

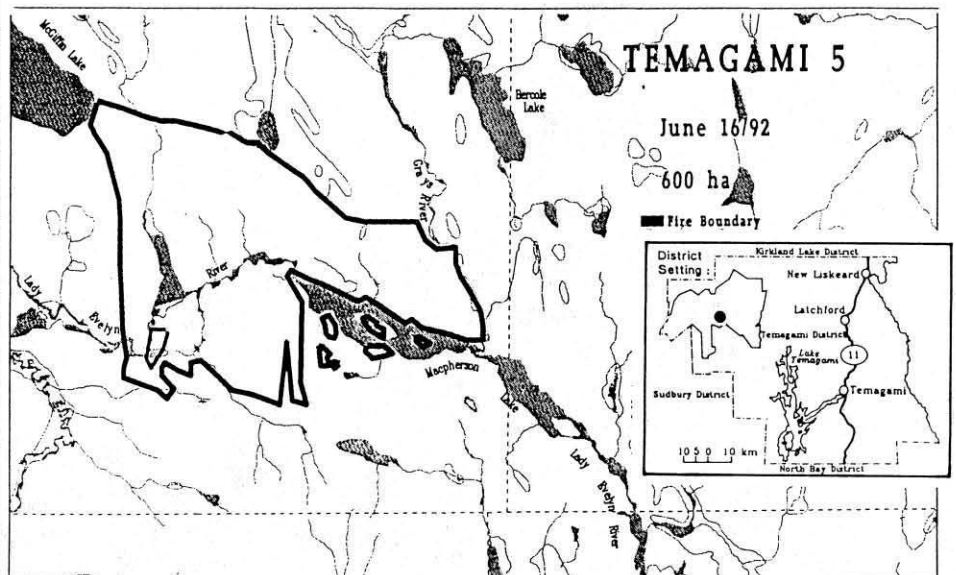


Temagami 5 started at a campsite on the east end of McGiffin Lake less than two kilometres north of the Lady Evelyn. Two fishermen had flown into the site, stayed a few days, and paddled out believing they had left their campfire out. But when conditions are as parched as they were this June, fire can play strange tricks. It can burn underground for days before resurfacing, and when this one did, it found dry fuel and strong northerly winds to help it spread.

Two Northwest Territories CF215 water bombers and five helicopters attacked the flames from above, while over 150 people worked on the ground. It took about 12 days to bring the fire under control and clean up the area, at a cost of about \$800,000, according to Bill Ray, North Bay / Temagami district fire operations manager.

"The visual aspect will probably be there for the next couple of years," said Ray, but it should prove to be good from a wildlife perspective. Ray expects sightings will increase as the area regenerates itself.

Already the blackened landscape is showing signs of recovery. A party that travelled through the burn in early August reported seeing ferns starting to poke their way through the charred ground. The group reported no difficulties on any of the portages, but did note several downed trees in the river at one set of rapids.



WCA member Paul Chivers is staff photographer at The North Bay Nugget.