

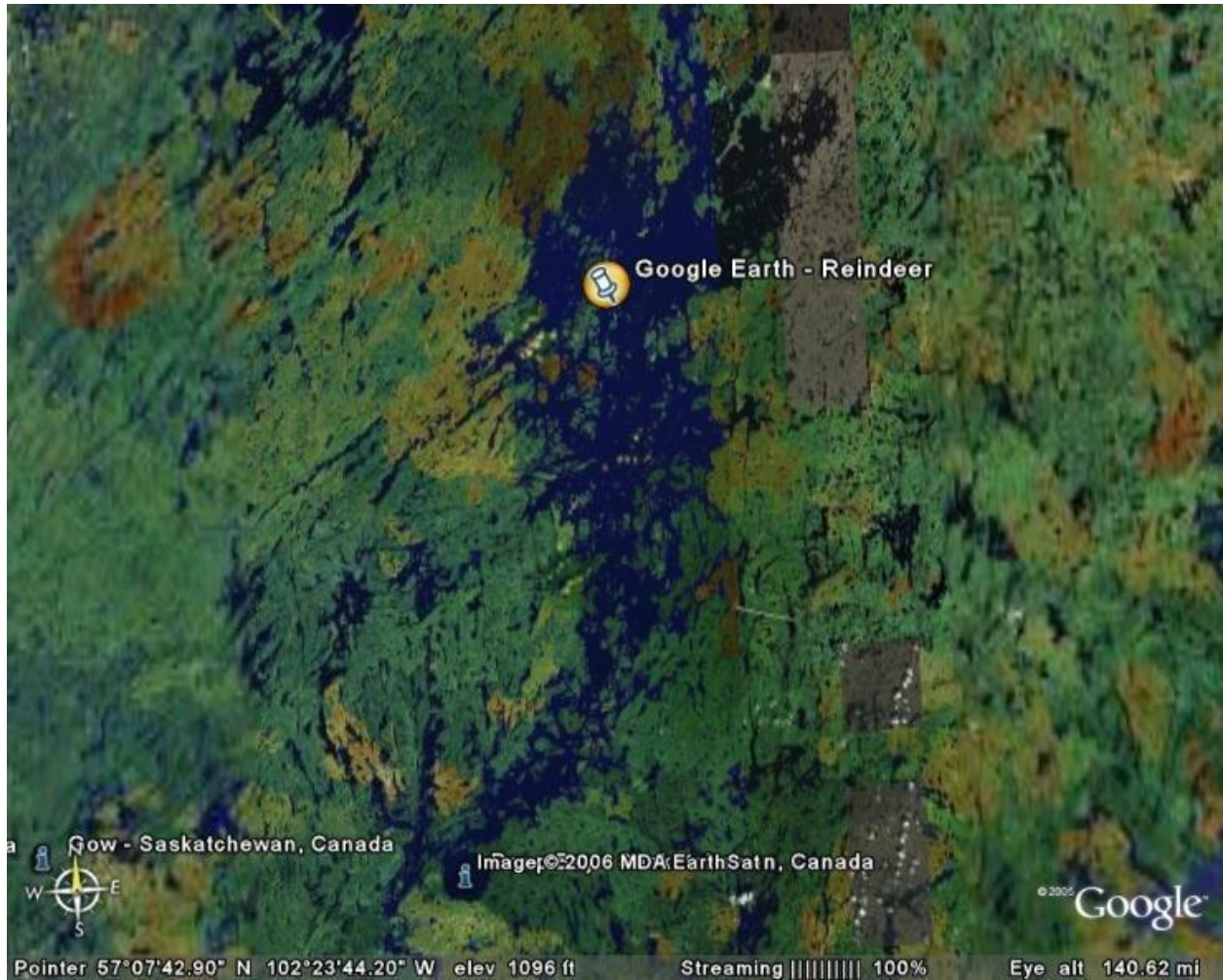
**My 40th and Laziest Canoe Expedition—
Reindeer Lake
July 15-30, 2017**



Gone are the daze of boot camp trips like the Near Death Experience. We're rusting into our golden years. For the 40th canoe trip I've organized since 1976 I planned the laziest trip ever—the Lazy 8 Brigade.



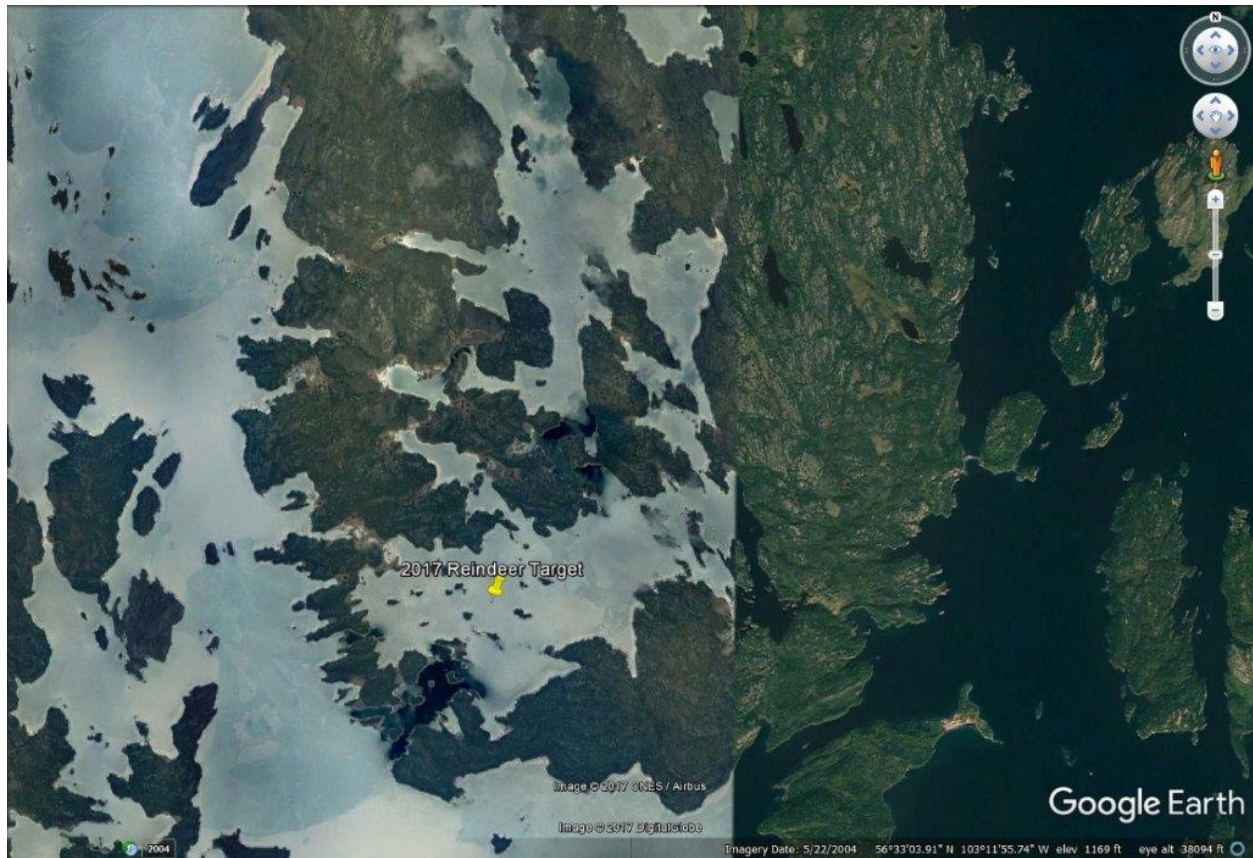
Back to the most beautiful lake in the world—Reindeer—way up in the top right of the 1225k/761m high province. My sixth time here. The bottom half of Saskatchewan is boring farmland; the north half gorgeous wilderness with 100,000 pristine lakes and rivers.



Canada's 9th and Saskatchewan's 3rd largest is 230k/140m long.



But we only did the lower 40k/25m, out of Southend at the, guess what, south end of the lake.



On the top, this sheltered bay with a multitude of islands fired my curiosity. The plan was to find a beautiful island, camp for a week, and do day paddles.



But tragedy slipped by first. The second full day—after an enormous storm that created plow winds smashing portages upstream from Missinipe to Black Bear Island Lake—our medical officer dislocated an ankle. While walking to his yellow canoe to untie it he stepped on the wet angled root behind him (in brown jacket) and—slipped!



Wisely I never head north without packing an extra spare tire *and* an extra doctor, so wife Dr. Tiny Tush popped it back in place and, with nurse Su, splinted it. Fortunately also we were only two miles from launch so they paddled back to civilization. After buying a new Kevlar canoe and looking forward to test paddling it on this trip....



So the Lazy 8 were down to the Lazy 6. We paddled by the thunderbird site, the most interesting in the province. With water 3-4 feet/meter plus higher than the levels on the Explorers Club Lost Pictograph Expedition. Crazy high. The storm had raised the lake level 2-3inches/50-75cm in one day! <http://www.jasonschoonover.com/2016/10/the-lost-pictography-expedition/>







Almost immediately we found a 5-star site amongst the reindeer moss.









And settled in for a week of whispering pines, fluttering birch, songbirds, Arctic terns and natural beauty.



Fishing was great and 88-year-old Capt. Hook, who had flown his Skyhawk out from Massachusetts for our 10th paddle together, outfished us all. While recovering from a broken hip suffered while skiing in March. Following breaking his neck last year horse jumping. I fully expect his parachute not to open next year.



My Top Secret Fish Batter of equal portions of dried dill, rye flour, garlic powder and Lowrey's Lemon Pepper is always a hit. Slow fried in butter over coals.



That and my venison stew and golden bannock. Five hours to prep.



Exploring Nature. I'm sure you know that jack pine can't reseed without forest fires to open the cones. Here's a progression opening from right to left.



Fellow Explorers Club member and entomologist Dan Johnson at the U. of Lethbridge IDed this Jurassic little beast as a Diving Beetle larva, genus *Dytiscus*. Mean looking mandibles.



As usual, it was mostly an Explorers Club brigade. Great to have resource friends in all theologies.



Common in the north are (Spruce) Sawyer Beetles.



Dan also IDed these as Boreal Chorus Frog eggs.



Paradise Lost? This mushroom cloud had me thinking, “Oh no, either that idiot Trump or that other nut job Jung On has punched the red button.” But then maybe Gary Larson has the right attitude....



“I’ll tell you what this means, Norm - - no size restrictions and screw the limit.”



Then we were slammed by a second massive storm. They're not unusual here where the lakes create a mini-climate, and a highly volatile one that is part of the magnificence. You've never heard thunder until you hear it up here shaking the landscape.



While we were dry and warm, Capt. Hook's piece-of-crap tent virtually collapsed in the gale and water blasted inside under the rinky-dink rain fly. With everything soaked, he was forced to take shelter for the night with Chicken Legs and Yoko.



Our Kevlar rain gauge read 30-gallons the next day when the sun returned. The lake was up another couple of inches.



Baritone voiced retired CBC-TV weatherman Deep Throat with another jack caught off shore at another site we camped paddling in and out.



A local Cree, Terry, dropped by for a friendly, interesting chat. It's been a good year for lake trout in the range of 45-55 pounds/20-25kg, he says. They're currently at the 60 foot/18m level.





Getting the J stroke down. I'm humbled that it's named after me.



This mystery object drifted in from afar, causing speculation. I guessed it to be an alien craft that was going to beam us aboard, tie us down and do sexual experiments. I was hugely disappointed when it turned out to be a beach ball.



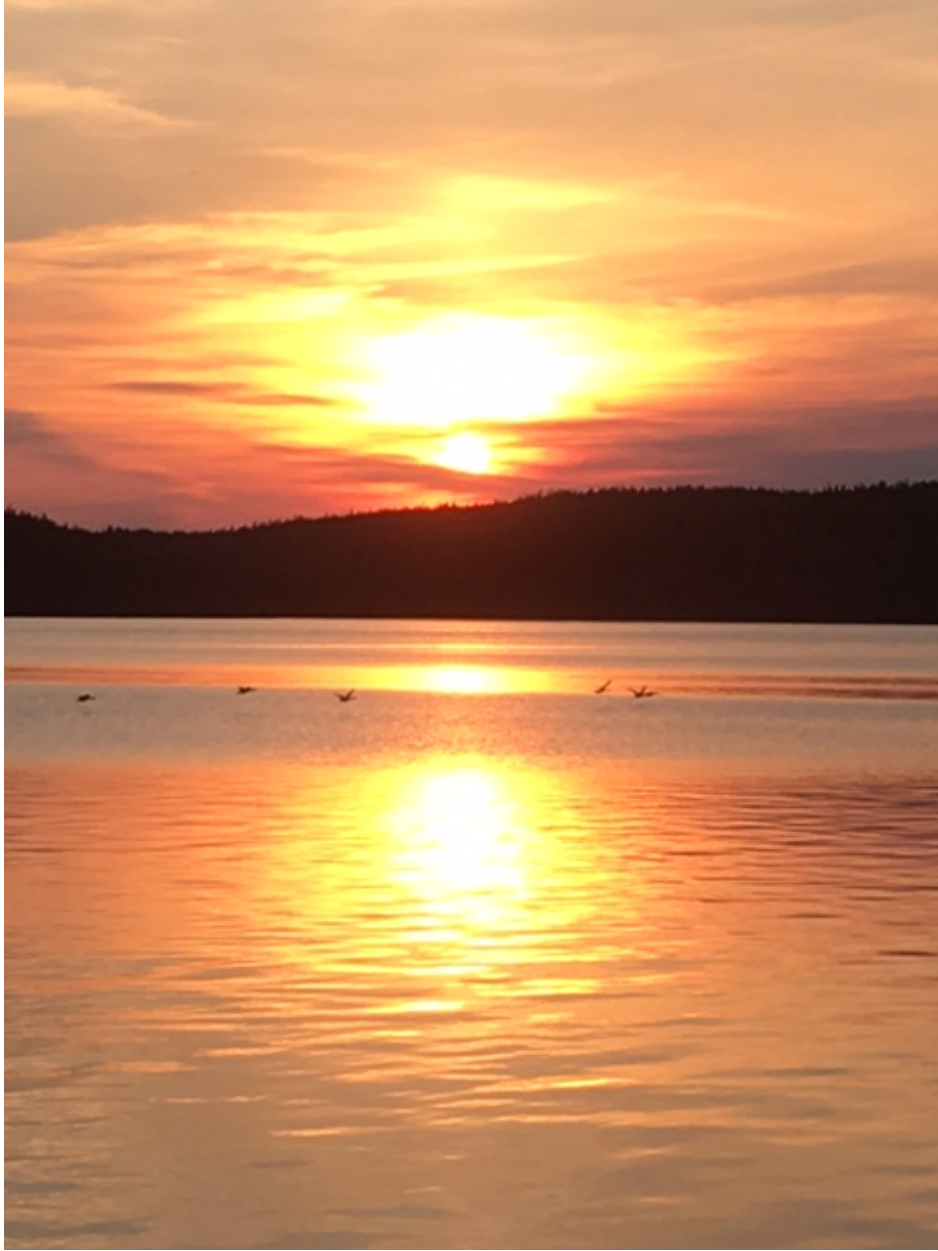


It's Canadian Shield country, 1.7-2.2 billion-year-old (and over four further north) foundation rock carved into magnificent forms by two-mile-thick glaciers during the ice ages.





Boring class picture of the Lazy 8...er...6 Brigade: Capt. Twat, Capt. Hook, Chicken Legs, Good Yoko, The Dragon Lady and Deep Throat.



Love this lake. We'll be back!

