

SPRING 2007

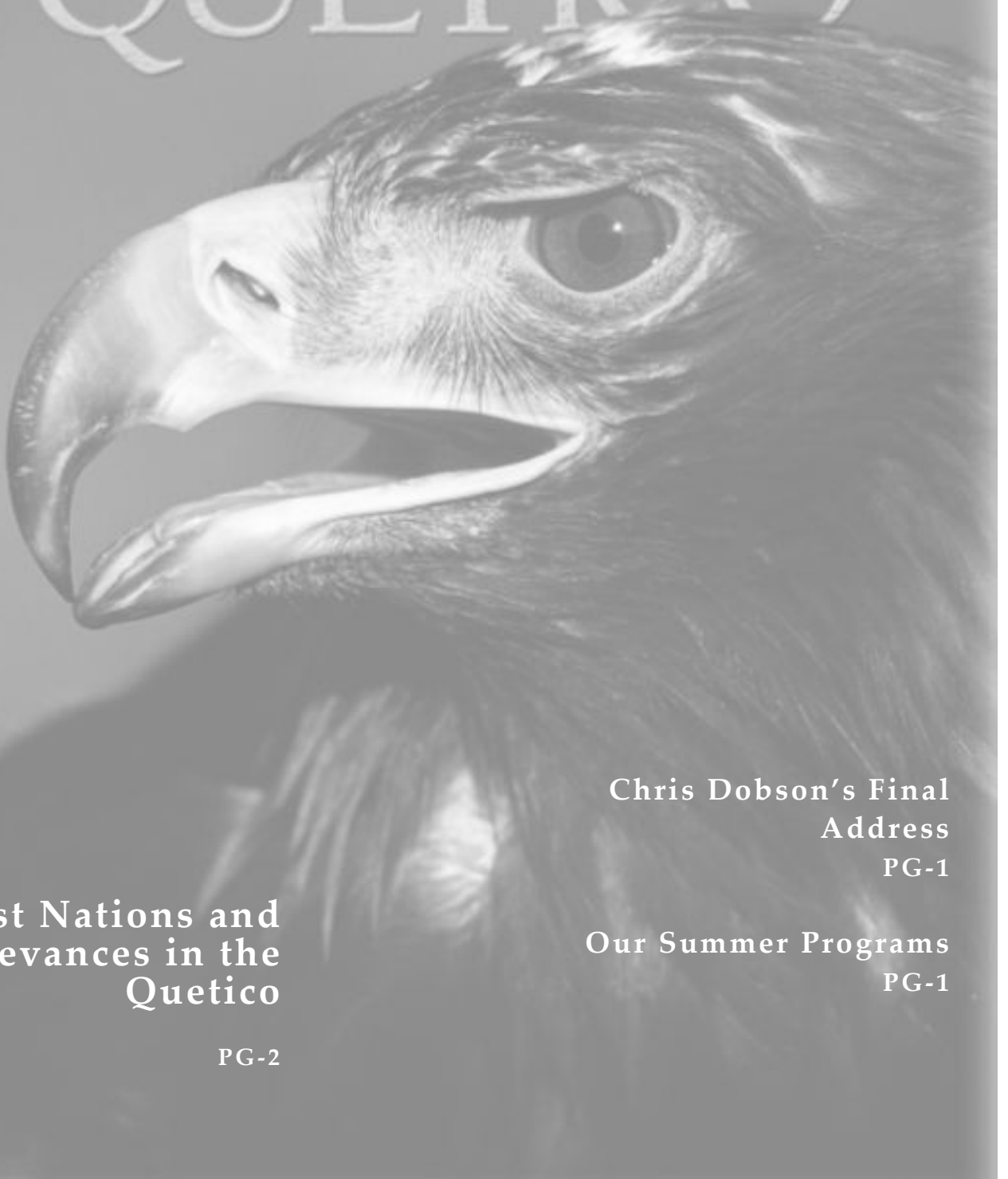
THE QUETICO

First Nations and
Grievances in the
Quetico

PG-2

Chris Dobson's Final
Address
PG-1

Our Summer Programs
PG-1



CHAIR'S CORNER

BY

Chris Dobson, Chair, The Quetico Foundation

This February the Foundation held its second strategic planning review. Our Strategic Plan goes right to the heart of the Foundation and defines the purpose of its existence. It is put together by all of our Trustees who attend the planning meeting or who share their ideas with us in other ways. The first such meeting was in 2002 under the Chair of Tanny Wells. The principle question then was whether the Foundation should concentrate its energies and resources exclusively on Quetico or should we take some of the ideas gained through our work in Quetico and promote them for application to other Provincial Parks. At that meeting consensus was reached that while we might cooperate with other Parks in Ontario, our number one job was Quetico. This was good guidance and has greatly helped the Foundation stay focused on Quetico Provincial Park.

This year our Strategic Plan review was chaired by Cam Clark. Cam is a member of the Foundation's Executive Committee with responsibilities for keeping the Foundation in close touch with the operations and staff of the Park as well as with other related activities and organizations in Northwestern Ontario and Minnesota. Prior to his time with the Foundation, he was also Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, so he knows how to listen to large groups of people who hold strong opinions. This made him an ideal Chair.

The most significant conclusion that came out of this year's strategic planning review was that we had it right at the previous planning meeting in 2002... focus on helping Quetico and tailor our programs for the benefit of the Park.

That is exactly what we will be doing this summer and into the future with five different programs running simultaneously funded by the Foundation, either in the scientific research area or in creating greater awareness and appreciation of the Park.

This will be my last time writing the Chair's report. Fraser Reeves will become our new incoming Chair at the annual meeting May 16th and I want to take this opportunity to wish him the best of luck. Finally I want to thank all of those who have helped and encouraged me during my two years as Chair, particularly our Executive Director Glenda McLachlan!

OUR 2007 SUMMER PROGRAMS

Our **Summer Student Research Program** will be operating for the twelfth consecutive summer, employing seven university, college and high schools students from the local community, other parts of the province and the United States. They will spend the summer in the Park completing the collection of research data pertaining to the natural history, fire history and vegetative ecology of the Park.

Our **Biology Internship Program** is in its second year, thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of the late Margery J. Warren. This Program supports the hiring of a senior university student, studying to pursue a career in biological or ecological sciences, to work as an assistant to the Park Biologist, gaining valuable experience in their field while furthering the research capacity within the Park.

The **Ridley Wilderness Youth Program** will be launched this August with the arrival in Quetico Park of 14 students enrolled in an outdoor leadership/environmental education course at Agincourt Collegiate in Toronto, for a week long canoe trip in the Park. This program will expose new Canadian youth, our future political, business and community leaders, to the value of the Canadian wilderness, such that their future decisions will ensure the protection of wilderness as we know it today, for our future generations.

The **Artist in Residence Program** operating in partnership with the Park and other interested organizations will run as a pilot program this summer under the careful management of the Quetico Park staff. It is expected that in 2008 a full roster of artists expressive in a variety of media, will take advantage of the opportunity to create within the Park for extended periods of time, utilizing the 'artists cabin' renovated with the support of the Quetico Foundation as their base. It is expected that this program will help to broaden the exposure and awareness of the Park and the beauty of its wilderness elements as depicted through a variety of artistic media.

The **Shan Walshe Memorial Bursary** is awarded to high school students at high schools in Atikokan and Lac La Croix each year who are continuing their education in an environmental field of study. Shan Walshe was a highly respected naturalist and educator in the Park for many years and left a long legacy in wilderness ecology and protection within the Park.

THE QUETICO' includes materials from both Foundation Trustees and outside contributors. We carefully edit our materials, and regret any reference printed in 'THE QUETICO' that may be interpreted in such a way as to offend or discredit anyone, as it is sincerely not our intent.

QUETICO PARK

First Nations & Grievances in The Quetico

The Ontario Crown Lands Department set aside some 405,000 hectares of prime pine timberland as the Quetico Forest Reserve in April 1909. At the time, Aubrey White, the Deputy Minister of lands, forests and mines noted that while there were two First Nations reserves in the territory, “the Indians would not be interfered with.” Beyond protecting the pine, the Quetico Forest Reserve was also supposed to provide protection for the big-game and fur-bearing animals of the region. Regrettably, over the next few years, poaching occurred on a massive scale. Construction camps for the Canadian Northern Railway, as well as various lumber camps ruthlessly exploited the fish and game resources of the reserve to feed their workers. A single small lumber camp alone required some 50-100 moose a season. Lands and Forests officials soon realized that Quetico would have to be given park status as a measure to protect the game. As it happened, Quetico had the distinction of being the first park to be created under the Provincial Parks Act of 1913.

Sadly, Aubrey White’s statement that “the Indians would not be interfered with” proved to be tragically wrong. The small Sturgeon Lake Ojibway band of Reserve 24C, located within the forest reserve, was affected quickly, and negatively. In the late autumn of 1910, necessity obliged band members to leave their reserve in search of a winter supply of game. They established a seasonal encampment in the Hunter’s Island section of the Quetico forest reserve. Although the band members had surrendered the area in question under Treaty No. 3 (1873), they had been assured that the lands would not be wanted for a long time, and that they would be able to exercise their hunting, fishing and trapping rights in the region. It is unclear whether this isolated band even realized that the forest reserve had been established.

All the same, provincial officials forced the band to break camp in December 1910. Leo Chosa, the operator of a trading post on Basswood Lake, considered the decision to be cruel and callous. “What are to become of those Indians?” he asked. “You cannot annihilate them ...their reservation at present cannot support them ... I doubt very much that there exist today a civilized people under the sun that would uphold and compel its officers to enforce a law that would deprive a man of his home and throw his wife and little ones on the mercies of a northern winter to endure the tortures that the

Indians in question will have to undergo if they are compelled to move from Hunter’s Island this winter.” The enforced removal resulted in the dispersal of the Sturgeon Lake people. Lacking a sufficient food supply to survive the winter, they sought refuge with other Ojibway communities, particularly with the Lac la Croix band, whose reserve was located at the southwest corner of the forest reserve on the Minnesota border.

Following the creation of Quetico Provincial Park in 1913, the Ojibways’ litany of woe continued. They were arrested for trapping, hunting and fishing in the park and their access to sacred ceremonial sites was restricted. In 1915, without consultation with the survivors of the Sturgeon Lake band, the federal and Ontario governments declared Reserve 24C abandoned.

These events came back to torment the government of Ontario. In the last quarter of the twentieth century the members of the Lac la Croix First Nation, who consider themselves to be related to and descendants of the Sturgeon Lake Ojibway, demanded redress of their two long-standing grievances against the province—the cancellation of Reserve 24C, and the effective extinction of the Treaty Rights of the Lac la Croix Ojibway, due to the creation of Quetico Provincial Park on their traditional lands. On June 3, 1991, Minister of Natural Resources C.J. (Bud) Wildman made an historic and unprecedented act of atonement, by apologizing in the Ontario legislature for the treatment meted out to the Lac la Croix Ojibway, and promising that the government would provide immediate and long-term assistance to improve the economic and social conditions of the band.

Wildman also responded decisively to the band’s request that the government amend the Quetico Management Plan, so as to allow mechanized boat and canoe access to additional waters in the Wilderness Park, for the purpose of guiding, and to permit the operation and landing of aircraft on additional lakes.

Since that time, park administrators and politicians have endeavored to harmonize aboriginal rights and park policy in the Quetico (and, indeed, in all provincial wilderness parks), and to engage First Nation peoples more directly in the planning, management and operation of our parks.

Dr. Gerald Killan, Trustee

Superintendent’s Musings

Quetico Park will celebrate its 100th Birthday in 2009. The Quetico Foundation, or the organizations which led to the formation of the Foundation, have been active for most of that period. It is understandable that in a parliamentary system the issues which can be dealt with inside of the normal 5 year electoral cycle receive most attention. Short-term pain for long term gain can be a challenge because electoral judgements are often based upon the short term. The current climate change debates wrestle with this issue.

A 100th anniversary predictably raises questions of what will/should Quetico be like 100 years from now. The key tool used to shape long term direction for the park’s future is the management plan. Quetico’s long term management plan is undergoing a major review. The last full plan was done in 1977 with significant input from the Quetico Foundation. The planning process involves several pre-defined steps and various review and comment phases. Anyone can register to get updates on the plan’s development by sending an e-mail request to queticoplan@ontario.ca.

In the summer of 2007 the Background Information portion of the plan will be out for public review. This summarizes everything we know about the park as well as the major issues which need to be subsequently addressed. The Quetico Foundation can play a crucial role in setting the long term direction for the park. One hundred years from now may seem like an impossibly long context but it represents only the adolescence of a single lakeside Pine.

Robin Reilly, Quetico Park Superintendent

CANOE DAY 2007

In thanks to Grand Experiences of Paris Ontario, nineteen canoes of Trustees, Trustees Emeritus, and friends and acquaintances of the Quetico Foundation enjoyed a long and at times not so leisurely paddle down the Grand River from Paris to Brantford on Saturday April 28th for our 6th Annual Quetico Foundation Canoe Day! The cool air and occasional drizzle did not deter even the least experienced of the hearty group, who meandered their way through the rural Carolinian forest characteristic of the banks of the Grand River, eyeing blue herons, including an ominous nesting site, the occasional rodent and of course a proliferation of fisherman casting for speckled trout. The fast water, frequent rocks, strong current and the famous 'bloop' offered a little excitement from time to time along the route, but everyone managed to stay upright and for the most part relatively dry. The one portage on route around a small dam was an easy carry and added a flavour of the Quetico wilderness canoeing experience we all love and long for! Next year we will tackle another stretch of the Grand- from somewhere to somewhere- and we hope you'll be able to come along for the ride, the excitement and maybe another portage! Look for the date at the end of April or early in May in our fall newsletter or on our website!

It's a fun way to support the work that we do and wet your appetite for a summer of paddling adventures!

2007 Annual Dinner

As this newsletter goes to print, we are once again beginning to prepare for our Annual Dinner on October 17th in Toronto at the newly located Ontario Club, now at 1 King Street West. Last year over 100 distinguished guests experienced a number of 'virtual' adventures with Wendy Grater, Owner, Black Feather Wilderness Adventure Company, while testing their luck for a Langford Canoe or their pocket book for a wilderness adventure holidays- all in support of our Summer Student Research Program. Our 2007 dinner's mystery speaker is guaranteed to be riveting, the auction items enticing and the canoe the perfect compliment to your collection. Mark the date on our calendar and we look forward to seeing you there!

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If you are interested in any of our programs, have concerns regarding the Park that you would like to share, or would like to support or become involved with the Quetico Foundation, please call us or email us at your convenience.

If you would prefer to receive our materials electronically, please let us know.

And don't forget to keep abreast of our activities on our website!



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Charitable Registration # 119252427RR0001