



*News from the desk of Colleen Norrish,  
Project Manager for the Trails of 1885..*

I recently took a fascinating journey into the fur trade era following the travels of David Thompson, famous Canadian explorer, voyageur, map maker and fur trader. Thompson made many epic journeys by canoe to expand the fur trade in Canada, including paddling the South Saskatchewan River.

Our staging point was Petite Ville, historic wintering location for the Métis between the 1860's and the late 1880's, across from Fish Creek. After a brief history lesson, we were on our way— 18 of us in 6 canoes and 1 voyageur canoe. I was flying under the North West Company flag, followed by the Hudson's Bay Company and Saskatchewan flags. We were quite the group.

The river was extremely low and we were on constant lookout for sand bars and rocks. After a quick shore lunch, we headed for Batoche National Historic Park, putting into shore at the Carlton Trail Ferry location. We were then treated to a tour of the park, spent time in the Interpretive Centre and a much needed cold drink. Returning to the river, we finished our first day of canoeing, getting to a location made for overnight camping.

Our next day took us to South Branch House archaeological site, not far from Batoche National Historic Site, where we could read the 1787 journal in



Thompson's handwriting. Equally intriguing were visible remnants of the Northwest Company fur trade fort that Thompson visited during his clerk's apprenticeship. Watching a 'dig' and meeting the dedicated people that are working in the field was truly fascinating and memorable. Back on the water to our overnight camp at the south east corner of Nesbitt Forest.

Next morning we woke to light rain, a welcome relief after two days of very hot weather and headwinds. Although going with the current made paddling easier, moving a heavy canoe loaded with tent, sleeping bags, clothes and flag was hard work. Now we had a tail wind and the flag become a sail and moved us along quite nicely. We ended our trip at the big buffalo at St. Louis around supper time on Sunday.

I should mention that this was my first canoe trip and definitely not my last. The trip was well organized by CanoeSki Discovery Company ([www.canoeski.com](http://www.canoeski.com)),

Continued on Page 2



the guiding and historians were excellent and my fellow canoers were awesome. Well fed, well advised, well provided for made for a super three days away from phones, computers, traffic and pressure. I highly recommend the trip to learn about our history, to see our area from a different point of view, and to just get away.

Page 2

Pictured here: Cliff Speers (far right), CanoeSki and the winners of 2008 Tourism Awareness Week Contest, Connie and Jamie Baxter from Morse, Saskatchewan. Photo credits to Jeffrey O'Brien, City of Saskatoon.



## DUCK LAKE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE GETS A \$375,000 FACELIFT

The Government of Saskatchewan is contributing \$375,000 toward repairs to Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre - home of the first shots fired in the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

Exterior repairs include replacing all windows in the tower, roof repairs including new roofing, soffit and fascia, siding replacement and paint.

"The Government of Saskatchewan is excited to contribute to the preservation of Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre," Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Christine Tell said. "Through the interpretive centre, we can learn about and celebrate our rich past and share its fascinating stories with visitors to our province." "The heritage, cultures and stories of this area, especially those of 1885, have and continue to be such an important part of our history," Duck Lake Interpretive Centre Administrator Celine Perillat said. "We are ecstatic that the provincial government would assist us with funding that will help us to preserve these important objects and relate the stories for visitors and generation to come."

The Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre houses more than 6000 artifacts, many of which are related to the 1885 Northwest Resistance. Its 125th commemoration anniversary is scheduled for 2010.

The Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre tells the story of the 1885 Resistance from three different perspectives: The First Nations, Métis and the Pioneers. Events of the Resistance and its aftermath have left a mark on Canada's history and culture.



## Government of Canada Invests in Historic Buildings at Fort Battleford

The Government of Canada is making smart investments to improve historic buildings and infrastructure at Fort Battleford National Historic Site. Agricultural Minister and MP for North Battleford-Lloydminster Gerry Ritz announced funding for two projects that will see the stabilization of the five historic buildings and the restoration of a historic landscape.



*View of the rear of the commanding officer's residence.*

From this investment of \$910,000 over three years, one project, with a total cost of \$490,000, will focus on the preservation of the cultural resources at Fort Battleford. Built between 1876 and 1898, stabilization work will be conducted on the five remaining historic buildings including the Commanding Officer's Residence, the Officer's Quarters, Barracks #5, Sick Horse Stable and the Guard House.

An additional project, with a total cost of \$420,000, will see the removal of the old Visitor Centre, Administration Building and workshop, as well as the restoration of these grounds to fescue prairie. A new energy efficient and sustainable workshop will be built in a new location so as not to interfere with the historic landscape. This work will allow visitors a better appreciation of the history of the site by returning the landscape to the 1880 era. A new Visitor Centre was opened in 2006.

## Government Supports Partnership Promoting Tourism to Batoche Na- tional Historic Site

*Excerpt from Government of Canada news release, June 8, 2009*

The Dizaines for Batoche Development Co-operative Ltd., a coalition of Métis and community organizations, will lead the Batoche and Area Future Development Project to preserve the Batoche historical site and promote Métis culture and history.

This project is made possible by Government of Canada funding of over \$391,000, Government of Saskatchewan funding of \$40,000, and additional funds from Tourism Saskatoon and Sagehill Community Futures Development Corporation, constituting an investment of almost \$464,000 in tourism initiatives.

"This investment will create new opportunities and further economic development while celebrating the unique Métis cultural identity," said the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification. "Our government is proud to partner with the Métis community and the provincial government to invest in the continuing development of the Batoche National Historic Site."

Batoche was declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1923, and serves as a vital link to the history of the Métis people and their impact on the development of Canadian history and culture. In recent years, the Métis community has become more involved with the development and promotion of Batoche. This initiative is an opportunity to support this trend.

The objectives of the Dizaines for Batoche Development Co-operative Ltd. include ensuring that Batoche remains an icon of Métis culture and history, promoting increased tourism, and creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

"This is an exciting tourism initiative that will draw both national and international visitors and will help us to showcase our region as a major Western Canadian destination for tourism in areas of history, education and culture," said Randy Fernets of Tourism Saskatoon.





## MORE NEWS...

Page 4

I recently met with a group of junior high school teachers from Alberta that were visiting Saskatchewan on a Tourism Saskatchewan sponsored familiarization tour. This group is focusing on the stories of 1885, looking at the sites and determining where trips fit in to the school year and the logistics of bringing students.

***Congratulations to Fort Battleford on their recent win at the Saskatoon Exhibition Parade, winning First Place, Commercial—Provincial/National Corporation Category.***

Brendan Manz  
Communications, Visitor Services &  
Heritage Presentation Officer is towing  
the float through downtown Saskatoon  
on August 4th.



## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES...

Working with Alberta Aboriginal Tourism, I am off to visit Métis Crossing, Buckingham House, Frog Lake and other destinations related to 1885 in Alberta. While the majority of events of 1885 took place in Saskatchewan, we want to ensure that all locations have the opportunity to market themselves and each other.

In September, *Trails of 1885* will be featured at the GoMedia event to be held in Whistler. This event is hosted by Canadian Tourism Commission and brings together approximately 200 travel writers from around the world. *Trails of 1885* will be presented at breakfast on the first full day of the event. It is a huge opportunity to expose *Trails of 1885* to a captive audience before any other province has a chance to wow them. I will keep you updated.

The website is up and running. Starting in October I will focus on 2010, the events, locations, festivals and news, doing updates, additions and editing on a bi-weekly basis. Send any and all relevant dates, links and information when available.