

Join us for Algonquin Provincial Park's 2nd Annual

Winter in the Wild Festival

February 16, 2013 • Family Day Weekend

All activities during the festival are free with the purchase of a Daily Vehicle Permit or Camping Permit with the exception of food.



A. HYWARREN

Winter in Algonquin is unforgettable and Winter in the Wild highlights the best of what the season has to offer the whole family.



A. HYWARREN



Make memories in Algonquin this Family Day weekend.

Schedule of Events

8:30 am - 10:00 am

Guided Winter Bird Walk at Spruce Bog Boardwalk Trail

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Winter Landscape Photography Tips with Peter Ferguson in the Visitor Centre Theatre

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Winter Wildlife Excursion by Snowshoe at the Visitor Centre

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Tours of the Algonquin Park Visitor Centre Collections Room

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Winter Wildlife Photography Tips with Peter Ferguson in the Visitor Centre Theatre

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Guided Winter Bird Walk at Spruce Bog Boardwalk Trail

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Ice Skating, Campfire and BBQ at Mew Lake Campground

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Winter Camping Demonstrations at Mew Lake Campground

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fireside and Night Hike Wolf Howl Program at Mew Lake Campground

Events are subject to change. Please check online for a current list of events: www.algonquinpark.on.ca

Seeing Red and Blue this Winter

Those of you who have visited the Park during the spring and summer may have appreciated the high level of bird activity during those times of year, at least as far as hearing birds is concerned. Even though fewer birds are present in the Park during the winter, they can still enhance your excursions. The interesting thing about winter birds is that the types and



WIKIMEDIA

Blue Jay

numbers of birds we can see may be quite different from one year to the next. Some year-round residents are present only in low numbers in winters when the natural food supply is meagre. For example, most Blue Jays will leave if the autumn crop of acorns (the fruit of the Red Oak) or of other tree seeds is poor. In autumns when there is a



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The number of overwintering Blue Jays is influenced by the quality of tree seed crops such as acorns in autumn.

large acorn crop, Blue Jays can store them, and later retrieve them, thereby allowing them to get through the winter here.

Along these lines, other birds that usually reside farther north all year may show up in Algonquin in good numbers, if their habitual food source is sparse. An example of this is the Pine Grosbeak, a large finch the male of which is particularly attractive. Pine Grosbeaks are usually only seen in good numbers here if crops of Mountain-Ash fruit upon which they feed are poor farther north.

Another interesting thing about winter



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Male Pine Grosbeak

birds is that we can – to a degree – predict the relative numbers of many of them based on the food crop we see in the autumn. We knew that the 2012 acorn crop in Algonquin Park and surrounding areas was good. We also knew that the crop of Mountain-Ash fruit up north was variable. So it isn't a complete surprise that there are fair numbers of both Blue Jays and Pine Grosbeaks in the Park this winter. If you wish to see these birds up close, you might consider stopping by the Visitor Centre, where they may frequent the bird feeders!

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The Visitor Centre offers free WiFi internet access... and while there, don't forget to check out The Friends of Algonquin Park bookstore, or enjoy a light snack or meal at the Sunday Creek Café.



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December 14, 2012

A Winter Camp Renewed

By Rory MacKay

A full scale replica of a camboose shanty is one of the treasures to be found in the Algonquin Logging Museum, which follows the history of logging from the 1830s to the modern day. The central fireplace, or camboose, was the focus of the culinary and

social universe for the fifty two shantymen who slept and ate in this kind of dwelling: the only source of light; the only source of heat for cooking; the only warmth for fending off the bitter cold of an Algonquin winter's night.

Given its importance in the lives of



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The loggers slept in a double tier of bunks (two men in each) around three walls of the shanty. The cook prepared a steady diet of bread and beans (baked in kettles buried in hot sand), salt pork, and strong, green tea in his camboose fireplace. The fire never went out all winter—providing heat and ventilation.





A camboose from 1900.

MACNAMARA COLLECTION, ONTARIO ARCHIVES

the shantymen, a replica of a shanty and its camboose should match the historical record. When the Algonquin Logging Museum shanty was constructed in 1992, flat rocks were used to hold back the sand of the camboose. It was discovered that arrangement did not match with the four existing nineteenth century photographs of shanty interiors or with first-hand accounts, which indicated that in most shanties large beams of wood surrounded the camboose. The beams were lower than the rock wall that had been used in the replica camboose.

In 2010, the shanty roof began to fall in, a condition that made the building unsafe for visitors. Whether an Algonquin Park camboose had wooden beams holding back the sand was



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Other than on the ends of their bunks or the odd bench, one of the few places the shantymen could sit while eating was on the wooden beams surrounding the camboose.

merely an “academic” question until repairs began. Fortunately, independent archaeological research could answer the question. Work on an 1871 camboose shanty along the Madawaska River was conducted by the author, who is a former seasonal naturalist and current research archaeologist, with permission of Park authorities and under license by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. (The artifacts are held in the Algonquin Park Visitor Centre.)



CHARLES MACNAMARA COLLECTION

Camboose in Mr. McDonald's Shanty at Lake Travers, Black River, Quebec in November 1900.



Algonquin Logging Museum camboose shanty in 2012, following its reconstruction.

R. MACKAY COLLECTION



R. MACKAY COLLECTION

The new configuration of the Algonquin Logging Museum camboose, with the cramier and bean-hole.

Careful excavation of a sandy mound – the former camboose – centrally located within a rectangular set of foundation mounds revealed that the sand of that camboose was held in place by the remains of log beams on all four sides. There was no evidence of vertical posts, but apparently not all shanties had them. Near the top of the sand there were also large



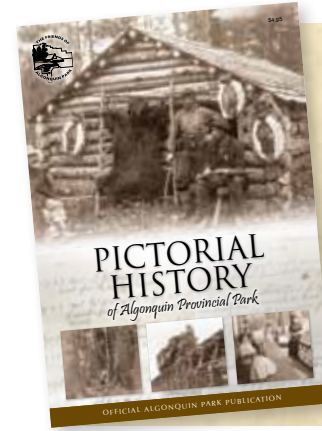
A panniken or “tea-bowl” of the type used by shantymen for their tea or beans, found through archaeological investigation in the remains of an 1871 shanty camboose.

R. MACKAY COLLECTION

stones that would have made an additional fireplace surround.

Armed with this information about the camboose structure, Park maintenance staff reconfigured the camboose fireplace this past October. Large wooden beams replaced the rock wall between the vertical support poles. An open-fronted ring of rocks was built on the sand. In the original shanties, as much as a cord of wood would have been burned each day. A “bean-hole” was added, to one side, in which large iron pots holding beans or bread to be baked would have been placed on a bed of coals and covered by glowing embers, ash and hot sand. A fireplace crane, or “cramier”, used to swing a large pot of boiled salt pork or tea over the fire, was constructed of hand-hewed black spruce poles.

Thus, a more improved representation of a winter camp from over a century ago has been achieved...but only in part. Missing are the tall tales shared around the fire, the shanty songs about the work in the woods and the dangers of the river-drive, and the music of a fiddle on a Saturday night. Lacking also are the smell of wood smoke and tobacco smoke, the bedbugs and lice, the essence of wet woolen clothing drying by the fire, and the chorus of snoring from fifty-two men sleeping two to a bunk. Alas, all those are just too difficult to reproduce.



The revised Pictorial History of Algonquin Provincial Park is here!

Long-time visitors may be familiar with the previous edition of this popular book. In the new edition, we have enhanced the priceless historical photographs using the latest in digital technology to increase the clarity of the images. The layout of the book's contents has also been significantly improved and we have added photographs of a number of priceless artifacts from the Algonquin Park Archives. The book is available for \$4.95 at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore, the East Gate and West Gate, and on-line at www.algonquinpark.on.ca.

Winter Recreational & Educational Facilities

As you may have already discovered, Algonquin Park can be a fascinating place to visit in the winter. You may not be aware, however, of the many different recreational and educational opportunities that are available to you. Some of the things winter visitors can enjoy include:



PETER FERGUSON

Algonquin Visitor Centre (including the bookstore & self-serve café) — open weekends and for extended periods during holiday seasons.

Cross-country Skiing — two superb groomed and trackset cross-country ski trails and a wilderness ski trail.

Dogsledding — arrange a trip on the dogsled trail.

Interpretive Trails — parking areas are ploughed at most of our self-guided interpretive trails.

Skating — on the outdoor ice sheet at Mew Lake Campground.

Camping at Mew Lake Campground — campsites on a first-come, first-served basis (including some electrical sites!) Comfort stations with drinking water, flush toilets, showers, washers, and dryers. Seven yurts are available by reservation only.

Backcountry camping — Interior camping reservations are not required after (Canadian) Thanksgiving to late April.



Interior Camping Permits may be purchased along Highway 60, in person, at the West Gate (Daily, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) (705) 633-5583 or the East Gate (Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) (705) 633-5572.

If it is inconvenient to travel to these offices given the detour required from your proposed Interior access point, you may purchase an Interior Camping Permit, using a major credit card, by telephoning the East or West Gate during business hours.

For more detailed information on winter activities in Algonquin, pick up a copy of our winter brochure, available at the East and West Gates, and the Visitor Centre.

www.algonquinpark.on.ca