper and interpreter for Hudson's Bay Company, and his wife settled on south bank of river on land which later became part of the town of Prince Albert.

A pelican's food (small fish, salamanders, frogs, etc.) is scooped up and retained while the water is forced out between the closed upper and lower parts of the beak.

PLANT FACT - Cranberry (*Vaccinium sp.*) There are several species found in North Saskatchewan River Valleys including the bog cranberry, also known as marsh whortle berry or swamp berry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*). Cranberries are food for geese, partridges, birds of the grouse family, bears, and martens. Bog cranberries indicate moist to very wet, nitrogen-poor soils and high surface groundwater.

ANIMAL FACT - Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) are secretive creatures, active at night and seldom seen in the wild. Their main food source is the snowshoe hare, which has a population fluctuation that follows a 10-year cycle. The fur-trading records of the Hudson's Bay Company show a closely linked 10-year cycle of growth and decline in populations of these two species over the past 200 years.

In 1865, the Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Albert on the south side of the river, near present day town of Prince Albert. It operated until 1885.

In 1866, although Europeans had been traveling along the North Saskatchewan River for over a hundred years by that time, Reverend Nesbit and his family are considered the first permanent European settlers in the area around Prince Albert.

In 1868, there was a minor gold rush on a sand bar 2 miles from Nisbet's mission in the vicinity of the present town of Prince Albert.

In the spring of 1875, a group of Aboriginal people who had gone to the big island immediately west of Prince Albert to tap maple trees were surprised at night by a sudden rise of water caused by an ice jam downstream. All were drowned except a mother and daughter who were able to cling to a tree until rescued in the morning.

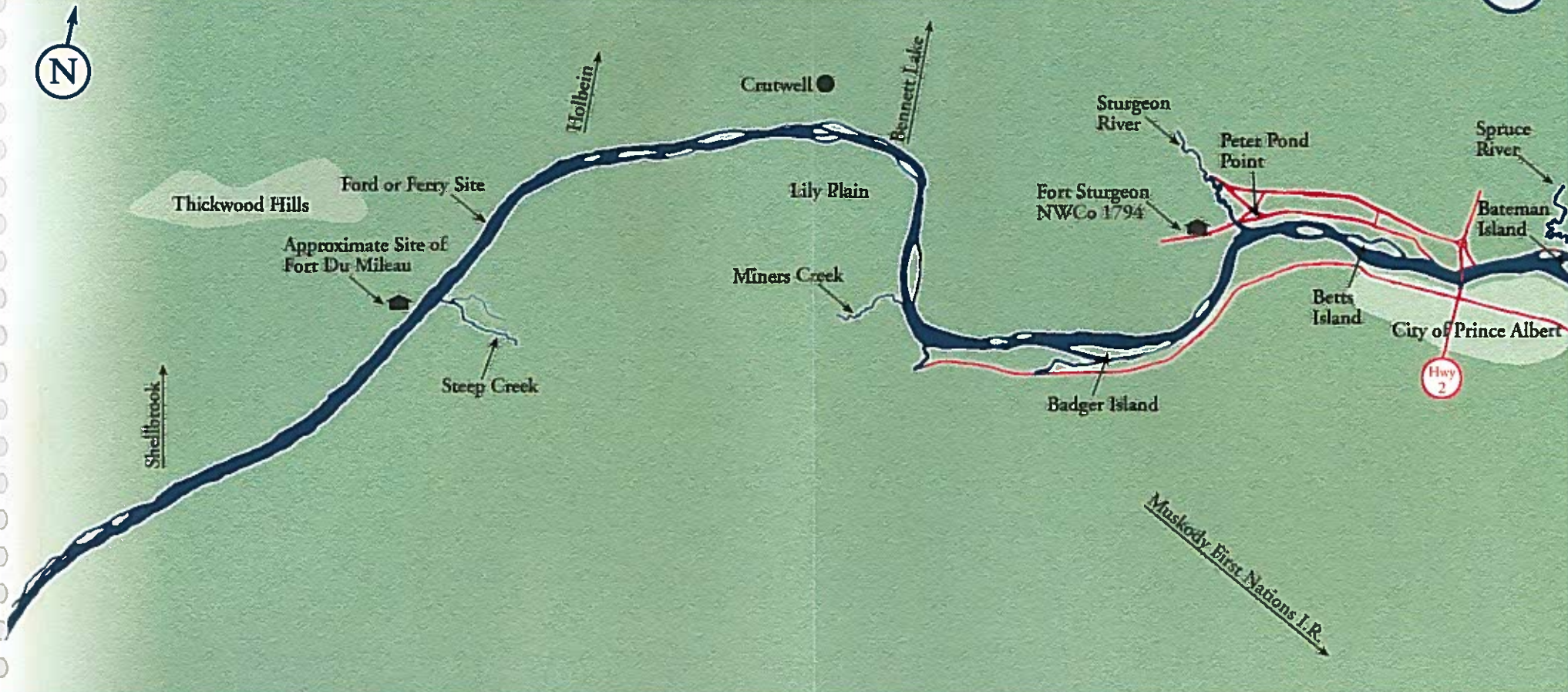
In 1880, a Hudson's Bay Company grist mill was built in Prince Albert using framing timber sent downstream from Edmonton that spring. It started to grind grain on the 4th of December of that year.

In 1882, Stobart and Co. opened a fur trading headquarters on the North Saskatchewan River at Prince Albert.

In 1882, just as a new fleet of sternwheelers began business on the North Saskatchewan River, the river cut a new channel and changed its course at the Sturgeon River, and "the confidence of shippers in the reliability of the Saskatchewan steamboats to deliver freight was destroyed."

PLANT FACT - Western Wood Lily, or Tiger Lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*) is Saskatchewan's Provincial flower. Please do not pick this beautiful flower. It is a perennial, prairie plant that has disappeared from many riverside environments due to soil disturbance and over picking. It was an important food source for early people (the bulblets are nutritious and delicious).

BIRD FACT - The Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) is particularly abundant along the North Saskatchewan River around Prince Albert. It prefers insects during the breeding season when more than 90 percent of its food is made up of insects and spiders. During the winter it relies more on berries and fruit. One of its beautiful songs sounds a little like: *oh- holy, holy, holy; ah- purity, purity, purity; eeh- sweetly, sweetly, sweetly.*



1:50,000 Maps: 73 G/1, 73 H/4

In 1884, Louis Riel came up river to attend a meeting of Prince Albert citizens in Jimmy Treston's Hall on 149 River Street West.

From August 1890 to the summer of 1891, Lucy Maud Montgomery lived in Prince Albert with her father. She was about 14 years old at that time.

Two Steamboats were built in the town of Prince Albert. In 1904, the first, *The Saskatchewan* was built for the Hudson Bay Company and used to transport freight for the company up and down the length of the North Saskatchewan River.

In 1907, *The City of Prince Albert* was built to work in the regional logging operations.

In 1916, the steamboat, *City of Prince Albert*, was sold to a local syndicate which re-outfitted the ship with Saloons and Dance Halls and renamed it the *George V*.

In 1917, during the Prairie Prohibition Era, the *George V* operated as a 'Rum-Runner', transporting and selling alcohol across 3 provinces from The Pas, Manitoba to Edmonton, Alberta. The *George V* usually anchored out in the middle of the water with all of the lights on and the piano music playing. Local people would go out in canoes or rowboats to join the festivities.

"On a fall trip on the river, upstream from Prince Albert, wildlife biologist Philip Taylor and I poked around sandbars and maple-treed islands where Aboriginal people used to gather sap. Arriving at Fort Carleton by water brought images of earlier days: families boarding the steamer Northcote, York Boats and canoes departing with furs for points east." Peter Kingsmill Editor-in-Chief, TOURISM magazine (Canadian Tourism Commission), and Chairman, The Heart of Canada's Old Northwest Tourism Marketing Organization Inc.

ECO-TIP: Pack it in, pack it out. Pack a small plastic bag for trash that others may have left behind.

"The Forks" – the meeting place of two great confluences was also the meeting place of early First Nation's people. They met here to trade and celebrate long before Europeans arrived.

In 1748, *Le Chevalier de la Verendrye*, of New France built a small fort "near the forks of the Saskatchewan." On a map, which he sent to France in 1750, *la Verendrye* called the North Saskatchewan River the "Poskaiao".

In 1751, *Jacques Repentigny Legardeur de Saint-Pierre* of New France, sent two canoes west to build a small post just east of the forks on the Pascoyac (Saskatchewan), which he called *La Jonquiere*. A few years later *Chavalier de La Corne* built a fort at the forks of the North Saskatchewan and the South Saskatchewan, which he called *La Corne*.

August 24, 1754 - Anthony Henday records, "In the evening came to Sechonby River (North Saskatchewan); it is about 2 furlongs wide and full of Sandy Islands; the current runs easterly, and very rapid; the water deep; the banks high, on which grow Birch and Hazle trees."

In 1794, the first Fort Carleton was built below 'the forks'. In 1810, it was moved upriver to its more familiar location (judged to be the half-way point between Fort Garry and Edmonton).

The steepest drop in the river for navigation occurs between present day Prince Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Forks. York Boats began to be used on this portion of the river in 1797.

BIRD FACT - The area round the 'Forks' has some of the northern-most **Piping Plover** (*Charadrius melodus*) nesting habitat. Since 1985, this species has been considered endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. These are small, stocky, insect-loving shorebirds, well camouflaged on sand and gravel bars. If they are disturbed too often they will abandon their nest, eggs and even their young.

ANIMAL FACT - **River Otter** (*Lutra canadensis*) may still be sighted along this reach. The River otter is the largest member of the Mustelidae family, which also includes mink, weasel, skunk and badger. Adult otters are three to four feet long, including a 12 to 18-inch tail, and weigh from 15 to 25 pounds. In 1800, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company reported 65,000 otters shipped to Europe.

In the 1870's, the Hudson's Bay Company introduced steamboats to the North Saskatchewan River. The first unnamed steamer was wrecked on its maiden voyage so the first steamboat to enter the river at 'the forks' was *The Northcote*, followed by *The Lily* in 1877. By 1883 these two had been joined by *The Manitoba*, *The Northwest*, *The Marquis* and others.

July 22, 1875 - From a letter written by Chief Factor Hamilton, "it would not take much to remove from the channel some of the large boulder stones which at present makes the Cole's Falls a dangerous place to run down when the water is at all low."

August 17, 1878 - *The Northcote* struck a sunken rock running Coles Falls, breaking 83 frames and damaging her planking.

In 1880, *The Northcote* made 5 return trips on the North Saskatchewan from Grand Rapids to Edmonton. On one of those trips, near Cumberland House, a baby boy was born aboard to Reverend John Reader's wife. They christened him 'Northcote Reader' and he later became a river boatman on the North Saskatchewan.

1883 - "on her second upriver voyage of the 1883 season, *The Marquis*, the flagship of the Saskatchewan fleet, had approached the foot of Cole's Falls only to discover that she could not climb the rapids and complete her sortie to Prince Albert with her cargo of binders essential to the town's grain harvest..."

BUTTERFLY FACT - In the area around the 'Forks' look for Grizzled Skippers, Common Branded Skippers, Eastern Pine Elpins, Old World Swallowtails, Dorcus Coppers and Cranberry Blues.

PLANT FACT - Paper Birch (*Betula papyrifera*) Birch leaves can be chewed and the paste applied to bee and wasp stings. Aboriginal people used to give a piece of thick, sweet birch bark to babies to chew on when they were teething. Long ago birch bark was used to make canoes, sleds, teepee door covers, food platters, bowls, cups, moose callers, net weaving shuttles as well as birch biting artwork. This species is an important food source for many animals. Beaver and rabbits often eat the small trees while deer, moose and elk graze on the bark and leaves of some of the larger trees. Many birds and small mammals eat paper birch buds, catkins and seeds. Paper birch is a favorite feeding tree of yellow-bellied sapsuckers, that peck holes in the bark to feed on the sap. Hummingbirds and red squirrels also feed at the sap wells in holes created by sapsuckers.



Kalyna

Meath Park

Wettable

To Hudson Bay
via Lake Winnipeg



1:50,000 Maps: 73 H/4, 73 H/3, 73 H/6

BIRD FACT - Nashville Warblers (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) are found in this area. They are a highly migratory neotropical species that winters in Mexico. They are tiny, insect eating birds, about 4" long. They resemble other larger warblers but are distinguished by their white eye ring. While feeding, these warblers are often seen in flocks of several dozen.

BIRD FACT - Only persistent and quiet birders will spot an **American Black Duck** (*Anas rubripes*) along this reach. It is sometimes called the Black Mallard due to its similar size and shape and is very shy. Once a favorite with hunters, its population had severely declined by the 1970's but with more restrictive hunting regulations in both Canada and the United States this duck population is increasing.

One summer, in the early 1880's, a stagecoach driven by Robert Ross was robbed on route from Prince Albert to Qu'Appelle. The thief was not caught until the following winter when Ross spotted the man watering his horses in a hole chopped in the river ice parallel to 22 - 8th Street East in Prince Albert. Although the bandit confessed that he followed the river trail east of Prince Albert looking for a place to hide his loot and finally buried the loot under a boulder at the forks, the money was never found, not even by him when he got out of jail. He had marked the boulder with charcoal that had washed off in the rain.

There are six sets of rapids within 170 miles of river above the Forks. Cole's Rapids, which were called Cole's Falls in the early days of the fur trade, are about 30 miles below Prince Albert.

"From the earliest days people lived close to the river, knowing that water is the source of life. The North Saskatchewan River provides water for agriculture, industry, municipalities, recreation and wildlife activities. Without water, none of these activities or livelihoods would flourish. This precious resource needs to be protected and managed with full knowledge of its impact on everyone and everything."

Cindy Shepel, Watershed Engineer, President NSWA

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Although every effort has been made to ensure accurate and interesting information, the NSWA would like to be alerted to any errors or omissions.

Interesting river facts that may have been overlooked will be considered for subsequent printings of the guide.

Please send these and any other comments to: water@nswa.ab.ca.

Check out our Website for more river-related information: www.nswa.ab.ca.

A River Guide Bibliography may be requested from: water@nswa.ab.ca

