

Canoe Lake Youth Camp

August 28 to September 1, 2005

Goals and Objectives:

Part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) mandate is to develop on-the-land programs for youth in wildlife stewardship and to foster ethical hunting practices. To help meet these goals ENR implemented the Canoe Lake Youth Camp. The objectives are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for youth to enjoy the northern outdoors and to view various species of wildlife.
- To teach ethical hunting practices and how to properly field dress caribou.
- To teach firearm and bear safety.

ENR, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Aboriginal Healing Foundation Youth Program, Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee and Ehdiitat Renewable Resource Council provided funding for the program.

Location:

Canoe Lake (N68°13' W135°54') is in the Richardson Mountains on the border of the GSA and ISR, twenty-one air miles south west of Aklavik, NT. The timing of the camp was arranged in order to coincide with the fall migration of the Porcupine Caribou Herd.



Caribou meat being loaded on to the floatplane.

Participants at the Camp:

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| <i>Ian Mcleod</i> | <i>ENR RRO II</i> |
| <i>Jonathan Pascal</i> | <i>Hunt Leader</i> |
| <i>Sara Margaret Mcleod</i> | <i>Volunteer</i> |
| <i>Sam Mcleod</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>Charmaine Elanik</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>William Paul</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>Chris Semple</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>Tom Mcleod</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>Jordan Mcleod</i> | <i>Youth</i> |
| <i>Frank Kasook</i> | <i>Youth</i> |

What We Did:

August 28

The first floatplane departed Aklavik for Canoe Lake at 2:00 PM. Everyone was able to make it out on the four-chartered flights by 5:00 PM. Officer Mcleod arrived on the final flight and the youths had finished building a new floor for the tent frame and soon had their tent set. We were very excited to see caribou during the flight in. After supper we completed camp preparations, followed by a presentation on firearm and bear safety.



The floor of the tent frame is nearly completed.

August 29

The morning was clear and sunny. There was a herd of caribou close to the camp. Samuel, William and Jonathan harvested one young bull. Later in the afternoon more caribou came to the lake just across from the camp. Several of the youth paddled across and were able to harvest two more caribou. The youngest member of the camp, and the only female, spotted several caribou behind the camp. Officer Mcleod took them hunting and they shot a large bull caribou. Later in the evening Jonathan led another group of youth for a hike up a hill above the camp. The youth spotted several caribou and built Inukshuks.



Tom and Charmain are happy with their hunt.

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August 30

On the third day of the camp Sara and Jonathan taught the youth how to skin and field dress the caribou. That evening Jonathan took another group of youth to a creek behind the camp where they harvested four more caribou. All the participants assisted in packing the meat back to camp.

August 31

The morning was cool and cloudy and we had fresh snow on the ground. We received word that the AIB was chartering several flights out to our camp that day to bring in some elders, youths and staff. We cleaned up the camp and field dressed the remaining caribou. We hiked to the south end of the lake and tried to harvest several more caribou, but they were skittish and we were unsuccessful. However we did pick some blue berries.



William Paul with prize bull caribou.

The AIB charters first arrived at about 17:00. We prepared a big meal for our guests. Some of the youth went up in the hills behind camp and harvested four more caribou. On this hunt William Paul harvested the biggest caribou of the whole camp. We all took part in carrying the meat back to camp. Most of our visitors flew back out that evening. Some youth and chaperones from AIB stayed overnight.



Hunt Leader Jonathan Pascal and youth with Inukshuk they built.

September 1

A few herds of caribou were spotted north of the camp, so to take advantage of the additional youth; Officer Mcleod took them out on a hunt. The first herd of caribou bolted up the hill, but we were patient and a second herd soon came along. We were fortunate to harvest two caribou out of this herd. The plane, taking people back to Aklavik arrived at about 13:00. The first four flights went well and all the youth, except for one, went back to Aklavik with the meat. Due to unexpected aircraft problems some of us had to spend another night at Canoe Lake.



Officer Mcleod demonstrating field dressing of a caribou.

September 2

As we did not expect the flight out to arrive until later in the evening we went out on a hike to a ridge above the north end of the lake. We saw some caribou and a moose. That evening we hiked to a beaver lodge near the camp and observed three beaver storing willows for the winter cache. The plane came to pick us up at about 22:30 and we all flew out.

What We Learned

Being on the path of the Porcupine Caribou migration over three days was a unique experience. The youth truly enjoyed flying out to a remote lake and camping in the mountains.

The youth also saw various types of wildlife and viewed scenery that some of them may only have heard about before this camp. Although we did not see a bear, bear safety was always stressed.

They learned important lessons about living on the land and participating in a fall caribou hunt. Some of the youth had never been out hunting before, or handled a firearm, or even worked with caribou meat.

Providing this type of opportunity for youth, an opportunity some may not otherwise have, is an important part of passing along conservation education, traditional knowledge and learning about their aboriginal cultures.