

APRIL 2005 NEWSLETTER

Sahtu Renewable Resources Board - To protect, conserve & manage renewable resources



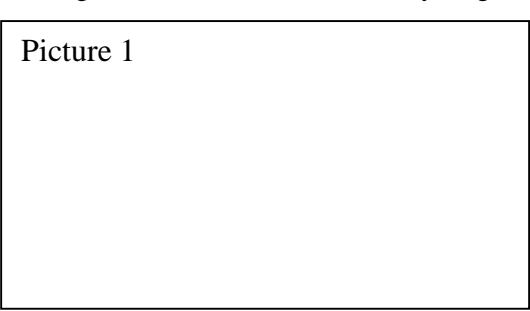
INTRODUCTION

By Dr. Norman Simmons

Although the story of the first moose skin boat in the February newsletter, and the following tales of hunting in the Moose Horn River Valley and the moose skin boat trip down the Gravel River are fiction, the stories are based on fact. The names of the people and places are real. Most of the factual information came from Gabriel Etchinelle, George Pelissey, and Madeline Karkagie, as well as from the personal experience of Maurice Mendo. Anthropologist Dr. Chris Hanks confirmed the story of the first moose skin boat, first published in the "Mackenzie Valley Viewer" and repeated in the February newsletter.

BREAKUP IS COMING! WHERE ARE THE HUNTERS?

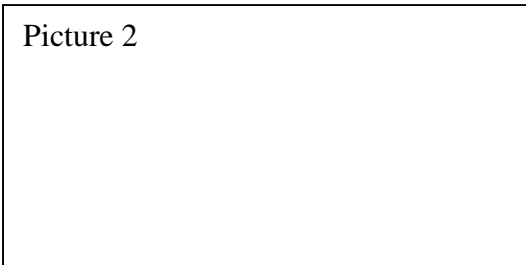
Last time, we left the hunters camped high on the Gravel River, getting ready to make a large canoe with moose hides. That was about 125 years ago, and they were making the first ever moose skin boat. But that is too long ago - we really don't know what it was like in the mountains then. So let's leap ahead 80 years or so to the 1960's, when Mountain Dene still alive today were young hunters. Imagine that we were eagles back then, looking down on the Gravel River in March, high above the mouth of the Twitya River. We eagles saw Dene camped by the river, just as we did more than a century ago. In camp we saw Madeline Karkagie and Stella Mendo, and younger women Vivian McCauley, Cecile Hatchele, Theresa Etchinelle, and Rose Bavard. Moose hides were soaking in the river, under their watchful eyes. These women were skilfully making dry meat from the caribou and moose the men recently shot. The men had been hunting caribou and moose in the Moose Horn River valley for the last three days. While on the hunt, they were sleeping open fire on spruce boughs, so of course they left their tents, wood stoves, and flour with the



women back at the Gravel River camp, three hours away. They had all 14 dog teams and toboggans with them. They were supposed to be back by this time, cutting young spruce for the frames of the moose skin boats. The women would not begin sewing the hides until they returned. The weather was turning warm and breakup was fast approaching, so the women were concerned.

Meanwhile, hunt chief Gabe Etchinelle was sitting on spruce boughs near a fire below Moose Horn Peak, waiting for the tea to boil. Around him were hunters George Pelissey, Andrew Horissey, John Hatchele, Norman Andrew, John Hatti, John B. Hatchele, Robert Horissey, Gabe Horissey, William Horissey, Pierre Bavard, Maurice Mendo, David Etchinelle, Jonas McCauley, and Leon Andrew. They were discussing whether or not they had enough meat for themselves and the people back in Fort Norman. Their dog toboggans were nearly full of meat, coffee, salt, sugar, and axes. The toboggans were very heavy. Should they keep hunting, or start back?

The 14 dog teams were still in their harnesses after the morning hunt, but the toboggan lead ropes were firmly tied to trees. The toboggan heads were covered with raw moose hide



WANTED WILDLIFE ARTWORK FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Let's see which school has the best artists: Send your animal drawing to

The Sahtu Renewable Resources Board
Box 134, Tulita NT
X0E 0K0

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Breakup is coming! Where are the hunters?
- 2005 Woodland and Barren-ground Caribou Survey
- 2005 Regional Science Fair

SPECIAL!!!!!!

- Special acknowledgement is extended to Mr. Keith Hickling, Manager, Fish and Wildlife, of the newly formed Department of Environment, and Natural Resources [ENR], (formerly RWED), for his invaluable assistance in providing funding and other support for the trapping programs under way in the Sahtu.
- Congratulations to Mr. Fred Bonnell of ?Ehtseo Ayha School, Deline for the outstanding success of his Back on the Land Program: so far, nearly 20 students have taken part in this experience.



(Continued from Page 1)

for protection and trimmed narrow at the top so that they would slide through the bushes with ease. The carryalls were made of caribou hide or canvas. The dogs, seven or eight to a team, were small, strong, and fast. But now they were tired, and they were dozing on the snow.

The men all wore duffle parkas, covered with Grenfel cloth, and trimmed with wolverine hair, better to shed frost. Their moose hide mitts were trimmed with beaver fur and lined with duffle. They wore mukluks of smoked moose and caribou hide, topped with canvas, with their pants tucked in. Their feet were warm, but not hot. Each hunter had a small packsack with skinning knife, matches, and maybe tobacco.

Under the guidance of the hunt chief, everyone agreed to return to camp, even though they were still short of moose hides for the second canoe. They hoped that they would see moose on the way back.

The next morning, the men started up-river, driving their refreshed dogs as they trotted behind the heavy toboggans. But suddenly, out of the thick willows to the right of the lead team came a roar. Spring bear! Just out of its den where it had been hibernating, covered with armour of frozen mud, hungry and grouchy. The most dangerous of bears! It stood tall, then dropped, and danced with its front feet, woofing threateningly. Shouts of the hunters, *Sah cho! Sah cho!* Big bear! Dogs barked and howled, teams turned sharply toward the bear, men sprinted to grab their rifles and then their lead dogs to halt their teams!

To be continued...

2005 WOODLAND AND BARREN-GROUND CARIBOU SURVEY

By Boyan Tracz (ENR)

The caribou jumped up and took a couple of bounds through the snow. She stopped, looked back at us, and then looked to the herd that was waiting for her on the small lake. Head and tail held high – and with a little snort, she trotted off to join her own. Another successful capture and radiocollar deployment, and another successful day. Through most of March and the beginning of April, ENR (formerly RWED) completed a barren-ground caribou collaring program in the Inuvik, Sahtu, and Kitikmeot regions of NWT and Nunavut. Over 180 collars were deployed on barren ground caribou, with a small number also placed on boreal woodland caribou. The main objective of the collaring is to assist with a census of the herds in summer 2005, which will be done by taking aerial photographs while caribou are together in huge groups on the barren tundra after calving. The collars will also tell us where caribou are in different seasons, and how they travel. This information is very important as development increases in the NWT.



2005 REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

This year's Regional Science Fair was held at Mackenzie Mountain School on March 4th and 5th. Projects were submitted by Mackenzie Mountain School, Norman Wells, ?Ehtseo Ayha School, Deline, and Chief T'Selehye School, Fort Good Hope. The overall winners for grades 7 to 12 included First Place: Dana Huffman and Devon Huffman (Norman Wells); Second Place: Courtenay Kakfwi (Fort Good Hope); Third Place: Danielle Nyland (Norman Wells). These students represented the Sahtu at the Canada-Wide Science Fair held in Vancouver, British Columbia, March 15 to 20.

Special thanks to Mr. Tom Aikman for his unbelievable energy and dedication!

