

A scenic sunset over a lake. The sky is filled with vibrant orange and red clouds, reflecting on the water's surface. Silhouettes of trees and bushes are visible in the foreground, framing the view. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

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LIVING

PLACES TO GO, ACTIVITIES TO DO, THINGS TO SEE
HISTORICAL FEATURES | WINDOW ON OUR PAST

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COVER PHOTO: "Sunrise on Winnipeg River" Photo by Donna Besel

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Photo by Livid Delgado
"Fox on Leebiter Road"

Welcome to Lac du Bonnet Living

Welcome all local and international readers to the ninth issue of Lac du Bonnet Living.

Tourism is an important component of Lac du Bonnet's economy. To compliment that, we at Clipper Publishing Inc. – publishers of the Lac du Bonnet Clipper newspaper – annually take the opportunity to print a full-colour tourism guide focussing on the 'four-season playground' that encompasses Lac du Bonnet while highlighting places of interest, recreational opportunities, events, culture and local history.

With the coronavirus pandemic cancelling most events and gatherings over the last two years, tourism experts predict 2022 to be a summer of rediscovery for the Winnipeg River corridor and what it has to offer.

As a result, this edition of Lac du Bonnet Living will highlight regional history as well as events like the Boreal Shores Art Tour, Fire and Water Music Festival and the always popular Canada Day festivities and famous fireworks.

We would like to give special thanks to all those individuals who volunteered their time, supplied photos and articles and shared their knowledge and professional experience to shape this publication.

Enjoy.

Mark T. Buss, Candace Kekish and Marlene Hrysió



Photo by Bettina Busch "Owl on Pole"

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Welcome to the Town of Lac du Bonnet

On behalf of the council of the Town of Lac du Bonnet we want to welcome you to our community.

Lac du Bonnet is a wonderful community, located in the hub of activity in eastern Manitoba, along the beautiful Winnipeg River, a quick one-hour drive from Winnipeg. Lac du Bonnet is the place to go for all your tourism and recreation enjoyment in 2022.

Lac du Bonnet is a great hub of arts and recreation. There are many artists and art events inspired by those living in the area (wood carvers, painters, musicians, Boreal Shores, Winnipeg River Arts Council etc.).

Our "four season playgrounds" is a wonderful place to live or vacation. If you love the water as I do, get your boat or personal water craft and get on the water to enjoy fishing, skiing, wakeboarding, tubing, swimming or just a lazy day floating down the river.

The Trans-Canada trail system goes through our area and provides great walking and biking paths to see the beauty around us. Golf courses in our immediate area provide a great opportunity to nail that "hole in one".

Our community is full of history: Aviation has been part of our history for close to 100 years. Entrepreneurs have built brick factories,

railways, the first hydro electric dam (1906) in Manitoba, logging and many other businesses. See it all at the local museum.

Our town provides an environment where we promote the foundation of the family. You will experience a balanced blend of town convenience and amenities, together with a peaceful, laid-back place to raise a family.

We are a town with a great mix of retail shops, businesses and residents. We are proud of the investment of people, business and the provision of leisure opportunities; that is what makes Lac du Bonnet a wonderful place to live, do business and then retire.

Lac du Bonnet is an age friendly community. It truly is a four season playground for the young and the young at heart. You really need to see it for yourself to appreciate all our community has to offer.

Come visit and then stay! That's what I did.

Mayor Gordon Peters
Town of Lac du Bonnet



Welcome to the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet

On behalf of Council and staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet.

Lac du Bonnet is situated a short scenic drive northeast of Winnipeg and we take great pride in our region being a "Four Seasons Playground." Our municipality is a sparkling gem, with beautiful lakes, rivers and stunning sunsets - something for everyone to enjoy.

Despite all the difficulty we have all incurred during the past two years with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions, our region and municipality has experienced exceptional growth. We have had many new residences constructed, with residents living and working from home - our future is bright.

Our council believes that it is the overall quality of life and abundance of recreational opportunities that make us a preferred destination for many.

In the summer, you can take to the Winnipeg River, Lake Lac du Bonnet, the Lee River and the Pinawa Channel to enjoy our countless kilometres of scenic waterways or tee off at our region's many first-class golf courses.

If fishing is your passion, you can book a fly-in trip or try your luck in our local waters, which play host to professional tournaments.

If you enjoy nature, come walk a section of the Trans Canada Trail and view the abundant wildlife or take a hike in one of our nearby Provincial Parks. Spend some quality camping family time at one of our

many campgrounds.

If you enjoy history, you can get a glimpse by stopping at our regional museum or the Pinawa Dam Provincial Heritage Park.

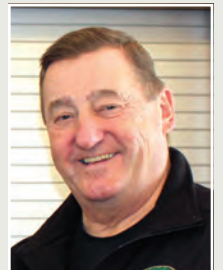
In the winter, you can snowmobile our vast network of the best-groomed trails, snowshoe and cross-country ski our region's wilderness trails, or enjoy a session of ice fishing at the Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association's trout ponds.

Visit our website at www.rmoflacdubonnet.com to plan a day or weekend trip for you and your family or friends! Check out the RM of Lac du Bonnet's website's recreation tab for activities and programs that appeal to you.

We would be more than ecstatic to welcome you to our community in the months ahead. After coming to visit us once, you may just find yourself wanting to stick around. Many folks have come for a visit but ended up staying for a lifetime.

On behalf of council and our committed municipal staff, I extend everyone a warm Lac du Bonnet welcome.

Reeve Loren Schinkel
RM of Lac du Bonnet



Lions' Canada Day Ready to Roar Again

Looking for a weekend event for family and friends? The Lac du Bonnet Lions-sponsored Canada Day weekend will be roaring once again from July 1 to 3 after a two-year pandemic break.

"Everybody is so excited to know the Canada Day events are back in Lac du Bonnet and the Lions are proud to be able to contribute and put this on for contributors and those who attend," said Lac du Bonnet Lions president Joel Spearman.

The July long weekend is packed with activities drawing thousands of people from across the region. People can visit the parking lot by the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre to check out the Lions Family Fun Zone as well as a farmer's market, featuring a variety of home grown food, arts and crafts from dozens of vendors.

New for 2022 is the Lions-sponsored KidSight free vision screening for children from five months to six years of age. Screeners will be on hand at the Lions Family Fun Zone on July 2.

Throughout the weekend, a Wonder Shows midway



*Thousands of
people gather at
the Lac du Bonnet
Beach to catch
the spectacular
fireworks display.*

**LIONS CLUB OF
LAC DU BONNET**



Canada Day

WEEKEND 2022

JULY 1-3

FIREWORKS

July 2

PARADE

July 3

WONDER SHOWS

CAR SHOW

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LIONS FUN ZONE

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located in the parking lot by First Street offers a variety of rides and games for the young and young at heart.

The Lac du Bonnet Arena board will be hosting their annual beer garden, which helps satisfy a thirst for a cold beverage on a hot summer day.

On the evening of Saturday, July 2, the crowd will gather at the Lac du Bonnet beach to watch what has become known as one of Canada's best fireworks displays. During the show put on by Arch Angel Fireworks, the



Sunova Park is home to the annual Canada Day mixed slo-pitch tournament.



The Lac du Bonnet Arena board beer garden helps satisfy a thirst for a cold beverage on a hot summer day.

crowd gazes in awe as the sky and the water below flash for almost 40 minutes with spectacular colour and light. Members of the Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa fire departments carefully overseeing the safety of the beach spectators.

Spearman said the Lac du Bonnet Lions fundraise annually for the fireworks show and he encourages the public to give generously at donation stations set up around town.

The annual float parade takes place on Sunday at noon. Following the parade, the Winnipeg River Car Club

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The Wonder Shows midway offers a variety of rides and games for the young and young at heart.

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If your hungry, members of the Pioneer Club come out in full force to cook and feed over 200 people at a pancake breakfast. Vendors set up around town on the parking lots to help compliment local restaurants with a wide variety of tasty treats and provide a unique outdoor shopping experience.

For the sporting fan, an annual mixed slo-pitch tournament takes place over the weekend at Sunova Park behind the Lac du Bonnet Arena, where parking is set up for teams to pitch a tent or trailer.

The Lac du Bonnet Lions Club received their charter in 1963 and true to their motto, they have been serving the community for almost 60 years. This dedicated and hard working group of volunteers represent the community spirit Lac du Bonnet was founded on, unselfishly extending a hand of assistance in virtually every event



The Winnipeg River Car Club will roll in with their Show and Shine.

that takes place in the community. Over 120 volunteers participate to help make the Canada Day gathering a success and an event celebrated as a home coming for many local families.

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2022

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Fire & Water getting the band back

The Fire and Water Music Festival is getting back in tune for 2022 and with a new address.

Organizers of the local music festival have been given permission by Town of Lac du Bonnet council to relocate the annual event from behind the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre to the Lakers Water Ski Club site.

Fire and Water president Marie Hiebert and the board of directors had been considering the option of moving the August long weekend festival to a location on the water to showcase the Winnipeg River for some time but did not have the opportunity until now. As a cornerstone event of the Lac du Bonnet summer season, she said they would like to keep improving the event

and tailor it for people to attend and enjoy live music.

“It has been a dream of the festival to be on the water,” Hiebert said. “We hope that it will create a buzz around the gorgeous location and bring people to the festival annually.”

Lac du Bonnet’s award winning Fire and Water Music Festival is a three-day event featuring music and art with a focus on local and provincial talent. The festival provides important opportunities for new, upcoming acts to introduce their talents to a broader audience and showcase their original material.

The festival is organized and run by volunteers, many of them being artists and musicians as well. The laid

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back environment of the festival encourages up front and personal contact with artists who often leave the stage following their performance and join the audience to catch the next act.

The 2022 lineup will be a good one with several well known Manitoba acts such as Woody Holler and his Orchestra, Ridley Bent, Burnstick and the Mitchell James Acoustic Trio as well as Gecko Band from Puerto Vallarta.

Ridley Bent is a Country and Western singer songwriter with six studio albums. His unique delivery and storytelling has kept him busy playing folk festivals everywhere this side of the St. Lawrence.

Burnstick is the award-winning husband and wife duo of Plains-Cree guitarist Jason Burnstick and Francophone-Métis singersongwriter Nadia Burnstick. Together they push the boundaries of contemporary



Ridley Bent

folk music while allowing the beauty of simple melodies to shine through.

Western swing sytlist Woody Holler's shows are reminiscent of a 1940s radio show with a sound that is nostalgic yet thrilling. The repertoire is eclectic, fun and fascinating, featuring finger-snapping swing beats, honey-slowed love croons, a dash of



Burnstick



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opera and show stopping “extreme” yodelling.

Mitchell James is a roots/pop artist with a bright future ahead. He has been featured on recordings by Del Barber, Cassidy Mann, and more. His latest EP, *The Spark*, produced by Winnipeg’s own Ariel Posen and backed by the members of Juno winning The Bros. Landreth, is a collection of pop, soul and rock songs are sure to warm the heart and inspire the soul.

Gecko Band plays classic rock covers. Hailing from



Daniel Koulack (left), ‘Woody Holler’ Darryl Brunger and Jeremy Penner



Mitchell James

Puerto Vallarta, they have a big Manitoba following as they always get the crowd up dancing and relate directly to their audience. Che Victor has an amazing voice, knows tons of songs and it is just a fun time watching him perform.

“We are actively working on booking more, and of course this list is subject to change,” said artistic director Anthony Kost. “We also have some volunteers working on the idea of a young performers set.”

The festival normally offers three stages featuring independent music, artist workshops and children’s programming.

With a move to the smaller Lakers Ski Club grounds, Kost said the format will move to one main stage and will not have more than one band playing at a time.

“We may have occasional short sets elsewhere on the grounds while the main stage set-up is taking place for the next band,” Kost said.

George Foreman and the Grills – aka George Semchuk and company – will be the ‘Artists at Large’ at Fire and Water performing tweener sets and campfire entertainment.

Hiebert said the event will still have a main entrance and there will be fencing of the site for security reasons. Access from the water is possible with the boat launch next to the site, but there will be no docking of boats. Being dropped off and picked up are the only options by water.

A smaller festival with an annual attendance around the 200-person mark, it is also believed a move to the smaller area would be better as organizers could limit the number of tickets available.

Hiebert said cancelling the festival in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions was difficult. She said they took their cue this year from the Wnnipeg Folk Festival, who likewise announced they would be hosting an event after a two-year hiatus.

“It is a great feeling to start planning for the festival this year,” Hiebert said. “Although we have held some smaller events over the last two years nothing beats the full festival.”

For more information visit the Fire and Water Music Festival website at firewater.ca

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Boreal Shores Art Tour back on the road

After two years of being parked in the garage due to COVID-19, the Boreal Shores Art Tour is getting back on the road for 2022.

Scheduled for Aug. 20 and 21, the Boreal Shores Art Tour (BSAT) is a free, road-trip worthy, self-guided art tour featuring artists at their studios or group locations scattered throughout the beautiful and diverse Boreal forest and shore regions of North Eastman. From the eastern shores of Lake Winnipeg through the Winnipeg River system to the Whiteshell Provincial Park, the tour showcases artists from diverse communities who love to explore all aspects of visual art.

First held in 2017, visitors met 34 talented artists at 16 locations during the two-day tour.

Over 700 people travelled the BSAT route in 2019 making an average of six stops each. There were 38 artists located at 22 stops with five group locations spread along the way. Many people made it to every stop – an accomplishment that can only be done by devoting the entire weekend to driving the route.

Artists sold just under \$40,000 worth of art on those two days with reports purchased items were sent across Canada as well as the UK, Germany, France and the U.S. Less than half of the visitors were from the region while the rest came from all parts of Manitoba as well as from B.C. to the Maritimes.

The Boreal Shores Art Tour is also good for businesses across North Eastman. Tour goers bought a reported 63 tanks of gas, ate 154 meals and paid for 10 overnight accommodations during the 2019 event.

Organizers said 2020 promised to be even better with

more than 45 artists registered. COVID intervened however resulting on the 2020 and 2021 events being cancelled.

Janice Charko, spokesperson for the organizing committee, said the 2022 regional art event has applied to the RM of Lac du Bonnet for a small grant to cover event insurance and to cover COVID safety for each location – hand sanitizer, masks and signage for social distancing. She said group locations already have greeters identified and they will be ensuring protocol guidelines are being followed.

“We will be following any provincial orders,” Charko said.

For those applying to BSAT to display their work, artwork must be original in concept, design and execution. Items must have artistic merit and be of acceptable quality. Accompanied by digital photos of the artwork, applications will be reviewed by an independent and anonymous board of whose decision to admit or not, using these guidelines, will be

accepted by the board of BSAT.

Charko said total of 39 artists will display their wares are 22 stops for this year’s event with a number of new people ready, willing and able to welcome tour-goers. Those already pencilled in include Pinawa’s Stu Iverson, Rick Cline in Seven Sisters, Mary Louise Chown in River Hills, Margaret Korlak from Whitemouth, Demi-Raine Enns in Lac du Bonnet and painter Jamie Hoagabom in Victoria Beach.

Korlak is a multi-talented artist from the RM of Whitemouth who has been involved with BSAT since the tour was introduced in 2017.



Photographer Stu Iverson says the Boreal Shores Art Tour, along with other art sales and tours, is important in helping reinvigorate the artistic community.



“Participating in the BSAT for the last two years has been a positive growing experience in many ways,” Korlak said. “As an artist, being in the show has pushed me to explore new avenues of expression, challenged me to use a variety of mediums and to find creative ways to display my artwork. Opening my studio to visitors has been a way to share my environment and to invite the viewer to experience what motivates and inspires my work.”

Iverson is one of the region’s most prominent photographers and has viewed several international locales through a lens. Iverson compliments his images by utilizing unique lighting produced by environmental conditions such as hoar frost and fog. His vast portfolio is not limited to any particular topic, but Iverson has an interest in capturing images of wildlife and nature.

His work has often been featured in *The Clipper*. His photos of the Pinawa Dam and suspension bridge have also been published in the McNally Robinson photo book *Manitoba by Manitoba*.

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The Boreal Shores Art Tour encourages art and nature lovers to explore the beauty of North Eastman.

Like everybody else, Iverson said artists have had varied responses to COVID, noting some have been able to be productive, have learned new techniques and made more art. Others have unfortunately moved on to other things and just let their art be.

He said the Boreal Shores Art Tour, along with other art sales and tours, is an important incentive for the artists and to help reinvigorate the artistic community.

“For all of us, the fact that there is an art show coming up acts like a stimulus to get ready, be prepared (and) finish some of those things we have been thinking about doing,” Iverson said. “Having the tour, meeting the public (and) selling their art is great for most artists.”

Iverson said the tour itself is as equally stimulating for viewers, many of whom look on it as a way to take a drive with family or friends and see the countryside or communities they have not visited in a while.

“For people going on tour we believe that taking a drive... talking with artists and others on the tour and seeing new art will be a great mental break from day-to-day concerns,” he said. “Most people are just having fun and enjoying a low stress activity.”

From a personal note, Iverson said art has to be shown, discussed, liked, disliked, sold or not sold to allow for the creation of more art.

“And of course the ultimate compliment is when somebody wants to buy it and hang it on their wall,” he said.

For more information the BSAT website at borealshoresarttour.ca

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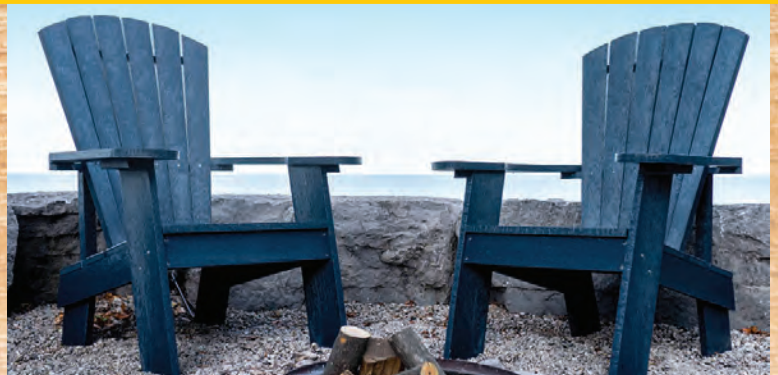
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Community Garden Established in LdB

Residents of Lac du Bonnet have access to a community garden with a focus on food security, building community and increasing the health and well-being of people in the region.

Initially developed out of the Food Security Network, the planning committee set the foundation for the garden to be an inclusive place to gather for food and friendship.

Gardeners are required to sign a standard agreement to respect rules and procedures, which will guarantee the garden remains well-maintained and accessible.

A section is dedicated to grow produce for the Lac du Bonnet Food Bank and the Lunch is On Us program. Gardeners also have access to a garden shed, tools and water.

Last year proved to be a great year for the Lac du Bonnet Community Garden pilot project. Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR) guided the team through the planning process as they determined garden interest and



needs. Land for the garden donated by McIntosh Farms was a temporary place to test-drive larger crops like pumpkins, squash and corn in a communal approach.

Feedback from gardeners in the 2021 pilot project was overwhelmingly positive. Growing conditions and access to resources were highlighted as essential elements of garden success and enjoyment.

As harvest was finishing in the fall, Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) awarded the garden a grant of \$21,300. In addition, Shepherd's Purse



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contributed a grant of \$1,500. The Agassiz Gardening Club also provided financial support to the garden.

The significant funding support will put the Lac du Bonnet Community Garden in full bloom moving forward. Funds will be used to develop a permanent site. A greenhouse has already been purchased and will be assembled in spring. Plans are in place for a footbridge, irrigation system, raised beds, shed and signage.

Future goals for the garden include partnerships with children and youth, workshops on food preservation and cooking, a seed library and continued support for gardeners.

Partnerships have been essential to the operation of the community garden. The Town of Lac du Bonnet has partnered every step of the way and will be providing support for irrigation in 2022. McIntosh Farms also



The Lac du Bonnet Community Garden is an inclusive place to gather for food and friendship.



provided water last year for the garden, one of the driest seasons in years and will continue support with access to parking, cultivation and consultation.

The Lac du Bonnet Community Garden encourages people new to gardening as well as seasoned veterans to join. Financial assistance is available for rental fees.

Individuals interested in renting a plot can email ldbcommunitygarden@gmail.com or contact Liebrecht at 204-345-9492.

The organization functions solely on the generosity of the community. Donations can be made to HEROS Alliance at the town office. Specify that the donation is for the community garden. Tax receipt on donations over \$20 are available if requested.

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Memories of Pointe du Bois Book Binding History



Manitoba Electrical Museum director Pam McKenzie (left) presents a cheque to Cathy White Juskow in the amount of \$250 to help offset costs associated with the publishing of the Memories of Pointe du Bois history book.

Work continues on a book detailing the history of Pointe du Bois – the former Winnipeg Hydro company town located 40 kilometres northeast of Lac du Bonnet.

Memories of Pointe du Bois, MB is being written by former resident Catherine White Juskow with the support of many from the community who feel the places and memories of those who lived there should not be forgotten.

“When the homes were razed to the ground in 2015, I was heartbroken and it really bothered me, that there was nothing left,” Juskow

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said. "Pointe had provided me with such a wonderful place to live and grow."

The Pointe du Bois Generating Station was built on the Winnipeg River between 1909 and 1911 by the City of Winnipeg. Its purpose was to supply power to the city in competition with the privately owned Winnipeg Electric Company.

From a population that ranged between 300 and 400 in its heyday, Pointe du Bois had dwindled to 79 people by 1996.

Manitoba Hydro inherited the company town in 2002 as part of its purchase of Pointe du Bois and Slave Falls hydroelectric dams. Over the next decade, Hydro reportedly put little into the



Cathy Juskow in 1997 beside the town map that once welcomed visitors to Pointe du Bois.



Cathy Juskow working on Memories of Pointe du Bois in her home office

upkeep of the town site.

With a new spillway structure built for operation in 2014, and the old spillway sealed off, Manitoba Hydro began decommissioning the entire town site in 2013. The last residents were told to be gone two years later.

The *Memories of Pointe du Bois*, MB project started with Louise Kollinger, who created a Facebook page in 2013, followed by a reunion that September.

When the page fell quiet after the town was razed in 2015, Juskow and others decided they just simply couldn't let the town disappear. A private Memories of Pointe Facebook group was set up in 2017 to encourage people to share their

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1949 Pointe du Bois School - Grade 3

information. Members have come forward from as far away as Australia to reconnected with Pointe family and share pictures, information and memories on the page.

A gathering was held in Lac du Bonnet in May 2019 with 96 people in attendance. All unanimously supported the project of a the town history book with a commitment to purchasing the publication when complete.

Juskow reported the group had success in collecting a good deal of information allowing her to create a database of photos, names, dates, job descriptions of residents and their families, along with information about what living in Pointe du Bois was like over the century the community existed.

“This would also include information on the events, organizations and recreation that residents were involved in,” explained Juskow.

COVID-19 hit and has slowed the progress of the book as many places have been closed to researchers. This has presented other challenges with respect to the gathering of pictures and information.

“Research and writing for the book is almost complete. I found the newspaper archives of publications such as *The Springfield Leader* and it’s Pointe du Bois columns invaluable when it came to my research,” said Juskow. “It would be great if we can put together a book something like *Logs*

n Lines (a history of the Lac du Bonnet area).”

Juskow said she will never have too many pictures, too much memorabilia or information when it comes to this project. Just recently, she said she was in contact with and received pictures from the Square family.

The project has also received some funding for publication. They received a Heritage grant in the



1963 at the South Station, going to Slave Falls for school picnic

amount of \$4,000 and also received \$250 from the Manitoba Electrical Museum as well as photos for the project.

“I also want to recognize the support that I have received from *Lac du Bonnet Clipper* owner Mark Buss and former owner Kim MacAulay for their support,” Juskow said. “They have offered to edit the book and aid me



1970 PDB Pool2a



Pointe du Bois sign

in preparing the book for print. Our local newspapers are an important and integral part of preserving our history.”

Individuals with questions can message organizers via email at pointedubois1911@hotmail.com or through the Memories of Pointe du Bois Facebook page.



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Recreation Along the Winnipeg River Corridor

By Donna Besel

Since COVID started, Manitobans have been looking closer to home for interesting things to see and do.

In the Winnipeg River area, visitors and residents are discovering places and activities that they may not have previously experienced and that don't require a lot of expensive equipment. Here are some favourites.

Let's start where the Whitemouth River flows into the Winnipeg River. Although the road has lots of bumps and its facilities have aged, Whitemouth Falls Provincial Park is a great place to spend the day – fishing, picnicking and taking photos of pelicans, the nearby hydro dam and the rushing water. Also, Great Grey Owls, bears, and other boreal wildlife can be spotted. Some folks kayak in the rapids and swim in the calmer bays.

In the surrounding forest, there's a web of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing.

Further along Hwy 11, after a turn onto PR 211, you'll find Pinawa, with plenty of all-season activities. An extensive system of hiking and biking trails surrounds the entire town. The scenic Ironwood Trail winds along the Winnipeg River shoreline and cross-country ski trails spread out over 40 kilometres onto the golf course and into the boreal forest. The curling rink

hosts bonspiels and regular play for all ages. Every summer, the town celebrates its birthday with a parade, fireworks, social and beach activities.

Recently, hundreds of visitors have been plunking inflatables into the Pinawa Channel at the diversion dam and drifting for a couple of hours with the current. Their tubing trip ends at the suspension bridge, where they exit. Most visitors like to try bouncing and swaying on the structure that stretches across the channel. This narrow waterway also provides a spot for kayakers and canoeists to head downstream to Pinawa Dam Provincial Park. If you start at the diversion dam, it's a three or four hour paddle with one short portage.

Lately, Pinawa Beach has become a hotbed of family excitement with the floating Hoopla Island, where kids can slide and splash and fly through the air. If you don't like cool river water, you can swim in a heated pool, right next to the beach. There's also a marina, numerous boat launches and a rowing/sailing club.

Pinawa delivers big time when it comes to the arts. In W.B. Lewis Centre, there's a full gallery with ongoing lessons. In the community centre, Eastern Manitoba Concert Association hosts a fall/winter concert series and have years of experience showcasing big name talent from across Canada. Also, the Pinawa Players, an

amateur theatre company, has been producing lively plays for decades.

After leaving Pinawa town site, head down the gravel road (PR 520) to Pinawa Dam Provincial Park, home of Manitoba's first hydro-electric generating station - built in 1906 and operated until 1951. Due to quirky artillery experiments and tons of dismantling, the dam now resembles a collection of Roman ruins.

In 1985, its scenic



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rapids and popularity with visitors led to it being designated a provincial park. Over the years, hiking trails, railings, amphitheatre, bridges, historical signage, playground, picnic tables, toilets and fire pits have been added to enhance the public's enjoyment of the 250,000-square-metre park.

When PR 520 hits PR 313, turn west toward Lac du Bonnet. This town and the surrounding municipality have a larger population than Pinawa, with more than 40 cottage subdivisions. All summer long, the huge dock and the small beach in downtown Lac du Bonnet swarm with happy swimmers. Numerous boat launches and more than 60 kilometres of unobstructed waterways provide endless opportunities for fishers and boaters.

Recently, Lac du Bonnet Trails Association worked hard to upgrade the nearby TransCanada Trail, creating a better link between Old Pinawa and Great Falls. One popular section is the Blueberry Rock Trail with its lookout tower, picnic tables, fire pits, and toilet. Also, the new section between Old Pointe Road and Pinawa gravel pit provides hours of scenic recreation for hikers, cyclists, snowshoers, and cross-country skiers. Another system of ski trails is located about 15 minutes west of town, off PR 317 in the Agassiz Forest,

For years, the Town of Lac du Bonnet has attracted huge crowds for its Canada Day celebrations with fireworks, parade, social, ball tournament and midway. Also, it hosts the Fire & Water music festival and has a small concert venue at the St. John's Heritage Church

and Arts Centre. Lac du Bonnet Community Centre includes a curling rink, bowling alley and a large space for gatherings of all kinds. The annual Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby draws thousands of avid anglers, vying for big money prizes.



Lac du Bonnet Blueberry Rock Trail TCT

Heading north on Hwy 11 leads to Great Falls, with another beach, boat launch and dam. In this former hydro town, the well-preserved Great Falls Hall provides a charming, old-fashioned venue for bowling, craft sales, socials and other events.

A little further along the shores of the Winnipeg River, the small community of St-Georges has a popular beach and a busy boat launch.

Next on Hwy 11, the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls has another huge hydro dam and another impressive set of rapids. One of this town's main claims to fame is the 4P Festival (paper, power, pickerel and peas), held on the Labour Day weekend. Although the paper mill no longer exists, locals celebrate their communities with a

parade, social, pea soup competition, talent contest, ball tournament, chainsaw carving displays and fireworks.



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Another claim to fame is the famous walleye fishing derbies, which attract high level competitors from all over. An additional gem is Powerview School's drama club. For years, they have been putting on dramatic plays and musicals.

Next to Pine Falls Hospital, nine kilometres of well-groomed cross-country trails allow skiers to explore the boreal forest and hills. Their chalet is equipped with fire pit, benches, outhouse and a massive stove.

Heading north, Sagkeeng First Nation has two parts, separated by the widest section of the Winnipeg River, where it flows into Traverse Bay. With around 3,600 members living on the reserve, this community hosts well-attended pow-wows and various sporting events at their large arena.

Past the reserve, the Winnipeg River enters Lake Winnipeg, where one could spend days exploring all the beaches and cottage communities. On the land mass that juts north into the big lake, you will find Albert Beach, Victoria Beach, Hillside Beach, Belair and Lester Beach. On the southwestern side, there's Grand Beach Provincial Park, Grand Marais, Sunset Beach, Lakeshore Heights, Balsam Harbour, Boulder Bay, Beaconia and Patricia Beach Provincial Park.



Pinawa Channel tubing

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An especially interesting place is Elk Island Provincial Park, located on the northern tip of the peninsula, accessible only by boat or a long wade in shallow water. Ringed by long beaches and sand cliffs, the island is covered with dramatic trees and bright flowers.

These Lake Winnipeg communities feature lengthy stretches of white sand, stunning horizons, great fishing/boating and interconnected off-road trails. Thousands of summer visitors spend time in this area and numerous cottage owners live there year-round. In the winter, folks enjoy scenic cross-country ski trails in Grand Beach Provincial Park. And, on the frozen lake, clumps of ice fishing shacks provide hours of fun for hearty fishers.

It's hard to list the endless recreational activities and facilities, but here are some that can be found throughout the whole region.

- rivers and lakes for canoeing and kayaking
- opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife and nature
- hiking and biking trails
- boat launches and marinas
- restaurants and places to stay

- places to fish, sail, water ski, wakeboard
- museums: Lac du Bonnet, St-Georges, Grand Marias
- community centres/curling clubs/ hockey rinks: Seven Sisters, Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, Powerview-Pine Falls, Sagkeeng, Grand Marias, Victoria Beach
- senior centres: Lac du Bonnet, Pinawa, Powerview-Pine Falls, Grand Marias, Victoria Beach/RM of Alexander
- golf courses: Pinawa, Black Bear and Granite Hills near Lac du Bonnet, Pine Falls and Grand Pines near Grand Beach
- libraries: Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, St-Georges with a Victoria Beach branch
- bowling alleys: Lac du Bonnet, Great Falls
- farmer or summer markets: Lac du Bonnet, Victoria Beach, Pinawa
- riding lessons or sleigh rides: Pine Rock Stables, Ridge Creek Ranch and Double E Ranch, all near Lac du Bonnet
- RV parks and campgrounds: Powerview-Pine Falls, Pinawa, Grand Beach Provincial Park and surrounding areas, Lac du Bonnet and surrounding area,
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Lac du Bonnet Tower Road x-c ski trails TCT

Also, it is important to note recreational projects that connect North Eastman communities.

1. TransCanada Trail links all of them, from Seven Sisters to the Beaches, and this initiative provides infinite opportunities for non-motorized recreation.
2. Winnipeg River Arts Council serves the municipalities of Alexander and Lac du Bonnet, the Towns of Powerview-Pine Falls and Lac du Bonnet, and the LGD of Pinawa. Over the past 10 years, it has organized art exhibits, storytelling events, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre Touring productions, youth mentorships, writing workshops, art classes, Canada 150 Dreamcatchers Tour and Truck Stop Circus (in Lac du Bonnet). It supports and promotes Fire and Water Music Festival, 4P Festival, Pinawa Players, Eastern Manitoba Concert Association, Boreal Shores Tour, Pinawa Art Gallery, all of the local libraries and museums, and arts events hosted by regional artists and organizations.
3. The annual Boreal Shores Art Tour is a free, self-guided driving tour that showcases visual art located in artists' studios or group locations across Eastman, from Whiteshell Provincial Park to the Beaches area.



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Fishing the Winnipeg River Never Disappoints

By Don Lamont

Over the last 40 years, I have fished almost every section of the mighty Winnipeg River.

I got my start in the fishing industry as a guide at Eagle Nest Lodge, some 38 kilometres upriver from Lac du Bonnet. My first tournament was held at Tall Timber Lodge located at the mouth of the Bird River. The Bird was the place where I caught my first smallmouth bass and what a thrill that was.

What I am trying to say is that this river has been in my DNA right from the beginning. I almost always make at least one trip there every year, usually in the spring. This part of the world with its large expanse of fishable water and great scenery is just a spectacular destination. It doesn't hurt that much of the river edges on the Canadian Shield.

A couple of years ago my wife and I headed out for a day to fish the Winnipeg River just south of Lac du Bonnet. When we arrived at the boat launch that I just off PR 211 to Pinawa, things were relatively quiet. When we loaded up the boat at 5 p.m. to head back to Winnipeg that had changed dramatically. There were many families shore fishing and enjoying the great outdoors.

On the water though, we had a nice quiet time with no boats in sight. We fished many sections of the river, trying to find some active fish. Finally, around 3 p.m., we found a school of walleye tucked behind a shoreline point, out of the main current flow. With a water temperature of 8 Celsius it appeared the fish were still in the spawning mode. We were also lucky enough to land three fish under the 45-centimetre slot size to take home. The highlight of the day was a doubleheader of walleye, one near Manitoba Master Angler size. These



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My wife Thora and I with the double header of nice walleye.

were caught while drifting a jig in four metres of water.

This is just one small sampling of what is available. This section of the river provides a plethora of fishing opportunities. While walleye is the most popular target species, the smallmouth bass fishery has exploded. You will find them everywhere and they grow to massive proportions. Local angler Matt Gelley has made many YouTube videos on catching these great game fish. You can find them at MG Outdoors.

For those looking to catch a massive northern pike, this section of the river from Pinawa to the McArthur Falls dam holds some of the largest pike in the province. I can remember many a day when trolling for walleye when

we have hooked into a massive pike. In the spring they will be related to bay and weed edges, but when summer rolls around they are the rock humps and drop-offs around the many islands in this section of the river.

In late summer many of the anglers turn their attention to the mooneye that abound in the faster water in the section by Lac du Bonnet, down river from the Seven Sisters Dam. There is also a good fall run of walleye up to the dam.

One other species that has gained popularity is the black crappie. There is a very good population in the Lee River along with some jumbo perch.

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- ✓ **Funding bursaries for district students pursuing careers in Resource Management.**
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amount of water that is fishable in this section of the Winnipeg River. There is some great detailed mapping available to anglers. LakeMaster has an HD Map of this section of river as does Anglers Edge Mapping.

Purchase of these products will cut down searching time dramatically and might save you a lower unit on your outboard.

When it comes to an angling destination this section of the river has it all. It is a multi-species bonanza and with reduced limits along with a slot size it will only get better as the years go on. Give it a try this year, you won't be disappointed.



Ted Fardoe with a massive pike caught near MacArthur Falls.

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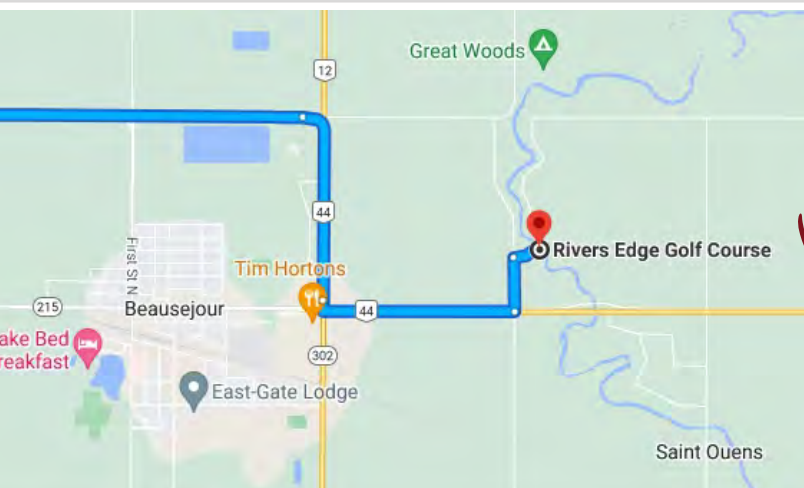


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Calm Waters: The History of Pinawa

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District
Historical Society

Pinawa is the only Manitoba town that has existed in two time periods, moved eight kilometres and was supported by two separate industries. Its history is vast, complex and confusing. The name “Pinawa”, an Indigenous word meaning “calm or gentle”, refers to the river channel, but also to the hydroelectric generating station built on it, its company town, and later the nuclear research site and its accompanying town, before progressing to the community known today.



During the late 1700s and through the 1800s, Indigenous peoples, European explorers and fur trading companies travelling along the tumultuous Winnipeg River knew of a safer route that branched off the north side of the Winnipeg River, bypassed the dangerous seven falls and rejoined the Winnipeg River at the north end of “Lake du Bonnet”. That route was the Pennawa, a narrow and meandering river, “in some places a mere opening between rocks,” that, near its end, “winds through an immense marshy area covered with wild rice.”

Bishop David Anderson, while travelling from Red River in 1854, left the Winnipeg River at Lac du Bonnet and entered the Pinawa River where paddling against the current was easier, though its



View of Pinawa Channel, 1903. Credit to Manitoba Electrical Museum & Education Centre.

five portages weren’t any less arduous than those on the main river.

Anderson described the first two falls as “pretty, but small,” not more than 20 feet wide and 12 feet high. The third was “a continuous succession of cascades, and altogether a long portage,” while the fourth was located in a “beautiful gorge, not above six feet wide, through which the water passed over solid rock.” They portaged their gear and guided their canoe past the falls with some men on long lines and others pushing it from behind. There was one final short portage before they re-entered the Winnipeg River, continuing on to the Islington Mission at White Dog, Ont.

Geologist and naturalist Henry Hind, while on an expedition to the Red River Settlement in 1857, camped at the mouth of the Pennawa before

travelling down the river. While waiting for breakfast in the hour before sunrise, Hind observed “the almost oppressive silence was broken only by the occasional splash of a pike, the distant howling of a wolf or the subdued roar of the Winnipeg River carried on a gentle western breeze.”

The Wolseley Expedition of 1870 was the last large canoe brigade to travel the Winnipeg River. By 1877, the Canadian Pacific Railway had entered the southeastern portion of the province. It arrived in Whitemouth in 1880 and was completed to Winnipeg three years later, connecting Manitoba to the rest of Eastern Canada. Expansion out of Whitemouth into the untouched wilderness was inevitable. Lac du Bonnet was formed in 1898 and the railway came to this small industrial community in 1901.



The advancement of civilization, and the steady growth of Winnipeg’s population and economy, required the province to think about powering the future. In 1900, recognizing the power potential of the Winnipeg River, there was a race to acquire the land along it. The federal government’s Department



Construction camp, 1903. Credit to Manitoba Electrical Museum & Education Centre.

of the Interior scrambled to avoid power site monopolies and placed stipulations on all land along with Winnipeg River: if it wasn’t developed within a certain amount of time, the land reverted back to the government.

In the midst of this chaos, William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, members of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company (WERC), hired New York’s Pearson Engineering Company to survey the Winnipeg River for potential power sites during the winter of 1901. Hugh L. Cooper, the company’s engineer, rejected the seven falls of Seven Sisters because sections of it were iced over. His chosen location, a few kilometres to the east, was the Pinawa Channel as it still had open water.

The recommendation wasn’t based on the channel’s power potential, rather on Cooper’s belief a free-flowing channel year-round would offer better control over water movement towards a power site.

In the summer of 1902, the Winnipeg General Power Company was formed to manage the financing and construction of the Pinawa hydroelectric generating station, the first to be built in Manitoba. The company’s first decision, based on logic



Original townsite, circa 1910. Credit to Manitoba Electrical Museum & Education Centre.

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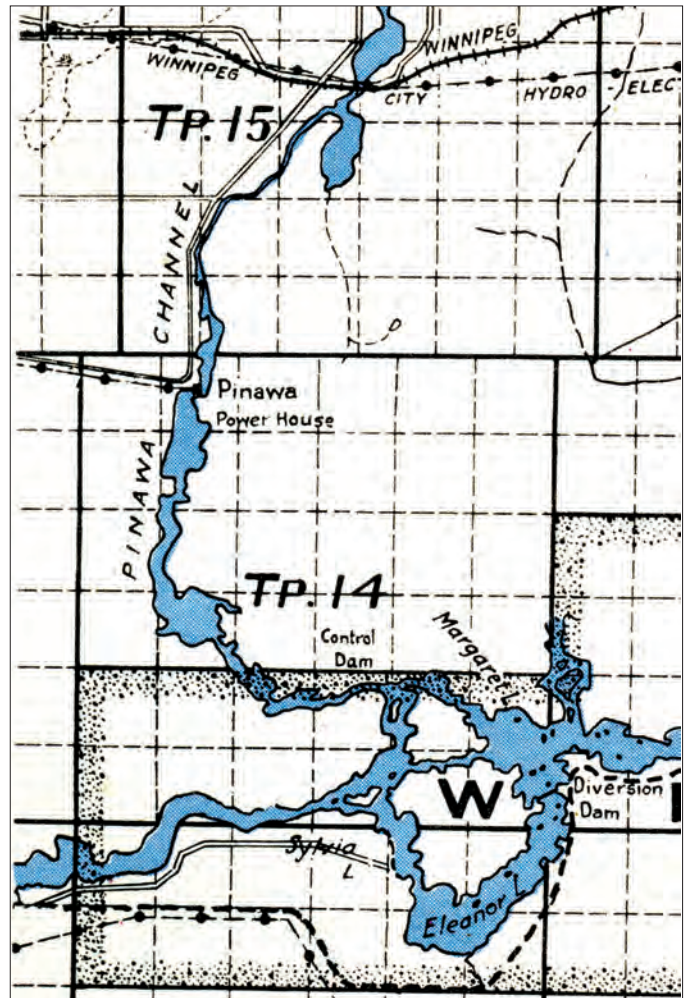


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and business, was to not construct a rail bridge over the Winnipeg River or a spur line to Pinawa, as there would be no outbound freight, which meant “this marvel of modern engineering would be built almost solely through horse and human power.” Lac du Bonnet, the closest railhead to the power site, became a shipping hub for supplies and workers. All construction materials, including the 11,250-kilogram generators, were barged across the river at Lac du Bonnet, then transported by teams of horses over corduroy roads.

This \$3 million project brought together a vast network of workers over the five-year construction period. Winnipeg employment agencies sent recent immigrants directly to Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet and it became a gathering place for unemployed men hoping for work. Loggers, homesteaders and teamsters from the Lac du Bonnet area, along with men from the Fort Alexander and Brokenhead reserves, cleared bush and transmission line right-of-ways. Hydraulic and electrical engineers from Eastern Canada, the United Kingdom and the U.S. supervised all aspects of construction. Excavation, dredging and installation involved approximately 1,500 workers of varying skill levels. Steam-powered tripod drills, high explosives, horse-drawn scrapers and men with shovels moved 385,000 cubic metres of granite. The same methods were used to built the diversion dam on the Winnipeg River, which maximized the channel’s water flow. All concrete was mixed and poured by hand and all steel transmission towers, from Pinawa to Winnipeg, were put up “by horse and human power.” Once construction was completed in spring 1906, the majority of these jobs disappeared.



1942 map showing Pinawa generating station, the control & diversion dams. Credit: Manitoba Tourism Bureau



The WERC’s Pinawa generating station delivered the first low-cost hydroelectric power to Winnipeg on June 9, 1906. The power plant required an operating staff of “50 to 60 men, including managers,” a small crew of electrical technicians and a variety of general labourers to “tend boilers,



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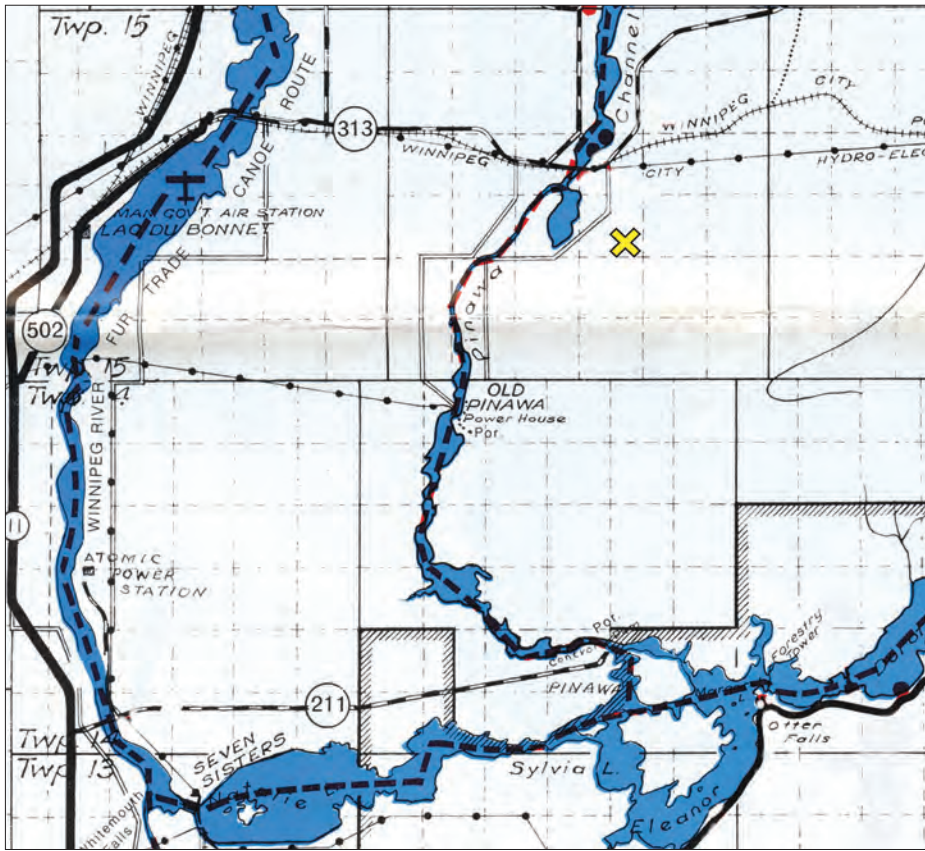
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1968 map showing Old Pinawa, Pinawa & atomic site; URL location marked with yellow "X"
 Credit: Manitoba Tourism Bureau

keep machinery oiled, clean the plant, cut and blast ice blockages in the river” and do other assorted maintenance tasks. These employees, isolated in the middle of bush and muskeg, lived in the company town or on nearby homesteads. The same gruelling transportation system used during construction remained as Pinawa’s lifeline to Lac du Bonnet, and it imposed their dependence on the company store for dry goods and other essential supplies.

This company town was self-sufficient. Families

established a farming operation that kept milk cows and sheep, while a large vegetable garden supplied the store. An array of recreational facilities, including a tennis court, community hall and a curling rink, which at one time was the oldest in the province, kept residents entertained. A school and post office were also established. The town, maintained by a professional gardener, was fully landscaped and had a park-like quality.



The Pinawa generating station stopped power production Oct. 25, 1951. At the time, only four employees remained: an operator, two oilers and one cleaner. The post office and company store also closed, leaving the townsite vacant. The diversion dam on the Winnipeg

River was blown to allow the full flow of the river into the Seven Sisters generating station. In 1906, the generating station’s 19,000-horsepower output was too large for just Winnipeg, which had some citizens concerned about whether the excess power could be sold elsewhere. Even with an expansion to 30,000 horsepower, the Pinawa generating station could not compete with the combined 985,000 horsepower of the six hydro generating stations on Winnipeg River in 1951.

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After 45 years of service, Pinawa's generators were silent. The WERC repurposed some equipment, except for the clock, which ran faithfully throughout the plant's operation, but refused to work once removed from the wall. The only explanation was that it missed "the vibration of the machines."

Two years later, demolition began. In July 1953, newspapers advertised generators and all other equipment for sale on an "as is, where is basis." The powerhouse was to be demolished to the "generating floor level." Some equipment was sold as scrap metal, and anything that could be reused was salvaged. Throughout late 1953 and into 1954, the Winnipeg-based Schwartz Iron and Metal Co. Ltd., dismantled the power plant. They stripped machinery before starting on the building itself.

Alongside this work, the townsite slowly disappeared. The houses built of wood were moved to Great Falls. The brick buildings were offered to anyone who might make use of them, including the

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Pinawa generating station construction Credit: Friends of Old Pinawa

provincial government, but they remained on site, empty and unused.



In 1958, the military moved into the Pinawa site. Over one weekend in mid-May, 350 Winnipeg soldiers conducted a civil defence exercise “to practice their role in the event of a nuclear

attack on Manitoba.” The hypothetical scenario, conducted in the midst of Cold War tensions, was that a nuclear bomb detonated near Great Falls, “devastating a 12 to 14 mile radius.” The soldiers’ training began on the convoy out to Pinawa, dodging imagined radiation patches and other obstacles. The military “borrowed a group of abandoned houses” and scattered casualties inside, buried under rubble, for the soldiers to rescue.

By April 1959, the Department of National Defence leased the dam site for five years from the Manitoba government for use “as a training ground for regular and militia soldiers.” Army officials said the area would be used for “wet and dry bridging, assault river crossing, fieldcraft, demolitions and civil defence exercises.”

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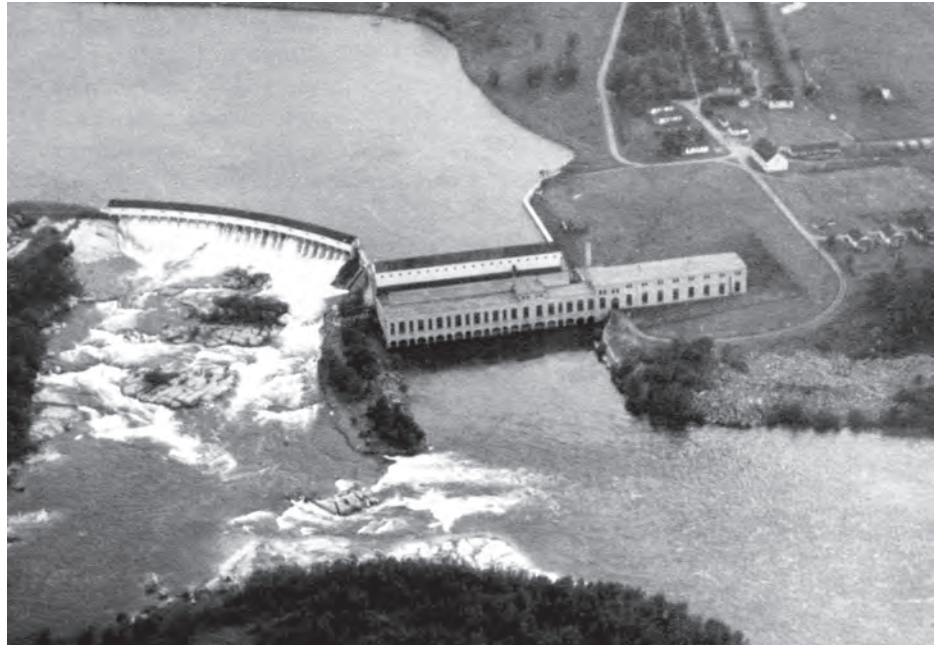
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Throughout 1959, Pinawa hosted a number of demolition training exercises. The steel-reinforced concrete throughout the various structures provided hands-on training in “many different types of demolition work.” Due to the use of high explosives, the public was asked to avoid the area. The first, held the weekend of May 16, involved the 6 Field Engineer Regiment of Winnipeg and several other units in support roles. The exercise was designed to demolish the two side approaches, limiting access to the remaining sections of “spillways, main dam and wing walls” and decreasing the hazards to visitors.



Generating station and townsite, circa 1910s
 Credit: Manitoba Hydro: A History of Electric Power in MB booklet



In September 1959, a four-day survival skills exercise involving “all units at Camp Shilo” took place at Pinawa. For authenticity, they used “a small source of radioactive material” and had a monitoring platoon “determine the patterns of radioactive fallout.” The rescuers “marched three miles” to the site before searching for “skillfully made-up simulated casualties buried beneath debris.” The abandoned houses were once again used for this purpose.

The irony of these training exercises was that a nuclear research site was coming to Manitoba. The location chosen by government officials was ten km away from the site of the Pinawa generating station.

Plans for a “nuclear energy research and development centre” were announced Oct. 1, 1959. Canada’s first nuclear research centre was in Chalk River, Ont. Manitoba was chosen for the expansion of nuclear research in the country because the province lacked “industrial research” sites. The primary research subject at the Manitoba site was to be the development of nuclear power reactors and improving upon current reactor models.

The Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd. (AECL) site had a lengthy selection process, as it required “an abundant supply of water and a large area of land not under cultivation,” though the Lac du Bonnet area was an early favourite. By December

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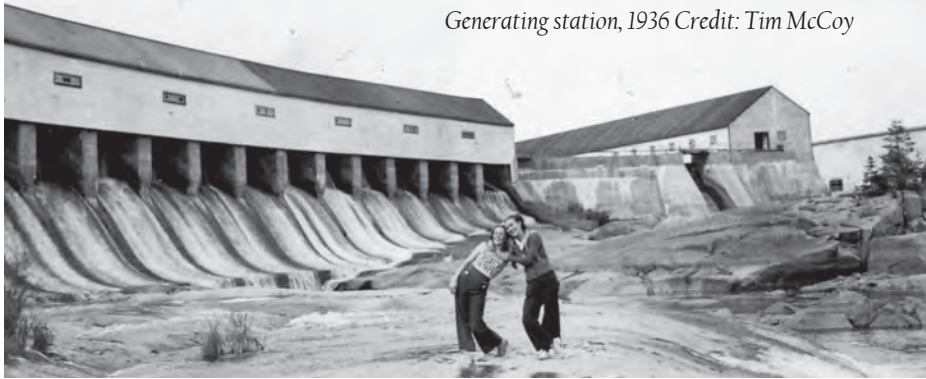
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Generating station, 1936 Credit: Tim McCoy

1959, engineering surveys along with soil and rock sampling were conducted and plans were made for a new townsite close to the proposed nuclear research site.

By January 1960, after gathering all necessary government approvals, it was announced the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment (WNRE), named for its proximity to the Whiteshell Forest Reserve, would be located on 11,000 acres in Township 14, Range 11 East, seven kilometres south of Lac du Bonnet on the

east side of the Winnipeg River. This land was located within the boundaries of the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet: 8,000 acres were provincial lands which would be transferred to the federal government, while the remaining acres were privately owned and were purchased by AECL.

Political scuffles preceded the October 1960 announcement of AECL's townsite location. The RM of Lac du Bonnet formally requested the townsite be located in Riverland, while the Premier of Manitoba, Duff Roblin, was accused of not doing enough to ensure the expansion of an existing community, like Lac du Bonnet or Seven Sisters. The new town was to be built 16 kilometres southeast of Lac du Bonnet, on a parcel of Crown land bordered by "the north shore of Sylvia Lake in the Whiteshell" on the Winnipeg River and the "south shore of the Pinawa Channel,"



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chosen for its proximity to the WNRE and for access to “many pleasant lakes and streams.”

The community had a location, but no name. In July 1961, it was revealed “Manitoba’s first nuclear research development village” would be named Pinawa. Some said it was named after “a channel in the area” while others claimed it was in homage to the “abandoned Winnipeg Electric Company’s hydro site.” Either way, the name had approval from AECL, the National Board of Geographical Names, the Post Office, and the Manitoba Government. The borders of the Whiteshell Forest Reserve (which was re-designated the Whiteshell Provincial Park in 1961) and the RM of Lac du Bonnet were adjusted to allow for the creation of the Local Government District of Pinawa.



New Pinawa townsite, 1964 Credit: Friends of Old Pinawa

Throughout 1961 construction continued on the WNRE. Contractors, most from Lac du Bonnet, cleared the bush and road right-of-ways from Hwy 11 to the Winnipeg River and through to the research site and new town. Muskeg bogged down caterpillar tractors, so horse teams hauled construction materials. By June 1962, the bridge over the Winnipeg River was officially opened.

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It was designed to withstand heavy equipment and shortened the distance to reach the research site, bypassing the Lac du Bonnet-Riverland route which had been used for access to that point.

In May 1963, the reactor building was excavated to a depth of 65 feet prior to concrete reinforcement. The contractors officially turned the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment over to AECL by July. At the same time, the employees began arriving at the townsite, transferring from Chalk River, Ont. The first was chief security officer, Ben Banham, and his wife and son. The RCMP came next, followed by LGD of Pinawa personnel. The completed houses, on streets marked with hand-made signs, were islands in the “midst of a turmoil of mud roads and construction equipment.” The community continued, as planned, to gradually expand with people and amenities to become a “completely self-contained community” with schools, “a shopping centre, hospital, town office and fire hall.”

One newspaper reporter in 1963 joked the community would probably have “Manitoba’s highest concentration of brains.” The nuclear physicists, chemists and engineers studied alternatives within nuclear power production using the research reactor, Whiteshell Reactor-1 (WR-1), which became active in November 1965. Over the next decade, the complex was renamed Whiteshell Laboratories though their research mandate remained the same. WR-1, the “principal source of radioactivity released” at Whiteshell Laboratories, was shut down by May 1985. In 1998, it was announced Whiteshell Laboratories

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on the environmental screening of the UNDERGROUND RESEARCH LABORATORY

Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. is planning an Underground Research Laboratory (URL) for geotechnical research near Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa, Manitoba, about 300 metres deep in the crystalline rock formation known as the Lac du Bonnet Batholith.

Before finalizing construction plans, AECL has been studying the potential environmental impacts of the project according to the screening guidelines of the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Process. The draft screening report is now ready and we would like to obtain your input.

URL ad, showing what's underground, 1982
Credit: The Leader, Lac du Bonnet

would be closed. The decommissioning process was expected to take 60 years, allowing the natural decay of radioactivity levels within the WR-1 research reactor. AECL’s facilities will be “systematically retired from use” and a portion of the site would be available for general business use. Full decommissioning is expected to be completed by 2060.



In 1980, AECL planned to expand Whiteshell Laboratories with an underground research lab 13 kilometres east of Lac du Bonnet. The researchers’ goal was to “develop a safe method” for the disposal of nuclear waste by studying water movement within granite rock. The proposal agitated a group of local residents who protested the project throughout its five-year construction, worried the area would soon become a “radioactive garbage dump.”

The Underground Research Laboratories (URL) opened in 1986 on land leased from the RM of Lac du Bonnet. The 20-year lease, from 1980-2000, stipulated the site could not be used for nuclear waste disposal and research officials stated repeatedly that nuclear material would never be used in these experiments. Manitoba Mines Branch monitored all research work to ensure these

conditions were met.

URL was the “first research facility in the world to be built below the water table in previously undisturbed granite.” A vertical shaft, 443 metres deep, which at the time could fit Toronto’s CN Tower inside, was cut through the granite rock to provide access to the underground testing sites at depths of 240 metres and 420 metres respectively. Each site had “hundreds of metres of tunnels and multiple test rooms.” URL attracted international scientific visitors and underground tours were available for tourists and locals.

The closure of URL was announced in 2003. The five-year decommissioning process began in 2006, which closed all “underground experiments, tunnels and shafts” and brought “all materials and furnishings” to surface level for disposal. The final step, completed in 2010, was to completely seal the site using “high strength concrete bulkheads sandwiching a dense clay component.” All that remains of the URL is a small fenced enclosure and a few signs, though the research conducted at the

underground facility will be used across Canada’s nuclear sites for decades.



The site of the Pinawa generating station, known locally as “Old Pinawa” to differentiate the two locations, had the potential for a tourist attraction, but it was also in danger of disappearing off the map. The brick houses had been demolished in 1969 and the place had fallen into ruin. For many years, Old Pinawa was “forgotten and seldom visited.” Responsibility for the land was shared by Manitoba Hydro, provincial Crown Lands, the Parks Branch and the RM of Lac du Bonnet, though no one was in a hurry to do anything with the site.

Discussions were had throughout the early 1980s. The RM wanted a development plan, but couldn’t seem to agree on one. Crown Lands said they “would not sell the property, but would hold onto it for future Parks Branch development.” The Parks Branch declared it a historic site in 1982, and a concept was developed, but no plans were fully actioned.

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Old Pinawa had become a long-weekend hangout. Complaints flooded in about site vandalism, rowdy parties and unsightly garbage, broken glass and aluminum cans in the channel. Those responsible for the site decided the “hands-off approach” was best, that conservation officers and police should continue to “confine the party rather than break it up.”

Then, on the May long weekend 1985, an 18-year-old man was murdered by a member of the Los Bravos motorcycle gang. RCMP descended upon the area, roadblocks were set up and the man was charged. Everyone took notice. Local residents petitioned the RM for more controls of the Old Pinawa site. The RM sent requests to the Parks Branch that the site be “closed until such time as the area has been established as a supervised park.” Police monitored the area closely, especially during the July long weekend, but people avoided it.

Changes happened rapidly. The 75-acre site, which contains “the dam, the area above and below the dam and the old townsite,” was designated as a heritage park. This meant the site was available for day use only and, under the Parks Land Act, all open liquor was banned. It also became the only



Aerial view of URL, 1990s Credit: AECL

heritage park in Manitoba with a “manmade feature as its focal point.”

Redevelopment began in fall 1985 and continued into 1986. A sandblasting company removed all graffiti from the concrete. Parking areas were established, while fences and a gate were installed to contain motorists. Picnic tables, barbecues, toilet facilities and limestone walking paths created a family-friendly park atmosphere. Through a joint agreement with AECL, a road connecting PR 313 and PR 211 was built, creating a “day-drive loop from Winnipeg.”

Exactly one year after the tragedy, the Old Pinawa Heritage Park opened to the public. An estimated 450 people visited throughout the May long weekend. The official ribbon cutting ceremony happened on the July long weekend 1986, with government representatives from all across the province, including the Village and RM of Lac du Bonnet. After 35 years vacant and neglected, the Pinawa generating station entered the next stage of its life as a provincial heritage park. The Friends of Old Pinawa continue to keep watch over and preserve this historical landmark.



Aerial view of Whiteshell Laboratories, 1990s Credit: AECL

- ldbhistorical.ca
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History's Lost and Found: The Wendigo Resort

By Walt Shawlee

From 1958 to 1971, a husband and wife and their five children made a secluded spot on the south shore of Lettonia Bay a major destination for Manitobans and people from far and wide.

The story of the Wendigo Resort and its varied clientele began with Paul and Anna Boel, who emigrated to Canada from Belgium after the Second World War.

“My dad’s dream was a hunting and fishing resort,” said Linda Hapko, Paul and Anna’s daughter, who remembers being only five years old at the start of something grand when her family set up shop in 1958.

Reflecting on the 13 years the Wendigo Resort operated prior to burning down, she added “I don’t think I realized at the time what we actually had. I remember different events, like my parents receiving tourism awards.”



Guy E. Moore, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Recreation for Manitoba in 1967, presented Paul Boel and his wife Anna with the Award for Achievement for members of the Manitoba Tourist Association. The much coveted Grose Award and trophy originated by Rex Grose.

Big dreams and hard work paid off. When news of Manitoba’s first indoor pool at the Wendigo Resort appeared on the front page of the Saturday paper, people showed up in droves.

“The very next day the cars were lined up for miles



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down the whole gravel road. My mom ran out of food at three in the afternoon,” recalled Hapko.

The resort became a focal point within Manitoba, hosting national level conferences featuring the likes of Jean Chrétien, clientele from the US for hunting and fishing, and a wide variety of colourful guests.

“Burton Cummings brought a plane-load of Florida people out,” Hapko recalled regarding her youth working at Wendigo Resort. “It was around 1969. It was burned in my memory as a kid, because it was quite the big deal. It was right after [The Guess Who] made it big.”

Wendigo Resort’s draw as a hunting and fishing lodge expanded with the addition of Wendigo Wings, a fly-out service. Such was the call of Manitoba’s wilderness that the pioneers of space flight visited.

“We had people like Wernher von Braun,” Hapko said of the NASA scientist. “He shot his first moose with my dad.”

At its peak, the resort had 25 rooms, eight cabins, and offered a wide variety of amenities including a heated indoor pool, fly-out services, snowmobile rentals,



boat rentals, volleyball courts and a licensed lounge. Expansion plans included adding an indoor ice rink, although this never saw fruition.

“It was the place in Manitoba to go. We were booked out a year in advance all the time,” Hapko noted fondly.

In August 1971, an electrical panel failed in one of the older sections of the main building, sparking a fire. While Hapko was not there to witness the blaze, she recalls from the reports that “we had a small section that was wood, and from there the tar paper in the roof caught fire.”

The structure of the resort was designed not to burn, and had a modern fire protection system, however, from the outside and viewed from the air the structure looked as though it was engulfed in flame.

“The water bombers flew out and water bombed it, which caved in the roof. All the walls were still up, but the structure was ruined,” Hapko explained.

While the Wendigo Resort was no more, the family continued onwards in its pioneering spirit, becoming cattle ranchers with 1,200 head of cattle, and later going back into the hotel business by buying a small hotel in Castlegar, B.C.



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Policing the Frontier

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

An English poet passed through Lac du Bonnet in 1913, observing a village of “wandering workmen” from construction and labour camps, speaking with the voices of many nations. A rough place on the fringes of law and order, Rupert Brooke referred to it as “the ultimate outpost of civilization.”

At the time of Lac du Bonnet’s establishment, the Manitoba Provincial Police (MPP) handled law enforcement throughout the province with one- and two-man detachments. Most MPP records were lost or destroyed, leaving only sparse details buried in newspaper articles. In the Eastern region, the MPP maintained a post in Selkirk. In 1905, Provincial Constable Alex Lemaire was based in Lac du Bonnet. Over the next decade, the MPP covered the vast area with posts moved between Beausejour, Molson and Whitemouth.

Newspaper reports of police in the Lac du Bonnet area are limited to more serious incidents. The Pointe du Bois generating station construction site made Winnipeg news twice in less than a year. A 1909 Christmas party quarrel over a lone woman led to one man stabbed. The attacker was captured at the Molson CPR station.

In November 1910, a dispute between two construction workers ended when one man killed the other with an

axe before fleeing into the bush. With communication challenges and transportation delays, the Chief Constable from Winnipeg took two nights and most of two days to reach the area. His belief was the fugitive reached the main CPR line and was travelling east or west. Newspapers ran a full description of the man while searches were conducted of all farms and camps along the rail lines. He was found and arrested in Buffalo, NY in July 1911. A MPP member travelled to

Niagara to escort him back to Winnipeg for trial.

During a 1911 smallpox outbreak, a MPP constable assisted with quarantining the brickyard and Woodbine Hotel. Police also intercepted illegal sturgeon fishing and arrested a Bolshevik (Russian communist) agent spreading propaganda to new settlers in the Lac du Bonnet region. On many occasions, officers travelled across miles of rough terrain to remote homesteads following reports of volatile individuals threatening others with rifles.

On November 14, 1919, the Royal North-West Mounted Police (RNWMP) established a detachment in Lac du Bonnet. The RNWMP became the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on February 1, 1920. An 8-room house on the corner of Second Street

and McArthur Avenue served as the RCMP detachment from 1926 to 1934. The MPP posted their own constable in Lac du Bonnet to assist the RCMP officer uphold law and order in the area.



LdB Historical Society Archives

Unknown officers circa 1920.

Bootleggers, Car Chases and Safecrackers

The presence of Mounties and provincial police in Lac du Bonnet forced crime into remote territories, conducted in secret and with some sophistication. Prohibition, implemented in 1916, kept police busy, searching for makers of bootleg liquor even after prohibition ended in Manitoba by 1921.

On December 31, 1928, Sgt. Nicholson, RCMP from Lac du Bonnet, and Cst. Watson, MPP out of Beausejour, raided a Molson property in search of an illicit still operation. Sgt. Nicholson was killed during the raid, resulting in a “large posse of mounted and provincial police” arriving in Molson to apprehend the suspect, found hiding in a neighbour’s cellar.

On April 1, 1932, the RCMP absorbed the MPP province wide. Those MPP members who chose to stay were retained at their previous detachments. Duties were unchanged, with the officers continuing to suspect a still operating in the vicinity of Lac du Bonnet, supplying Winnipeg bootleggers.

In July 1934, Cst. Stuart, of Lac du Bonnet, and Cst. Watson, of Beausejour, walked four miles of muskeg to raid a “fully equipped distillery concealed in the Julius bog, a few miles east of Molson.” Six men, who had

carefully covered their movements, were arrested on site and charged. This was “one of the largest stills ever seized” in Manitoba. It required six trucks to transport the tanks, steam boiler, surplus ingredients and mash to Winnipeg.

Throughout the 1930s, the RCMP rented a seven-room house on Lake Avenue, which served as detachment quarters for the one or two members. In 1935, they acquired their first motor car.

By August, while Cst. John Batza was on patrol, three boys from the relief camp stole the police car. Cst. Batza commandeered a car and driver, pursuing them across the river and into the bush to the North. After twenty miles, Cst. Batza tried and failed to board his car, sustaining minor injuries. He later discovered his car crashed into some stumps, though in “working order.” He kept watch on the roadside overnight, then waited at the Winnipeg River bridge the next morning. By noon, he arrested the boys when they tried to cross back to Lac du Bonnet.

In the summer of 1945, the RCMP occupied space over the Red and White store on Park Avenue, before renting detachment quarters at 174 Lake Ave. in October. Their numbers continued to fluctuate between one and two

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members through 1950.

In December 1953, RCMP investigated two break-ins made by expert safecrackers at the new Hudson's Bay Co. store. On Dec. 13, the thieves pushed open the back door and used a sledgehammer to chip away at the concrete base of the 600-pound safe, stealing \$5,000. Two weeks later, the thieves returned, blowing the door off the new safe with homemade nitroglycerine, grabbing \$250. By March 1954, the "safe gang" had robbed 10 premises within short drives of Winnipeg, all a week apart. It seems they were never caught.

With the village and surrounding areas connected by road, the Lac du Bonnet RCMP began expanding their patrol borders to cover more territory.

Flying North

By the 1980s, the duties of the Lac du Bonnet RCMP were as vast and varied as the territory they covered. Having outgrown their space on Lake Avenue 10 years earlier, new detachment quarters were built on the



LdB Historical Society Archives

Cst. John Batza 1937

corner of Minnewawa Street and Leslie Avenue. The 14 officers based out of this "nondescript office" patrolled the village and its surrounding areas, and conducted routine northern patrols in a "large area north of Bissett," only accessible by air, summer water routes or winter road, which included the communities of Berens

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River, Bloodvein, Poplar River and Little Grand Rapids, with day trips made into Pauingassi.

Each week, for two to three days at a time, six officers flew out of the Lac du Bonnet airport to these northern communities. The RCMP Twin Otter hauled passengers and detachment supplies to the short gravel runways. At times, they chartered Whiteshell Air Service's twin-engine Beechcraft and the Otter or Beaver, on floats or skis.

The officers were often met at the airstrip by band constables "hired to assist the RCMP with the policing of the community." They opened files and took complaints. The Lac du Bonnet detachment was contacted immediately for serious incidents, like assault or murder, otherwise the investigation began when officers were on regular patrol. Crimes relating to bootleg liquor were common. In the north, the police were viewed as helpers, often "asked to carry information and news from one place to another, to do favours and assist people with day to day problems."

The quiet of the north, comforting to some and frightening for others, was filled with "work, visiting and television via satellite dish." The officers were also responsible for the maintenance of their residence and office trailers, doing everything from general housekeeping to fixing frozen pipes or broken hinges and small carpentry or electrical jobs. They even built their own dock at Little Grand Rapids for easier summer boat access.

During the winter, the workload for the Lac du Bonnet detachment was "60 per cent north, 40 per cent south."

With increased traffic on winter roads, officers regularly drove the "long and arduous" routes from the south and between communities checking for stranded motorists, drunken drivers and speeders. In summer, those numbers were reversed, with time spent checking on the welfare of adventurers and search and rescue in the north.

While in Lac du Bonnet, officers worked day or night shifts, patrolling the village and surrounding areas and investigating complaints ranging from traffic violations to assault and theft.

In August 1984, a new detachment opened on Fifth Street, located just off Hwy 11. The building was designed to meet the specific needs of the officers and the community. It remains in use today.

By 2000, as part of a province-wide consolidation, the Whitemouth and Pinawa detachments merged with Lac du Bonnet. The seven members who "served as fly-in officers" to northern communities were moved to Selkirk. The remaining officers were left to patrol a large area containing Gem Lake in the north, Ste. Rita in the south and as far east as the Ontario border.

The RCMP have a 102 year history in Lac du Bonnet. They uphold the legacy of the early MPP and RNWMP officers who worked to bring law and order to this village on the fringes of civilization, while continuing to keep our community safe.

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Little Grand Rapids patrol cabin in the 1980s.



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The End of an Era

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

The 1950s were a time of great change in Lac du Bonnet. The Winnipeg River rose 14 feet with the construction of McArthur Falls and Lac du Bonnet's aviation heyday was coming to a close.

By 1947, Canadian Pacific Airlines withdrew from bush operations and their Manitoba assets were picked up by well-known Lac du Bonnet aviators Roy Brown and Milt E. Ashton to form Central Northern Airways, Ltd. (CNA), the third largest airline in Canada. They received their operational permit on May 12, and that same day, flew their inaugural flight from Lac du Bonnet to Bissett, carrying one and a half tons of mail.

CNA, headquartered at Winnipeg's Stevenson Field, operated Norsemen and Bellanca aircraft on daily scheduled routes between their main bases of Lac du Bonnet, Flin Flon and Sioux Lookout. In Lac du Bonnet,

the CNA acquired the decommissioned RCAF hanger, workshop and slipway for their conversions to floats or skis, while their offices and flights remained at the dock. CNA, with their fleet of 28 aircraft, called themselves the "Wings of the North." Though as the boundaries of the North expanded, Lac du Bonnet became farther away from these remote places.

Discussions began in May 1955 to acquire the Hydro-owned land in front of CNA's offices for use as a park and swimming area. The dock was already a draw for local children, especially when a jump off the end meant they could avoid the muddy, weedy river bottom while swimming.

In late 1955, CNA merged with another northern airline to create a new company, Trans-Air Limited (different from Trans-Canada Airlines), which had a fleet of 42 planes, making it the largest commercial airline working out of Winnipeg. Their head office was located at Stevenson Field with main bases at The Pas

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Lac du Bonnet District Museum



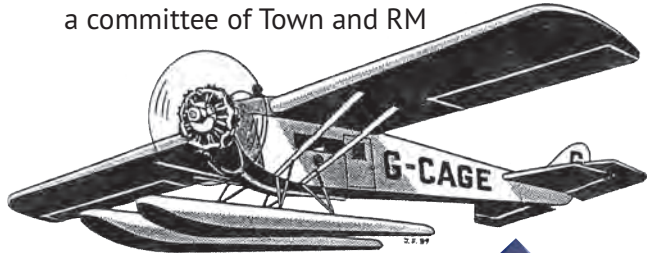
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and Churchill. Trans-Air operated a Douglas DC-3 route from Winnipeg to Red Lake, Ont., bypassing Lac du Bonnet for access to the mining areas, though they retained a small operating base at Lac du Bonnet. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, the airline's focus was on northern expansion beyond Churchill.

Slowly, the town dock became the landmark we know today. In July 1966, years after the planes had left the dock, the question "Are you proud of our beach?" was posed in *The Springfield Leader* newspaper.

Lac du Bonnet was a resort town that lacked proper beach facilities: "The little bit of beach [has] no sand, but gravel, sticks, broken glass, litter of all description to step on. There is a sign 'please use trash cans,' however, there isn't one in sight." Plus, the pre-McArthur Falls shoreline created a dangerous "sudden drop only a few feet off shore."

Within the week, local contractor, Eugene Lavoie, leveled and cleared the beach of rocks and other debris before his trucks dumped 10 loads of sand onto the beach. Seven local businessmen chipped in to cover the cost of the 120 yards of sand.

Two years later, the vacant airline offices and other buildings were removed from the town dock hill. By 1974, the village mayor and council, along with the Lions Club, worked together to purchase the beach area from the provincial government. That same year, another cleanup of the grassy hillside and beach was completed.

By 1982, the Lakers Ski Club, the Lions and the Legion funded the first lifeguard. A few years



An aerial view of town dock circa 1958.

LdB Historical Society Archives

later, the multi-person beach patrol created a buoyed supervision area from the beach to the end of the dock. And in the summer of 1985, as part of revitalization projects, play structures were built along the town dock hill.

More than 90 years after its construction for an airplane base, the town dock is set to receive much-needed upgrades that will ensure this dock, and its legacy, live on in Lac du Bonnet for another century.

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Flying with the Canada Goose

Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

For nearly a century, the Lac du Bonnet dock has been a town landmark. Viewed now as merely a place to swim, this pier was once home to the fearless trailblazing bush pilots opening up the North and securing Lac du Bonnet's place in Canada's aviation history.

Western Canada Airways, Ltd. (WCA), the first commercial airline to operate out of Lac du Bonnet, arrived in early 1927 and soon made provincial aviation history. Having begun in Sioux Lookout, Ont. in December 1926, James A. Richardson's WCA expanded rapidly in response to the growing need to service prospectors and mines. Richardson hired only the best pilots and purchased the most suitable aircraft for the work: Fokker Standard Universals, which were easily converted from wheels to pontoons or skis. Lac du Bonnet

was WCA's first base in Manitoba, outside of Winnipeg, chosen for its access to the North and to fill the gap to Sioux Lookout.

On June 1, 1927, WCA's first scheduled flight from the Lac du Bonnet dock, Capt. F.J. Stevenson flew the province's first semi-official airmail to Bissett, Long Lake and Slate Lake (in Nopiming Provincial Park). The post office hadn't issued airmail stamps, and wouldn't for another year, so WCA was allowed to issue their own. These "sticker stamps" (or "semi-official airmail stamps" as they are now known) were not to resemble any existing postage stamp and were sold for ten cents each. Manitoba's first official airmail was flown out of Lac du Bonnet on October 4, 1927 by WCA pilot, W.L. Britnell, to Long Lake and Bissett.

Based on their success at Lac du Bonnet, WCA established bases throughout Northern Manitoba, including at The Pas and Ilford. They also became the first



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 Photo Credit: Norm McCoy.

national carrier to fly out of Winnipeg's Stevenson Field (what is now the international airport).

By 1929, WCA was the second largest airline in the entire British Empire. Their fifty-one aircraft, marked by their Canada goose logo, were flown by war veterans and skilled bush pilots transporting cargo throughout Canada's Northwest.

Richardson, concerned with Canada's aviation sovereignty, wanted expansion to the national level. In 1930, he created Canadian Airways, Ltd. (CA) by bringing together WCA and the Aviation Corporation of Canada (a syndicate of five Eastern Canadian aviation companies), and also gathered cooperation from the CN and CP railways. This new company was awarded airmail contracts across Canada and transported 8,000 passengers between nine provinces per year.

Operations out of Lac du Bonnet continued to grow with regularly scheduled mail and passenger service to mines throughout Eastern and Central Manitoba and constant movement of prospectors, mining officials, fishermen bound for otherwise inaccessible lakes and bales of furs for the HBC and other free traders.

Maintenance engineer, Allan Hunt, was assigned to pilot, Roy Brown's Fairchild. Shaw's Drug Store, just up the hill from the dock on the corner of Third Street provided an excellent

vantage from which Hunt would await Brown's return.

Brown, and his wife, Diana, opened their home to CA customers. Some believe it was this friendly hospitality that contributed to CA's success in Lac du Bonnet. In 1934, business was so good that Brown and three other CA senior pilots left to form Wings, Ltd., which started a considerable rivalry though rapport between the companies remained friendly.

Richardson's sudden death in 1939, and the outbreak of the Second World War put a strain on CA. In 1942, CA was absorbed into Canadian Pacific Airlines, joining other Lac du Bonnet airlines Wings, Ltd. and Starratt Airways. Lac du Bonnet's aviation heyday was coming to a close, leaving the rumble and roar of early bush planes at the town dock only to memory.

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Lessons Offered Bridge	Friday	1:00pm
Hard Card Bingo	Friday	7:00pm
Meat Draw & Chase the Ace	Saturday	2:30pm



Lakeview Turkeys Limited

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

Turkeys fascinated Fred Gauer. Even though he knew nothing about the birds, he wanted to raise them.

After vacationing in Lac du Bonnet for 32 years, Gauer decided to make the community his permanent home in 1956. He entered into a one-year partnership with a local turkey farmer, who had started his interest in the birds, and purchased 200 acres of land on the east side of the Winnipeg River near the bridge. Local men cleared the bush and constructed buildings. That first year he raised 1,500 turkeys, a number that grew annually.

The farm, managed by Gordon McKeown, was a large complex. It had a “laying flock” of 4,000 turkeys, a brooder building with space for 9,000 birds and four growing barns with a combined capacity of 13,000. Each building had modern ventilation systems and water was

pumped year-round from the Winnipeg River using underground pipes.

Gauer purchased 40,000 bushels of oats and wheat for turkey feed from 62 local farmers, though automation processes allowed the farm to operate with only three employees. As his operation grew, the local farmers couldn't supply enough feed, so Gauer had it shipped out weekly from Winnipeg.

The Gauer Estate was compared to a Hollywood villa, with its swimming pool, duck pond, acres of gardens and manicured lawns, and four miles worth of roads. The “posh layout” drew the attention of airborne tourists and, after many turkeys panicked and died because of low-flying aircraft, the Department of Transport declared the Gauer lands a restricted area.

In addition to his farm, Gauer constructed a processing plant close to the village that was considered “the most modern” poultry plant in North America. At the time

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Lakeview Turkeys employees circa 1960 – owner Fred Gauer in back.

of its opening in June 1959, the plant had 35 employees, two government inspectors and could process 450 birds an hour. Once fully operational, Gauer anticipated an annual production of 100,000 birds and employment for 60 people.

Lakeview Turkeys Limited covered the process from egg to packaged, frozen turkey. Gauer had the ability to give customers choice, offering turkeys as small as six pounds and as large as 20 pounds. He also marketed turkey roasts, becoming the first to produce them in Canada.

Though Gauer wasn't in it for his own profit, his vision was to improve agriculture and business in Lac du Bonnet. He wanted locals to come together to create a turkey industry. His hope was that farmers would raise turkeys, and for those who were already poultry producers, he made it convenient to get their birds to market.

Gauer spent \$1.2 million on his hatchery, raising and processing operations to become Manitoba's largest

turkey producer, but by 1961, his venture failed. Lac du Bonnet farmers weren't interested in turkeys. The 40,000 turkeys processed at Thanksgiving that year were all his own. In order to keep the plant running, Gauer would have required another \$500,000 farm upgrade and a yearly production of 150,000 turkeys. The plan wasn't feasible, so Gauer shut down the entire operation.

In 1966, Gauer and McKeown started Aquanautics Canada Ltd. in the former plant building. This company operated for a short time, manufacturing the Nordak II, a fiberglass boat driven by a large four-bladed propeller capable of summer and winter use.

Afterwards, the building was vacant for two decades. New owners completed extensive renovations and Watertown opened in July 1991. Most of the Gauer Estate is now a cottage subdivision.

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In the Path of the Storm

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

On May 10, 1922 at 12:45 p.m., storm clouds darkened the sky. A “great black funnel-shaped cloud” appeared over the trees as a “mighty wind smote the district.”

Five miles north of Lac du Bonnet, in Landerville, teacher Stanley Pitre and his family took shelter inside. The cyclone lifted the Pitre’s house clear off the foundation, bringing it down in a mass of “kindling wood.” Trees, a foot in diameter, snapped. In addition to the teacherage, the Landerville school and nearby farm buildings were destroyed. Household effects scattered for miles. In 10 minutes, the wind stopped, leaving only rain. Mrs. Pitre and her eldest son were rushed to Lac du Bonnet with serious injuries, while the others escaped relatively unharmed.

At the same time, Winnipeg lost all power. Street cars and moving picture shows came to an abrupt halt. All work reached a standstill. In the hardest hit area of Lydiatt, southwest of Molson, houses and farms were leveled. A mile of Winnipeg Electric Company and Winnipeg Hydro powerlines were devastated: 34 transmission towers bent and twisted, the cables torn from the insulators, landing over 100 yards into the bush. A half-mile of telephone and CPR telegraph poles were also broken, some ripped out of the ground.

While Winnipeg lamented the loss of their electric ranges and the cancellation of Pantages’ matinee, families in the path of the cyclone emerged to find their entire livelihood gone. Wind carried machinery upwards of one mile and drove lumber three feet into the ground. Insurance policies did not cover “loss by hurricane.”

Crews from Winnipeg rushed out to repair the damaged lines, while the auxiliary steam plant on Mill Street

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W.D. Halliday, Dr. Malcolm and Earl Halliday among the wreckage of the Landerville school teacherage.

supplied power to industrial businesses within 45 minutes. Street car service resumed in two hours. A large portion of the city remained dark. At midnight, a special train left Winnipeg with another 15 linesmen, specialized equipment and food supplies bound for the devastated area.

Throughout the next day, residents, farmers and company employees worked to “bring order to great chaos.” A temporary line of 30 cedar poles filled the gap in the transmission line. By 5 p.m., Winnipeg’s normal power was restored. Attention turned to the construction of a second temporary line to carry the current while the permanent line was repaired. Costs were estimated at \$60,000, with new towers built of heavier steel to withstand future storms.

On May 12, five members of the Pitre family arrived at the Winnipeg CPR station. They were the first victims to arrive in Winnipeg suffering from storm-related injuries. No casualties were reported besides one horse and one cow.

The cyclone made headlines across the province for weeks. Strong storms continued throughout the summer of 1922. On June 22, multiple devastating tornadoes touched down across southern Manitoba, once again damaging power transmission lines near Lydiatt. The Lac du Bonnet region was hit with heavy winds, rain and “hens’ egg” sized hail. This storm still ranks as one of the worst in Canadian history.

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Park Avenue School

By Jennifer Strassel
Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

In 1904, a 10-member board held the inaugural meeting of the Lac du Bonnet School District No. 1235. J.D. McArthur donated land at the corner of Park Avenue and Fourth Street for the school, which was funded through donations and newly implemented school taxes. By July, the logs were cut and the contract was awarded to local builder, Thomas Houston, for a one-room school house. By October, the school hired the first teacher.

Throughout Park Avenue School's 85-year history, the space couldn't keep up with the community's growth. In 1915, a two-room addition expanded the original

structure. By 1930, plans were made for a new school. The old buildings were sold and moved off the property to make way for the four-room stuccoed school in 1931. The design, by provincial architect Gilbert Parfitt, included a basement. After only six years, the Riverland Pentecostal Mission Swedish Church hall was rented to provide students with extra space.

On Feb. 25, 1945, fire destroyed the school. Classes were moved to the municipal and community halls, along with the Pentecostal Mission and St. John's Anglican parish halls. This arrangement continued for two years. In January 1947, students moved into the new Park Avenue School, though much of the interior finishing was completed that summer.

Lac du Bonnet's student population continued to grow. By 1955, Park Avenue school had 325 students, of whom 84 were high school level. The community advocated for better educational facilities. By September 1961, construction of a collegiate was underway. At the elementary level there were 285 students and 10 teachers, while 154 high school students and their five teachers awaited completion of their new building. Classes attended in three finished collegiate classrooms, two rooms in Park Avenue and at the St. John's church hall. Lac du Bonnet Collegiate opened Nov. 24, 1961 with space for 160 students in Grades 9 to 12 and featured separate rooms for academic and specialized science applications along with an auditorium.

In 1966, with smaller district schools closing within two years, the decision was made to construct a second eight-classroom elementary school on land purchased by the school board two blocks south of Minnewawa. Park Avenue students occupied the St. John's hall and two collegiate classrooms until Centennial School opened in May 1967. Grades 5 to 8 were moved into the new school, while Grades 1 to 4



LdB Historical Society Archives

Park Avenue School's progression from 1904 to 1947.

remained at Park Avenue. The next school year had 456 students and 18 teachers between the two elementary schools. High enrolment also prompted expansion of the collegiate. The renamed Lac du Bonnet Senior School opened Oct. 15, 1971. The addition of more classrooms, a large gymnasium, plus shops and home economics areas, boosted capacity to 425 students.

In 1989, the decision was made to close Park Avenue school. An addition was built onto Centennial to accommodate all elementary students for the fall term. Over summer holidays, classroom materials and some playground equipment from Park Avenue were relocated to Centennial. Ownership of the Park Avenue school and property transferred to the village. High renovation costs and a lack of interest in the building resulted in the school being stripped of all usable materials and demolished. The future of the site was debated, with

consideration given to a parking lot, before the 55-plus condos of Park Manor opened in 1996.

Despite its closure 32 years ago, Park Avenue remains Lac du Bonnet's longest running school. Centennial School continues to provide elementary education, while the Senior School celebrates their 60th anniversary this fall.

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Photo by Rick McGregor
 "Porcupine in Pine Tree"

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