

Conflict and Conservation: A Human History of Animals in  
Gatineau Park, 1938-1958

by

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the shifting human perceptions of wildlife in Gatineau Park, Quebec, from 1938 to 1958, and argues that these views came into conflict with the *actual* animals that roamed there. It draws upon records of the Federal District Commission, animal studies methodology, and naturalists' field observations to demonstrate that non-human animals, as much as human animals, shaped the conservation practices that developed in the park. White-tailed deer and their predators frustrated attempts to order and classify them as they transgressed physical and conceptual boundaries: deer were domesticated, farm dogs went wild, and "brush wolves" challenged taxonomic boundaries by breeding with coyotes. Upon their reintroduction beavers "destroyed" park landscapes, defying Grey Owl's construction of the beaver as a symbol of wildlife conservation. These encounters with animals challenged the expectations of rural residents, park visitors, and the Ottawa Ski Club who called for the removal of troublesome beavers and wolves.

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## Introduction

In December of 1953, novelist Mazo de la Roche delivered a speech at the Canadian Club's annual Christmas meeting in Toronto. During her address, she boldly argued that the beaver should never have been chosen as a symbol of Canada, and asked her audience, "Who nowadays wants to work like a beaver?" The *Ottawa Journal* admitted that she had a point: though the expression, "working like a beaver," had long been considered "high praise," this was no longer a desirable trait to the modern citizen of the 1950s. Instead, this citizen sought to reduce their share of labour in the home and at work through increasingly accessible and affordable technologies. The hardworking beaver simply "wouldn't know quite what to make of the modern trend towards [making] more money for less work." De la Roche suggested that "the deer, graceful [and] symmetrical, would be a much better symbol."<sup>1</sup> The *Journal* acknowledged the attractiveness of the deer, but noted that the selection of an animal that was regularly "shot at and sometimes hit and killed and consumed for food" for Canada's national symbol might create new problems. This could be remedied, it was argued, by prohibiting the hunting of deer in Canada, but then the deer would "increase and multiply to the point of becoming a public nuisance," and the newfound national symbol would just as quickly end up being "booted" from Canadians' front lawns.<sup>2</sup> The *Journal* countered that perhaps a horse might be a more suitable symbol of Canada.

This debate draws our attention to the puzzling "business of picking a symbol from wild life."<sup>3</sup> More importantly, it points to larger historical questions about how humans have seen and understood animals, and how human attitudes towards animals

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Press, "Canada's Beaver A Sad Symbol," *Ottawa Journal*, 15 December 1953, 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Have We Outgrown the Beaver?" *Ottawa Journal*, 16 December 1953, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

shift over time. By the mid-twentieth century the beaver had apparently lost its appeal, or at least it had for some: though “working like a beaver” may not have been attractive to a middle or upper class resident of an urban centre like Ottawa, it was the reality of working class labourers and residents of rural communities. Thus, this episode also hints at the myriad, and often conflicting, views of animals that can and do exist at any given point.

This thesis examines the shifting perceptions of animals that were held by humans within and around the boundaries of Gatineau Park, and argues that these ideas and attitudes came into conflict with the *actual* animals that roamed there. As historian Nigel Rothfels notes, “there is an inescapable difference between what an animal *is* and what people *think* an animal is. In the end, an animal or species is as much a constellation of ideas (for example, vicious, noble, intelligent, cruel, caring, brave) as anything else. And, as with history itself, each generation seems to remake its animals.”<sup>4</sup> This thesis traces the interplay between various human ideas and attitudes towards animals, and the ways in which these perceptions both shaped, and were shaped by, relations that developed between humans and animals in Gatineau Park.

When Gatineau Park was established in 1938, certain species of desirable wildlife were in short supply: beavers had been extirpated from the region and deer tracks were reported as a “rarity.”<sup>5</sup> Remarking on this shortage, the park’s administrators began to manage the space as a wildlife sanctuary: over the next twenty years, the animal landscape of Gatineau Park was physically altered as beavers were introduced to its lakes

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<sup>4</sup> Nigel Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 5.

<sup>5</sup> “Deer Abound in Gatineau Park 12 Miles from Parliament Hill,” *Ottawa Journal*, 17 April 1944, 3, and H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 12 July 1940, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

and ponds and as populations of white-tailed deer (and their predators, wolves, coyotes, and dogs) grew abundant. As this transformation took place, humans' ideas about these animals shifted correspondingly.

This transition from animal scarcity to abundance was laden with conflict, competition, and contradiction. As this thesis will illustrate, much of this conflict derived from opposing views of animals that were held by the various humans of Gatineau Park. Though the park was administered by the employees of a single organization, the Federal District Commission, its policies and practices were influenced by a wider collection of individuals. Rural property owners, wealthy cottagers, and recreational visitors, such as the Ottawa Ski Club, each had their own views on how (and which) animals should live in the park, and each had a hand in shaping the policies of wildlife management that were practiced by the Commission. In fact, it was often the park's publics that were the first to come into conflict with wildlife, and the ones to demand the most severe "resolutions" to their disputes. Though it was the Commission that would ultimately implement wildlife policy, it frequently acted in response to the interests and demands of assorted park users and neighbouring municipalities.

In other cases, ways of seeing and thinking about animals were themselves the problem. As Jon Coleman notes, humans not only invest animals with values (vicious, noble, caring), but they also organize and divide clusters of animals into categories based on these values.<sup>6</sup> In the area of Gatineau Park, animals were organized by their assumed relationship to categories of "wild" and "domestic," and were confined to the spaces that corresponded with these descriptors: wild animals belonged in wild spaces, and domestic animals belonged in domestic spaces. As this conceptual ordering of animals was

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<sup>6</sup> Jon Coleman, *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 202.

imposed on the animal landscape of Gatineau Park, however, these categories began to break down. Animals transgressed the perceived divisions between their respective categories, and rejected easy classifications. When park rangers attempted to enforce the physical and imagined boundaries of the park, they consistently came into conflict with the actions of living, breathing animals.

As historian Tina Loo explains, “For humans, the trouble with wildlife is that flesh and blood creatures do not always live up to their representations.”<sup>7</sup> In Gatineau Park, this gap between expectation and reality can and did prove fatal to non-human animals. As humans strove to impose their views over the park and all that it contained, they constantly clashed with non-human animals that failed to act according to plan, and who appeared to have their own views on how the space should be managed. The park’s various managers were forced to respond to animals that acted in unpredictable, and often undesirable ways: many animals killed each other; some occupied areas where they were unwelcome, or escaped from the park entirely; and others damaged park facilities, private property, and to some extent, their own habitats. Simply put, the park’s officials and its publics were forced to reckon with the autonomy of non-human animals.

The autonomy of these animals often enabled them to evade park policies altogether, but it also helped to shape the various human policies and practices of conservation that developed around them. For as these non-human animals refused to bend to existing park policies, the policies were changed. As Erica Fudge notes, though “Animals may not be aware of the changes they are creating, [...] those changes are no

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<sup>7</sup> Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada’s Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 3.

less real for that.”<sup>8</sup> Without necessarily intending to, the actions of individual and collective animals shape the human contexts in which they exist. In Gatineau Park, the actions of both human and non-human animals had direct implications for the character of conservation that developed there. Consequently, the animals in this thesis are not simply understood as the objects of human action and aspiration, but as active, agential participants in the shared history of conservation in Gatineau Park. The relationships that developed between human and non-human animals were mutually constitutive, and so this thesis strives to consider the actions of each set of actors accordingly.

Engaging with animals in agential terms requires a shift in thinking about human and non-human actors, the past, and the writing of history. Scholars like Harriet Ritvo, Erica Fudge, Nigel Rothfels, and Jon Coleman have explored the challenges of this daunting task in the growing field of historical animal studies.<sup>9</sup> As Coleman notes, “When comparing ourselves to other creatures,” there is an undeniable human tendency to “mistake difference for superiority.”<sup>10</sup> It is only by resisting this urge to think about the world in anthropocentric terms that we can recognize that there are alternative ways of being in and relating to the world. And as Fudge suggests, this is where the power of animal histories truly lie: “to question the anthropocentric view of the world [...] is to challenge the status of the human.”<sup>11</sup> By recognizing the centrality of animals to what we might otherwise consider “human histories,” we are forced to reassess our own place in

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<sup>8</sup> Erica Fudge, “The History of Animals,” *Ruminations* 1 (2006), accessed 3 August 2016, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/16560/pages/32226/history-animals-erica-fudge>

<sup>9</sup> Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Erica Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” *Representing Animals*, ed. Nigel Rothfels, 3-18 (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002); Coleman, *Vicious*, and Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*.

<sup>10</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Erica Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” *Representing Animals*, ed. Nigel Rothfels, 3-18 (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002).

the world. One way that this can be partially addressed is through the use of the terms “human animals” and “non-human animals,” which is a practice that is periodically adopted throughout this paper. The use of these terms signals that humans are also animals, and helps to deconstruct some of the artificial boundaries between “us” and “them.” When considered from this perspective, the history of conservation in Gatineau Park looks different.

The discipline of historical animal studies was pioneered by Harriet Ritvo with the publication of *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (1987), though its roots can be traced back even earlier, to scholars like John Berger, who famously asked “Why Look at Animals?” in 1980.<sup>12</sup> Since 2000, historical animal research has gained significant traction, and historians have taken their work in numerous directions. In her article, “Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” Erica Fudge outlines three general trends in historical animal literature, which she labels “intellectual history,” “humane history,” and “holistic history.” The first, “intellectual history,” consists of attempts by historians to trace human attitudes towards animals, where attitudes are the focus of these histories, not the animals themselves. “Humane history” explores the ways in which humans have historically related to animals, and how these relations have shaped broader human ideas (e.g. political, cultural). Finally, “holistic history” uses representations of animals as a way of rethinking cultures “which have, apparently, been thoroughly ransacked for meaning by historians.” Like humane histories, this holistic approach recognizes that the study of animals can reveal much about humans, but goes further by questioning the status of the human itself. This thesis

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<sup>12</sup> John Berger, “Why Look at Animals,” *About Looking* (London: Writers and Readers, 1980), and Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

finds itself in the third camp, the “holistic history,” as it explores human attitudes towards other species of animals and points to the ways in which these attitudes can also reflect on relations between groups of humans.<sup>13</sup>

In thinking about animals, it is important to recognize the limitations of working with sources created and preserved by humans. As Nigel Rothfels explains, one of the main challenges of writing about historical animals is that our ability to understand them will always be “constrained by the mediated nature of their presence in our historical record.” If and when animals appear in our records, they do so under very particular circumstances, and through historically contingent human perspectives. This should not deter historians from exploring their historical records, however, as Rothfels notes that these appearances can reveal much about the human contexts “in which [animals] have been seen, studied, collected, or killed.”<sup>14</sup> But as Etienne Benson notes, “in a world where human life is so intricately intertwined with nonhuman life,” our records also reveal “traces” of animals which can provide insights “that are not reducible to the human perspective.”<sup>15</sup> In order to access these insights, I rely on the work of biologists, ecologists, and naturalists to interpret the “animal traces,” such as beaver dams, deer tracks, and wolf kills, that are described in Gatineau Park’s records. Though human perspectives inevitably permeate all human observations, whether historical or scientific, having a basic knowledge of animals’ physiological needs and corresponding behaviours is essential to developing a more nuanced account of their actions in the park. This paper draws upon the natural sciences to better situate past relations between people, animals,

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<sup>13</sup> Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow,” 9.

<sup>14</sup> Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Etienne Benson, “Animal Writes: Historiography, Disciplinarily, and the Animal Trace,” *Making Animal Meaning*, eds. Linda Kalof and Georgina Montgomery (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011), 3-16.

and their environments.

This paper also draws from a rich historiography of parks and wildlife conservation in order to inform its analysis of the shifting ideologies and practices that were adopted in Gatineau Park. In Canada, this history was pioneered by Janet Foster in 1978, with the publication of *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada*. Widely considered the “definitive history of the beginnings of wildlife consciousness in Canada,” Foster’s *Working for Wildlife* explores the role of the federal public service in the development of conservationist philosophies and policies in Canada. It argues that a small number of dedicated civil servants turned their own laudable goals of preserving endangered wildlife into active government policy and legislation, thereby inventing what we now know as wildlife conservation in Canada.<sup>16</sup>

Since then, historians like George Colpitts, Tina Loo, and Darcy Ingram have shifted the study of wildlife conservation from its bureaucratic origins to practices of conservation by individuals and organizations.<sup>17</sup> Colpitts was one of the first to challenge Foster’s interpretation when he argued that conservation practices in the west had developed out of a desire to safeguard local access to fish and game resources from the

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<sup>16</sup> Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada*, 2nd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). J. Alexander Burnett also traced the government’s role in the history of conservation in *A Passion for Wildlife: The History of the Canadian Wildlife Service* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> For a historiography of wildlife conservation, see Loo, *States of Nature*; George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); Darcy Ingram, *Wildlife, Conservation and Conflict in Quebec, 1840-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014); and John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margin: Native Peoples and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007). See also American historians like Louis S. Warren, *The Hunter’s Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Etienne Benson, *Wired Wilderness: Technologies of Tracking and the Making of Modern Wildlife* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

perceived threat from newly arrived immigrants through the late nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

Tina Loo confirmed similar trends in *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (2006), where she found that individuals and organizations across Canada had done just as much (if not more) for the development of conservation practices and philosophies as employees of the public service. As she reveals, Indigenous communities, sportsmen, and organizations like the Hudson's Bay Company all practiced methods of wildlife management. Darcy Ingram fittingly brings this analysis to Quebec, the location of Gatineau Park, in his recent book, *Wildlife, Conservation and Conflict in Quebec, 1840-1914* (2014). Ingram argues that conservation in the province was influenced most directly by British culture and values that were derived from a history of what he calls "patrician sensibilities." According to Ingram, the origins of conservation philosophies in Quebec were founded in a desire to improve the environment, so as to produce more game, rather than to preserve the environment in its preexisting state.<sup>19</sup>

Questions of wildlife conservation have also been addressed in the histories of many of Canada's national and provincial parks, by such scholars as Claire Campbell, Alan MacEachern, Sean Kheraj, Jennifer Brower, and John Sandlos. Similar efforts to explore the relationship between parks and wildlife have been pursued in the United States, by Louis S. Warren, Karl Jacoby, Alice Wondrak-Biel, and Thomas Dunlap, to name a few.<sup>20</sup> Throughout these studies, historians have noted the paradox that

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<sup>18</sup> Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> Darcy Ingram, *Wildlife, Conservation and Conflict in Quebec, 1840-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014).

<sup>20</sup> For a historiography of wildlife in parks, see Claire Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011); Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Jennifer Brower, *Lost Tracks: Buffalo National Park, 1909-1939* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2008); and John Sandlos, "Federal Spaces, Local Conflicts: National Parks and the Exclusionary Politics of the

characterizes the mandates of these parks: simultaneous preservation and use. Until the late twentieth century, these were not always seen in opposition to each other. As Sandlos notes, “Canada’s park system was founded with a particularly strong emphasis on the parks as playgrounds, vacation destinations, and roadside attractions that might simultaneously preserve the fading scenic beauty and wildlife populations amid increasingly agricultural and industrial landscapes.”<sup>21</sup> And while the Parks Branch’s Commissioner, James B. Harkin, was known to promote these commercial developments, it was equally common for local governments, chambers of commerce, and recreational groups to advocate for development in order to stimulate a local tourist industry. Problems emerged after the Second World War when highways facilitated increased access to (and through) these “wilderness” areas. As Sandlos notes, “the public demanded that national parks be developed as playgrounds to attract tourists on an expanding highway network.”<sup>22</sup>

The Parks Branch was happy to oblige, until the popularity of these parks as tourist destinations threatened the mandate of conservation. Animals that resided within the boundaries of these parks, for example, were increasingly expected to conform to the unrealistic expectations of tourists. As Kheraj notes, even exotic animals were introduced

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Conservation Movement in Ontario, 1900-1935,” in *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 16, no. 1 (2005): 293-318; Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Alice Wondrak-Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> John Sandlos, “Nature’s Playgrounds: The Parks Branch and Tourism Promotion in the National Parks, 1911-1929,” *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, ed. Claire Campbell, 53-78 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 60.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72. These historians have also noted the distinctions between “preservation,” the act of preserving natural resources (such as trees, wildlife, or scenic views) in their current state, and “conservation,” the act of managing those resources for continued and improved use.

to Vancouver's Stanley Park to "be enjoyed like an ornament on the landscape."<sup>23</sup> Of course these animals were not simply ornaments, but autonomous beings that came into conflict with other opportunist species that preyed on the newly arrived animals. Parks visitors, and often the park managers themselves, neglected to consider the agency of the very animals they wished to conserve, seeing them as only objects, or "ornaments" that could be moved and adjusted at will. These expectations point to the ironies of wildlife conservation: park animals were supposed to be wild, but they were also supposed to behave; and they were supposed to be abundant, while leaving no trace of their presence on the landscape. In their management of wildlife, park managers were forced to reconcile the conservationist policies of their organizations with the expectations of park visitors.

In exploring wildlife conservation, it was not just the when or the who that historians like Loo, Colpitts, and Ingram have sought to debunk, but also the why. Recent historiography has rejected the earlier view of wildlife conservation as a high-minded and selfless endeavour for one that acknowledges its anthropocentric origins and objectives: conservation was rarely, if ever, initiated for the sake of wildlife itself, but for the benefit of human interests and values. Moreover, this historiography asserts that conservation was always in the interest of certain classes or categories of humans, and that its practice had marginalizing effects on less-privileged populations. The motivations of conservationists were scrutinized most directly by Sandlos in *Hunters at the Margin: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (2007) in which he argues that the conservation goals of the state were integrated with larger colonial projects of assimilation and oppression in the North. These motivations were also

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<sup>23</sup> Kheraj, "Demonstration Wildlife" 512.

questioned by Jean Manore's work on hunting and the exclusion of the Algonquin from Algonquin Park in Ontario, and Karl Jacoby's examination of the impact of game regulations on the pre-existing rural populations around Adirondack Park in the state of New York, which share many parallels with the conflicts that arose in Gatineau Park.<sup>24</sup>

Historians of environment have made significant developments in the area of wildlife conservation, and this body of literature usefully informs my understanding of the management of wildlife in Gatineau Park. My approach to studying these conservation efforts is, however, quite different from most of the existing literature on parks and wildlife conservation. The predominant focus of conservation histories is almost always human; the history of wildlife conservation seems to have focused more on the *human* practice of conserving, the values that inspired it, and the impact that it had on various human populations, rather than the wildlife actually being conserved. Even as the historiographical analysis shifted away from the bureaucratic protectors of wildlife to more local practices of resource management, and later, to the "poachers" of wildlife, the focus remained on the human animal. Just as the motivations behind conservation practices were themselves human-centered, so too is its history.

In focusing directly on human accounts of animals in Gatineau Park and the ways in which human and non-human animals shaped the physical and conceptual landscapes of conservation within its boundaries, my research attempts to draw upon animal studies to inform the ways in which wildlife conservation is conceptualized in parks. In doing so, it follows the example of historians who have taken a more perceptive approach to the

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<sup>24</sup> Jean Manore, "Contested Terrains of Space and Place: Hunting and the Landscape Known as Algonquin Park, 1890-1950," *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, eds. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner, 121-147, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) and Karl Jacoby, "Class and Environmental History: Lessons From "The War in the Adirondacks," *Environmental History* 2, no. 3 (1997): 334-342.

animals in their histories. In “Demonstration Wildlife: Negotiating the Animal Landscape of Vancouver’s Stanley Park, 1888-1996,” Sean Kheraj explores how everyday encounters between humans and animals in urban environments shaped the perception and management of animals throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Alice Wondrak-Biel’s *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (2006) explores the challenges of creating a bear policy that would satisfy the mandate of Yellowstone Park, while examining the impacts of these policies on the bears themselves, and the visitors who came to see them.<sup>25</sup> Etienne Benson’s *Wired Wilderness: Technologies of Tracking and Making Modern Wilderness* (2010) traces the history of wildlife radio-tracking, and the ways in which the animals themselves pushed tracking technology to develop in new ways.<sup>26</sup> Jon Coleman’s *Vicious: Men and Wolves in America* (2004) shares authority between the two species by challenging the human ‘superiority complex’ so often assumed when dealing with animals, and is especially useful in this regard. Coleman brings the historical ecologies and behaviours of wolves to the forefront of his account, and explores how their actions were (mis)interpreted by human settlers of colonial New England, and contributed to an extensive mythology and folklore surrounding the wolf.<sup>27</sup> As Coleman notes, these interpretations of wolves resulted in centuries of mass extermination by humans, and it was only through broader shifts in ecological science and public education that human perceptions of wolves began to change.

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<sup>25</sup> Alice Wondrak-Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears*, 3. George Colpitts described similar trends in “Films, Tourists, and Bears in the National Parks: Managing Park Use and the Problematic “Highway Bum” Bear in the 1970s,” *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, eds. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner, 153- 178 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Benson, *Wired Wilderness*.

<sup>27</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 20.

This thesis aims to follow the lead of such historians of animals by placing considerable emphasis on human perceptions and understandings of animals in Gatineau Park, and the ways in which these views resulted in material conflicts on the ground. In so doing, this thesis also considers the role of park users and rural communities, as well as literary figures such as Grey Owl, in the development of wildlife conservation practices; it examines the ways in which human and non-human animals were managed in order to accomplish conservation goals; and it extends this analysis to a very understudied park.

### *Chapters*

This paper has three chapters. The first introduces readers to Gatineau Park. It offers a brief account of the history of the region, both in terms of geographic change and human uses of the land, and chronicles the philosophies and motivations behind the creation of the park. It also introduces readers to the existing literature on Gatineau Park, and the primary sources that make up my research. This first chapter aims to establish a framework through which readers can understand and interpret the relations that developed between the human and non-human animals of the park.

The following two chapters address the park's wildlife more directly, first by focusing on the conservation of white-tailed deer, and then on beavers. Though all species of non-human animals inevitably contributed to the history of conservation in Gatineau Park, there were strategic motivations behind the decision to place emphasis on deer and beavers here. On a practical level, this was a result of the availability of sources,

and the corresponding presence of these animals in the archive. Nevertheless, the prevalence of beavers and deer is quite revealing.

White-tailed deer were the first animals to preoccupy the Commission in the development of their sanctuary, and so their story comes first. Soon after the Commission committed to conserving these animals in their park, they were forced to recognize the relationships between deer and other animals. As the reader will learn, what opens as a chapter on the history of deer in Gatineau Park quickly (d)evolves into a history of their non-human animal predators: wolves, coyotes, and wild dogs. As human managers attempted to order and control the actions of these predatory animals, their pre-conceived notions of difference broke down: domestic animals turned wild; wild animals became domesticated; wild animals trespassed onto domestic spaces; and domestic animals infiltrated wild spaces. As this chapter will demonstrate, animals in Gatineau Park simultaneously moved through and occupied conflicting categories of analysis. They were wild and domestic, good and bad. Moreover, these animals also challenged physical, biological, and taxonomic boundaries: they moved through space without consideration for property lines and other boundary markers; wolves, coyotes and the occasional dog bred with one another, weakening the divisions between species; and these hybridizations challenged human's ability to label the animals that they encountered. Thus, in focusing on the management of deer in particular, it becomes possible to trace the physical and conceptual movements of animals through these categories.

The beavers, on the other hand, appeared to be their own worst enemy. Unlike the white-tailed deer, which were perceived as under constant threat of predation, the greatest

threat to the beavers in Gatineau Park was their own public image. This was an image that had been cultivated in the 1930s as Grey Owl advocated for the beavers' conservation in North America and Britain. As a cherished Canadian symbol, the beaver was a well-known and anticipated introduction to the park. Upon their arrival, however, recreational users found that the beavers were nothing like the discursive symbol that had long been entrenched in the Canadian psyche. Much as Mazo de la Roche had done, the park's various publics questioned the validity of the beaver's symbolism: from their perspective, the beavers were destructive, inconsiderate, and quite frankly, a nuisance. This chapter traces the evolution of humans' perceptions of beavers throughout the so-called "Battle of the Beavers" that emerged in Gatineau Park. By following the stories of beavers, deer, and other animals in Gatineau Park, it becomes evident that human perceptions of these animals conflicted on the ground.

## Chapter 1: The Creation of Gatineau Park



Location of Gatineau Park, 1950 (Region of the National Capital Existing Conditions Map, *Greber Report*, 1950, Plate 4, Atlas.)

Gatineau Park is located in the Gatineau Hills (formerly the Laurentian Hills) region of Quebec, just north of the city of Ottawa, Ontario. According to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Gatineau Park has the greatest diversity of habitats and the largest number of endangered species of any park in Quebec, making it a primary concern for conservationists.<sup>1</sup> There is an abundance of white-tailed deer, beavers and other small mammals in the park, and larger mammals such as black bears, cougars, and wolves. There have been sightings of over 230 species of birds in the park,

<sup>1</sup> “Gatineau Park – Make it a “Real” Park!” *Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society: Ottawa Valley Chapter*. <http://cpaws-ov-vo.org/campaigns/gatineau-park> (accessed 3 August 2016).

and numerous species of fish can be found in over 50 lakes and ponds. Additionally, the park's marshes and bogs provide feeding and breeding zones for many insects, amphibians, and reptiles.<sup>2</sup>

This impressive biodiversity is largely a result of the park's position between the boreal forest of the Canadian Shield, a Precambrian rock mass that was formed over one billion years ago, and the eastern temperate forest of the St. Lawrence Lowlands, a relatively flat and fertile area to its south. The Eardley Escarpment, which rises 270 metres above the Ottawa Valley and extends over 30 kilometres through the park, marks the dividing line between these two geological features, and separates the rocky hills of the Gatineau Hills from the fertile valley below. This juncture provides a uniquely hot and dry microclimate capable of housing many rare species; the majority of the park's at-risk plant and animal species can be found here.<sup>3</sup>

The 361kilometer park is a major recreational destination for the metropolitan populations of Ottawa and Gatineau, and park managers have had to balance the interests of wildlife with those of humans. The number of visitors attracted to the recreational trails, campgrounds, heritage sites and scenic lookouts threaten the health of the park's ecosystems and the wildlife that depend on them. The park's ecological integrity is also strained by a small population of private property owners within the park's boundaries. Gatineau Park is made up of more than 1,400 separate parcels of land acquired by the federal government over a period of nearly 70 years, and though most of its former

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<sup>2</sup> "Conservation at Gatineau Park," *The National Capital Commission*. <http://www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/places-to-visit/gatineau-park/conservation-gatineau-park> (accessed 2 November 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

residents have since left (or been removed), a handful continue to own homes and cottages within the park's boundary, a fact that remains controversial to this day.<sup>4</sup>

Legally, Gatineau Park is neither a provincial park, nor one of Canada's many national parks.<sup>5</sup> Instead, it occupies a unique place in the Canadian park system under the purview of the National Capital Commission (formerly the Federal District Commission), a federal Crown Corporation responsible for planning the development, conservation, and improvement of Canada's Capital Region. As a result of its informal status, the park's plants and animals are precluded from receiving the legal protections awarded to provincial and national parks, to the chagrin of conservationists. Language tensions and jurisdictional issues in the region further complicate management.

Gatineau Park is also situated between the Ottawa and Gatineau Rivers. The Gatineau River flows south along the eastern boundary of the park until it meets with the Ottawa River, which circumscribes the western and southern boundaries of the park and marks the provincial border between Ontario and Quebec. These rivers have historically attracted a host of human occupants. Archaeological evidence shows that the confluence of the Ottawa, Gatineau, and Rideau Rivers served as a gathering place for many hundreds of years. The Ottawa was also the primary route to the western interior, and a central conduit of the fur trade.<sup>6</sup> The first group of permanent European settlers in the

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<sup>4</sup> Dennis Messier, "Save the Hills!" *The Gatineau Park Chronicle 2007* (Ottawa: National Capital Commission, 2007), 1. [http://gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/chronicles/GatineauParkChronicle\\_2007.pdf](http://gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/chronicles/GatineauParkChronicle_2007.pdf) (accessed 1 December 2015).

<sup>5</sup> *Gatineau Park: A Threatened Treasure* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Ottawa Valley Chapter, 2008). [http://cpaws.org/uploads/pubs/booklet\\_gatineau.pdf](http://cpaws.org/uploads/pubs/booklet_gatineau.pdf) (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>6</sup> For archaeological evidence of Indigenous uses of this area see Randy Boswell and Jean Luc Pilon, "The Archaeological Legacy of Dr. Edward Van Cortlandt" and "Below the Falls: An Ancient Cultural Landscape in the Centre of (Canada's National Capital Region) Gatineau," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 39, no. 2 (2015). For their history, see Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), and *The Invisible Nation*, directed by Richard Desjardins and Robert Monderie (NFB, 2007).

region was led by Philemon Wright, who emigrated from Massachusetts in 1800. These settlers cleared land in the township of Hull, displacing the Algonquin from their traditional hunting grounds and maple sugar bush.<sup>7</sup> Wright founded a lucrative timber industry, using the Gatineau and Ottawa Rivers to transport pine out of the region, which fuelled the growth of communities in the Ottawa Valley. Asa Meech was the first white settler in the hilly area that would eventually include Gatineau Park when he arrived in 1821 from New England. Though settlers in the valley found fertile farmland, those in the Gatineau Hills, like Meech, were lucky to produce enough from the shallow, rocky earth to feed their families; over time many of their fields and farmhouses were abandoned and gradually reclaimed by the forest.<sup>8</sup> This shortage of productive agricultural land in the Gatineau Hills forced many to diversify their activities. The industrialization and urbanization of Hull and Ottawa saw entrepreneurs take advantage of the Hills' forests, waterways, and underground resources.

It was this same process of urbanization, however, that fuelled the arrival of large numbers of vacationers to the Gatineau Hills. By the early 1890s, the construction of a rail line between Hull and the town of Wakefield, Quebec, brought tourists through the picturesque Gatineau Hills, and prompted city dwellers to take to the forests in great numbers.<sup>9</sup> Their arrival became an important source of income for the descendants of the

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[https://www.nfb.ca/film/invisible\\_nation/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/invisible_nation/) (accessed 10 Aug, 2016). For an account of Wrights' encounter with the Algonquin, and their petitions for the return of the land, see Joan Holmes and Associates, "Algonquins of Golden Lake Claim," prepared for Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat, 1993. For a description of the difficulties in researching the history of Indigenous occupation of this area see Joan Holmes, "Hidden Communities: Research Difficulties in Researching Non-Status Algonquins in the Ottawa Valley," presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Algonquin Conference, Boston, 1998.

<http://www.joanholmes.ca/Algonquin%20Non-Status%20Paper.pdf> (accessed 8 August 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Bruce Elliott, "Philemon Wright (1760-1839)," *Outaouais Heritage Magazine*.

<http://outaouais.quebecheritageweb.com/article/philemon-wright-1760-1839> (accessed 7 August 2016).

<sup>8</sup> J. David Andrews, *Gatineau Park: An Intimate Portrait* (Ottawa: Dynamic Light Productions, 1994), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Dennis Messier, "Save the Hills!" 2.

area's pioneers, who could provide transportation and much-needed labour for those looking to establish a more permanent base in the Hills. Homes and cottages were constructed along the shores of Kingsmere, Meech, and Mousseau (Harrington) lakes. This cottage community was primarily upper-middle class, and quickly developed strong ties to the landscape and to each other, and an aversion to other conflicting uses of the landscape, which would become one of the driving factors for the creation of a park.<sup>10</sup>

The idea of a park in the Gatineau Hills formed long before any action was taken to achieve it. The first formal suggestion was brought by Frederick Todd who had been hired by the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC), a federal body formed in 1899 with a mandate to transform Ottawa into an attractive capital city.<sup>11</sup> The 1903 Todd Report presented a strategy for the city's development that was grounded in aesthetic considerations, and included the recommendation to create a natural park in the area surrounding Meech Lake.<sup>12</sup> Todd was also the first to suggest the construction of a parkway that would provide easy access to the Gatineau Hills from downtown Ottawa, in order to connect the proposed park to its primary audience.<sup>13</sup> Though Todd's specific recommendations would never be implemented, the idea of creating a park in the Hills gained increasing support over the years. Twelve years later, another precedent-setting report was prepared for the OIC, which recommended the creation of a powerful federal district encompassing Ottawa, Hull and the vicinity. The 1915 Holt Report emphasized the beauty of the Gatineau Hills and highlighted the need to preserve them through the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Alisa Catherine Apostle, "The View from the Hill: National Park Culture and Gatineau Park 1920-1960," M.A thesis, Queen's University, 1997, 66.

<sup>12</sup> Michele Filion and Serge Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park* (Ottawa: National Capital Commission, 2004), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Filion and Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park*, 10.

creation of a national park. Though many of Holt's recommendations would eventually be realized, the course of the First World War and various other financial pressures would result in significant delays. It was not until 1927 that the Federal District Commission was formed, and another 11 years following that for the establishment of a park.

Despite the numerous recommendations and plans, the ultimate decision to establish a park in the Gatineau Hills was mainly in response to local pressures. As Serge Gagnon and Michele Filion note, Gatineau Park was “not the product of a detailed plan or clearly defined project,” but a “piecemeal creation born on the whim of circumstances, events and actions by individuals.”<sup>14</sup> Of particular note was the continued growth of the cottage industry and the use of the hills by recreational organizations like the Ottawa Ski Club. The club had been founded in 1910 by a handful of skiers who had constructed a large ski jump in Rockcliffe Park in Ottawa. As membership expanded and cross-country skiing (“trail-skiing”) became the club's primary activity, the club demanded a network of trails, and “turn[ed] its eye to the Gatineau Hills.”<sup>15</sup> By the 1920s, it had purchased a small cabin in the Hills that would become the permanent headquarters of the club, on a site now known as Camp Fortune. Through mostly volunteer labour, over 60 miles of trails were carved into the hills, “marking the boundaries of the Club's Gatineau Empire.”<sup>16</sup> At the same time that cottagers were setting up recreational and permanent

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<sup>14</sup> Filion and Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert Marshall, *History of the Ottawa Ski Club* (Ottawa: Self-Published, 1973), 15.

residences in the Gatineau Hills, others left their mark by constructing and maintaining a network of trails and corresponding facilities.<sup>17</sup>

Farmers also persisted on pockets of land, and through the 1930s began turning to their woodlots in order to get through the Great Depression, exacerbating longstanding tensions between rural residents and upper class cottagers. These cottagers sought an environment that appeared unmarred by human activity, and tried to protect the scenic woodlands from the axe. Their concerns for the loss of valuable trees were echoed by members of the Ottawa Ski Club who, in response to clear cutting in the Hills, began purchasing much of the land surrounding their facilities in order to safeguard the surrounding trees, and in 1933, created the Ottawa Ski Club Forest Preservation Society. The Society's president, A. George McHugh, pushed for the creation of a national park, stating that members of the Society would "no doubt feel a deep sense of satisfaction in the fact that they [had], in a measure, contributed to the preservation in its natural state of such a unique national monument."<sup>18</sup>

Only one year after the creation of the Ottawa Ski Club Forest Preservation Society, the Federal Woodlands Preservation League (FWPL) was established to "address the problem of clear cutting in the Gatineau Hills [...], particularly in the Kingsmere and Meech Lake sector."<sup>19</sup> The FWPL was founded by former prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and his chief private secretary, Harry Baldwin, both of whom held private property in the Hills. The FWPL was patronized by members of the cottage community and many other such powerful figures as then-prime minister R.B

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<sup>17</sup> Dennis Messier, "Save the Hills!", 1, and Quinn Lanzon, "From the Ground Up: The Alpine and Cross-Country Sportscares of Gatineau Park, 1910-1967," M.A thesis, Carleton University, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> George McHugh, "Letters to the Editor," *Ottawa Ski Club News*, 1 (1 December 1933), 3. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1933-12-01.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Filion and Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park*, 15.

Bennett, Roderick Percy Sparks, a noted conservationist and successful businessman, and W. D. Herridge, a Canadian politician and diplomat. Given its membership, the FWPL had more political clout than the Ottawa Ski Club's Forest Preservation Society, which disbanded shortly after the rise of the FWPL. The club supported the FWPL and encouraged its membership to donate to it in the March 25, 1935 edition of *The Ottawa Ski Club News*, the club's internal publication.<sup>20</sup>

The FWPL lobbied the federal government for the protection of the forest, and in 1935 pressed the government to survey the "condition of the Gatineau Hills woodlands."<sup>21</sup> The Department of the Interior surveyed the area at the request of the Federal District Commission, and reported the results in the *Lower Gatineau Woodlands Report*. The report found that clear cutting was severely damaging the scenic value of the region, and the authors suggested "corrective measures to preserve only those areas that were visible."<sup>22</sup> They outlined eight options, including the federal purchase of land in the Hills, and the creation of a national park.

Efforts to create a park finally materialized three years after the publication of this report, on July 1, 1938, when a resolution was passed by the House of Commons that gave the Federal District Commission the authority and the resources to acquire land and to construct a parkway in the Gatineau Hills.<sup>23</sup> A budget of \$100,000 was appropriated for the occasion. By this point, employees of the Commission had already begun surveying and mapping lands suitable for inclusion in their park, and recommended the

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<sup>20</sup> "Those Paying Parties," *Ottawa Ski Club News* 15, no. 7 (25 March 1935), 10. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1935-03-25.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Filion and Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park*, 16.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> In 2003, the New Woodlands Preservation League speculated that the 3-year delay in purchasing land was a result of the newly re-elected Mackenzie King's relationship to the proposed park. In 1927, he had been accused of supporting the Gatineau parkway project in order to ease access to his summer home in the Hills, and was likely careful to avoid similar speculations.

expropriation of 3,388 acres of property from 33 landowners in the Township of Hull. The Commission would acquire 13,000 acres the following year, and by the early 1950s, the lands under their control expanded to 43,000 acres.<sup>24</sup>

The acquisition of lands throughout the Hills was a rather haphazard process. Though expropriation tactics were used in certain circumstances, the majority of the park's land was acquired through hundreds of individual negotiations with property owners throughout the Hills, and parcels of land were slowly collected piece by piece. A number of properties within the boundaries of the park continued to be owned by private citizens, however. As the park's area continued to grow, it also pushed up against (and sometimes over) the borders of the surrounding municipalities of Chelsea, Wakefield, Eardley, Ste. Cecile de Masham, and Lusk Lake, whose residents (and their animals) would play a key role in the conflicts that arose with respect to wildlife.

The creation of a park did not put an end to woodcutting in the region. Farmers who occupied the Hills continued to harvest trees for firewood and building materials unchallenged until well after the Second World War.<sup>25</sup> Only those areas of the Hills that were valued by the Commission or the cottage community for their scenic qualities were immediately acquired and their trees preserved. These competing interests, between the preservation and use of trees in the Hills, were largely a symptom of class difference: the Commission and its fellow conservationists valued the trees for non-consumptive purposes as they were intended to serve as a backdrop for their enjoyment of nature; to the members of the rural communities inhabiting the Hills, these trees were valuable as

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<sup>24</sup> Apostle, "The View from the Hill," 62.

<sup>25</sup> Dennis Messier, et al., "Gatineau Hills Forest Industry, 1800-1938: Myth or Reality?" *The Gatineau Park Chronicle 2009* (Ottawa: National Capital Commission, 2009). [http://gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/chronicles/GatineauParkChronicle\\_2009.pdf](http://gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/chronicles/GatineauParkChronicle_2009.pdf) (accessed 1 December 2015).

firewood and for building materials. Moreover, the actual creation and development of the park was an industry in itself. The construction of a parkway to improve access to the Hills in particular was a highly invasive project that took many years. As Dennis Messier notes, the “construction of the parkway network, parking lots, picnic areas and campgrounds also required the cutting of thousands of trees and provided work for many of the region’s loggers.”<sup>26</sup> Not surprisingly, the editors of *The Ottawa Ski Club News* commented that the Commission’s decision to take up ownership of land in the Hills would “gladden the hearts of all lovers of trees,” but the report that they were planning to construct a parkway was “not so welcome.”<sup>27</sup> Others were more supportive, and construction projects associated with the development of the park were a major selling point for its creation. As Steven Alexander notes, the Gatineau Park project was heavily influenced by the ongoing effects of the Great Depression, and so was promoted as a relief effort that would offer work to hundreds of unemployed workers who would construct many of the park’s amenities.<sup>28</sup>

Land acquisition was put on hold with the onset of the Second World War, initiating a period of limited growth for the park. The war years were spent primarily establishing existing park boundaries, and maintaining a hold on the land and animals that were already under the responsibility of the Commission. With the postwar return of regular funding, the Commission embarked on a frenzy of land acquisition that greatly exceeded their capacity to map and regulate the park’s expanded boundaries. This

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> *Ottawa Ski Club News* 19, no. 1 (15 December 1938), 6. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1938-12-15.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Steven Alexander, “Shifting Landscapes and the Creation of Gatineau Park during the Great Depression,” paper presented at the Historical and Global Perspectives on Provincial and Local/Regional Parks in Canada Symposium (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 2010).

immediate postwar period of indiscriminate development resulted in unclear boundaries and widespread confusion (often by the Commission itself) as to who owned what space, and which activities were permitted where.

In 1947, an Advisory Committee on Gatineau Park was established to address the organization of the park's continued development. The work of the Committee culminated in 1952 with the "Report on Master Plan for the Development of Gatineau Park," which emphasized the scenic potential of the proposed 80 kilometer parkway, and recommended the development of beaches, a nature museum, and other points of interest to attract tourists. Additionally, Jacques Gréber's "Plan for the National Capital General Report" (1950) stressed the protection of the capital region's natural resources for recreational purposes. Most notably, the report called for the development of "touristic routes" through the Gatineau Hills.<sup>29</sup> The Commission would attempt to work within these recommendations until 1958, when it was succeeded by the National Capital Commission (NCC), the organization that remains responsible for the park's management today.

#### *Sources on Gatineau Park*

Despite its unique history and proximity to the nation's capital, there is a dearth of historical literature on Gatineau Park. It has been the subject of two M.A. theses, written in 1997 and 2014 by Alisa Catherine Apostle and Quinn Lanzon respectively.<sup>30</sup> Select aspects of its natural and cultural history have been detailed in the works of Katherine

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<sup>29</sup> Jacques Gréber, *Plan for the National Capital General Report* (Ottawa: Federal District Commission, 1950), 236.

[https://qshare.queensu.ca/Users01/gordond/planningcanadascapital/greber1950/Full\\_text\\_Greber1950.pdf](https://qshare.queensu.ca/Users01/gordond/planningcanadascapital/greber1950/Full_text_Greber1950.pdf) (accessed 13 August 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Apostle, "The View from the Hill," and Lanzon, "From the Ground Up."

Fletcher (2004) and J. David Andrews (1994), as well as in publicly funded research papers by the National Capital Commission (2004).<sup>31</sup> With the exception of Lanzon's thesis, which uses the ski trails of the Gatineau Hills as an experiential archive of Gatineau Park's history, the available literature on Gatineau Park's history focuses almost exclusively on the administrative history and development of the park. The Gatineau Valley Historical Society also publishes research on the wider Gatineau area by local community members, academics, and hobbyists in their annual publication, *Up the Gatineau!*, though few of these articles relate to the park or its animals specifically. There has been no historical research on the management of wildlife in Gatineau Park, a gap that this thesis is eager to fill.

Fortunately, the archival resources for this thesis are rich. The Federal District Commission produced extensive documentary archives throughout their management of Gatineau Park from 1938 – 1958. With their dissolution in 1958, the Federal District Commission's records were deposited with Library and Archives Canada (LAC), including an extensive collection on the creation of Gatineau Park and the management of people and wildlife within its growing (and often fuzzy) borders. Among these files are reports and recommendations for troubles with wildlife, receipts for the purchase and introduction of species into the park (and in some cases, their removal), as well as constant expressions of frustration over animal transgressions of both real and imagined boundaries. The prevalence of these records suggests that there were frequent clashes between the human and non-human animals of the park, and that these were a major preoccupation for the Federal District Commission. My research encompasses the period

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<sup>31</sup> J. David Andrews, *Gatineau Park: An Intimate Portrait* (Ottawa: Dynamic Light Productions, 1994); Katherine Fletcher, *Historical Walks: The Gatineau Park Story* (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 2004); and Filion and Gagnon, *The Creation and Early Development of Gatineau Park*.

that corresponds with Gatineau Park's management under the Federal District Commission, from its establishment in 1938 until 1958. These first twenty years were a formative period for the park as they were spent continuously making and remaking park boundaries and regulations, and learning to coexist with animals in new ways in a common environment.

This primary source base is enriched by the Ottawa Ski Club Newsletter Archive, which is held by the Gatineau Valley Historical Society. As Quinn Lanzon has illustrated, the Ottawa Ski Club was intimately invested in the Gatineau Hills long before the creation of the park, and had a front row seat to the trials and errors of the Commission as it embarked on its mission of conservation. More important, however, is how this vast collection details the club's own encounters with animals, and the ways in which their close proximity to wildlife shaped their experiences in the park. Beginning in the 1910s, the Ottawa Ski Club produced a steady stream of newsletters and bulletins in *The Ottawa Ski Club News*, a regular periodical that connected club members, and informed them of club activities. From 1943-1962, this regular publication was supplemented by the publication of an annual yearbook, *The Ottawa Ski Club Year Book*.

This thesis also relies heavily on the *Ottawa Journal*, an Ottawa-based newspaper that was in print from 1885-1980. Throughout the development and management of a game sanctuary in the Gatineau Hills, regular articles in the *Journal* kept recreational visitors (actual and potential) updated on the state of the park's wildlife. The park's animals captured the attention of Ottawa's readers, and articles in the *Journal* inform my understanding of the value of wildlife to the general public, and are especially helpful in filling in the gaps of the Commission's official park archive.

The combination of these three collections of primary source material helps to trace the evolution of ideas towards animals in the park, and the corresponding conflicts that arose. It is important to note, however, that despite the richness of these sources, they do privilege certain narratives. Firstly, the Federal District Commission, the Ottawa Ski Club and the *Ottawa Journal* were all based in Ottawa. Though the headquarters of the Ottawa Ski Club was physically located in Gatineau Park, its membership was made up of primarily middle class Anglophones from across the Ottawa River. The literary, studied, tone of much of their newsletters and publications is especially revealing in this regard. Similarly, the *Ottawa Journal* was produced by and for English-speaking residents of Ottawa, and the majority of the Federal District Commission's employees were Anglophone (including those that operated in Gatineau Park). These records only rarely provide the perspective of the farmers and working class residents that inhabited the Hills and its surrounding area.

Employees of the Commission, the *Journal*, and members of the Ottawa Ski Club also shared a common understanding of the park. To them, the Gatineau Hills was a recreational space, and this relationship shaped their perceptions of the animals they encountered and imagined there. As the history of the park's establishment has shown, however, the region was (and is) a home to many others. Fortunately, the presence of farm dogs and domestic livestock throughout the park's archive was a subtle reminder of the communities that were disrupted or displaced by the creation of Gatineau Park. By tracing the relations between humans and animals in the region, it was possible to view the presence of these actors in ways that may not have otherwise been visible.

## Chapter 2: Wildly Domestic: The Protection of White-tailed Deer

In July of 1946, the *Ottawa Journal* reported a “Big Increase in Wildlife Population On Gatineau Park’s 16,000 Acres.” According to the Superintendent of the park, E. S. Richards, “The number of fawns seen by [park] rangers and visitors to the park [was] greater than any year so far,” and visitors were reportedly delighted with what they saw. After only eight years of the rangers’ management, white-tailed deer were in abundance across the sanctuary of Gatineau Park. Despite the vigilance of the rangers, however, the article reported that there was “an occasional infiltration of wolves, or “brush-coyotes” as some naturalists style them, inside the park’s boundaries.” Apparently attracted to the park by its newfound abundance of deer, these predators threatened to undermine the rangers’ work. But Richards was none too worried: “They make very nice rugs or fur-pieces,” he told the *Journal*. “I’ve had two or three tanned and dressed. They’re a light fur and quite attractive in appearance.”<sup>1</sup>

Since Gatineau Park’s establishment in 1938, the Federal District Commission, its employees, and recreational visitors to the park all shared a fondness for white-tailed deer. Though all game animals were encouraged in the sanctuary of Gatineau Park, the success of the white-tailed deer was a management priority, and park rangers did what they could to see the population rise as quickly as possible. From 1938 to 1958, their strategy was simple: eradicate all potential threats to the deer. Not surprisingly, as the population began to increase, so too did the number and variety of threats against it. Among them was the infamous wolf, “or brush-coyote,” whose tanned and dressed pelts would symbolize the rangers’ valiant efforts to protect the prized deer. However, these

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<sup>1</sup> Alf Skyes, “Big Increase in Wildlife Population On Gatineau Park’s 16,000 Acres,” *Ottawa Journal*, 20 July 1946, 13.

pelts also serve as a metaphor for park managers' inability to order and divide animals into neat categories. As Coleman notes, humans not only invest animals with values, but they also organize and divide clusters of animals into categories based on these values.<sup>2</sup> In Gatineau Park, animals were organized by their assumed relationship to categories of "wild" and "domestic," and were confined to the spaces that corresponded with these groupings: wild animals belonged in wild spaces, and domestic animals belonged in domestic spaces. But as this conceptual ordering of animals was imposed on the animal landscape of Gatineau Park, these divisions broke down. Animals transgressed the perceived boundaries between their respective categories, and rejected easy classifications. When park rangers attempted to enforce the physical and imagined boundaries of the park, they consistently came into conflict with the actions of living, breathing animals.

As this chapter will demonstrate, animals in Gatineau Park simultaneously moved through and occupied conflicting categories of analysis. They were wild and domestic; feral and tame; good and bad. These animals also challenged physical, biological, and taxonomic boundaries: they moved through space without consideration of property lines and other boundary markers; wolves, coyotes and sometimes dogs bred with one another, weakening the divisions between species; and these hybridizations challenged human's ability to label the animals that they encountered. What looked like a wolf was not always a wolf. Throughout the (nearly) twenty-year period explored in this chapter, park rangers were engaged in the policing of these physical and conceptual boundaries. One of their main challenges was the difficulty of managing wildlife in the midst of a rural community, and the park's borders were especially important as they demarcated the

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<sup>2</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 202.

extent of the Commission's authority. However, these borders also served to separate that which was considered wild from that which was not. The sanctuary was a refuge for wildlife, and stood in stark contrast to the rural communities that surrounded the majority of its borders. Park rangers were there to ensure that the wildness of the park remained separate. Thus, as rangers attempted to order the space of Gatineau Park according to abstract ideas of "this is wild" and "that is not," they were constantly challenged by animals that rejected simple categorization. Though the park's boundaries (real and imagined) were clearly defined in theory, these borders did nothing to restrict the mobility of animals in practice. In focusing on the singular goal of managing white-tailed deer, it becomes possible to trace the physical and conceptual movements of animals through these categories.

#### *White-tailed Deer and Hunting in the Gatineau Region*

The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is a medium-sized cervid that evolved and is widely distributed in North America. They currently range from northern Canada south through the United States, Mexico and Central America. Though they generally reside along the edges or near small openings of forests, they are an adaptive species, and can prosper in boreal, deciduous and rain forests, as well as prairies, mountains, rangelands, and swamps. They can also withstand subarctic, temperate, and semiarid climates, and have come to thrive in increasingly developed areas. In fact, areas of agricultural production can actually attract deer and expand their ranges. As Stephen Ditchkoff notes, the anatomy and physiology of white-tailed deer can vary considerably

across their wide range.<sup>3</sup> Generally, the fur of an adult white-tailed deer is a reddish-brown on the head, back, sides, and legs, while its abdomen, chest, and the inside of its legs, chin, and ears are covered in white fur. Throughout the winter, its pelage becomes darker and thicker. When fawns are born, the backs of their coats are dotted with white spots designed to help them blend into their surroundings (these disappear after around 4 months). Female deer (does) typically contribute 1 to 2 fawns to the population each spring, though this number is influenced by population dynamics, habitat quality and food availability.<sup>4</sup> Their diets also vary depending on the location and season, though they generally forage on shoots, grasses, forbs, leaves, buds of trees, flowers and fruits.

The white-tailed deer have a host of natural predators. They are most commonly hunted by large predators, such as wolves and cougars, though smaller animals like coyotes, lynx, and wolverines are also known to prey on deer when the opportunity arises. These predators hunt deer that are easily caught (generally the young and the weak), though they can and do take out healthy stock as well. Canid predators, such as wolves, coyotes, and dogs, are most successful when they ambush their prey, as the fast-sprinting deer can often outrun their enemies.

One of the most successful predators of white-tailed deer has been the human hunter. Indigenous hunters preyed on white-tailed deer and other large game animals such as caribou to supply food and raw materials for clothing, tools, and shelter. These hunters held complex and unique relationships with the animals they killed, and placed significant emphasis on the autonomy and agency of these animals in their hunting stories. As historians have noted, Indigenous hunters also engaged in varying practices of

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen S. Ditchkoff, "Anatomy and Physiology," *Biology and Management of White-tailed Deer*, ed. David G. Hewitt (Boca Raton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

animal management, such as strategically burning fields and forests to create favourable edge habitats for deer.<sup>5</sup> Indigenous hunters also traded deerskins and meat with early European settlers, who relied on venison and other game meats to survive. As these permanent settlers became more established, they continued to hunt through the late autumn and early winter to supplement their summer harvests.<sup>6</sup>

By the nineteenth century, the stark decline of game animals prompted widespread conservation efforts by hunters and legislators across North America. These efforts were fuelled by the recognition that game animals like white-tailed deer were economically significant, and that their extirpation would be detrimental to the wellbeing of their regions. Wealthy sport hunters in particular invested significant resources into the protection of game animals, through the creation of private hunting associations and game reserves, and by lobbying for heightened restrictions surrounding the hunting of deer and other animals. In Canada, Indigenous hunters were (technically) exempt from the majority of these newfound regulations, though their right to hunt, trap, and fish in their traditional territories was nevertheless degraded. As Manore and Binnema have noted, Indigenous communities were often displaced by efforts to establish national and provincial parks, and were excluded from hunting within their boundaries.<sup>7</sup> In Quebec, Ingram notes that Indigenous hunters suffered the most from the widespread practice of

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<sup>5</sup> See for example Louis Bird and Roland Bohr, "Views of a Swampy-Cree Elder on the Spiritual Relations between Hunters and Animals," *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, eds. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 89-104; Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1999); and Paul Nadasdy, "The Gift in the Animal: The Ontology of Hunting and Human-Animal Sociality," *American Ethnologist* 34 (2007): 25-43.

<sup>6</sup> David Calverly performed a cursory review of published settler accounts and histories of Upper Canada and found that hunting was a fairly common activity. For more, see David Calverly, "When the Need for it No Longer Existed": Declining Wildlife and Native Hunting Rights in Ontario, 1791 – 1898," *The Culture of Hunting in Canada*, eds. Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 107-108.

<sup>7</sup> Binnema and Niemi, " 'Let the Line Be Drawn Now,' " and Manore, "Contested Terrains of Space and Place."

private hunting leases and sport-based restrictions, which undermined longstanding hunting and fishing patterns.<sup>8</sup>

This decline in game animals was felt through the Gatineau region, where white-tailed deer played an integral role in economies of subsistence and sport hunting. Following the construction of the rail line through the Gatineau Hills to Wakefield in the 1890s, this decline was increasingly tied to the influx of sportsmen from Ottawa.<sup>9</sup> Referencing the overwhelming number of deer that were taken from Gatineau by Ottawa hunters in 1911, an article in the *Ottawa Journal* predicted that “ten years from now [would] see the Gatineau almost entirely shot out.” The article argued that in order to preserve the deer, the provisions regulating hunting had to be “overhauled and made more severe,” and claimed that anyone in opposition to new regulations was “neither sportsmen nor deserving of the slightest consideration.”<sup>10</sup>

Over the next three decades, the controls around game hunting in the region would become more restrictive, as demanded. However, the concept of conserving game animals in wildlife refuges was also becoming more common. Unlike game reserves, which were privately owned tracts of lands that were reserved specifically for hunting by members of private associations, wildlife refuges or sanctuaries were lands that were excluded entirely from hunting, so that the game animals that roamed there could multiply. A handful of these wildlife refuges were established as part of the early national parks system to preserve endangered species such as elk and bison, but as John Sandlos notes, the majority of these areas were removed from the parks system once these species

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<sup>8</sup> Ingram, *Conservation in Quebec*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> The annual pilgrimage of urban, middle-class men to more remote corners of the wild was linked by Tina Loo to a broader hunt for masculinity in “Of moose and men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880–1939,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2001): 296-319.

<sup>10</sup> “The Deer of the Gatineau,” *Ottawa Journal*, 21 October 1911, 6.

were no longer in danger of being destroyed.<sup>11</sup> More common was the practice of managing new and existing parks as wildlife sanctuaries or reserves in order to attract tourists. This was a view that was clearly expressed in the 1920s by Dominion entomologist Gordon Hewitt when he wrote that the increase in game in the national parks would “serve as an unrivalled breeding-ground for the big-game animals of the Rocky Mountains region, and the surplus wild-life population [would] afford a constant supply of big-game and fur-bearing animals for the adjacent unprotected regions. This is one of the great advantages of such natural reserves.”<sup>12</sup> Although these restrictions protected game animals from hunting, as Binnema and Niemi note, “the central goal was conservationist—geared toward sustained yield for sportsmen outside the park—not preservationist.”<sup>13</sup>

Large game animals were also an attractive addition to parks because tourists were thrilled to observe and photograph them. Colpitts, Wondrak-Biel, and Brower have described the pleasure that park visitors felt by feeding large animals like deer, elk, and especially bears, and how this often became an expected and sought after part of the park experience.<sup>14</sup> In Stanley Park, Sean Kheraj noted that park officials actively introduced free-roaming species to the park specifically to appeal to the expectations of “a public that wanted to regularly encounter such creatures as they rambled through the forest.”<sup>15</sup> Most parks were willing to oblige: observing and interacting with wildlife in these ways

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<sup>11</sup> John Sandlos, “Nature’s Playgrounds: The Parks Branch and Tourism Promotion in the National Parks, 1911-1929,” *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011*, ed. Claire Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 68.

<sup>12</sup> Binnema and Niemi. “‘Let the Line be Drawn Now,’” 734.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. The article also argues that the Stoney were removed from Banff National Park in order to create landscapes abundant in wild game to accommodate sportsmen and tourists. See page 724.

<sup>14</sup> Colpitts, “Films, Tourists, and Bears in the National Parks,” Wondrak-Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears*, and Brower, *Lost Tracks*.

<sup>15</sup> Kheraj, “Demonstration Wildlife,” 504.

conformed to the non-consumptive uses of nature that these parks were intended to facilitate. In Stanley Park, and others like Buffalo National Park, some animals were also collected and displayed in paddocks for more intimate (and guaranteed) sightings.<sup>16</sup>

By the time that Gatineau Park was established, the active conservation of wildlife was a common strategy that responded to the calls of local hunters to ensure the continued presence of game animals in the region, and the enjoyment of tourists who sought to observe these animals “in the wild.”<sup>17</sup> After roughly 8 to 10 months following the establishment of Gatineau Park, the Commission had acquired enough property in the Gatineau Hills to start managing that space as a sanctuary for wildlife. Though the majority of the park’s boundaries were only loosely defined by this point (and would gradually shift outwards), the Commission recruited a small, permanent staff of rangers to enforce them and to begin protecting the park’s wildlife. Among them was E. S. Richards, who had been hired by the Commission leading up to the creation of the park in 1938 to recommend land for purchase, and to supervise this process of land acquisition. The following year, Richards became Gatineau Park’s first superintendent, a position he would hold until he retired in 1956. Richards had served in the First World War, and in 1924 graduated from the University of New Brunswick Forestry Program. At the time of his hire, he held fourteen years’ experience in “timber cruising, buying and taking care of woodlands, and in cutting pulpwood,” had served as Chief Forester at a paper company in Nova Scotia and on a forestry committee for the National Research Council, and was most recently employed by the Dominion Forest Service in Ottawa.<sup>18</sup> Though he was clearly an experienced hand at managing forests, a notable absence from his resume was

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<sup>16</sup> Kheraj, “Demonstration Wildlife,” 512, and Brower, *Lost Tracks*, 116.

<sup>17</sup> MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 193.

<sup>18</sup> E.S. Richards to F.E. Bronson, 20 May 1938, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 265, part 2, 1.

any experience working with animals. By December of the same year, three additional rangers had been hired under Richards, each with forestry experience as well. And as with Richards, there was no indication that any of these men had any prior experience in working with wildlife.

As Tina Loo notes, this prevalence of forestry expertise was a notable trend for employees at the federal parks level as well, and was a symptom of the state of wildlife science at the time. Unlike the disciplines of forestry or fisheries management, the management of wildlife had only emerged as a formal discipline in the first half of the twentieth century. Aldo Leopold had led this new discipline in the United States with the publication of *Game Management* (1933), which was described by Loo as “a quantitative and experimental discipline devoted to the study of organisms in relation to their environment.” This work was based on the research of Charles Elton, who had helped to lay the foundations of modern ecology just a few years earlier.<sup>19</sup> Though the research of Leopold and others would gradually get picked up by the Parks Branch through the late 1930s, the onset of the Second World War would preclude much thought on wildlife science, and the management of game would remain under the purview of amateur foresters and “practical men” like those in Gatineau Park until after the 1940s, and in some cases much later.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the infancy of game management as a formal discipline, the protection of white-tailed deer and other game animals in Gatineau Park was a large part of the rangers’ jobs, and one that was not to be taken lightly. This was evidenced by the Commission’s 1939 requests to have its rangers sworn in as official game wardens under

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<sup>19</sup> Loo, *States of Nature*, 19-20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

the laws of the province of Quebec. Although the Commission already had “the necessary powers to enforce regulations in this respect on its property,” it felt that increasing the authority of their rangers would allow them to “more efficiently discharge [of their] duties as a protector of wild life,” a task it argued would be mutually beneficial to both the Commission and the province.<sup>21</sup> The Commission also requested that the rangers be sworn in as “Honorary Game Officers” under the 1917 Migratory Birds Convention Act.<sup>22</sup> Both requests were approved, and the rangers were sent badges for their identification as such officers. These titles gave the rangers the authority to enforce provincial wildlife legislations in addition to the park’s own bylaws, and conveyed the commitment of the Commission to the protection of game animals. As evidenced by their requests, the Commission was “very anxious to afford every protection to the birds and animals in this area.”<sup>23</sup>

As provincial game wardens, rangers had to navigate a complex set of rules and regulations surrounding the lawful killing of game in Quebec. In 1938, the regular season for hunters in the Gatineau and surrounding areas went from late September to November, and hunters were restricted to just one deer per season. With respect to deer hunting, it was strictly prohibited to: kill deer calves; use jack lights, pits, snares, ropes, poison, or spring or net traps; make use of dogs to hunt deer, or allow dogs to run at large in places frequented by them; hunt deer while yarding; allow the flesh or any other part of the deer to be destroyed or abandoned; buy or sell deer meat; hunt from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise; or destroy or damage the lairs or burrows of fur-

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<sup>21</sup> H. R. Cram to Charles Fremont, 22 April 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 4, and Charles Fremont to H.R. Cram, 3 May 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 4.

<sup>22</sup> H. R. Cram to F. H. H. Williamson, 20 April 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 4.

<sup>23</sup> H. R. Cram to Charles Fremont, 22 April 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 4, and Charles Fremont to H.R. Cram, 3 May 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 4.

bearing animals. Certain activities were also restricted to those with specific permits or licenses: hunting, catching, or trapping fur-bearing animals in the open season required a permit; non-residents of Quebec were prohibited from hunting in the province without a licence; a special permit was required if any game was to be hunted or captured for sale, breeding, or to be kept in captivity; a license was required for commercial sales; and a permit was required to move any fur within or outside of the Province, and royalties to be paid on the same. The cost of a permit for residents of Quebec interested in hunting deer was \$1.10. Non-residents of Quebec were required to pay a general hunting fee of \$26.00 per season, and additional fees if they planned on hunting migratory birds, caribou, or bear.<sup>24</sup> These rules were designed to restrict the hunting of deer and other game animals in ways that would ensure the ongoing survival of the game, and give their prey a “sporting” chance. They were also intended to regulate the “wrong” kind of hunters: those that hunted for subsistence.

As the annual autumn hunting season approached, the Commission began publishing announcements in local newspapers advising potential hunters that the area of Gatineau Park was now off-limits. The first of these announcements was published in September of 1939 in the *Ottawa Citizen*, which read: “Hunting, shooting, or the carrying of firearms or airguns within the Gatineau Park area is prohibited [...]. Penalties will be exacted for infraction of this order.”<sup>25</sup> In December of 1939, an article in the *Ottawa Journal* reported that “William Trudeau, recently appointed game-warden for the sanctuary area,” had used his authority to arrest a Mr. Hendricks for illegally carrying a

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<sup>24</sup> *Summary of the Fish and Game Laws of the Province of Quebec* (Quebec: Department of Mines and Fisheries, 1938), LAC RG 34, file 190, part 4.

<sup>25</sup> “Prohibit Firearms Gatineau Park Area,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 23 September 1939, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

firearm within the sanctuary. After pleading guilty to the charges, Hendricks was fined ten dollars.<sup>26</sup>

### *Dogs in Gatineau Park*

Early in the development of the wildlife sanctuary, Superintendent Richards noted that human hunting might not be the only threat to the success of game animals in the park, and that the white-tailed deer could require protection from other animals as well. As Ted Binnema and Melanie Niemi note, the removal of human hunters from game reserves was typically “paralleled by a policy to reduce all predators [...] so that the large herbivores could proliferate and become tamer.”<sup>27</sup> Less than a year following the park’s establishment, it was reported that dogs were running loose in the park. According to Richards, dogs were known to hunt deer and their continued presence in the park, whether playful or aggressive, could risk driving the deer and other animals away from the sanctuary. As further evidence for his claim, Richards pointed to the existing “statute prohibiting dogs from the Crown lands of Quebec.”<sup>28</sup> On his advice, the Commission swiftly resolved that dogs should be prohibited from entering the newly established park.

This was a decision that would quickly become controversial among many of the park’s visitors, and was one that was tied to an age-old debate surrounding the use of dogs to hunt deer. Otherwise known as “driving with dogs,” the practice of using dogs to aid human hunters in tracking and killing deer had received considerable criticism from

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<sup>26</sup> “Pays \$10 Fine For Carrying Gun In Game Sanctuary,” *Ottawa Journal*, 22 December 1939, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Binnema and Niemi, “ ‘Let the Line Be Drawn now,’ ” 739.

<sup>28</sup> E. S. Richards to H. R. Cram, “Re Dogs in Gatineau Park,” 8 January 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

conservationists in the region since as early as 1911.<sup>29</sup> As one article in the *Ottawa Journal* explained, when deer are hunted by dogs they generally make for the water, where they can easily outswim their pursuer. Being able to predict the deer's response, hunters would release their dogs in wooded areas and wait eagerly along the banks of rivers and on lakeshores for deer's inevitable dash for the water; when the animals emerged from the woods, the hunters were ready with their guns, and the deer were relatively easy targets.<sup>30</sup>

To some, this was seen as poor sport. In 1924, the *Journal* argued that using dogs to drive deer was too easy; the true challenge for hunters was "endeavouring to see a deer before it sees him."<sup>31</sup> As Loo explains, elite sportsmen were guided by a code of conduct, or "sportsman's creed," that asserted that animals must be taken in a "sporting manner," and which granted game a fair chance of escape.<sup>32</sup> As the *Journal* echoed, anything less was merely a "pot-shot," not sport, but "butchery." More importantly, however, the practice of using dogs was widely viewed as detrimental to the supply of deer.

Responding to a party of Ottawa hunters who had returned from a trip to "Gatineau country" having killed sixteen deer with dogs (fifteen of which were reportedly does), the article claimed that driving with dogs was "A wonderful sample of how to kill out wild life!" The use of dogs, it was argued, virtually guaranteed that hunters would catch far more than their fair share of deer (which was only one deer per season in 1924). By this

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<sup>29</sup> "The Deer of the Gatineau," *Ottawa Journal*, 21 October 1911, 6.

<sup>30</sup> "Butchery of Deer," *Ottawa Journal*, 18 November 1924, 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Loo, "Of Moose and Men," 307.

logic, many believed that if the driving of deer were allowed to continue it would lead to the destruction of deer in the region.<sup>33</sup>

This was a view that gained significant traction through the early twentieth century, as hunting associations and other conservationists in the region pleaded for increased regulations surrounding the deer hunt. In addition to the sheer number of deer that could be killed through the use of dogs, those opposed to the practice noted that these dogs also chased “fawns, does and bucks indiscriminately,” despite existing regulations that restricted the hunting of fawns and sometimes does precisely to ensure the protection of a healthy breeding stock. It was also pointed out that dogs could “make the flesh [of a deer] useless for food” if and when they managed to take down a deer themselves.<sup>34</sup>

These views received significant opposition from the owners of hunting dogs, who pushed for the continuation of the practice. According to these hunters, the use of dogs to hunt could decrease the number of hunting accidents and that it allowed hunters who were physically incapable of trekking through the forest to continue to participate in the hunt. And while it may be tempting to assume that these hunters were simply opposed to the practice of conservation, this was not the case. All parties to the debate agreed that strict regulations needed to be enforced in order to maintain a healthy population of deer, but disagreed over which regulations would achieve this.<sup>35</sup>

This debate was not unique to the Gatineau region. By the mid-1920s, most other provinces had reportedly enacted prohibitions or restrictions over the driving of deer with dogs, as had many regions of the United States. In Massachusetts, renowned author and conservationist Thornton W. Burgess frequently used his children’s stories to condemn

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<sup>33</sup> “Butchery of Deer,” 6.

<sup>34</sup> “Battle for Use of Dogs to Hunt Deer in Ontario,” *Ottawa Journal*, 16 March 1933, 17.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

the use of dogs to hunt deer. Throughout his lifetime (1874 – 1965) Burgess was said to have written over 170 children’s books and more than 15,000 animal stories for his daily newspaper column, “Bedtime Stories,” which was published daily in local papers across North America, including in the *Ottawa Journal*. These stories followed the adventures of such characters as Lightfoot the Deer, Peter Rabbit, Jerry Skunk, Buster Bear, and Paddy the Beaver, and encouraged children to respect the natural world and its laws. Within these stories, Lightfoot the Deer was frequently faced with the threat of human hunters, and occasionally, the hunters’ dogs. Each time this occurred, “A great anger filled Lightfoot’s heart. What right did these dogs have to hunt him so? What had he ever done that they should seek to kill him? They did not need him for food for they were fed and cared for.” Lightfoot the Deer consistently felt helpless against bands of hounds, and came to think of all men as “utterly heartless” for allowing the practice. As Burgess explains, however, there was no way that Lightfoot could have known that “it was against the law to hunt deer with dogs.” The only men that were “heartless” were those that allowed their dogs to hunt deer illegally.<sup>36</sup>

These stories and others like it were regularly printed in the *Ottawa Journal*. And while it may have been illegal to hunt deer with dogs in Massachusetts, where Burgess was writing, this was not the case in Quebec until 1929, just nine years before the establishment of Gatineau Park, when a law was passed that prohibited the hunting of deer (and moose and caribou) with dogs in the province. Infractions of this order could net hunters a fine of \$40 to \$50.<sup>37</sup> More importantly, however, was that the new law also specified that dogs “accustomed to hunt or pursue deer” were not permitted to run at

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<sup>36</sup> Thornton W. Burgess, “Little Stories for Bedtime: How Lightfoot Got Rid of the Hounds,” *Ottawa Journal*, 17 November 1919, 11.

<sup>37</sup> “Quebec to Enforce New Hunting Law,” *Ottawa Journal*, 15 March 1929, 17.

large in any place frequented by deer, under penalty of \$5 to \$25. The law granted any person that found a dog running or hunting in these areas the right to kill the animal, “without incurring any responsibility.”<sup>38</sup>

Though the debate around dogs and deer had developed in response to the widespread *human use* of dogs in organized hunts, by the late 1920s, it was widely accepted that dogs in general posed a serious threat to populations of deer. This view had long lasting implications for the dogs that frequented Gatineau Park. When Superintendent Richards recommended that dogs be prohibited from the park, he was drawing from a language of longstanding debates over the assumed relationship between dogs and deer, and insisting that dogs, with or without human hunters, jeopardized the protection of white-tailed deer in the park.

Less than a year following the decision to prohibit dogs, however, Richards noted that it was still “quite common to see or hear from dogs which have banded together and which go on the mountains to run deer.” Though he doubted that many deer were actually killed by the dogs, Richards claimed that the deer would nevertheless be “driven away and other wild life destroyed.”<sup>39</sup> The dogs that Richards encountered in Gatineau Park were not the playful, companion animals with which readers are probably most familiar. Unlike “the pet dog in the city,” these dogs were “hardy, prolific,” and knew “how to live off the country,” and their prevalence in the park was largely a result of its location: situated in the midst of numerous rural communities such as Chelsea, Wakefield, Ste. Cecile de Masham, Eardley, Cantley, and Lusk Lake, the park was bordered by a host of farms and other properties that kept their own animals. Dogs in particular would be kept

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> E. S. Richards to H. R. Cram, “Re Dogs in Gatineau Park,” 8 January 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part.5.

on most rural farms in order to guard sheep and other livestock, to bring home the cows, and otherwise protect the owners' properties.<sup>40</sup> Generally referred to as “free-roaming” or “free-ranging” dogs, these animals can pose a significant threat to populations of wildlife as they were typically left to their own devices. As ecologists Joelene Hughes and David W. Macdonald have noted, “dogs in rural landscapes may move between human-dominated areas where they get feed and shelter, to the surrounding landscape where they may encounter wild species.” To many of these rural dogs, the woods of the Gatineau Hills were a place to hunt; many would get feed from their owners, but many others were required to catch their own meals. These dogs relied on interactions with both human and non-human animals to survive, and served to connect the wildlife of the park with its surrounding rural communities.<sup>41</sup>

This connection between rural and wild spaces and animals was exactly what the Commission had attempted to disrupt. The prohibition of dogs was intended to insulate the wildlife of Gatineau Park from the rural communities in which it was situated. For obvious reasons, these dogs were unable to comprehend the newly established restrictions over their movements, and as Richards noted, continued to band together to run deer in the park.<sup>42</sup>

The same was not as true for the “pet dog in the city,” who were also known to wander the trails of the park, and whose movements were controlled and supervised by their human masters. And while these dogs had not been the target of the Commission's

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<sup>40</sup> “Wild Dogs – Menace to Deer,” *Ottawa Journal*, 24 September 1946, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Joelene Hughes and David W. Macdonald, “A Review of the Interactions Between Free-Roaming Domestic Dogs and Wildlife,” *Biological Conservation* 157 (2013): 342. See also Matthew E. Gompper, ed., *Free-Ranging Dogs & Wildlife Conservation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>42</sup> E. S. Richards to H. R. Cram, “Re Dogs in Gatineau Park,” 8 January 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

policy against dogs, they quickly became the focus of its application. For when it was decided that dogs would no longer be welcome in the park, no distinctions were made between hunting dogs, farm dogs, and domestic dogs (companion animals); the policy was simply “no dogs.” Though the Commission had intended to address the destruction of game animals by dogs, their policy did little to obstruct the movements of dogs that actually did this killing. Instead, when park rangers began patrolling their districts, the only dogs they consistently encountered (at least originally) were these domestic pets.

By prohibiting dogs from Gatineau Park, the Commission inadvertently launched a debate over the place of so-called “city dogs” within the park. As rangers began informing recreational visitors with dogs that their pets were no longer welcome within the park’s boundaries, Richards noted that a considerable number of visitors had expressed their objections to the policy, and in some cases, refused to comply when confronted by park staff.<sup>43</sup> Following these refusals, Richards came to wonder whether “all dogs [were] to be kept off [the park] or only such dogs that [were] known to run deer.”<sup>44</sup> Evidently, park visitors had argued that because their pet dogs were not trained to hunt, they were not a threat to the park’s wildlife. And to an extent, the Commission seemed to agree: it responded to Richards by deciding that “small dogs” would be allowed in the park, but “not others.”<sup>45</sup>

Recreational visitors were unimpressed with the attempts by park staff to prevent their pets from joining them in the park. Less than two weeks following Richards’ message to the Commission, a disgruntled letter was published in *The Ottawa Ski Club*

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<sup>43</sup> E. S. Richards to H. R. Cram, “Re Dogs in Gatineau Park,” 8 January 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> E. S. Richards to H. R. Cram, “Re Dogs in Gatineau Park,” 8 January 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5. (Cram’s decision was written and signed in the margins of Richards’ memorandum.)

*News* on the subject of the new policy. Though the club owned land within the park's boundaries, particularly in the area of Fortune Lake, their ski trails and slopes extended well beyond their own property limits and onto the recently acquired lands of the Commission. While skiing, members of the club occupied park property just as much as their own, if not more. Consequently, even though the club had no policy against the bringing of dogs to their property, the prohibition of dogs from the park effectively restricted members with dogs to the few acres of land actually owned by the club. These restrictions prompted a member of the ski club to put their frustrations to writing. The disgruntled member, however, appears not to have been a skier at all. In fact, they were not even human:

May I, as a member of a tribe in which man has always found his best and most faithful friends, according to his own admission, protest against the treatment that we receive from a few people in authority who do not understand us and have no use nor love for us, belonging as they do to that highly prejudiced class known as "dog haters."

It is bad enough of the caretaker at the Camp Fortune lodge to refuse to admit us and leave us shivering miserably in the cold, because a few fanatics object to our presence, but that man Richards, the superintendent of the new Gatineau Park, has gone one better: he has decreed that no dog, leashed or unleashed, shall be allowed in any part of the 12,000 acres Park. This means that we are no longer able to follow our masters when they take a stroll out of the city.

We, city dogs, need exercise to keep in good health, just as much as any man; We need warmth, we suffer from the cold as much as any human being [...]. If, in a playful mood, we chase a bunny, a squirrel or a partridge, it is all in fun and no harm intended. We never catch any anyway. As for deer they would not even run away if they saw us. I would not want to appear prejudiced, but I believe Mr. Editor that a lone stray cat around a summer cottage, does more harm to birds in a week's time than all the dogs in the city in a whole season. [...]

God did not intend the trees, the air and sunshine for man alone. Be fair to us who are, as you know, and always want to be

Your best and most faithful friends,

A DOG.<sup>46</sup>

Penned from the perspective of a dog (or as close as one can get to it), the letter clearly separated the class of so-called “city dogs” from the hunting dogs that had been the cause of such heated debates throughout the past three decades. These mild-tempered dogs were simply taking refuge in the wild like their human masters. They were there to have fun, and to get exercise, nothing more. Even the deer, it was argued, would be able to distinguish between the tame city dog and a hunting dog, and “would not even run away if they saw [one].” Much like the hunters that resisted the end of deer hunting with dogs, the author here does not deny the importance of wildlife or conservation. Rather, the letter is a clear indication that well-trained dogs from the city were simply not seen in opposition to conservation efforts. The city-dogs, like their human masters, were not a threat to wildlife in Gatineau Park because they were assumed to be a higher class of dog; they were orderly, obedient, and in many cases, licensed by the state. The merciless, indiscriminate deer-killers on the other hand, belonged to a rural class of workers and farmers whose dogs were believed to be unpredictable, dangerous and destructive, the antithesis of companion animals from the city. As Amanda Sauermann notes in her M.A. thesis, these dogs were “connected to ideas of class and vectors of status,” and writings about them reveal just as much about their owners’ relations with other individuals than they reveal about the animals themselves.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Ottawa Ski Club News* 20, no.2 (15 January 1940), 9. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1940-01-17.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>47</sup> Amanda Sauermann, *Regulating and Representing Vagrant Curs and Purebred Dogs in Toronto, 1867-1910*, M.A thesis, Carleton University, History, 2010, 4.

However, the city dog does point to some of the many ways of being (and perceiving) a dog: there was clearly a sharp divide between the docile city dog and the aggressive hunters that attacked the park's deer, and even then, these rural working dogs could themselves be quite different than the dogs that would be released by human hunters to drive deer. There were very real distinctions between the various types and temperaments of dogs, none of which were captured by the simple label "dog." The letter clearly points to this oversight by the Commission when it prohibited all dogs from its park. If it was not an oversight, then clearly they were simply "dog haters."<sup>48</sup>

While the dog's plea to its human audience would have likely appealed to many other dog owners and sympathizers within the club, it is interesting to note that the Ottawa Ski Club itself expressed its support of the park's no-dog policy. Following the dog's letter is a notice that reads "The Directors of the Ottawa Ski Club are positively against the bringing of dogs out on the trails in the winter, as they are a constant danger to skiers on steep-slopes, and have been the cause of several accidents. They would, however, favour some relaxation of the regulations as regards spring and fall months."<sup>49</sup> Though dogs were banned from the park for the purpose of preserving and protecting park wildlife, the Commission's decision had the unintended result of protecting the interests (and limbs) of skiers as well.

Nevertheless, the dog's plea for inclusion appears to have driven a wedge between members of the club. In the following edition of *The Ottawa Ski Club News*, a letter was published in response to the dog's, this time from a self-styled 'Animal Lover.'

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<sup>48</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *Ottawa Ski Club News* 20, no.2 (15 January 1940), 9.  
<http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1940-01-17.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

It reads:

I was much interested in a letter which appeared in the last issue of our Club News, signed "A Dog". It was a delight to read these well-expressed protests of our canine friend, a rare treat indeed to have the inner workings of a dog's mind laid bare, since our much loved friends are usually linguistically inarticulate, expressing their feelings for us by tail wags [...], by various other expressive bodily movements and by that revealing light of the eye [...].

While, perhaps, the writer would not go so far as to subscribe to the dictum "love me, love my dog", he has a profound liking for these steadfast friends and playmates. Nevertheless their limitations must be recognized. I doubt if even so intelligent an animal as the one which is represented in writing the article referred to would be wise enough to keep out of the way of skiers downhill at great speed. [...]

There are very many of us who have a great liking for other creatures besides dogs. Now that we have a fine Gatineau Park, it is to be hoped that in the not distant future we shall see more of these creatures than we do now. Certainly deer, partridges, and other shy occupants of the woods will soon learn that the new park is a sanctuary. Already there are more deer about than formerly, probably because they haven't been hunted down by the hunter and his dog. We hope for the day when these beautiful creatures will be more plentiful and less shy within the confines of the Park. The fulfilment of that hope would certainly be retarded and perhaps altogether prevented if the woods should be filled with the barking of our dogs, however playful. [...]

The officials of the Gatineau Park have made a wise and far-seeing decision. Let us broaden our horizon and endeavour to people our Gatineau Park with the interesting creatures which hitherto have been scared away by man, dog and gun. We must urge our dog friend to make some slight sacrifice in the interest of his masters and of other species of the animal world.

ANIMAL LOVER.<sup>50</sup>

Unlike the former, this author's view of the distinctions that existed between the city dog and the hunting dog was much more nuanced. Recognizing the relationship

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<sup>50</sup> "Letters to the Editor," *Ottawa Ski Club News* 20, no.4 (18 February 1940,) 8-9.  
<http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1940-02-18.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

between the “steadfast friends” and their human masters, the author nevertheless asserts that these dogs’ playful demeanour was no justification for the inevitable effects of their presence on the park’s wildlife; though their differences may have been real, this did not seem to matter. Though the author appears to share the view that the dog was not to blame for its so-called “limitations,” the author was just as quick to note that these limitations had no place in the park. The park was characterized as a space for wild animals, or “creatures,” categories that no dog could fit into. The dogs had their place, and, thanks to the “wise and far-seeing” officials of Gatineau Park, the other creatures now had theirs. Importantly, the animal-loving skier’s opposition to the presence of dogs in the park was clearly rooted in their desire to observe the park’s wildlife. As they explained, “We hope for the day when these beautiful creatures will be more plentiful and less shy within the confines of the Park,” so that they could “see more of these creatures than we do now.”<sup>51</sup> So long as the white-tailed deer were not harassed by dogs and hunters, their population would not only become more abundant, but would also become less fearful of, and visible to, park visitors. In order to accomplish these modest goals, the boundaries that divided the park’s wilderness from the rural and domestic spaces around it needed to be enforced.<sup>52</sup>

This was exactly what the park rangers had been hired to do: by policing the park’s boundaries, the rangers enforced the assumed distinction that was drawn between the “wildness” of Gatineau Park, and the rural and domestic spaces (and animals) that threatened it. In the fall of 1940, the enforcement of these boundaries took on a new significance when the Commission enlisted the help of the Royal Canadian Military

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<sup>51</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Ottawa Ski Club News* (18 February 1940), 8-9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

Police (RCMP). In October of that year, Superintendent Richards requested that one of his rangers, J. C. Holt (Ray), accompany an RCMP constable on a patrol of the park. According to Richards, the presence of the Constable was to serve as a deterrent to wrong-doers in the area: “The constable will be wearing his red coat and I believe will create some impression since he is 6 ft. Do not walk him too far as I understand he is not very strong, but we would like him to be seen by all potential law breakers.”<sup>53</sup> Though border patrols were part of the park rangers’ regular duties, the addition of the Mountie, with his iconic red coat, was intended to convey the state’s authority in Gatineau Park. And because his presence in the park was primarily for show, the Constable’s apparent “limitations” were a non-issue.

After completing his patrol on October 5, the Constable described his findings in a formal report to the Commission. He said he had spent the majority of his patrol notifying the farmers that resided along the boundary of the park that it was strictly prohibited to hunt within its grounds. He also requested that prominent figures within the numerous districts, such as mayors, priests, and shop owners, notify other members of their communities of the restrictions. On hunting, the Constable reported that “no shooting [was] heard in the whole district.” He had, however, encountered several visitors with dogs who were notified that they “had to be kept away from the park area as it was a game sanctuary.”<sup>54</sup> When the Constable returned for his second patrol on November 4, he again reported that he had seen dogs “running at large,” and that in each case the owners were informed that no dogs were allowed in the park area. Rather than issuing formal warnings, or asking dog-owners to leave the park, the Constable simply

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<sup>53</sup> E. S. Richards to J. C. Holt, 1 October 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 8.

<sup>54</sup> R. C. Stuchbery, “Re: Patrol Gatineau Park,” 7 October 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 8, 1.

informed visitors of their wrongdoing and politely requested that their dogs remain leashed for the remainder of their trip. This lenience was likely a result of the newness of the law, as each of the visitors the Constable had confronted during his patrol had reportedly been unaware of the restrictions on dogs in the park.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, however, was the fact that these dogs and their owners were not rural trespassers, but recreational guests.

In contrast, farmers along the park boundaries were again interviewed by the Constable, many of whom had been “reported to the patrol as persons who might hunt on the Park area if opportunity arose.”<sup>56</sup> As stated in his previous report, the Constable was of the view that regular patrols of the park would “doubtlessly have a good effect on the people who reside in the districts,” and that those who saw the Mountie would “think twice before venturing on a hunting trip in the park.”<sup>57</sup> And while there is very little evidence of these “potential law breakers” in the Commission’s archive, the recruitment of the RCMP to enforce the park’s boundaries suggests that the rural community was more resistant to regulations than the archive reveals. Which is no surprise: by enclosing the Hills within a park boundary, land that had been previously open to hunting, foraging, and timber cutting was suddenly closed; trees that had been used for building materials could no longer be cut; and conservation policies suddenly precluded the region’s inhabitants from hunting for food and furs in their former ranges. With the stroke of a pen, long-standing practices became crimes if local inhabitants were not careful to mind the park’s boundaries. And for many residents, losing access to the land that the park now

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<sup>55</sup> R. C. Stuchbery, “Re: Patrol. Gatineau National Park,” 4 November 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

occupied would have been detrimental to what Karl Jacoby describes as the “seasonal cycle” of small-scale-farming, hunting and trapping, and logging that he identified amongst rural residents of New York state.<sup>58</sup> Much like the policy against dogs, hunting restrictions in the park made no distinction between rural hunters that relied on wild meat for food, and sportsmen that hunted primarily for leisure. And to those that had relied on these lands and its animals, it would not have seemed fair to equate the two. As Jacoby noted in the Adirondacks, inhabitants of the Gatineau region would have had a detailed knowledge of the landscape, which they could have used to facilitate illicit hunting activities.<sup>59</sup> Though the Commission’s archive is (nearly) silent on these activities, the involvement of the RCMP suggests these transgressions were quite common, or thought to be.

Some of these transgressions, however, may have had less to do with residents’ resistance to new laws, so much as their ignorance of them. Or, perhaps more likely, that the rapidly evolving boundaries of the park made it difficult to know where hunting was and was not permitted at any given point. In order to address this, the Constable recommended placing notices strategically throughout the park detailing the regulations respecting dogs and hunting. By the following year, a number of signs were erected throughout the park in both English and French that communicated these prohibitions in large, block letters. However, they also made it very clear who the park was intended to please. The signs read as follows:

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<sup>58</sup> Karl Jacoby, “Class and Environmental History: Lessons From “The War in the Adirondacks,” *Environmental History* 2, no. 3 (1997): 328.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

GATINEAU PARK GAME SANCTUARY  
 THIS IS YOUR PLAYGROUND  
 Care with fire  
 Respect for trees  
 Kindness to animals and birds  
 Will make it an enjoyable place  
 FIREARMS and DOGS PROHIBITED  
 FEDERAL DISTRICT COMMISSION <sup>60</sup>

Though this space was intended to protect and conserve its trees, animals, birds, and other natural “resources,” the park was equally intended to accommodate the interests of tourists and other recreational visitors. It was both a refuge for wildlife and playground for humans.

In some respects, it could also be described as a zoo. Despite the Commission’s concerns for wildlife (or rather, because of it), the *Journal* reported that the park was “literally alive with game of all kinds.” White-tailed deer in particular were “becoming common” in the park, with visitors reporting sightings of fifteen to twenty deer within an hour in the Luskville area of the park.<sup>61</sup> With the help of the *Ottawa Journal* and other newspapers, the park’s wildlife was promoted as a sight worth seeing. By the following year, in 1941, deer were reported as “plentiful,” though visitors apparently had to go “farther back in the woods” in order to find them.<sup>62</sup> This was quickly addressed by park staff, as salt licks were promptly set up along the sides of roads and trails in order to draw the deer from their hiding places, and into the view (and lenses) of park visitors.<sup>63</sup> One article commented that “The park is likely to prove a [welcome] challenge to camera

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<sup>60</sup> *Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1952-53* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1953), back cover. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1952-1953-year-book.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>61</sup> “All Types of Native Animals and Birds for Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 16 October 1940, 20.

<sup>62</sup> “Breath-Taking Scenic Charm Awaits Gatineau Park Visitor,” *Ottawa Journal*, 4 July 1941, 22.

<sup>63</sup> “Vistas of Beauty Opened Up By Winding Gatineau Trails,” *Ottawa Journal*, 1 August 1941, 2.

shooters.”<sup>64</sup> Much like the animals in a zoo, the deer of Gatineau Park were purposefully and strategically put on display for the enjoyment of its visitors. And as Nigel Rothfels notes, the most popular zoos were those that did away with elaborate buildings, barred cages, and glassed-in rooms, in favour of “exhibits in which animals appear to be living in nature.” Through the construction of manufactured “natural” environments, these “immersion exhibits” not only feigned the appearance of animals “living in apparent freedom,” but encompassed visitors within an apparently natural world as well.<sup>65</sup>

Gatineau Park was promoted as a zoo-like attraction that offered its visitors the chance to observe wild animals in their authentic natural habitats.

This increase in the park’s deer would continue through 1943, when they were described as “particularly plentiful throughout the Gatineau,” with reports of “no fewer than 150” seen searching for food in the valleys below the mountain.<sup>66</sup> Within only five years, the population of white-tailed deer in Gatineau Park seemed to be turning around. The protection from human hunters and the discouragement of dogs had provided a secure environment for deer to reproduce. Though the park’s dog policy had resulted in the unintended consequence of denying (most) recreational visitors the right to bring their dogs to the park, the Commission continued to apply their dog policy to opposed city visitors. Though the application of the policy was admittedly slow and uneven to start, notices in the local paper, appropriate signage, and regular patrols ensured that the policy was integrated into the regular management of the park’s white-tailed deer.

In policing the park’s boundaries, the park rangers and the RCMP attempted to keep the park space wild; domestic and rural dogs were denied entry to the park’s

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<sup>64</sup> “Plan to Make Game Sanctuary of Gatineau National Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 25 April 1941, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 199-200.

<sup>66</sup> “New Map Reveal Inviting Trails in Kingsmere Area,” *Ottawa Journal*, 27 February 1943, 4.

wilderness (as much as humanly possible), and rural hunters were prevented from taking valuable game from the sanctuary. The success of the park's policies was measured largely in white-tailed deer: as the population increased, so too did the park's relative "wildness," a fact that did not go unnoticed by the increasing number of visitors to the park. In order to please these visitors, the park was simultaneously managed as a refuge for wildlife and a zoo. Unfortunately for the Commission, however, the growing abundance of white-tailed deer would attract more than just human visitors to the park; as the space became more "wild," it attracted wilder beasts as well.



Source: Ottawa Ski Club Year Book, 1952-1953

### *The Arrival of "Wolves"*

In the winter of 1943-44, the *Ottawa Journal* reported that "For the first time since Gatineau Park opened, wolves were sighted" in the park. The rangers had

reportedly spotted three, “and a solitary wolf was shot in the Luskville area.” According to Superintendent Richards, the winter snow made the deer “easy prey” for the wolves, and so his rangers were “on the lookout for any wolf-tracks,” and predicted that they would soon “smoke out” any wolf making its way southward towards the park deer, eliminating the wolves before they became a problem.<sup>67</sup> This was not the case. The following season, the Commission would apply to the Wartime Prices and Trades Board for a permit to purchase small-arms ammunition for the “control of pests.” According to their application, “Dogs running wild, wolves, and an occasional bear, are shot in the park [...] Our rangers, and their deputies, must do this shooting and are in need of ammunition.”<sup>68</sup>

The elimination of predators to support the reproduction of white-tailed deer and other game animals was a common management strategy for conservationists. But as Jon Coleman and Karen Jones note, humans have held a long and unique relationship with the destruction of wolves (*Canis lupus*).<sup>69</sup> For centuries, these wolf “criminals” were killed on behalf of slaughtered livestock, a practice that had led to their extirpation from England by the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, when European settlers arrived in New England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they encountered a creature of legend. However, it was not just the wolves’ criminal reputations, or the fact that they had long since been destroyed in Britain that made them the subject of myth. They were also fearsome

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<sup>67</sup> “Deer Abound in Gatineau Park 12 Miles from Parliament Hill: Summer Playground Near Ottawa Awaits Post-War Days for Development,” *Ottawa Journal*, 17 April 1944, 3.

<sup>68</sup> H. R. Cram to Wartime Prices and Trades Board, 27 September 1944, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 11.

<sup>69</sup> Coleman, *Vicious* and Karen Jones, “Writing the Wolf: Canine Tales and North American Environmental-Literary Tradition,” *Environment & History* 17, no. 2 (2011): 201-228. Dan Flores has also traced the history of North American destruction of coyotes in his recent book, *Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

<sup>70</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 49.

monsters. As Coleman explains, “European folklore was replete with toothy monstrosities. Werewolves laid siege to villages; mad wolves bit the noses off fair maidens; rampaging wolf squads chased down peasant families in the snow; and sexually charged wolves drooled over red-clad pubescent girls.”<sup>71</sup> The howls of wolves haunted the colonists, and would continue to incite fear (and lore) for generations.

The persecution of wolves has far exceeded that of any other predator: they were ceaselessly shot, poisoned, trapped, and tortured; their pelts and heads were kept as prizes or displayed as warnings to other wolves; and their deaths were the subjects of legends that lived on for generations. Although wolves “may have had enough sensibility to avoid human contact,” Coleman notes that they had “no way of comprehending the human notion of territoriality that extend[ed] to the animals in their care. When [wolves] sank their teeth in to cows, goats, pigs, and sheep, wolves committed sins unimaginable to them.”<sup>72</sup> And these wolves paid for them with their lives.

When wolves were especially destructive, individual farmers and local governments would often impose bounties on their heads, and expert wolf-trackers and hunters became common. By the late nineteenth century, sport hunters increasingly took part in the labour of wolf killing as well.<sup>73</sup> To these hunters, every deer that was taken down by a wolf was one less available for the annual hunt. In the Gatineau region, it was said that when wolves destroyed large numbers of deer, “the whole mountain country suffers because the destruction of deer lessens the attraction to outside sportsmen, who otherwise would bring a lot more money to the countryside.”<sup>74</sup> As farmers sought to

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 36

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>74</sup> “Wolves on the Gatineau!” *Ottawa Journal*, 8 October 1936, 6.

protect their livestock from predation, hunters sought to enforce their monopoly on the hunting of game.

With the arrival of wolves to Gatineau Park, the Commission too began hunting the animals. As the *Ottawa Journal* noted, “Gatineau Park north of Ottawa is a game sanctuary and firearms are not permitted to be carried. But rifle shots echoed through the hills over the week-end,” as two of the predators “fell before park rangers’ bullets.”<sup>75</sup> These wolves had reportedly been “harassing and attacking the deer in their [winter] yards” following a heavy snowstorm the week before. As tradition would have it, Richards had their hides “dressed by a local fur dealer” to be put on display in his Meech Lake home. Applications for the provincial bounty were completed as well, though it was unclear whether Richards or the Commission would pocket the profits.<sup>76</sup>

As the *Journal* explained, deep snow made it difficult for deer to get out of their winter yards, and so made them more vulnerable to predation.<sup>77</sup> When snow exceeds a certain depth, deer congregate along the same trails and general areas as the snow gets packed down and is easier to walk on. This seasonal “yarding up,” as it is often referred, appears to be a strategy that helps deer to survive harsh winters, as herding together preserves their energy, and can be safer than venturing out to find food, exposing themselves to predators in the deep snow. As Stephen Ditchkoff explains, for deer the cost of searching for food in the winter is normally greater than the energy obtained from the low quality feed, and so deer “voluntarily restrict feed intake and activity during

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<sup>75</sup> “Shoot Two Brush Coyotes,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8.

<sup>76</sup> In Quebec and Ontario, bounties were used to encourage wolf hunting until the early 1970s. See Gilbert Proulx and Dwight Rodtka, “Predator Bounties in Western Canada Cause Animal Suffering and Compromise Wildlife Conservation Efforts,” *Animals* 5 (2015): 1034-1046.

<sup>77</sup> “Shoot Two Brush Coyotes,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8.

winter.” Those that search for food under such harsh conditions are more likely to die than those that forage opportunistically.<sup>78</sup>

Though there are a number of deeryards within the boundaries of the park, the deer of the greater Gatineau area generally winter on the Eardley Escarpment, as it protects them from northerly winds. When confined to these snowy slopes, the deer were perceived as helpless against the hungry wolves in Gatineau Park, an image that was captured by the *Ottawa Journal*. They needed protection more than ever, and the rangers were happy to oblige. But unlike the farmers or hunters of the region, the rangers were not attempting to protect the deer from predation so that they could then harvest them themselves; they were protecting the deer to replenish local deer populations, and to ensure a healthy number remained to be observed by tourists. Nevertheless, an interesting parallel exists between the park and its surrounding farms: the park’s white-tailed deer were not domestic “livestock,” but they were, in a sense, living property. Their population was actively managed and controlled in order to serve specific, human objectives, and the Commission had expended a significant amount of resources to ensure their protection. Though the Commission may not have been able to control the deer in the same way that a farmer might control their livestock, it nevertheless felt a sense of ownership and authority over the animals within its boundaries. The deer occupied a sort of in-between: they were simultaneously wild, and human property, just as the park might be considered a wildlife refuge or a zoo.

Evidently, the assumed distinctions between wild and domestic spaces and animals within and surrounding Gatineau Park were much less defined than they were made out to be. However, this was perhaps most exemplified by the wolves themselves:

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<sup>78</sup> Stephen S. Ditchkoff, “Anatomy and Physiology,” 50.

as the community quickly discovered, not all wolves in the park were technically “wolves.” When two were shot and killed by park rangers in 1944 for “annoying and killing the protected deer,” their hides were brought to a Dr. R. M. Anderson of the Department of Mines and Resources in Ottawa, where they were identified instead as an unknown type of coyote. Described as a “little darker and larger than the coyotes of the plains,” these animals were reported to have “infiltrated from the West.”<sup>79</sup> The following year, the animals found in the park were described as a “coyote brush-wolf type, weighing about 65 pounds.” As Superintendent Richards informed the *Journal*, these animals were “not as cunning or intelligent as the larger timber-wolves.”<sup>80</sup>

As Coleman notes, wolves are particularly illustrative of the “dilemmas of animal classification” as they “have a long history of shifting shape, size, color, and behavior [sic].”<sup>81</sup> They also have a “penchant for hybridization,” and have often taken to interbreeding with coyotes.<sup>82</sup> Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are notably smaller in height and in length than wolves, though they share many similar features and are closely related. Coyotes have a narrow snout compared to the broad snout of a wolf, and its ears are longer with pointed tips. Coyotes hunt in pairs, or on their own, while wolves hunt in larger packs. This allows wolves to hunt larger game animals, such as deer, moose and caribou, with greater success, while coyotes tend to target smaller mammals (though they can and do take down deer). In Algonquin Park, it was noted that wolves that had interbred with coyotes were notably smaller, but also friendlier to strangers (wolf, coyote, or human). Though both wolves and coyotes are fearful of humans, coyotes are said to be

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<sup>79</sup> “Shoot Two Brush Coyotes,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8.

<sup>80</sup> “Brush Wolves Again invade Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 5 December 1945, 1.

<sup>81</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 197

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

more adaptable to human environments. This, according to Coleman, is key to wolves' survival: "If wolves hope to inhabit a world filled with national parks, logging trucks, and suburban backyards, they need to become more like coyotes."<sup>83</sup>

From the mid-1940s until 1958, the wolf-like predators in Gatineau Park were variously labelled as "wolves," "coyotes," "bush coyotes," "brush coyotes," "brush wolves," "coyote brush-wolves," "timber wolves," and a "mongrel breed of Western coyote."<sup>84</sup> And while it is certainly possible that these various 'types' of wolves and coyotes were frequenting the park and its surroundings, present-day research suggests that they were likely a single, hybrid species. From 2013 – 2015 the National Capital Commission (the successor of the Federal District Commission) engaged in its first ever survey of the "wolves" of Gatineau Park. What they found was a nameless hybrid of wolves, coyotes, and dogs – a sort of "canid soup." As the *Ottawa Citizen* reported in October of 2015, the "Packs of Gatineau Park [were] Not quite wolves, not quite coyotes."<sup>85</sup> And while Coleman notes that contemporary "wolf studies have gone a long way toward understanding wolves as wolves rather than as figments of human imaginations,"<sup>86</sup> these creatures continue to attract our attention: in the days and weeks following the *Citizen's* publication, these animal hybrids found their way into the *National Post*, *The Economist*, and *The Smithsonian*, to name a few. Reported as an "amazing contemporary evolution story that's happening right underneath our nose," the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>84</sup> "Shoot Two Brush Coyotes," *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8; "Brush Wolves Again Invade Gatineau Park," *Ottawa Journal*, 5 December 1945, 1; "Gatineau Park Deer Snowed in, at Mercy of Brush Wolves," *Ottawa Journal*, 10 February 1947, 26; "Smokey Grey Phantoms Raiding Bush and Farm," *Ottawa Journal*, 15 April 1950, 3; Jim Fisher, "Wolf Hunt: Preying on Deer In Gatineau Park," *Ottawa Journal*, 16 January 1956, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Tom Spears, "Packs of Gatineau Park: Not quite wolves, not quite coyotes," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 22 October 2015. <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/packs-of-gatineau-park-not-quite-wolves-not-quite-coyotes> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>86</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 3.

so-called “coywolves” captured the attention and imagination of a worldwide audience.<sup>87</sup> Though scientists disagree over the use of the term “coywolf,” these studies suggest that the unidentified hybrid species can be found across regions of eastern North America, and can be traced back as far as 200 years. Given the scepticism of park rangers, farmers, and the media over the species of wolf and/or coyote that roamed the Gatineau Hills, it is likely that they were all part of the “canid soup” that the NCC would identify nearly 75 years later.

This inability to properly classify these mysterious predators points to the power of animals to transgress both biological and taxonomic boundaries. Moreover, the present-day insistence on establishing new labels such as “coywolves” or “woyotes,” whether scientific or not, illustrates humans’ penchant for ordering and classifying animals systematically. And as Coleman notes, while hybridization may help wolves survive, it also “violates the cultural values twentieth-century humans have attached to the taxonomic categories of “wolf” and “coyote.””<sup>88</sup>

These transgressions did little to alter the park’s treatment of the animals. Whether wolf, coyote, or some variation of the two, these animals were perceived as dangerous predators, and were subject to years of active extermination. Human relations with the “wolves” in Gatineau Park were not determined by their biology (which they did not know) or their appearance, but by the direct actions of the predators. If it looked like

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<sup>87</sup> Tom Spears, “They’re not quite coyotes and they’re not quite wolves. ‘Coywolf’ hybrids roam Gatineau Park,” *The National Post*, 23 October 2015. <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/theyre-not-quite-coyotes-and-theyre-not-quite-wolves-coywolf-hybrids-roam-gatineau-park> (accessed 4 August 2016); “Greater than the sum of its parts,” *The Economist*, 31 October 2015. <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21677188-it-rare-new-animal-species-emerge-front-scientists-eyes> (accessed 4 August 2016); and Marissa Fessenden, “Coywolves are Taking Over Eastern North America,” *The Smithsonian*, 3 November 2015. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/coywolves-are-taking-over-eastern-north-america-180957141/?no-ist> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>88</sup> Coleman, *Vicious*, 201.

a wolf, and acted like one, then it was treated like one. With that said, however, the term “wolf” carried particular connotations, and the decision to describe these animals as wolves mattered. Park managers, visitors, and the rural community were well versed in the rhetoric of wolves as vermin, and throughout their extended presence in the park, the wolf-like animals would be styled as “predators,” “marauders,” “killer wolves,” “beasts,” “fear-inspiring enemies,” “smokey grey phantoms,” and “menaces” in the media.<sup>89</sup>



Source: the *Ottawa Journal*, 15 April 1950, 3.

As Superintendent Richards told the *Journal*, all of these “beasts seem[ed] to have an uncanny knowledge of where to find the deer.” The “several carcasses” that rangers

<sup>89</sup> “Shoot Two Brush Coyotes,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8; “Brush Wolves Again Invade Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 5 December 1945, 1; “Gatineau Park Deer Snowed in, at Mercy of Brush Wolves,” *Ottawa Journal*, 10 February 1947, 26; “Wolves Grow Bold in Gatineau Area,” *Ottawa Journal*, 18 March 1948, 9; “Smokey Grey Phantoms Raiding Bush and Farm,” *Ottawa Journal*, 15 April 1950, 3; Jim Fisher, “Wolf Hunt: Preying on Deer In Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 16 January 1956, 15.

had regularly found in the deeryards were evidence of this.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, these “beasts” included the farm dogs that periodically took to hunting in the park. Not quite wild, nor fully domestic, these farm dogs also called into question the assumed distinctions between dogs and wolves/coyotes, and suggest that these divisions were more fluid than one might expect. Although these farm dogs were never villainized to the same extent that wolves were, the perceived differences between the two did not prevent them from being exterminated if and when they behaved like wolves.

Protecting deer from this mix of canid predators was no easy task, and in January of 1946 it was described as a “constant battle” between park rangers and the “brush coyotes” and wild dogs of the park. As the *Journal* reiterated, the canids were most dangerous in the winter as they could easily outrun a deer that was “floundering in the deep snow.”<sup>91</sup> But as *The Journal* reported in January of 1947, efforts to protect the deer from predation were compounded by periodic storms and other harsh winter conditions that threatened to starve out the deer. In this particular instance, heavy rains followed by freezing cold temperatures had “sheathed trees and shrubs in Gatineau Park with a coating of solid ice,” which led to a sudden famine among the white-tailed deer. Noting the condition of the deer, Superintendent Richards told the *Journal* that “Unless conditions change speedily, we’ll spread out hay to tide them over until milder weather comes. [...] We’re ready to put out their emergency ration of hay any time now if this cold snap continues.”<sup>92</sup> It was also mentioned that when these emergency rations were put out, the deer were often reluctant to eat it.<sup>93</sup> Though it was not the policy of the

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<sup>90</sup> “Shoot Two Brush Coyotes,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 December 1944, 8.

<sup>91</sup> “Deer and Partridge in Danger of Starvation Owing to Ice,” *Ottawa Journal*, 11 January 1946, 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> “Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 26 January 1946, 7.

Commission to “make a practice of feeding the deer,” exceptions were made in emergencies like this one. According to Richards, it was feared that the deer would come to depend on the rangers for food and not “bother to forage for themselves as they should.”<sup>94</sup> Though the Commission had been purchasing hay and feed for game since at least 1940, and took advantage of salt licks to draw the deer into visitors’ line of sight, they apparently drew the line at allowing the visitors to feed deer themselves. This would risk domesticating them, an idea that went against the presumed wildness of the park. This policy was not the most popular among visitors, as the *Journal* reported that many expected the park’s deer to “come out to the roads and trails and beg [for] food” as they did in Algonquin Park.<sup>95</sup> Compared to the deer of Algonquin, Gatineau Park’s deer were described as a bit “stand-offish.”<sup>96</sup>

With the help of park rangers, the deer managed to survive the harsh winter in record numbers. But by the summer, park officials expressed new concerns that the population might be so large that the land might not have the capacity to support their eating habits. In July, Richards told the *Journal* that the “deer population [was] higher than it has ever been and they’re all eating their heads off.” Richards feared that the deer would “eat themselves out of house and home and run short of cedar buds this Winter.”<sup>97</sup> The following year, Superintendent Richards repeated that they “really don’t want any more deer in the park just now [...]. The deer population there has just about reached saturation point.”<sup>98</sup> Despite this apparently unsustainable rate of increase however, efforts to protect them continued. As Brower noted in Buffalo National Park, efforts to reduce

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<sup>94</sup> “Gatineau Park Deer Prefer to Rustle Their Own Groceries,” *Ottawa Journal*, 14 August 1954, 3.

<sup>95</sup> “Gatineau Park Deer Prefer to Rustle Their Own Groceries,” *Ottawa Journal*, 14 August 1954, 3

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> “Gatineau,” *Ottawa Journal*, 16 July 1947, 12.

<sup>98</sup> “Wildflowers Out, Bears Roam, Fawns Born in Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 27 April 1948, 14.

overabundant populations of game animals often provoked public criticism, as overabundance was believed to be beneficial to hunters, whereas other animals, like bison, were reduced with little resistance.<sup>99</sup>

Some of the growth in the deer population was attributed to their apparent awareness of the park's boundaries, and understanding that within them they were safe. "Although not remarkable for their intelligence," Richards told the *Journal* that the deer of Gatineau Park "know well enough the difference between a protected area where they are safe from hunters' bullets," from an area where they were not.<sup>100</sup> According to Richards, any deer roaming outside the park's boundaries during the hunting season would "high-tail it back to the park" at the sound of gunshots.<sup>101</sup> Though the deer could not be forced to stay within the boundaries of the park, it is interesting to consider that they might nevertheless be aware of them. The fact that Richards and his rangers invested these deer (and their predators, for that matter) with so much agency is perhaps indicative of the rangers' ongoing struggles to control them. As they observed and encountered wild animals on a daily basis, they were unable to effectively control the autonomous actions of animals that appeared to have their own ways of living in the park space. As Richards would later state, "When you're working with nature, you've got to take things in stride."<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Brower, *Lost Tracks*, 87.

<sup>100</sup> "Lordly Moose, Graceful Deer Move to New Feeding Grounds," *Ottawa Journal*, 5 June 1948, 19.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> "Gatineau Park Deer Snowed in, at Mercy of Brush Wolves," *Ottawa Journal*, 10 February 1947, 26.

*Harbouring Predators*

Resident wolves reportedly observed this same understanding of the park's boundaries. According to Quebec agricultural representative J. W. Delaney, wolves had been "decimating flocks of sheep in the lower Gatineau and Eastern Pontiac districts to such an extent that many farmers [were] going out of the sheep business altogether." Though the destruction of domestic livestock had obviously not been unheard of in the Gatineau Valley, farmers had reportedly recounted damage to their flocks on a larger scale than ever before. Delaney wrote:

Many of our farmers feel that they can't risk staying in the sheep business at the present rate of destruction, and while the Gatineau Valley with its permanent pastures and bushland is a very good place for economic raising of sheep, I can't advise them to do so if they are to lose them through marauding bears and wolves.<sup>103</sup>

Delaney reported that this destruction was greater than ever, and that this was because the wolves took refuge from farmers in Gatineau Park: "these destructive animals seem to know they're safe from hunters in Gatineau Park, and they make their dens and breed there."<sup>104</sup> Not only was it assumed that the increased populations of deer had attracted these predators in the first place, but it was also suspected that the park was shielding the wolves from destruction. When wolves retreated within its boundaries after a night of hunting local livestock, farmers were unable to seek retribution: only rangers had the privilege of hunting 'pests' within the park. Unless farmers caught wolves in the act, they had no way of rectifying what they saw as a criminal act, and were suffering for it financially.

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<sup>103</sup> "Wolves, Bears and Wild Dogs Attack Sheep in Gatineau," *Ottawa Journal*, 16 November 1946, 16.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

Interestingly, Delaney also noted that some of these damages were also brought on by “half-wild dogs.”<sup>105</sup> As one *Journal* article noted, “a posse of farmers” had engaged in a wolf-hunt following the decimation of their sheep, and upon catching the predator, found that it was not a wolf at all, “but a big dog living under conditions similar to that of wolves.”<sup>106</sup> According to the article, these “half-wild dogs” were especially destructive when they were “allowed to grow up without attention, without training or adequate food.” In these instances, it was said that the dog becomes “a semi-savage animal, quick to kill and eat poultry and sheep.” After turning on their human communities, it was not uncommon for these dogs to be killed or chased into the woods, where they would then make their home, and become a threat to game. However, it was also stated that these half-wild animals could be even more dangerous than wolves themselves, because they had been raised under “the ways of man and [knew] how to avoid bullet or poison.”<sup>107</sup>

The news of the plight of these farmers spread quickly. On November 25, 1946, a Mr. Fred W. Burns contacted the park in order to verify that a rumour he had heard from the local farmers was true: that the Commission was going to “establish a law to destroy wolves and bears in this said park.” As an “old bush man and an old hand in [the] trapping business,” Burns was interested in applying to become one of these new hunters. Unfortunately for Burns, the Commission was not engaging hunters for the purpose of shooting wolves or bears in their park, nor did they intend to.<sup>108</sup> The spread of

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> “Wild Dogs – Menace to Deer,” *Ottawa Journal*, 24 September 1946, 4.

<sup>107</sup> “Wild Dogs – Menace to Deer,” *Ottawa Journal*, 24 September 1946, 4.

<sup>108</sup> H. R. Cram to Fred W. Burns, 2 December 1946, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 13.

information, however, suggests that farmers in the region had been discussing the possibility of joining together in protest against the ill effects of these predators.

Which is exactly what they did next. Two days following the hunter's request, the Commission received a letter from the Municipality of Eardley requesting that they give the matter of wolves and bears their "most earnest and immediate attention."<sup>109</sup> Enclosed with the letter was a petition that had been submitted to the Council of the Municipality of Eardley from farmers of the township that demanded their Council "take immediate steps to protect [the farmers] from the menace of wolves and bears." The petition continues:

These animals are protected and multiply in the National Park under jurisdiction of the Federal District Commission. We have no objection to the Federal District Commission in protecting these wild animals, but, if [they] wish to do so [they] should protect us from damages inflicted to our livestock when they come out of this Park. We feel the District Commission should keep its wild animals inside their park or destroy them so they will not cause us any more damage.<sup>110</sup>

Unable to take matters into their own hands, the farmers demanded that the Commission punish or control its delinquent wolves and bears. The petition was signed by no fewer than 33 farmers, the majority of which resided near Lusk Lake along the western boundary of the park. Like the deer, the area's domestic livestock required protection from predation if farmers were to make a living. And yet, even though it was the very wildness of the wolves that was cause for complaint, they were nevertheless viewed as the *de facto* property of the Commission. Despite the Commission's engagement in a

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<sup>109</sup> "Request from Farmers from the Township of Eardley, Regarding Damages Caused by Wolves and Bears," 27 November 1946, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 13.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

policy of wolf extermination within the park's boundaries, the wolves that frequented Gatineau Park were perceived by those on the outside as wild property.

The Commission did not share this view. Upon receiving the petition, Secretary Cram requested that Superintendent Richards advise him on the matter. According to Richards, because "Wolves and bears that kill farm stock [...] must cross the park boundaries before such damage is done," the matter thus fell outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, and into the hands of the province.<sup>111</sup> Though the Commission was prepared to hunt wolves within its own boundaries, to protect its own animal property, the hunting of wolves outside of the park area was the responsibility of provincial game wardens. Richards concluded his memo with the following comment: "I suggest the matter be referred to Mr. Audette [the provincial game officer] for appropriate action at the same time requesting him to be sure that none of his men carrying guns, poison or traps crosses into Gatineau Park."<sup>112</sup> Despite the fact that Richards was passing the responsibility for wolves over to the provincial authorities, he maintained that those same authorities should not be permitted to hunt the wolves within the park's boundaries. Though humans and animals clearly shared conflicting understandings of space, these jurisdictional conflicts suggest that human understandings of space also clashed as well.

Unsatisfied with the Commission's response, the farmers of Eardley brought their concerns to their local Member of Parliament, who requested a response from Secretary Cram regarding the wolf problem so that he may address his constituents.<sup>113</sup> The involvement of a Member of Parliament was apparently enough to change the

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<sup>111</sup> E. S. Richards, "Memorandum to Federal District Commission regarding Eardley Petition in re predators," 9 December 1946, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 13.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Leon J. Raymond to H. R. Cram, 11 December 1946, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 13.

Commission's tactics, as they reassured the MP that Richards had been "instructed to cooperate with Mr. J. E. Audette, Hull, Chief Provincial Game Warden for the district, in working out a plan to remedy matters."<sup>114</sup> While the "remedies" decided upon between Richards and the game warden were not reported, it was clear that they involved the additional hunting and killing of wolves in the park. Just over a month following this correspondence, the *Journal* reported that "rangers shot three of the marauders in the Luskville district following complaints from farmers that their flocks were being attacked." The article also stated that park rangers had been preparing for "extensive" patrols of the park, and Richards noted that "They not only get in our hair, but they have all the district farmers up in arms."<sup>115</sup>

When a 50-pound female wolf was shot in January of 1948, *The Journal* reported that "One ranger started the New Year right by knocking one of the big predators off a rock near Luskville with a well-placed shot." For Superintendent Richards and the rangers, the killing of wolves engendered a sense of personal pride. The same article reported that the wolf hide would go to Richards, and would "have a place of honor [sic] on the wall of his Meach Lake home, along with several others [that the] rangers killed in the fall."<sup>116</sup> According to a 1948 report by the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, "many more wolves were killed in the province and more money paid out in bounties than in the previous four years."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> H. R. Cram to Leon J. Raymond, 28 December 1948, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 13.

<sup>115</sup> "Gatineau Park Deer Snowed in, at Mercy of Brush Wolves," *Ottawa Journal*, 10 February 1947, 26.

<sup>116</sup> "Light Snow Gives Insomnia to Bears in Gatineau Park," *Ottawa Journal*, 3 January 1948, 1.

<sup>117</sup> "Wolves on the Increase But So Are the Deer," *Ottawa Journal*, 16 March 1949, 4.

By 1951 the situation had escalated to the point where any “dog in the park after Summer’s end [ran] a heavy risk of being rolled over by a ranger’s bullet.”<sup>118</sup> According to a July article, farmers in the district had been repeatedly warned of the upcoming hazard to their dogs should they be allowed to continue roaming freely into the park. But as park ranger Ed Cross noted, “With the price of meat the way it is,” it was no surprise that these dogs were being sent to the park to hunt their own meals. Just the previous season, Cross had followed a farmer’s dog from the site of his deer kill in the park right back to the farmer’s yard. According to Cross, when he informed the farmer of his dog’s activities, the farmer “took down his gun and shot the dog there and then.”<sup>119</sup> This farmer made it very clear that his dog, though useful, was expendable in ways that companion animals were not. Though it had been free to transgress the boundaries between wild and domestic, there were still rules to this relationship. Farm dogs had to behave, or at least not get caught.

In 1956, ten years after the farmers of Eardley had petitioned the Commission to manage the wolf problem, the Municipality of West Hull contacted the Commission with similar demands. Mrs. Jean C. Diotte, Secretary Treasurer, wrote to “inform [the Commission] that wolves are creating a nuisance, causing damages to livestock within the municipality.”<sup>120</sup> She continued, “Any action the Commission sees fit to take to exterminate and rid the municipality of wolves will be greatly appreciated.”<sup>121</sup> In the same year, a Mr. H. P. Nugent also contacted the Commission to express his concerns for

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas Van Dusen, “Moose, Deer Range Free Near Ottawa On Mansion Property Public to Own,” *Ottawa Journal*, 26 July 1951, 3.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> West Hull was south of Lusk Lake, along the south western boundary of the park, close to Ottawa.

<sup>121</sup> Jean C. Diotte, Municipality of West Hull, to H. R. Cram, 17 January 1956, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 19.

the problem of wolves of the park. Though he had not yet lost any of his own livestock, he wrote that it was “no pleasure living in fear,” and that he and his wife regularly heard the howls of wolves, and were afraid of going outside at night.<sup>122</sup> According to Nugent, his son had already lost 35 turkeys, and had been forced to stay up all night in order to try and save the remainder of his flock. Given that the Commission forbade the hunting of wolves within the park’s boundaries, Nugent, like the township of Hull, requested that his son be compensated for his loss.<sup>123</sup>

Though neither of these requests for damages was approved, the park’s first organized wolf-hunt was arranged by the Commission to respond to increased concerns for wolf activity outside the park’s boundaries. Special permission to carry and use firearms within the park was granted to 85 “expert riflemen” for a single day; unfortunately for the hunters, “the swift-moving packs were outside the 800-acre tract of known wolf country” on the day of the hunt. According to an article in the *Journal*, only “A lone timber wolf on a hunger run” came under fire, “but lived to prey another day.” Ranger Cross told the *Journal* that “Luck wasn’t with us, [...] but it was great sport.” Included in the party were members of the Wakefield Rifle Club and the Wakefield Hunt Club, who organized into teams and systematically combed through the forest: “a line of beaters close to two miles long moved slowly through the woods,” while “Blockers” were “stationed at points where the animals were expected to run.”<sup>124</sup> As the article noted, the hunt would be organized again if permission was granted by the Commission, and many of the riflemen suggested that “wolf hunting could become as thrilling a Winter sport for this area as skiing.”

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<sup>122</sup> H. P. Nugent to Elmwood Edey, 14 August 1956, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 20.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> “Wolf Hunt: Preying On Deer in Gatineau Park,” *Ottawa Journal*, 16 January 1956, 15.

### *Conclusion*

Only thirteen years after the failed wolf hunt, Gatineau Park would play a key role in the restoration of the image of the wolf. In 1969, Bill Mason, Canadian naturalist, author, and filmmaker for the National Film Board, transported three young timber wolves from the Northwest Territories to his home in the Gatineau Hills. Mason had convinced the Film Board, Canadian Wildlife Services, and the authorities of Gatineau Park to allow him to keep the wild wolves in a large enclosure behind his Meech Lake home, within the boundaries of Gatineau Park.<sup>125</sup> Over three years, Mason filmed the lives of these wolves in close proximity, capturing rare footage of the birth of pups, the social dynamic and hierarchy of the pack, and their playful, gentle demeanour for a feature-length documentary, *Cry of the Wild* (1972), which earned five million dollars at the box office. Mason's film contributed to the transformation of the wolf's image from that of a marauding, skulking criminal to a "disciplined hunter, respected leader, and committed parent."<sup>126</sup>

Off-screen, the results were slightly different. After three years with the animals, Mason attempted to return the wolves to their home in the wild Northwest Territories. After failing to catch any of their own food, however, the domesticated wolves were ironically returned to their enclosure in the Gatineau Hills, where they were eventually shot and killed. No longer capable of surviving in the wild, this experiment in wolf domestication had also proved fatal.

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<sup>125</sup> Ken Buck, *Bill Mason, Wilderness Artist: From Heart to Hand* (Surrey: Rocky Mountain Books, 2005), 163.

<sup>126</sup> Bill Mason, *Cry of the Wild*, National Film Board of Canada, 1972.  
[https://www.nfb.ca/film/cry\\_of\\_the\\_wild/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/cry_of_the_wild/) (accessed 19 July 2016).

Within only a matter of years, the physical and conceptual landscape of Gatineau Park had been significantly altered. The white-tailed deer of Gatineau Park, which had once been reported as scarce, had become abundant. Domestic and rural/wild dogs that had once been free to run, play, and hunt in the woods were slowly evicted or hunted. The “wolves” were also hunted, too, when they unexpectedly arrived at the park’s borders. To the chagrin of park rangers and rural residents, these borders were fluid, and did nothing to restrict the movements of animals: wild animals infringed on domestic spaces, and vice versa. As they sought to maintain complete control over their properties, they constantly clashed with non-human animals that failed to respect their laws.

Borders between conceptual categories were also fluid. The park’s prized white-tailed deer were simultaneously the picture of wildness, and the embodiment of human control. Throughout the park’s first twenty years, the population of deer was actively and strategically managed in order to make it more abundant, and these efforts undermined the very wildness they were intended to signify: hay and other feed was distributed by park officials to protect the deer from the harshness of winter; salt licks were strategically placed along roads to draw them into the view of park visitors; and through the extermination of wolves and other predators, it was hoped that the deer would become less fearful, and more tame. Combined with regular media coverage of the deer’s wellbeing in the park, these strategies were used to put the park’s white-tailed deer on display. Though they were wild, they were also living property, and were meant to be observed. This same fluidity was observed towards their predators. As park rangers began to hunt these animals, they were surprised to find a “mongrel” breed of wolves, coyotes, and sometimes dogs. Similarly, many of the so-called “wild dogs” that preyed

on the park's deer also worked on farms, and had human owners. By following the story of the white-tailed deer in Gatineau Park, wider discussions over the assumed relations between human and non-humans animals emerged.

### **Chapter 3: Conservation and “The Battle of the Beavers”**

In 1957, the Secretary to the Federal District Commission, H. R. Cram, reminisced about the reintroduction of beaver to Gatineau Park 17 years earlier. He recalled receiving a peculiar phone call on an ordinary Saturday afternoon in September of 1940. The caller had identified himself as a janitor with the Department of the Interior’s Dominion Parks Branch, and informed the Secretary that a pair of beavers had been unexpectedly delivered to the Branch’s Sparks Street office.<sup>1</sup> The beavers, sent from the Quebec Department of Mines and Fisheries and addressed to the Commission, had been delivered in error to the Parks Branch. This error was compounded by the fact that it was a Saturday, and neither of these two offices was open. Apparently, the unsuspecting janitor had been the only person present at the Branch when the beavers were delivered, and had somehow managed to find Cram’s contact information. Secretary Cram requested that the janitor have the beavers redirected to the Commission’s Carling Avenue office, and as “the beaver could not very well be left in their container in the office until Monday,” Cram proceeded to do the only thing he saw possible: with no prior experience, the highest-ranking employee of the Federal District Commission set out with the intent to release the beavers into Gatineau Park that very afternoon.

Upon arriving at the Commission’s office, Secretary Cram and his son set about loading the large metal containers holding the live beavers into their vehicle, succeeding only after some difficulty. On their way to the park, the two men recruited the park’s superintendent and one of his rangers for good measure. When the four men arrived at Fortune Lake, the containers were strung over long poles and “shouldered by the stalwarts” in shifts of two down the Lake Trail and into the water where “all were

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<sup>1</sup> The Dominion Parks Branch actually went by the name of the National Parks Bureau from 1936-1947.

revived, including the beaver, by a swim in the cool waters of the lake on a lovely late September afternoon.”<sup>2</sup>

The story of the arrival of Gatineau Park’s first pair of beavers was not one that was easily forgotten. But by 1957, when the tale was recounted and published in *The Ottawa Ski Club News*, attitudes towards the beavers had shifted, and the Commission had responded by initiating a program of beaver reduction earlier that year. This “program” was effectively a kill order: park rangers were given the unprecedented authority to trap and kill beavers on all 44 of the park’s lakes and ponds, and their pelts were to be sold for profit. Following years of the beavers’ destructive antics, and complaints from nearby residents and park visitors, the Commission felt that it had no other choice. As Secretary Cram reflected back to that fateful Saturday, the conservation of beavers in Gatineau Park had gone full circle.

Almost as if the introduction of beavers to the park was doomed to confusion, mishap, and blunder from the start, the arrival of the park’s first pair was oddly reflective of their relationship with humans in Gatineau Park over those seventeen years. As a cherished Canadian symbol, the beaver was intended to be an attractive addition to the park’s animal landscape, and one that would convey the Commission’s commitment to wildlife conservation in the park. And for a time, it did. However, shortly after their arrival, recreational visitors of the park found that these creatures were nothing like the popular image of beavers that they had come to know and love: they were seen as destructive, selfish, and inconsiderate of the natural environment.

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<sup>2</sup> H.R. Cram, “The Tale of the Beaver at Lake Fortune,” *The Ottawa Ski Club Year Book, Season 1957-1958*, 52-53. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1957-1958-year-book.pdf> (accessed 19 July 2016).

This chapter traces the interactions between humans and beavers as they fought for control of the park's lakes and ponds. Humans that had never before encountered a beaver in the flesh, typically the park's recreational visitors from the city, had only ever known the beaver as a hard-working, but loveable little creature. By the time beavers were introduced to Gatineau Park, this was a popular image: through the 1930s, Grey Owl, a well-known author and conservationist, used beavers as a symbol for the decline of wildlife, and promoted them as fun-loving "little people" that needed protection across North America. From the beavers' introduction to their eventual destruction, this perception of beavers came into conflict with the actions of material beavers, and shaped the relations that developed between them and park visitors. As they became more abundant, the beavers also came into conflict with rural residents as the effects of their work extended beyond the park's boundaries. Just as farmers had protested the abundance of wolves in Gatineau Park, residents of these communities also protested the increase in beavers as their properties began to be damaged by periodic flooding. Throughout this chapter, the Commission was forced to reconcile their goals of conservation with the expectations and demands of other humans.

### *Beavers in North America*

The image of the modern beaver (genus *Castor*) is ubiquitous. Known for their oversized incisors and large, flat tail, the beaver is a large, semi-aquatic rodent native to the North American and Eurasian continents. Typically weighing between 14 and 30 kilograms, beavers can survive upwards of 10 years in the wild. Strictly herbivorous, they live in lakes and ponds surrounded by choice trees: aspen and other species of poplars are

a beaver's preferred food, followed by beech, ash, maple and various conifers. Beavers' diets also consist of vegetation such as aquatic plants, grasses, sedges, and forbs.<sup>3</sup> When this combination of choice foods and ponds are unavailable, beavers construct log, mud, and stone structures to dam streams, and transform ideal fields and forests into wetland habitats better suited to their needs. As the food and building supplies surrounding a beaver pond becomes exhausted, they may construct a series of canals that can extend their reach as far as 200 metres into the surrounding forests by water. This facilitates their mobility and their gathering of food and materials. Beavers' homemade reservoirs also insulate their lodges, which are constructed with severed branches and mud, and designed with underwater entrances that make the beavers' homes impenetrable to the average predator. These lodges typically house a single colony of beavers, including an adult male and female pair, and their kits and yearlings; by the age of two, most beaver offspring leave their natal ponds in order to construct their own habitats. Beavers' unique ability to manipulate their environment and create their own habitats sets these "ecosystem engineers" apart from any other animal.<sup>4</sup>

Indigenous populations across the North American continent managed and harvested beaver for food and clothing for centuries. Anthropologist Shepard Krech notes that the Northern Algonquians (who occupied territories from parts of Labrador, Quebec, and through northern Ontario and Manitoba) controlled the hunting of beaver through the creation of family hunting territories.<sup>5</sup> In principle, this system was designed to restrict

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<sup>3</sup> Dietland Müller-Schwarze and Lixing Sun, *The Beaver: Natural History of a Wetlands Engineer* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Runtz, *Dam Builders: The Natural History of Beavers and Their Ponds* (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2015), 68.

<sup>5</sup> Historians have disagreed over whether these management practices were borne out of necessity for the fur trade, or if they had developed before the arrival of European settlers. See Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 180.

trapping privileges in a particular area to a family that would oversee the beaver population within their territory.<sup>6</sup> The use of such practices was not always effective however, as local circumstances such as migration, warfare, trespassing, and disease, as well as “culturally determined and historically contingent attitudes toward animals, exchange, and accumulation” complicated its application on the ground.<sup>7</sup>

Upon arriving in North America, European explorers were quick to tap into pre-existing practices of beaver trapping in order to supply the growing demand for furs in Europe. The short barbed hairs of the beavers’ inner coat were prized for the production of a lavish felt that characterized the European hat industry. By the seventeenth century, the population of Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) had severely declined, and suppliers looked to the West to support an ever-increasing demand. For the 250 years that followed, the pelts of North American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) would fuel an international trade in furs.

This demand supported and expanded burgeoning fur economies that spread across the continent and incorporated Indigenous societies into vast trade networks. Indigenous trappers would exchange beaver pelts for a variety of manufactured items such as kettles, guns, and alcohol, and shipments of beaver pelts would be periodically sent to Europe. As European demand for North American pelts swelled, and the number of available beavers began to fall in the eastern continent, the frontier expanded westward

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<sup>6</sup> “Family” is defined as a group of people not necessarily related, but united by kinship or other social ties, Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 179. Harvey Feit makes similar observations of the Cree in northern Quebec. See “Hunting and the Quest for Power: The James Bay Cree and Whitemen in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*, ed. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (McClland & Stewart, 1995). <http://arcticcircle.ucom.edu/HistoryCulture/Cree/Feit1/feit1.html> (accessed 7 August 2016).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 176, citing Toby Morantz, “The Fur Trade and the Cree of James Bay,” *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 39-58.

in search of additional furs, opening up the continent to further exploration and settlement. With this expansion, the trade in furs continued to gain momentum until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became abundantly clear that these natural resources were not without their limits.<sup>8</sup> Persistent trapping and heightened competition between trading companies brought the beaver to the brink of extinction. The Hudson's Bay Company responded to the decline when it became a monopoly in the 1820s by attempting to reduce its own pressures on beaver populations, but much of the damage had already been done.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, beavers had become rare or absent in many parts of Quebec, Ontario, New York and Pennsylvania, prompting concerned legislators to pass laws designed to cease the widespread destruction of the beaver. At the turn of the century, beaver restocking programs were becoming commonplace across the United States and Canada. Following a surge in fur prices at the end of the First World War however, many Indigenous and non-Indigenous trappers put increasing pressure on beaver populations, and by the early 1930s they had again fallen to dangerous levels.<sup>10</sup> In response, various levels of government in Canada imposed heightened restrictions on the hunting of beavers.<sup>11</sup>

The popularity of the beaver as an emblem stems back to the seventeenth century, when the Hudson's Bay Company first included the animal on their coat of arms. Thereafter, the beaver was a recurrent symbol in New France, British North America, and then Canada: in 1673, the beaver was combined with the fleur-de-lis in a proposed set of arms for Québec City; during the War of 1812 a medal was struck depicting the British

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<sup>8</sup> J. Alexander Burnett, *A Passion for Wildlife: The History of the Canadian Wildlife Service* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 4-5, and 29.

<sup>9</sup> Loo, *States of Nature*, 96.

<sup>10</sup> Krech, *The Ecological Indian*, 177.

<sup>11</sup> Loo, *States of Nature*, 104-105.

lion protecting the Canadian beaver from the American eagle; in 1851, the beaver appeared on Canada's first postage stamp, the "Three Penny Beaver"; and in 1905, was considered for a place on the Canadian coat of arms.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the beaver's prolonged use as a Canadian emblem, however, it was always understood through a lens of economy and exchange: the beaver was a commodity. Its assumed connection to Canadian identity had nothing to do with the living creature itself, but with the ability of its pelt to supply vast networks of trade. The most renowned study of beavers from this perspective came from economic historian Harold Innis in *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, which traced the development of the fur trade and its relation to the development of the Canadian economy. And while Innis famously (but briefly) described the beaver and its habitat in his first chapter, this had more to do with his "commodity-analysis" approach than any interest in the beaver itself. As his biographer John Watson notes, the beaver was simply used as "a focusing point around which to examine the interplay of cultures and empires."<sup>13</sup> It was the trade in furs that had shaped the economic, social and political landscape that developed in Canada, not the beaver itself.

By the time of the beavers' reintroduction to Gatineau Park, they were invested with an entirely new meaning. Through the 1930s, the image of the beaver as a commodity shifted to one that came to represent the decline of Canadian wildlife, and the efforts needed to preserve it. This shift was initiated by Grey Owl, one of Canada's most

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<sup>12</sup> Bruce Peel, "Emblems of Canada," *Historica Canada*. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/emblems-of-canada/> (accessed 12 July 2016). and "Official symbols of Canada," *Government of Canada*. <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1444070816842> (accessed July 12, 2016). For the representational history of the beaver in Canada, see also Margot Francis, "The Strange Career of the Canadian Beaver: Anthropomorphic Discourses and Imperial History," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 17, 2-3 (2004): 209-239.

<sup>13</sup> John A. Watson, *Marginal Man: The Dark Vision of Harold Innis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2006), 146-147, 149.

famous conservationists and advocates for the protection of beavers. Through his writings and public lectures, Grey Owl reconnected Canada's animal symbol with the actual living creatures that its image was based on. This connection was, in large part, the reason behind the introduction of beavers to Gatineau Park.

*Grey Owl and the Mythical Beaver*

Born Archie S. Belaney, in Hastings, England (1888), Grey Owl immigrated to Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century, divorced his British heritage, and refashioned himself in the image of an Ojibwe Indian. Adopting the name Grey Owl (or 'Wa-sha-quon-asin'), he spent years learning to live and trap like the Ojibwe, and made a living as a trapper until the mid-1920s, when he began to bemoan his chosen profession. His wife, an Iroquois woman called Anahareo, is credited with converting him from a trapper to a wildlife conservationist when she convinced him to save two orphaned beaver kits, after killing their mother.<sup>14</sup>

Together, Grey Owl and Anahareo raised the two young beavers as pets and quickly developed a curious relationship with their new "friends." The longer Grey Owl cared for the two young kits, the more that he realized that "These beasts had feelings and could express them very well; they could talk, they had affection, they knew what it was to be happy, to be lonely – why, they were little people!"<sup>15</sup> Every day the beavers became more personable: according to Grey Owl, they would cling, childlike, to his legs; eagerly call for his affection; respond when spoken to; and fall asleep in his shirt, or around his

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<sup>14</sup> By this time Grey Owl had already been married twice before, and had never actually divorced his first wife, Angele Egwuna. He and Anahareo were married in 1925.

<sup>15</sup> Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*, in *The Collected Works of Grey Owl: Three Complete Unabridged Canadian Classics* (Etobicoke: Chapters Publishing, 1999), 258.

neck. Soon enough, Grey Owl began to abhor the “monstrous” and indiscriminate killing of beavers by trappers like himself, and vowed never to trap again.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he took to studying the beavers, and began publicly advocating for their protection, first through writing, and later through public lectures.

Grey Owl’s writings appealed to the Dominion Parks Branch’s Commissioner, James B. Harkin, who invited him to appear with Anahareo in a short documentary produced by the Branch entitled *Beaver People* (1928). The silent film portrays the couple with their beavers, and shows the four of them “sharing food, friendship and even play.” The two beavers are captured begging for food (not poplars, but potatoes, apples, and boiled rice), sidling into Grey Owl’s canoe, and even wrestling with Anahareo.<sup>17</sup> In 1935, he released a children’s novel, *Sajo and Her Beaver People*, which traces the spirited attempts of two Ojibwe children to protect their pet beavers from fur traders (a familiar setting for anyone with a knowledge of Grey Owl’s experience with his own pets). Here, the “beaver people” are portrayed as just as brave and adventurous as their human masters. Through his writings, Grey Owl sought to convince the world that these beavers and their environments were worth protecting in their own right, and he did so by likening them to humans. For the more the beavers resembled little people, the harder they were to kill.

Harkin invited Grey Owl to work in Riding Mountain National Park, and later Prince Albert National Park, where he could establish his own beaver colony and serve as caretaker for the parks’ animals. Under their employment, Grey Owl was able to pursue and promote his own work while also serving as the Parks Branch’s spokesperson for

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<sup>16</sup> Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild*, 265.

<sup>17</sup> *Beaver People*, Film, National Film Board of Canada, 1928. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/beaver\\_people/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/beaver_people/) (accessed 19 July 2016).

wildlife conservation. Using the beaver as a symbol for the decline of Canadian wildlife, Grey Owl urged the public to adopt a more “Native” way of thinking about and appreciating nature, contributing to the mythical image of the Indian as the original environmentalist. His campaign for the beavers challenged the public to re-evaluate their relations with the natural world, and encouraged them to view beavers as co-dwellers of wilderness, not just as lawful prey.

Grey Owl’s cry for the protection of beavers launched a period of unprecedented regard for beavers. By 1936, he had published three best selling books, prompting a string of lecture tours across cities in North America and Britain. In the two years leading up to Gatineau Park’s establishment (and coincidentally, his death), Grey Owl visited Ottawa on numerous occasions, preaching his love for beavers to all who would listen. In 1936 he was received by the Governor General at Rideau Hall, and his portrait was featured in a photographic art exhibition at the National Gallery in Downtown Ottawa. He was guest of honour at events held by such organizations as the Ottawa Field Naturalists Club and the Ottawa Girl Guides, and was the subject of countless other lectures, including to the Eastern United Church Men’s Association and the Ottawa chapter of the Y.W.C.A.<sup>18</sup> In these lectures, Grey Owl would read sections of his books to his supporters, and used footage of his pet beavers to help draw attention to beavers’ human-like features. Grey Owl’s popularity (and by extension, the beavers’) cut across diverse interest groups and various segments of the English-speaking population, and

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<sup>18</sup> “Received At Rideau Hall,” *Ottawa Journal*, 10 March 1936, 8; “Photographic Art Salon Opened At Gallery,” *Ottawa Journal*, 26 October 1936, 5; “Herbert Groh Again President: 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Field-Naturalists’ Club is Held,” *Ottawa Journal*, 2 December 1936, 22; “Lloyd Roberts Speaks to Men’s Club,” *Ottawa Journal*, 20 January 1937, 4; Constance Troy, “With the Girl Guides,” *Ottawa Journal*, 12 February 1938, 26; “Opening Health Fair In Y. W. C. A. Friday Afternoon,” *Ottawa Journal*, 17 February 1938, 14; “Grey Owl to Give Lecture,” *Ottawa Journal*, 9 March 1938, 9.

raised the profile of the beaver and conservation in Canada and abroad. With Grey Owl's help, the beaver came to stand for so much more than itself.

Grey Owl inhabited the persona he had crafted for himself until his death in 1938, when, within a week of his passing, his "true" British heritage was revealed.<sup>19</sup> Though his fraudulent identity garnered significant criticism and his reputation as a respected conservationist initially suffered, he was nevertheless remembered for his contributions to the conservation of wildlife. An editorial in the *Ottawa Citizen* confirmed as much: "Of course, the value of [Grey Owl's] work is not jeopardized. His attainments as a writer and naturalist will survive."<sup>20</sup> And they did. When a one hundred page tribute to the life of Grey Owl was published shortly after his death, all 100,000 copies were sold in just two days.<sup>21</sup> His message of conservation had captivated a worldwide audience, and facilitated the North American beaver's rise to celebrity status in the Canadian wildlife scheme. Perhaps one of the most tangible examples of its prestigious standing was when it was stamped on the Canadian nickel in 1937, a space it continues to occupy to this day.

By the time of the beavers' introduction to Gatineau Park in 1940, the North American beaver (not its fur) was at the height of its fame, and it was within this wider cultural milieu that the beaver was chosen for reintroduction to the region. As a newly minted emblem of conservation and a beloved celebrity, the beaver was a topical addition to the park's wildlife, and one that conveyed a clear commitment to conservation in Gatineau Park.

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2011), 153.

<sup>20</sup> Brian Bethune, "Grey Owl," *Historica Canada*. [http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/grey-owl-macleans/#h3\\_jump\\_0](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/grey-owl-macleans/#h3_jump_0) (accessed 15 July 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Loo, *States of Nature*, 112, citing Lovat Dickson, *Wilderness Man: The Strange Story of Grey Owl* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), 268.

Ironically, it was the beaver's famed image that would also spoil its relations with humans in the park. For even though Grey Owl had promoted beavers as sentient beings, with their own personalities and specific needs, he did so in a way that further severed the popular image of the beaver from its material form. As naturalist Michael Runtz explains, despite the widespread consumption of the idealized beaver image, on the ground "beavers are not always held in high esteem."<sup>22</sup> When the animals finally arrived in Gatineau Park, many found that they were very different from the beavers that they had come to love: they were invasive, destructive, and quite frankly, a nuisance. That the mythical beaver had fooled so many was a testament to Grey Owl's primary audience: the majority of his followers inhabited cities, and had never before encountered a beaver in the flesh. Thus, when visitors to Gatineau Park finally had their chance, many were disappointed. And in true Grey Owl fashion, the legendary beaver was found to be a fraud.

### *Introducing Beavers to Gatineau Park*

When Gatineau Park was formed, beaver trapping had been prohibited for the ten-year period between 1931 and 1941. These restrictions had come too late for the Gatineau region, however. Though evidence suggests that it had been well populated with beavers in the past, beavers had been extirpated long before these prohibitions were enacted. In 1940 Secretary Cram wrote that "Although there [were] old relics of beaver workings within the park, the animals themselves were trapped or driven away long before the area was made a sanctuary."<sup>23</sup> The decision to introduce beavers was reached in July of 1940,

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<sup>22</sup> Runtz, *Dam Builders*, 14.

<sup>23</sup> H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 12 July 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 5.

just two years following the untimely death of Grey Owl and nearly a decade of beaver conservation awareness. The Commission's stated goal was to "re-instate this interesting animal in a place which is so suitable and where they will have adequate protection."<sup>24</sup> Grey Owl's promotion of the beaver had paved the way for its inclusion and conservation in Gatineau Park.

His influence on the conservation of beavers can also be traced to other federal parks across Canada, though these efforts are mentioned only briefly in the works of historians. Alan MacEachern notes that beavers were introduced to Cape Breton Highlands National Park and Prince Edward Island National Park in 1938 for the same reason that they would be introduced in Gatineau Park two years later: "The justification for these reintroductions was that these animals had been native to the park area, but had been extirpated by the humans there in the past century." Beyond the parks' stated justification, MacEachern also notes that by this period, beavers were "attractive to tourists and to the [Park] Branch's idea of what wildlife a park should have."<sup>25</sup> Glynnis Hood points to similar efforts at Elk Island National Park, where seven beavers from Banff National Park were introduced in 1941, and in Wood Buffalo National Park, where beavers were flown from Prince Albert National Park for introduction in 1948. Hood notes that "All across Europe, Canada and the United States there was a movement afoot to bring beavers back to the landscapes where they had once lived," and connects this movement to the popularity of Grey Owl through the 1930s.<sup>26</sup>

After deciding to reintroduce the beavers to Gatineau Park, efforts to acquire them were set quickly into motion and Secretary Cram reached out to the Quebec Game and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 194-195.

<sup>26</sup> Glynnis Hood, *The Beaver Manifesto* (Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books, 2011), 56, 58.

Fisheries Branch in the hopes of securing beavers. His request described the region's vast supply of lakes and woodlands, and drew particular attention to the availability of poplars in the park. In addition to knowing the beavers' dietary needs, he also conveyed the Commission's understanding of the importance of sex ratios by requesting six pairs of beavers, as opposed to just twelve beavers. Unlike most rodents (or even mammals), beavers are monogamous, and typically stay with their partner for multiple breeding sessions, if not their whole lives. If the Commission was to be successful in establishing a permanent population in the park, they would need equal numbers of male and female beavers.<sup>27</sup>

The Deputy Minister for the Game and Fisheries Branch, L.A. Richard, confirmed the cooperation of his department, but cautioned that beavers could be a nuisance "in certain localities [...] and have to be trapped." The Deputy Minister also requested that the Commission be responsible for any expenses incurred in trapping and transporting the beavers.<sup>28</sup> Despite the Commission's limited availability of funds due to "wartime exigencies," Secretary Cram reserved up to \$200 for the procurement of beavers, and stated that he would "be thankful for as many pairs as possible that can be sent [...] for that amount of money."<sup>29</sup> That neither the costs of acquiring beavers in the midst of a world war, nor the warnings offered by the Deputy Minister dissuaded the Commission from going ahead with their plans reveals the central role that beavers were expected to play in the park. Unfortunately for the Commission, it would only be a few years before they understood the true cost of this agreement.

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<sup>27</sup> H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 12 July 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 7.

<sup>28</sup> H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 18 July 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 7.

<sup>29</sup> H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 2 August 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 7.

The first pair of beavers was trapped by employees of the Game and Fisheries Branch in Temiscouata County, in the lower St. Lawrence district, and delivered to the Commission on that fateful Saturday in September of 1940.<sup>30</sup> According to Secretary Cram, the very first beaver lodge that was ever constructed in the park was on Fortune Lake, right “at the spot near the end of the trail where the beaver were [first] dumped into the water.”<sup>31</sup> Though it was a first for Gatineau Park, these “applications for animals” were not uncommon by any means across Canada’s park system. As MacEachern explains, the Dominion Parks Branch in particular had a long and varied history of transferring animals across the growing network of national parks.<sup>32</sup> Through these transfers and exchanges of animals, park managers were able to support the growth of desirable species of wildlife, while tapping into the growing demands of tourists in the process. In fact, the 1930 *National Parks Act* included provisions that allowed the “taking of animals for [...] propagating purposes,” suggesting that this was a widespread practice.<sup>33</sup>

When a second pair of beavers was trapped in Temiscouata on September 25, a telegram was sent to the Commission inquiring whether it would be interested in receiving them. After confirming the Commission’s interest, Secretary Cram clearly outlined where the beavers were to be sent in order to avoid any more mix-ups.<sup>34</sup> When

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<sup>30</sup> Ironically, Grey Owl and Anahareo had relocated to the Temiscouata region with their pet beavers in order to establish their first beaver colony.

<sup>31</sup> H.R. Cram, “The Tale of the Beaver at Lake Fortune,” *The Ottawa Ski Club Year Book, 1957-1958*, 52-53, accessed 19 July 2016, <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1957-1958-year-book.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Alan MacEachern, “Lost in Shipping: Canadian National Parks and the International Donation of Wildlife,” *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Nelson: Toronto, 2009), 196-213.

<sup>33</sup> An Act Respecting National Parks (Statutes of Canada, 20-21 George V, Chap.33), assented to 30 May 1930. <http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/national-parks-act-1930.htm> (accessed 12 July, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> Telegram from L. A. Richard to H. R. Cram, 25 September 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 8; and H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 25 September 1940, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 8.

the beavers arrived, they too were released in Fortune Lake, and went quickly to work. With the help of the Game and Fisheries Branch, the Commission had successfully managed to place four beavers in its park. The details surrounding the legality of the Quebec Department's entrapment and transportation of the four beavers are somewhat vague, however. Though the transfer of animals was indeed a common practice, recall that the trapping of beavers in Quebec specifically had been prohibited since 1931, and that the ban would not be lifted until 1941. When the Deputy Minister supplied the Commission with beavers in 1940, he appeared to do so in contravention to the existing sanction. That being said, given that the anti-trapping policy had been put in place to protect and support the growth of beavers in the province, the trapping and relocation of beavers to a sanctuary in Gatineau seems like a reasonable concession. Either way, trapping privileges were returned to the province shortly following the receipt of the four beavers.

This would prove advantageous to the Commission, which was eager to acquire more beavers the following season. On May 10, 1941, they contacted the Game and Fisheries Branch to renew their interest in acquiring more beaver pairs to add to the two couples already living in the park. In his response, the Deputy Minister stated that his branch would be pleased to cooperate again "if at all possible."<sup>35</sup> Anxious to ensure they would receive a greater quantity of beavers than the previous year, the Commission sent similar requests for beavers to departments responsible for federal and provincial parks across Canada, including to Algonquin Park, but to no avail.<sup>36</sup> According to the Ontario

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<sup>35</sup> H. R. Cram to L. A. Richard, 10 May 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9; and L. A. Richard to H. R. Cram, 12 May 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>36</sup> Requests for beavers were also directed to Banff National Park, but the records do not show if the Commission ever received a response.

Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, the department would have been “pleased to be of some service” to the Commission “provided [that] the beaver were to be liberated within the confines of the Province of Ontario.” Because they were destined for a park in Quebec, the letter recommended putting in a request with the Game and Fisheries Branch.<sup>37</sup> Having already contacted the Branch earlier that month, all the Commission could do was wait.

By July, the Game and Fisheries Branch had managed to trap and deliver another pair of beavers to the Commission without issue, but its next shipment would contain only a single female beaver, as the trappers had not yet been successful in trapping her mate. The missing beaver draws our attention to the obvious, yet often overlooked, complications of trapping and transporting live animals. According to correspondence between the beaver’s captor and the Commission, the trapper had been forced to send the beaver without her mate as the summer heat had made it dangerous to store her out of water long enough to catch her companion.<sup>38</sup> But to the Commission’s surprise, not one, but two more beavers would be delivered to their office the following week, though one was dead on arrival. When reporting the beaver’s condition to the Game and Fisheries Branch, Secretary Cram informed them that two of the three other beavers that had been sent to the Commission that year had arrived with injured forepaws.<sup>39</sup> Though the animals had reportedly been in very good condition when they were shipped, officials of the Game and Fisheries branch suggested that it was possible that some of the beavers had sustained minor injuries while they were trapped. According to the letter, “Wounded

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<sup>37</sup> Office of the Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests, Ontario, to H. R. Cram, 27 May 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>38</sup> Arthur Dumas to H. R. Cram, 10 July 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>39</sup> H. R. Cram to Arthur Dumas, 19 July 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

forepaws [were] not abnormal, on those trapped beavers, even after the caution taken not to send [the Commission] too injured ones.”<sup>40</sup>

Foot snares and leg-hold traps were common instruments used to trap live beavers in Canada, and were likely the methods used by trappers of the Branch. Aimed at a beaver’s limbs, these traps are designed to restrain beavers as opposed to killing them, though leg- and foot-hold traps were known to cause injury to trapped animals. Though a permit was necessary to trap any fur-bearing animals in the province of Quebec, the use of specific traps was unregulated until the late twentieth century. The types of traps and conditions surrounding their use (e.g. how they were placed, and what they were made of) were entirely up to the trapper, leading, in some cases, to painful experiences for trapped animals. Foot snares could be especially dangerous as the snare was designed to tighten as an animal struggles; the more an animal thrashed, the deeper the snare cut into its flesh.<sup>41</sup> Thus, when an initially healthy beaver arrived lifeless at the Commission’s headquarters in 1941, it was possible that it had succumbed to injuries from trapping, or other “inside and unknown injuries.”<sup>42</sup> Given the nature of beaver trapping and live transport, an inspector with the Game and Fisheries Branch claimed that “it [was] impossible to do any better,” and that the Commission should advise if they wished the Branch to cease all efforts in trapping beavers.<sup>43</sup>

The casualties were apparently worth the risk, however, as the Commission did not advise the Branch to stop trapping beavers. As a result, another beaver was killed in transport in September of the same year. In his letter to the Commission, Deputy Minister

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<sup>40</sup> Laureat Lavoie to Federal District Commission, 29 July 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>41</sup> “Trapping and Wildlife: Types of Traps,” *The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals*. <http://thefurbearers.com/trapping-and-wildlife/types-of-traps> (accessed 3 August 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Laureat Lavoie to Federal District Commission, 29 July 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

L.A. Richard acknowledged the death of this second beaver, and reassured the Commission that they would only be charged for the five beavers that had arrived alive.<sup>44</sup> Despite the beavers' public adoration and the policies that had been put in place to protect the animal, this was still a business transaction between two organizations. By the end of October 1941, the Commission had received 17 live beavers in total, four of which were placed at Fortune Lake (in 1940), two at Black Lake, five at Charette Lake, and three each at Lusk Lake and Clear Lake. The beavers had cost \$30 per pair for a total of \$255.<sup>45</sup>

Though the process of acquiring the beavers had not been perfect, it paled in comparison to the complications that would develop following their arrival. And while the beavers had been brought to the park in order to ensure their protection, this was a view that would quickly lose much of its original appeal for recreational visitors. The longer the beavers were there, the more that individuals in the park began to believe that it was not the beavers that needed protection from humans, but vice versa. Though the beavers were not destructive in the same way that wolves and other predators of the park were, they nevertheless had a way of destroying that which appealed to the park's human managers.

### *Beavers as Park Managers*

Within the two years following the introduction of the first four beavers to Fortune Lake, traces of their presence were readily apparent to those who knew where to look. After speaking with Superintendent E.S. Richards, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported in

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<sup>44</sup> L. A. Richard to H. R. Cram, 30 September 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>45</sup> "Beaver in Gatineau Park," 3 October 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

February of 1941 that the beavers had already built a dam and a lodge on Fortune Lake, and were peacefully nestled in their homes for the winter. Appearing to invite readers to see for themselves, the *Citizen* reported that on frosty mornings, “a fine spiral of steam can be seen coming from the small vent in the top of the beaver lodge, silent evidence of the four beaver resident there.”<sup>46</sup> Members of the Ottawa Ski Club, whose headquarters was set up at Fortune Lake, were especially well positioned to observe the beavers released there. Their proximity to a new hub of beaver activity appears, however, to have quickly become a point of contention between the skiers and the Commission. In fact, members of the club were the first to draw attention to the beavers’ questionable behaviour at the Lake. A comment in the 1942 Ottawa Ski Club Handbook reads as follows:

The Commission has also planted beavers in Lake Fortune, probably in the hope that they might help the skiers to clean the trails, but although very industrious, these animals appear to lack intelligent leadership. They [...] appear to concentrate their efforts on diverting the surplus water of Lake Fortune from Camp Fortune Creek to another slope of the mountain, quite a useless and silly undertaking.<sup>47</sup>

Given the number of lakes and ponds in the region, members of the club pointedly question the rationale behind the Commission’s decision to release the beavers right in their backyard. More importantly, however, they also question the rationale behind the beavers’ redistribution of water.

This redistribution is key to beavers’ survival. One of its main functions is to ensure that the beavers’ pond is sufficiently deep that the water will not freeze through to

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<sup>46</sup> “Creating Beach,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, 26 February 1941, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 9.

<sup>47</sup> C. E. Mortureux, “The Saga of the Ottawa Ski Club,” *The Ottawa Ski Club Handbook* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1942) 8. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1942-OSC-Handbook.pdf> (accessed 19 July 2016).

the bottom during the winter: because beavers do not hibernate, they spend their winters holed up in their state-of-the-art lodges, designed to insulate them from the elements while maintaining seasonal access to water. At the proper depths, these ponds allow beavers to continue to swim under the ice all winter long, which they do to access their food caches. These caches (or “larders”) are large collections of sticks and other woody vegetation that are gathered in the fall, and piled deep into the water. Throughout the winter, when the beavers are hungry, they only have to swim under the ice to collect some sticks from their underwater cache. Without access to a generous supply of water, beavers are unable to survive in the winter.<sup>48</sup>

Though beavers construct their dams and ponds to accommodate their own needs, the resulting changes to the landscape can provide any number of benefits to other plants and animals. For example, as choice vegetation is cut and the area surrounding their pond is flooded, beavers create favourable conditions for other plant species to flourish. Their activity can increase a stream’s carrying capacity for warm-water fish, and their ponds can harbour a host of amphibians, reptiles and aquatic insects. They also attract a greater variety and quantity of waterfowl and other birds, small mammals, and others like white-tailed deer. But as with any changes to the physical landscape, there are inevitable negative consequences for other species of plants and animals too. The erection of beaver dams slows or obstructs the movement of water, preventing organisms that once depended on the flow of water from thriving. These dams can also impede the upstream movement of fish, preventing them from accessing annual spawning sites.

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<sup>48</sup> Runtz, *Dam Builders*, 76.

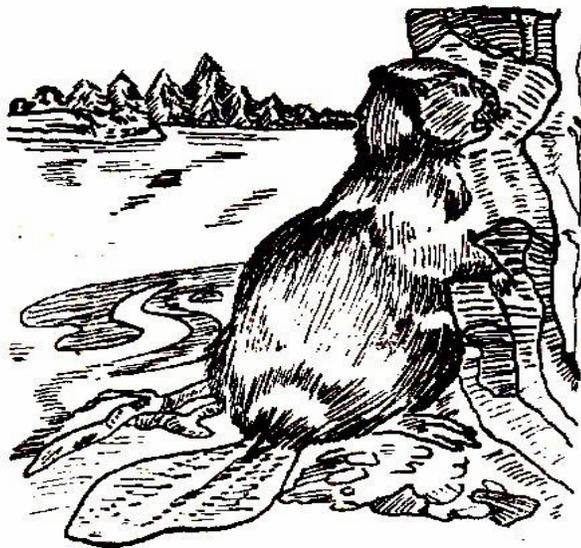
In areas that are inhabited by humans, the work of beavers is frequently perceived in a negative light. In Gatineau Park, the pre-existing interests of human users of the park suffered from an altered environment. The skiers, who had never had any issue with the flow of water through Fortune Lake and Camp Fortune Creek, were unable to see any value in the beavers' work. Instead, their description of the supposedly unintelligent beavers' behaviour as "useless and silly" seems to suggest a view that the beavers' skills could be more usefully applied to other projects. With that said, if park managers had had any way of communicating with the beavers, they would have likely been told that the idea of a park was just as "useless and silly" of an undertaking from their perspective.

By the following season, the beavers had had sufficient time to flex their creative muscles, and members of the club had had ample exposure to the beavers' "undertakings" to develop definitive views. Published in the club's 1943 – 44 seasonal yearbook, "The Beaver at Lake Fortune" was a four-page exposé detailing the so-called destruction wrought by the newly unpopular animals. At first "thrilled beyond measure" at the opportunity to share the space with an animal that had "played such an outstanding part in Canadian History," members of the club were now appalled by the toll that the beavers had taken on the landscape. Reportedly finding the shoreline of Lake Fortune flooded and many trees "slaughtered," the "sylvan beauty" that had once characterized their enjoyment of the Lake was now described as "a scene of utter desolation."<sup>49</sup> The beavers' flooding had also destroyed a number of paths in the lake area, which had likely been the handiwork of the skiers themselves. As Quinn Lanzon explains, the club was heavily involved in the construction and maintenance of an extensive network of trails throughout

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<sup>49</sup> "The Beaver at Fortune Lake," *Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1943-44* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1944), 23, 25. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1943-1944-year-book.pdf> (accessed 19 July 2016).

the Gatineau Hills. Consequently, it was not only the scenic value of Fortune Lake that was at stake, but also the hard work of volunteer skiers.<sup>50</sup> The article continued, “Here was a lake at one time, one of the prettiest in the Gatineau hills, where hundreds of young people used to enjoy swimming [...]. Now after three years of the beavers’ management it looks as if it had been struck by the wrath of God!”<sup>51</sup> After only three years, the beavers had taken control of Fortune Lake.



Source: Ottawa Ski Club Year Book, 1943-1944

These “destructive” animals stood in stark contrast to the jolly little “people” that had peacefully shared a pond (and cabin!) with Grey Owl and Anahareo. The park beavers had not enriched the environment, as they had been led to expect, but had disrupted the assumed pre-established “natural” order of the lake: once a favourite spot “for picknickers and nature lovers,” the lake was no longer an attractive (read: natural) destination. Though it had initially been “great fun” to watch the beaver slapping the

<sup>50</sup> Lanzon, “From the Ground Up.”

<sup>51</sup> “The Beaver at Fortune Lake,” 23.

water with its tail, there was “no longer any fun now that [they] cannot even get near the water.” This devastation was compounded by the possibility that the beavers might be doing it intentionally: throughout the club’s article, the beavers were cast as purposeful destroyers, wrecking the shores of Lake Fortune to satisfy their own selfish interests. And in a sense, this was true; they were actively and creatively managing their space and surroundings to suit their own needs. These needs simply conflicted with those of the club.

Determined to put the beaver in its place, the article went on to question the beavers’ supposed intelligence. It did this first by comparing the beaver to animals “rated much lower in the scale of intelligence.” Unlike the beaver, bears and jackrabbits, for example, simply dug “a comfortable den under a heap of brush or at the foot of a tree, without any fuss or trouble.” In spite of these animals’ relative unintelligence, they were able to build their own homes while leaving comparatively little evidence of their presence on the land.<sup>52</sup> If beavers were so smart, how had they not learned to construct their homes without leaving such a mess? The club was keen to remind readers that the beavers’ reputed intelligence was no match for the brainpower of their human competitors. For if it was, the beavers would have realized (like the skiers had) “that the building of a dam [was] entirely unnecessary.” The beaver had only to “build his abode on a raft, house-boat like [...], thus sparing himself a whole lot of work and trouble.” According to the club, that would have been too simple, as “the beaver must work like the beaver he is.”<sup>53</sup> That the proposed “house-boat” arrangement overlooked all of the

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<sup>52</sup> “The Beaver at Fortune Lake,” 23.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

beavers' needs is beside the point. What mattered was that the beaver was, after all, just an animal.

The article repeatedly remarked on the beavers' impressive abilities, while purposefully relegating them to their inferior place beneath humans. In doing so, however, the article raises one of the great ironies of this chapter: in an attempt to distance the reckless actions and behaviours of the beavers from the more intelligent, rational decisions of the humans of the park, the article actually likens the animals to their human foes: in order to explain the actions of these beavers, they were often described in human terms. When describing how beavers transport trees and sticks to their lodges by canal, the article states that the beaver "floats his wood supply down to his quarters, like a regular lumberjack," and proceeds to refer to the beaver as "Johnny Beaver," a reference to the infamous lumberjack and Canadian icon, Johnny Canuck. The beavers' lodge is likened to a two-story home, and then to an igloo, though it was quickly pointed out that the latter houses its occupants "without flooding the country." The beavers worked in teams, they were "industrious," and they were "saboteurs." And while members of the club were personifying the beavers at Fortune Lake in very different ways (and to different ends) than Grey Owl had just a few years prior, they were drawing from the same language of beaver "people" that had become so common.<sup>54</sup>

The article also positions itself in support of conservation efforts, not against them. In fact, it claims to "fully subscribe to what the great naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton says of [the beaver] in his book," which was that "It is fitting indeed that the beaver, the symbol of energy, peace, and industry, should be the emblem of Canada for

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<sup>54</sup> Grey Owl was certainly not the first to describe beavers in anthropomorphic terms (terms like "eager," "busy," and "industrious" have long been associated with beavers), though he expanded this language considerably through his depiction of beavers as quasi-people.

which it did so much.”<sup>55</sup> According to the club, the conservation of beaver was just simply not a good fit for *their* park:

We think it is fitting that this marvelous little worker should be protected and allowed to pursue his peaceful industry along some lakes and streams, when by doing so he serves the countryside and does not turn a place of beauty into an ugly morass. To allow him to be extinguished through the greed of man would be the height of ingratitude – but let him be kept away from the lakes of the Gatineau Park. He has no place there.<sup>56</sup>

As the club suggests, conservation was intended for the benefit of human interests, not for the animals themselves. And in Gatineau Park, the club argued that no one was benefitting from the beavers that had been placed there.<sup>57</sup>

The visual and recreational interests of the Ottawa Ski Club conflicted with the ecological needs of the park’s beaver, and by extension, with the Commission’s policy of conservation. More importantly, however, is that these conflicts also clearly demonstrate that actors other than humans, with their own agency and agendas, were applying their will to the park. As the beavers began setting up their lodges at Fortune Lake, they unknowingly challenged the club’s assumed authority over the lake and its surrounding landscape. And as Erica Fudge notes, just because animals are unaware of the changes they set in motion, “those changes are no less real for that.”<sup>58</sup>

Though the beaver “exposé” was published in the Ottawa Ski Club’s internal publication, it was an obvious plea to the Federal District Commission for the beavers’ removal from the park. The Commission, however, seems not to have heard it. In April of 1944, Superintendent Richards reported to the *Ottawa Journal* that the park’s beavers had

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<sup>55</sup> Ernest Thompson Seton was a renowned author and artist of wildlife who, like Grey Owl, described animals in very anthropocentric terms (1860-1946).

<sup>56</sup> “The Beaver at Fortune Lake,” 29.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Erica Fudge, “The History of Animals.”

“multiplied rapidly” and continued to thrive “on almost every lake.” Though they were described as “somewhat shy,” visitors were informed that they could expect to see five or six beaver homes on most lakes in the park, and were encouraged to go see for themselves.<sup>59</sup> Occasionally, such articles on the success of the beavers, similar to those that reported on the annual successes of the park’s white-tailed deer, were printed in the local papers as an added attempt to entice visitors to the park. As the writings of the Ottawa Ski Club seem to have predicted, however, as the number of beavers increased, so too did the complications associated with their management. And as they became more troublesome, they also became more newsworthy.

In 1946, nearly two years following the complaints by the Ottawa Ski Club, the following headline was printed in the *Journal*: “Gatineau Park Wardens All Set for ‘Battle’ of the Beavers: Cunning Animals Victorious Over Rangers in Water-Level Contest.”<sup>60</sup> The article reported that in the short period that the beavers had made their homes in the park, they had apparently taken to “housekeeping” in a big way. Among the many lakes scattered throughout the park, there was “scarcely one without its quota of cone-shape, stick-and-mud beaver lodges.” Moreover, park officials had “run into plenty of trouble in the park through the beaver’s stern insistence that water in his pond be kept up to required levels.”<sup>61</sup> Though the flooding of Fortune Lake that had begun three or four years earlier had not seemed to trouble the Commission, as the population of beavers increased, they were unable to ignore the numerous changes to the landscape of the park.

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<sup>59</sup> “Deer Abound in Gatineau Park 12 Miles from Parliament Hill,” *Ottawa Journal*, 17 April 1944, 3.

<sup>60</sup> “Gatineau Park Wardens All Set for ‘Battle’ of the Beavers: Cunning Animals Victorious Over Rangers in Water-Level Contest,” *Ottawa Journal*, 26 January 1946, 1.

<sup>61</sup> “‘Battle’ of the Beavers,” 1.

Unlike the skiers or other visitors who were said to have complained, however, park officials reportedly did not object to the beavers' presence, but viewed the beavers as permanent guests. In other words, the rangers simply understood that the beavers were there to stay, and that any objection to this view would be futile. Instead, it was their job to mitigate the destruction of the beavers as best as possible. Thus, "In the spirit of conservation," park rangers reportedly tried to avoid tearing down beaver dams, knowing very well that this would leave the beaver at the mercy of countless predators. Instead, they tried "every trick in the book" to keep water levels down. One such attempt was to insert a pipe into a beaver dam in order to maintain a free flow of water into the pond and lodge, without relying on rising pond levels to accomplish it. After further examination, the rangers found that the beavers "had stuffed the mouth of every pipe with a quantity of mud and debris," and that the water levels were "rising higher than ever." Though the rangers were making great efforts to solve the flooding problems, "Mr. Beaver [was] Too Smart."<sup>62</sup>

The news article personified the beavers just as the club's writings had. Of particular note was the claim that the beaver was "reputed to judge the water-level in his home pond by reclining in the upper story of his 'bungalow-type' residence and allowing his tail to dangle. If it becomes wet, well and good; if not, another dam goes up."<sup>63</sup> Not only does the article rely on the same language that was employed by the club, but it even conjures up the same image of the beaver lounging in its two-story home, unabashedly indifferent to the damage it was causing to its human neighbours. As well, the beavers were again stacked against the intelligence of humans, only this time it was to the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 7.

beavers' advantage. The beaver was described as having an IQ rated more highly than "man," as it repeatedly outsmarted the rangers' efforts to reduce flooding. And while the article continued the earlier narrative that the beavers' destruction to the park's landscape was entirely deliberate, it went even further: "the beaver is so convinced of his mission as 'nature's engineer' that he is not above diverting the course of streams and flooding large sections of park terrain in the process."<sup>64</sup> The beavers were so determined to satisfy their own (selfish) needs that they were willing to destroy the landscape, at the expense of others, to achieve their goals. Despite the beavers' privileged skillset as "nature's engineers," their mission mattered more than the state of their environment.

In spite of their tireless efforts, park officials continued to have high hopes for the beavers, and in 1948, they were described as "a very definite asset in the wild-life picture," so long as they were "not permitted to multiply so rapidly that they destroy timber."<sup>65</sup> As members of the Ottawa Ski Club had pointed out in 1943, however, the timber had been facing destruction for nearly five years already. An inevitable result of the beavers' so-called "mission," trees of different sizes, ages, and species were taken, damaged, or destroyed by beavers for a variety of reasons. Depending on the case, a whole tree might be taken, or it might be cut down only to have its crowning branches removed. In some cases, beavers are forced to abandon trees, and in others, a beaver might simply stop for a quick bite to eat, devouring a tree's bark and damaging its exterior. On average, trees up to 15 centimetres in diameter can be felled in less than 50 minutes.<sup>66</sup> Regardless of beavers' intentions, however, Runtz notes that the entire process can seem very messy, giving "the impression that the animals indiscriminately

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> "Beaver Take to the Air," *Ottawa Journal*, 26 August 1948, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Müller-Schwarze, *The Beaver*, 68 and Runtz, *Dam Builders*, 46.

cut [down] everything in sight. In reality they do not, and studies have shown that there is method to their apparent madness.”<sup>67</sup> And as various concerned park users and managers have already pointed out, even trees that were spared by a beaver’s incessant need to chew could often be met with a similar fate as they are drowned in flood waters.

Not surprisingly, the Ottawa Ski Club was the first to point to the ironies involved in conserving a population of beavers that destroyed the park’s valuable timber:

The [Commission] has been doing a lot of work on hills and trails in the Camp Fortune area. But why in the world do they not give Harry Dunne a shotgun and turn him loose around Fortune Lake for a few days’ beaver shooting? These destructive rodents flood our trails and create acres of drowned lands. It seems inconsistent that the Commission should stress conservation so much then start raising beavers to destroy hundreds of magnificent trees. The beaver looks fine on an emblem, but at Camp Fortune his name is mud.<sup>68</sup>

As the club points out, the conservation of beavers in Gatineau Park conflicted with the preservation of the park’s forests. Even though the park had become a sanctuary for wildlife, the impetus for the establishment of a park in the Gatineau Hills had been the trees themselves. Recall that the Federal Woodlands Preservation League (FWPL) had been one of the driving forces behind the creation of the park, having successfully lobbied the federal government to survey the region’s forests, the results of which were published in *The Lower Gatineau Woodlands Report*. Additionally, that the Ottawa Ski Club had itself advocated for the protection of trees through the creation of the Ottawa Ski Club Forest Preservation Society.

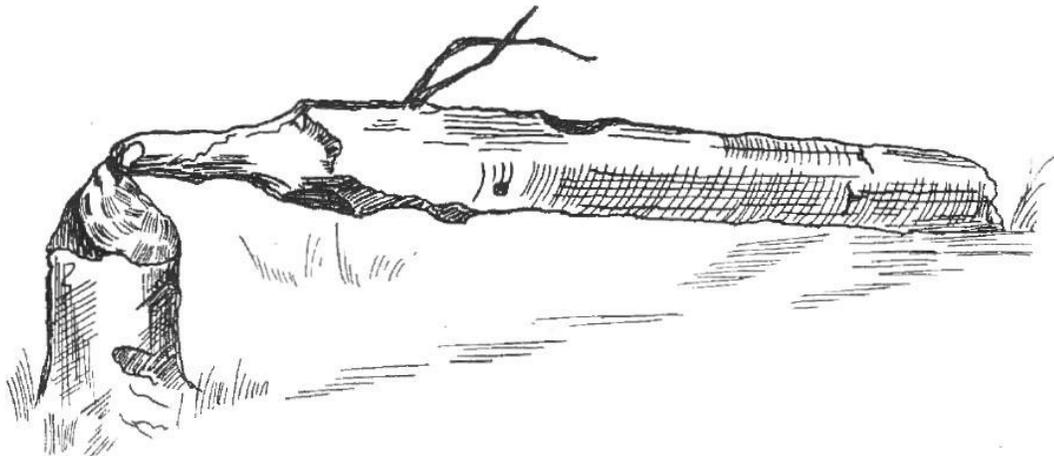
Though the conservation of wildlife and forestry would presumably go hand in hand, the Commission was forced to acknowledge the difficulties associated with

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<sup>67</sup> Runtz, *Dam Builders*, 87.

<sup>68</sup> “Editorial Comments,” *Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1948-49* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1949) 7. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1948-1949-year-book.pdf> (accessed 19 July 2016).

pursuing both projects simultaneously. The introduction of beavers to the park had resulted in the destruction of the very timber that members of the woodlands community had fought for years to protect. The distinction, of course, was that this destruction had not been pursued by human acts of development and exploitation as feared, but by the “natural” world itself. To members of the Ottawa Ski Club, this did not seem to matter. For while they had claimed to be in support of beaver conservation in principle, their idea of conservation was one that was bound by human expectations and understandings of land-use. Though the beaver was fine as an emblem, in Gatineau Park, they were apparently more trouble than they were worth.



Source: Ottawa Ski Club Year Book, 1943-1944

In the same issue of the 1948-1949 yearbook, another member of the club revealed attitudes towards the beavers at Fortune Lake in an article titled “Try it on Foot,” a recommendation for skiers to visit the park throughout the summer months. The author employs the use of analogy, sarcasm and exaggeration in order to communicate his frustration with the beavers at Lake Fortune:

It is now fairly common to see deer and rabbits, etc., and of course we must not forget Paddy the Beaver and the work he has been doing on Fortune Lake. This once insignificant little pond, as a result of the beavers' industry, now floods an area so large that a boat is being used on it. The great number of dead and dying trees standing in several feet of water indicates the activity of "Flat-Tail and Co." and continues to amaze the many hikers who visit his "Operation Des Joachims". It is unfortunate that these prodigious workers cannot be trained to expend their energy in less devastating practices.<sup>69</sup>

Much to the author's chagrin, the once attractive landscape that visitors could expect to find in the area of Fortune Lake was no longer picturesque. Pointing to the destructive work of "Paddy the Beaver," the author references the 1917 children's novel, *The Adventures of Paddy the Beaver*, which was one of a series of animal stories authored by Thornton W. Burgess in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was a regular character with Lightfoot the Deer in Burgess' "Bedtime Stories" newspaper column. Burgess' stories were intended to teach children to respect the natural environment which, to the club, was a rather ironic pursuit given that "Paddy" himself showed no respect for the landscape of Gatineau Park. The author also points to the apparent magnitude of the beavers' devastation of Fortune Lake by comparing their work to that of a fictional construction company ("Flat-Tail and Co."), and his final product, to the massive Des Joachims dam, a hydroelectric dam roughly 200km up-river from the Ottawa-Gatineau Region that was flooding forests and displacing entire communities at the time that the article was written.

By comparing the destructive work of a beaver to that of a human construction project, the beaver was again brought closer to its human foes. And from this perspective, beavers and humans were not so different. There's a certain poetry in the fact that

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<sup>69</sup> D. McN, "Try it On Foot," *Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1948-49* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1949), 59. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1948-1949-year-book.pdf> (accessed 19 July, 2016).

humans could have such strong feelings against the beavers' actions, when their own history is ordered around similar human actions of conquest. Just as settlers to the Gatineau region had displaced the Algonquin from their traditional grounds, and as upper class cottagers encroached on the descendants of these pioneers, the beavers were now attempting to take Fortune Lake from the Ottawa Ski Club. The discourse surrounding their invasion of the lake and its shore eerily resembles human narratives of colonial pasts: upon arriving on unfamiliar territory, the beavers proceeded to colonize the land with little regard for its former uses or occupants. Only in this case, it was not the colonizers that destroyed their opponent, but vice versa: unable or willing to learn to co-exist with the beavers, members of the Ottawa Ski Club demanded the destruction of their opponents in a way that was so familiar.

#### *The Decline of Beavers in Gatineau Park*

By the late 1940s, the Ottawa Ski Club was not the only party concerned with the growth of beavers in the park. In a handwritten letter addressed to Superintendent Richards, a man named C. D. Chamberlain claimed that the population of trout in Lusk Lake was being negatively affected by the regular flooding of the lakeshore and by the accumulation of felled trees into the water. Given that trout require very shallow waters in which to spawn, Chamberlain was seriously concerned with the rapidly rising water levels. Chamberlain held the park's beavers personally responsible for the decline in trout, and claimed that the "only sure cure" was to return the water levels to their former levels.<sup>70</sup> His concerns for the trout came from his own interest in fishing recreationally in the park. Unlike hunting, which had been strictly prohibited almost as soon as the park

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<sup>70</sup> C. D. Chamberlain to E. S. Richards, 28 April 1949, LAC, RG 34-B, file 190, vol. 267, part 14.

was established, fishing had always been permitted, and continues to be permitted to this day.<sup>71</sup> Prior to the creation of a park, the local Fish and Game Protective Association for the counties of Gatineau, Hull, Papineau, and Pontiac had been involved in the stocking of Gatineau's Lakes. In 1937, the Association had planted 2000 speckled trout in Pink Lake, and another 800 in 1938.<sup>72</sup> Throughout the 1940s and '50s the Commission continued efforts to stock the park's lakes on the advice of fish and game associations. Fishing was encouraged, and the Commission did what it could to support the sport. In June of 1943, Lusk Lake was stocked with 200 speckled trout fry, and another thousand were dropped by plane into Lac Clair (Clear Lake).<sup>73</sup>

However, recall that less than two years prior six beavers had been introduced into those same two lakes (3 per lake). As Chamberlain argued, the beavers appear to have disrupted the quality of fishing that fishermen of the region had come to expect from the park. From his view, the conservation of beavers was occurring at the expense of the park's trout and of recreational fishermen. The irony of one introduced animal (beavers) disrupting the success of another animal that had been introduced to the park (trout) seems to have been lost.

In response to his concerns, Superintendent Richards reassured Chamberlain that Lusk Lake had "originally" contained both beaver and trout, and that he believed that "in a very few years times the unnatural conditions caused by the beavers raising the water will have corrected itself."<sup>74</sup> There is no indication of how Richards defined "original," nor how he would be familiar with the conditions of the park's lakes prior to its creation.

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<sup>71</sup> The unique relationships that sport hunters and anglers have to the wildlife that they hunt has been noted by Jean Manore in "Contested Terrains of Space and Place," 134-135.

<sup>72</sup> James C. McCuaig to H. R. Cram, "Re Pink Lake," 15 Nov 1938, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 265, part 3.

<sup>73</sup> E. S. Richards, "Memorandum," 9 July 1943, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 266, part 10.

<sup>74</sup> E. S. Richards to C. D. Chamberlain, 10 May 1949, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 14.

However, his statement does reveal a belief that predominated for much of the park's first decade: that the introduction of beavers was a process that would, over time, follow a predisposed or 'natural' course without human intervention.

This was a view that the Commission would change. In fact, efforts to reduce the beaver population were suggested by park employees as early as 1950, just one year after Chamberlain's complaint. In February, Superintendent Richards wrote to the Commission requesting permission to dispose of "surplus" beaver in Gatineau Park. As Richards explained, "Each year a considerable number [of beavers] follow the water courses beyond the Park boundaries and are taken by local trappers" anyway. Unable to restrict the mobility of these beavers, Richards requested that the Commission allow him to trap the park's incremental beaver population. Their furs would be auctioned annually "to the Commission's advantage," as a way to both control the increase in the population of beavers and to reap some small benefit after years of damage to the park. He also assured the Commission that "This procedure of trapping is necessary in the provincial parks."<sup>75</sup>

In fact, the disposal of "surplus" animals for profit is a concept that was frequently adapted in parks across Canada, and one that was seen as "in line with the concept of conservation and planned and controlled resource use directing the park system at that time."<sup>76</sup> Once the population of beavers had become so abundant that they were no longer in any risk of being extirpated again, there was no harm in disposing of some to make a few dollars. This was especially true once the overabundance of beavers had begun to take a toll on the landscape. In Algonquin Park, park staff had trapped

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<sup>75</sup> E. S. Richards to Federal District Commission, "Re: Disposal Surplus Beaver in Gatineau Park," 17 February 1950, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 267, part 15.

<sup>76</sup> Bower, *Lost Tracks*, 62.

excess beavers since as early as 1910, as it was considered to be a convenient way to earn extra income for the park while controlling its population of beavers.<sup>77</sup> An even more extreme example occurred in Buffalo National Park, where the “conservation” of bison evolved into a profitable abattoir.<sup>78</sup> In both cases, however, park managers faced significant backlash from local trappers and the parks’ surrounding communities. From a trapper’s perspective, the idea of a game sanctuary did not make much sense once game had become so abundant that park staff were themselves exploiting the animals for commercial gain. In the case of Algonquin Park, Manore notes that many trappers were so outraged by the park’s decision to dispose of beavers that they actually increased their illegal trapping activities within its boundaries.<sup>79</sup>

Though hunters and trappers were generally in favour of conservationist practices, “conservation” can and did mean different things for different people. And while the managers of Gatineau Park clearly looked to these and other parks for strategies to manage its animals, they did not appear to learn from these parks’ mistakes. Superintendent Richards’ proposal to trap surplus beavers was approved by the Commission for one year, and the necessary trapping permits were requested from Gatineau’s chief game warden for the province of Quebec. However, this decision to trap beavers for profit does not appear to have been publicly disclosed; as trapping activities in the park became more visible, they also became more controversial.

In the meantime, the Superintendent’s efforts to reduce the population of beavers did little to prevent further damage by those that remained. According to a survey, “Not only [had] the beaver damned [sic] every stream, lake and swamp in Gatineau Park,” but

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<sup>77</sup> Manore, “Contested Terrains of Space and Place,” 143.

<sup>78</sup> Bower, *Lost Tracks*, 53-83.

<sup>79</sup> Manore, “Contested Terrains of Space and Place,” 143.

they continued to spread out to adjacent areas. Some were reported to have “gone as far afield as the Gatineau river,” while others had “moved North and West of the present park limits.”<sup>80</sup> By 1953, the Commission would receive a rising number of demands for a reduction of beavers in the park. In May, the Commission was notified by the Ste Cecile de Masham Chamber of Commerce of their resolution that “damages caused in the region by the Commission’s beavers be brought to the attention of the Minister of Fisheries and Game of the Province of Quebec as well as to the Federal Deputy, Mr. J. C. Nadon and to Mr. J. E. Audette of Hull.”<sup>81</sup> According to an extract from their records of discussion, the beavers were cited as “an endemic plague, doing his damages in the neighbouring Municipalities of the Federal District Commission.”<sup>82</sup> The municipalities of St. Cecile de Masham, Hull East, Hull West, Eardley, and Wakefield East were all listed as being affected by the damage, and requested that the Commission take immediate measures to prevent further destruction.<sup>83</sup>

In his response to the County of Gatineau, Secretary Cram assured them that their concerns would be brought to the attention of the Commission at their next regular meeting.<sup>84</sup> In the meantime, Cram wrote to Superintendent Richards and requested that he review the County’s concerns.<sup>85</sup> In a memorandum to the Commission, Richards claimed that the alleged trouble being caused by beavers had been grossly exaggerated, and that only two of the five municipalities mentioned were actually concerned. Instead,

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<sup>80</sup> “Gatineau Park Animals Ready for Winter,” *Ottawa Journal*, 10 December 1952, 3.

<sup>81</sup> “Extract from the Books of Minutes of Discussions of the Regular Meeting Held on May 29, 1953,” 29 May 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17. Nadon and Audette were provincial game wardens for the region.

<sup>82</sup> “Meeting of the Corporation of the County of Gatineau,” 10 June 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol 268, part 17.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> H. R. Cram to Palma Joanis, Secretary-Treasurer, 24 June 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

<sup>85</sup> Memorandum from H. R. Cram to E. S. Richards, 24 June 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

Richards explained that the issue was “mainly a matter of annoyance to cottagers owning property within the Park boundaries,” rather than those neighbouring municipalities to the park.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, Richards reminded the Commission that no protection was offered to beavers outside the park’s limits, and that property owners outside the park were free to dispose of troublesome beavers themselves (subject to provincial trapping regulations). Of course, many of the problems associated with the abundance of beavers, such as flooding or streams that had been obstructed, would have originated in the park, but overflowed into the surrounding areas. Although Richards stated that the Commission did not need to take responsibility for the damages done outside the Park, he suggested that the number of park beavers be reduced to help mitigate the problem.<sup>87</sup>

The Commission heeded Richards’ advice. Unlike the first instance of disposing so-called “surplus” beavers, the park’s population of beavers were now to be reduced in order to control the effects that their population growth was having on the physical landscape. Thus, as the population of beavers grew, so too did the Commission’s understanding of surplus beavers. This time, their decision to trap a percentage of the beaver population was printed in the *Citizen* on July 20, and formally communicated to the County on July 29, 1953. The letter read that:

the Commission had no jurisdiction over wild life beyond the boundaries of Gatineau Park but that it would arrange to have the beaver population kept under control within the area of the park thereby eliminating to some extent the beavers migrating into adjacent areas.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> E. S. Richards to Federal District Commission, “Resolution by the County of Gatineau dated June 10<sup>th</sup> relative to damage done by Park beaver,” 14 July 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> H. R. Cram to Palma Joanis, Secretary-Treasurer to the Corporation of the County of Gatineau, 29 July 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

Predictably, this decision did not receive unanimous support from the community. On July 27, H. W. Habgood wrote a letter to the *Citizen* in which he described the Commission's plan to reduce the population as "poor and unimaginative."<sup>89</sup> It was not the Commission's decision to reduce the population of beaver that bothered him, but *how* they were planning to do it: instead of allowing park rangers to trap the beavers, Habgood argued that farmers and other property owners in the park area should be permitted to trap the beavers themselves. By responding in this manner, it was argued that the beavers could become a source of compensation for private landowners who had been subjected to beaver damage, rather than the organization believed responsible for it in the first place.<sup>90</sup>

For a number of residents within and surrounding the park's boundaries, property damage was extensive. Claims that beaver floods had damaged roadways, small bridges and other private property were not uncommon.<sup>91</sup> For a select few, however, it seems as if the beavers may have been used as a scapegoat for existing property damage. A man named Robert Mulhall wrote to the Commission on August 10, 1953, outlining comprehensive damage that had reportedly been done to his property. Much of the damage, he claimed, was the direct result of beaver-induced flooding, such as dead trees, retreating roadways, a rotting bridge, and the contamination of his water well. According to Mulhall, the water levels on Brown's Lake, where his home was built, had risen by 22 inches since he purchased the property in 1942.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> "Beaver in Gatineau Park," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 27 July 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

<sup>90</sup> "Beaver in Gatineau Park," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 27 July 1953.

<sup>91</sup> E. S. Richards to Eddy Cross, 11 May 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Mulhall to H. R. Cram, 10 August 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

Interestingly, however, Superintendent Richards himself reported that “Brown’s Lake [was] at the same elevation as it was at this time last year – and just about the same level as it was in 1942.” Instead, Richards proffered that Mr. Mulhall had simply built his cottage on an unfit plot of land that nobody else had wanted, and that the land in question had always been periodically flooded by no fault of the Commission or its beavers.<sup>93</sup> To support his claim, Richards noted that “A Mr. Roberts, who [also] owns a cottage on [Brown’s Lake], says that the [water] level is about the same as it was in the past, and that it suits him very well. If the level was lowered 22 [inches] as Mr. Mulhall requests, Mr. Roberts says he will be the first to complain.”<sup>94</sup> An article in the *Journal* appeared to confirm his findings, when it declared that water levels across all the park’s lakes were dangerously low. Apparently “Alarmed by the threat of forest fires and the low level of water in lakes through the area,” park rangers quite fittingly began “knocking holes in beaver dams” across the park in order to boost water levels in its lakes. As the title of the article reveals, however, the beavers continued to “foil” park rangers’ plans: just as quickly as the rangers could punch holes in the dams, “the beavers come along and fill them up again.”<sup>95</sup> Though it was certainly possible that the level of beaver activity on Brown’s Lake fluctuated throughout the years, periodically increasing and decreasing the Lake’s shoreline, it was also possible that residents of the park did their best to take advantage of a poor situation. Either way, there were very clear divisions over the view

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<sup>93</sup> E. S. Richards to Federal District Commission, “Re: Alleged damage by Beaver Brown’s Lake, see letter dated August 10<sup>th</sup> from Mr. Robert Mulhall,” 10 September 1953, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 17.

<sup>94</sup> E. S. Richards to the Federal District Commission, “Re: Alleged damage by Beaver,” 10 September, 1953.

<sup>95</sup> “The Race is On! Beaver Foil Park Rangers Knocking Holes in Their Dams,” *Ottawa Journal*, 1 September 1953, 1.

of beavers in the park, not just across the various groups of park users and managers, but within these communities as well.

From 1954 – 1957 very little is written about the beavers in Gatineau Park. In fact, the only publicity that these beavers appeared to receive at all was in July of 1956, when a brief article in the *Journal* reported that a beaver dam had burst and washed out Meech Lake road. According to “investigators” of the Commission, it was believed that the flood had been the result of a deliberate “blasting” of the beaver dam, though the Commission assured readers that it had not given authorization for the use of dynamite in the area. Interestingly enough, the following year the editor of the *Ottawa Ski Club Year Book* casually recalled a time (it was unspecified) when members of the club’s volunteer trail-workers had themselves blasted a dam with dynamite “several times.”<sup>96</sup> Though the location of the dam in question was not disclosed, based on past experiences, it was more likely that members of the club had blown dams in and around the Fortune Lake area. Nevertheless, the admission by the club’s editor points to the willingness of the club to take matters into their own hands and, given the number of complaints that were received about beavers since their introduction, its members were likely not the only ones to use dynamite in the park.

Then, after three years of relative silence on the matter of beavers, the Commission appeared to arrive at wits end. In what appears to have been a rather abrupt decision, the Commission resolved that “the necessary steps be taken to eliminate as far

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<sup>96</sup> J. S. P., “Editorial,” *The Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1957 – 1959* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1959), 7. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1957-1958-year-book.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

as possible the beaver menace in Gatineau Park.”<sup>97</sup> A trapping program was to begin in the fall of 1957 under the direction of the new superintendent, Elwood Edey, who had been authorized to trap beavers on all 44 lakes in the park with his rangers.<sup>98</sup> The justification for the extermination of beavers in the park was included in the Federal District Commission’s annual report (a first for the beavers, since their original introduction). It reads:

At the request of the municipalities, and following upon numerous complaints from farmers, the Federal District Commission decided that the population in Gatineau Park must be reduced. A program of trapping was carried out in the late fall of 1957 under the direction of the Gatineau Park Superintendent with the knowledge and consent of the provincial game service. Fortune Lake, for instance, has been literally ruined by the activities of these animals. The pelts are sold by the Commission on fur markets.<sup>99</sup>

Though the archives reveal little about the months leading up to this eventual decision, it appears that no news is not always good news.

A short article published in the *Journal* following the decision to exterminate beaver in the park claimed that the chairman of the Federal District Commission, “A distinguished forester and wildlife expert, [...] would be the last to order [the beavers’] destruction except when absolutely necessary.” Nevertheless, the decision was “deplored” by the correspondent, who suggested that the beavers should be “transferred to the Nation and Castor rivers in Eastern Ontario” instead.<sup>100</sup> The following year (and coincidentally, the last year of the Commission), readers were updated on the beaver trapping program

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<sup>97</sup> H. R. Cram, “The Tale of the Beaver in Gatineau Park,” 19 August 1957, LAC, RG 34, file 190, vol. 268, part 21-A(1). The tale was also published in *The Ottawa Ski Club Year Book 1957 – 1958* (Ottawa: Ottawa Ski Club Publication, 1958), 51 – 53. <http://www.gvhs.ca/digital/gatineau-park/osc/1957-1958-year-book.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>98</sup> Martin Sinclair, “War of Gatineau Beavers,” *Ottawa Journal*, 25 October 1958, 35.

<sup>99</sup> Federal District Commission, *Fifty-Eighth Annual Report* (Ottawa: Federal District Commission, 1957), 30.

<sup>100</sup> “Beaver Can be Trouble-Makers,” *Ottawa Journal*, 25 July 1957, 8.

when another correspondent for the *Journal*, Martin Sinclair, ventured into the park with one of its rangers in order to investigate the “War of Gatineau Beavers.” As Sinclair and the ranger headed down into the valley, he reported that “the sounds of the bush died.” The only noise that they heard was the sound of their own feet, and “the dead crack of branches that broke at the touch.” Black, broken trees marked the length of the valley, where the water had once risen high enough to “choke” the forest. An “abandoned” beaver lodge loomed eerily nearby. According to Sinclair, “There was no life here. Even the beavers had left.”<sup>101</sup>

The beavers were gone, but they had not left. And after seeing the “desolation” that the beavers had wrought on the landscape, the difference did not seem to matter; there were no beavers, and it was better that way. Or at least, it was better for those that hoped to one day return Fortune Lake to its former beauty. Even so, Sinclair was assured by the ranger that the trapping of beavers was done humanely: “We set a trap near the water. When the beaver steps into it he is pulled beneath the surface of the water and drowned.” And just like that, in what Sinclair describes as an act of “official poetic justice,” the beavers of Gatineau Park were drowned, just as they had drowned countless other fields, forests, and properties of the park over the past seventeen years.<sup>102</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Though the socially constructed image of the beaver had paved the way for its conservation in Canada and in Gatineau Park, it quickly paled in the presence of its less-romantic muse. When visitors were finally faced with the physical animal, they were

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> “Beaver Can be Trouble-Makers,” *Ottawa Journal*, 25 July 1957, 8.

forced to reconcile with the unexpected realities of the non-human. Close proximity to the beavers would revise the sentiments of many within and around the park, as what they knew about the animal expanded to include aspects of its behaviour that were considered less palatable. And even so, this revised image of the beaver, based around its destructive antics and blatant disregard for the natural world, was just as erroneous and just as anthropomorphic.<sup>103</sup>

After less than 20 years, the introduction of beavers had gone full circle – from releasing the beavers, to trying to control them, to eventually destroying them. Unable to reconcile their own principles of management and control with those of the beavers, the Commission chose to cull a large percentage of the beaver population in lieu of continuing to learn to coexist with them. Their expectation that beavers would fit into and respect their park vision had been founded on an imaginary symbol, and not a real animal. The glorification of the beaver by Grey Owl in the 1930s contributed to these unrealistic expectations.

What was assumed would be an exciting and mutually beneficial relationship with Canada's favourite animal had actually evolved into a relationship that was based in a struggle for power: over water and trees; the physical and visual landscape; and the authority to dictate the character of the park. The park's human and non-human animals held competing views, understandings, and uses of the land, conflicts that were eventually "resolved" through mass extermination, ordered by the same organization responsible for their introduction in the first place. It was only one month following this decision, in August of 1957, that the Secretary to the Commission, H. R. Cram, reflected back on the events surrounding the unusual arrival of that first pair of beavers, nearly

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<sup>103</sup> Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 5.

seventeen years earlier. Spending a Saturday afternoon releasing live animals in the park had been one of the last things the Secretary had expected to do that day. And as he stood, overlooking Fortune Lake, he never could have predicted that he would eventually be responsible for exterminating the majority of the park's beavers as well.

### **Conclusion**

From 1938 to 1958, the animal landscape of Gatineau Park was drastically altered. Within a matter of years, the white-tailed deer, which had once been reported as scarce, were so abundant that they began to threaten the environment that supported them. Dogs that had once been free to run and play in the woods were slowly evicted, and rural or wild dogs, which may have taken shelter in the forest and occasionally foraged for food there, were hunted. Wolves and coyotes were hunted, too, when they unexpectedly arrived at the park's borders. The park's lakes and ponds were stocked with beavers, whose activities undoubtedly attracted other animals as well; as they engineered their own personal oases they made room for some animals to flourish, and endangered others like trout.

The landscape beyond the park's boundaries was altered, too. Wild animals that took refuge in the park preyed on the livestock that surrounded its borders. Some farmers went out of business, while others zealously guarded their animals in order to continue making a living. Roads were washed out, wells were contaminated, and other property damaged by floods that originated within the park's boundaries, at the hands of the notorious beavers. As rural residents and park officials alike sought to maintain complete control over their properties, they constantly clashed with non-human animals that failed to respect their laws. Throughout this process, humans held shifting and competing perceptions of animals, which regularly came into conflict with the very animals these views were intended to represent.

The park's prized white-tailed deer were simultaneously the picture of wildness, and the embodiment of human control. Throughout the park's first twenty years, the

population of deer was actively and strategically managed in order to make it more abundant. However, these efforts undermined the very wildness the deer were supposed to signify: hay and other feed was distributed by park officials to protect deer from the harshness of winter; salt licks were strategically placed along roads to draw them into the view of park visitors; and wolves and other predators were exterminated, in the hope that the deer would become more tame. Combined with regular media coverage of the deer's wellbeing in the park, these strategies were used to put the park's white-tailed deer on display. Though they were wild, they were also meant to be observed. Even the park's predators, which some might consider to be the park's "wildest" animals, were not as wild as they seemed. As park rangers began to hunt the animals, they found a "mongrel" breed of wolves, coyotes, and sometimes dogs. Similarly, many of the so-called "wild dogs" that preyed on the park's deer also worked on farms, and had human owners. And these animals crossed physical boundaries, too: wild animals infringed on domestic spaces, and vice versa. These animals simultaneously moved through and occupied conflicting categories of analysis, and challenged humans' ability to order and classify them according to imagined principles.

Human perceptions of animals also evolved and resulted in conflict with the arrival of beavers to Gatineau Park. Leading up to the park's establishment, Grey Owl had lifted the image of the beaver higher than ever before as he advocated for their protection around the world, and shifted popular understandings of the beaver from a commodity to a living creature. Through his writings and lectures, Grey Owl promoted beavers as fun-loving, odd "little people," that captured the hearts of Canadians, especially urban Canadians that had little first hand knowledge of beavers. This image of

beavers had paved the way for their introduction to Gatineau Park and to other parks across Canada, but it also created unrealistic human expectations. When the beavers finally arrived, they were perceived as destructive, selfish, and inconsiderate. As the beaver physically altered the shores of Gatineau Park's lakes and ponds, they altered humans' perceptions as well.

Members of the Ottawa Ski Club, whose headquarters were located just off of Fortune Lake, were well placed to observe these changes, and were some of the loudest (and earliest) advocates for the beavers' removal from the park. As members of the club watched as the beavers wrecked their backyard, they came to see the beavers for what they "truly" were. As their perceptions of the animals shifted, however, they continued to draw from a language that personified the beavers. These beavers were no longer respected creatures, but purposeful destroyers, with no consideration for the natural environment. As they attempted to distance the beavers' unacceptable behaviour from that of humans, they actually pointed to our similarities: like humans, beavers were engineers, construction workers and lumberjacks. They built massive dams that (like the human variety) resulted in widespread flooding and ecological damage. Ultimately, it appears that complaints from the park's rural neighbours were what led to the beavers' destruction: the effects of these beavers were felt beyond the park's boundaries, where rural residents suffered property damage and demanded the beavers' removal.

The actions of these animals shaped park policy: as beavers damaged lakeshores, various programs were implemented in order to reduce their numbers; as predators hunted the park's prized deer, they were hunted in return. However, these same policies were also shaped by humans' perceptions of the animals and their actions: the beaver was

not the symbol once thought, and so was not welcome in the park; because deer were prized, its predators were hated. From the park's establishment to the introduction, protection, and growth of animals within its boundaries, the reformation of the park's animal landscape was laden with conflict, competition, and contradiction. By tracing the (d)evolution of the beaver's image in Gatineau Park, and the ways in which deer, dogs, wolves, and coyotes defied easy classification, this thesis has shown how humans' perceptions of animals in the park between 1938 and 1958 have both shaped, and were shaped by, the relations that developed between these human and non-human animals. As historian Nigel Rothfels notes, "there is an inescapable difference between what an animal *is* and what people *think* an animal is."<sup>1</sup> In Gatineau Park, this gap resulted in a host of conflicts between humans and animals that shared a common environment.

By focusing on historical accounts of animals in Gatineau Park, this thesis has attempted to bridge a gap between environmental and animal histories, and drew from the methods of scholars of historical animal studies and from the field of the natural sciences to support this goal. This transgression of disciplinary boundaries rejects the overwhelmingly human-focused approach to the study of wildlife conservation that has been commonly adopted by historians, and considers animals as active, agential participants in the history of their conservation. This thesis also considers the complex relationships between animals themselves, and the ways in which these interactions contributed to the development of conservation policies. It moves the common discussion of hunting and conservation in parks away from human hunting activities, and includes the realities of animal predation as well. By following the physical movements of animals across and beyond the boundaries of the park, the relationship between these animals and

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<sup>1</sup> Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts*, 5.

residents of rural communities were also found to play a significant role in the history of conservation, as were the views of park visitors. It also contributes to our understanding of beaver introductions to parks, a trend that has been identified but rarely explored by historians, and connects this trend to the writings of Grey Owl. The history of the park, and of wildlife conservation in general, looks much different from this perspective.

There are a number of avenues for further exploration. One of the greatest gaps that this research has identified is the lack of sources from the view of the rural communities surrounding Gatineau Park. Conservation was primarily explored through the lens of park managers, and so the focus was on the challenges of managing wildlife in the midst of rural communities. It was however equally challenging for rural residents to raise domestic animals so close to a wildlife refuge. Further research into the attitudes of the local farming community, especially among francophones, would have provided a different perspective. By focusing on the stories of deer, wolves, coyotes, dogs, and beavers, this thesis also excluded the contributions of other animals. Our understanding of conservation would benefit from the inclusion of the park's birds and fish, which would extend its analysis beyond mammalian species. Partridge were of particular concern in the park, as was the stocking of fish for sport.

Though these animals have continued to come in to conflict with humans in recent years, their history of conflict in the park has paved the way for better relationships between the two. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bill Mason, Canadian naturalist, author and filmmaker for the National Film Board, helped to dispel the myths surrounding wolves when he transported three young timber wolves from the Northwest

Territories to an enclosure behind his Meech Lake home in Gatineau Park.<sup>2</sup> Over three years, Mason filmed the lives of these wolves in close proximity, which he used to produce a feature-length documentary *Cry of the Wild* (1972). The success of Mason's film helped to construct the image of the wolf as a "disciplined hunter, respected leader, and committed parent."<sup>3</sup> In Gatineau Park, these wolves are no longer hunted, but protected and even researched by the National Capital Commission, as evidenced by their recent study on hybrid wolves in the park.

Around the same time, Gatineau's very own "Beaver Whisperer," Michel LeClair was the first in Canada to develop and install pipe-and-cage style systems to regulate the water levels of active beaver lakes in order to prevent flooding. These systems, known as "Flexible Levelers," were designed to reduce the impact of Gatineau Park's beavers on their surrounding landscapes, so that they may continue to live in its lakes with minimal damage to park facilities and other human property. These devices continue to be used in the park today, and have since been installed in lakes across North America.

These animals, which were once actively exterminated, are now able to coexist with humans in Gatineau Park, and their conservation is a heightened priority for the park management. If this thesis is any indication, however, these views will continue to shift as humans enter an increasingly urban and industrial world. It will be interesting to consider what place Gatineau Park's animals will have in this shared future.

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<sup>2</sup> Ken Buck, *Bill Mason, Wilderness Artist: From Heart to Hand* (Surrey: Rocky Mountain Books, 2005), 163.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Mason, *Cry of the Wild*, Film, 1972. [https://www.nfb.ca/film/cry\\_of\\_the\\_wild/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/cry_of_the_wild/) (accessed 1 August 2016).

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