

'OVER THE

The Soper River cuts through the exposed rock of southern Baffin Island alongside the unmarked Itijjagiq Trail.

LAND'

A hiker in a red jacket and dark pants is walking away from the camera on a narrow, rocky trail. The landscape is a vast, open, and rugged terrain with scattered rocks and patches of low-lying vegetation. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a few small buildings. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall atmosphere is serene and expansive.

It's the meaning of *Itijjagiq*, the trail that connects the communities of Iqaluit and Kimmirut across southern Baffin Island, spanning both age-old traditions and recent change

**BY OSSIE MICHELIN
WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID KILABUK**

THE ITIJJAGIAQ TRAIL is more of an expanse than a trail. There are no trail markers here other than nine emergency cabins scattered along the trail's length. No trees or bushes corral hikers along a set path; they must determine which ridge lines to hike or which streams to ford. Nothing but rivers, mountains and marshes influence how far and wide hikers wander to their destination.

For the Inuit of southern Baffin Island, the trail runs through their backyard, and in the winter it becomes a highway of snowmobile tracks connecting Iqaluit's Frobisher Bay to Kimmirut on southern Baffin. It is also where they fish for Arctic char, pick berries and hunt geese, other birds and, at one time, caribou by the hundreds.

"It's a big part of a lot of people's lives, particularly those with family in Kimmirut and Iqaluit who use it to travel back and forth," says Amy Brown, acting manager of parks planning and establishment with Nunavut Parks and Special Places. "Now with a growing population of southerners using the trail as well, its users have grown beyond just local Inuit. It's interesting to share something that is so natural to us here in Nunavut with the rest of Canada as a piece of The Great Trail."



Running 120 kilometres across the Meta Incognita Peninsula, the Itijjagiq is one of the newest additions to The Great Trail and the only section in Nunavut. This is not a hike for beginners: the trail traverses Katannilik Territorial Park, crossing over mountains, vast barren plateaus and lakes and through river valleys. For those experienced enough, however, it is an unforgettable journey.

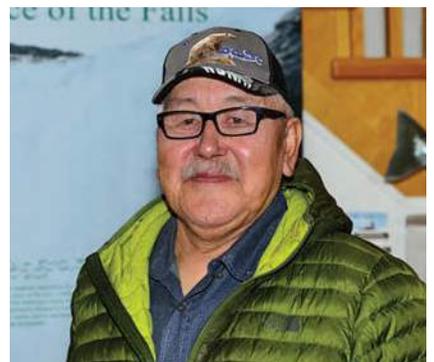
Leaving from Iqaluit south across Frobisher Bay, the trail climbs from sea level to almost 670 metres in altitude across an expansive plateau within a span of about 25 kilometres. The terrain then shifts to broad rolling hills of sheer rock and sparse patches of stunted vegetation. The lack of distinctive points of reference is disorienting.

Two billion years ago, mountains rivaling the Himalayas pushed up here from a continental collision, but glacial erosion and time wore the mountains

down to their roots. Now ever-changing rock and mineral formations dominate the trail's landscape, from chalky mountains of crumbling marble, to monoliths of quartzite and other rocks, to rusty brown cliff faces.

The rocks here are striking, but they are nearly identical to rocks and minerals found farther south in Quebec and Ontario. The difference lies in the fact that the glaciers have relinquished Baffin Island much more recently than southern Canada. And with such short growing seasons, the area has yet to bury the exposed rocks with topsoil, let alone top them with forests, as it has in the South.

The unbroken horizon of the upper plateau all but disappears upon reaching Mount Joy, roughly halfway along the Itijjagiq. Known as *Kiinaujaq* in Inuktitut, this is where the terrain transforms into a deeply embedded sandy and marshy river valley bursting with willows,



The Itijjagiq Trail follows the Soper River Valley (TOP) across much of the Meta Incognita Peninsula. Few people alive today know the region's terrain as well as Elder Sandy Akavak (ABOVE) of Kimmirut (BELOW).

cotton grasses and other plant life all the way to the end of the trail. Across Baffin Island, the Kimmirut area is known for having the most sought-after berries, and in the late summer they are undeniably





IN INUKTITUT, *ITIJAGIAQ* means “over the land,” and for Inuit this is unique, as traditionally they remained along the coastline harvesting the bounty of the sea. Things began to change in 1942 when the American Army built a base at Frobisher Bay, on the trail’s north end, in what is now Iqaluit. With vibrant communities at either end of the peninsula, Inuit began taking the inland trail in winter by dogsled.

“The youth today have no idea what my way of life was like. I know they can’t go back to that way; some people are trying but it’s just not possible,” says Inuit Elder Sandy Akavak. He is a large man with strong weathered hands. Everyone in town greets him as he passes, and he greets them back with a smile and a twinkle in his eye.

The 76-year-old is one of the oldest residents of Kimmirut; he has seen many changes come to Baffin Island in his lifetime. He was born in a tent on a small islet off the Baffin coast. His family moved to Lake Harbour, now Kimmirut, when he was seven so his father could work as a special constable with the RCMP. His father was the first to begin running a dogsled overland to Frobisher Bay. This dogsled route for delivering supplies, assisting the RCMP and delivering the mail would become the basis for most of the Itijjagiq.

“Sometimes we would do the entire trail run just for one letter,” Akavak laughs. He points out that the current trail veers to the north more than his father’s original trail, but he says it

abundant, plump and flavourful. Many Inuit stain their fingers purple and blue harvesting bag upon bag of crowberries and blueberries.

At this time of year, Nunavut conservation officer Sean Noble-Nowdluk patrols along the southern end of the trail on ATV and by jet boat up the Soper River. The 22-year-old bears the mark of a hunter who has spent much time on the Land, with the inverse image of his sunglasses tanned onto his face.

“This is an amazing valley for geese. I’ve never seen so many geese as I have seen here,” says Noble-Nowdluk. As he

Ossie Michelin (@Osmich) focuses his journalism on northern and Indigenous issues. His work has appeared on APTN, CBC Indigenous and Vice. David Kilabuk (@DavidKilabuk) specializes in photographing the area in and around Pangnirtung, Nunavut.

continues up the river, more and more geese enter the sky, disturbed by his boat’s drone. The protected river valley is a summer nesting ground for Canada geese. At their peak, he says, they number in the high thousands and the sound of honking fills the valley.

Also scattered across the river valley are reminders of the thousands of caribou that once roamed here. Antlers, skulls and other bones can be found almost everywhere. Like other caribou herds across the North, the number of Baffin caribou is dwindling significantly. The most recent surveys estimate that there are fewer than 5,000 across all of Baffin, compared with more than 200,000 in the early 1990s.

“They said there used to be thousands of caribou here,” Noble-Nowdluk laments. “You might see one or two now sometimes but not so much since they went away, not like they used to.”



ITIJJAGIAQ

makes him happy to know people are still using the route. Akavak, and later his son, would continue the tradition of working with the RCMP in Kimmirut.

Growing up, Akavak and his brothers would set a trapline in the fall to catch Arctic fox and silver fox to sell to the Hudson's Bay Company trading post in exchange for bullets, equipment and staples such as flour, lard and baking powder.

With the arrival of the American army in the 1940s came snowmobiles, planes parachuting supplies at Christmas, and more and more southerners moving up and bringing with them alcohol and crime, something Akavak says had never been a problem before. For better or worse, being connected by a trail to Iqaluit, and by extension the rest of the world, has brought many changes to Kimmirut. Akavak, for his part, hopes that the Itijjagiq joining The Great Trail network will bring many new visitors and friendly faces looking to explore what makes his home so special.

Brown shares that sentiment and hopes that the trail will open visitors' eyes to the beauty of the territory. "When you look at Nunavut, everywhere is essentially remote. All our communities are fly-in communities," she says. "So having something to draw in people's awareness — to home them in on a particular region — allows visitors to dip their toe in the pond, and it gives



them something to gravitate toward. We're hoping this trail will be the first of many adventures for people in the South as they turn their gaze north toward Nunavut."

Likewise, Brown sees this as more than just a hiking trail but something to give people in the territory a sense of belonging and connection to share with those living in the South.

"Nunavut can feel very removed from the rest of Canada," she says. "The trail helps connect us to the rest of the country even though it's such a vast distance between the southern communities and the southern Great Trail to here all the way up in Nunavut."

KATANNILIK TERRITORIAL Park ranger Andrew Boyd sees visitors of all kinds, each seeking their own adventure in the beautiful land. All visitors must sign up with the park and carry GPS devices, so park staff can track them to ensure their safety. Boyd is the first to say this trail, which can take more than a week to hike in the summer, is not for beginners. "Dealing with the environment, the bugs, the elements, the animals — you never know what to expect," he warns, although he admits that's part of the charm. "You go out there and it's never the same. You can cross the same land and there's always something different. You can appreciate it in a new way every time you go out."

Andrew Boyd (in red), a Katannilik Territorial Park ranger, speaks with Ossie Michelin at one of the trail's emergency cabins (ABOVE). Soper Falls, in Katannilik park (BELOW).

With every season, the trail transforms completely. Boyd jokes that the three seasons are "snow, mud and bug." Each winter the trail becomes a vast untouched canvas only marked by rock faces jutting out defiantly from beneath the soft snow and well-worn snowmobile tracks, which create a wide, hard-packed thoroughfare that can be crossed in a single day. In the spring, as snow softens and the rivers begin to flow again, the trail becomes nearly impassable and is closed for weeks. In the summer, the scent of plants fills the air along with the droning of thousands and thousands of flies. In the autumn before the snow begins to accumulate, the land is quiet and still in anticipation of winter's approach.

Boyd believes that what makes the trail so special is that there is no set way to get from the trail's start to its end. "There's no definitive line that you have to follow. You're always trying to find the animals along the way with no guarantee, because there's nothing to herd them or keep them in anywhere so they just roam, so you have to roam as well. That speaks to the type of trail we have here." 🌀



See 360-degree views of the trail and meet a few of its stewards at cangeo.ca/jf18/baffin.



Thick-billed Murres (Guillemots) diving offshore Nunavut

TALLURUTIUP IMANGA

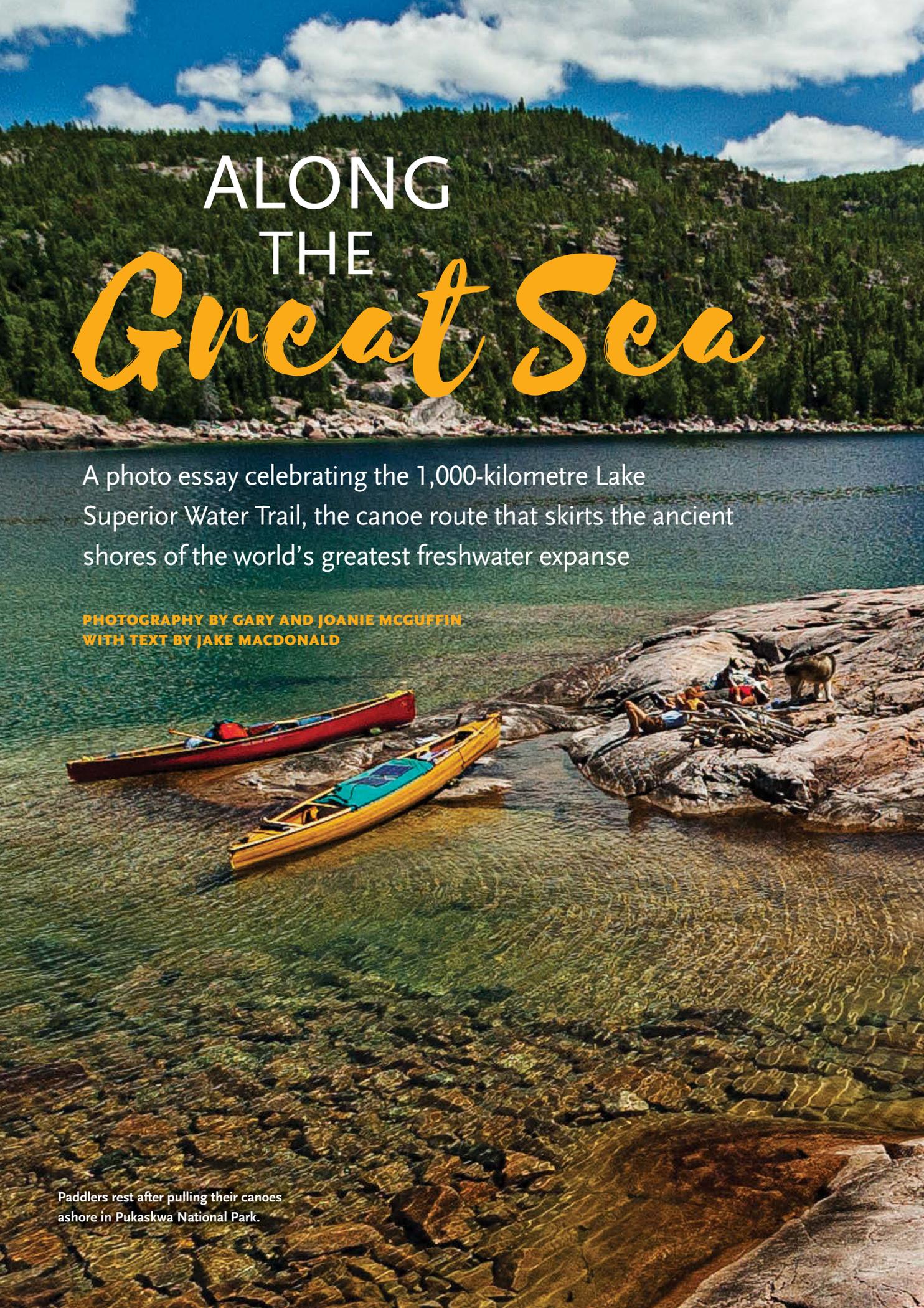
What is Tallurutiup Imanga?

In the future, it will be Canada's largest marine conservation area, located offshore Nunavut. Working together has sustained people of the North for generations. The designation of this diverse marine area is a testament to that spirit of collaboration.

Today we congratulate the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, the Governments of Canada and Nunavut, and all organizations that contributed to the recently announced final boundary agreement for the area. Shell's contribution of 860,000 hectares of offshore rights to the Nature Conservancy of Canada last year helped enable conservation of this wider marine protected area.

Explore more: www.shell.ca/conservation





ALONG THE *Great Sea*

A photo essay celebrating the 1,000-kilometre Lake Superior Water Trail, the canoe route that skirts the ancient shores of the world's greatest freshwater expanse

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY AND JOANIE MCGUFFIN
WITH TEXT BY JAKE MACDONALD**

Paddlers rest after pulling their canoes ashore in Pukaskwa National Park.



ONE OF THE MOST spectacular parts of The Great Trail is the route across the north shore of Lake Superior. Even for motorists, the stretch of Trans-Canada Highway from Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay can be a bit of a challenge, with long gaps between services, erratic weather and the ever-present possibility of a moose jaywalking into the path of your vehicle.

In the past, only skilled paddlers have risked the north shore of Superior. The lake's notorious gales generate massive waves that have swallowed hundreds of ships over the years, some as large as the legendary *Edmund Fitzgerald* (which at 222 metres was about the size of Toronto's TD Bank tower). But with the modern-day development of sturdy canoes and kayaks fit for long-distance travel on a lake of Superior's size, more people than ever before can explore this 1,000-kilometre section of The Great Trail.

A consortium of municipalities, conservation groups, First Nations and myriad volunteers have worked together to build the trail network, which consists of 16 water-access points and a network of campsites and boat launches. Some of these are in lakeshore communities such as RosSPORT and Terrace Bay; many feature hiking trails, picnic tables, composting toilets, bear-proof garbage containers and wheelchair-accessible launching docks.

Still, this is Lake Superior, and anyone interested in exploring the water trail is urged to prepare and exercise caution. The lake has many stretches of rocky, inaccessible shoreline, and weather conditions can change abruptly. Fog can persist for days. Paddlers are therefore urged to monitor marine weather forecasts and remember the old bush pilot's advice: "When in doubt, chicken out."

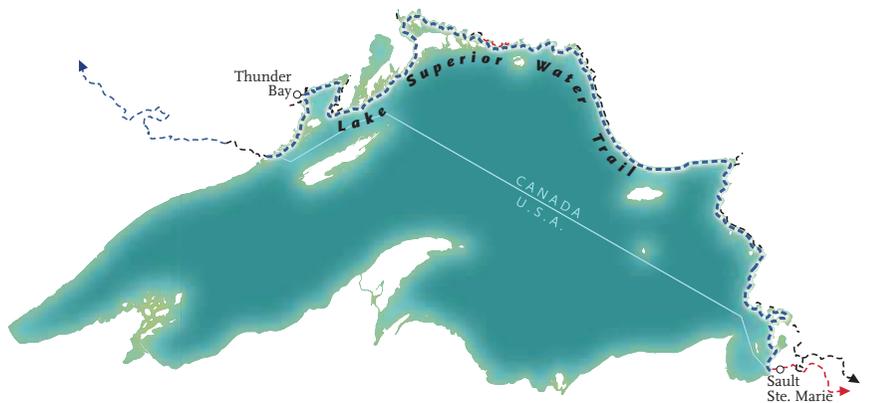
But on calm-weather days, travelling from cove to cove along Superior's shoreline is an unparalleled experience that offers natural wonders with every dip of your paddle. Maybe it's the water, jade-green and as clear as a window, through which you can see boulders looming far beneath you. Or the Till Creek waterfall cascading into the lake near Old Woman Bay. Or the tiny, hardy plants that sprout from barren stone outcrops. Or the soaring ravens drifting like tiny flecks of soot below the rim of ancient cliffs.

No matter which of these draws your eye, each is quintessentially Superior and emblematic of a spiritual intensity you can experience nowhere else but on the big lake they call *Gitchie Gumee*. 🌲

Clockwise from top: Battle Island Lighthouse, located in the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area; a greater yellowlegs; an aerial view of a small island within the marine conservation area.

Gary and Joanie McGuffin are conservation photographers whose work has appeared in the Globe and Mail and explore. Jake MacDonald writes regularly for Report on Business Magazine and Cottage Life.





MAP: CHRIS BRACKLEY/CAN GEO





Clockwise from **OPPOSITE**: Kayakers at Wilson Island, near Rossport; the rock formation known as Nanabijou's Chair in the Gargantua Islands Preserve, near Lake Superior Provincial Park; paddlers explore a cave on St. Ignace Island; sunset on Healy Island, near Rossport.



Watch a video and see photos of filmmaker Dianne Whelan's journey along the Lake Superior Water Trail, part of her attempt to hike, bike and paddle the entirety of The Great Trail, at cangeo.ca/jf18/superior.



RIBBON OF *green*

It's an apt moniker for the Edmonton River Valley Trail, a route that plays an active role in the lives of many in the city. Here are some of their stories.

**BY TIM QUERENGESSER
WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER BRACKEN**

"THOSE WERE JUST the best times for me in the world as a child, being with that little group of girls hiking along the trails," says Sheila Thompson of her introduction to Edmonton's pathways at the age of 10.

It was 1960, and Thompson was in Grade 5 at King Edward Elementary in the Strathcona neighbourhood. Her teacher, Ms. Brenton, was an outdoorswoman who stabled a horse in the city's river valley, and she would hike Thompson and several other girls through the trails on Saturday mornings.

Trail views (clockwise from TOP LEFT): Looking out over the river valley; Edmonton's skyline; the High Level Bridge; a man walks his dog in Forest Heights Park; a volleyball game on the shore of the North Saskatchewan River; Sandra Gaherty and her sons Samuel (left) and Noah in Constable Ezio Faraone Park.



Erin Jackson and her dog, Kaya, in Rundle Park (ABOVE), part of Edmonton's River Valley Trail. The iconic High Level Bridge (BELOW) is visible from many parts of the trail.

Years later, Thompson, as a member of Alberta TrailNet, a group tasked with helping create The Great Trail, worked to establish numerous parts of the network.

Today, she's one of tens of thousands who ride, walk, hike, bike and explore the city's trails. These people and their stories offer a glimpse into what the Edmonton River Valley Trail means to its city. And there may be no more knowledgeable guide to begin such a tour than Thompson.

Before she retired in 2010, Thompson was a teacher, and her instructions for a beginning lesson on The Great Trail in Edmonton are fittingly teacher-like. Meet her on your bicycle at the Alberta Legislature grounds at 8 a.m., sharp.

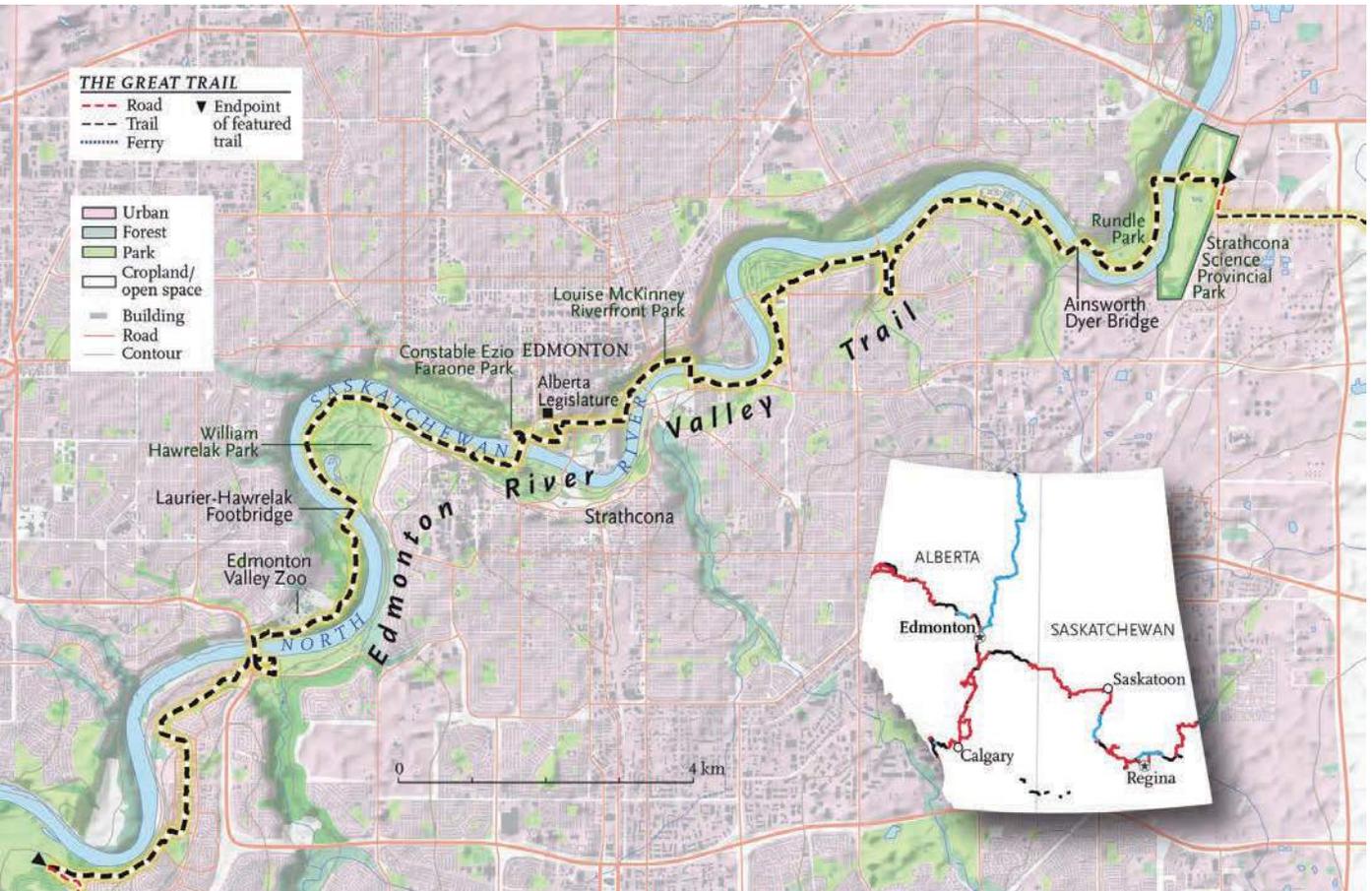
The legislature sits where the fur-trading post Fort Edmonton once did, its presence marked now by a tiny concrete plinth. The trail, Thompson says, offers Edmontonians not only mobility but also a way to connect themselves to the city's past — the river's use as an Indigenous meeting place, then for the fur trade, urban settlement and so on.

"The trail allows you to experience it in three dimensions because you choose the activity that you want to do, you choose the area of the trail you want to visit, and then you can also have the added dimension of time," she says. "This is a historic route, and much of Alberta's Great Trail is built on historic routes."



THE GREAT TRAIL runs along the Petroleum Way highway for a few kilometres before entering the North Saskatchewan River valley at Strathcona Science Provincial Park, tucked away on Edmonton's northeast edge. Refinery smokestacks loom, hugging the river bank.

Harmony Wolgemuth first came here as a junior-high student in the 1980s. Back then, the park was home to government-run pavilions extolling the virtues of turning Alberta's bitumen into oil and displaying old coal mines, while other areas hosted scientists excavating Indigenous artifacts in what became the city's largest-scale archeological project.



“It would have been a field trip, and I wouldn’t have had as much interest in it then as I do now,” says Wolgemuth.

She’s a post-secondary educator today and is interested in finding ways to maintain human connections to places such as this. Wolgemuth, 51, walks her dog, Chili, here at least 12 hours each week. Mountain bikers and a contingent of model airplane enthusiasts — who have taken a spot in the abandoned park as their de facto airfield — are her usual companions, though on this sweltering August afternoon, she’s joined by some nudist sunbathers.

“I hope they have some other plans for this,” Wolgemuth says, as she surveys the UFO-inspired former main building, a would-be lair for some evil genius to plot world domination. It was long ago boarded up. Since she discovered the spot three years ago, Wolgemuth comes regularly, a mug of decaf coffee always in hand, seemingly using

herself as a subtle push to keep life in the park since the closure of its exhibits.

But she can only do so much, despite this park’s connections to the River Valley Trail. “It’s not one of the busiest places going, that’s for sure. But cyclists and dog walkers still use it. If you leave the park sort of half up and half down, looking like a ghost town, and everybody knows it used to be something, but nobody knows why it isn’t any more, it just seems kind of sad.”

Being active is an important part of life, particularly for people with disabilities. I think that’s why the trail is so important to me.

IMMEDIATELY WEST of Strathcona Science Park, down the trail and across the industrial Ainsworth Dyer Bridge spanning the North Saskatchewan, is Rundle Park.

Named after Reverend Robert Rundle, the first missionary educator in Fort Edmonton, it was built atop a former landfill.

On a crisp July morning, Erin Jackson, 33, is here training for a triathlon and, every so often, pulls her dog, Kaya, away from squirrels. Jackson is a lawyer, a member of several boards and a wheelchair athlete, slowly scaling back her racing to focus on a new job — drafting a new mental-health policy for the Alberta government.

Jackson first came to this part of the trail on family picnics, but after injuring her spinal cord in a car accident in

Tim Querengesser (@timquerengesser) writes for publications such as Eighteen Bridges, Alberta Views, the Walrus and CityLab. Amber Bracken (@Amber_Bracken) shoots for the Globe and Mail, Reuters, Maclean’s and more. Both live in Edmonton.



2003, she now comes to train in her race wheelchair, on her hand-cycle or, her new passion, on cross-country skis. “Being active is an important part of life, particularly for people with disabilities,” she says. “Actually, I think that’s why the trail is so important to me. I just choose this one because there’s nice shade coverage and it’s really open. It’s really actively used so you feel safer, and it’s nicer than being in a gym.”

Jackson and Kaya move at a slow, jogging pace, dodging ruts in the asphalt. To their right, Rundle’s baseball diamonds and tennis courts slowly spark to life. As she rolls, Jackson says she only realized she was using The Great Trail in Rundle Park, as well as other parts closer to downtown, in preparing to chat about it. Now she wants to use the system elsewhere.

“Someday, I would like to see other parts of it,” she says, “although I have to say I’m kind of biased because I think Edmonton is by far one of the nicest river valleys I’ve ever been in.”

DOWN THE TRAIL from Rundle, atop a ridge with views of the river-valley-sized chasm between downtown Edmonton and the old city of Strathcona, sits Constable Ezio Faraone

Sandra Gaherty with her sons Noah (left) and Samuel. Gaherty, who doesn’t own a car, regularly uses the trail to walk or bike to work.

Park. Sandra Gaherty is here, helping her six-year-old son, Samuel, open a bag of Cheezies after a long bike ride across the city’s iconic High Level Bridge.

“If you have kids and choose to live without a car, get used to them complaining, and teaching them about resilience,” she says. Nearby, her other son, 10-year-old Noah, sits quietly, partly watching over Samuel to help his mom and partly scanning the bridge for excitement.

Gaherty, 39, first stepped on the trail in 2011 after moving to Edmonton from Edinburgh, Scotland. She came with lofty ambitions: Despite Edmonton

being one of the most car-dependent cities in Canada, she planned to walk and bike to work just as she did as a civil engineer in Scotland. Then she promptly began commuting by car.

Her experiences walking and biking on parts of The Great Trail rescued her dream. “The realization that Edmonton was walkable and bikeable motivated me then to decide that I may as well do this to go to work. It might take a bit longer, but if I’m loving it this much, why not?”

The realization that Edmonton was walkable and bikeable motivated me then to decide that I may as well do this to go to work. If I’m loving it this much, why not?’

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EDMONTON RIVER VALLEY



Today, Gaherty has become something of a flag-bearer for car-free child rearing, earning a feature story in the local daily for bucking the city's trend as she raises her boys without a vehicle.

"When Samuel was a baby, I used to just ride across the bridge with him in the bikeseat on the front, because it was an amazing view of the river," she says. "He loved it. He just learned how to ride his bike three weeks ago, and just when we were coming down the hill onto the bridge today I looked right, because he has coaster brakes on his bike, and was like 'Oh, I don't know if he can do that hill.' He just had this huge smile on his face."

Moments later, Noah jumps up and points at the bridge. But Samuel wants his mom's attention, too. "A tram — it's a tram!" Samuel screams, pointing at the High Level historic streetcar on top.

SHEILA THOMPSON'S tour continues from the legislature across the North Saskatchewan River and into the University of Alberta campus, which Thompson explains was annexed as part of the river lot system used to allocate land as Europeans settled in Edmonton. She then rolls farther west, into William Hawrelak Park, only to be "swooped upon," as Thompson later describes it, by more than 100 cyclists on The Great Trail

Sheila Thompson (right) and Tim Querengesser ride toward a portion of the trail near the south side of the High Level Bridge.

training for an upcoming triathlon. Thompson freezes on her green city bike and the peloton flies around her like water rushing around a rock in a river.

Across the North Saskatchewan again, this time on the Laurier-Hawrelak footbridge, she passes the Edmonton Valley Zoo. Eventually, after trudging up the steep river bank, Thompson ends up at the new home of Fort Edmonton, near where she first started exploring trails as a 10-year-old.

"We are at the place where all of the trails join together," she says. "To have that so close to home, it's a game changer for me. I'm very happy that we have the idea of The

Great Trail, and I think it's important that everybody has a chance to get out and experience nature, especially in an urban environment — for children to be able to know what it's like to get out and explore." 🌐

The trail allows you to experience it in three dimensions because you choose the activity you want, you choose the area you want, and then you have the added dimension of time.'



See more of the Edmonton River Valley Trail in a video of its notable sites and the people who use it at cangeo.ca/jf18/edmonton.

Lifetime experience #3

'It was incredible to wake up every day in a new part of the Arctic'



Being on the One Ocean ships made a huge difference to my *Into the Arctic* project — I'm only able to access so much landscape when on land — but it was also just incredible to wake up every day in a new part of the Arctic, especially because I was still in full-on painting and filming mode. [Trépanier started his *Arctic Passage* painting shown above during his *One Ocean Expeditions* trip. — Ed.] Having the opportunity to see parts of the region I otherwise never would have seen was a big thrill for me as an artist and as a traveller.

There were many standout moments, but one I'll never forget was when we were sailing down the west coast of Baffin Island. The sun had just set, but there was still a glow in the sky. When I walked around to the east side of the deck, I saw that the moon was beginning to rise and noticed northern fulmars gliding alongside the ship in the moonlight. Then the northern lights started to come up; they were weak, but still dancing. I thought it couldn't get any better, but then I looked down at the water and saw it was aglow with bioluminescent creatures — they were like fireflies of the sea.

I wish that I'd had a camera that was able to capture the combination of those four kinds of light. To have been able to put that on film would have been wonderful, but it will just have to remain one of those great travel experiences that I tell people about.

—Cory Trépanier
*Artist in Residence with
One Ocean Expeditions and
passenger aboard the
One Ocean Voyager
and Navigator, 2015*



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The restored Kinsol Trestle spans the Koksilah River and is one of many dramatic highlights to be seen along Vancouver Island's Cowichan Valley Trail.

The background of the entire page is a lush green forest. On the left side, a wooden trestle bridge structure is visible, extending into the distance. In the foreground, several tall, thin plants with clusters of small pink flowers are in focus. The sky is a pale, overcast grey.

COWICHAN CONNECTION

Built on the legacy of former rail lines
and logging routes, the Cowichan Valley Trail
now links its users to Vancouver Island's
history, cultures and communities

**BY SUZANNE MORPHET
WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN O'NEILL**



ON A HOT July afternoon, a young mother ambles across a long wooden trestle, her toddler pushing alongside her on a small trike. The child is too young to know it, and his mother has probably walked this former rail bridge too many times to give it a second thought, but the Kinsol Trestle near southern Vancouver Island's Shawnigan Lake isn't just any old bridge. Yes, its weathered fir timbers elegantly span the Koksilah River with a pleasing geometric symmetry, but at 44 metres high and 187 metres long, it's not just the highest wooden trestle in the Commonwealth but also one of the largest wooden trestles in the world.

The trestle is a dramatic highlight of the Cowichan Valley Trail, a 122-kilometre segment of The Great Trail that winds along the island's southeastern coast between Malahat and just beyond Ladysmith, passing through conifer forests with dense understories of salal and fern, over eight restored wooden trestles (including the Kinsol),

The trestle is a dramatic highlight of the Cowichan Valley Trail.

past former logging and mining towns, and alongside the Cowichan River, a Canadian Heritage River renowned for its salmon and steelhead trout.

But for all the nail-biting around the trestle's near demise and subsequent rescue (see "Saving the Kinsol Trestle" sidebar on page 66), its history, and the history of the Cowichan Valley Trail, is only one part of a much bigger story — one that intertwines Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's Confederation-era "national dream" of a railway that linked the country from coast to coast and the development of Vancouver Island.

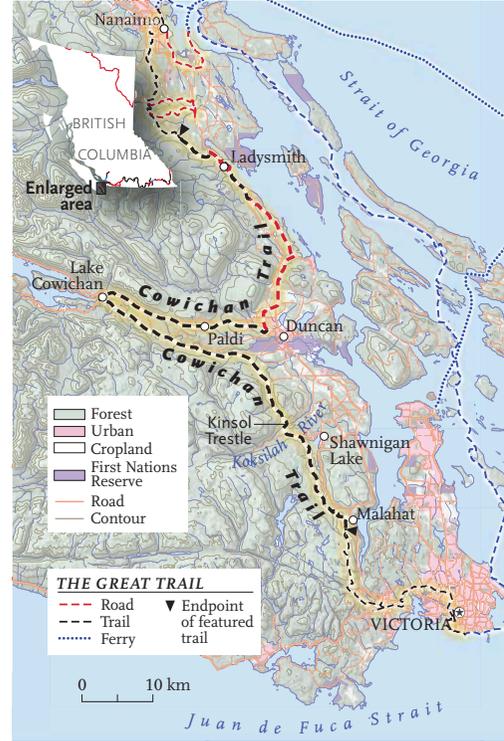
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE today, but in the late 1800s more people lived on Vancouver Island than the British Columbia mainland. Victoria was, after all, the colony's largest and capital city, so when a transcontinental railway was proposed, people naturally expected it to terminate on the island.

But with rugged mountains on the mainland and the Strait of Georgia in between, "it didn't make sense from an engineering point of view," says Bob Turner, a transportation historian and the author of *Vancouver Island Railroads*. "So Vancouver Island got the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway, kind of as a compensation." Esquimalt was the site of a Royal Navy base next to Victoria, and Nanaimo was an important coal-mining centre, "so a connection between them was seen as being a good idea in any case," Turner adds.

The Cowichan Valley, about halfway between Victoria and Nanaimo, had an enviable climate, and the E&N, as it was known, spurred settlement after it was completed in 1886. (Macdonald himself, who'd represented Victoria as an MP from 1878 to 1882 without ever visiting the city, drove in the last spike near



COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL



Shawnigan Lake.) The main hindrance for settlers was the enormous trees that were an obstacle to farming. For others, however, the trees were the plum. “Much of the valley was this amazing stand of 300- to 400-year-old Douglas fir, which was highly prized for its lumber,” says Turner. “From the perspective of forest companies, and probably the province too, this was like a gold mine.”

In 1912, the E&N opened a branch line from Duncan to Lake Cowichan to serve the burgeoning logging industry. It was a game changer, according to Tom Paterson, who writes a twice-weekly history column for the *Cowichan Valley Citizen*. “Numerous trains came out of Lake Cowichan in a day, loaded with logs. And when I say loaded, there were cars that had only two or three of what they call B.C. toothpicks on

Suzanne Morphet (@SecretsSuitcase) writes regularly about adventure travel for publications such as the Globe and Mail and Vancouver Sun. Robin O’Neill is an outdoor lifestyle and action photographer whose work has appeared in Mountain Life, explore and Powder magazines.

them,” he says, laughing and stretching his arms to give some idea of the massive size of the trees.

By 1924, a second railway — Canadian National — was completed from Victoria to the east end of Lake Cowichan, giving the logging industry access to even more timber, and laying the groundwork for the recreational trails of the future.

By the 1950s, **trains were gradually pulled from service** in the Cowichan Valley, and many tracks were eventually ripped up.

Over the next quarter century, the rail and logging boom continued. But by the 1950s, the railways were losing out to trucks and cars. Trains were gradually pulled from service in the Cowichan Valley and — except for the E&N mainline — tracks were eventually ripped up.

Fortunately, the former rail corridors began to be purchased and preserved in the 1980s, and by the time the Trans Canada Trail Foundation came calling in 1997 seeking a route on

Clockwise from ABOVE: Old-growth forest along the trail; a cyclist rides over one of the trail’s restored bridges; the Cowichan River.

Vancouver Island, the key pieces of land were available. By 2002, the Cowichan Valley Regional District had finalized a route, and the Cowichan Valley Trail was born.

LAST JULY, Chris Newton, a former tree faller, was smoothing out the southernmost and newest portion of the Cowichan Valley Trail, the Malahat Connector, which had opened a month earlier. Unlike most of the rest of the trail, the connector is hilly, with grand views of the Gulf Islands, the Olympic Mountains and, on a clear day, Washington state’s Mount Rainier.

“This had been logged back in the ’30s and ’40s,” he explained to a group of cyclists who had stopped to chat. Leaning against his dusty pickup truck in the shade of second-growth forest, Newton said that although still relatively young, these quiet forests shelter numerous species, including black bears, Roosevelt elk, deer, cougars and wolves.

From the Malahat Connector, the trail flattens out as it pushes northwest past

COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL



Shawnigan Lake, across the Kinsol Trestle and the Koksilah River, and along the Cowichan River before reaching Lake Cowichan, one of the largest lakes on the island. From there, it hooks east and descends slowly but steadily, passing Paldi, a former logging community named for its Punjabi founder's hometown in India. At Duncan, which once echoed with the rumble of passing log

trains, it turns north and up the island's east coast, through Chemainus — famous for its murals, many of which depict its sawmill heyday — and into Ladysmith, originally a coal-mining community and rail hub where boxcars filled with merchandise from the mainland were transferred from barge to rail.

In short, there is no dearth of rail-and-logging-related sites along the trail;

Hikers make their way along the trail after visiting the Kinsol Trestle.

Duncan alone is home to two of the six museums in the region — the BC Forest Discovery Centre and the Cowichan Valley Museum — that help preserve this aspect of its history.

But there is more to the Cowichan Valley Trail than lumber and steel.

SAVING THE KINSOL TRESTLE

Constructed by hand between 1911 and 1920, the Kinsol Trestle is a magnificent feat of engineering from the Age of Steam that today is the must-see site on the Cowichan Valley Trail. A little more than a decade ago, though, the historic railway bridge seemed destined to be lost.

In 2006, after years of neglect, vandalism and two arson attempts, a Victoria engineering firm recommended to British Columbia's Ministry of Transportation that the trestle be demolished and replaced. The Cowichan Valley Regional District agreed, and the following spring the province announced \$1.6 million in funding toward a

new bridge, on top of a previous commitment of \$1.5 million to dismantle the original trestle.

That's when Macdonald & Lawrence Timber Framing, a local company specializing in building and conserving timber structures, decided to study the trestle and offer a second opinion. "I had never been there before and I was blown away by what an impressive structure it was," says Gordon Macdonald, the company's CEO. "I realized a couple things. One was that there was a lot of good material in the bridge. The other was that there were well-proven ways of repairing structures like the trestle that hadn't been considered."

Macdonald also sought input from other volunteer experts, including the retired senior engineer for CN Rail who had been responsible for the Kinsol Trestle for more than 30 years.

In June 2007, Macdonald's group convinced the Cowichan Valley Regional District that the trestle could, and should, be saved. Rehabilitation would be cheaper and more environmentally sound than replacement. But foremost, says Macdonald, the trestle was simply too significant to lose. "It was one of the few survivors from this era when no project was too big or too crazy to be undertaken."

It took about a year to restore the trestle, including a couple of "intense months" when seven sections of the bridge were removed, from the top deck down to the foundation, leaving the rest of the bridge "just standing there, temporarily guyed together," Macdonald recalls, noting that he barely slept during that time.

The result? "Our dream of making it a destination has come true," says Lori Treloar, curator of the nearby Shawnigan Lake Museum and a vocal proponent of saving the trestle. "We have hundreds of people out there every week. We consider it a jewel in The Great Trail."



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COWICHAN VALLEY TRAIL



In Duncan, for instance, trail users can detour onto the Totem Tour Walk and see how the city honours the culture and history of the Cowichan Tribes and the Coast Salish people with one of the world's largest outdoor displays of totem poles, now numbering 40.

In the local Hul'q'umi'num language, Quw'utsun (Cowichan) means "warm land," a reference to the climate that drew early settlers eager to reap the agricultural bounty the valley still offers.

Among those who knew a good thing when they saw it was Dionisio Zanatta, who moved from Treviso, Italy, in

the 1950s and helped pioneer the local wine industry by providing an acre of his property to the provincial government as a test site for grapes. Later, Zanatta and his daughter opened Vigneti Zanatta, one of the first commercial wineries on

Farm Table Inn owners George Gates and Evelyn Koops (ABOVE). Old railcars at the BC Forest Discovery Centre in Duncan (BELOW).

and, on an experimental basis, olives. "These are things you wouldn't think of normally being grown in Canada," says Docherty.

The same mild, sunny weather that's good for agriculture makes the trail an appealing year-round option for everyone from the cyclists that stop for sleep and sustenance at businesses such as the Farm Table Inn, a B&B and restaurant about halfway between Duncan and Lake Cowichan, to hikers and history buffs such as Tom Paterson, the *Cowichan Valley Citizen* columnist who strolls its course searching for railway artifacts. "It's quiet and your imagination's at work, and you realize that a train used to come along right where you're walking," says Paterson. "Well, for every mile on the trail, there's a hundred stories." 🌿

Although still relatively young, **these quiet forests shelter numerous species**, including black bears, Roosevelt elk, deer, cougars and wolves.

the island. Located just southwest of Duncan, it's less than two kilometres from the trail.

More recently, Rick Pipes and Janet Docherty found their dream property near the Kinsol Trestle — a small farm called Merridale that was planted with heritage varieties of apples. Today, the couple produce more than 200,000 litres of cider per year, in addition to operating an on-site distillery and gastropub. Most wouldn't be surprised to find an apple orchard on the island, but less common crops pop up, too, including lavender, tea

and, on an experimental basis, olives. "These are things you wouldn't think of normally being grown in Canada," says Docherty. The same mild, sunny weather that's good for agriculture makes the trail an appealing year-round option for everyone from the cyclists that stop for sleep and sustenance at businesses such as the Farm Table Inn, a B&B and restaurant about halfway between Duncan and Lake Cowichan, to hikers and history buffs such as Tom Paterson, the *Cowichan Valley Citizen* columnist who strolls its course searching for railway artifacts. "It's quiet and your imagination's at work, and you realize that a train used to come along right where you're walking," says Paterson. "Well, for every mile on the trail, there's a hundred stories." 🌿



Read an interview with Gordon Macdonald about his restoration work on the Kinsol Trestle and the history and culture of the Cowichan Valley at cangeo.ca/jf18/trestle.

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THE GREAT TRAIL GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

25 questions to test your knowledge of Canada's country-crossing, coast-connecting trail system

BY NICK WALKER

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It took many trails and waterways — 432, to be exact — to link Atlantic coast and Shield country, Prairie and northern tundra, Rocky Mountains and Pacific rainforest. And not only those landscapes, but also all of Canada's largest cities and countless smaller communities, historic sites and protected areas. The more you drill down, the more staggering the idea behind The Great Trail becomes.

So in small tribute to a very large trail system, here are 25 questions to test your knowledge of this national network and a few of the places, people and histories it ties together. Good luck!



1 **WHAT IS THE LONGEST** *land-based* section of The Great Trail?

- a) Alaska Highway, B.C.-Yukon
- b) Mackenzie Highway, N.W.T.
- c) Mackenzie River Trail, N.W.T.
- d) Newfoundland T'Railway Trail

2 **AT 1,660 KILOMETRES,** this is the longest *water route* on The Great Trail.

- a) Lake Superior Water Trail
- b) Northwest Passage
- c) Athabasca River Trail, Alta.
- d) Mackenzie River Trail, N.W.T.

3 **AROUND HOW LONG** have Ojibwa and Cree been using the “Path of the Paddle” — water trails between Thunder Bay, Ont., and eastern Manitoba — for travel and trade?

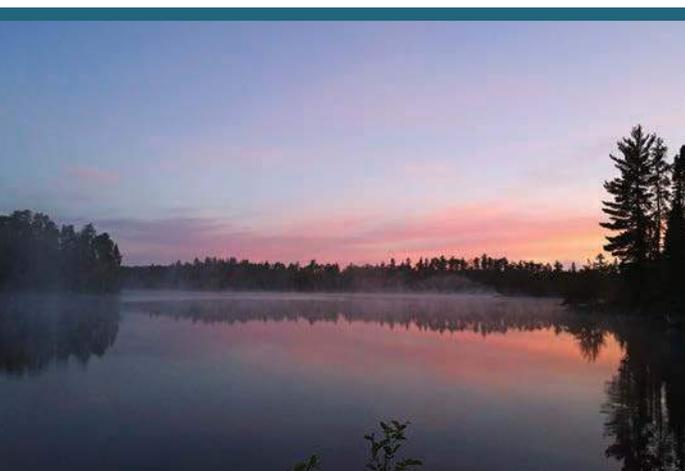
- a) 1,000 years
- b) 5,000 years
- c) 10,000 years
- d) 20,000 years

4 **ALBERTA'S KANANASKIS** Country Trail is home to The Great Trail's —

- a) highest elevation
- b) deepest average snowfall
- c) highest foot-traffic
- d) highest number of geo-tagged Instagram photos

5 **ON THE MORE THAN** 500-kilometre Northern Trails of Saskatchewan, you follow part of a route taken by this famous Canadian in 1885.

- a) Major-General Sir Isaac Brock
- b) suffragist Nellie McClung
- c) explorer David Thompson
- d) Métis leader Louis Riel



6 **IT'S NOT THE ARCTIC,** Pacific or Atlantic Ocean, but follow this water route and you'll be paddling salt water.

- a) Great Slave Lake, N.W.T.
- b) Qu'Appelle River, Sask.
- c) Lake Superior, Ont.
- d) Bras d'Or Lake, Cape Breton, N.S.



7 IF YOU WERE TO FOLLOW The Great Trail east across the Chignecto Isthmus, what province or territory would you enter?

- a) Northwest Territories
- b) Quebec
- c) New Brunswick
- d) Nova Scotia

8 IN WESTERN MANITOBA, The Great Trail runs through Neepawa, home to which great Canadian author?

- a) Alice Munro
- b) Robert Munsch
- c) Margaret Laurence
- d) Lucy Maud Montgomery



9 THE WRECKHOUSE TRAIL, on Newfoundland's southwest coast, is named after —

- a) multiple shipwrecks in nearby coastal waters
- b) a string of train derailments
- c) storm-damaged fishing settlements
- d) all of the above

10 TRUE OR FALSE

SCOTTISH EXPLORER

Alexander Mackenzie was the first person to travel the length of the Northwest Territories' Mackenzie River, which today forms the Mackenzie River Trail.

11 PARTS OF YUKON'S Ridge Road Heritage Trail, built in 1899 during the Klondike Gold Rush, are "corduroy road." What does this mean?

- a) Rich mineral deposits give the ground a striped appearance.
- b) Logs were laid down in rows to add stability to the trail.
- c) It was a general term for any supply route (think "silk road").
- d) Way markers were made from the durable cotton material.

12

TAKE SOUTHWESTERN B.C.'s Chilliwack Valley Trail for views of Slesse Mountain (right), Mount Cheam and other stunning peaks. To what major mountain range do these belong?

- a) Cascade Mountains
- b) Coastal Mountains
- c) Appalachian Mountains
- d) Rocky Mountains



13

ON THE MILLENNIUM TRAIL in Whitehorse, stop for an underwater observation-deck view of the world's longest wooden fish ladder, through which hundreds to thousands of these fish bypass the Whitehorse dam each year.

- a) Arctic char
- b) chinook salmon
- c) sockeye salmon
- d) rock perch

15

TRUE OR FALSE

NEWFOUNDLAND, not mainland Canada, is home to the longest trail built on an old railbed.

14

NOW INCLUDED in The Great Trail, this was built during the Second World War because the government feared an attack by the Japanese.

- a) Cowichan Valley Trail, Vancouver Island
- b) Alaska Highway, B.C.-Yukon
- c) Sea to Sky Trail and Highway, B.C.
- d) Dempster Highway, Yukon



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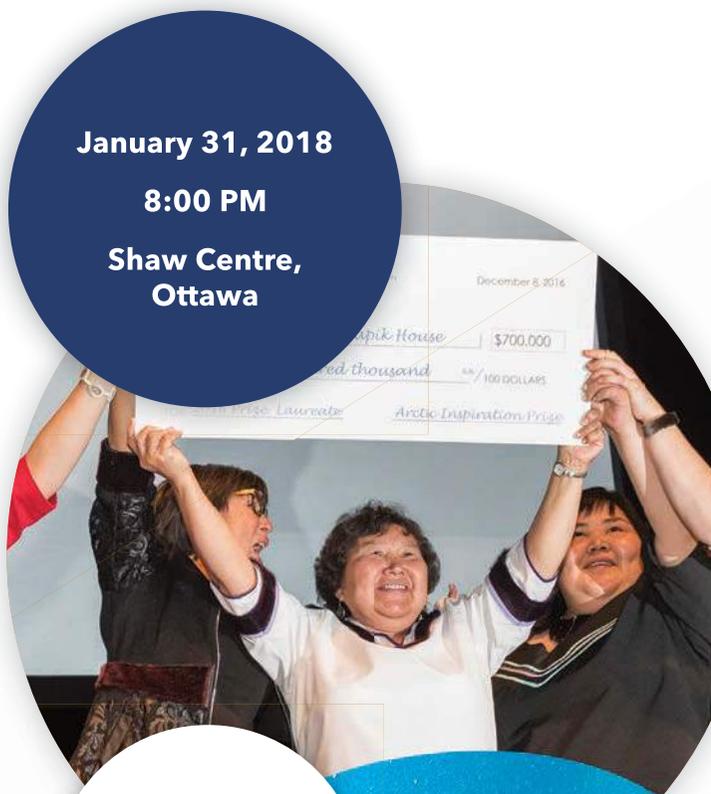
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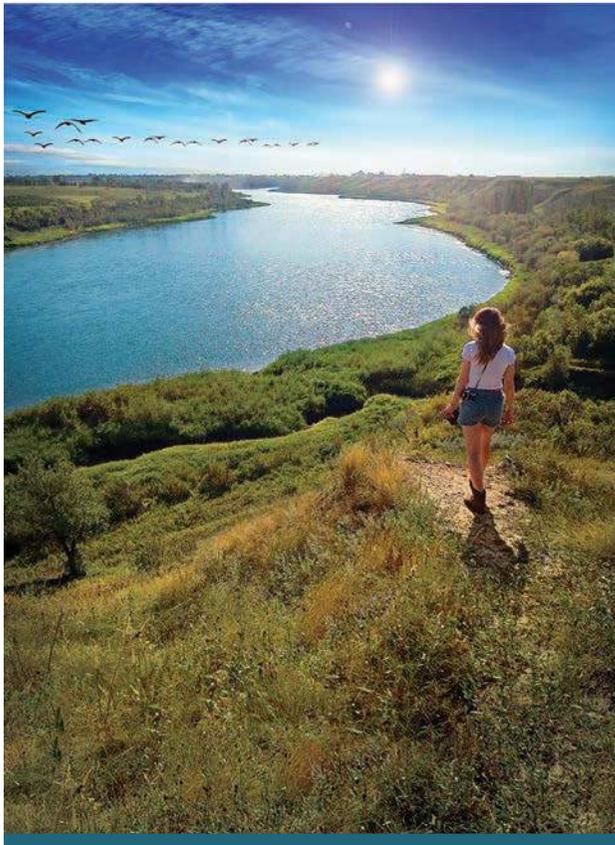


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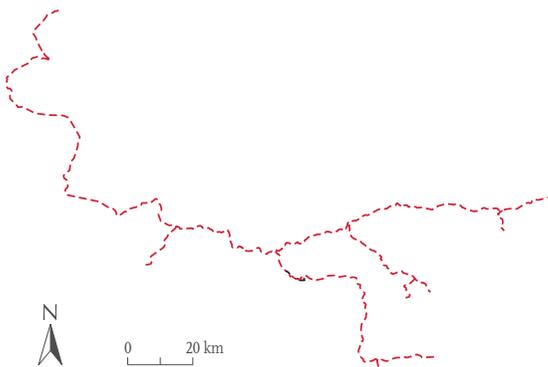
ULTIMATE QUIZ



16 THE MEEWASIN TRAIL runs along both sides of the South Saskatchewan River through Saskatoon. Simply meaning “beautiful” or “nice,” from what language does *meewasin* come?

- a) Cree
- b) Iroquois
- c) Michif (Métis)
- d) Inuktitut (Inuit)

17 THE TRAIL OUTLINED BELOW extends to each of this province or territory’s three main geographical “points.” Where is it?



18 IN SOUTHERN MANITOBA, trail users walk directly along the Canada-U.S. border. In what year did the Canadian and U.S. governments start working together to mark the border?

- a) 1814
- b) 1867
- c) 1872
- d) 1920

19 A METEORITE impact created this huge natural feature, accessible by several trail sections.

- a) Gulf of St. Lawrence
- b) Sudbury Basin, Ont.
- c) Lake Superior, Ont.
- d) Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island, Nunavut

20 ON WHICH of these trails might you encounter caribou in their natural habitat?

- a) East Coast Trail, Avalon Peninsula, N.L.
- b) Dempster Highway, northern mainland N.W.T.
- c) Itijjagiq Trail, southern Baffin Island, Nunavut
- d) b and c
- e) all of the above



21 WHICH OF the following is *not* part of The Great Trail?

- a) North Sydney, N.S., to Port-aux-Basques, N.L., ferry
- b) Great Slave Lake ice road, N.W.T.
- c) Stanley Park Seawall, B.C.
- d) North Vancouver to Vancouver Sea Bus



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22 WHICH CAPITAL CITY'S stretch of Great Trail would take you over the site of the former Iroquois village of Stadacona?

- a) Charlottetown
- b) Halifax
- c) Quebec City
- d) Ottawa



23 THIS IS THE REGIONAL TERM for the wind-stunted, twisted spruces along the Wreckhouse Trail and other Newfoundland coastlines.

- a) scoffs
- b) Newfie bonsai
- c) Joe Batt's timber
- d) tuckamore



24 IF YOU COULD stretch every piece of The Great Trail out in a straight line, how many times would it reach from Victoria to St. John's?

- a) 1½ times
- b) a little more than 3 times
- c) almost 5 times
- d) 11 times



25 WHICH CANADIAN PARK is home to —

- 1) one of the nation's largest cross-country ski trail systems
 - 2) an accessible marble cave named for a pioneering family
 - 3) a former prime minister's estate
 - 4) 45 kilometres of The Great Trail
- a) Prince Edward Island National Park, P.E.I.
 - b) Gatineau Park, Que.
 - c) Algonquin Provincial Park, Ont.
 - d) Banff National Park, Alta.

ARE YOU A GEOGRAPHY GENIUS?

RANK YOUR SCORE

- 25** Great Trail guru
- 20-24** Pathfinder
- 15-19** Trail tenderfoot
- 10-14** Armchair explorer
- 0-9** Are you reading the right magazine?



The short answers to this quiz appear on the opposite page. To see the long answers, visit geoquiz.cangeo.ca/ult18.



QUIZ ANSWERS

QUESTIONS START ON PAGE 71

1. a) Alaska Highway, B.C.-Yukon, accounting for 1,318 kilometres of trail
2. d) Mackenzie River Trail, N.W.T., connecting Great Slave Lake to Tuktoyaktuk and the Arctic Ocean
3. c) 10,000 years
4. a) highest elevation (2,185 metres)
5. d) Métis leader Louis Riel, during the Northwest Resistance
6. d) Bras d'Or Lake, Cape Breton, N.S., one of the world's largest "inland seas"
7. d) Nova Scotia (from New Brunswick)
8. c) Margaret Laurence
9. b) a string of train derailments, caused by 160 km/h winds
10. False. Indigenous Peoples have been using the waterway for millennia.
11. b) Logs were laid down in rows to add stability to the trail.
12. a) Cascade Mountains, a range that extends as far south as northern California
13. b) chinook salmon
14. b) Alaska Highway, B.C.-Yukon. With the help of Indigenous guides, this huge Canada-U.S. project was completed in just eight months.
15. True. Newfoundland's T'Railway Trail is 872 kilometres long.
16. a) Cree
17. Prince Edward Island
18. c) 1872
19. b) Sudbury Basin, Ont.
20. e) all of the above
21. b) Great Slave Lake ice road, N.W.T.
22. c) Quebec City; Jacques Cartier first visited Stadacona in 1535. By 1603, explorers found it had disappeared.
23. d) tuckamore
24. c) almost five times. The entire trail network is 24,410 kilometres long.
25. b) Gatineau Park, Que., home to the Lusk Caves and the Mackenzie King Estate

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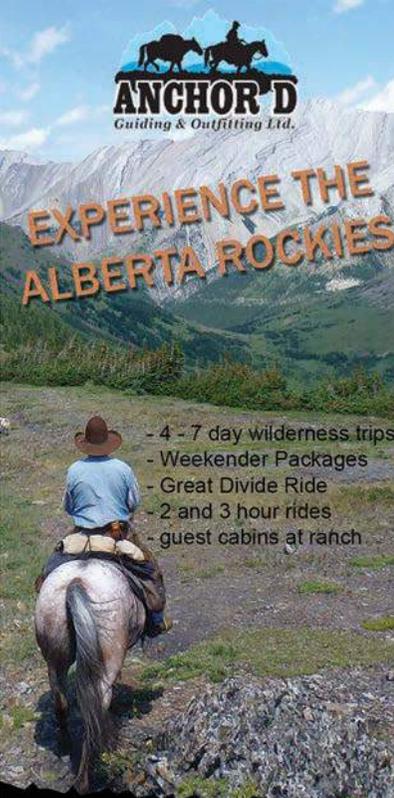


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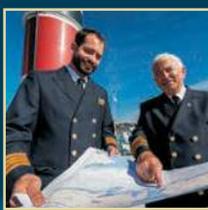


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COMMENT

Your feedback

Indigenous Peoples issue

I found the special Indigenous issue of *Canadian Geographic* (November/December) inspiring and informative. I was impressed by the quality of the Indigenous languages map. I wish the traditional language of the Okanagan region of B.C., where I reside, was better represented in the schools, college and university here. It's good to be able to think in many ways, particularly when the way of the Syilx people has been connected to the land here for so long. Your issue rekindled my interest to learn more of this language. I also enjoyed the interview with Ry Moran ("Discovery") and the cultural revival inherent in "The Tribal Canoe Journey." I found the "Survivors' Circle" stories from residential school survivors to be heroic, painful, touching, inspiring and enlightening. I was particularly thrilled by Ted Quewezance's words: "Reconciliation starts with the individual."

Garth Thomson
Kelowna, B.C.

Thank you for this ("Land of their own"). Not a lot of people realize that there are land-based Métis in Canada.

Jacqueline Bellerose
Edmonton

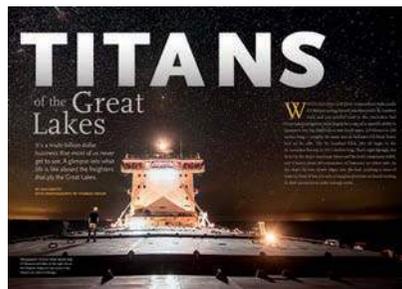
Beautiful Luke Marston mask gracing the cover of this month's @CanGeo. #Indigenous —@mjmclean

I loved your special Indigenous issue. It is important for Canadians to hear the stories of the survivors whose lives were terribly altered by residential schools ("Survivors' Circle"). I suggest that you publish another issue portraying more of the various Indigenous cultures, past and present. We all want to learn more about this country's history. That is what Canada is all about!

Christine Barbini
North York, Ont.

Great take

I worked full time on freighters for four years in the late '70s and early '80s ("Titans of the Great Lakes," July/August 2017). Many Canadian sailors lost jobs when foreign ships were allowed to steam past Montreal into the Great Lakes, relieving us of what could have been our cargos. The worst part about the job was sailing



on Lake Superior with the fall and winter gales. Many times, I thought we'd never make it to port.

Nancy Thompson
South Bruce Peninsula, Ont.

Corrections:

The bentwood box on the cover of the November/December 2017 issue was carved by Coast Salish artist Luke Marston. He was not credited. In "The Inuit future" in the same issue, the Inuit relationship with the federal government should have been referred to as "an Inuit-Crown relationship" and there are four land-claim presidents.

COVER VOTE

How we chose this issue's cover



Wrong. It's not often that *no one* on our team of experts — including newsstand director Nathalie Cuerrier, newsstand consultant Scott Bullock, creative director Javier Frutos and editor-in-chief Aaron Kylie — picks the image that ultimately wins our regular reader cover vote.

Going into the tally, we strongly favoured options one and two. In the end, these garnered just 22 and 30 per cent of the vote. No one predicted that option three, a dramatic vista of the Bay of Fundy coast, would win a decided victory with 48 per cent. (Of course, we still felt it was a strong candidate, or we'd never have included it!) But this is exactly why we do this exercise: to gauge the reaction of our readers, the people who will ultimately buy the magazine. Voters commented that the image depicts the most attractive hiking destination, a spectacular view and one of the nation's most renowned locations. We couldn't argue much with that. Fundy it is.

CONTACT US

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Comments may be edited for length and clarity.

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THIS PAGE, COVERS, LEFT TO RIGHT: GARY AND JOANIE MCCUFFIN; ROBIN O'NEILL; NICK HAWKINS. OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: STEPHEN ELGERT; RIGHT: CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY, X-817, S91-2020

WHAT'S THIS?

Recognize this mystery object and how it relates to Canadian geography and history?



- ▶ Visit cangeo.ca/whatsthis for a hint, to enter your guess and for a chance to win one of three copies of *The Ultimate Canadian Geography Quiz* special issue.* Follow us on [@CanGeo](https://twitter.com/CanGeo) for more hints.
- ▶ The deadline is Feb. 20, 2018.
- ▶ The correct answer will appear in the March/April 2018 issue.

*Three winners will be randomly selected from all correct responses.

Canadian Geographic and the Canadian Heritage Information Network have partnered to showcase important artifacts from Canadian history and geography. Each object comes from one of the museums in CHIN's national network.

LAST ISSUE'S OBJECT: Bison vertebra with arrowhead

This thoracic vertebra from a bison has been punctured by an iron arrowhead and is a rare example of the effectiveness of traditional Indigenous hunting techniques. Iron arrowheads rapidly replaced chert (stone) arrowheads following the arrival of Europeans on the Prairies. Similar vertebrae embedded with chert arrowheads have been found, indicating that despite technological change, local Indigenous people continued to hunt bison in much the same way while incorporating new materials in their traditional weapons. This specimen was found in the mid-1880s in Saskatchewan's Cypress Hills and is displayed in the new Canadian History Hall of the Canadian Museum of History. 🌐

With files from the Canadian Museum of History. Learn more about this artifact and others by visiting historymuseum.ca.



Explore more stories from Canada's past through cangeo.ca/whatsthis.



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YOUR

SOCIETY

NEWS FROM THE ROYAL CANADIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY



GEOGRAPHY'S BIG NIGHT

Exploration and innovation were the two prevalent themes at The Royal Canadian Geographical Society's annual College of Fellows Dinner, held at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que., on Nov. 16.

The Society made several major announcements, unveiling the official ensign of the RCGS *Resolute* (One Ocean Expeditions' new RCGS-flagged polar vessel), celebrating a new memorandum of understanding with the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and revealing design plans for the RCGS's new headquarters at 50 Sussex Dr., which reopens to the public in spring 2018.

Guests included Ontario Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, *Jeopardy!* host and RCGS Honorary President Alex Trebek, former deputy prime minister John Manley, and Mike Robinson and Roger Crofts, CEO and chair, respectively, of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie, President of the Crown Council of Ethiopia, and Princess Saba Kebede were hosted by the Society as part of a trip commemorating Emperor Haile Selassie I's 1967 visit to Canada. The prince became the first royal inducted into the College of Fellows since Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1930.

In the keynote address, Wade Davis, the renowned anthropologist and ethnobotanist, shared photographs and insights from his travels to some of the most remote places on Earth, including the heart of the Amazon rainforest. "Indigenous people the world over are leading the fight to protect the planet's ecosystems from anthropogenic threats," Davis said, "and it is on all of us to listen and learn from their efforts."

—Andrew Lovesey



THIS YEAR'S MEDALLISTS

The 19 2017 RCGS medallists are widely accomplished, and include Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile-Selassie of Ethiopia (TOP LEFT), Mike Robinson, CEO of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (TOP RIGHT, left), historian and author Shelagh Grant, and Arctic archeologist David Morrison. Ontario Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell and Alex Trebek presented the awards at the annual ceremony. For the full list of medallists, visit cangeo.ca/rcgs17.



2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The RCGS had one of its best years ever — a fact that was celebrated at the Society's annual general meeting (ABOVE). Fellows heard that the Society is in a strong financial position going into 2018, which will see the RCGS continue to expand its national programming and fully move into headquarters at 50 Sussex.



THE 2017 RCGS FELLOWS DINNER

Clockwise from TOP LEFT: RCGS President Gavin Fitch (left) with Abenaki storyteller and crier Daniel Richer, Alex Trebek and RCGS Explorer-in-Residence Jill Heinerth; Wade Davis delivering the keynote address; Ry Moran, director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; Deborah Apps, president and CEO of The Great Trail, with Trebek; One Ocean Expeditions' Andrew Prossin (right) and the RCGS brass unveiling the ensign for RCGS *Resolute*; Society CEO John Geiger speaking about the new polar vessel; Algonquin drummer Awema Tendesi opening with a traditional song; explorer Adam Shoalts and Alexia Wiatr.

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT AND CUT OUTS: ALEX TETREAU/CGN CEO; OTHERS: BEN POWLESS/CGN CEO

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Canadian Geographic goes to the wolves



Wolf pups play near their den close to Yukon's Kluane National Park (TOP). Natural history specimens await transfer to the Royal Alberta Museum's new location in Edmonton (ABOVE).

“Wolves are a litmus test for competing world views on nature and life.” So long-time wolf researchers John and Mary Theberge told writer Alanna Mitchell for her story exploring our love-hate relationship with the species in the January/February 2015 issue of *Canadian Geographic*. Our readers, however, seem to fall largely on the appreciative side of that ledger. Wolves are one of the magazine's most popular topics and cover subjects.

So when the opportunity arose for us to once again work with renowned wildlife photographer Peter Mather, a fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers, to share his recent work capturing wolf dens in his home territory of the Yukon, we jumped at the chance. What's better than wolves? Wolves with pups.

Mather located, visited and photographed numerous wolf dens last summer. Wolves create them, or use abandoned dens of other animals, to raise their pups in the summer. Dens can be used by generations of wolves, with some having been dated at more than 700 years old. A selection of Mather's results will be featured as a photo essay in the March/April issue.

There's more great photography in the issue, too, including the award-winning images from our latest annual *Canadian Geographic* photo competition and amazing shots from Edmonton-based photojournalist Amber Bracken, who spent the past three years documenting the move of artifacts and exhibits from the old location of the city's Royal Alberta Museum to its new home.

The issue also features the story of Canadian archeologist Dougald O'Reilly, a senior lecturer at the Australian National University and one of the world's foremost experts on the mythical Plain of Jars archeological landscape in Laos.

And there's much more, too. Don't miss it. 🌐



Subscribe or renew today at canadiangeographic.ca/subscribe or by calling 1-800-267-0824. The March/April 2018 issue hits newsstands February 26.

our country

REVEALING CANADA



Rick Hansen

The Paralympian explains why Vancouver's Stanley Park is his favourite place on The Great Trail

The first time I went to Stanley Park was probably in 1976, when I had just come down from Williams Lake, B.C., to go to the University of British Columbia. I'd decided to do some training, and one of my friends said, "Let's go to Stanley Park," and off we went. We wheeled around it, and it was like I had gone to the other side of the moon; it was quite a long journey for me at the time because I'd just come out of the rehabilitation centre and was starting to learn about my endurance and how far I could go. I thought, "Well, if I did that, I could go even farther."

When I was an aspiring Paralympian in the late 1970s and 1980s, I lived in a little apartment in Kitsilano and was always trying to get down to the water, which I've always been drawn to. When parts of the seawall started to become accessible, Stanley Park became my training ground because I could go completely around it.

Even though the park is in a big city, when you get out on the seawall, you feel like you're a part of the natural beauty of the ocean ecosystem. When you move around to Siwash Rock, you really get that sense of the West Coast, with the waves crashing in off the rocks. Sometimes at high tide and with strong winds, the water can blow up and over the wall and onto the trail, and you have to time it so you can pass before the next wave crashes across. If you're lucky, you can see a seal or even a killer whale or a humpback whale.

The park is a place that made me realize that the world is accessible and inclusive, that I can have a life that's full, that I don't need to be cured in order to be whole, be included or be a part of something special. It's truly inspiring. 🌍

—As told to Joanne Pearce



What's your favourite Canadian place?
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hashtag #ShareCanGeo.



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