



# conservation report

Richard Smerdon

My thoughts for this issue have been led in four directions; garbage, sewage, road access and beavers. The beavers are an antidote to the depression caused by thinking about the first three items. In addition I feel that a reply to Gord McIntyre's letter is appropriate for this column. His letter appeared in the summer issue.

I received two impressions. The first is his apparent conviction that civilisation is a mere veneer covering man's natural instinct to kill anything that moves. Undeniably there are deranged individuals, who lacking the controlling influence of civilisation, seek to destroy whole races, whole creeds, whole species of animals and vegetables, indeed whole sections of this planet, but I don't consider myself one of them and have no ambition to become one.

I don't feel emasculated when, on occasionally seeing a moose my instinct is to reach for a camera instead of a gun. I fish when there is the opportunity to pep up my diet and often enjoy the 'hunt', but feel no disgrace in admitting that I heartily dislike the physical act of killing my supper. I use the fish population for my pleasure and gastronomic delight and leave the proving of my masculinity to activities outside the scope of conservation.

The second point of issue is more subtle. For a man to battle and overwhelm a Grizzly bear with his bare hands would demonstrate to me that he was a) nuts and b) an extraordinary and interesting member of our species and well worth being acquainted with. For a man to shoot the same bear with a high powered rifle in order to prove to himself that he is a 'man's man', demonstrates to me that he is indulging in a form of mental self abuse and is of little interest other than for psychoanalysis.

For a man to travel in and out of remote regions, utilising all his knowledge, strength and courage attracts my attention as I am attracted by anyone who can make full use of their abilities. For a one-legged man to run half way across Canada fills me with admiration. To see a blind man walking alone down a crowded city street has the same effect. To enlist the help of mechanical aids to make an otherwise unattainable goal possible is fine but if those aids encroach on the pleasures of other people, no matter what their circumstances, then it is presumptuous to suggest that they are selfish in opposing them. I am impressed by people who suit themselves to 'the wilderness' as opposed to suiting 'the wilderness' to themselves.

I may be interpreting Gord's letter erroneously but these are my reactions after reading his letter carefully.

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Below are two letters concerning the misuse of one small beach on Lake Temagami. Claire and I passed that way this year and we have had our own bad experiences with the same road access where it touches Red Squirrel Lake. The road is designed for, and heavily used by logging trucks which kick up huge dust clouds as they rattle along. We were amazed at how people in campers along the road were prepared to endure this hourly dust storm. It is not surprising that people who can accept this miniature Armageddon as part of their recreation will be conscience-free in creating their own wilderness

Here is the letter which Claire Brigden sent to the Temagami Lakes Association:

Dear Sirs:

I wish to report to the Temagami Lakes Association a serious and increasingly alarming problem of garbage and litter being left at and near and the sandy beach at the head of Fergusson Bay, as the direct result of access by road to this area. Many vehicular campers apparently have a total disregard for all good camping practices. Other concerned cottagers join me in alerting you, the directors of the T.L.A., to this problem and ask for your direction and action in an attempt to rectify this situation.

Yours Sincerely,

Claire Brigden,  
Fred Rymers,  
David Carpenter,  
Bruce Hodgson.

The following letter was sent to Bob McGee, District Manager of the M.N.R., Temagami by the Executive Secretary of the T.L.A.

Dear Bob:

On August 4th I visited Camp Wanapitei and was immediately shown the aftermath of an extended visit to the Sandy Inlet beach by a party of four 'big city' folk from Sudbury. They had set up their tent right on the beach astride the trail from the parking area on the Red Squirrel Lake Timber Access Road. They had dug and used a pit privy about two feet from the water's edge, a fire had been maintained about one foot from the water's edge. On departure they had made absolutely no effort to clean up after themselves. They did not disperse the fire ashes nor had they even had the decency to fill in the pit privy. Garbage was strewn all over the area of the beach, part of it consisted of a full garbage bag of fish guts. The attached letter underlines that, while this may be an extreme example, it is not an isolated one. The new privately-produced Lake Temagami mini-map indicates a minimum of sixteen tent sites on the beach at Sandy Inlet. At present these are serviced by a single, unidentified privy. While the T.L.A. realises that there are many completely unserviced campsites on water-accessible parts of Lake Temagami, we contend that these latter are used by people who travel by water and are therefore more aware of the quality of the recreational experience inherent in the uniqueness of Lake Temagami. As such, they are inclined to treat the facilities with respect. Needless to say, campsites accessible to road traffic attract an entirely different type of visitors; witness the description above. The T.L.A. believes that the beach at Sandy Inlet must be serviced with at least two additional privys. These must be clearly identified and additional signs erected directing people to pitch their tents behind the beach and remove their own litter. The area must be visited by conservation officers at least twice weekly during the summer and these officers must be prepared to prosecute violators of M.N.R. and M.O.E. regulations to say nothing of the standards of normal, human decency. We hope that these recommendations will be accorded in your 1984 funding arrangements and await a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours Sincerely

I would take issue with the suggestion that all road travellers are a menace and also that all water travellers are a superior breed. The major menace is the engine which gives thoughtless people the ability to move large quantities of garbage into beautiful places. It doesn't matter much whether they are attached to a car, boat or plane; they provide the same opportunity.