

Cli Lake Ecology Camp 2007

Participants



Students



Isaac Salopree
Age:14
Hay River Reserve



Joey Moses
Age:12
Wrigley



Jordan Nahanni
Age:15
Fort Simpson



Brandon Moses
Age:12
Wrigley



Rocky Gargan
Age:13
Fort Providence



William Martel
Age:15
Hay River Reserve

Students



Rachel Elleze
Age:15
Fort Providence



Rachel Duntra
Age:17
Fort Liard



Ariel Duntra
Age:16
Fort Liard



Winona Letcher
Age:10
Fort Simpson



Emily McInnis-Wharton
Age:15
Fort Simpson



Khali Campbell
Age:12
Fort Simpson

Staff



Loyal Letcher
Facilitator
NNNL



Susan Betsaka
Cook
NNNL



Ria Letcher
Host
NNNL



Louisa Moreau
Elder
NNNL



Kurt Tsetso
Guide
NNNL



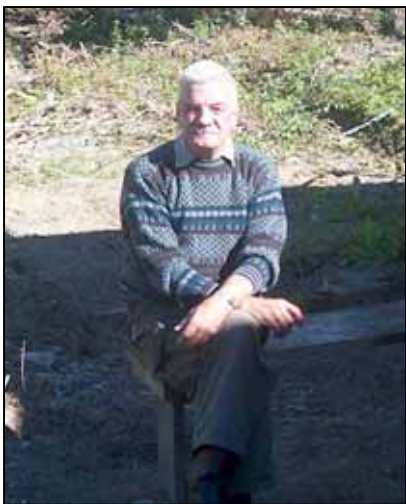
Neal Phillips
Camp Maintenance
NNNL

Staff



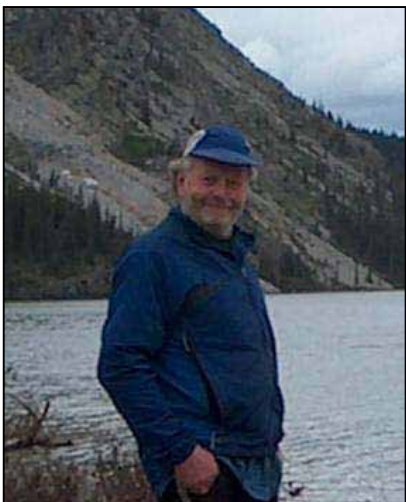
Joseph Tsetso
Elder
NNNL

Darren Squirrel
Guide
NNNL



Frank Letcher
Instructor
NNNL

Lady
Bear Dog
NNNL

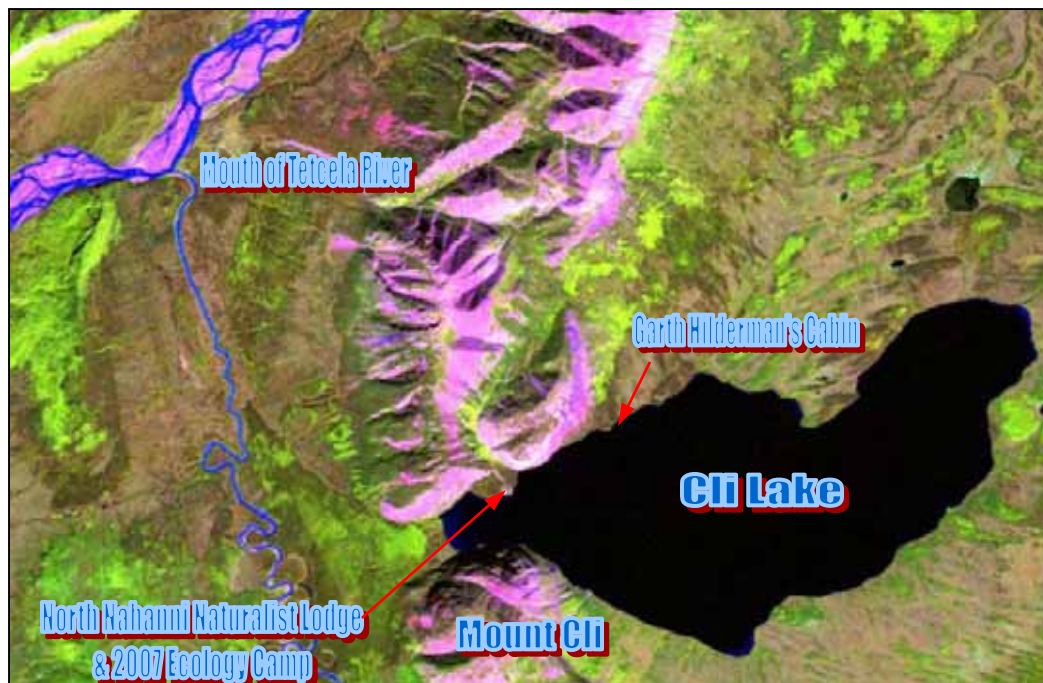


Garth Hilderman
Facilitator
NNNL

Danny Allaire
Wildlife Technician
ENR



Cli Lake Area and the Lodge



After the students unloaded the twin otter and met everyone, they were given an orientation of the camp, taught the camp rules and assigned their accommodations.



North Nahanni Naturalist Lodge
at Cli Lake

Students unloading the
twin otter



History of the Region

On the day 2 of camp, Loyal Letcher, a facilitator for the North Nahanni Naturalist Lodge (NNNL) started the courses by teaching the students about the geography and history of the region. The unique geographic features of the area, traditional lifestyles and the establishment of the lodge were explained to the students.

Elder, Louisa Moreau told stories about how her family used to live off the land and the hardships they had to endure.

Loyal Letcher explaining the geography of the region to the students



The students listening to their first lesson



Louisa Moreau telling stories of how her ancestors used to live off the land in the area



Bear Safety

Later that morning, Loyal instructed the students in proper bear safety techniques, including minimizing possible bear encounters, selecting appropriate campsite locations, camp layout, proper food storage and garbage disposal while out on the land. He summarized ENR's Safety in Grizzly and Black Bear Country booklet and discussed his involvement with wildlife as a traditional harvester. Bear bangers (a deterrent) were also demonstrated to the students.

A bear that had been deterred across the lake by boat the day before was seen behind the lodge later that evening. To ensure the camp's safety a decision was made to have the bear dispatched.

Loyal instructing the students about bear safety



Loyal explaining to the students why the bear was dispatched

Loyal shooting a bear banger



Plant Identification & Preservation

During the afternoon of day 2, Danny Allaire, a Wildlife Technician from Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) taught the students how to identify plants and prepare them for mounting. Danny gave a brief introduction to the Wild and Wacky booklets handed out to the students. Plants were collected during a hike towards Cli Creek and the best collected samples were preserved using a plant press.

Traditional aspects of forest ecology were also taught by Elder Louisa Moreau. Students learned what parts of a tree were utilized for certain tools and what type of plants and berries were edible, medicinal, and nutritional. The students found it quite interesting and eagerly participated in all of the practical exercises.



Elder, Louisa Moreau, teaching the girls how to collect Labrador Tea for making traditional tea.

Students hiking to Cli Creek

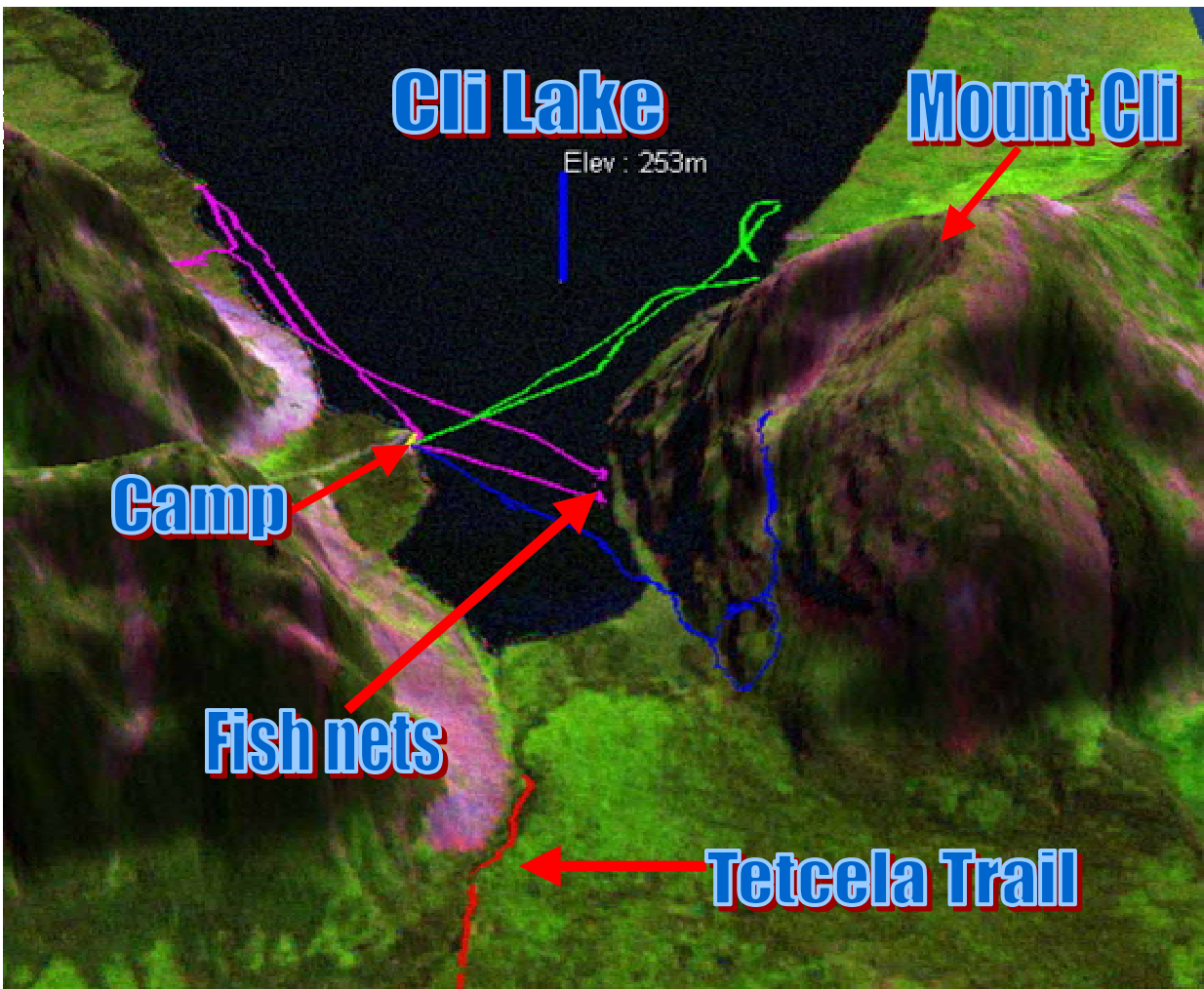


Danny Allaire, showing the students how to preserve plants using a plant press.

Navigation & Orienteering

On day 3 of the camp, students learned how to read maps by determining and using coordinates of latitude and longitude. Each student had to find a location on a map using coordinates and define a location with coordinates. The students learned how to use a global positioning system (GPS) to navigate around camp using waypoints that they entered into handheld GPS's. The intention of the course was to show how useful a GPS can be on the land.

Students went out and mapped the trails around camp, they took a GPS while checking the fishnet and the guides mapped the hiking trail to the Tetcela River. The crooked lines on the map are accumulated GPS track logs from the camp, which were downloaded on to a computer using OziExplorer software. This map was made using 3D OziExplorer software.



Navigation & Orienteering



Danny showing Isaac how to record coordinates of a location



Danny showing Rocky how to plot coordinates he was given.



All boat trips were recorded with GPS



Danny showing Jordan how to make a grid for reading coordinates

Emily making sure the GPS was recording the trip



Hiking up the Landslide

The weather was unfavourable during the afternoon of day 3 for the planned hike up Mount Cli, therefore the hike was delayed and the students were taken to a nearby landslide that occurred 4 years ago. Loyal discussed the geology of the area and the effects of climate change while at the landslide. The students climbed up for a closer look at the landslide while guides told them stories of how the terrain and the lake's water level used to be before the landslide.



Traveling to the landslide



Students hiking up the landslide



Loyal explaining how climate change may affect the lake



Loyal explaining how the terrain used to be

Water, Boat, Canoe safety

During the morning of day 4, Loyal taught the students water, boat and canoe safety and rescue. Loyal explained water characteristics, rough water do's and don'ts, hazards to look for including scouting out unknown rivers and traveling in bad weather. Loyal gave the students a list of equipment needed in case of an emergency. The dangers of hypothermia, improper planning and ignorance of using safety equipment were discussed. Each student learned how to properly use a throw bag. All these activities were taught in the classroom and then practiced on dry land.

Each student was fitted with a lifejacket according to their weight and size. They were taught how to properly get into a canoe and how to do proper canoe strokes (forward, draw, pry and sweep). The students went for a canoe ride afterwards down to Cli Creek at the end of the lake. All students had to wear life jackets while on the water during trips and they had to have supervision while swimming in the lake.



Ariel learning how to use a throw bag



Students going for a canoe ride to Cli Creek



Students wearing life jackets while out on the lake.

Wilderness Safety and Survival

On day 5 of the camp, Loyal taught the students basic wilderness survival techniques, including what kind of gear is needed in order to travel on the land, notifying someone where you are going and for how long. The students learned how to check a fish net, make a proper camp fire and they learned how to make an emergency signal fire. As an exercise the students were split into 3 groups to build their own signal fire. The signal fires were lit the next day to demonstrate to students how fast a signal fire needs to light in order for a boat, vehicle or plane to see it. During the week some survival tricks and traditional knowledge were also taught to the students by the guides and elders, including how to make a stove out of a log.



Danny showing how to make a stove



Making tea on the stove



Each group made a signal fire



Students standing by the lit signal fires

Nature Hike to Mount Cli's Summit

During the afternoon of day 5, the students and instructors went for a hike up to Mount Cli summit. The trip started by boating across the lake to the base of the mountain at the west side of the lake. Kurt Tsetso and Garth Hilderman guided the students up the mountain. Most the of the students made it the majority of the way to the top. Everyone enjoyed the challenge and the students were quite impressed at their own accomplishments.



Students stopping to take a picture of the group climbing



Students climbing up a steep portion of the mountain under the guidance of Garth and Kurt.



Students taking a break

Nature Hike to Mount Cli's Summit



Garth and Rocky coming back from the summit



Rocky and Brendan posing for a picture



Students taking a break close to the summit



Looking down from the peak at the group



Waiting for the rest of the group to come down from the summit

Firearm Safety

On day 6 of the camp, Frank Letcher taught a firearm safety course. He taught the students about the dangers of mishandling a firearm and demonstrated some of the most common accidents that occur while handling a firearm. The students were shown different types of firearms and bullets. During the afternoon the students reviewed the Canadian Firearms Safety Certification Manual and watched a 30 minute video on proper firearm handling techniques.



Boys looking at the different types of bullets



Emily looking at the different types of guns



Frank reviewing the FSC Manual with the students

Recreational Activities

During the evenings students spent time sitting around the camp fire, using the hot tub and sauna. They were supervised during swimming, canoeing and hiking activities. Indoor evening activities included story telling, card games, watching movies and board games.



Boys playing a board game



Boys enjoying the hot tub



Girls making designs with a string



During the last regional wildlife workshop held in October 2006 there was consensus that the youth ecology camp should continue to be held at different locations throughout the Dehcho Region. The 2003 and 2004 camps had been held at the Trout Lake Fire Base. By holding the camp in different locations this would allow different communities the opportunity of hosting and conducting the youth ecology camp as well as providing the chance for participants to experience different areas of the Dehcho. A joint DFN/ENR committee reviews the proposals and awards the camp. The 2005 camp was held near Jean Marie River and hosted by Land is Life. The 2006 camp was held near Hay River Reserve and was hosted by the Katlodeeche First Nation. This year's camp was held at Cli Lake west of Fort Simpson and was hosted by North Nahanni Naturalist Lodge Ltd.

Previous camps taught a variety of traditional and scientific skills. This year's camp focused on more of the traditional survival skills. Students learned a lot of new tools which should help them in future endeavours. Once again we appreciate all the work the instructors and elders did this year to ensure a most memorable experience by all those who attended.

Returning to Fort Simpson

Due to the inclement weather which prevented all students from returning to Fort Simpson on the same day, there was no feast this year. The generally cloudy weather didn't deter students from actively participating in all of the activities. The elders, supervisors and facilitators played an integral role in the ecology camp's success as did the group of students from throughout the Dehcho. All students wholeheartedly participated in and became involved with all of the different experiences provided to them during the camp. The students thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the 2007 camp and made friendships that will last a lifetime.

Under the guidance of local experts, most of the students went out by jet boat from Cli Lake to Fort Simpson via Cli Creek, Tetcela River, North Nahanni River and Mackenzie River. Fort Simpson students flew out by airplane the following day.



The students were boated down Cli Lake towards Cli Creek for their walk to Tetcela River.



Kurt Tsetso packed and 4-wheeled most of the students gear to Tetcela River.

Returning to Fort Simpson



Loyal waiting for the students to pull up the boat to reload



Rachel looking up Cli Creek



Neal at the staircase, start of our walk



Students walking down the trail



Loyal loading up the boat on Tetcela River



Boating down the North Nahanni towards Fort Simpson