

# January 2014 Bowron Lake Trip Report

## Day 1 January 30

Started 10:30 am

Finished 4:55 pm Lost our light about 5 min. after that

Bowron Lake to river cabin

-9<sup>0</sup> C

Sunny day and the trip started out good. Stopped for lunch at 1pm just after we entered the marsh area. As we went thru the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain, the temperature felt like it dropped 10<sup>0</sup>. We went to cross the river and Wes went thru just at the edge of the far shore. He then went thru again coming back, again right at shore about 2 ft from the old path.

It took Wes some time to get changed and warmed up. Made our way down to the river via following the edge of Sugar Loaf Mountain this time and stayed dry. Open water at the crossing to the river cabin so we had to backtrack and cross the river 3 more times to get to the cabin. A hard pull to get the sleds up the bank.

That first day we realized that we had too much weight on the sleds and pulling so hard made us sweat too much.

Lessons for the day: eat more, drink more, less weight on the sled and learn how to stop water from freezing. We also over estimated our speeds and really only did around 1 mph.

-15<sup>0</sup> C overnight, -4<sup>0</sup> in the cabin

## Day 2

Start 11:05 am

Finish 3:00 pm

River Cabin to Pat's Point cabin

-10<sup>0</sup> C during the day

We took too long to pack and get underway. Sunny day. Slow start as we had to find the trail around the island. We are walking on 3" of snow over a hard crust breaking thru sometimes.

We saw two moose on Swan Lake by the Pavich Island and then two more just south of Pat's Point just as we got there.

The Cabin did not warm up to much as we were trying to dry our clothes,  $-2^{\circ}$  to  $+2^{\circ}$  C

Overnight,  $-13^{\circ}$  C in the cabin and  $-23^{\circ}$  C outside.

### Day 3

High today  $-10^{\circ}$  C

We stayed around Pat's Point for the day.

Sunny in the morning and then it clouded over. We cut and split lots of wood for the fire and to leave a supply for the next group.

We took time to get all our boots dried out, too much moisture. We have learned to use vapor barriers for our sleeping bags and our boots but you should change your socks halfway thru the day to not get cold feet.

We walked down Spectacle Lake and saw a wolf cross east to west down by the sand bar, look around and then went back across the lake. We walked to the Ranger Cabin and what a nice place.

At 6:30 pm the clouds had cleared and the temp was  $-10^{\circ}$  C

$-10^{\circ}$  C overnight in the cabin and  $-23^{\circ}$  C outside.

### Day 4

Start 10:05 am

Finish 2:25pm

Pat's Point to River Cabin

$-10^{\circ}$  C on the trail

Cloudy, fog to start but it cleared up and was a very nice sunny day. We are in better shape today and made much better time, about 1.8 mph. On day One, we walked for 10 min. and took a break, now we can go 20 to 30 min.

Leaving Pat's Point to the bottom end of Pavich Is. 1.72 mi. we took 42 min = 2.45 mph

Good travelling over our old track.

$-11^{\circ}$  C in the cabin and  $-26^{\circ}$  C outside

## Day 5

Start 9:20am

Finish 12:35pm

-16°C on the trail and never warmed up.

We had our old track to follow so things went well. River crossings were good and we stayed along the side of Sugarloaf till on Bowron Lake.

Speed was just under 2 mph and unless you had a very light sled, that speed would not change.

Got back to the truck by 12:55 and got the generator going to power the dual block heaters on the big old diesel.

### Notes:

-8 hours run time on a propane bottle for the lantern, not long when the box says 18.

-Bring a pillow case along and put your jacket in it to make a pillow and then in the morning the jacket is right there and somewhat warm to put on right away.

-Bring 3 changes of long johns along to cycle, lots of socks

-Bring lightweight camp boots or my muckalucks and use plastic bags to do outside.

-Mark map where wood lots are but more than likely not much help.

-Bring paper towel, not cloth towel, too hard to clean

-The vapor barrier in the sleeping bag worked very well and kept our bedding dry, a bit of a learning curve on how to use it.

-Bring a snow bucket, a milk jug cut down.

-Electrolytes, not Gatorade, Unnu from MEC

-hip pad for bed

-a better saw for firewood, as cutting wood is a problem and not too much around that is useable.

-bring vapor barrier gloves (Subway sandwich gloves) for your mitts as your mitts get wet from sweat

-4 pair of Pall bearer gloves to absorb moisture from hands.

#### Things not to bring

- Only one burner stove, not two
- machete
- rubber boots
- spare poles for sled
- water pump
- spare snow shoes
- one shovel, not two
- coffee perk, instant only
- no extra bungees(heavy)
- No tent if by myself, dig a quincy.
- Salt and pepper, never used it once on the food.

#### Things to do to Lighten the Load

- Sled load needs to be 40 to 50 lbs. I think to make it workable.
- different open cell pad
- cook stove
- spare batteries
- Different sheet for sleeping bag, silk maybe, not heavy flannel.
- Lighter tent or no tent
- Smaller bible, New Testament only
- Different lantern and gas
- Spoon only, never used the knife and fork

### What we did bring

- Axe and machete
- Tent
- Closed cell pad
- Open cell pad
- -30<sup>0</sup> C sleeping bag with inner flannel sheet and vapor barrier liner.
- Propane stove (two, only needed one) and lantern with six bottles of propane and we used 4 ½.
- Two pots which worked well to melt snow
- Lots of different clothes, layers, bed clothes including a hoody which worked well
- Vapor barriers for our boots which kept our boots dry
- Freeze dried food and oil, canola, to add to the food
- Chocolate bars and trail mix for snacks.
- Oatmeal and freeze dried for breakfast
- Peanut butter
- Electrolytes
- Vitamins, first aid kit, toilet paper
- Fire starter, matches and lighters
- Camera, SPOT, GPS, maps, spare batteries
- Ski pants
- Sunglasses and goggles
- Spare poles for the sleds(not next time)

### Epilogue

We packed too heavy. The cold was not the problem, sweat was (too heavy a load) and freezing drinking water.

I am going to look into back country skis (waxless, fishscale) to aid in the travel time and will lighten the load to 40 lbs or so. Also, do not keep adding items at the last minute as that weight adds up to fast.

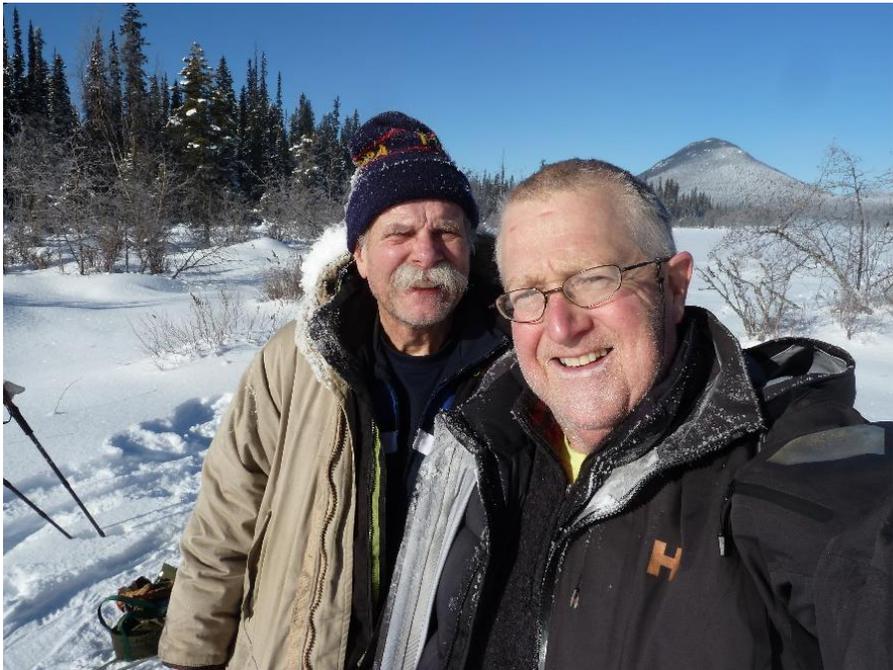
The trip did not go as planned but we learned a lot so that next year we can do it better. The weather was great, the team work with Wes was great.

Thank you to Sandy and Dick at Bear River Mercantile [www.bowronlake.com](http://www.bowronlake.com) for their help and hospitality. Also to Dave Jorgensen at White Gold Adventures [www.whitegold.ca](http://www.whitegold.ca) for his input.



The view from the River  
Cabin on Bowron River.  
Barry Stanley Photo  
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Self Portrait of Barry and  
Wes on Bowron Lake  
winter trip. Barry Stanley  
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