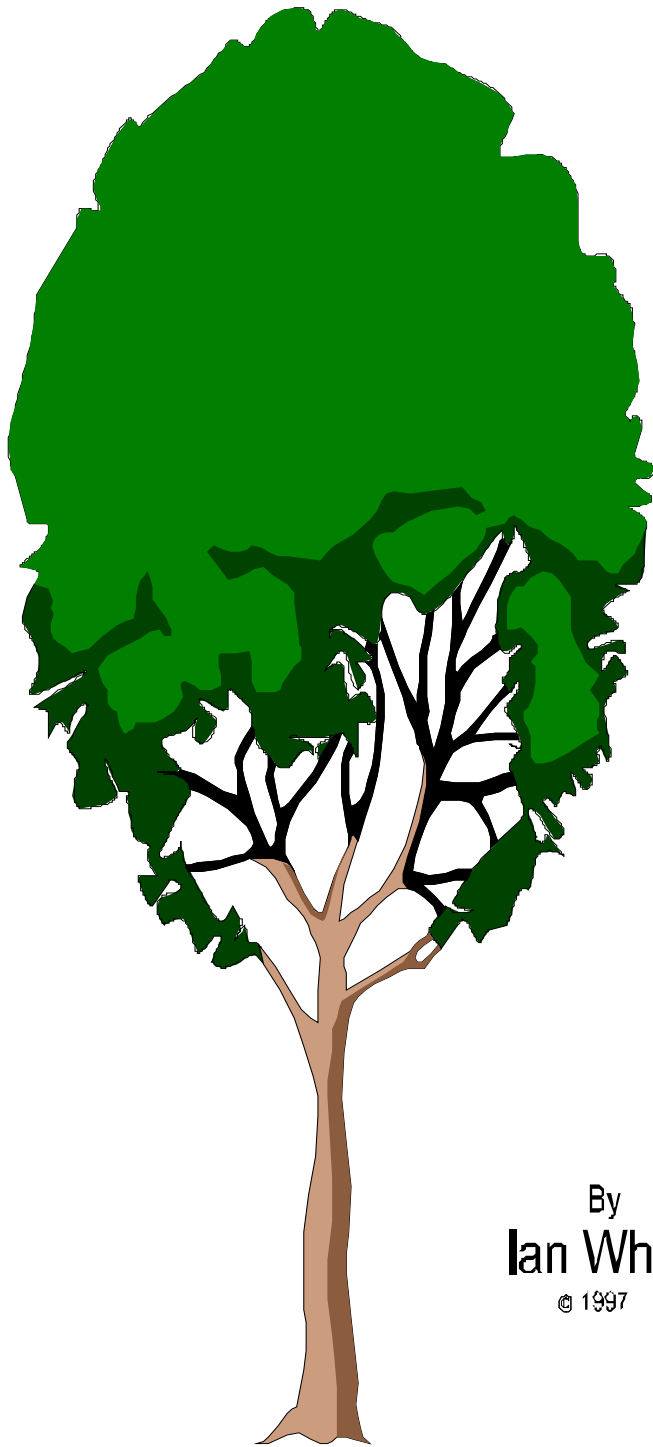


The Nature of Perkins-Sur-Le-Lac



"Under Our Feet"

By
Ian White
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Keith Doughty and Travis Fisch '97

THE NATURE OF PERKINS-SUR-LE-LAC
“UNDER OUR FEET” ©

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For many years we had wondered about the “Abandoned Mine” symbols which appear in the Perkins-sur-le-lac area on government maps. What had been mined and when? So one cold winter day we walked into the library of the Geological Survey of Canada to try to find the answers to these questions. Well, one thing led to another, then to another, and to many others. The end result is what you now have in your hands.

Thanks are due to many people who went out of their way to assist in finding the information. A wide spectrum of public servants, such as librarians, clerks, scientists and researchers in several departments, demonstrated great professionalism and an eagerness to help. **Gil Boyce** reviewed the draft versions and made many constructive suggestions which were instrumental in improving the document. **Larry Surch** devoted long hours translating the text; not an easy task considering the nature of some of the terminology.

Since we built our cottage in 1974 we have often realised that the PSLL Property Owners Association has had a succession of dedicated volunteers who worked hard to preserve and improve the quality of life in the Domain, but whose toils were not always visible and recognised. We are giving this paper to the Association as our personal “thank you” to all these people.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, **Edna**, for putting up with all my odd behaviour as I sought out relevant information in a multiplicity of places, and who tolerated the fact that my typing speed (about three words a minute!) meant that I spent hour after hour hunched over the computer keyboard.

Ian White

July 1997

THE NATURE OF PERKINS-SUR-LE-LAC
“UNDER OUR FEET”

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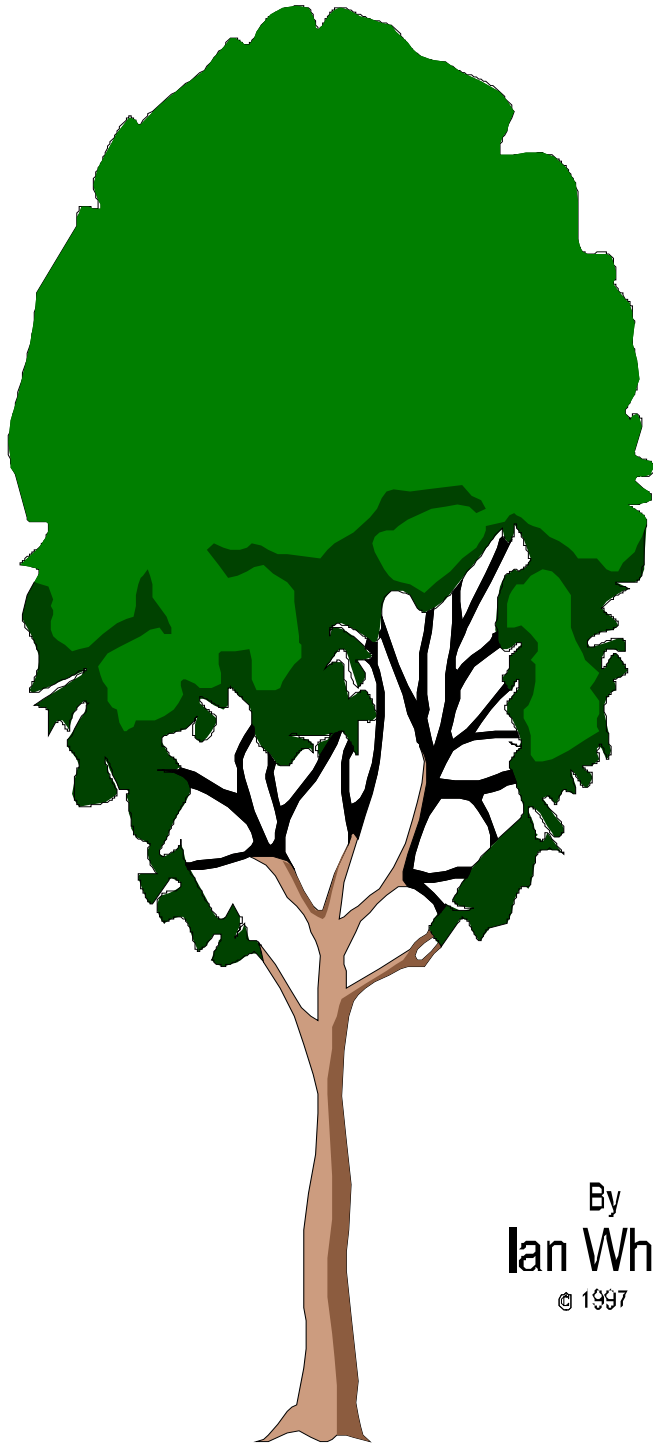
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INTRODUCTION

Very few areas of Canada offer the advantages of Perkins-sur-le-lac (PSLL). Only a very short distance from our nation’s capital, it is an unspoilt Domain of beautiful lakes, forests, mountains and extraordinary flora and fauna. The inventory of wild birds varies from the huge soaring hawks, to blue herons, loons and the tiny hummingbirds, which we all enjoy at the feeders we put up for them. There are over two hundred types of wildflowers, including at least four kinds of orchids, an insect-eating plant, plus a myriad of shrubs, bushes, trees, ferns and other plants. The geology is rich in interesting features which have been studied and explored for about a century-and-a-half. Several mines have been worked for minerals and two types of gems have been found in the ground beneath our feet. Today’s property owners are very conscious of the nature which surrounds us, and are anxious to preserve and enjoy it.

BEFORE THE DEVELOPERS

Once upon a time, more than a billion years ago, mountain chains arose in a large area, part of which we now know as the Ottawa Valley, the Gatineau Hills and the Laurentians. This was the beginning of the land in which Perkins-sur-le-lac is situated. Volcanic activity and several episodes of mountain building, pushed up a variety of volcanic rocks, and over the millions of years since, these have been transformed by the many forces of nature into the rocks on which we now live, cottage and play.

The landscape during the earliest times was one of smoking volcanoes, spewing ash and lava, with no living matter (life

existed only in the oceans, and even there it was in very simple forms), and an appearance which we would now describe as lunar, with the surface covered in gravel, lava, ash and crumbling rocks.

This is part of what we now call the Canadian Shield. It is the oldest rock formation on the surface of the planet Earth. Geologists refer to the time it was formed as pre-Cambrian. Its age, and the weathering and abrasions which it has received since it was formed, account for the rounded peaks of the hills and mountains. This is a contrast to the sharper and more jagged tops of the considerably newer mountains in Western Canada and other parts of the world.

About 1,450 million years ago, the bedrock on the surface of Perkins-sur-le-lac today was about 12 miles (20 km) below ground, all the overlying material having been eroded away in the intervening years.

As the rocks were being formed there were several periods of volcanic eruptions. The latter ones forced molten lava into cracks which the volcanic pressures created in the older formations. This led to the situation which we can still see today, whereby the solid rock under our feet has bands of what are quite visible as different colours and types of material.

After this early period when there was virtually no living matter, exotic tropical plants, such as huge palms and tree-size ferns, grew in the area.

About 600 million years ago, as the mountains were being weathered away, seas progressively covered the lower portions of the mountain system. A wide diversity of life swarmed in these warm, tropical waters.

Between 120 and 400 million years ago, major faults fractured the area as plates of the earth's crust moved and split. (Even today there are still fairly frequent minor earthquakes in the Outaouais, Laurentian and Eastern Ontario regions), Great blocks of rock dropped down to form a trough in the shield, which had been created during the activities of a billion years earlier. The faults can be seen today as steep scarps, such as the Eardley escarpment along the southern margin of the Gatineau Park. A flat-floored depression was thus formed, stretching from the Laurentian Highlands to the Adirondack Highlands, and eastward beyond Montreal.

It is quite likely that dinosaurs inhabited the area at some time or times during this era (the Jurassic and Triassic periods), but the geology and geography were such that any remnants or evidence have not survived. We have no knowledge, and it is possible that we will never know, what types of dinosaurs occupied this part of the land and just when they arrived and disappeared.

Mosquitoes were already on Earth during this time, and some scientists believe that they probably annoyed the dinosaurs as much as they bother us today! Black flies did not develop until towards the end of this era.

After this period there occurred the last Ice Age. Snow accumulated and compacted into glacier ice in the northern highlands, then flowed into the St. Lawrence lowlands and the Ottawa Valley, covering them with a thick, slow moving sheet of ice. Although glaciations in Canada may have begun as much as two million years ago, the glacial event which left its mark on our area occurred only about 20,000 to 30,000 years ago. Great streams of ice, about 2 miles (4 km) thick, swept southwards from the Laurentian Highlands, eroding the rock surfaces and depositing uneven pockets of clay, sand, gravel and boulders over the bedrock.

Today, where the bedrock in Perkins-sur-le-lac is exposed, or where we uncover it to dig foundations for buildings, etc., it is usually very rounded and worn smooth as a result of the glacial movements during this Ice Age.

Gradually the climate warmed and the ice sheet melted slowly from the south towards the north. The Penny Ice Cap, which now covers six thousand square-kilometres of Baffin Island, is the only

remaining vestige of the glacier which once had such a major influence on forming our present topography.

The weight of the ice pushed the land surface below sea level. As the ice melted, and as large masses broke off, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean, called the Champlain Sea, flowed in. All of Ottawa, and most of the land south to the St. Lawrence River, lay beneath this glacial sea whose surface would have just covered the tip of the flagpole on the Parliament Hill Peace Tower. A branch of the Champlain Sea protruded to the north, lying roughly from the Lièvre River in the east, almost to the Gatineau River in the west, and north to about Low (Quebec)

Perkins-sur-le-lac was covered with cold water which had arctic / sub-arctic characteristics. Bowhead whales and ringed seals lived in the waters, along with other sea creatures typical of today's Arctic Ocean waters. The plants, which had grown in the region millions of years earlier, had retreated southwards to places where some of them survived, but others disappeared forever.

Over the following centuries, the land rebounded from the weight of the glacial ice, a process which continues even today! The bowhead whales and ringed seals were replaced by belugas and harbour seals as the water became warmer and less salty.

As the glacier receded, the land which bordered it became home to the range of plants and animals which now exist in the Arctic Tundra, creatures such as the arctic hare, caribou and even polar bears.

About ten thousand years ago, the Champlain Sea had become so shallow that it could no longer be considered an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. The flow of

water was from the west and no water could enter from the Atlantic, thus ending the marine period for Perkins-sur-le-lac. But as it was still under fresh water, the climate became warmer and drier than it is today.

This warmer period ended about five thousand years ago and our present landscape was formed. One of the most experienced geologists in the region, Dr. D.M. Baird, has described the Gatineau Hills, including the Perkins-sur-le-lac area, as "showing very clearly that we are looking at the eroded roots of a once massive mountain range, now dead and completely eroded away".

The volcanic-origin rock, which has been considerably altered over the millions of years and which now lies under our feet, normally does not contain any type of fossils or other signs of the varied forms of life which have existed during the millions of years since it was formed, so Perkins-sur-le-lac is not a fruitful hunting ground for palaeontologists (fossil students and collectors).

The now disused sand and gravel pit, which lies just across Blackburn Road from Barnes Lake, is a remnant of the time when Perkins-sur-le-lac was under the Champlain Sea. Radio-carbon dating has put the age of fossil shells found there at about twelve thousand years. No other deposits of this type are in our Domain.

Nearly all the present forms of plant life native to the area migrated here from the south between then and now: mosses, ferns, herbs, wildflowers, grasses, tubers, creepers, bushes, vines and trees. The species with light seeds borne on the wind were the first to arrive. Those with heavier seeds followed more slowly in the cycle of migration.

In this area, radio-carbon dating of pollen deposits in the layers of earth shows that the flora was of an herb-shrub tundra. As the Champlain Sea retreated, the spruce, poplar, junipers, shrub birch, and alder soon moved in. Poplar became the dominant species, but then spruce began to take over and became the major forest material for about a thousand years, starting between nine and ten thousand years ago, until birch and pine migrated into the region from the south. The birch was mainly white birch; jack pine was widespread at first until it was replaced by white pine.

Between six and eight thousand years ago, other tree types invaded and displaced the pine. Hemlock, maple and birch increased perceptibly. Oak came along soon after; however, there was constant evolution. Four to five thousand years ago, the hemlock population was suddenly and drastically reduced, possibly as a result of disease. Hardwoods, such as elm, ash, hickory and basswood, became more prominent.

In the mid-1600's, when Europeans first began to explore the region, there were plentiful stands of tall red and white pine. From about 1800 on, a strong demand for this type of wood arose in Europe, so the early settlers found a ready market for the trees, which they chopped down and sent over the Atlantic. In fact, many vessels criss-crossed the ocean carrying wood from this area to the Old World and bringing people, in the holds, on the reverse journey. The logs were usually carried down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to Quebec City or Montreal where they were loaded onto the ocean-going ships.

Logging in the Perkins-sur-le-lac area began in the early 1840's. John Adams Perkins set up a saw mill in about 1845, which caused a village to grow around it – no prizes for guessing what the village is called.

Battle Lake derives its name from a fight which took place between John Adams Perkin's lumbermen and those of Levi Bigelow over the limits of logging concessions. Perkins' men were the winners!

Sadly, the tall pines were virtually all removed by logging in the 1800's, although some fine specimens still exist near Maskinongé Lake. In the rest of the Domain, the trees which we have now are relatively young and more varied in species.

There is also a very marked difference between the age and type of trees around Maskinongé Lake and those in the other parts of Perkins-sur-le-lac. This is probably due to the effects of one or more forest fires, but dates and details of the destruction are not available, although Oakley Carey recalls that in the early 1930's there was a forest fire in the area of the Domain.

The past few centuries have seen the introduction of life forms, especially plants, which are not native to North America. Some were deliberately brought from other continents by the people who came here, while others found their way across the oceans by accident, usually hitching a ride on some form of transportation being used by humans.

The process continues today: zebra mussels and purple loosestrife being two notorious examples, but fortunately these two are not yet posing any threat in Perkins-sur-le-lac.

However, some of the flora which is growing in the Domain today has been brought in within the past few decades as loads of earth, fill, sand, gravel and topsoil have been trucked in to amend the landscape and cover septic tile-beds.

Fortunately, we now have strict environmental controls on modifying shorelines and the creation of beaches. This serves several purposes. It preserves the habitat and the very existence of the shore's many natural forms of life; it prevents alien species, which may harm the native species, from being trucked in; and it preserves the unspoiled nature, both for ourselves and for future generations.

Today, many property owners are tending gardens around their buildings. They are bringing in cultivated plants and producing beautiful gardens on their land, but, inevitably over the years some of these plants will be killed off by the forces of nature, whilst others will flourish and will escape from the gardens to become part of the flora of the Domain. Plant diseases, pests and insects, which are brought in with the plants, will suffer either of the same two fates.

Human life in southern Quebec could have begun with early hunters, as much as ten thousand years ago, but there was no reason for these people to have occupied the land which we now call Perkins-sur-le-lac. About a thousand years ago, nomadic bands of Algonkian Indians started to hunt and fish in the Ottawa and Gatineau River Valleys, roaming to wherever they could find sustenance. One of the lakes in the Domain, Maskinongé, bears an Algonkian

name, but it is unlikely that Perkins-sur-le-lac was ever a suitable place for them to establish a settlement, although they may have passed through the terrain and fished for food in our lakes, however, no evidence of their presence has been found.

OUR PLACE ON THE GLOBE

Most people outside North America are taught that the border between Canada and the United States is the "49th Parallel", but Perkins-sur-le-lac is actually at latitude of 45 degrees, 40 minutes north, which means it is about 240 miles (385 km) south of 49 degrees. Parts of Maine, Michigan, Minnesota and Idaho are further north than we are, while almost the whole of North Dakota, Montana and Washington states are to our north. The Domain is at about the same latitude as Saint John (New Brunswick), Portland (Oregon), Lyons (France) and Venice (Italy). We are further south than most of Europe and the former USSR.

Perkins-sur-le-lac's longitude is 75 degrees, 35 minutes west, which places us about in line with Cape Hatteras (North Carolina), Great Exuma Island (the Bahamas), Guantanamo (Cuba), Medellín (Columbia), and Lima (Peru). Each morning, the sun rises over our Domain before it reaches any part of Florida.

As the crow flies, it is about 17 miles (27 km) from the entrance of Perkins-sur-le-lac to the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill; 9,250 miles (14,800 km) to the South Pole; 3,150 miles (5,000 km) to the Equator; 1,455 miles (2,330 km) to the Arctic Circle; and 3,060 miles (4,900 km) to the North Pole. Note that we are about half way between the Equator and the North Pole.

HOW HIGH IS UP?

Within Perkins-sur-le-lac there are only two small areas which are over 1,000 feet (300 metres) above sea level: the rock mass which rises sharply from the north side of the west arm of Rhéaume Lake, and a hill just west of Louise Lake.

A few small parts are over 900 feet (275 metres): an area between Corrigan Lake and Barnes Lake; the ground behind “Reece’s compound”, across Blackburn Road from the Battle Lake Beach; an area on the opposite side of Chêne Rouge Road from Trout Lake; and a rock mass on the north shore of Chevreuil Lake.

No part of the Domain is lower than 650 feet (200 metres). Compare this with the fact that the Village of Perkins, in front of the church, is at about 400 feet (120 metres), and the Ottawa River, as it flows between Parliament Hill and the Museum of Civilization, is less than 140 feet (42 metres) above sea level.

Chevreuil Lake is over 800 feet (245 metres) and Corrigan Lake is above 765 feet (233 metres), but the other lakes are all close to 740 feet (225 metres) above sea level, except Barnes at 675 feet (205 metres).

Perkins-sur-le-lac is unusual in that its waters flow away in three different directions. As Blackburn Road approaches the Battle Lake Beach it goes over a crest; this is part of a watershed which divides two catchment basins. The waters to the west of this, i.e. from the marsh areas on each side of Blackburn Road and from Barnes Lake, run off towards the west into Mud Bay, from which they move into McGregor Lake, then to the Blanche River, which flows in

a southerly direction through Perkins Village, and eventually reaches the Ottawa River just east of Templeton (Quebec).

Battle Lake, Chevreuil Lake and Louise Lake all drain into Rhéaume Lake, which feeds into the McLaren Bay area, flowing into Ruisseau Carroll (Carroll Creek), which flows northeast to meet the Rivière Lièvre, just north of Poupore.

To the east of Battle Lake, there is another ridge of high ground which forms a watershed. The waters from Corrigan Lake run into Maskinongé Lake; they then pass out of the Domain into Kendall Lake, then to the Ruisseau Hillman (Hillman Creek), which flows southeast to meet the Lièvre River – a bit north of Buckingham. The Lièvre River meets the Ottawa River at Masson (Quebec).

From the time water flows out of each of our lakes – no matter which watershed it is in, to its reaching the Ottawa River – it drops by more than three times the height of Niagara Falls!

No official records seem to be kept for the depth of our lakes, but anecdotal evidence says that much of Battle Lake is about 185 feet (56 metres) deep, while most of Rhéaume Lake is in the 35 to 60 feet (10 to 18 metres) range although there is a trench which reaches about 90 feet (27 metres) in depth. This trench would be the result of gouging action by the glaciers of earlier times.

THIS LAND IS OUR LAND

In the early 1970's, Environment Canada produced a series of maps portraying the potential of Canada's land:

- ❑ There is a “moderate capability” for recreation, the land being useful for family boating and recreational lodging. There are particular opportunities for gathering and collecting items of popular interest, some parts having interesting rock formations.
- ❑ There are “severe limitations” to the growth of commercial forests due to thin top soil and unsuitable topography.
- ❑ “Severe limitations” also apply to the production of waterfowl as a result of adverse topography.
- ❑ The production of hoofed animals, such as deer, has “moderate limitations”, except in the area around and south of Maskinongé Lake which has only “slight limitations”.
- ❑ The soil has no capability for crop use or permanent pasture because of its stoniness and shallowness to bedrock.

COCKTAILS FROM THE CLOUDS

Most of the stone in the area does not react readily with chemicals, but there are pockets of rocks, such as calcite, which do help to counter or buffer acid rain. Although the rain falling in Perkins-sur-le-lac has been measured as very acidic, when it enters our lakes it tends to be neutralised so that the water in which we swim in is of a chemical nature which is usually not harmful to us.

The closest site at which governments' monitor the effects of acid rain on a lake is at Sheridan Lake, which is about 4 or 5 miles (7 km) north of Perkins-sur-le-lac (near McFee Lake). In testing regularly since 1983, they have found the pH and other important chemical and physical features of that lake not only to be quite stable, but usually to be at a level which is well suited for most fish and other types of aquatic life. Clair Lake, which is near Philippe Lake in the Gatineau Park, is also monitored and shows a similar picture.

In general, many studies have shown that Perkins-sur-le-lac is in an area which receives rain, which is badly contaminated with acids and other chemicals, but the effect of these on the lakes has, as far as we know, not yet been serious to either humans or other forms of life.

One regular feature, which is a cause for concern, is that the chemicals in the precipitation tend to build-up and become concentrated in the snow and ice during the winter. Then when the melt comes in the spring, they are released suddenly into the lakes. This creates lake water which is at its worst for a few weeks until nature brings the whole environment back into equilibrium. The shock of this temporary effect each spring can do harm to a variety of aquatic life forms. It comes at about the time that fish and frogs are spawning, and when most other living organisms in and around the lakes are at a critical period in their reproduction. If the spring thaw occurs rapidly, and is accompanied by heavy rain, the chemicals in the snow and ice are released into the lakes in a very concentrated form and the effects are maximised. If the thaw is slower, the melted water has a chance to filter and percolate through the soil for a period of time, which helps to neutralise it, so the shock to the lakes is lessened.

Although our rock is fairly chemically inert, it is possible that very acidic precipitation could leach trace quantities of metal ions into the lake water. There is the potential that if these metals were to accumulate in the water, the consequences to all forms of life in and around the lakes might be serious. Very little is known about whether or not this is happening and what the effects would be.

THE FIRST PROPERTY OWNERS

On the 26th of March, 1807, the Township of Templeton was established in the County of Ottawa, Quebec. (The county name was later changed to Hull County!) The Township stretched from Pointe-Gatineau, in the southwest, to what is now our Domain in the northeast. It was divided into thirteen “ranges”, which ran from east to west, with each range being split into 28 lots of about 200 acres each. At the north edge of the Township, there was a “gore” which contained 46 lots of approximately 100 acres each.

Perkins-sur-le-lac comprises roughly of Lots 1 to 9 of each of the Ranges XII and XIII, plus lots 1 to 15 of the Gore. Appendix A (page 20) shows the approximate original lot boundaries of this plan, superimposed on today’s map of Perkins-sur-le-lac.

In the early 1800’s, the whole Township was government land. Appendix B (page 21) lists the first owners who bought these lots from the government.

In 1975, a realignment of boundaries put the Perkins Municipality, including Perkins-sur-le-lac, into the new Municipality of Val-des-Monts, which also contains parts of several other jurisdictions. The southern portion of

Templeton Township became the City of Gatineau.

Our Domain is within the area which covers the National Capital Commission.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Perkins: The village is named after John Adams Perkins, who was an early settler in the area, and who built a saw mill in about 1845. In days gone by, the village was often referred to as Perkins Mills because it had both a saw mill and a flour mill, but its official name has always been just plain Perkins. John A. Perkins was born in the United States but came to Canada in about 1830. We do not know how he learnt of the forestry potential in this area, but he came to the Outaouais no later than 1841, making the difficult journey up the Blanche River by canoe – with long and difficult portages – found a site where he felt a sawmill was viable and had it in operation by 1845. In 1842, on June 2nd, he became the owner of 200 acres of land – Lot 13 of Range IX – for 60 pounds. In subsequent years, he became the owner of much more land within reach of his sawmill and, indeed, although he belonged to the Church of Scotland – a Protestant denomination – he donated 200 acres to the Catholic Mission of Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue. He died in 1871 and was buried in Montreal on March 9th.

Barnes: Edwards A. Barnes acquired Lot 14 of Range XI from the government on August 27, 1847, one of the first persons to buy government land in the area. Barnes Lake is in Lot 7 of Range XII, which is about 2 miles (3 km) east of the parcel which Barnes purchased, but it is highly likely that the lake derived its name from him although the exact circumstances are not known. In her

excellent 1988 book, *Historic Walks – The Gatineau Park Story*, Katharine Fletcher talks about a Miles Barnes who lived as a hermit near Kingsmere Lake towards the end of the 19th century. Today in the Chelsea area, there is a Barnes Road and a Hermit Trail, both named after him. It seems likely that there is a family linkage between these two men, both with the name Barnes.

Battle: How Battle Lake got its name is mentioned earlier in this paper, although the year in which the fight took place does not seem to be recorded. The name Battle Lake appears on a map drawn by George F. Austin in October 1861.

Chevreuil / Deer: When the new Municipality of Val-des-Monts was formed in 1975, it brought together pieces of several previous ones. It also found itself with three lakes, each called Chevreuil Lake. In 1995, after twenty years of confusion, its planning staff decided that henceforth the one in Perkins-sur-le-lac would be referred to as Chevreuil Lake to distinguish it from the others.

Corrigan: This is a good, old Irish name and many of the earliest settlers in the area were Irish. No records have been found of the person who gave his/her name to Corrigan Lake. Maps produced up to and including 1891 did not even show this lake.

Louise: The name Louise Lake is fairly new. For over a hundred years, most official maps have referred to it as Sucker Lake and still do so today.

Maskinongé: This is an Algonkian word for “big fish”, but in the French language today it is used in Quebec for the muskellunge (musky) species of fish.

McLaren: The bay in Rhéaume Lake owes its name to one of the descendants of David and Elizabeth Maclaren, who emigrated from Scotland to the Ottawa Valley in 1822. In the 19th century the spelling of names was not always consistent. The present day paper and lumber company bears the name Maclaren, but the McLarens and the McLaurins listed in Appendix B (page 21) all belonged to the same family.

Rhéaume: Rhéaume Lake is situated on Range XIII, Lots 2 to 6, and it had this name on an 1861 map. Jean-Baptiste Rhéaume’s name is found in a document, dated 1862, as living at the edge of the lake. However, a census taken in 1861 shows the same name, and his wife Roberte, his son, also called Jean-Baptiste, his son’s wife, and his son’s two young children, Eustache and Léon, as having a farm on Range XIII, Lot 28, which is about 3 miles (5 km) west of McGregor Lake. Historians do not know the exact story, but they are pretty sure that this family is the origin of the lake’s name.

In La Belle Province, according to a provincial government listing, there are two Barnes Lakes, only one Battle Lake, 57 Lacs Chevreuil or variations of it, three Lacs Corrigan, 32 Lacs Louise, six Lacs Maskinongé, three Lacs Rhéaume, 68 Lacs Truite / Trout Lake, and three McLaren Bays. This listing does not include Chevreuil Lake, Corrigan Lake, Louise Lake and Trout Lake in Perkins-sur-le-lac.

The earliest detailed map of the area, published in 1825, shows our largest lakes, but no names are attached to them.

George Austin’s 1861 map shows and names Battle Lake, Rhéaume Lake, Maskinongé Lake and Barnes Lake. Chevreuil Lake is shown but not named

and no other lakes are shown in Perkins-sur-le-lac. This pattern is repeated on many other maps until 1891, when the name McLaren's Bay appears, and Sucker Lake is also introduced.

The early maps all show Battle Lake and Barnes Lake in English, Rhéaume Lake in French and Maskinongé sometimes in one language and sometimes in the other!

FOR ROADS SCHOLARS

The road now called Blackburn Road is not shown, even without a name, on the 19th century maps, nor are any other roads (tracks) in Perkins-sur-le-lac, except that of an 1891 cartographer that includes a road running from the northeast tip of Rhéaume Lake in a straight line, northeast direction to the Lièvre River. This map also includes roads from the northeast point of Maskinongé Lake, following the north side of the Hillman Creek to the Lièvre Valley, and one from the south end of Barnes Lake going south past the German Co. Phosphate Mine (later called the Blackburn Mine), and then turning west to the Village of Perkins.

In light of the fact that this map was drawn before much significant mining took place, and that the Maskinongé to Lièvre track was not close to any mines, it indicates that these were built as logging roads, although the Rhéaume to Lièvre route – and also that from Barnes to Perkins – was used extensively over the following few decades to transport the minerals extracted from the mines which were starting to produce.

A 1920 map shows a track running from McGregor Lake to near the shore of

Battle Lake at what is now Wallingford Road. This was the earliest record of our present Blackburn Road. A 1941 map shows this point as still being the end of the trail.

OUR ROCK GROUP

The main type of rock in the area has the geological name of gneiss (pronounced "nice"). It is a rock which is of volcanic origin, but over many tens of millions of years the original material has been transformed by tremendous pressures: by great heat under the earth's surface, and by chemical actions into the very hard rock which we have today. It is granular, with individual mineral crystals often being visible to the naked eye.

It is frequently in bands of different colours, the shade being determined by the nature of the material from which it originated – by the metamorphic processes to which it was subjected, and by the chemicals which it contains in small quantities. Light coloured areas are typically made up of crystals of quartz and feldspar, while darker bands are usually mica and pyroxene. Each of these types is quite common in and around Perkins-sur-le-lac.

Intruded into our area there are broad streaks of pink rock (syenite) which are very visible in some places. This pink material is a mixture of quartz and pink feldspar which was forced, as molten magma, into cracks in the existing rock where they later cooled and crystallised deep in the Earth's crust over six hundred million years ago. There are also seams of marble (crystalline limestone) in the region.

The first rock to be of commercial value in Perkins-sur-le-lac is apatite, which is a major source of phosphate. There are many veins of it, both thick and thin. It is a hard and heavy rock, and is usually green but can be reddish or brown.

The other mineral which brought miners and speculators to our Domain is mica, which is often found in close proximity to the apatite.

When the rocks in the region were first formed over a billion years ago, there was virtually no vegetation or other forms of life. As a result, there are no fossil fuels, such as coal or oil in the ground today. Don't bother drilling!

MINING – DO YOU DIG IT?

The recent Canada Map Office's maps of the region show two "abandoned mines" in Perkins-sur-le-lac, plus another one just outside its border, but some reading of old government publications reveals that this understates the activity which took place about a hundred years ago.

Mica and apatite were first reported in the region in 1831 by F.L. Ingall. The economic possibilities of the minerals in the area created considerable activity between about 1875 and 1890. Prospecting was intense, entrepreneurs bought land from the Crown, and money was raised to open up mines.

Phosphate rock, apatite, is used primarily to produce fertilisers, although there was also some demand to manufacture phosphoric acid and phosphoric salts for chemical applications, including phosphate detergents.

The local apatite mineral was often easier to extract than its equivalent being mined in Ontario, so the mining industry began to put its money, and hopefully make its profits, in the Perkins area. Much of the production found its way to super phosphate factories in Great Britain. This was aided by the fact that the area's output was located within comparatively easy reach of water and rail transport to the Port of Montreal. It was transported from Templeton Station on the Canadian Pacific's Ottawa to Montreal North Shore rail line. The station has long since disappeared but the rails are still in use – Route 366 crosses them between Highway 50 and Route 148. The exact route taken to get the material from Perkins-sur-le-lac to Templeton Station is not recorded, but most of it was skidded during the winter when frozen lakes and rivers provided a path of least resistance.

The mineral realised high prices so a phosphate boom occurred in the region during the late eighties and early nineties. The extensive apatite deposits in the Perkins-sur-le-lac area were exploited on a large scale. However, some higher grade deposits were discovered in Florida at the beginning of this century, and Florida soon replaced Canada as a major commercial source.

Mica crystals are found as sheets or scales, and are used because they can be readily split into thin, elastic films which are fairly transparent and very resistant to heat. It can then be used as an insulating material in electrical equipment and also as a heat insulator in stoves, lighting fixtures, etc. Although it was widely used for these purposes decades ago, it has now largely been replaced by other materials; however, many electric toasters still use it. Small particles of mica are often used today as simulated snow on Christmas decorations.

OUR HOLES IN THE GROUND

Three main mines were operated within what is now Perkins-sur-le-lac: The Battle Lake Mine, The Rhéaume Lake Mine and The King Edward Mine.

The lots mentioned below in the descriptions of the mining activities are shown in Appendix A (page 20.)

The Battle Lake Mine, Range XIII, Lots 4 and 5: Considerable quantities of high-grade apatite were extracted from these pits during 1886-87 by the Anglo-Canadian Phosphate Company of London, but in 1887 the company abandoned it. By 1900, the property had been bought by the Wallingford Mica Company, who opened it for mica mining in that year, and it was still in production in 1920.

The main mica workings were located about 100 yards (90 metres) from the north shore of Battle Lake, and consisted of a large open pit, or quarry, some 200 feet (70 metres) across and 70 feet (22 metres) deep, from the bottom of which drifts were cut to follow seams containing mica. This is now the area across Blackburn Road from the Battle Lake Beach, which many present property owners know as the compound used by Bert Reece until a few years ago.

The old phosphate pits lie nearer the south shore of Rhéaume Lake and consist of a number of small openings on several, more or less, parallel seams of green apatite. A few years before 1920, some small mica pits were opened on the steep north shore of Rhéaume Lake, opposite the Battle Lake Mine workings. This land was part of the same lot, but not much effort appears to have been put into it. Considerable quantities of a mauve and purple gemstone, called wilsonite, are also reported in these north shore mica pits,

some of it being of a quality suitable for jewellery making.

A 1920 Mines Branch report states that the phosphate mineral from this mine was hauled to the Lièvre River, 2.5 miles (4 km) distance, and shipped to Buckingham where there were two plants: one for making phosphorus from the mineral, and the other for turning it into super phosphate fertiliser. The production from mines in the region was normally accumulated in the summer and autumn because it was easier to transport it out during the winter months by hauling it over frozen lakes, rivers and paths. The route from the mine to the Lièvre River was probably over the frozen Rhéaume Lake, then by the path mentioned earlier as running from the northeast point of the lake.

The mica operations, which were attractive to the owners because they produced some very large crystals with a high market value, were started in 1900 and employed an average of fifteen men. Equipment included a 30 HP horizontal boiler to produce steam power, steam drills, a hoist, three derricks, a pump, and a tramway to convey waste to where it was dumped. A spacious boarding house provided accommodation for thirty miners.

The mica was described as first class, light silver-amber in colour and an “excellent splitter”. The percentage of the excavated rock, which was useable mica, was “far above average”. One crystal weighed 200 lbs (90 kg) – cut into sheets measuring 14” X 19” (35 cm X 48 cm) – while another gave commercially useful sheets of 19½” X 27” (50 cm X 68 cm). Such sheets had a high commercial value.

The diagram on the next page shows a “cobbing shed” at the mine site. Cobbing is the process of separating the raw mica

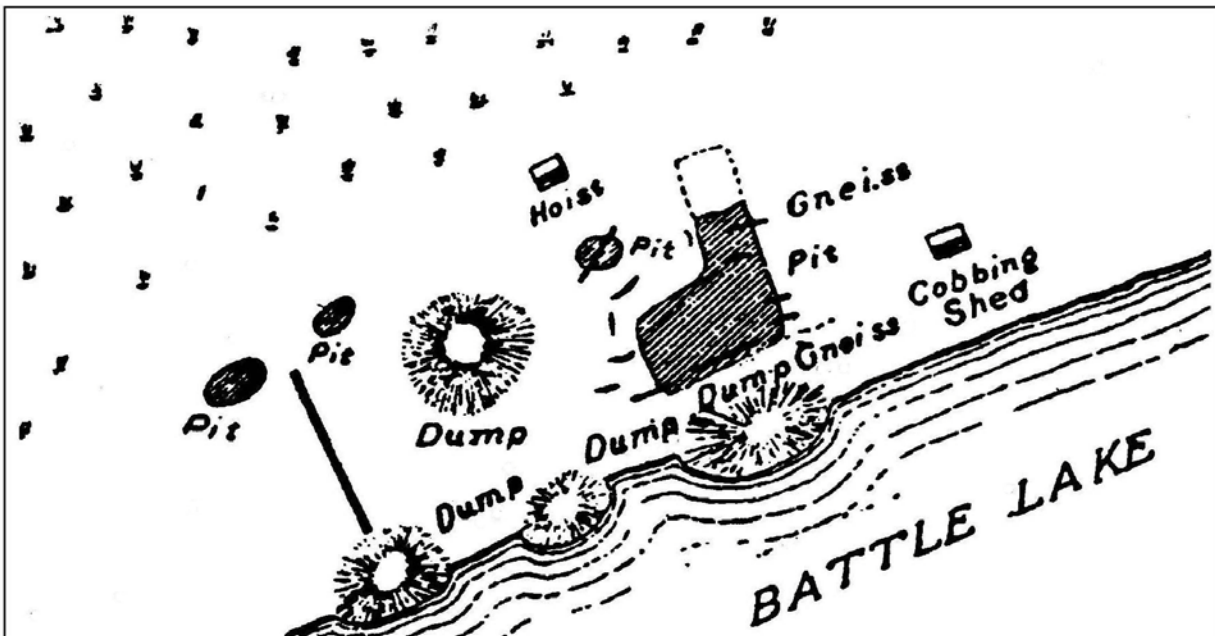
from the rock within which it is found. After cobbing in the area, the material from the mines was shipped to “trimming shops” where it was carefully separated by hand, classified and trimmed into the thin sheets which were commercially valuable. These trimming shops provided employment for many women. In 1912, ten such factories were counted in Ottawa, and in 1930 there were reported to be at least five in Hull, three in Ottawa, and one in Buckingham. E. Wallingford, who owned the Battle Lake Mine – and also the Rhéaume Lake and King Edward Mines (see below) – had a mica processing shop in Perkins. In and around the Village there were also women who helped to sustain the family by performing this work in their kitchens at home. One report says that a typical worker could produce 4½ lbs (2 kg) in a nine-hour day, for which she would be paid 75 cents – a very good wage in the period before the First World War.

At the mines, an 1885 paper states that skilled miners were paid \$1.50 to \$2.00

per day and the labourers got \$0.80 to \$1.25; both included board and lodging. The paper also commented that this was considered good pay: at the time bread cost less than 5 cents a loaf and eggs were 15 cents a dozen. The normal working day was 12 hours long, but reduced a bit in winter because of the fewer hours of daylight. Most of the miners were in the 20 to 40 age range and the majority were not married. By ancestry, the French, Irish, Scottish and English were all well represented.

During 1886 to 1887, the company which owned the Battle Lake Mine in the 1880’s – the two next lots to the west in the same range, Lots 6 and 7 – carried out considerable work there, including the installation of a steam plant. However, after 1887 they withdrew from the region altogether.

There is also a report of mica outcrops in Range XIII, Lot 3, which is just east of the Battle Lake Mine.



This diagram of the Battle Lake Mine was published in 1905.

The Rhéaume Lake Mine, Gore, Lot 3: This mine was the property of the Wallingford Mica Mining Company and was situated about 300 yards (270 metres) from the north shore of Rhéaume Lake, on the side of a steep ridge overlooking the lake. Started in 1901, the workings consisted of two pits about 25 feet (8 metres) deep, opened on several small seams of dark silver-amber mica accompanied by large quantities of high grade phosphate. Work was continued intermittently at the site for about ten years.

No machinery was used at these pits – all excavation being done with picks, chisels and muscle power – but there were two horse derricks to raise the mineral to the surface. There were also culling sheds. The author of a report in 1912 visited the site only to find the mine full of water so he could not examine the workings.

The King Edward Mine, Gore, Lot 8: This operation is about 300 yards (270 metres) north of the north western shore of McLaren Bay, which projects from Rhéaume Lake. It is on the same ridge as the Rhéaume Lake pits, which are over a quarter of a mile (400 metres) further east. At the time of its working there were no roads leading to it – access being by water.

There is a large deposit of phosphate here and considerable work was carried out in 1886 by the Anglo-Canadian Phosphate Company. There were three main openings for extracting the mineral, each reaching a depth of about 25 feet (8 metres).

The mine was later owned by Messrs. Wallingford, Cornu and Belcourt and some mica was extracted. No machinery was ever used at this mine, although it was equipped with two horse derricks (which would have been used to haul the mineral from the bottom of the pit to the surface), a boarding house and culling sheds.

It is reported that at this location there were found some crystals of vitreous blue scapolite, a hard gemstone, which is of interest to collectors and gem cutters.

In addition to these three main excavations, there were workings at several other sites in the Domain.

Gore, Lot 6: A few small openings were made in the 1880's by a Mr. Murphy. Then in 1904, Messrs. Watts and Noble of Perth (Ontario) worked for a few months with a couple of men. The amount of phosphate produced was "inconsiderable". In 1910, the Kent Bros. then acquired the site and had a few men employed there with unknown results.

Gore, Lot 9: This was owned by the same company as the Battle Lake Mine and some digging was carried out, but there are no reports of them having extracted any material.

Range XII, Lot 4: Mr. E. Watts of Perth (Ontario) carried out some minor prospecting in the first decade of the 1900's. Then, in 1909, he sold it to Messrs. O'Brien and Fowler who set some men to work on it in 1910. Outcrops of mica were found at several points, the most promising being a few hundred yards from the south shore of Battle Lake, on the north side of the ridge between Battle Lake and Corrigan Lake.

This area had some good sized crystals of darkish, mottled mica, but there were considerable differences in the quality of the mica found at points only a short distance apart. The crystals taken from one outcrop were of a light silver-amber quality with excellent splitting properties, while a few feet away the sheets were dark and brittle.

Only a small number of minor patches of phosphate were found here.

Range XII, Lot 5: This lot belonged to Mr. H. Ayles of Ottawa in the early years of this century. A little work was done in 1908 by Mr. P. Hamilton, under lease from the owner. Some large crystals of mica were found but they were rather crushed which limited their value.

Range XII, Lot 8: There is a mention of mica being mined in this lot, but no other information is available.

Range XIII, Lot 3: Some mica outcrops have been reported here, east of the Battle Lake Mine.

NEIGHBOURING HOLES IN THE GROUND

The Blackburn Mine, Range XI, Lots 8, 9, 10 and 11: This mine was reportedly opened in 1888 by Messrs. Blackburn of the company Blackburn Bros. of Ottawa. (Today there is a Blackburn Building on Sparks Street, Ottawa; a Blackburn Avenue in Sandy Hill, Ottawa; Blackburn Hamlet in South-East Ottawa; and a Blackburn Creek which flows into the Gatineau River opposite Kirk's Ferry.) The mine was situated just

southwest of Barnes Lake, near Mud Bay, and just outside the present Perkins-sur-le-lac boundary. Access to it was not from Blackburn Road but by a road which ran due south from the mine; this road is now marked as de la Mine Road.

(There was also considerable rivalry between the Wallingfords and the Blackburns!)

The Blackburn Mine's original purpose was to extract phosphate and over 100,000 tons (100 million kg) of apatite for phosphate was produced. However, it soon became the largest mica producer in the district and at one time employed up to 120 people. In total, this mine produced more mica than any other mine in Canada. Mining ceased in December 1909 because it became less expensive to import mica from Madagascar than to dig it up in our area as their labour costs were less than Canada's!

According to the report, the principal excavation was an open pit over 300 feet (92 metres) long, 180 feet (55 metres) wide, and 120 feet (37 metres) deep. From the southeast end there were underground workings in an easterly direction, with three galleries: 300 to 500 feet (92 to 150 metres) long, at levels of 180, 240 and 280 feet (55, 73 and 85 metres), joined by a shaft 160 feet (50 metres) deep. The galleries were up to 25 feet (8 metres) high.

The underground workings were electrically lit; the power for the lighting, pumps, compressors and motors coming from a power house which the Blackburn Bros. built near the outlet of Dam Lake, about 2½ miles (4 km) away from the mine. It was the only mine in the Perkins /

Perkins-sur-le-lac area which had electric power. There were two steam hoists which could be operated either by steam or compressed air. Hoisting was done in iron buckets on 2" (5 cm) cables, suspended from two wooden towers, rising 60 feet (18 metres) above the ground. There was a tramway with large wooden tipping cars, each holding 6 tons (5,400 kg) of rock and drawn by teams of horses.

In the early phosphate mining days at the site, large quantities of mica were thrown on the dumps as useless. When the demand for this mineral rose, a force of some twenty to thirty men were employed for a year in turning over the large heaps of discarded rock to recover the mica.

When the 1912 report was being prepared, the camp was described as having a large boarding house that accommodated over a hundred men, a stable for fifteen teams of horses, a store house, a weigh house, and the manager's quarters and offices. Oakley Carey, who is well known to many of our property owners, was born at the mine site. His father and grandfather had each in turn been managers of this mine. He tells that at one time there were twenty-four buildings at the mine.

The mica is described as a first class light amber, with the crystals being either individuals or in small aggregates which are embedded in the phosphate. About 50% of the mica mined was commercially valuable – a high proportion. The phosphate was extracted simultaneously with the mica.

The Blackburn Bros. had a mica trimming shop at 303 Maisonneuve Street in Hull. The building has long since

disappeared. It would have been situated just east of the Maisonneuve / Sacré Coeur intersection, in the area which today is a tangle of ramps and roads where Maisonneuve Boulevard, the MacDonald-Cartier Bridge, and the Highways 50, 5 and 148 all converge. Much of the mine's output was also processed in Ottawa.

On the north side of McGregor Lake, the Oblate religious order had a summer residence for its young missionaries in training. In the summer of 1899, a group of them visited the Blackburn Mine when one wrote (in French): "Soon we arrived at Mud Bay. As the name indicates, it is a slimy bay of brackish water. The water lilies which dotted it made it more pleasant by their perfume and their fresh colours. We stopped for a while on the road leading to the mine. After eating we decided to go on and visit the mine... We descended, by means of a cable attached at the top, into an enormous hole shaped like a funnel. The mine, we were told, was more than two hundred feet deep and it was very dangerous to work there because of the rock falls. After having visited and admired the gigantic works, we were taken to visit the cook. The one luxury of their quarters was the neatness. The tables and benches were the main furniture. We were welcomed with great courtesy... He prepared a table with cakes, cream and pies covering a white cloth... It was time to leave our hosts. We invited them to come to see our big fête on August 2nd."

Although the mine was closed in 1909, the 1912 report notes that there were still considerable reserves of both mica and phosphate.

Then the market changed once again. Uses and a demand were found for small pieces of mica which had previously been of no commercial value. So once again a workforce was hired – in 1929 it numbered about twenty-five – and they were put to work mining both new material and going over afresh the discarded dumps to retrieve the sellable mica. Some activity at the site continued until 1942.

Buckingham Township, Range XII, Lots 26 and 27: The Vennor Mine also lies just outside the present Perkins-sur-le-lac, a few 100 feet east of Chevreuil Lake. It was worked for apatite in several pits in the early 1880's, with some openings having been made as early as 1872.

There was also a variety of other similar activity only a few miles from Perkins-sur-le-lac. In addition to other mica mines, graphite – which was valuable as a lubricant, as contacts in electrical motors and also as the “lead” in pencils – was mined just north of Donaldson Lake and at several points in the Lièvre Valley, not far from Perkins-sur-le-lac. Graphite and diamonds are both pure carbon. So, if there is graphite in the area is it possible that there are also diamonds? Highly improbable – the pressures and temperatures which create diamonds are much greater than those which produce graphite.

There was work near Cantley (Quebec) to extract titanite, a source of titanium dioxide which is widely used as a white pigment in paints, papers, ceramics and cosmetics.

Feldspar attracted some mining to the east of our Domain; it is used in pottery, clay products, glass and scouring powders.

There have been numerous attempts to find viable sites for mining the asbestos – which is present in a variety of formations near but not in Perkins-sur-le-lac – but none of the deposits were found to be of adequate quality or quantity to justify the investment required for mining it.

Today there are no operational mines of any type in the Outaouais / Southwest Quebec area.

A short drive from our properties, the Laflèche Caves have recently been reopened and guided tours are available during part of the year. Dating back 12,000 to 20,000 years, these are the largest caves in the Canadian Shield. Major work has considerably enlarged the space in the caves, which is accessible to visitors. They are described as “a stunning underground world, with unexpected natural architectural formations... one of nature's most unique and exciting wonders”. Facilities for guests are in place and it's also a good spot for a picnic. A truly fascinating trip which is only a few minutes from your cottage!

The Eco-Museum in Hull is also close by and gives more insight into the natural history of the land where we cottage and live.

The Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa has a small permanent exhibit of the geology of the Ottawa / Outaouais area. Specimens of most of the rocks and minerals mentioned above are displayed there, although these samples were not collected in Perkins-sur-le-lac.

TIDBITS

Until a realignment of municipalities in 1976, Perkins was a municipality in its own right, founded in 1909. In 1967, Perkins had a population of 1,228.

- Federal Election Riding of Gatineau-La Lièvre.
- Provincial Election Riding of Papineau.

NATIVE LAND

CLAIMS IN THE AREA

The Kitigan-Zibi Band of Algonquin Indians, based in the Maniwaki (Quebec) area, claims that a major part of the Outaouais, including Perkins-sur-le-lac, belongs to them. The claim is grinding its way through Justice Canada to determine whether or not the claim might have any legal validity. (*Source:* John Leslie, (819) 994-1182, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1994 /12 /14.)

ROCKS

Large masses of granite and pink syenite which show where large volumes of rocks were at one time molten and squeezed into the surrounding rocks (*Source:* Dr. D.M. Baird.)

OTHER

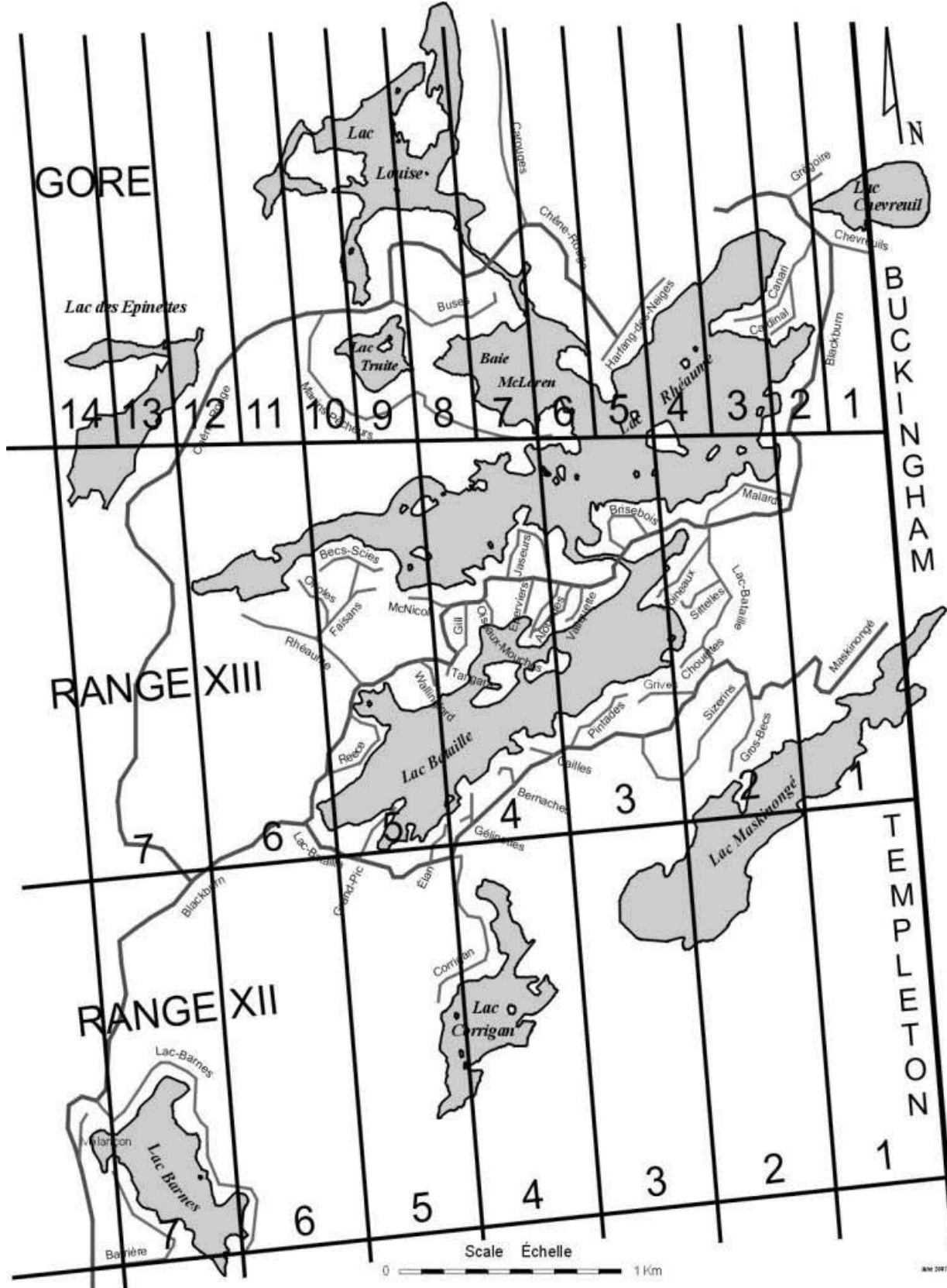
Perkins-sur-le-lac enjoys about 140 days of frost-free weather each year.

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THE LOTS OF PERKINS-SUR-LE-LAC



FIRST PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE DOMAIN				
RANGE	LOT	OWNER	YEAR	AREA
XII	1	Richard Conroy	1854	S 100 acres
	1	Robert Blackburn	1875	N 75 acres
	2	Richard Conroy	1854	S 100 acres
	2	Robert Blackburn	1875	N 75 acres
	3	John McLaurin and Robert Blackburn	1865	200 acres
	4	McPherson Lemoyne	1869	200 acres
	5	Alexander Foster	1881	200 acres
	6	Alexander Foster	1881	200 acres
	7	Alexander Foster	1881	200 acres
	8	Alexander Foster	1881	N 100 acres
	8	Alexander McLaurin	1881	S 111 acres
	9	John McLaurin	1889	S 5 acres
XIII	1	James Gibb, Jr.	1869	135 acres
	2	James McLaren	1869	143 acres
	3	John Flemming	1878	119 acres
	4	John Flemming	1878	241 acres
	5			
	6	W.A. Allen	1878	389 acres
	7			
8	Charles E. Graham	1878	294 acres ¹	

¹ It includes part of another lot not within Perkins-sur-le-lac.

FIRST PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE DOMAIN				
RANGE	LOT	OWNER	YEAR	AREA
GORE	1	Edward Watts	1877	144 acres
	2	Peter A. Peterson and J. Kennedy	1878	272 acres Lots 2 and 10
	3 4	Andrew Main	1878	217 acres
	5	Henry W. Shepherd	1878	124 acres
	6	Maria Murphy	1881	351 acres ²
	7	Arthur H. Murphy	1881	121 acres
	8	Peter A. Peterson and three others	1878	137 acres
	9	W.A. Allan	1878	141 acres
	10	Peter A. Peterson and J. Kennedy	1878	272 acres Lots 2 and 10
	11	Alexander McLaurin	1878	406 acres ²
	12	James K. Whyte	1885	127 acres

² It includes two other lots not in Perkins-sur-le-lac.