RECONNAISSANCE

and

PRELIMINARY RECREATION PLAN

of the

CROOKED RIVER FOREST RESERVE

By

L. BROOKS
FORESTER-IN-TRAINING
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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location and Access:

The Crooked River Forest Reserve encompasses the Crooked River watershed extending from Summit Lake to Fort McLeod at the northern extremity of McLeod Lake. It is reached by the Hart Highway which enters this reserve at a point 25 miles north of Prince George. When completed, the highway will pass through the Crooked River Forest for a distance of about 65 miles. This is a new highway built in accordance with the highest standards of highway design with long radius curves and extensive cut and fill work making for long straight stretches. When graded, safe speeds up to 60 miles per hour are possible. At the time of this survey the road was accessible as far as the southern extremity of McLeod Lake but eventually it will link the Peace River District with Prince George by way of Pine Pass. It will then become a major supply and tourist route to northern British Columbia and the whole length of the Crooked River Forest will be readily accessible to motorists.
Topography and Geology:

The Crooked River Forest is located in a region of low topographic relief. The poorly defined drainage system and many swamps are evidence of fairly recent glaciation of this region. Generally speaking, the rivers are slow moving, lakes are shallow and a high percentage of the area is occupied by swamplands. This latter fact is particularly noticeable when flying over the region.

The Crooked River looking south. Note low, rolling country.

Heavy clay and black muck make up a high percentage of the soils but wide ridges of sand and gravel crisscross the region due, no doubt, to the vagaries of glacial action. These are particularly evident in the Heart-Bear Lake area.

From the recreationalist's point of view perhaps the most
interesting geologic formations in the Crooked River Forest are the two peculiar shaped mountains, Teapot Mountain at the northern end of Summit Lake and Coffeepot Mountain several miles north, but south of Davie Lake. These are remarkably similar formations of a low, rounded form but, in spite of their unspectacular height, they are well-known and prominent landmarks in this comparatively flat country. Whether these rocky protrusions are the summits of once lofty mountain ranges now mainly buried by glacial drift or if they are batholithic extrusions similar to those of the Coast ranges but on a smaller scale, can only be answered by a study of the region by qualified geologists.

River boat about to leave Summit Lake float for Hudson Bay Post at Fort McLeod. This is now a thing of the past due to the construction of the Hart Highway. River boats now leave from Fort McLeod for the north country.
II. SUMMIT LAKE

Description and Location:

Summit Lake, 32 miles north of Prince George by Hart Highway is the first of the series of lakes making up the Crooked River drainage system. The divide between the Arctic and Pacific watersheds crosses the Hart Highway approximately seven miles south of this lake thus the waters of Summit Lake eventually find their way to the Arctic Ocean by way of the Peace and Mackenzie River systems. This is a fact of considerable interest to the tourist travelling this region and could be more fully exploited by the placing of a suitable marker where the divide crosses the highway.

Summit Lake

Summit Lake is irregularly shaped; roughly L-shaped with each
arm being about four miles long. The many bays and islands give a sense of seclusion to boating enthusiasts and fishermen. These features also add much to its scenic beauty and general interest.

The land surrounding Summit Lake is low, rolling and mostly forested with close stands of white spruce and balsam varying in age from sapling stands to mature timber. Much of the bordering land is swampy, especially that at the extremities of the bays and arms. These swamplike areas greatly reduce the potential value of the lake for recreational developments by increasing the cost of access roads, limiting the number of building sites and providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Summit appears to be a very shallow lake. Summer temperatures quickly warm its waters making it a popular swimming lake for local residents. In this respect, it has a distinct advantage over Cluola Lake, another popular recreation lake situated 40 miles west of Prince George on the Vanderhoof Highway.

Most of the accessible shore waters of Summit Lake have gently sloping gravel or firm clay bottoms. Perhaps the worst feature with regard to its suitability for bathing is the brownish colour of its waters. This appears to be due to a type of algae which not only colours the water but forms a slippery brown film over the bottom of the lake. This does not appear to discourage local bathers, however.

Fishing:

Summit Lake has a considerable variety of game fishes in its
waters but large fish of any species are a rarity. Fish caught are generally about one pound in weight and under, although very occasionally four or five pound Great Lakes char are caught. Other common game fish are Dolly Varden char, Kamloops trout and Rainbow trout. The squaw fish, an undesirable, coarse fish, is perhaps the most frequently caught species.

The small size of fish in Summit Lake is probably due to a lack of feed. This may be the result of the long dormant stage each winter when the shallow waters, in which most of feed lies, are frozen.

Present Use:

In the last few years popular use of Summit Lake has undergone a significant change under the influence of the new Hart Highway. In the past, Summit Lake's chief value lay in its role as the southerly terminus of the river boat fleet which used to float huge quantities of freight down the Crooked River and into northeastern British Columbia, and the Arctic beyond. The Hart Highway is rapidly changing this picture as it pushes further northward. At the present time the southerly terminus for this river traffic is on Davis Lake some 20 miles north of Summit Lake and when the Hart Highway is finally completed, this river traffic will no doubt die out altogether.

The present major use of Summit Lake is for recreational pursuits. Although it has long been a swimming and boating lake for Prince George residents, the improved highway has increased this use until it is now one of the most popular recreational lakes in the district.
The river boats once used for transporting freight are now widely used as pleasure boats for fishing parties or tours around the many interesting islands and bays.

Although somewhat restricted by lack of facilities, picnickers and campers make up a sizeable crowd on weekends. Concentrations of 60 to 100 day users are common on Sunday afternoons. This use is centred around "Buck's" store, a typical small country store which caters to picnickers by providing a few picnic tables, outdoor toilets, swimming and diving float and a boat dock. The owner, Frank Buchanan, also operates a gas pump and rents out six small cabins usually on a monthly basis. He also owns a large-roomed log building used on occasion as a dance hall.

Most heavily used area on Summit Lake. Property in foreground privately owned. Building on right is Buck's store.
Two other commercial enterprises cater to the public at Summit Lake. Summit Lodge, which is still under construction, is an ambitious project operated by Mr. Alan Gough. He eventually hopes to operate a modern lodge and is well on the way toward that objective. At the time of this survey Mr. Gough was able to cater to small banquet groups and had two overnight rooms completed. He also operated a refreshment bar which did a small business with the picnickers and permanent residents.

Summit Lake Lodge, owned by Mr. B.B. Belford, is registered as a commercial lodge but has not been used extensively for this purpose. This owner originally planned to cater to a high class clientele by providing deluxe accommodation on the land between his lodge and the Bart Highway. However, the creation of the Crooked River Forest Reserve in 1949 disrupted his plans by making it impossible for him to purchase the required land. He did not consider that the Special Use Permit gave him secure enough tenure for a large-scale investment. The construction of a schoolhouse on land directly behind his present property further disrupted his plans.
Summit Lake has been used for summer homesites for over a quarter of a century. The first cabins were built on the islands and on the mainland in the vicinity of the river boat landing. The colony about the landing, originally a squatter's settlement, took on a permanent character and necessitated a survey in 1928 when Lot 10127 was subdivided into 21 blocks. In addition to this, Lots 9361, 9362, 9363 and all the islands were purchased for cabin sites. At the time of this survey two additional lots in the vicinity of Lot 9362 were under application for purchase. These applications were approved just prior to the setting aside of the Forest Reserve and at this time were awaiting survey by a B.C.I.S.
Three of the islands are occupied by well-built summer homes while two others are occupied by shacks which apparently are no longer used. The other four islands are undeveloped.

**Potential Recreational Use:**

1. Public Picnic and Camping Grounds

Although the Hart Highway has made Summit Lake more easily accessible from Prince George, it has had little affect in actually increasing the amount of accessible shoreline. Reference to the index map will show that the highway comes close to the lakeshore at only one point other than in Lot 10127. This is at the head of a small bay in Lot 4012 north of the present high use area. Unfortunately this bay has few of the desirable characteristics that have made the shoreline of 10127 so popular. The back shore of the south side of this bay is low, swampy and mosquito-infested. It would require costly brushing and fill work to make it usable for any recreational activity. The north side of the bay forms a flat-topped ridge with 15 to 25 degree slopes to the lake edge. It could be developed as a campground with but a short access road from the Hart Highway. The tip of this ridge where it slopes down into the lake could be converted to picnicking use but its relative isolation from the areas of more established use within Lot 10127 would probably detract from its popularity. Also, this shoreline has a somewhat confined appearance due to the proximity of the surrounding islands.
Only at the northwest corner of the promontory does one get any extensive view of the lake.

Summit Lake Scene

The best portions of the southern shore of Summit Lake have also been alienated already. In any event, the northern aspect of this shoreline makes it less desirable for use as a public picnicking and camping ground. Generally speaking, most backshores in this region with a northern aspect have a profuse growth of Devil's club and other undesirable, wet soil species which provide an ideal habitat for mosquitoes.

The only other area suitable for day use by the general public — in fact, the only accessible area on this lake which could be easily developed for such use — is the northwest fraction of Lot
10127, or more specifically, Blocks 18, 19, 20, 21 and that portion of Block 22 situated directly behind Block 18, the total comprising an area of about nine acres (refer to subdivision plan of Lot 10127). Although this land is, at present, in private hands it is occupied by only five cabins all of which are of cheap construction. The present low use of this potentially valuable fraction of land is, no doubt, a temporary situation which will change when the full affect of the Hart Highway is felt in this country.

If development of public recreational facilities on Summit Lake is proposed in the near future careful consideration of the above possibility should be made for, although this area would require purchase, this initial cost could be offset by low development and maintenance costs.

2. Summer Homesites

A cursory examination of Summit Lake gives the illusion that it is ideally suited for summer homesites. It is one of the most scenic lakes in the region, is accessible from Prince George by only 32 miles of modern highway, and its many bays and arms give promise of privacy to many potential summer home owners. Construction of access roads to all building sites would not be an absolute necessity. Some of the best cabins on this lake at present have been built in remote locations with materials and equipment transported to the sites by river boats.

Less favourable features of this lake are evident on closer
examination. Perhaps the worst feature is the great area of swamp-
lands which occupies much of the backshores and the land surrounding
Summit Lake. These provide breeding places for the numerous mos-
quitoses which plague the residents most of the summer. These pests
make it necessary to screen all windows and porches and greatly re-
strict outdoor activity, especially in the mornings and evenings.
The most effective method of control appears to be by clearing brush
and trees from the vicinity of the cabin allowing the sun to pene-
trate and dry out the surrounding land. Some measure of relief is
also obtained by building at the water’s edge where the lake breezes
tend to keep the mosquitoes down. Both of these practices are
admittedly not in line with the accepted theories of good planning
for summer homesites; especially so where, as in the region, it is
desired to retain as much of the wilderness character as possible.

Another serious problem which affects all recreational use
of this area is the lack of suitable water supply. It has been the
practice in the past to use the lake water for drinking purposes and
most of the permanent residents still use this supply. Increased
use of this lake will, no doubt, increase the chance of pollution
since it is a shallow lake with a sluggish outlet and no large inlet
streams. It appears to be predominately a seepage lake with a very
slow water turnover. Already some residents are transporting their
drinking water from a roadside spring ten miles north of Summit Lake.
Obviously, they have reason to suspect the purity of Summit Lake waters.

Attempts to dig wells in this vicinity have been unsuccessful due to the impermeable clayey nature of the soil. However, it is felt that a more determined effort to locate underground water would be successful, especially if technical advice was sought since permeable gravel beds are common in the region and it is quite possible that small deposits of water-bearing gravel exist even in this predominantly clay terrain.

Recommendations:

1. Proposed Public Reserve

It is proposed that the following area be set aside for future development as a public camping and picnicking grounds:

"The fractional NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Lot 4012 and all that part of the NE $\frac{3}{4}$ of Lot 4012 contained between its western boundary and a line paralleling the Hart Highway on the east side and ten chains from it (roughly sixty acres in all.)"

As previously noted, this fraction of land is far from being the ideal forest recreation site but it does represent the best land now available without resorting to purchase and may, in the future, be worth the expense necessary for its development.

2. Buffer Zone Reserve About Summit Lake

It has been suggested that a 20-chain buffer strip be reserved along the entire shoreline of Summit Lake. The purpose of this reserve would be to prevent logging operations from spoiling
the wilderness setting of the lake.

A uniform strip of untouched land set at an arbitrary width of 20 chains may not be the solution to this problem, however, since the width of strip required varies according to local conditions. For instance, a grass swamp may extend for a distance considerably over 20 chains from the lake edge allowing a clear view of timber beyond the 20-chain limit. On the other hand, a ridge may rise sharply from the water's edge then round off and slope steeply on the opposite side. In this case it would be possible to log close to the crest of the ridge without destroying scenic values even though the crest may be well within the 20 chain distance.

It seems that the best solution is to set the width of each buffer zone in the field by considering the affect of local cover and topography. This would mean that special care would be required in laying out timber boundaries paralleling the shorelines.

**Summer Home Sites:**

Three separate blocks of summer homesites were laid out during this survey; Their location is shown on the index map.

Block "A" - located on the east side of the Hart Highway parallels the Right-of-Way but the front line is 150 feet from the road centreline. There are five lots in this block, each with 150-foot frontage and 150-foot depth. It is expected that applications will be made for these lots almost immediately, since they are fairly close to the settled parts of Summit Lake. It is also expected that
the applicants will wish to build permanent homes rather than summer cabins.

Another problem raised will be that of the extent of clearing allowed both within each lot and between it and the highway. It is suggested that a certain amount of thinning be allowed but that clear cutting, especially of the trees between the front line and the highway Right-of-Way, should definitely not be permitted. The purpose of setting these sites back 150 feet was to prevent them from intruding on the highway.

Block "G" is located on the south shore of Summit Lake. It consists of six lots each 150 feet wide by 200 feet deep and 300 feet back from the lake edge. They are located on a nicely timbered, gently sloping backshore fronting on a shallow bay. It is felt that any extensive growth of the Summit Lake community will be in this direction although some difficulty will be encountered in building an access road along these shores due to the intervening swampy stretches.

Block "D", consisting of four lots, is located on the west shore of Summit Lake, an area in which a recent application for a cabin site was made. This is a pleasant but rather remote location for summer cabins. From the standpoint of soil condition, cover and available sites, however, it is one of the best locations on the lake.

III. TEAPOT MOUNTAIN

Description and Present Use:

This small, unusual mountain is one of the attractions of
Summit Lake. It is a popular viewpoint accessible by a steep trail from a boat landing on the west side of the outlet from Summit Lake. Numerous names inscribed on a pine stump at its summit testify to its frequent use by sightseers.

The top of this mountain is quite flat and parklike in places with an open growth of pine and Douglas fir. The sheer rock walls which exist on two sides are very unique in this region and appear to be curiously out of keeping with the structure of surrounding country.

The view from Teapot Mountain is outstanding since the comparatively flat topography makes it possible to see an unbroken stretch of wilderness for many miles in every direction. To the south, Summit Lake breaks the forest carpet with irregular pattern. To the north, the Crooked River cuts its way through the timber toward the distant hills of the McLeod Lake country while to the east and west the dark green of the forests is broken only by the lighter green patches of swamplands.

The importance of Teapot Mountain as a much-frequented viewpoint must be recognized in any inventory of the recreational resources of the Summit Lake region. The climb up this mountain and the rewarding views from its crest serve as a fitting climax to a well-rounded day of boating, swimming and fishing on Summit Lake.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that this mountain and the timber between it and the lakeshore be included in any reserve along the shores of
Summit Lake.

Improvement of the trail up Teapot Mountain, clearing of windfall at its summit and improvement of the boat landing should be done concurrently with any other public recreational development at Summit Lake.

IV. THE CROOKED RIVER

Description:

The Crooked River between Summit Lake and Davie Lake has unusual recreational potentialities. This 20-mile stretch of river is navigable by river boat and canoes but has several somewhat hazardous stretches which require careful navigation, particularly if travelled by canoe. The variety of river conditions and cover types on this trip make it interesting from this viewpoint alone. Add to this the good fishing encountered at several points and the occasional sight of a moose or bear and the net result is a day-long trip of unusual interest and experience.

The highlights of this boat trip are the runs down the riffles. These are stretches in the river where rapid changes in elevation cause swift flow and creation of the bar-like bottom conditions known as riffles. It is in these riffles that the best trout fishing is to be had.
A placid stretch in the Crooked River's course.

The first riffle encountered heading down the river from Summit Lake is the Cottonwood Riffle located a few miles north of the lake outlet. This is a short fast stretch of water with a quick turn at its foot. It is, perhaps, the easiest of the three main riffles to run.

Harrison Riffle, located ten miles below Summit Lake, is fairly long with very fast water and a boulder-strewn bottom which requires considerable care to navigate safely. The river boatmen have done much over the years to improve this riffle and others by clearing the main channel of boulders and building small breached dams to deepen the water in shallow places. This greatly lessens the danger of grounding but has not in any way spoiled the naturalness of the river since these low dams are barely discernible as such in
the turbulent waters.

The foot of Harrison Riffle, where it flows into a placid stretch of the river, is renowned for its good fly fishing. This spot can be reached by a short trail from the Hart Highway at a point 11 miles north of the turn-off to Summit Lake.

The most exciting and difficult of all the riffles to run is the Long Riffle located about 15 miles downstream from Summit Lake. This is actually a series of riffles which twist and turn through the brush and timber for over one mile. Parts of this are extremely fast and quite narrow with many gravel bars to upset the unwary boatsman. The one-mile stretch requires considerable effort and dexterity to navigate safely but the lengthy free run of the craft is a highlight of the trip.

At several points along the way the river widens to almost lakelike proportions where the placid waters are a restful contrast to the speed and action of the riffles. At other points the river is narrow and boulder strewn and closed over with overhanging trees. The last few miles consist of innumerable switchbacks along the willow-bordered flatlands at the head of Davie Lake. Along the entire course the cover is everchanging from dense spruce stands which shadow the river to wide, open marshlands.

Now that this river is no longer used by the river boats for freighting there is a danger of it gradually becoming impassable due to boulders working their way back into the channels and through blocking of the narrower stretches by driftwood, fallen trees and
the action of beavers. Even on this reconnaissance trip it was necessary to drag the canoe over one newly-formed beaver dam. In the past these dams and other obstructions were cleared and the river kept in navigable condition at all times.

Recommendations:

Although the present recreational use of the Crooked River is somewhat sporadic it is felt that a yearly clearing of its course from Summit Lake to Davie Lake would be justified on the grounds that it is an unusual recreational feature which may well become one of the great attractions of this region in years to come.

To preserve the wilderness appearance of the Crooked River it is proposed that all timber between the Hart Highway and this river be placed under reserve along with a buffer strip on the west bank of the river similar to that proposed for the shores of Summit Lake.

It is felt that the primary value of the Crooked River lies in its suitability for recreational pursuits. It is, therefore, recommended that the river not be used for log transportation or storage since such use would greatly reduce, if not entirely destroy, its recreational value.

V. HEART LAKE

Description and Location:

This small but picturesque lake is located fifteen miles north of Summit Lake on the Hart Highway. As the name implies it
is roughly heart-shaped. It is about one-half mile in diameter and has a fairly regular shoreline. Since it is located in the sandy, pine terrain of this region it has desirable features not common to the lakes of the lower spruce and swamp country of the Crooked River Valley proper.

Harrison Rifle, Turbulent waters and hidden boulders.

The surrounding shores are generally gently sloping with those of the east and southeast rising more sharply to a terrace-like flat about 50 feet above lake level. The cover is mainly open pine and aspen saplings with some Douglas fir seedlings. Parts of the south shore have fairly dense growths of Douglas fir seedlings to water's edge. The northeast corner is swampy especially in the vicinity of the outlet. There is evidence of old beaver workings at this point but the animals have apparently been trapped out long ago.
The west shore, paralleling the highway and 300 to 500 feet distant from it, is the most attractive part of the lake. The backshore is gently sloping to the lake edge where a firm sand bottom continues the gentle slope. The cover is a very open jackpine and aspen sapling stand with a pleasant understory of dwarf huckleberry and various low shrubs and grasses.
A distinctive feature of this lake aside from its predominantly sandy bottom is the clearness of the water which gives it a very inviting appearance. The objectionable brown colour of most of the lake water of this region is entirely absent. Viewed from the air, Heart Lake appears to be fairly shallow and set in a bowl-like depression in the sandy terrain.

No information was available on the quality of the fishing in Heart Lake. Fish observed were small and consisted of trout and suckers.

**Present Use:**

The attractive appearance of Heart Lake plus the ease with which it can be reached from the Hart Highway makes it a fairly popular stopping place for travellers. It is possible to drive off the highway at this point and into the fringe of trees between it and the lake edge. On two occasions people were noted camping in this area.

This west shore has been the site of no fewer than six Special Use Permit applications within the last year. Four of these were for cabin sites, one for an organized campsite and the sixth for a resort site. Considering the very limited travel on the Hart Highway up to this time, it seems that demand for summer homesites on Heart Lake will be considerable once the highway is in general use.
Potential Recreational Use:

Heart Lake appears to be well-suited for development into a small recreational lake with emphasis on picnicking, swimming and, possibly, camping facilities. Its present unalienated shorelines provide favourable conditions for a model development of this type.

The west shore has high potential value as a public picnicking ground. Its easy access from the highway, gently sloping and nicely shaded backshore and the gently sloping firm sand bottom are ideal features for such a development.

The north shore could easily be developed as a camping ground with public camping in the area close to the highway and organized camping further east. This would give the organized camp the seclusion usually desired. It would also be in a locality with shallow waters suitable for use by children. Some removal of water weeds would be required but the firm, clean sand in these shore waters more than compensates for this inconvenience.

The east and south shores could be used for summer homesites. The fairly steep backshores and narrow beaches make them less desirable for use by the general public but this would not seriously reduce their value for summer homesites. The flat terrace-like land extending back from the slopes to the lake provide space for a considerable colony of cabins. Road building in this area would also be fairly easy since the land presents no undesirable topographic features, has a light cover of pine saplings and is well-drained.

It is believed that as use of this lake increases, the
need will arise for a commercial development. This would probably be a multiple service development catering to the needs of picnicker, camper and traveller. Location at the northwest corner of the lake would place it between the proposed picnicking and camping sites and give the development needed access to both the lakeshore and the Hart Highway.

It is difficult at this time to predict the extent of future recreational use in the Hart Lake area but it is believed that this will be one of the most popular spots in the Crooked River Forest once the highway is opened to the public and the attractions of Heart Lake become more generally known.

Recommendations:

It is proposed that the west shore of the Heart Lake be set aside as a recreational reserve for the use of the general public. This reserve should extend from the lake edge to the Crooked River and from the southwest corner of the lake to the western portion of the north shore as shown on the index map. By linking Heart Lake and the Crooked River in this way, it may be possible in the future to integrate their recreational uses.

It is proposed that a fringe of timber be left as a buffer zone about Heart Lake in a similar manner to that proposed for Summit Lake. In this case, however, it is not expected there will be any conflict with commercial logging since the timber values in this area are low.

It is proposed that the middle north shore be set aside
for use by a children's organized camp. A site was laid out for this use during this survey.

It is proposed that the east and south shores be set aside for subdivision into summer homesites. Two blocks were laid out during this survey, a block of five cabin sites on the east shore and a block of four sites on the south shore.

The most immediate need in this area is for control over automobiles. As previously stated, at the present time it is possible to drive off the highway into the tree fringe on the west shore. Herein lies a great danger to the attractive tree and shrub cover of this shoreline. Serious and permanent damage is inevitable if this practice is allowed to continue and grow. The undercover here is particularly light and subject to easy access and resultant mechanical injury by automobiles. Compaction of soils and killing of the tree cover would soon be the secondary affect. The valuable shade cover of this shore can only be protected by the construction of guard rails or other obstructions to car movement along the edge of the tree fringe.

VI. BEAR LAKE

Description and Location:

Bear Lake is similar to Heart Lake in form, size and general appearance. It is located one-half mile further north from Heart Lake and is surrounded by the same type of sandy, pine terrain.

The backshores are all gently sloping and covered with light
open stands of pine saplings with a very light under-cover. Similar to Heart Lake, Bear Lake has crystal clear water and a firm, gently sloping sand bottom.

Present Use:

Due to the difficulty of getting a car off the highway in the vicinity of Bear Lake, few people make use of its attractions.

Potential Recreational Use:

Although there is little change in topography or cover along the shores of Bear Lake, the north shore, mainly because of aspect, is best suited for use by the general public. It would be a simple and inexpensive task to make this shore accessible by automobile from the highway if and when use of this region justifies its development for recreational activities.

The south and east shores, due to slightly heavier under-cover and less favoured aspect, would be more suited for development as camping grounds or for summer homesites.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Bear Lake, along with adequate buffer zones, be set aside as a recreational lake for the future purpose of supplementing developments on Heart Lake.

VII. DAIVIE LAKE

Description and Location:

Davie Lake, located about 20 miles north of Summit Lake, is similar to Summit Lake in that it is bordered by spruce-balsam
stands and large grass swamps. The waters of this lake, however, appear to be fairly deep and much of the accessible shoreline is boulder-strewn and quite steeply sloping. The surrounding country is quite hilly.

A short spur road connects the Hart Highway to the boat landing in the small bay at the southeast corner of this lake. The only portion of shoreline in this bay suitable for use by the general public was purchased by Mr. E. E. Belford of Wichita, Kansas, in 1949. The remainder of the bay is held by the Forest Service as a Ranger Station site. As far as recreational uses are concerned, its chief value lies in its suitability as a boat landing easily accessible to the main highway.

The only other part of Davie Lake which is accessible is a portion of shoreline in Lot 5159. This is south and west from the landing and separated from it by a large grass and brush swamp. It can be reached from the Hart Highway by two miles of unimproved and presently unusable road.

This shore slopes quite steeply from a boulder beach to a height of 20 to 30 feet above the lake level where it levels off forming a flat-topped ridge. It is densely covered with a mixed-age, spruce-balsam stand. This area is very exposed to the strong winds which sweep down Davie Lake from the north. The wave-built beach is narrow and shelves quite steeply into the lake.

Present Use:

Davie Lake appears to have little recreational use other than
by the occasional fishing party who makes use of the boat landing.

Some interest was shown in the lake in 1930 when Lot 5158 was subdivided into small blocks presumably for sale as homesites. No sales were made.

An application for a cabin site in this area was again made in 1949.

In addition to the private property adjacent to the landing, there are three other portions of shoreline alienated in less accessible parts of the lake. There are no improvements on any of these to date.

Potential Recreational Use:

It seems that Davie Lake has little recreational value other than for fishing and, possibly, summer homesites. Future day recreation use will, no doubt, centre around the present boat landing. This area could be used for limited picnicking and camping but it seems doubtful whether it would have much drawing power with the far more attractive areas on Heart Lake so close by.

The backshore in the vicinity of Lot 5158, although not ideal due to its exposed location, could be used for cabin sites. It has the advantage of being well off the highway in a definately wilderness environment and the present poor access road could be made usable at fairly low cost.

The northern extremity of Lot 5158 has a gentle slope to water's edge and a more attractive cover than the land to the south. For this reason it could possibly be developed in the future as a
small camping and picnicking site for use by boating enthusiasts.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Lot 5158 and that portion of backshore extending south from the south boundary of Lot 5158 to the grass and brush swamp at the mouth of the Crooked River be set aside as a recreational reserve.

A block of three cabin sites were laid out in Lot 5158 during this survey.

VIII. RED ROCKY LAKE

Description and Location:

Red Rocky Lake is little more than a widening of the Crooked River in an area north of Davis Lake. At this point the highway passes close to the lake edge and has been widened to provide a parking lot for road building equipment. Several partially demolished shacks were still standing in this area.

Present and Potential Recreational Use:

This small lake has occasional use by fishermen probably due more to the convenience of the parking area and easy access than to any exceptional qualities of the lake.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the present widened portion of the highway and the shoreline opposite to it be retained as a roadside parking lot and boat launching point.

IX. KERRY LAKE

Description and Locations:

Kerry Lake is located still further north along the Crooked
River and is the last lake in the chain before reaching McLeod Lake. It is similar in some aspects to Summit Lake with a deeply indented shoreline, large islands and a predominantly spruce cover on its backshores.

The Hart Highway comes close to the lake edge at three points on Kerry Lake. The first is at the head of a small bay at the southern end of the lake. The south side of this bay is swampy but the north side forms a low ridge projecting into the lake. The tip of the ridge slopes gently into the lake forming a small gravel beach.

The road touches the lake again near its midpoint at the end of another larger bay. The shoreline swings away from the road both north and south of this bay. The shore between this bay and the foot of the lake forms a narrow, fine gravel beach with moderately sloping backshores. A swampy spit separates this shore from a cleared flat of about one acre in extent at the lake outlet. This flat was formerly used as a campsite by road crews and is accessible by a short spur from the highway. At the present time it is occupied by several partially demolished shacks and is quickly becoming overgrown with brush. There is a small, gently sloping gravel beach opposite this old campsite.

Present and Potential Recreational Use:

Kerry Lake has had little recreational use in the past due to its inaccessibility. It is, however, reputedly a fairly good fishing lake. Since much of its shoreline bordering the Hart
Highway is fairly accessible, quite attractive and has suitable cover and topography, a demand for cabin sites will no doubt arise. One application for a commercial resort site has already been made over the northeast corner of the lakeshore on the previously described road crew campsite.

It is felt that this deserted campsite would best be set aside for use by the general public since it could be easily adapted for such use and is the most accessible point on the lake.

It is expected that a lake of this size would support a commercial enterprise once the Hart Highway has become an established tourist route. A more suitable site than that applied for would be on the north side of the large bay on the centre east shore. This location would give a resort easy access to both highway and lake edge. The area is fairly flat and is covered by a mature stand of spruce and balsam. Some of the finest specimens of mature spruce and balsam along the Hart Highway grow in this vicinity, a feature which would, no doubt, create tourist interest but at the same time greatly complicate any extensive building program.

A commercial building site suitable for a small cabin-type resort and gas station was laid out on this area during this survey.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the area at the northeast corner of Kerry Lake formerly occupied by the road crew camp be set aside for use by the general public.

It is recommended that the commercial site laid out during
this survey be made available under Special Use Permit when use in
this region justifies a development of this type. Since this site
is in an area of mature timber close supervision would be required
over any development program.

XI. SUMMARY

The new Hart Highway has changed the Crooked River Forest
from a strictly wilderness region to a region of easy access from
end to end. From a recreational point of view this will result in a
much greater distribution of use and a greater intensity of use due
to the improved access to many lakes and streams previously accessible
only by boat or trail.

Other factors modifying use of this region are the general
increase in tourist travel in Central British Columbia since the
end of the war and the rapid population growth over the last few
years. The population of the city of Prince George increased 220 per-
cent during the years 1941 to 1949, while the overall increase for
Prince George and the surrounding district during these years was
68 percent.

Before construction of the Hart Highway, Summit Lake, at the
headwaters of the Crooked River, was the only lake in this drainage
system accessible by automobile. Consequently, it became first the
headquarters for the river boat trade and later, the centre of re-
creational activity. Inevitably, all the most desirable shoreline
and all the islands were alienated at an early date. Unfortunately,
no provision was made for use of this lake by the general public until it was too late.

An attempt to meet the needs of the general public was made in 1942 when the Summit Lake Park was created. This was later withdrawn when subsequent survey showed a park to be of comparatively little value with all the best parts of the lake already alienated.

The Fort Highway will have the effect of alleviating this need for accommodation of the general public by making accessible other unalienated lakes.

The setting aside of the Crooked River Forest in 1949 prevented further alienation of lakeshores and placed the whole region under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.

It is expected that migration of recreational use to lakes further north will be inevitable once their attractions become more generally known. Heart Lake has the highest potential recreational value of any of these lakes. It is ideally suited for development as a picnicking and camping lake, and there is also ample room on its shores for a commercial concession site, an organized campsite and a cabin colony.

Bear Lake is similar to Heart Lake and could eventually supplement its developments.

Davie Lake has little recreational potential due to alienations of its best shorelines and the large amount of bordering swamp land. An area at the southeast corner was believed suitable for development as a small cabin colony.
Much of the east shore of Karry Lake has desirable sites for summer homes. The northeast shore has a potential value as a public picnic or campsite.

As with all new highways there has been a rush to acquire choice land for gas station sites, resort sites and other commercial use sites. There had been five direct applications for such sites up to the time of this survey and this before the highway was even completed or open to the public. Obviously, the demand for commercial sites will exceed the capacity of the region to support such enterprise if this is not already the case. It seems that some policy with regard to selection and making available these sites must be decided upon.

It is believed that public auction of selected sites on a date several months after completion of the Hart Highway would be the best method of disposition. Future development of sites by permittees should be allowed only on approval by the Forest Service of the construction plans.

It is difficult at this time to determine the number of such sites which should be made available by Special Use Permit in the Crooked River Forest. Until further study is made of the affect of the Hart Highway it is suggested that not more than two commercial sites be made available. The best locations for these would be one at Heart Lake and one on McLeod Lake.

This report would not be complete without calling attention...
attention to the physical affect of the Hart Highway on this region. Unfortunately, this highway has been constructed with a total disregard for the scenic or recreational values of the forest. Apparently, the attitude has been that this is an unimportant wilderness area and, therefore, unsightly scars within and adjoining the Right-of-Way are of little importance in so vast a region. In assuming this attitude it is forgotten that the land adjacent to any highway is the only part of the country the majority of travellers ever see. These borders are, in effect, the show windows of our highways and the only criterion by which our land administrators can be judged by the travelling public.

Perhaps the most glaring example of destructive practice is the usual habit of digging borrow pits immediately adjacent to the travelled way. A border zone between the borrow pit and the highway would not add materially to construction costs and would eliminate this most unsightly of all construction scars.

Another example of disregard for scenic and recreational values is the location of the construction camps. It is common practice to clear cut and bulldoze an area bordering the highway. To make matters worse the choice camping spots in the country are usually chosen. The worst examples of this in the Crooked River Forest are the remains of the road crew camp at the northeast corner of Kerry Lake, the present construction camp at the south end of McLeod Lake and the grading crew camp on Whiskers Point.

There appears to be no valid reason why these camps cannot
be placed well off the highway Right-of-Way.

Another less destructive but nevertheless unsightly construction method is the manner of clearing Right-of-Ways to a surveyed line. This gives an objectionable artificial appearance to the roadside which could be easily avoided by cutting to an irregular line allowing small promontories of trees to remain. This would greatly enhance the beauty of the roadside and make it less monotonous to the traveller.

Slight alterations in location of the Hatz Highway could have done much in some areas toward increasing the recreational opportunity of travellers. A slight bend in the highway at a point one-quarter mile above Heart Lake would have made it possible to construct a rare viewpoint. Instead, the highway skirts the area and the viewpoint was converted into a gravel pit.

Better advantage could have been taken of the attractions of Heart Lake if the highway was swung a little wider of the west shore. It is probably a rare stroke of luck that the highway permitted any fringe of trees at all on this lakeshore.

The above examples emphasize the great need in this Province for a more enlightened attitude toward scenic and recreational values and their relationship to highway construction. Perhaps with closer liaison in the future between the Public Works Department and the Forest Service Parks Division the more obvious malpractices at least can be avoided and a step can be made toward creating beautiful as well as efficient highways.
Mileages Along the Hart Highway Within The
Crooked River Forest

**NB:** All mileages are computed from the intersection of Summit Lake Road - Summit Lake - with the Hart Highway. Travelling direction is North. To estimate distances from Prince George add 32 miles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM SUMMIT LAKE ROAD TO:</th>
<th>MILEAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park Reserve, Summit Lake</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground spring troughed to roadside</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(drinking water source for Summit Lake)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Rifle Trail</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large, conspicuous borrow pit</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Lake</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Lake</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large burn</td>
<td>18.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road to Davie Lake (0.6 miles long)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redrocky Lake</td>
<td>27.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kerry Lake</td>
<td>35.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landing field (highway widened)</td>
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<tr>
<td>McLeod Lake</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiskers Point</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fort McLeod</td>
<td>58.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTSIDE FOREST RESERVE</td>
<td>MILEAGE</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tudyah Lake</td>
<td>63.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsnip River Crossing</td>
<td>68.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L. Brooks  
Forester-in-Training,  
Parks and Recreation Division.
Summit Lake from Teapot Mountain.
The low, rolling lands are evident in this photo.
Teapot Mountain and the Outlet of Summit Lake
Buck's Store, the focal point for picnickers.
View of Teapot Mountain from the Proposed Public Reserve
Summit Lake from Teapot Mountain.
Note rock cliffs in the foreground.
Looking West from Teapot Mountain
The Boat Landing and Forest Service Cabin (right) on Davie Lake
The Northern view from
Teapot Mountain
Harrison Riffle.- Turbulent Waters and Hidden Boulders
A Favourite Fishing Spot at the Foot of Harrison Riffle
A Rocky Stretch Showing the Work of Earlier Boatsmen. (Low Dam Visible in the Centre of the Picture)
A Flacid Stretch in the River's Course
The River Widens to Lake-Like Proportions in Flat Country
The Crooked River Winds Through a Scenic and Varied Countryside
The Crooked River Flows into
a deep pool where fish are plentiful
A Potential Picnic Grounds on the West Shore of Heart Lake
View of West Shore from the Proposed Organized Campsite
MAP SHOWING
Gazetted Boundaries
OF THE
CROOKED RIVER
Provincial Forest
1949.

Forest Boundary shown thus
MAP SHOWING
Gazetted Boundaries
OF THE
CROOKED RIVER
Provincial Forest
1949.