



MIRNGUIQSIRVIIT

NUNAVUT PARKS ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ PARCS NUNAVUT



Nunavut Parks & Special Places – Editorial Series

January, 2008

KUGLUK/BLOODY FALLS TERRITORIAL PARK



Kugluk/Bloody Falls Territorial Park commemorates a dark day in Copper Inuit history. Here, on July 17, 1771, a group of Inuit were camped at a beautiful cascade on the Coppermine River, where they had been taking fat char with long fish spears. Masked by the roar of the water, a group of their traditional enemies, the Chipewyans, crept down from upriver, and fell upon the little camp. Using knives, arrows, and spears, they killed every one. This massacre was witnessed by a terrified Samuel Hearne, who was being guided by this group of warriors. Hearn reported the massacre in the journal of his journey.

This turbulent part of the Coppermine became known as Bloody Falls. Where the Coppermine River rushes over resistant rocks, it forms a magnificent cascade. This narrow channel with vigorously boiling rapids and twisting eddies

has been an important place for the Inuit of the western Kitikmeot region for centuries. Here, char heading upstream are forced into shallow channels, enabling people to take them with traditional hooks and fish spears. Generations of Copper Inuit have traveled here to fish, and to hunt caribou on the surrounding hills.

An 8.5 square kilometre area around Bloody Falls was designated as a Territorial Park due to its importance to Inuit of the area, to the scenic beauty of the area, and its abundant wildlife. Rolling tundra-covered hills and rocky escarpments are characteristic of the area. The valley is known for its lush displays of wildflowers in July, and the rocky shelves along the river make wonderful places to picnic, fish, and enjoy the beauty of the land. Caribou and muskox are frequently seen, as well as red and arctic foxes, and, occasionally, wolves or grizzlies.



Birds in the area include peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons, rough-legged hawks, and golden and even bald eagles. Any of these can nest on cliffs along the river. Small tundra birds such as Lapland longspurs, horned larks, redpolls, savannah sparrows, and white-crowned sparrows enliven the summer tundra with their songs. Yellow-billed, Pacific, red-throated and common loons can be seen along the river, as well as long-tailed ducks and red-breasted and common mergansers.

A small yellow daisy-like flower, the black-tipped groundsel, is common in the park. This plant was named by Dr. John Richardson of the first Franklin expedition; he called it *Senecio lugens*. “*Lugens*” comes from the Latin “*lugeo*” (to mourn), and by naming it this, Richardson commemorated the people who died here in the conflict with the Chipewyans in 1771. Other wildflowers, among them the mountain avens, several louseworts, rhododendrons, the striking blue arctic lupine and many more, bloom in profusion nearby.

In the fall, the entire area blazes with colour – the scarlet of the bearberry, yellow of willows, salmon colour of the dwarf

birches, bronze of Labrador tea, and maroon of the blueberries. Families go out to the park in the fall, picking berries and fishing in the river.

There are many old campsites in the area, and archaeological evidence of use of the area by the Pre-Dorset, the Thule, modern Inuit, and even by the Taltheilei Indians, who came to the coast from near Great Slave Lake, hunting caribou.

PADDLE THROUGH HISTORY

The Coppermine River has long been a travel corridor for the indigenous peoples of the North – ancient campsites are common along the river. Because there has been so little change since then, today’s river paddlers experience the land much as Hearne, Franklin, and the Inuit and Dene did almost two centuries ago.

A paddling trip flows through gorgeous wilderness and crosses the Arctic Circle on its way to the Arctic Ocean. It runs through lands rich in wildlife, where muskox and caribou graze on the sparse vegetation of the uplands, and where wolves and grizzlies patrol the river banks, ever alert for a stranded fish or drowned caribou. On the upper reaches of the Coppermine, many small rivers and streams flow into the main river through hills thinly covered with stunted spruce and dwarf birch. Downstream, the hills are covered with tundra, while the boreal forest is limited

to the lush river valley, and still farther downstream, the river flows through arctic tundra with wetlands at places along the river.

It is, without a doubt, one of the premiere arctic rivers for the advanced novice paddler, or for those adventure seekers who want a guided river trip with good scenery, wildlife, signs of past cultures, and want to learn more about the river’s important place in history. Due to its historical and cultural importance, its value to wildlife, and its incredible recreational experiences, the Coppermine River has been nominated as a Canadian Heritage River. Nunavut Parks and Kugluktuk are developing a river management plan, a requirement of the CHRS program, and are working towards full Canadian Heritage River designation, expected in 2008.

TRAVELLING TO THE PARK

A somewhat rough road connects Kugluk/Bloody Falls Territorial Park with Kugluktuk, some 13 kilometres north. This road is seldom passable for ordinary vehicles, but all-terrain vehicles can access the park. Operators in Kugluktuk can organize trips by ATV to the falls, or by boat on the Coppermine. Boats can travel upstream from the mouth of the river to about one kilometre below the falls, so this makes a wonderful outing. Check with the Visitors’ Centre in Kugluktuk regarding trips to the falls.

Because there has been so little change since then, today’s river paddlers experience the land much as Hearne, Franklin, and the Inuit and Dene did almost two centuries ago.

Winter trips into the park are sometimes available, and residents of Kugluktuk often go there by snowmobile, sometimes traveling upriver on the river ice. Caribou are frequently seen in springtime, and sometimes all winter.

For more information on **Kugluk/Bloody Falls Territorial Park** and the Coppermine River, check the Nunavut Parks website at www.nunavutparks.com, or call Nunavut Tourism at 1-866-NUNAVUT to request the Nunavut Travel Planner, which lists all licensed tourism operators, accommodations and services. ■



NUNAVUT PARKS & SPECIAL PLACES

☎ 867.975.7700 📠 867.975.7747

parks@gov.nu.ca

www.nunavutparks.com

KUGLUKTUK HERITAGE AND VISITORS' CENTRE

☎ 867.982.3570 📠 867.982.3573

NUNAVUT TOURISM

☎ 866.NUN.AVUT 📠 867.979.1261

(1.866.686.2888)

info@nunavuttourism.com

www.nunavuttourism.com

ARCTIC COAST VISITORS' CENTRE

☎ 867.983.2224

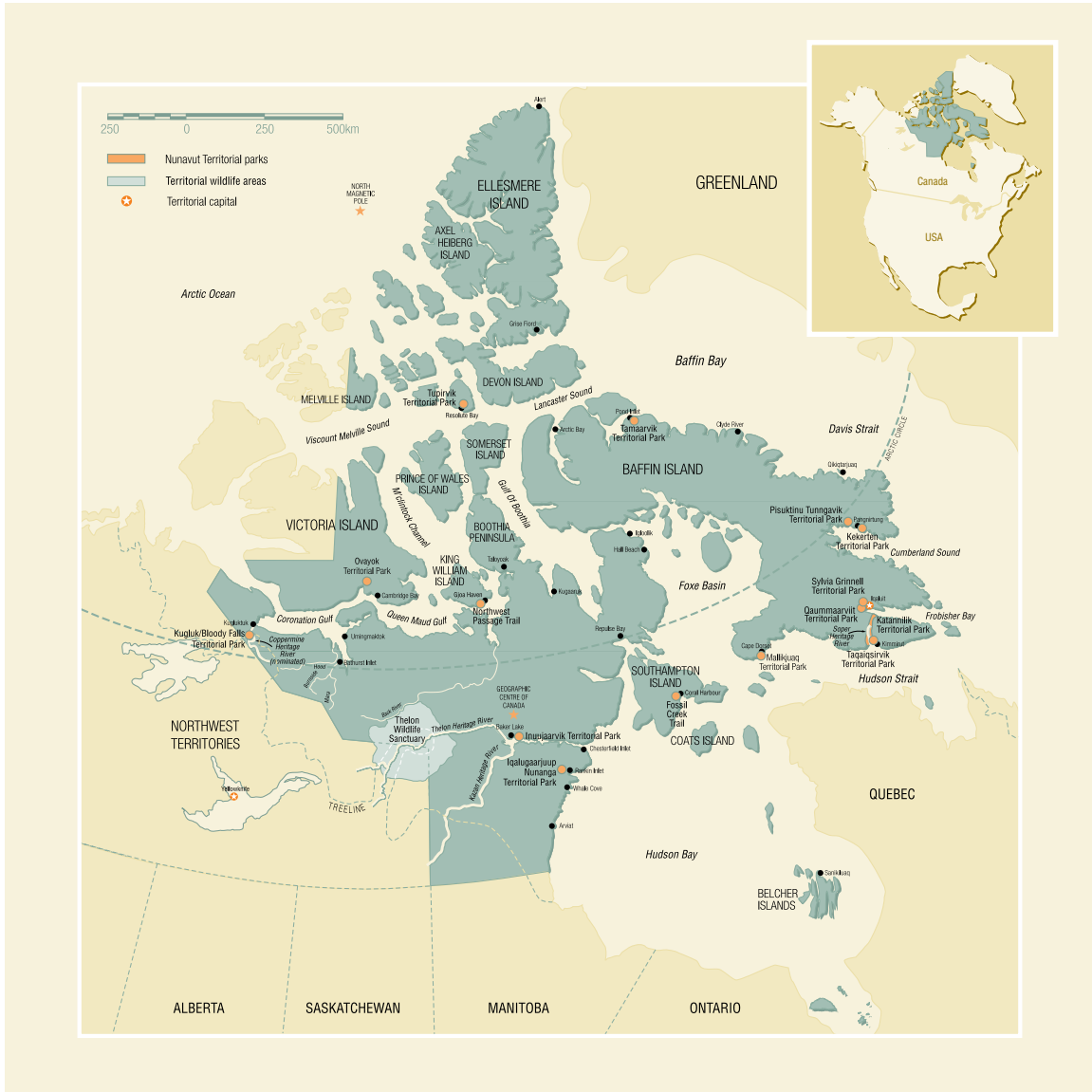
coasters@qiniq.com





MIRNGUIQSIRVIIT

NUNAVUT PARKS ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ PARCS NUNAVUT



SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL IN NUNAVUT

Nunavut's Territorial Parks offer some of the most breathtaking scenery and magnificent wildlife imaginable, but there are risks when traveling in a remote area. You must be self-reliant and responsible for your own safety. The extreme environment can change quickly, challenge your survival skills and face you with an emergency. Also remember, when you travel in Nunavut you are in polar bear country. Polar bears are strong, fast and agile on ice, land, and in water.

For more information on Safe and Sustainable Travel and Polar Bear Safety in Nunavut please visit our website at www.nunavutparks.com.



ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
Department of Environment
Havakviat Avatiligiyikkuᓄ
Ministère de l'Environnement

☎ 867.975.7700
☎ 867.975.7747
✉ parks@gov.nu.ca
nunavutparks.com

ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᓄᓄᓄᓄ ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ
ᐃᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ

NUNAVUT PARKS
& SPECIAL PLACES
Department of Environment
Government of Nunavut
P.O. Box 1000, Station 1340
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0

NUNAVUMMI
UNNAGIURHIQVIIT
& INNIITURLIIT
Havakviat Avatiligiyikkuᓄ
Nunavut Kavamatkuᓄ
Qiuqutaa 1000, Nayugaa 1340
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0

PARCS ET ENDROITS
SPÉCIAUX NUNAVUT
Ministère de l'Environnement
Gouvernement du Nunavut
Case Postale 1000, Succursale 1340
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0