Going West 2024

Joachim Schmidt



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1 Our trip to the Yukon in 2024

1.1 Intention

I plan to update this document as I have time (i.e., on rainy days) and when an internet connection is available.

This is a work in progress! Updated from **20241221**

1.2 Introduction

Susi and I have been talking about our desire to explore the northern Rockies and, if at all possible, visit the shores of the Bering Sea for a long time. This year, the opportunity arose to spend the summer on this trip.

During our visit to Germany last year, my sister Annette mentioned that she would like to come and visit. That made the trip even more special, as we could start the journey after Susi was done with her semester, and Annette could fly back when her travel time was up, connecting to her flight from Toronto back to Germany.

This document will be split into sections. Each part will begin with a Google map indicating the approximate route taken, followed by descriptions and pictures.

Big thank you to Lukas, who introduced me to Markdown, the language used for this document, and helped with the maintenance of the web server!

1.3 Take off

The start of our journey was a bit delayed due to some unexpected repairs on the camper. Additionally, I had planned to install a DC-DC charger between the truck's alternator and the camper battery to significantly improve the charge rate while driving.

One of the biggest challenges was replacing the freshwater intake hose. This required cutting a hole in the side of the camper—oh no! Still, reaching the clamps and fittings was very challenging. Benno's courage and nimble arms allowed him to remove the old hose and install the new one. Tim and Benno also helped polish the fiberglass hull, which requires a lot of patience and makes your arms hurt. Big thanks to Benno and Tim for this!

Meanwhile, Susi was busy finishing her semester and working on her curriculum development.

In the midst of this busy period, Annette arrived. Annette and I took three days off to visit our cabin in Manitoulin and check how it had survived the winter.

Finally, on May 28, 2024, we made it to Tobermory and boarded the Chi-Cheemaun, the ferry that connects to Manitoulin!

1.4 Travel route

1.4.1 Part 1 Lake Superior.

We began our trip on May 28 from Lion's Head and arrived in Winnipeg on June 3.

Link Google Maps

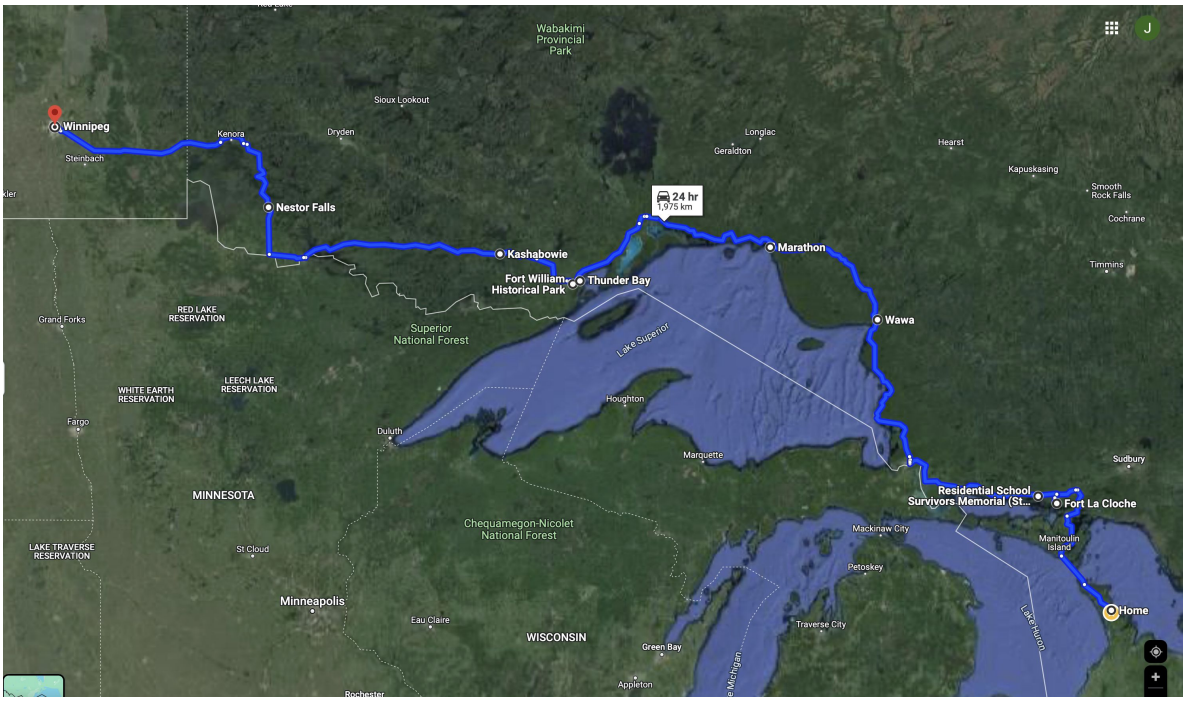


Figure 1.1: GM Part 1



Figure 1.2: The truck and camper are ready for loading.



Figure 1.3: The crew is excited and ready to embark on the trip!

Our first campsite was at the marina in Spanish, located on the north shore of Lake Huron.



Figure 1.4: The marina in Spanish.



Figure 1.5: The marina in Spanish.

First Nation children from the Bruce Peninsula were sent to the Spanish Indian Residential School, which was operated by the Jesuits. Parents could only reach the school by crossing the lake from Tobermory to South Baymouth, even if they had been allowed to visit their children.



Figure 1.6: The ruins of the Indian Residential School in Spanish.



Figure 1.7: A sculpture in front of the former school.



Figure 1.8: Annette and Susi on the shores of Lake Superior in Lake Superior Provincial Park.

We spent our second night in Wawa, on the shores of Lake Wawa. The town is famous for its large Canada Goose sculpture.



Figure 1.9: We spent our second night on the shores of Lake Wawa.

The next morning, we hiked to a smaller lake over a ridge that offered beautiful views.



Figure 1.10: Bunchberry, Cornus canadensis



Figure 1.11: Annette und Susi enjoy the view.

After spending the night near the site of the former lumber mill in Marathon, we hiked the Painters Loop in the morning.



Figure 1.12: The site of the former lumber mill in Marathon.

Members of the Group of Seven used the lookout as inspiration for their work.



Figure 1.13: Painters Lookout



Figure 1.14: Annette on Painters Lookout.



Figure 1.15: A bay of Lake Superior.



Figure 1.16: Serviceberrie

After the hike, we continued toward Thunder Bay. During the drive, we imagined spending the evening at a nice brewpub. However, it turned out to be more difficult to find a place than we had anticipated. Fortunately, thanks to Susi's creativity, we succeeded and enjoyed a pleasant evening before spending the night in a nearby parking lot.



Figure 1.17: A pub night in Thunder Bay.



Figure 1.18: Church in Thunder Bay.

We enjoyed having coffee and a snack at this church-turned-coffee shop and community meeting place.

On our way to Kenora, we visited Fort William and enjoyed a partially guided reenactment tour of the compound. The historic site was just gearing up for the season, so some buildings and displays were not yet open.



Figure 1.19: Fort William

Annette enjoys a beer in the evening sun at our resting spot for the night.



Figure 1.20: It's a hard life!

Just west of Quetico, we crossed the boundary of the Arctic/Atlantic Watershed.



Figure 1.21: Boundary Artic/Atlantic Watershed

Our next stop was the Quetico Provincial Park Visitor Centre. The Canadian side of the Park its almost twice the size of the German state of Saarland. In addition to learning about the natural and cultural history of this historically significant boundary water, I enjoyed browsing the free book exchange.

Camping for the night at Nestor Falls on Kakabikitchiwan Lake.



Figure 1.22: Nestor Falls

In Kenora we stoped to stock up on wine and beer before leaving Ontario and spend some quality time in a laundromat.

After crossing into Manitoba we continued to Winnipeg. The Forks, located at the confluence of the Red River and the Assiniboine River, is a place we have visited in the past while passing through Winnipeg. During the summer, many cultural festivities take place here. In recent years, the area has undergone significant upgrades.

We stayed overnight at a nearby parking lot, albeit for a horrendous parking fee. The night brought heavy rainfall, and Annette's bed got wet as we closed the window too late. Fortunately, each parking space is equipped with a power outlet for engine block heaters during the winter. We used the power supply to dry out the bedding with a hairdryer.



Figure 1.23: Wet morning at the Forks

While Susi visited the Museum of Human Rights, Annette and I explored a First Nations cultural information center.

1.4.2 Part 2 Grasslands National Park.

From Winnipeg, we headed towards Buffalo Pond Lake, arriving on June 10.

Link Google Maps

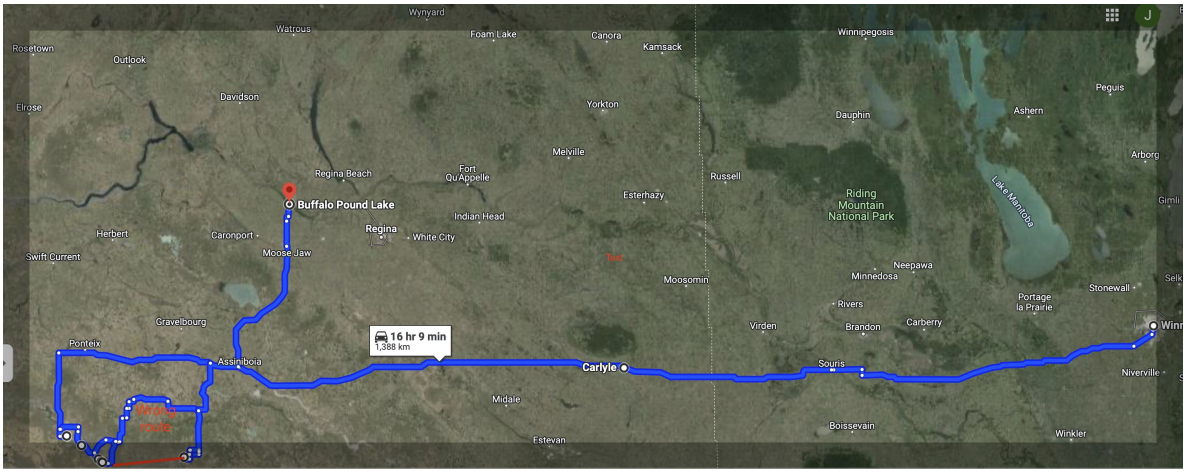


Figure 1.24: GM Part 2

The lower boundary of the map above represents the border with the USA.

This map does not accurately represent our route in Grasslands National Park. Google Maps does not account for the gravel road connecting the two southern points in the West Block. Refer to the red line—this is the road we took instead of the northern loop indicated on the map.

1.4.2.1 June 6 Grasslands National Park West Block.



Figure 1.25: Drummond's Milkvetch, Astragalus drummondii



Figure 1.26: Susi is enhancing a geodetic marker on top of 90 Mile Butte.



Figure 1.27: Prairie Smoke



Figure 1.28: Grasslands NP

1.4.2.2 June 9 Grasslands National Park, East Block.



Figure 1.29: Grasslands NP



Figure 1.30: DSC_0197-44



Figure 1.31: Fringed Sagebrush, Artemisia frigida



Figure 1.32: Annette in the East Block of Grasslands National Park.



Figure 1.33: Grassland NP East Block



Figure 1.34: Grassland NP East Block



Figure 1.35: Annette, Grassland NP East Block

1.4.3 Part 3 Saskatoon.

From Buffalo Pond Lake to Saskatoon, arriving on June 14.

Link Google Maps

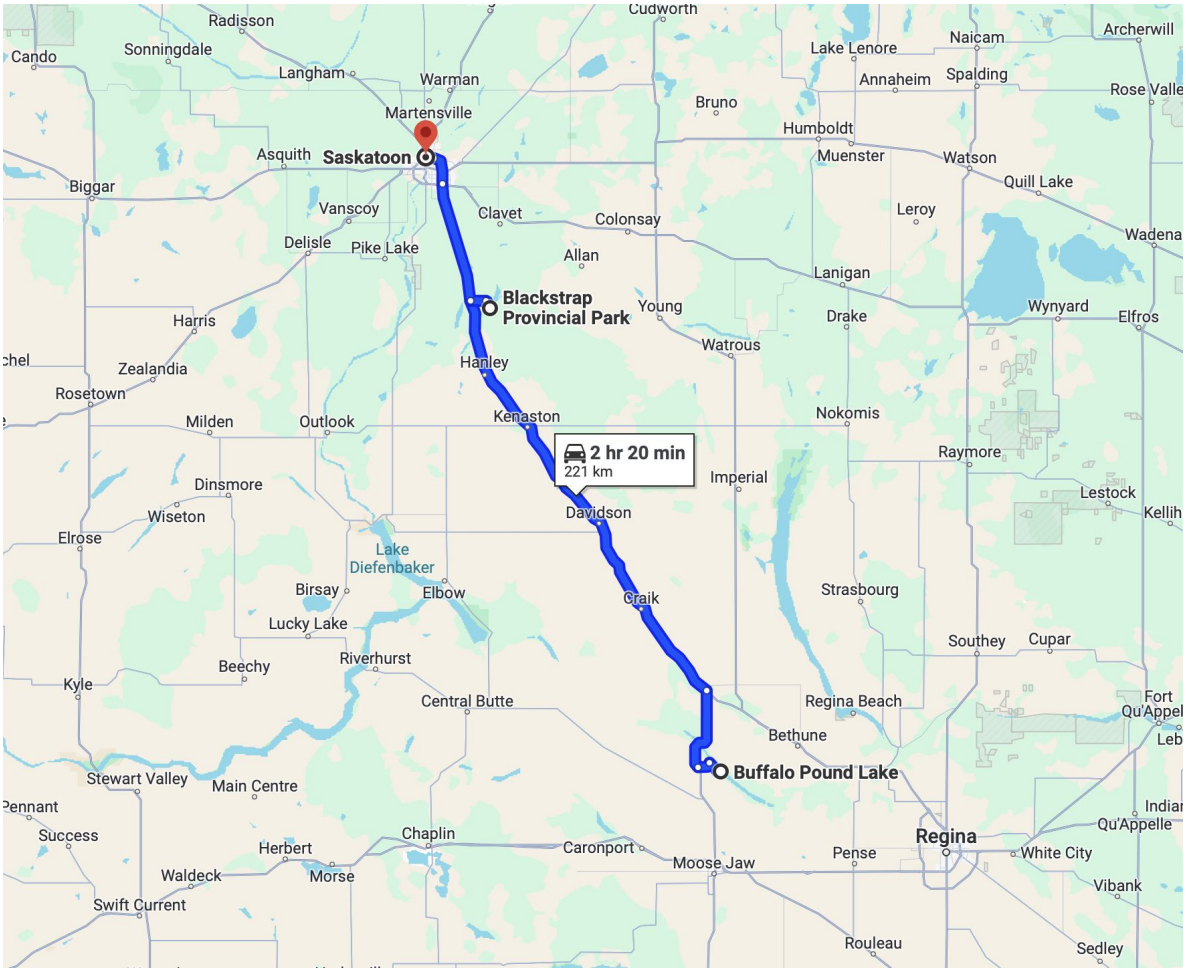


Figure 1.36: GM Part 3

1.4.4 Part 4 Edmonton.

We are leaving Saskatoon on June 16 and traveling toward the Catholic Church in Spruce Grove, northwest of Edmonton, arriving there on June 17.

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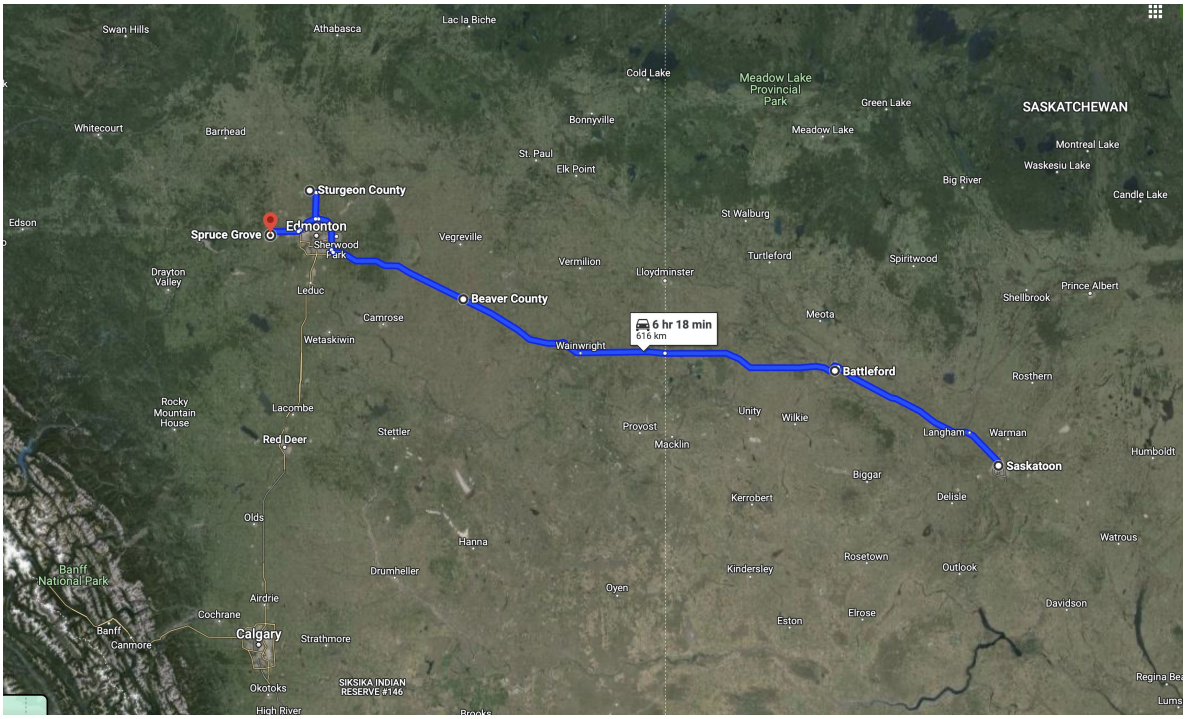


Figure 1.37: GM Part 4

1.4.5 Part 5 Alaska Highway - Dawson Creek.

Traveling from Spruce Grove towards Steam Boat, arriving there on June 21.

Link Google Maps

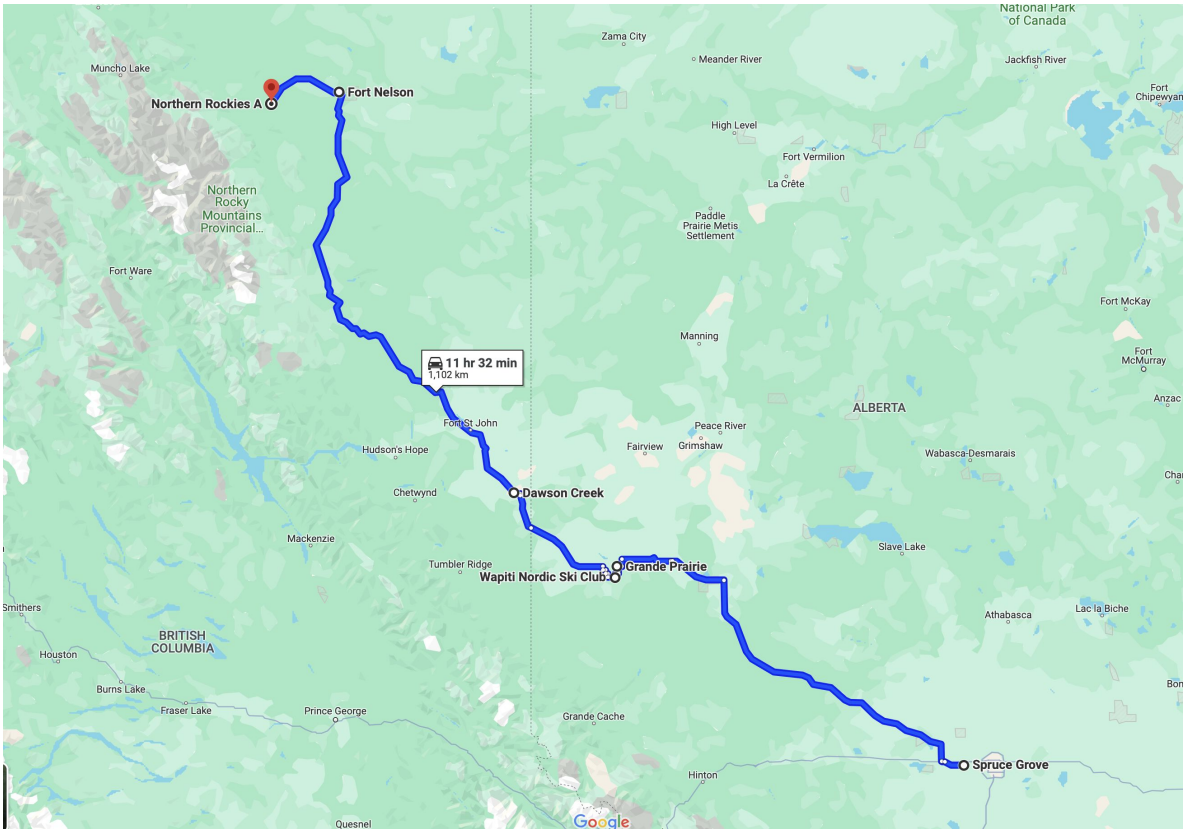


Figure 1.38: GM Part 5

1.4.6 Part 6 Alaska Highway - Stone Mountain Provincial Park - Whitehorse.

Travelling from Steam Boat towards Whitehorse, arriving there June 27.

Link Google Maps

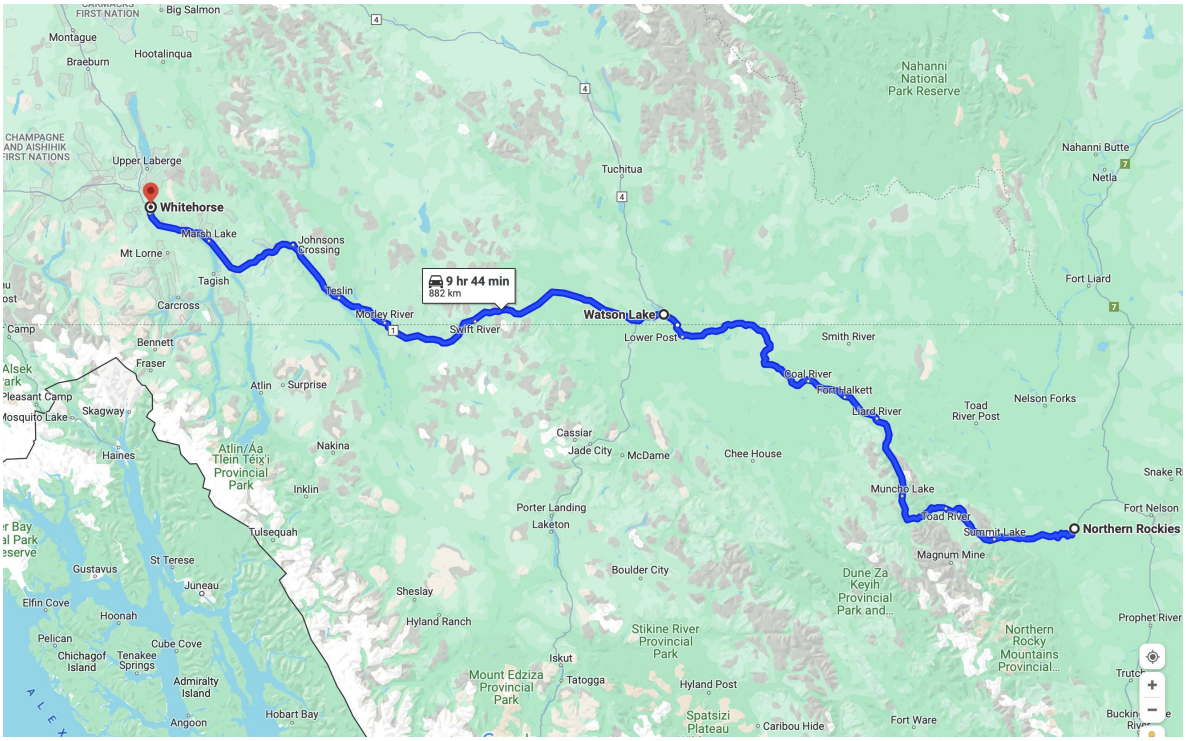


Figure 1.39: GM Part 6



Figure 1.40: Meeting Germans at the Liard River.

It was incredible to experience all these majestic northern rivers in person. We had read about them while planning our canoe trips on the Peace River and Albany River. Oh, what we would have given for the current—minus the cascades of the Liard—while paddling downstream on the lazy Peace River.

We encountered a surprising number of camper vans from Germany and Switzerland. Their owners had shipped their vehicles from Hamburg to Halifax to tour Canada and the USA.



Figure 1.41: Overnight stay by the Liard River.

1.4.6.1 Summit Lake in Stone Mountain Provincial Park, along the Alaska Highway, BC.

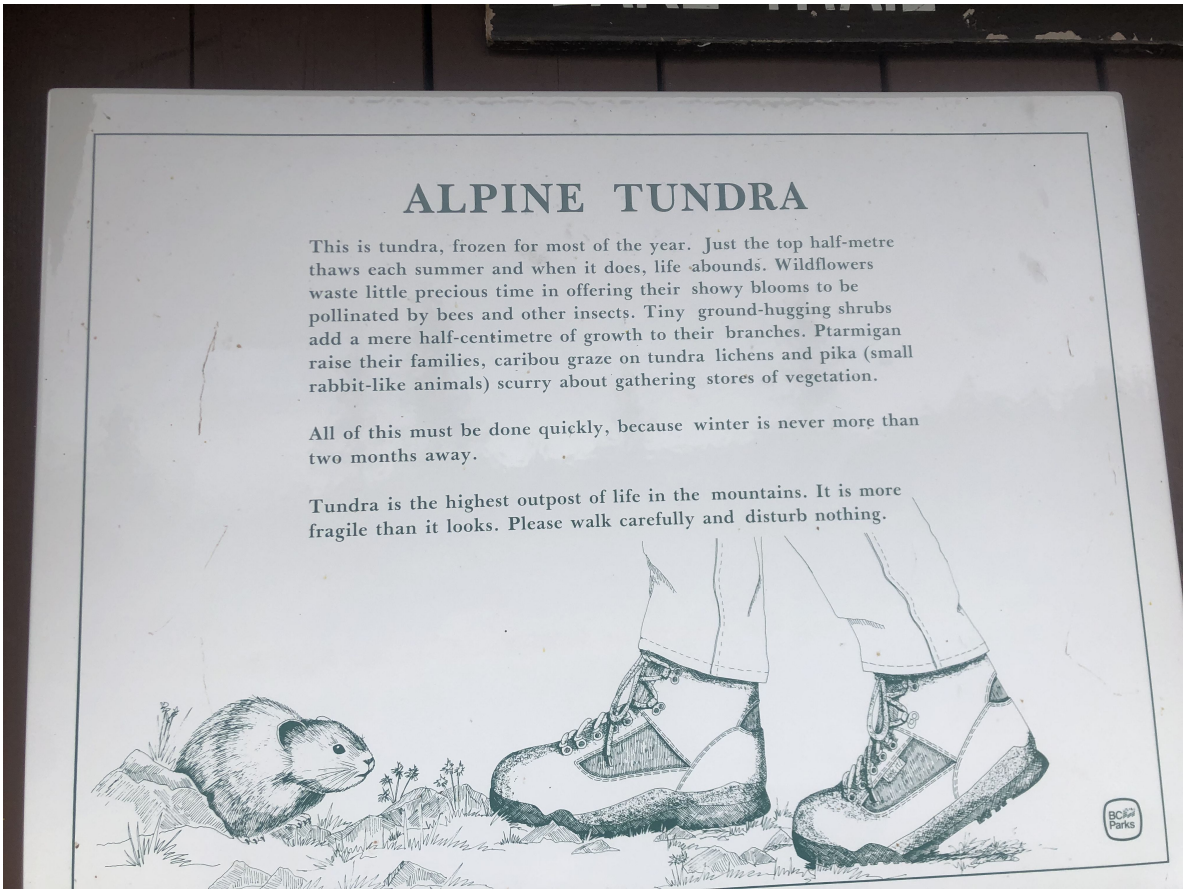


Figure 1.42: Alpine Tundra



Figure 1.43: One Flowered Annemone



Figure 1.44: Lapland Azalea



Figure 1.45: Can you find the moutain sheep?



Figure 1.46: It was cool and wet at Stone Mountain, but the heavy rain that had bogged us down for a day had finally ended.



Figure 1.47: A small layer of harder material is all that keeps these “Mud Pillars” standing. Amazing!



Figure 1.48: Pillar near Stone Mountain

1.4.6.2 Muncho Lake, BC

Raup's Paintbrush




Stone Sheep—surprisingly, they can move, despite their name!






Figure 1.49: The banks are made of this mineral-rich, highly erodible fine material that ungulates (deer, sheep, goats, etc.) like to eat.



Figure 1.50: A teddy bear, the big brown kind—Susi doesn't like being up close to them!

The Liard River comes through a canyon and has to go around a bend.



Figure 1.51: Whirlpool Canyon 1



Figure 1.52: Whirlpool Canyon 2

1.4.6.3 Whitehorse



Figure 1.53: A view from the Yukon University campus over Whitehorse. We enjoyed it so much that we stayed the night.

1.4.6.4 Yukon University Park.

A Human form cut out of rock, inspired by human shadows on the walls in Hiroshima.



Figure 1.54: Human form by Jerry Kortello.

Human Forest by Suzanne Paleczny.





A person evolving from a flower bud-like form by Béla Simó, who was born in the Transylvanian

Mountains.



Figure 1.55: Sculpture by Béla Simó.

1.4.7 Part 7 Kluane National Park.

Traveling from Whitehorse to Haines Junction and Kluane National Park.

We are leaving Whitehorse on July 4.

Link Google Maps



Figure 1.56: GM Part 7

The lower boundary of the map above is near the border between Yukon and British Columbia.

1.4.7.1 On July 4/5, we stayed at a place overlooking Wagga Creek on Aishihik Lake Road.



Figure 1.57: Aishihik Lake Road

Friendly neighbors, as long as you don't get stuck in their vast underground burrows.



1.4.7.2 July 5: Haines Junction walk, Kluane National Park.

We explored Haines Junction. The Visitor Information Center for Kluane National Park has wonderful displays and is very informative. It is located right beside the First Nations Administrative Building. Stretching our legs on a hike along the Dezadeash River near Haines Junction.

A view over the Dezadeash River, with the Kluane Range in the background.



Figure 1.58: Dezadeash River



Figure 1.59: Bog Wintergreen

We are camping overnight beside the Kathleen River, off the Haines Road, on the way to King's Throne.



Figure 1.60: By the Kathleen River.

1.4.7.3 July 6: King's Throne hike in Kluane National Park.

King's Throne Trail



Figure 1.61: Looking up to King's Throne



Figure 1.62: Up we go.



Figure 1.63: Kathleen Lake

The trail up to King's Throne is very steep, with sections over scree fields. This taxed our flatlander legs, which were not yet accustomed to the mountains. The new hiking poles came in very handy.



Figure 1.64: Hiking Poles are great!

The views over Lake Kathleen and the Kluane Mountains to the north are breathtaking. The winds picked up, growing strong and cold—providing the perfect excuse to skip the ascent to the peak today.



Figure 1.65: Looking North

Sliding down steep snowfields never gets old!



Figure 1.66: Sliding on snow fields.

The strong wind from the lake provided perfect conditions for flying a kite, as long as you were dressed warmly.



Figure 1.67: Kite

Some of the flowers we found the trail.



Figure 1.68: Larkspurleaf Monkshut



Figure 1.69: Dwarfed Fireweed

After returning from the hike to King's Throne, we headed south along the Haines Road and visited the temporarily occupied First Nations fishing village of Klukshu. That night, we found a lovely spot just south of the village on the western side of the Haines Road.



Figure 1.70: Camping spot south of Kluksu.

1.4.7.4 July 7: St. Elias Lake hike, Kluane National Park.

St. Elias Lake hike



Figure 1.71: St. Elias Lake



Figure 1.72: Bunchberry, in the lower left quadrant.



Figure 1.73: Camp by the Kathleen River with Kathleen Peak in the background.

1.4.7.5 July 8: Auriol trail hike.

Auriol trail

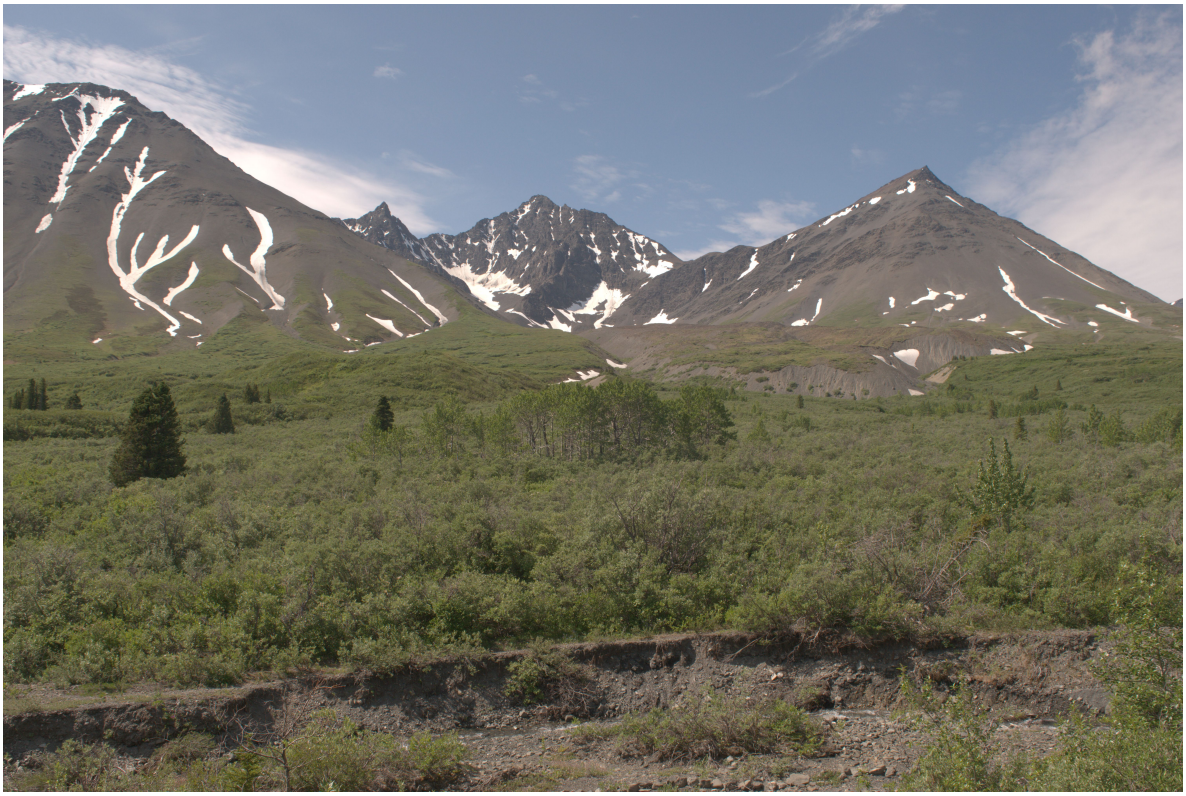


Figure 1.74: Kathleen Peak



Figure 1.75: Anticlea elegance



Figure 1.76: Anticlea elegance



Figure 1.77: The creek has washed out the trail.



Figure 1.78: Bog Labrador Tea



Figure 1.79: Larkspurleave Monkshut

1.4.7.6 July 8–10 at Crocus Meadows.

Fantastic views from this place! Strong and blustery winds come from Mt. Archibald, shaking our camper. Getting out of the door requires quite an effort.



Figure 1.80: View of Mt. Martha Black.



Figure 1.81: View of Mt. Martha Black on the left and Mt. Archibald on the right from Crocus Meadows.



Figure 1.82: Lanceleaf Stonecrop, Sedum lanceolatum

Some believe that hanging this plant in a room drives the fleas out, hence the name. In northern Canada, people often use the term “flea” to refer to all kinds of flying insects.



Figure 1.83: Tufted Fleabane, Caespitose Fleabane, Erigeron caespitosus



Figure 1.84: Alaska Indian Paintbrush



Figure 1.85: Alkali Grass, Anticlea elegans

Bear-root, also called Indian Potato, is a colourful plant that often grows in the gravel banks beside the roads. This plant is difficult to differentiate from Northern Sweet-vetch. While Northern Sweet-vetch is poisonous, Bear-root is edible for humans and is also eaten by bears.



Figure 1.86: Bear-root, Indian Potato



Figure 1.87: Bear-root, Indian Potato



Figure 1.88: Bear-root, Indian Potato



Figure 1.89: Bear-root, Indian Potato



Figure 1.90: Narrowleaf Hawksbeard, Mt Archibald in the background.



Figure 1.91: Narrowleaf Hawksbeard



Figure 1.92: Sudetic Lousewort



Figure 1.93: Sudetic Lousewort

1.4.7.7 July 11: Sheep Trail and Sheep Mountain - Thechál Dál in Kluane National Park.

Heading north on the Alaska Highway toward Silver City and the northern Kluane Visitor Center, named Thech'al Dhal, where Ä'äy Chù (Slim's River) flows into Kluane Lake. The water levels of Slim's River dropped dramatically in 2016 due to changes at the mouth of the Kaskawulsh Glacier. Now, vast areas of sandy former riverbeds are exposed, and the sometimes strong winds coming from the mountains stir up large sandstorms blowing toward Kluane Lake.



Figure 1.94: Trailhead for the Sheep Creek Trail and Bullion Trail.

The beginning of the trail is very sandy. Like the King's Throne trail, this is one of the more popular trails, and the many feet have stomped the sand into dust.



Figure 1.95: Sheep Creek Trail

After gaining some elevation on the trail through the forest, beautiful vistas begin to open up.



Figure 1.96: Overlooking the Slim's River delta.



Figure 1.97: Shrubby Cinquefoils



Figure 1.98: View over Slim's River valley with the Kaskawulsh Glacier.

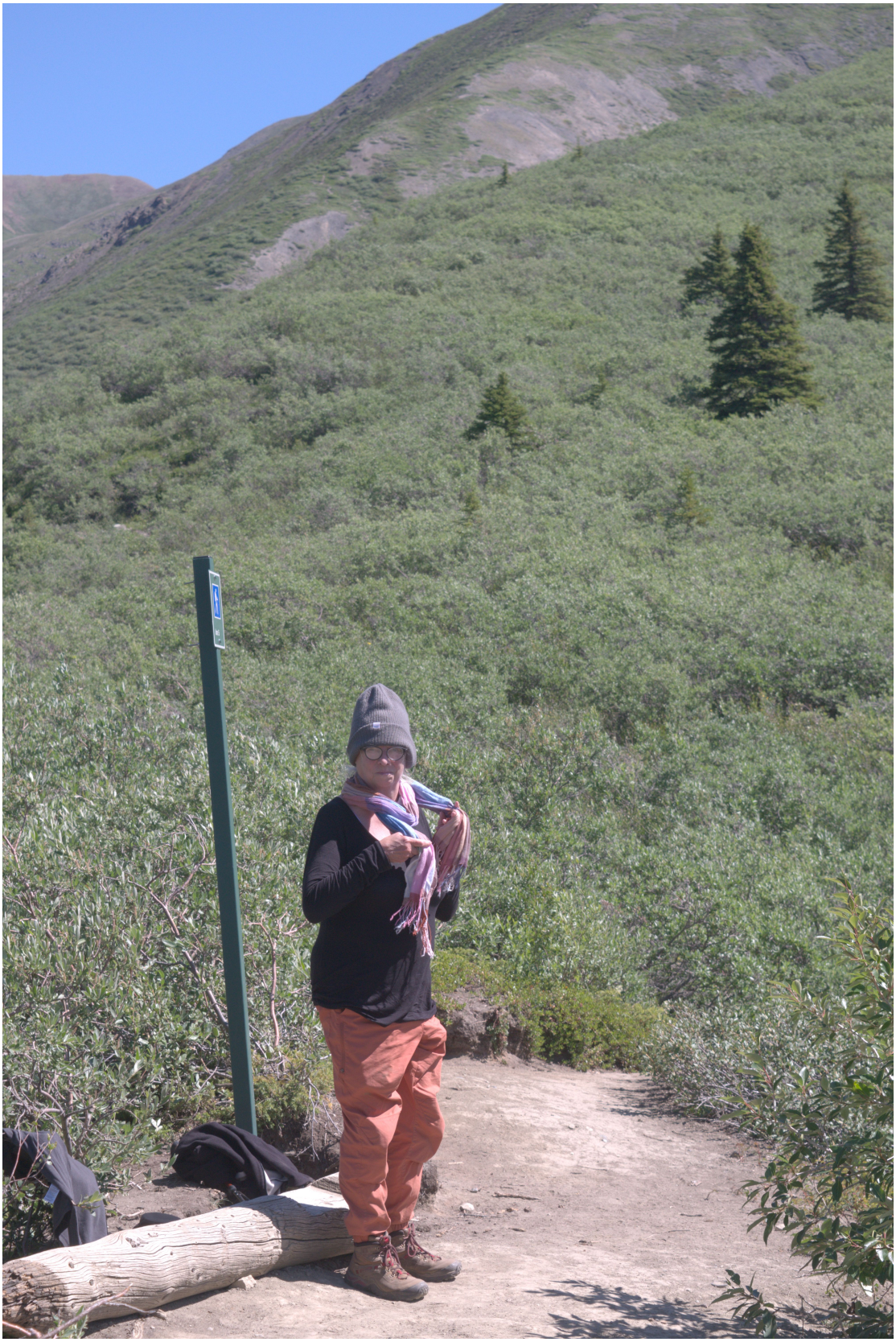


Figure 1.99: Susi at the lookout before the final ascent.



Figure 1.100: Looking for sheep.



Figure 1.101: Bluebells

The steep climb to the top of Thechál Dál was a challenge, not only for my fitness but also for my nerves. Some sections were so steep that I had to focus straight ahead to avoid feeling giddy.



Figure 1.102: Views from the top, 1,100 meters above Slim's River and our car.



Figure 1.103: Views from the top.



Figure 1.104: Moss Champion, Silence caulis.



Figure 1.105: Shrubby Cinquefoils



Figure 1.106: Red Castle Ridge

For the night, we stayed near the Soldiers Summit Trailhead on the shore of Kluane Lake.



Figure 1.107: Sand blowing out of Slim's River valley.

1.4.7.8 July 12: Bullion Plateau

The next day, Susi focuses on looking for sheep and resting, while I hike the Bullion Trail.



Figure 1.108: Hiking down an old trail in Slim's River valley.

A pleasant trail winds through the forest up to the Bullion Plateau.



Figure 1.109: Trail leading up to the Bullion Plateau.



Figure 1.110: Snowdon Lily



Figure 1.111: Capitate Valerian



Figure 1.112: Capitate Valerian



Figure 1.113: Red Castle Ridge, as seen from the Bullion Plateau.



Figure 1.114: Red Castle Ridge close up.



Figure 1.115: A strange structure on Williscroft Peak.



Figure 1.116: Mountain-Avens



Figure 1.117: The Mouth of the Kaskawulsh Glacier.

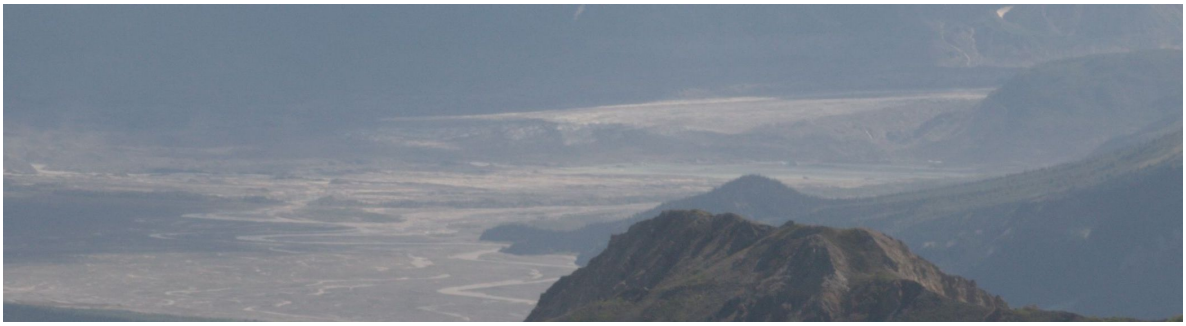


Figure 1.118: The mouth of the Kaskawulsh Glacier.

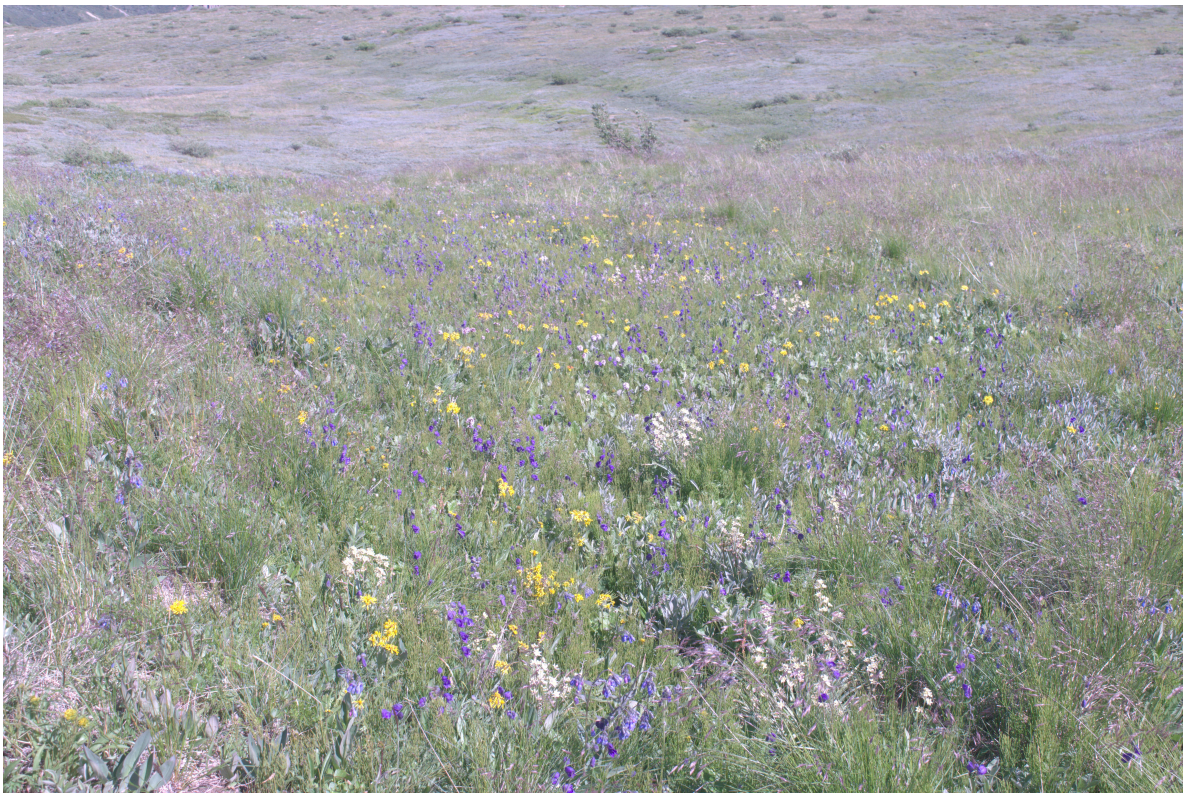


Figure 1.119: The flora of the alpine meadow.

1.4.7.9 Whitehorse, July 13-14.

Back in Whitehorse, we splurge on dinner at the Big Bear Tap House. In addition to upscale pub food and great beer, they specialize in funky bathroom signs.

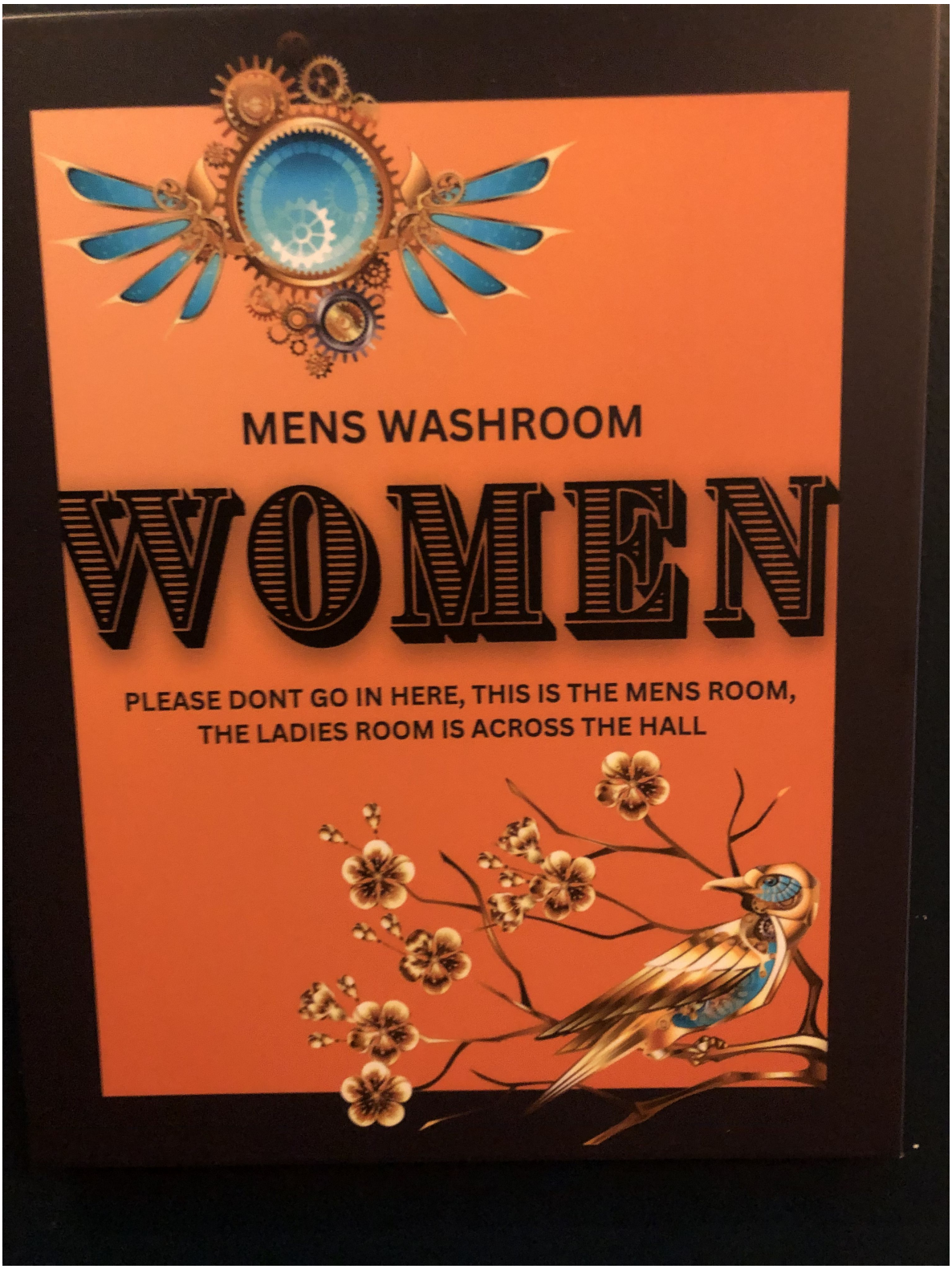


Figure 1.120: Big Bear bathroom sign.

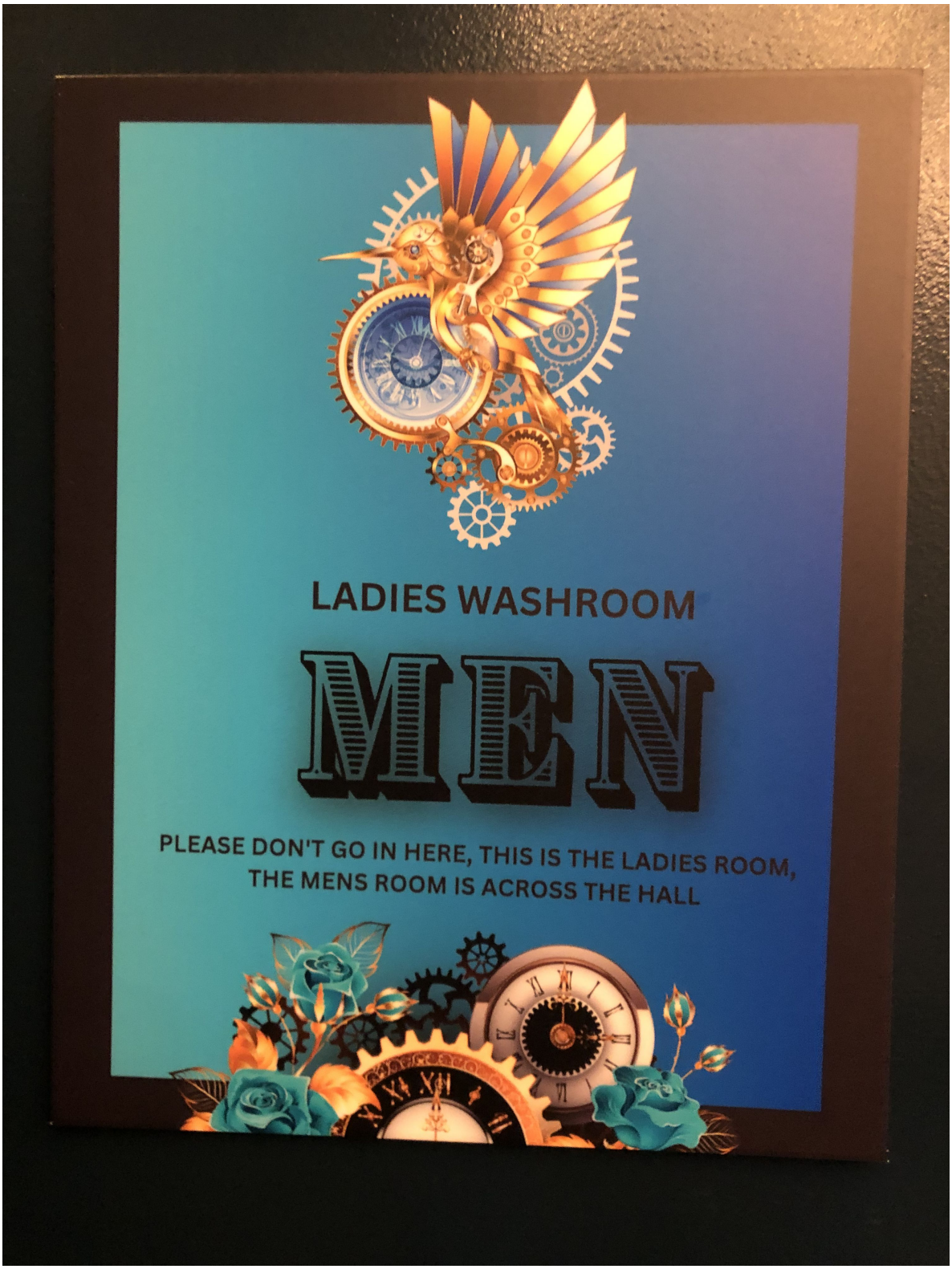


Figure 1.121: Big Bear bathroom sign.



Figure 1.122: Sculpture in Whitehorse.

1.4.8 Part 8 Demster Highway.

From Whitehorse to Tuktoyaktuk and Dawson City.

We left Whitehorse on July 14 and arrived in Dawson City on July 26.

Link Google Maps

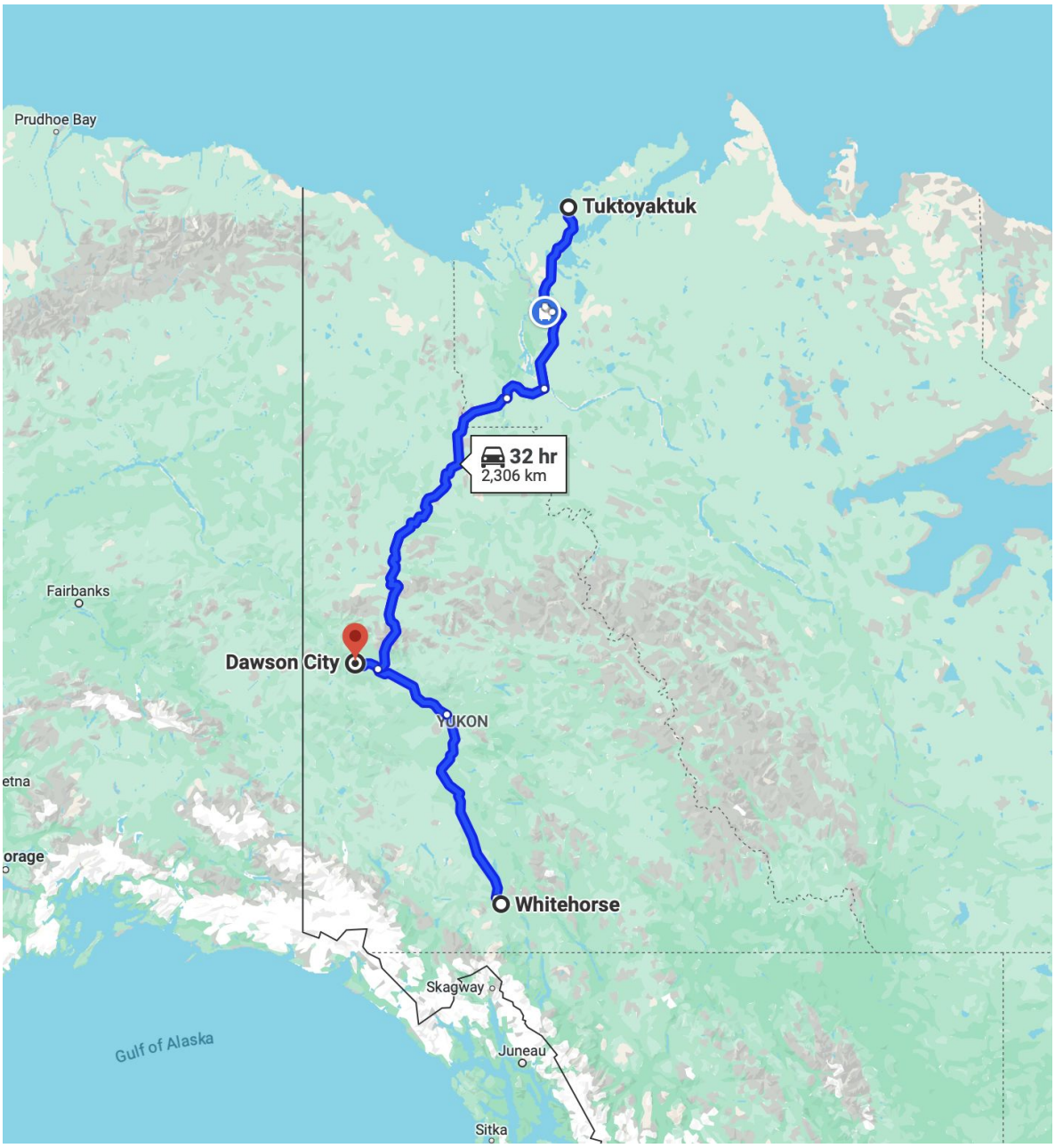


Figure 1.123: GM Part 8

1.4.8.1 July 15-16

Just north of Carmacks are the Five Finger Islands in the Yukon River. The Conglomerate Pillars present a challenge for boats navigating up and down the river.



Figure 1.124: Five Finger Islands



Figure 1.125: Five Finger Islands



Figure 1.126: Five Finger Islands

We camped at the “hidden campsite” on the Yukon River, across from Tachun Campground. Swiss fishermen had lit a big bonfire to grill steaks, just after we had driven through the remnants of a large forest fire that had blocked the road for a week.

We saw a golden eagle when we left the next morning.



Figure 1.127: Golden Eagle



Figure 1.128: Golden Eagle



Figure 1.129: Golden Eagle

1.4.8.2 July 16–26: Dempster Highway

1.4.8.3 July 16-17: Tombstone, a Yukon Territorial Park.

Similar to the canal system in the Harz Mountains, Germany, water was used as a power source for mining in this area.

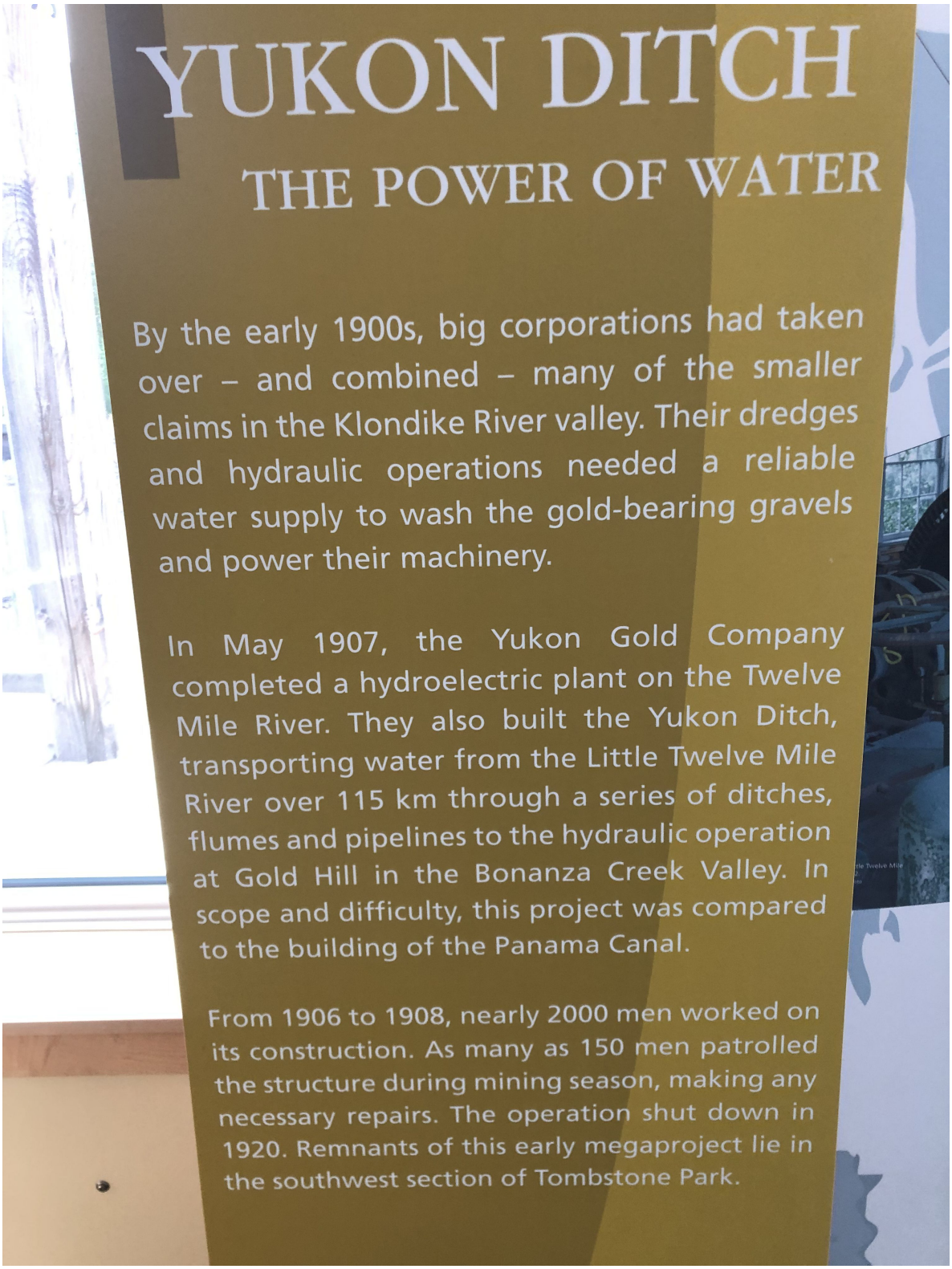


Figure 1.130: Yukon Ditch

Goldensides Trail



Figure 1.131: Goldensides Trail



Figure 1.132: Western Roseroot, Rhodiola integrifolia

1.4.8.4 July 17/18 at Old Crow

We stayed overnight beside the Swiss Hanomag-based stealth RV. For our North American friends, Hanomag was a well-respected brand in Germany, known for municipal multi-purpose vehicles, and they also built military trucks.

1.4.8.5 July 18 Crossing the Arctic Circle



Figure 1.133: At the Arctic Circle.

Camping beside a Weather Station.



Figure 1.134: Susi inspects

1.4.8.6 July 19 Crossing into the Northwest Territory



Figure 1.135: At the Yukon-NWT border.

Visiting the “museum” and campground office in Fort McPherson. Ferry crossing of the Peel River and the Mackenzie River. Disappointed by Inuvik, we continue toward Tuktoyaktuk, which everyone refers to as “Tuk.”



Figure 1.136: Peel River ferry.

Building on permafrost presents special challenges. Often, the structure sits on footings similar to these.



Figure 1.137: Fort McPherson



Figure 1.138: Fort McPherson



Figure 1.139: Mackenzie River ferry.

We stayed overnight just south of Tuk, one of the few places with a lot of mosquitoes.

1.4.8.7 July 20 Tuk and Pingo trip

Pingo National Landmark

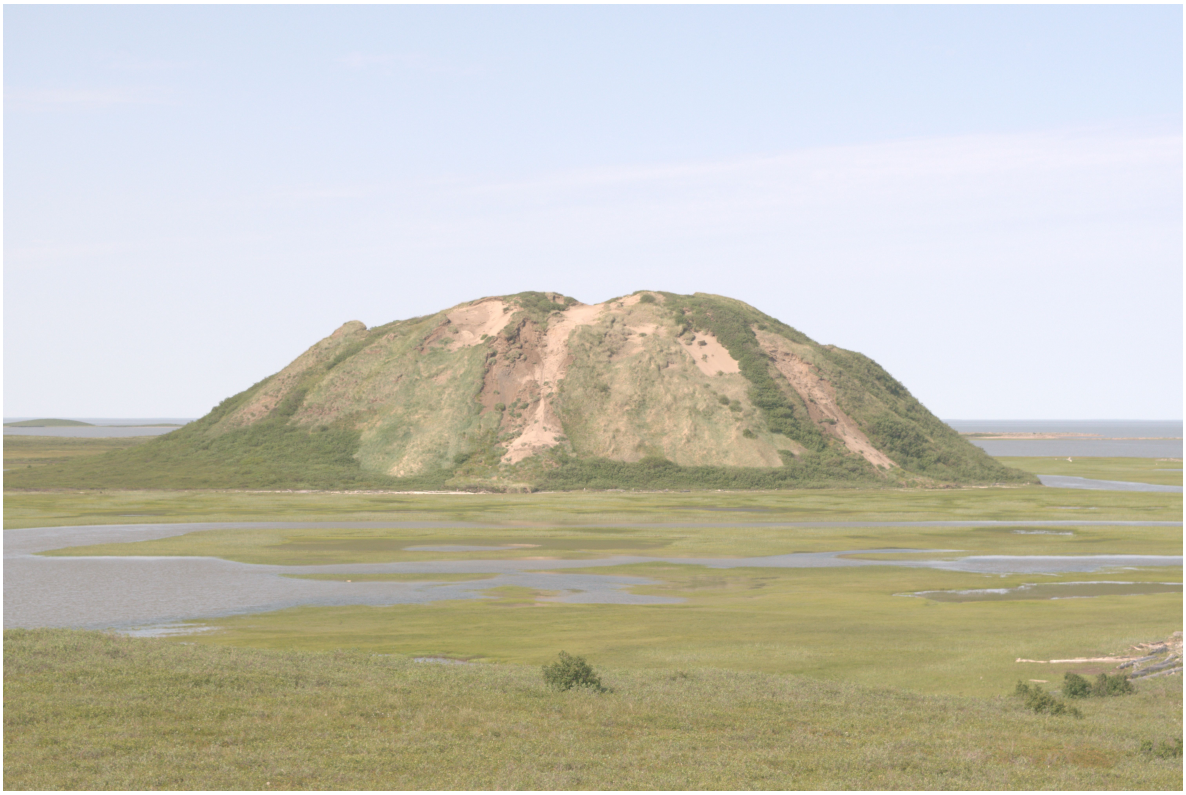


Figure 1.140: Pingo outside Tuk.

What is a Pingo?

Parks Canada Landmark outside of Tuk.

Parks Canada celebrates its birthday with guided trips to the Pingos. Local First Nations guides ferry us across a bay, with one accompanying us carrying a rifle in search of polar bears. In recent weeks, polar bears have been spotted close to Tuk.

The First Nations Elders we met at the picnic told us that the effects of climate change are dramatic, altering their entire way of life. Many older people don't leave their homes in the summer because they can't handle temperatures reaching 30 degrees Celsius. During our trip this summer, we often found that it was warmer in Tuk than in our location much further south.



Figure 1.141: Mackenzie River ferry.

Literally the end of the road—in this case, the Dempster Highway—with the Arctic Ocean in the background.



Figure 1.142: Tuk



Figure 1.143: Snowmobile parking lot.

Snowmobiles “parked” beside the Dempster. The locals also use them in the summer to cross the tundra.



Figure 1.144: Baking bread

I do this about twice a week.

1.4.8.8 July 21: Leaving Tuk and heading toward the Yukon border.



Figure 1.145: Satellite dishes

Federal satellite ground station just south of Inuvik.

1.4.8.9 July 22 Hiking on the alpine tundra.

Clarification of the terms “tundra” versus “alpine tundra” or “alpine meadow”:

The tundra begins north of Inuvik.

Alpine meadows or alpine tundra are types of vegetated natural habitats found at high altitudes.

Alpine meadows near the border between Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The vastness of the landscape was almost overwhelming.



Figure 1.146: Alpine meadows



Figure 1.147: Sheep's sorrel



Figure 1.148: Ridge walk

1.4.8.10 July 23

Sleeping near a radio station under construction.



Figure 1.149: A view of the Ogilvie Mountains.



Figure 1.150: Ogilvie Mountains



Figure 1.151: Fireweed, Chamaenerion angustifolium

1.4.8.11 July 24: Heading toward Tombstone Park.

Staying overnight by the Blackstone River, just north of Tombstone Provincial Park.

Blackstone River, just north of Tombstone Park. I took a bath here, and the current was so strong that I was worried I might be swept away.



Figure 1.152: Blackstone River

1.4.8.12 July 25

Angelcomb Peak hike.



Figure 1.153: Lapland Poppy



Figure 1.154: Artic Gentian

1.4.8.13 July 26: Leaving the park and returning to the start of the Dempster Highway.



Figure 1.155: Despite some rain, the rear of the camper is caked in mud.



Figure 1.156: Returned to the start of the Dempster Highway.

We are arriving in Dawson City.

1.4.9 Part 9 Dawson City.

Dawson City.

Dawson City is a Parks Canada Historic Site. Parks Canada restored and revitalized many of its historic buildings.

1.4.9.1 July 27 - 28 Dawson City



Figure 1.157: This beauty is FOR SALE!



Figure 1.158: Dawson City



Figure 1.159: Dawson City



Figure 1.160: Dawson City

Want to sleep like a gold digger? This is close to how they did it back in the day. The tents are made of canvas. In the winter, they added spruce branches to the outside and shoveled snow on top for insulation.



Figure 1.161: Dawson City accomodation



Figure 1.162: Dawson City

This one is still in need of some TLC. The morgue in Dawson looked very similar!



Figure 1.163: Dawson City



Figure 1.164: Dawson City School



Figure 1.165: Dawson City



Figure 1.166: Dawson City: Plenty of watering holes!

Since all the roads are dirt, these boardwalks come in handy when it rains.



Figure 1.167: Dawson City, real boardwalks!



Figure 1.168: Dawson City

Doohickies are a thing, not just in our Lion's Head yard.



Figure 1.169: Dawson City

This is the most important place in town—second only to the booze store.



Figure 1.170: Dawson City



Figure 1.171: Dreching tailings

The floating dredging units dig up the river or pond bed, wash out the gold, and pile the rocks behind them.

Building lots are in high demand, and real estate is very expensive, so subdivisions are developed on the gravel piles.



Figure 1.172: New land for settelments

1.4.10 Part 10 Top of the World Highway.

Part 10 Map

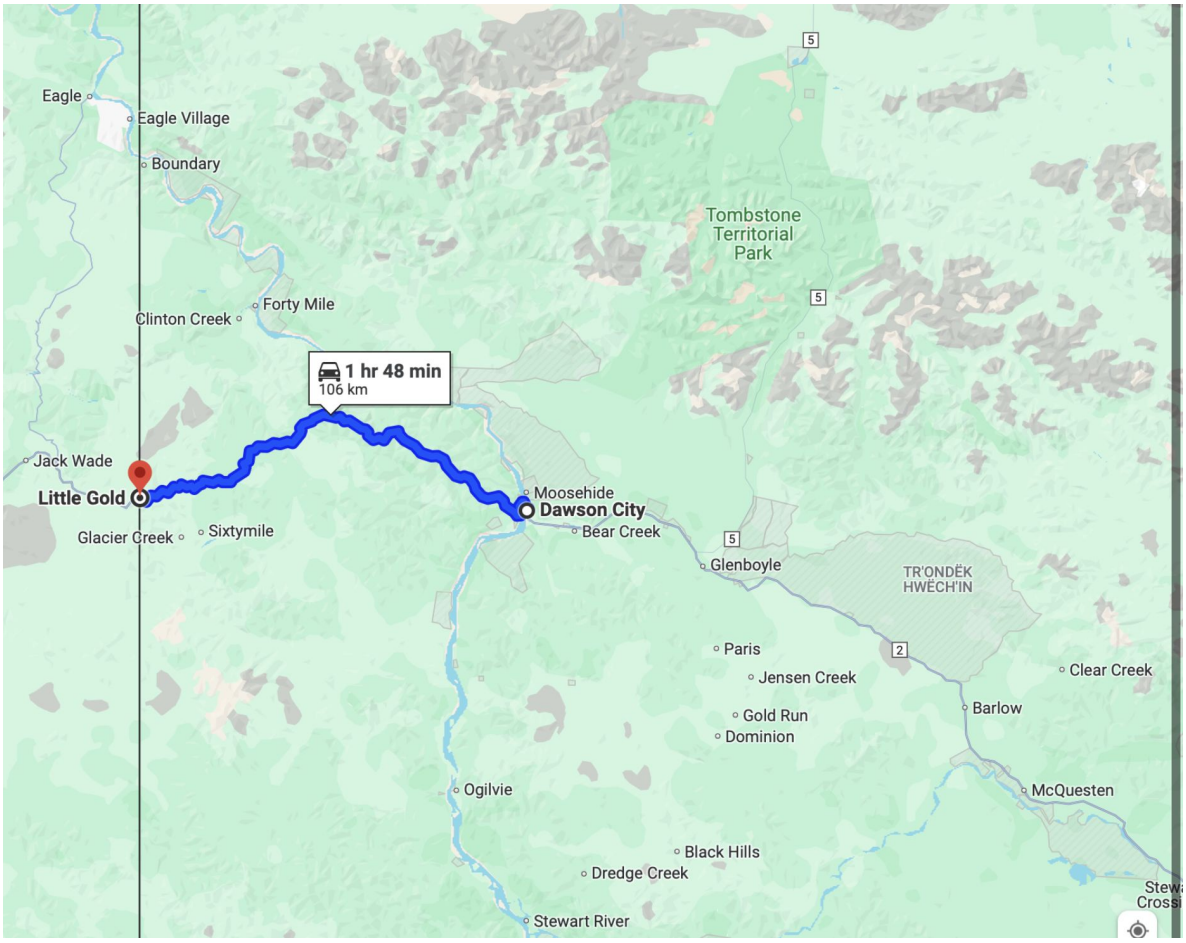


Figure 1.173: Part 10 Map



Figure 1.174: Fortymile Caribou Herd Range



Figure 1.175: Fortymile Caribou Herd

This is a great example of a restoration success.



Figure 1.176: Fortymile Caribou Herd



Figure 1.177: One-cone Clubmoss, Lycopodium lagopus

The blueberries don't grow much higher than the lichen.



Figure 1.178: Blueberry



Figure 1.179: Someone roasted his lunch here.

Standing on the hills offers expansive views of the landscape, this time under a cloudy sky.



Figure 1.180: Looking over the land.



Figure 1.181: Canada / USA border post.



Figure 1.182: Pull out near the border.



Figure 1.183: Yukon Ferry north of Dawson City.

1.4.10.1 From Dawson back to Whitehorse

During the gold rush, they built roadhouses about every 30 miles (45 km) to provide fresh horses for the horse-drawn buggies, as well as food and shelter for travelers.

Some of them are protected as heritage sites.



Figure 1.184: Roadhouse near Carmacs

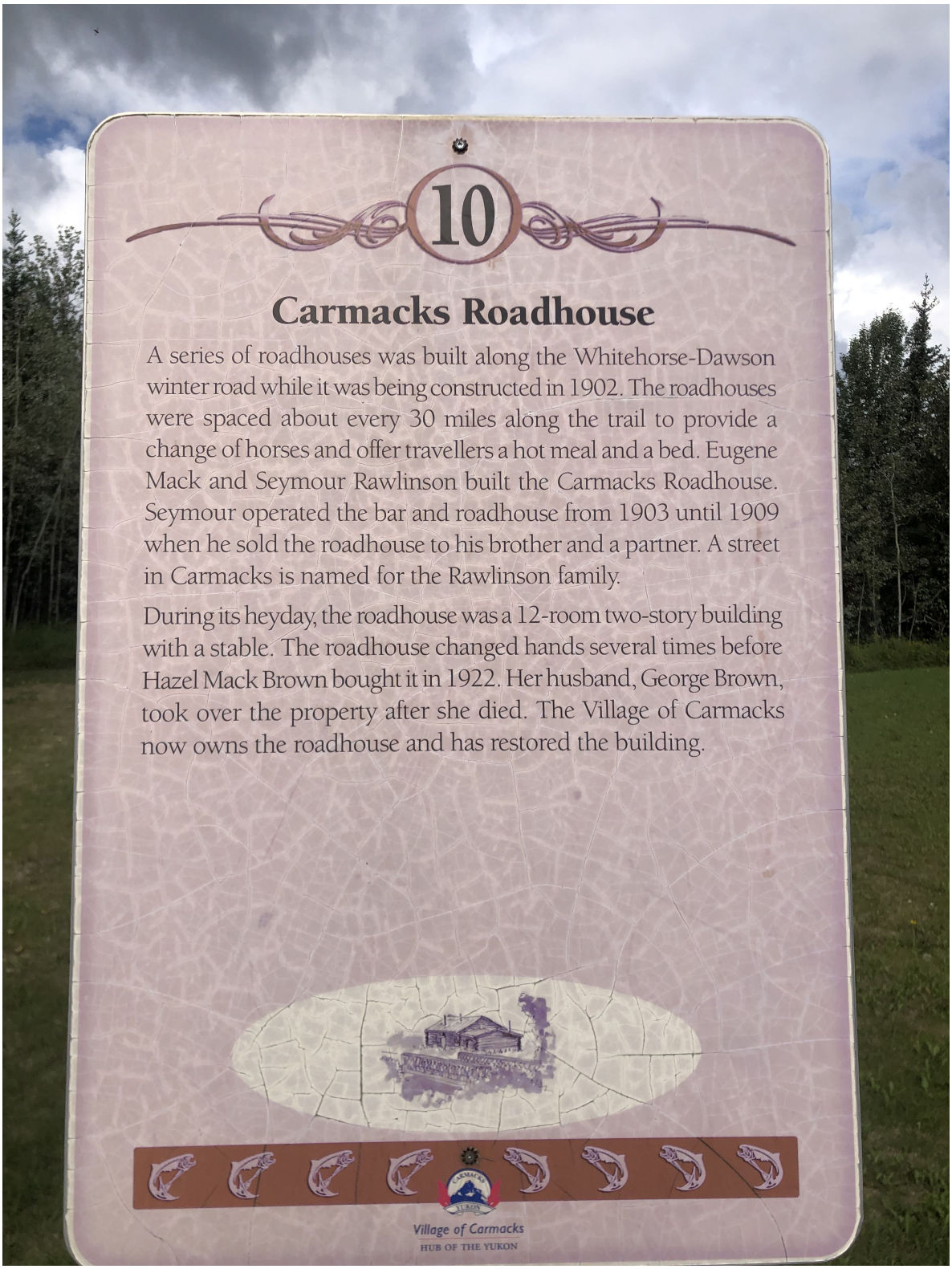


Figure 1.185: Roadhouse near Carmacs



Figure 1.186: The “Cliffs” of Whitehorse

1.4.11 Part 11 Yukon Lakes.

Part 11 Yukon Lakes Map Link

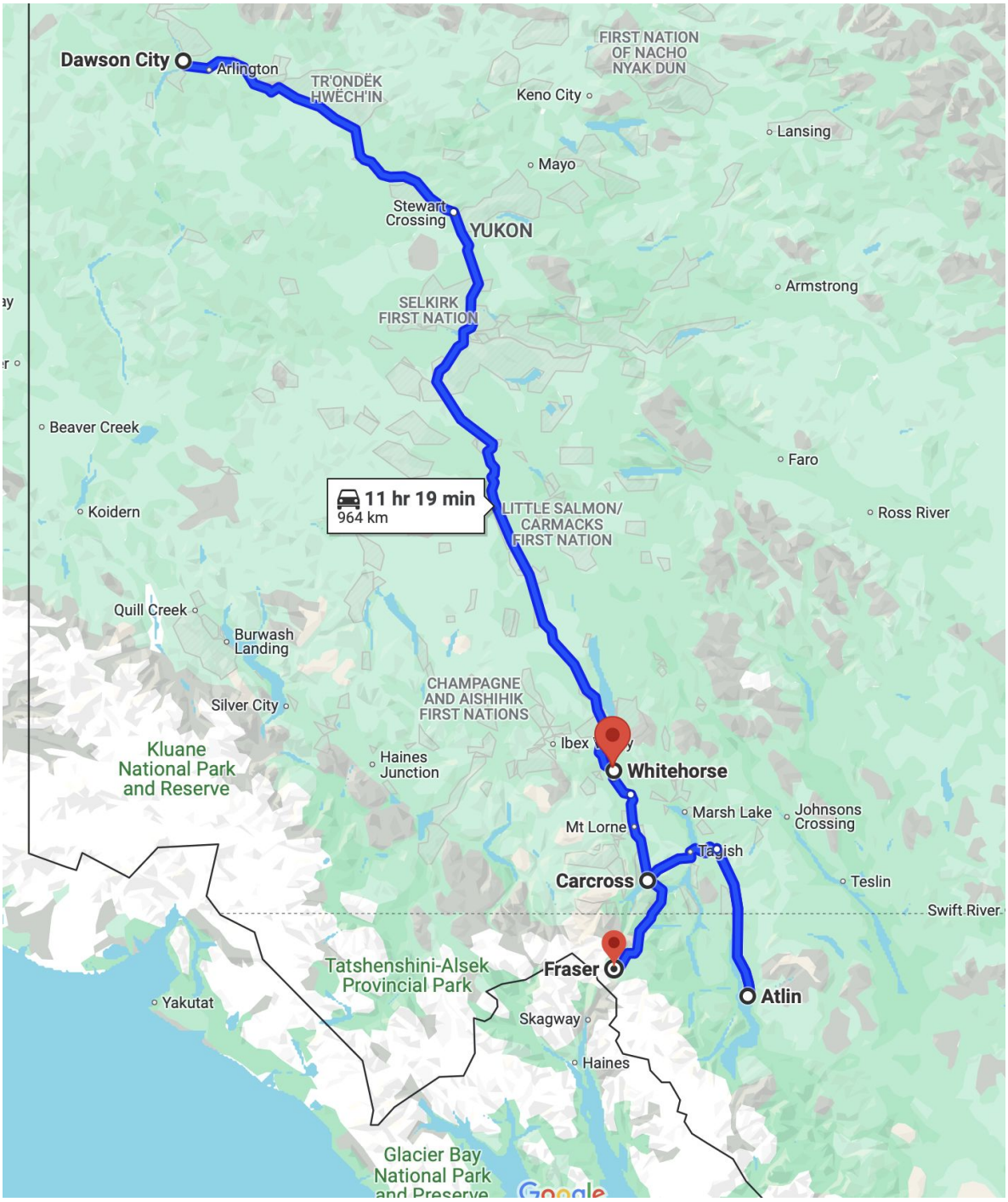


Figure 1.187: Part 11 Map



Figure 1.188: Dunes near Carcross, Yukon



Figure 1.189: The Duchess

The historic engine that pulled the train from Whitehorse over Carcross and White Pass to Skagway, USA.

White Pass & Yukon Railroad

A video about the rail road



Figure 1.190: White pass train engines.



Figure 1.191: ... passenger cars



Figure 1.192: The old boys are having beers in the hotel that has survived since the Gold Rush days.

The granny who served the drinks let Susi and me know that the guys have potty mouths. She'd probably like them to eat soap to clean up their language.

Carcross is our base station for exploring the many hiking trails in the area. After a long time without any cellphone connection, we enjoyed reconnecting with our kids—two of whom just moved to Holland while we've been exploring the Yukon.

We returned to this wonderful place where we could stay on the sandy beach and enjoy the fantastic view from the camper.



Figure 1.193: View over Bennett Lake, Garcross.



Figure 1.194: Our preferred camping spot is at the end of a dead-end road, overlooking the lake.



Figure 1.195: View over Bennett Lake from the camper.



Figure 1.196: Someone is enjoying the berries.

1.4.11.1 Atlin

From Carcross, we went to Atlin, BC. This small community can only be reached by a dead-end road from Yukon. Some refer to it as the 'Switzerland of the Rockies,' as the village is located on a beautiful lake and surrounded by mountains. However, the Switzerland comparison didn't quite work for us.



Figure 1.197: Atlin lake

1.4.11.2 Hike up Mount Monarch, August 5th.



Figure 1.198: View on Mount Atlin



Figure 1.199: Many glaciers in the area.



Figure 1.200: Atlin



Figure 1.201: Lake Como

We stayed at a quiet recreation site on the shore of Lake Como for a couple of nights while exploring the area around Atlin.

1.4.11.3 Hike up Como Bluff near Atlin, August 6th.

Susi is enjoying the shade with her book on one of the really warm days.



Figure 1.202: Atlin lake from Como Bluff.



Figure 1.203: Lake under Como Bluff.



Figure 1.204: Reading time

Back in Carcross. Most evenings, there was a very strong wind coming from the mountains over the lake.

These kiteboarders enjoyed it despite the low air temperatures. The water was warm enough to take a dip, but only on sunny days!



Figure 1.205: Kitebord on Bennett Lake.



Figure 1.206: Kiteboard jumping



Figure 1.207: We have a sunset again!

1.4.11.4 Hike up the east side of Montana Mountain, August 11th.

During our first stay in Carcross, we hiked up Montana Mountain from the west side, starting from Carcross. Today, we approach it from the east, 17 km down the Klondike Highway from Carcross on the SamMcGee Trail.

There used to be mining on Montana Mountain. They gave up about 100 years ago, but some of the remains can still be seen. On this hike, we followed the route where they operated an ore gondola. They extracted the ore near the top of the mountain and transported it down to Nares Lake using the gondola.

I was amazed at how well these structures have endured over time and through the climate.

In Carcross, they don't have waterlines for freshwater because the permafrost makes it difficult to build civil infrastructure. Freshwater is delivered to each house by water truck from the water treatment plant in the village.

1.4.11.5 Exploring the Klondike Highway between Carcross and Fraser, BC.

1.4.11.6 Hike from Fraser, BC, to Bryant Lake near Fraser Peak, August 10th.

Hiking up to a lake connected by a water pipe to Fraser to supply drinking water. Part of this area is closed for hiking to protect the summer grounds of the caribou.





Figure 1.208: Old gondola tower.



Figure 1.209: Ore bukett.



Figure 1.210: .. and up we go!



Figure 1.211: Relay station?



Figure 1.212: Gondola line to the lake.



Figure 1.213: Mount Montana invites further exploration!



Figure 1.214: Water truck





Figure 1.215: Steel water pipe with insulation.

This makes a nice if very narrow and tilted footbridge.



Figure 1.216: Bryant Lake under Fraser Peak.

1.4.11.7 Hike up "Log Cabin Mountain", on August 11th.

While Susi rested her overused knee, I explored the hill behind our campsite. An overgrown trail and a scrambling route above the tree line made this more time-consuming than anticipated. When I returned, Susi was ready to start a search.

Back in Whitehorse. During Susi's last night, it rained heavily, and we woke up to find ourselves in a lake.

The community bike repair place, which operates out of the old trailers, is underwater too.

This is run by volunteers to help support the homeless community.

1.4.11.8 August 14: Susi is on her way back home.

I spent two days in Whitehorse doing some camper clean-up and maintenance while Susi got her birthday bike in Windsor, Ontario, and took possession of our home in Lion's Head again. The soles of my leather hiking boots came off, and since Whitehorse doesn't have a resident cobbler, I glued them back on myself—curious to see how long that will last.



Figure 1.217: On the way back.



Figure 1.218: Look over Shallow Lake.



Figure 1.219: Look over Shallow Lake.



Figure 1.220: Leatherleaf saxifrage



Figure 1.221: Surprise!



Figure 1.222: Community bike repair trailer.

1.4.12 Part 12 Annie Lake Road.

Part 12 Annie Lake Road Map Link

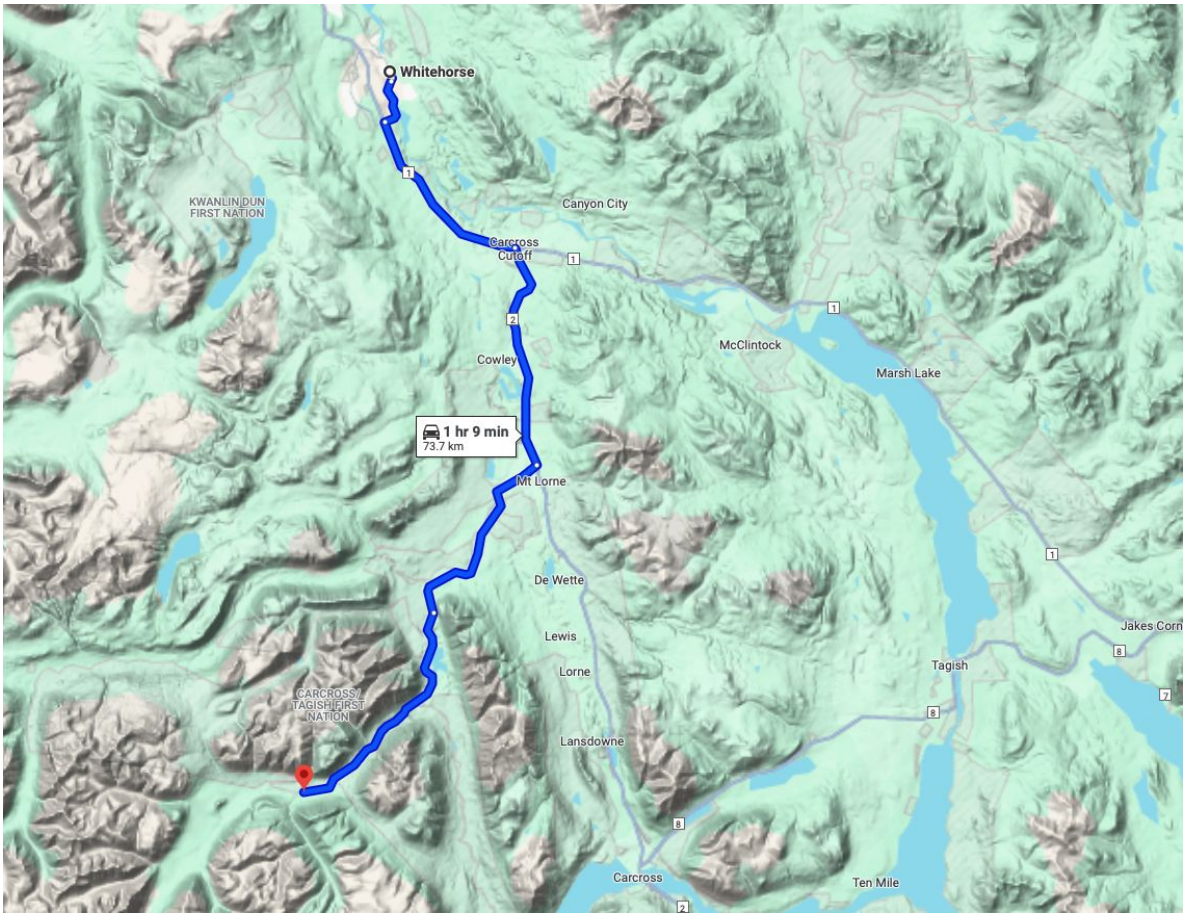


Figure 1.223: Part 12 Map

I see the first fresh snow on the mountains as I head south to Annie Lake Road.

The Annie Lake Road eventually turns into an unmaintained gravel road, with poorly fixed washouts. After 36 km, the bridge is replaced by a ford. Trucks without a heavy load can cross, but I didn't want to try that with the camper on the back.

The first night, I stayed beside the Wheaton River.

If you need to wax your pants but don't have an iron to melt the wax, use your dashboard on a warm, sunny day.

1.4.12.1 Hike up Mount Anderson, August 17th.

The walk begins through a beautiful pine forest, with lichen covering the ground.

The ATV trail becomes steeper, about 45 degrees, with deep, loose gravel that makes walking challenging.

Yet, some feel the need to drive up this path.

While reading a book, a large male caribou came by.



Figure 1.224: Already, on August 16th?

The ‘roads’—more like rough ATV trails leading into this area—were built by mining explorations.”

View over the Wheaton River valley.

Camp at Becker Creek Ford, August 17th–20th.

Reading day August 18th

1.4.12.2 Hike to the lakes beneath Becker Peak, August 19th.

Becker Peak Trail

To access the trail, I crossed the ford barefoot. The hiking poles helped me maintain my balance in the strong current.

I planned to spend the night near the lakes, so I had a heavy backpack with overnight camping gear. It was fairly easy to follow the old mining exploration trail, now used by hikers and ATVs.



Figure 1.225: Camp at Wheaton River.



Figure 1.226: Iron replacement.



Figure 1.227: Pine forest



Figure 1.228: Not nice for hiking.



Figure 1.229: German Hannomag Stealth Camper



Figure 1.230: Carribou



Figure 1.231: Lake near Mt. Anderson.



Figure 1.232 - Beardtongues



Figure 1.233 - Beardtongues



Figure 1.234: View near the top.



Figure 1.235: View near the top.



Figure 1.236: Mining remains



Figure 1.237: Mining remains



Figure 1.238: Wheaton River Valley



Figure 1.239: Becker Creek Ford



Figure 1.240: Crossing Becker Creek Ford.



Figure 1.241: Evening at the Becker Creek Ford.



Figure 1.242: Becker Peak Trail

Beautiful views after I entered the subalpine zone. After 10 km and a 900 m elevation gain, I reached the lakes.



Figure 1.243: Lake under Becker Peak.

I was looking for a campsite sheltered from the very strong and blustery winds, but no vegetation or rock formation provided this. The wind was strong enough that I wondered if my tent would withstand it.



Figure 1.244: Camp under Becker Peak.

The vistas are fantastic, and I only met two parties all day.



Figure 1.245: Becker Peak

After lunch by one of the lakes, I met a group of local women from Whitehorse who had come halfway up with their UTV. They mentioned that there might be a weather system coming in the next day. Sure enough, dark clouds soon blew over the ridge behind me.

Around 4 pm, I decided to walk back to avoid spending the night in this very exposed location due to the approaching storm.



Figure 1.246: Errosion Gully

I was happy to reach the camper after this long day.

1.4.12.3 Return to Whitehorse on August 20th–21st.

The temperature drops overnight, and it is only 4 degrees in the camper in the morning. The cool morning air creates clouds over the Yukon River in Whitehorse.



Figure 1.247: Cool morning in Whitehorse.

1.4.13 Part 13 Ibex Valley and Kusawa Lake.

Link for Ibex Valley Map

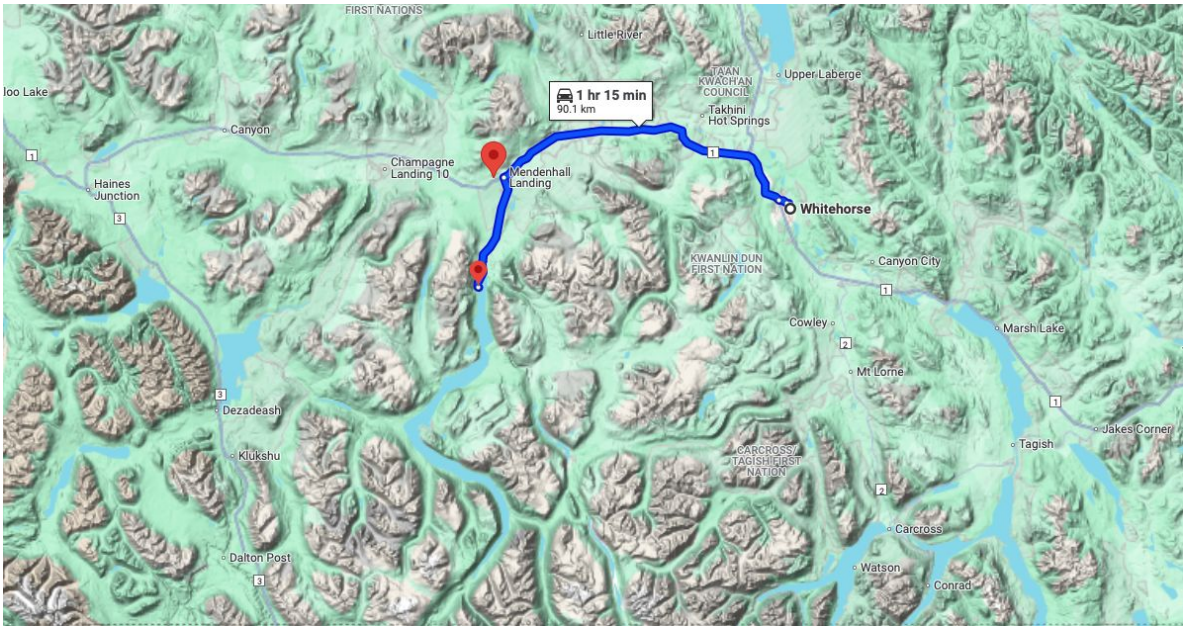


Figure 1.248: Ibex Valley Map

1.4.13.1 Hike up Stoney Creek, August 21

Stony Creek Trail

The trail is initially a rough dirt road leading to a few camps and a mine. The Terra Magnetta Mine was operated for several years by an enthusiastic and very optimistic miner who believes he has identified the location of the source of the gold found in the surrounding sediments. He is currently driving a shaft toward the location. I met him on my way while he was bringing in more equipment.



Figure 1.249: Terra Magnetta's Mine





The way up to the peak passes many claim markers.



Figure 1.250: Placer post

Leftover tree stumps from old forest fires act as ghostly markers.



Figure 1.251: Fire sculpture

Water erosion can create interesting forms too.



Figure 1.252: Sediment pillar

After passing through the open forest, views of the alpine meadows, Ibex Valley, and Lake Laberge to the northeast open up.



Figure 1.253: Alpine medow



Figure 1.254: View to the northeast with Lake Laberge.



Figure 1.255: Mountain range south of the valley.



Figure 1.256: View over Ibex Valley.

Overnight, I camped beside the old gravel pit at the Stoney Creek trailhead.

1.4.13.2 Spirit Canyon and Mendenhall Landing, August 22.

Spirit Canyon Trail

The trailhead is on a side road near a First Nation spiritual center. The trail starts through a dense forest but soon opens up to views of the Ibex Valley. After a rainy morning turned into a wet drizzle, everything is soaked.



Figure 1.257: Low clauds over Ibex Valley.



Figure 1.258: Spirit Canyon

Looking over the canyon, I met a local musher who was guiding two guests. He didn't know the history of this place or why it was called Spirit Canyon.

On the hilltop beside the canyon, the ground was covered in elk droppings. Maybe their presence has a connection to the name of this place?

Elk droppings

Returning from the walk, I turned off the Alaska Highway onto the Kusawa Lake Road, which follows the Tahkini River and ends at Kusawa Lake.

For the night, I stayed at Mendenhall Landing beside the Tahkini River.

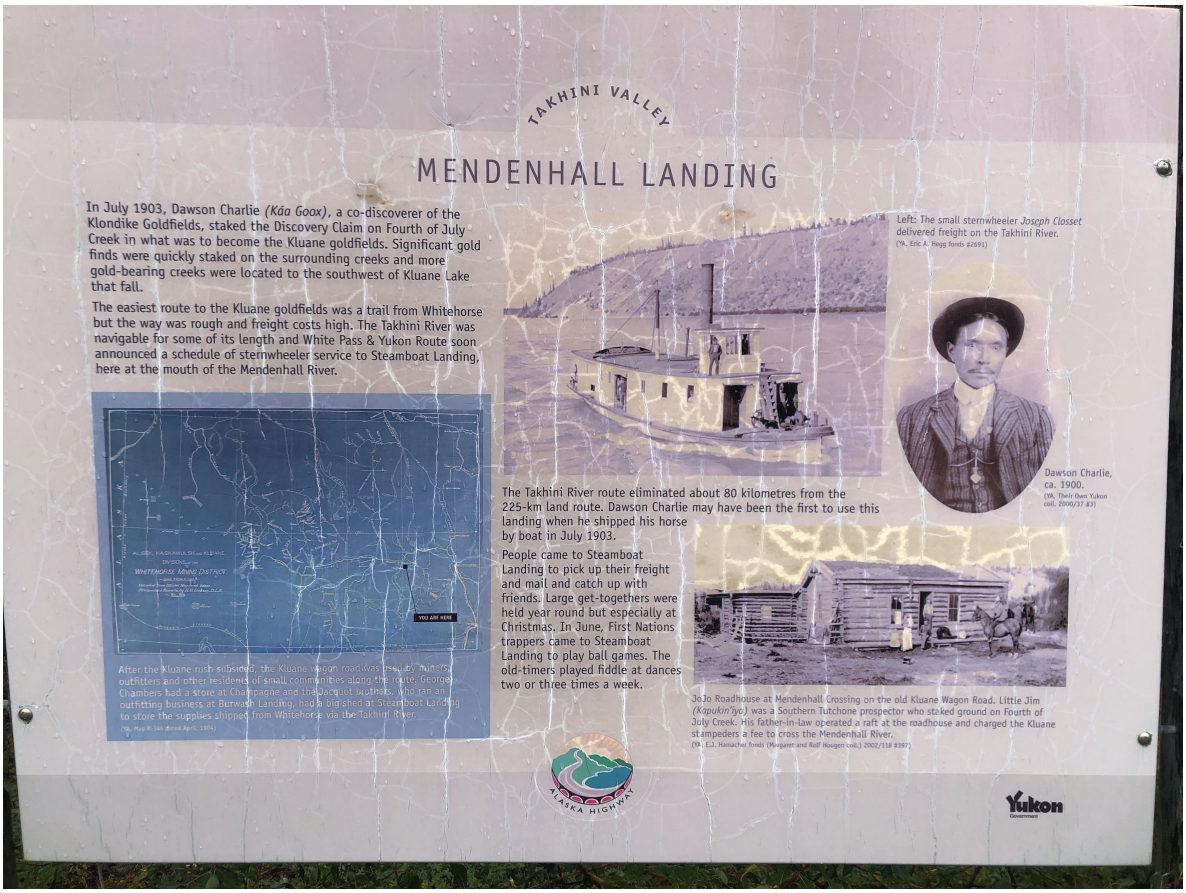


Figure 1.259: Mendenhall Landing

In July 1903, Dawson Charlie (Kao Goax), a co-discoverer of the Klondike Goldfields, staked the Discovery Claim on Fourth of July Creek in what would become the Kluane goldfields. The Takhini River became an important transportation route, and Mendenhall Landing was a stop for a sternwheeler.

1.4.13.3 Hike up the Kuawa Ridge, August 23

The next morning, I continued down the Kusawa Lake road past the Kusawa Lake Campgrounds to the Kujo Ridge trailhead. Upon arriving at the trailhead, I discovered that I hadn't closed the compartment where we stored our boots properly, and one of my boots had fallen out. I immediately returned the way I came and was lucky to find the boot in the middle of the dirt road after 15 minutes. What a relief!



Figure 1.260: View over the northern Kusawa Lake, with Mt. Vanier in the background.



Figure 1.261: View over the southern Kusawa Lake, from the Kuwaridge.



Figure 1.262: On the saddle under Mt. JoJoS2.



Figure 1.263: Westerly view towards Jo-Jo lake.

While I was taking a break on the saddle, a helicopter came to pick up two hikers or explorers who had come down from the southern boundary of the saddle.



Figure 1.264: Southern end of the saddle.

A group came up the ridge with horses and set up camp.



Figure 1.265: Camp with horses.



Figure 1.266: Camp with horses.

After returning, I camped for the night at the northern end of Kusawa Lake, on a very exposed terrace overlooking the lake.



Figure 1.267: Evening at Kusawa Lake.

1.4.13.4 Mendenhall Landing, August 24



Figure 1.268: Camp at Mendenhall Landing on the Tahkini River.

1.4.13.5 Camping on the hydro corridor north of Mendenhall Landing, August 25–29.

Camp on the hydro corridor.

Having heard faint mating calls from the elk, I was looking for a spot to hopefully see them. I followed a small side road that leads to a communication tower. Susi and I checked this out the first time we traveled to Haines Junction. I followed the overgrown trail we had rejected last time until a turnoff led to the hydro corridor.



Figure 1.269: Camp in the hydro corridor.



Figure 1.270: Overviewing the hydro corridor to the north.

Walking the hydro corridor towards the south around midday on August 26, I found a small herd grazing in the corridor. They slowly moved down the corridor, and I was happy that the wind was coming from them towards me, allowing me to slowly follow them.



Figure 1.271: Elk herd.



Figure 1.272: Elk cow.



Figure 1.273: Elk cow with a radio collar.

After following them for about an hour, they entered the forest and bedded down for a lunch rest. To my surprise, they let me sit nearby, reading my book, until I got too cold to sit still any longer. What an exciting event!



Figure 1.274: Evening view to the south.

Taking advantage of the excellent Wi-Fi connection provided by the nearby communication tower, I enjoyed having a stable phone and internet connection. The next day, I contacted Northern Lite to figure out what could be done about the screws fixing the front legs to the camper. These screws had been rotting out and no longer securely attached the legs to the camper.



Figure 1.275: After 20 years.

To my surprise, I received a quick response explaining the process to replace the internal plywood boards those screws were screwed into, along with an estimate of the time a shop would require. After another conversation with a truck camper maintenance mechanic in Houston, BC, I successfully completed the repair after returning to Lion's Head.

While cooking dinner, I suddenly realized that a group of elk had come from the south, grazing and moving close by the camper.



Figure 1.276: Elks in the evening.

The next morning I woke up to this view.



Figure 1.277: Elks in the morning.

t looked like the whole herd was having “breakfast” around the camper.



Figure 1.278: The guys.

After the morning excitement, I hiked up a hill to the northeast, following ATV trails and doing some bushwalking.



Figure 1.279: Fall colours slowly show up.



Figure 1.280: Evening view to the south.

1.4.14 Part 14 Kluane Lake.

Map link Part 14 Kluane Lake

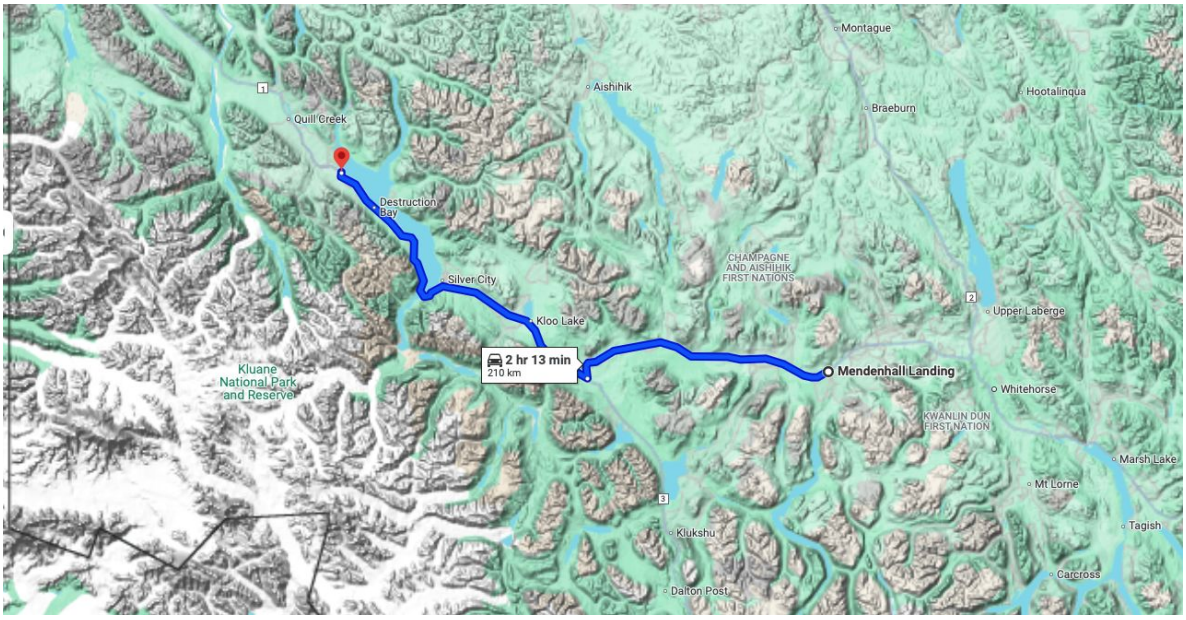


Figure 1.281: Map Part 14 Kluane Lake

On August 29th, I headed out to Haines Junction and continued north on the Alaska Highway towards Bear Creek. In Bear Creek, I turned off the Alaska Highway onto the Alaska Valley Road, which leads to the trailhead of Thunderegg Creek. I attempted this trail but soon discovered that it was completely washed out, and continuing would require crossing a ford—not what I had in mind for this afternoon walk, considering the much cooler temperatures. Instead, I walked a loop in the open meadows and low brush, enjoying the beginning fall colors of the aspen and views of Mount Archibald.



Figure 1.282: Fall colours are starting.



Figure 1.283: Mount Archibald

Afterward, I continued further north to Lake Kluane. Approaching Tech Dhal, or Sheep Mountain, I was lucky to actually see sheep on the mountain slopes—Susi and I had been unsuccessfully looking for them when we hiked here in June.



Figure 1.284: Mountain sheep on Tech Dhal.

Tomorrow, I plan to hike up the Sheep Creek trail again, hoping to experience this beautiful area in the fall colors.

For the night, I stayed at a pullout just north of the National Park boundary. This spot offers great vistas of the Mount Cairnes range, south of Lake Kluane.



Figure 1.285: Evening view of the Mount Cairnes range.

1.4.14.1 Hiked up the Sheep Creek trail on August 30.

Enjoying the wonderful outlooks over the A'ay Chu (Slim River) valley and the patches of bright red leaves, indicating that fall has begun.



Figure 1.286: Slim River valley.



Figure 1.287: Fall colours are so impressive here.



Figure 1.288: View of the range south of Slim river.

A reminder that we are in bear, specifically grizzly bear, country. This sign tells the story of Christine, a woman hiking in this area who encountered a young male grizzly and suffered fatal wounds.



Figure 1.289: In memoriam of Christine Courtney.



Figure 1.290: Fresh snow on Vulcan Mountain.



Figure 1.291: Aspen in the Slim River valley.

1.4.14.2 On Lake Kluane shores.

After returning from the hike, I found a camp spot on the shore of Kluane Lake, just north of the closed Congdon Creek Campground.



Figure 1.292: On the shore of Kluane Lake.

Susi and I have been in Yukon since June 26th, and now, at the end of August, the spring flowers are gone, and fall is clearly approaching. Even after two months, I am still baffled by how almost every day I experience vistas that leave me in stunned silence and awe!



Figure 1.293: Lake Kluane shore.



Figure 1.294: Snowy mountain peaks.



Figure 1.295: Fall at Lake Kluane shores.

The wind picked up over night and the lake got choppy.



Figure 1.296: More snow on the mountains.

It looks like the weather might be changing, with more clouds moving in.



Figure 1.297: Natures colour palette.

1.4.14.3 Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing, September 1.

After a day on the shore of Lake Kluane, I headed north to visit Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing. At a gas station in Destruction Bay, I met an elderly couple from Switzerland with a truck camper. They come most summers to travel through Yukon and store their vehicle for the winter at the truck camper rental Frazerway in Whitehorse.

Destruction Bay, situated near Lake Kluane, was one of the settlements established in 1942 by the U.S. Army Engineers as a tent camp for the construction of the Alaska Highway. After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government assumed that Japan might try to invade Alaska, and it was deemed necessary to build a road to Alaska for military purposes. This camp was destroyed by hurricane-force winds in 1952, hence the name. An article describing the history of the Alaska Highway can be found in The Milepost.



Figure 1.298: Destruction Bay



Figure 1.299: Burwash Landing

Surprise—some Germans must have been here. I found this sign on the porch of the library in the First Nations village.



Figure 1.300: At the library ...



Figure 1.301: Water levels seem to be very low.



Figure 1.302: Not longer in operation.



Figure 1.303: More fall colours

After visiting the museum at Burwash Landing, which displays many animals from the region and hosts the local quilting community, I turned around to spend the night at last night's spot on the shore of Kluane Lake.

1.4.15 Part 15 Whitehorse and Montana Mountain.

Map link Part 15, Montana Mountain

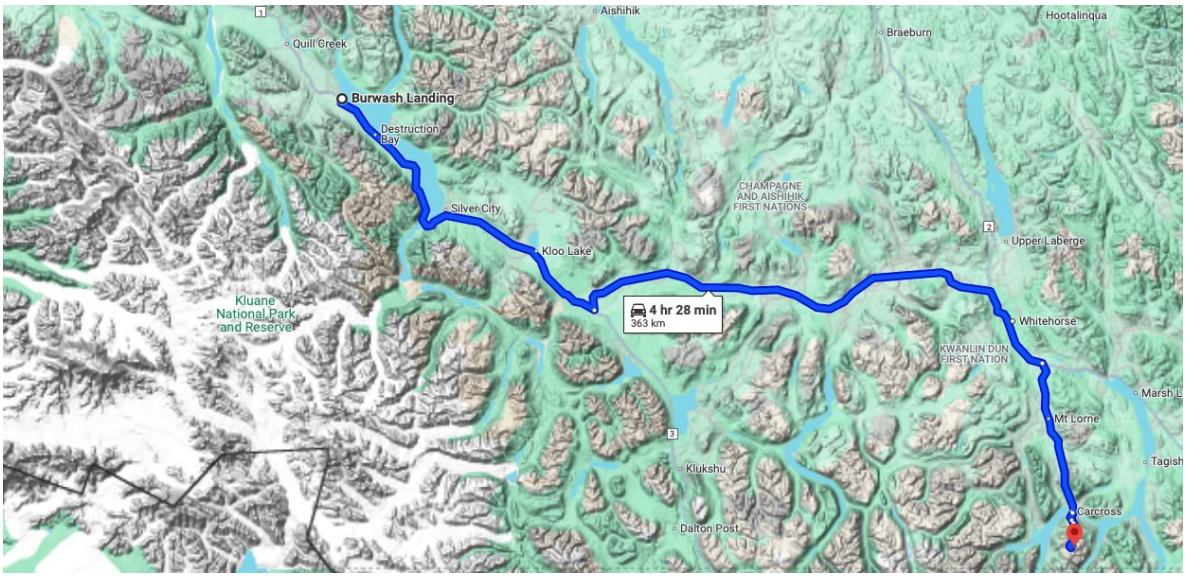


Figure 1.304: Map Part 15 Montana Mountain

On the next day, I returned to Whitehorse.

The following days were spent enjoying the warmth in our preferred coffee shop and at the fantastic local library, searching for literature about the mining history of Carcross and especially Montana Mountain. With the help of a friendly librarian, I found Fractured Veins & Broken Dreams by Murray Lundberg, which I later discovered was also available online. This history of the exploration of Montana Mountain and the surrounding areas was written by a local. I found it fantastic to read—it reminded me a bit of the Jack London stories I loved as a young adult.

On September 4th, I returned to 'our spot' in Carcross to spend the night there before hiking up Montana Mountain the next morning.



Figure 1.305: Evening light at Carcross.



Figure 1.306: Carcross, overlooking Bennett Lake.



Figure 1.307: Montana Mountain

Montana Mountain is about 2000 meters high, and the road is at an elevation of about 700 meters.

I followed the Sam McGee Trail and later the Mountain Hero Trail up to the ridge between Montana Mountain and Mount Matheson.

After gaining significant elevation while walking through the forest, the weather changed as I entered the alpine meadows on the Mountain Hero Trail. High winds drove cold rain, at times interrupted by brief periods of sunshine.



Figure 1.308: Fall colours on the way up.

Some flowering plants are still around.



Figure 1.309: Arrowleaf Senecio

Wonderful rainbows appeared when the rain stopped for a while.



Figure 1.310: Where's the pot of gold? Wait, they've been mining silver here.



Figure 1.311: Looking down over Windy Arm.



Figure 1.312: Another weather is coming in.



Figure 1.313: This boy got cold and wet.

A caribou came over the ridge to visit.



Figure 1.314: And who are you?



Figure 1.315: Toilet activity on the mountain.



Figure 1.316: Mountain goats.

On the return trip, I spotted some Mountain Goats. Mountain goats are not true goats; they are as closely related to muskoxen as they are to goats.

1.4.16 Part 16 Coast Mountains and Rocky Mountains.

Map for Part 16

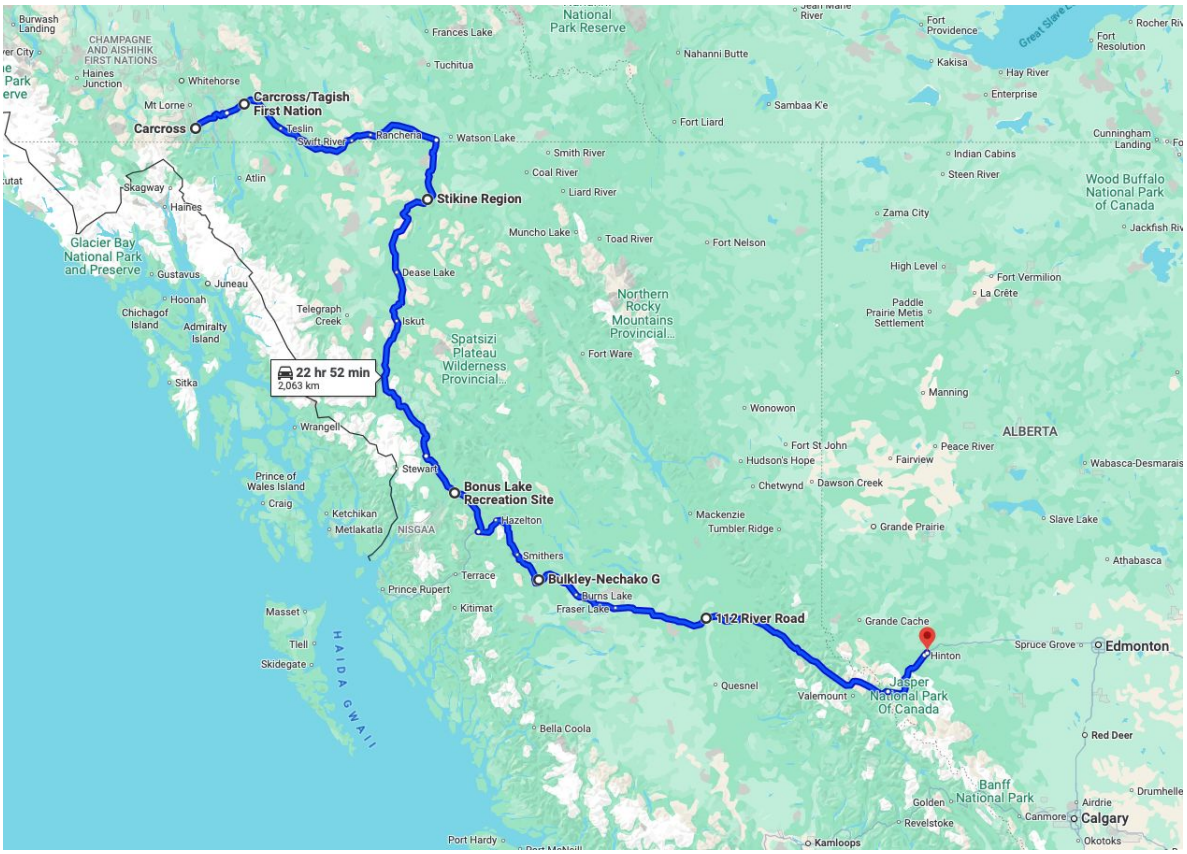


Figure 1.317: Map Part 16

After returning from the hike on Montana Mountain, I started the trip back home, traveling from Carcross towards Tagish and Jakes Corner, where the side road joins the Alaska Highway.

In the evening of September 5th, I camped at Marsh Lake near the Alaska Hwy.



Figure 1.318: Camp at Marsh Lake

The next morning, I continued traveling through the fall landscape along the Alaska Hwy. The hillsides past Rancheria on the Alaska Hwy, a motel with a restaurant and campground on the Rancheria River, displayed spectacular fall colors.



Figure 1.319: Hills near Rancheria, Alaska Hwy.



Figure 1.320: Hills near Rancheria, Alaska Hwy.

Just before the Alaska Hwy crosses the Liard River, the Dease Lake Hwy, also called the Stewart-Cassiar Hwy (BC Hwy 37), turns off to the south. A motel, restaurant, and guesthouse are at the crossing, named Baby Nugget. I visited the restaurant, hoping to get access to their internet, and ordered a nice-looking pie that was served with ice cream. No luck getting internet access, but the pretty good-tasting pie turned out to be the most expensive slice of pie I've ever had.



Figure 1.321: Leaving Yukon.

The Stewart-Cassiar Hwy turned out to be a small, meandering road that winds through hilly country, interrupted by flatter landscapes with lakes and bogs. Many wildfires have impacted the region in the past, and the marks are clearly visible. Depending on how much time has passed, the vegetation is in various stages of recovery. It's fascinating to see this while slowly driving through the landscape.



Figure 1.322: Wildfire History



Figure 1.323: Good Hope Lake



Figure 1.324: Camp near Good Hope Lake, BC.

On a walk the next morning, I found an old cabin situated just above the place where I stayed for the night.



Figure 1.325: Cabin near Good Hope Lake, BC.



Figure 1.326: Cabin near Good Hope Lake, BC.

After the settlement of Dease Lake, the road goes over a pass, where it meets a railway. These higher grounds resemble the Yukon landscapes much more compared to the woodland I've seen since entering BC.



Figure 1.327: Pass past Dease Lake.



Figure 1.328: Camp at Bonus Lake Recreation Site, BC.

Continuing on Hwy 37, the First Nations community of Kitwanga eventually comes into view. This marks the end of Hwy 37. Outside of Kitwanga is the historic site of Battle Hill located.



Figure 1.329: Battle Hill

After Kitwanga, I follow the Yellowhead Hwy towards the east. The next day, I plan to visit the Northern Lite dealer in Houston, BC.

For the night, I find a spot on a hill northeast of Houston in a recreational area with hiking and mountain bike trails.

On the way up, a deer is standing in a clearing, with the skin of its antlers stripped off. It's striking how much more delayed the seasons are compared to Yukon.



Figure 1.330: Deer by the camp on the hill above Houston, BC.



Figure 1.331: Camp at the radio tower above Huston, BC.

At the Northern Lite repair shop, I had a very helpful conversation with a seasoned mechanic that uplifted my confidence to try the required repair myself when I got back home.

From Houston, I continued east towards Prince George. Here, I stayed overnight in Kiwanis Park by the shore of the Nechako River. This shoreline park is dominated by very tall and large poplar trees. A closer look reveals many impressive carvings in the thick bark of the cottonwoods.



Figure 1.332: Bark carvings, Kiwanis Park, Prince George.



Figure 1.333: Bark carvings, Kiwanis Park, Price George.

The next day, I continued east through the intermountain valleys, with the Columbia Range to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east. These conditions create the ideal environment for a rainforest, which otherwise only exists west of the Columbia Range, where the clouds coming over the ocean release their rain. This location is over 800 km east of the ocean. A small patch of ancient old-growth forest has been protected, with some cedars over 1,000 years old. Chun T'oh Whudujut



Figure 1.334: Ancient Forests



Figure 1.335: Ancient Forests



Figure 1.336: Ancient Forests



Figure 1.337: Devils Club, Oplopanax horridus

The spines of the Devil's Club penetrate all but the sturdiest clothing.



Figure 1.338: Devils Club, Oplopanax horridus



Figure 1.339: Ancient Forests

After leaving the ancient trees and heading further east, I reached the Rocky Mountains at Mt. Robson, one of the most impressive peaks.



Figure 1.340: Mt. Robson

From Mt. Robson it wasn't far to Jasper.

Jasper Wildfire

On July 22, 2024, a forest fire started north of the town of Jasper, and on the same day, a fire south of town was reported. Due to the rapid expansion of both fires, the main transcontinental train line near Jasper was shut down. By the evening of July 24, the southern fire had reached the town. By July 25, 25,000 people had evacuated the town, the fire had grown to 32,000 hectares, and about one-third of the buildings in the town were destroyed. On September 7, the fire was under control, having grown to 32,722 hectares in size.

Jasper Forest Fire



Figure 1.341: Jasper after the fire on September 10, 2024.

The evening after I passed Jasper, I learned that the facilities in Jasper had just reopened to the public.

1.4.17 Part 17 Elk Island National Park and Grasslands.

Link to Map 17

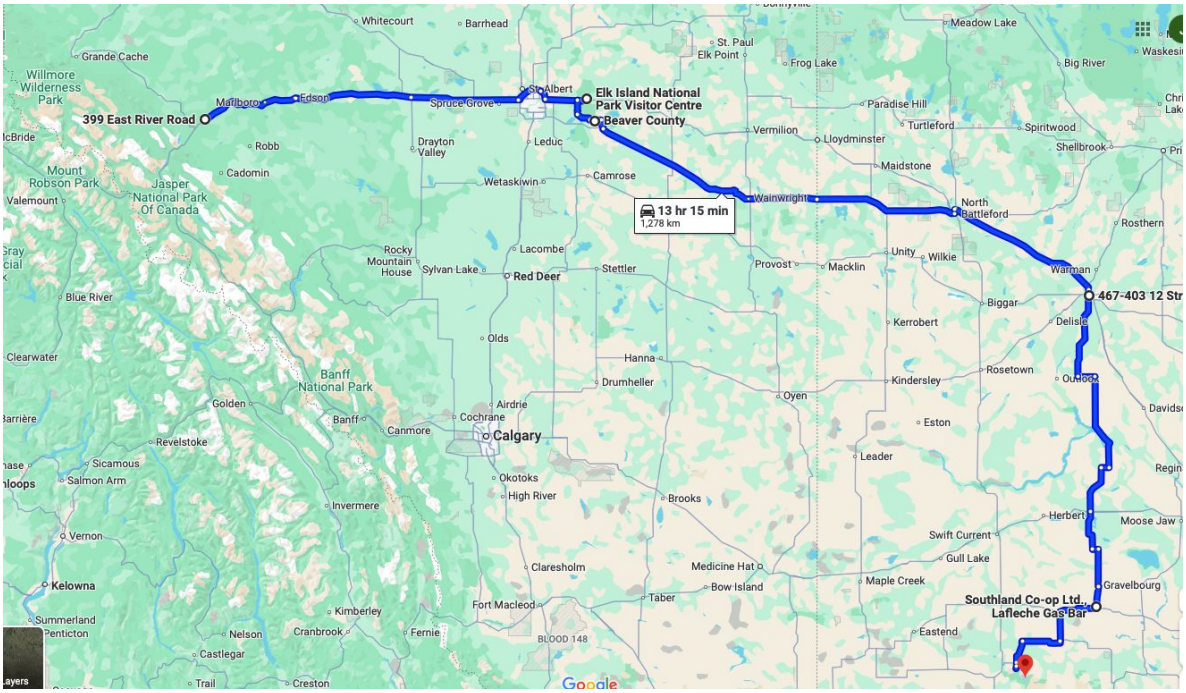


Figure 1.342: Map Part 17.

After spending the night at Mary Reimer Park in Hinton, BC, I was looking forward to the delicious treats the Italian Centre Shop in Edmonton offers. We celebrated Susi's birthday with a cake here on our way over.

After splurging on a delicious sandwich and coffee, and bringing prosciutto for the next lunches, I set off to visit Elk Island National Park just east of Edmonton.

Stretching my legs with an extended afternoon hike, I encountered quite a number of bison. The last one got a little too close for comfort.



Figure 1.343: Last bison on the hike.

Staying overnight just south of the park, at the entrance to a cereal field recently harvested, not far away the farmers continued harvesting until late at night. The next morning, I continued to Saskatoon, where I stayed for two nights before heading to Grasslands National Park in southern Saskatchewan.



Figure 1.344: Evening at 12 Mile Butte.



Figure 1.345: Evening at 12 Mile Butte.

Grasslands NP is one of my favorite places. Visiting it now in its late summer state provided a nice comparison to the early summer when we spent some days here. The flowers are now mostly gone. On one of my walks, I met a woman traveling in a Dodge van. She works as a professional truck and bus driver and explores North America in between gigs.

1.4.18 Part 18 Crossing Manitoba.

Link to Google Maps for Part 18

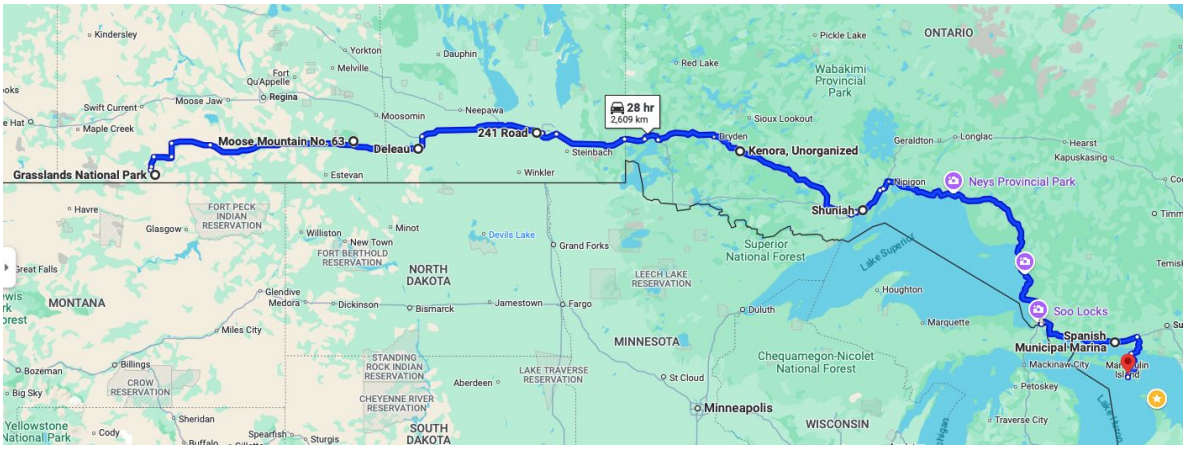


Figure 1.346: Route map for Part 18

After leaving Grasslands and heading towards Carlyle, I was reminded of the very strong winds we experienced on our way west. This time, however, the weather was calm until I approached Winnipeg. I had a wonderful break at the community park in Deleau, enjoying the fun of exploring all the romance novels that populated the book exchange 'birdhouse'.



Figure 1.347: Delau Park

Closer to Winnipeg, it started to rain quite heavily, and the news reported that many villages I had passed through had been flooded."



Figure 1.348: By Beaudry Provincial Park.

The gravel road leading to Beaudry Provincial Park, where I spend the night, was completely waterlogged and difficult to navigate due to all the rain that must have fallen just before I arrived.



Figure 1.349: By Beaudry Provincial Park

More rain overnight made me look forward to reaching asphalt roads again. I spent half the day at the impressive Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg. While entering the museum early in the morning, I passed Wab Kinew on my way in, as he was just walking out to his car.



Figure 1.350: By Beaudry Provincial Park.

Leaving Winnipeg, the weather got increasingly unsettled with wild cloud formations jetting across the sky. On the radio, they talked about the possibility of tornado touchdowns and funnel clouds, but I didn't experience either.

Reaching Thunder Bay, the excellent public RV water and wastewater station was very welcome! On the way out of Thunder Bay, I was wondering why the right side of the highway was lined with transport trucks for many kilometers until I came to a police stop. The highway towards Sault Ste. Marie was closed in both directions, with no bypass available. The police estimated it would take 12-24 hours before the road would open again.

Getting off the highway, most RVs went to the nearby KOA campground, which had a long line waiting to enter. Following a small road near the Lake Superior shore, I ended up at MacKenzie Point Conservation Area. Surprised to see people swimming in Lake Superior, I was happy to follow their example and was surprised at how warm the water was.



Figure 1.351: MacKenzie Point Conservation Area.

With no other options available, I stayed overnight and was very happy that nobody complained.

The trip along the shore of Lake Superior is always exciting with all the great vistas.

The last night of this trip, I stayed in the marina by Spanish, near the residential school ruins.



Figure 1.352: Spanish Marina

The next day, I was lucky to get an early ferry and was happy to arrive back home in the afternoon.

We started on May 28 and I came home on September 20th. What a beautiful trip this was! It is incredible to be able to live in a country where we can travel 18,322 km, never stay on a campground, and meet so many friendly and supportive people across many provinces and territories.



Figure 1.353: Cheers with Yukon beer!