

2009 Turnbull Family Adventure Challenge Winners



Unforgettable

What do you get when you add the following together?

A group of adventure-seeking Scouts and leaders

Wanting to do something BIG

Two years of trip planning

Several 10 km training hikes (with an increasing level of exertion)

Years of Scouting skills and experience

To follow No Trace Camping protocols

Many hours of fundraising

Team building exercises

200 dehydrated apples

And a generous donation from The Turnbull Family?

Answer: A 15 day, unforgettable journey and adventure in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland!

In August 2009, the 1st Kanata Beaverbrook Troop undertook a 15 day expedition to western Newfoundland. The main goal of the trip was to tackle a five day wilderness backpacking hike along the Long Range Mountain Traverse and climb Gros Morne Mountain. Ten Scouts, leaders and parents traveled to Newfoundland for an adventure of a lifetime.

The Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland has two world heritage sites; historical importance; geologic beauty and wonder; incredible landscapes; educational significance; and a 35 km wilderness backpacking trail over very rough terrain with at least one 2,200-foot climb.

Since we were traveling to Newfoundland, we decided to visit another UNESCO World Heritage site – the Viking settlement at L'Anse Aux Meadows. And of course – fit in some whale watching.

Gros Morne Park rules dictate that to minimize our impact on the environment we would have to split into two groups. We also had to prove to the Park Wardens that we knew what we were doing. We had to show them (with confidence) that we were able to read and follow a map and use a compass. This was the '**do or fail**' part that would end our wilderness hike before it began if we did not pass the Warden's questions. Each group was given detailed instructions and a VHF Telemetry unit to find them if they didn't return.

Training

Training was a large concern because the youth were aged 11 to 14 and the leaders were... well – not spring chickens. The Scouts improved their skills in camping, cooking, hiking, GPS usage and some First Aid. Three leaders also earned the first part of Wilderness First Aid. To improve our physical conditioning, we hiked trails in Gatineau Park outside Ottawa, biked 40 km and then climbed Mont Tremblant, which is similar in height to Gros Morne. Lightweight equipment and dehydrated foods were organized. Each group brought along a satellite phone; 5 lb First Aid kit; and extra GPS and compasses.

Cost

A major portion of the planning was how to pay for this trip. We estimated the cost for the entire trip would be \$40,000 or ~\$2100 per person. After the trip was completed and all the bills tallied, the final cost came in around \$30,000 or ~\$1700 per person. The major cost of the trip was the plane tickets; 1/3 of the expenses. The rest went towards food, equipment, vehicle rentals, lodging, camp and park fees, and

miscellaneous items such as whale watching and laundry.

One Scout wrote the submission for the Turnbull Family Award Challenge in which 1st Kanata received a generous contribution from them towards the adventure.

The Trip

Day 1: Our flight from Ottawa to Toronto to Deer Lake, NL was great. No lost equipment or members of the team. We spent our first night at a school in Pasadena where we went swimming in Deer Lake and later spent the evening sorting out our gear, packing our bear vaults and fuelling our stoves.

Day 2: We travelled to our base camp at Berry Hill (Rocky Harbour) to get ready for the upcoming Long Range Traverse (LRT) hike. Toured around Rocky Harbour and went swimming nearby at an indoor pool.

Day 3: Went to the Gros Morne Visitor Centre and met with Park Wardens to show them our ability to read a map and use a compass. We passed. We later traveled to the Tablelands to hike and visited the UNESCO Discovery Visitor centre. After supper, Group 1 finalized their hiking gear for the following day's Long Range Hike.

Day 4: (Group 1 hike: ~8.5 km
Group 2 Hike: 0 km)

Group 1 took the boat to the end of Western Brook Pond where the LRT trail begins. The first day proved just how challenging this hike would be. Being in a valley, the GPS units were unable to lock onto satellites to receive telemetry location, inadvertently causing the group to take a wrong trail that delayed them in reaching camp 1. However, they did set up camp at the top of the gorge. What a sunset and view of the Western Brook Pond in the morning!



Newfoundland

BY THE 1ST KANATA BEAVERBROOK TROOP

Group 2 remained at base camp getting ready for their hike the next day.

Day 5: (Group 1 hike: ~6 km Group 2 Hike: 8.42 km)

Group 1 packed up and headed towards camp 2.

Group 2 took the boat to start their hike, re-living the same dilemmas that Group 1 experienced. Group 2 also ended up camping near the top of the ridge.

Day 6: (Group 1 hike: ~5.5 km Group 2 Hike: 6.93 km)

Group 1 had a challenging day of taking wrong trails (moose trails) on their way to camp 3. They had to do some backtracking and bushwhacking through the tuckamore (aka sufferbrush as one Scouter called it) to get back on course.

Group 2 headed towards camp 2. Along the way, they had to urge a one antlered moose that was sleeping on the trail to move along.

Day 7: (Group 1 hike: ~8 km Group 2 Hike: 5.24 km)

Group 1 had a rough trip taking a wrong turn again that took them through the tuckamore. Light rain started later in the day before they reached camp 4.

Group 2 found that the hike wasn't difficult but finding the right trail was, as many animal trails crossed each other and the correct trail. By following the GPS, they reached camp 3 with very little problems.

Day 8: (Group 1 hike: ~6 km Group 2 Hike: 7.2 km)

Group 1 found today's trail was pretty straightforward. Towards the end of the trail, there was a 150 meter steep decline which took a lot of time climbing down with a backpack on (sometimes going down backwards). Very scary – couldn't see the bottom due to the straight angle of the slope.

Group 2 headed towards camp 4. It was a short hike so they stopped along the way to play in a snowfield and throw snowballs. After dinner, a herd of eight caribou ran up the trail in the distance.

Day 9: (Group 1 hike: 12.3 km Group 2 Hike: 6.01 km)

Group 1 left camp 5 and hiked without backpacks up to the top of Gros Morne Mountain and back. After lunch, they packed up and hiked out towards the parking lot (10 km) where the vehicles were left. All were glad to be back to Berry Hill to relax!

Group 2 awoke to see more caribou on the trail near camp. During today's hike, they stopped for lunch at a pristine lake. The descent into camp 5 was much more challenging than the trail heading up from the boat to camp 1. After supper, two moose decided to eat a few hundred feet away.

Day 10: (Group 1 hike: 0 km Group 2 Hike: 12.3 km)

Group 1 spent the day in Rocky Harbour doing laundry, touring around and fishing while waiting for Group 2 to complete their hike.

Group 2 woke to see a moose standing outside their tents (3 ft away) eating plants. Hiking without backpacks, they climbed up to the top of Gros Morne Mountain and back. While at the top, each Scout called home on the satellite phone. After lunch, they packed up and hiked out to the parking lot where the vehicles were left.

Both groups went to dinner in Rocky Harbour to celebrate the completion of the Long Range wilderness hike. While at the restaurant, they were "Screeched In" by kissing the cod and dancing with the Mummies.

TOTAL HIKING DISTANCE: ~46 km

Days 11 – 14 were spent together:

- re-organizing gear
- fishing in the surrounding streams
- enjoying a whale watching boat tour
- visiting L'Anse aux Meadows – home of the first Viking settlement in North America and the first iron-working smelt, and
- exploring the wreck of the S.S. Ethie during low tide before heading home.

Looking Back

Newfoundland is a unique and beautiful place. As one Scout summed it up, "I enjoyed the people of Newfoundland. Not only were they very friendly, but it was as though entertaining visitors was one of their most important jobs. I felt very welcome there."

It was the leaders that made this trip a success. The confidence of the leaders gave the youth assurance that they could do it. The memories of this trip and the confidence the Scouts developed will help them to succeed with their dreams and overcome challenges that await them. X

– 1st Kanata Beaverbrook Troop. A trip of this magnitude can hardly be summarized within these two pages. Readers are invited to visit: <http://www.1stkanatascouts.org/beaverbrook-troop-goes-to-newfoundland-1> to see a complete summary of the trip and hundreds of stunning photographs.

Scouts in Group 1
Neil Andreino
John Dodsworth
Ben Green
Brent MacDonald
Shawn Bender

Scouts in Group 2
John-Michael Donovan
Jacob Swan
Matthew Zimmerling
Brayden Metcalfe
Derek Smith

