



North Caribou Camps

Summer of 2011

Another season has come and gone and here we are once again planning for next year. The ice went out in time for our first group to fly in on May 20th. Dusty and his helper flew in a few days prior to start opening up camp, which is not always how things go in the north. We hope for another early ice out this coming season as our opening week is booked once again.

The summer of 2011 was an exciting one due to the dry conditions and the severe fire situation in July. Mike and June Redmond, Rob, Rob's mother, Eileen, and Rob's brother, Rick, had an experience they hope only happens once in a life time. I have attached the Dryden Observer's news article on their adventure which pretty much sums up what they went through. The good news is everyone arrived home safe and sound and most of their gear was recovered with just a hint of the lingering smoke smell. The camp was not in immediate danger of burning but the smoke made it very difficult and unhealthy to stay. However, everything was back to normal on North Caribou Lake in August even though the fire situation in the north continued to be a problem.

Rob spent the month of August at camp acting as camp attendant in place of Dusty. Bear Camp always calls Dusty away in July so Rob decided it would be enjoyable to spend the remainder of the season with the guests. He lucked out with gorgeous weather conditions and even watched a bull caribou swim to shore on the island, 50 feet from the dock.

Once again the John Dalton group went on the meal plan during their stay on Cemetery Island. Jurel came in to cook for the group and the food was excellent. We would like to remind all of you that this is an option and if you let us know ahead of time we can arrange to have a cook in camp for you as well.

North Caribou Camps lost a long time guest and good friend, Jon Groves, in August of 2011. Jon was very instrumental in making the camp on Cemetery Island what it is today by bringing many a fisherman year after year for the fantastic fishing and outpost experience. He will be sadly missed.

The 2011 season was slower than usual due mainly to the economy. Our main camp on North Caribou Lake actually had a few open weeks which was never the situation in the past. We hope that things start to improve for everyone so you can all continue to enjoy your vacations, especially your fishing vacation with us in Canada. The bookings are starting to come in and many of you have already spoken for your week in 2012. We do have some open weeks so please give us a call or email if you are wanting to join us next season. A few changes have been made on our web site and a calendar has been added to make it easier for you to check out what is available. We also have a few incentives for booking early, so please get in touch if you have any questions. Also, a new feature on our web site is the fishing licence information form. We hope this will simplify thing for our guests to send your details ahead of time so your licence is ready and waiting upon your arrival.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our guests for continuing to make North Caribou Lake your fishing destination. Please keep in touch and send us your fishing pictures so we can post them on the site.

We wish you all a very Happy Holiday Season and a safe and warm new year.

The Brodhagen Family



Dryden residents home after evacuation from North Caribou News — 27 July 2011

Much of the talk surrounding the fires of late has been focused on the evacuees from the northern communities threatened by smoke and fire. Thousands were taken from their homes and displaced in various communities in Northwestern Ontario.

Not everyone who was evacuated lived in a remote community, however. Eileen Brodhagen and her son Rob were at their camp when word came in they were being airlifted out to safety.

The 82-year-old began her trip to visit some friends in Pickle Lake in the beginning of July. The community was already accepting evacuees thanks to a large forest fire covering northern communities in heavy smoke.

The fires, growing rapidly, moved their way towards the community, burning down hydro lines in the process, cutting power to Pickle Lake for the week that she was there.

On Saturday, July 16, Mrs. Brodhagen's son Rob arrived to take his mom and two guests to their camp on North Caribou, 100 miles due north of Pickle Lake.

The travelers flew in on Northstar Air and were able to land at their camp.

“At the beginning, you could smell smoke and you could see it off in the distance and we were traveling through it, visuals were impaired but when we actually got over where it was burning, that creates its own climate...it was getting harder to breathe and the plane was bouncing around.”

The smoke cleared out as they got closer to camp and the pilot was able to land the plane on the water. For the first few days, the weather was fine but the smell of smoke was always lingering in the air.

Monday, the group could see flames flaring up and pluming above the trees due to the excessive heat and began to realize just how close the fire was to their end of the lake.

Tuesday morning, the campers began to worry when the smoke rolled in and visibility dropped considerably, with the end of the dock fading into oblivion, less than 50 yards from the camp.

“It's pretty scary when you can't see the water and you can't see anything because the smoke is that heavy,” says Mrs. Brodhagen.

Deciding it was unhealthy and unsafe to stay any longer, Rob called in to Northstar Air to have them flown out of the camp and back to Pickle Lake. Unfortunately, the plane was unable to fly and land in the smoke and the fire threatening the Musselwhite mine was lying in their path.

They were informed, however, that the MNR was aware that they were at the camp and were on the list to be airlifted by helicopter as soon as possible.

Five hours later, the MNR helicopter landed at the beach and the campers were told they were allowed just one bag. Rob opted to leave everything behind and loaded his dog, Luna, onto the chopper.

Unable to fly back to Pickle Lake, the helicopter was forced to land at the Musselwhite mine, which had already been evacuated and taken over by MNR fire crews.

“How Musselwhite is not totaled is beyond me. Those guys deserve kudos because the fire is right up to Musselwhite on both sides of the road...and the fire has burned on both sides of the road in most places.”

A van and an escort were waiting for them at Musselwhite when they landed and transported them back to Pickle Lake. They were able to stay there with friends until transportation could be arranged for them to leave again.

The Brodhagens were very happy with the way the MNR handled their evacuation as well as the support they received in Pickle Lake.

The camp on North Caribou is currently surrounded on the east, west and south sides by forest fires and there are still fires burning farther north. While their camp is not in immediate danger, other camps on the lake are not expected to survive the inferno to the north.

By Sarah Madussi