

**A Place to Get It All Back:
The Cultural Landscape of Cottagers in Nopiming Provincial Park**

By

Anjanette Zielinski

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Natural Resources Management

Natural Resources Institute
Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources
University of Manitoba
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ABSTRACT

Second home use or cottaging is an increasingly desirable practice across Canada. In Manitoba, cottaging sub-divisions are generally situated along lakes and rivers in the province, many of which are situated on Crown land or in provincial parks. This study explored what is meaningful about cottaging to bring about a better understanding of the importance of cottaging as a culturally meaningful social practice. The objectives of the research were to identify what makes Flanders Lake and surrounding area of Nopiming Provincial Park a meaningful place for cottagers; determine if there are shared meanings among cottagers; and consider the implications of the cultural landscape of cottagers for natural resource management.

The case study research considered the sense of place that is derived from cottagers' experiences and what specifically contributes to the significance of cottage culture in the cottaging sub-division of Flanders Lake, Manitoba. A qualitative, interpretive research design was used for data collection. Photo-elicitation also known as resident employed photography was used, whereby cottagers were asked to photograph things, places or people that represented meaningful aspects about cottaging and the surrounding area. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual participants to validate and triangulate perspectives. Using NVivo 7 qualitative software to manage data and elicit themes, a cultural landscape framework of cottagers was developed. Cottagers cited recreational activities, connections with people, interactions with nature and the tonic-like effects of cottaging experiences, as the most meaningful aspects of cottaging. The study showed that it is possible to determine

the most meaningful aspects of a place, and that many of those attributes are shared between community members. However, dissecting those meanings into constituent parts of a collective body of shared, interrelated and sometimes dependent meanings is complex, and not always possible. Further study on the cultural landscape of additional cottaging communities and of other area stakeholders is recommended given the increasing desirability and interest in cottaging, and potential for negotiating place meanings in multiple land use areas.

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I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt, for encouraging me to pursue this research, stemming from his course on ethnoecology. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. John Sinclair and Professor Ted McLachlan for their time and valuable guidance. Many thanks are extended to my mom and dad, the Tomac and Zielinski families, and friends and colleagues for their support and motivation. Thanks to my employers during the course of my studies for their support – the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment Secretariat and Manitoba Conservation. Thanks to Geoff Jones for his mapping assistance. Most of all thanks to my husband Greg and our dog Ringo for enduring the insanity over the course of my studies. This journey is now over – time for the fun to begin...at the cottage.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Plate 1. Home – the feeling of our place.¹

1.0 Background

This is a study about cottaging and what cottagers find appealing about having a cottage in a specific area of eastern Manitoba. It explores the interaction of people with their environment and how people make their environments meaningful. Specifically, I examine the cultural landscape of cottagers in a water-oriented second home setting.

A cultural landscape framework looks at the linkages between peoples' values and how people construct meaning in a landscape (Luka 2006, Kaltenborn 1997, Tress and Tress 2001). The term cultural landscape has been described as a way in which perceptions, beliefs, stories, experiences and practices give shape, form and meaning to the landscape (Lennon 2001). Particularly significant are the interactions between these perceptions and nature which becomes the collective cultural landscape (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995). I build on recent studies in second home research and proposed

¹ All photographs in this thesis were taken by research participants and remain anonymous. Photographs may not be used or copied without permission.

recommendations for future study, as described in Luka (2006), and attempt to reveal how the practice of cottaging expresses how people think about places.

Increasingly, greater emphasis on aspects of human dimensions in natural resource management has occurred in North America (Beckley 2003, Dakin 2003, Kwert 1996, Smaldone et al. 2005). Human dimensions of natural resource management are commonly referred to as the physical, biological, sociological, psychological, cultural and economic aspects of natural resource utilization at the community and individual levels (Kwert 1996). The impetus to research cottager perspectives stems from importance of collaborative natural resource management or efforts to involve the public and local communities in land use decision making. By using local knowledge about a resource or land base, joint stewardship of Crown lands could be encouraged (Payton et al. 2005). Past research has suggested that collaborative management can be successful if there is a shared place attachment to the area, whether functional or emotional or both. Research has also shown that people with strong ties or attachment to a resource are likely to be more concerned about how the resources are managed (Williams et al. 1992). By examining place attachment, problems in resource management may be better resolved (Williams and Stewart 1998).

Socio-cultural values have the ability to influence management goals and policy. In the case of park planning and management, it would be advantageous if perceptions and interests of people who use, visit or live in parks are integrated into decision-making. By examining cultural landscapes, integrated land use planning and

collaborative management which considers the human dimension of natural resource management is more likely to be achieved.

1.1 Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to reveal the cultural landscape of cottagers at Flanders Lake in Nopiming Provincial Park. As a cottager myself and resident of the study area, I was interested to discover why cottaging is a culturally meaningful practice and how cottagers' cultural landscape can be recognized and integrated into natural resource management planning. My research objectives were as follows:

1. Identify what makes Flanders Lake and surrounding area of Nopiming Provincial Park a meaningful place for cottagers.
2. Determine if there are shared meanings among cottagers which contribute to a cultural landscape of the area.
3. Consider the implications of the cultural landscape of cottagers for park management and land use policy and planning.

1.2 Research Questions

While conducting this study, the following research questions prompted my interest in the subject of cottaging and helped develop my thinking and approach:

- What gives meaning to a place?
- Are there any common themes or shared meaning among cottagers?

- How can place-based meanings and cultural landscapes be incorporated in land use and park planning?

These questions focus on the ways people are experientially and emotionally linked to their environments.

1.3 Study Area

The study area was limited to the Flanders Lake cottage subdivision in Nopiming Provincial Park, located approximately 200 km northeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (Figure 1). The subdivision was created in 1987 through a provincial cottage lot draw. Because the cottage sub-division is located in a provincial park, cottagers lease their vacation home lot from the Government of Manitoba. Leases are currently 21 years in length and renewable for additional terms. There are 45 waterfront cottages on Flanders Lake (Figure 2).

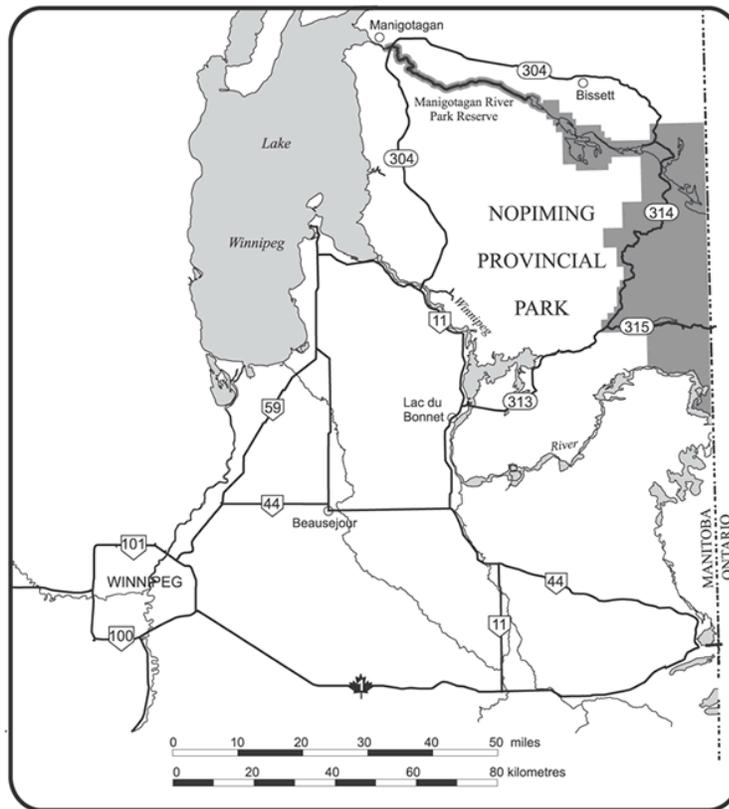


Figure 1. Nopiming Provincial Park Map (Manitoba Conservation 2008a)

Nopiming was created in 1973 and officially designated as provincial park lands in 1976, extending 1,440 square kilometres between Whiteshell Provincial Park to the south and South Atikaki Provincial Park to the north. Nopiming is classified as a Natural Park which is intended to preserve natural areas and to accommodate a diversity of recreational opportunities and resource uses, according to *The Provincial Parks Act*.

Nopiming supports recreational development, resource development, backcountry and access land use, and operates within an Interim Management Plan (Manitoba Natural Resources November 1988). To date, a park management plan has yet to be developed. Activities allowed in designated areas of the park include commercial resource

extraction, such as forestry and mining, recreational hunting and fishing, use of all terrain vehicles (ATV) and snowmobiles, cottaging and seasonal camping.

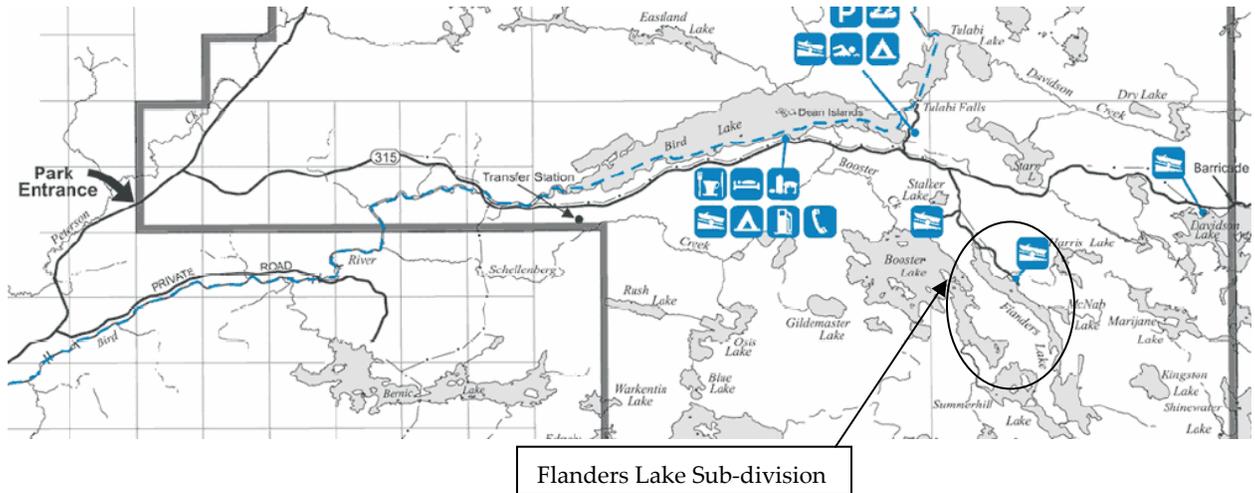


Figure 2. Southern area of Nopiming Provincial Park showing Flanders Lake Cottage Sub-division. (Manitoba Conservation 2008b)

Nopiming lies within the Nelson River drainage basin with local drainage involving three river systems: Manigotogan River, Bird River and Winnipeg River systems (Manitoba 1988). The physiography consists of Precambrian shield, relatively flat with rock outcroppings (Watson et al. 1990). Nopiming lies within the boreal forest region of Canada. There are three major forest types: jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) on thin soils where fires are frequent; black spruce (*Picea mariana*) bogs with tamarack (*Larix laricina*) in poorly drained areas; and aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamifera*) forested areas with better drainage (Watson et al. 1990). Nopiming supports a diversity of boreal forest flora and fauna, including the small Owl Lake woodland caribou herd.

Although Nopiming was created in 1973, cottage development began in 1945, with cottages at Bird, Davidson, Beresford, and Long Lakes being constructed to house employees of mining operations (Watson et al. 1990). A provincial lottery for cottage lots started in the 1970s on those lakes as well as on Flanders and Booster Lakes. Of note, the interim management plan for Nopiming (1988) states that there would be no increase in the number of cottage lots in Nopiming post-1988.

Since European arrival, resource extraction and development has occurred in Nopiming. A number of gold and nickel mines were operational in the park until the mid 1970's and drilling and exploration continues. Activities also occur outside the park, most notably in the Bissett area and at the Bernic Lake Tanco Mine. The presence of mining and forestry operations has led to road development for access purposes. By 1970, a very rough one-lane trail (known as Nopiming Trail) was developed with a formal road being built in 1978, and expanded in 1988, now Highway 314. Forestry operations in the park area started in the 1940s and continue today. The main commercial tree species is spruce for pulp use. Tembec maintains a forest management licence (FML-1) for the area and processes the lumber at operations in Pine Falls. Some trapping and wild rice harvesting for subsistence occurs in the park.

Nopiming is classified as a natural park which supports multiple land uses within the park boundaries. In 1993, the Government of Manitoba introduced a new Parks Act which allowed the minister responsible for parks to divide up the park into specific land use categories: resource management (RM), recreational development (RD) and backcountry (B). Resource management allows commercial resource development

or extraction, such as mining and logging. Recreational development areas accommodate campgrounds and cottaging sub-divisions. Backcountry areas protect natural features and offers basic facilities and trails for nature-oriented recreation.

Figure 3 shows the land use categories of Nopiming, and points out the location of the case study.

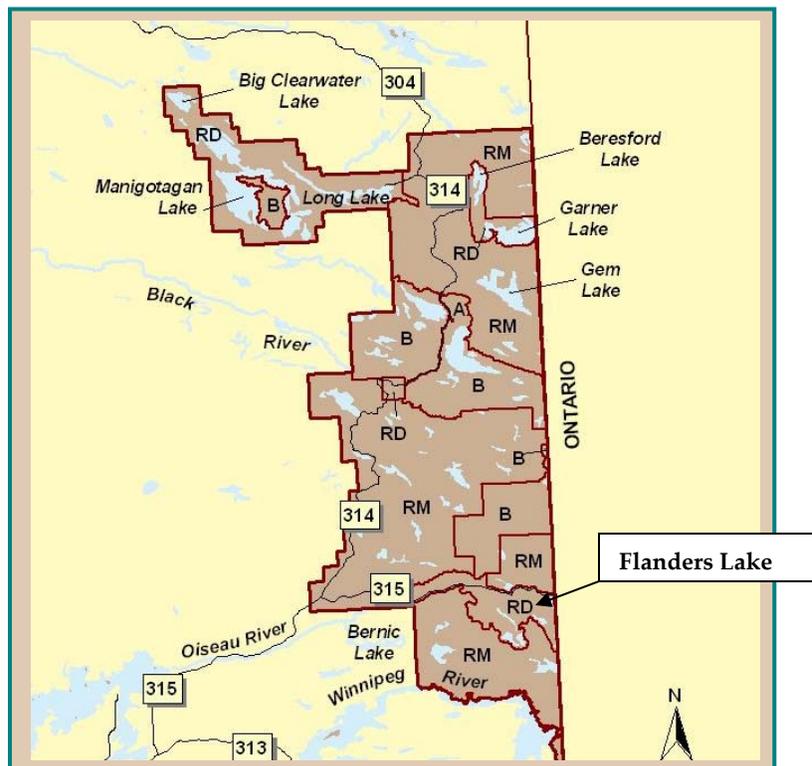


Figure 3. Nopiming Provincial Park Land Use Categories from a System Plan for Nopiming Park, (Manitoba Conservation 1997)

(Land use categories: RM = resource management; RD = recreational development; B = backcountry; A = access)

1.4 Research Design

To achieve the objectives of this study, I used a qualitative, interpretive research design using a case study approach. My aim was to explore the phenomenon of

cottaging or second home use, and examine practices and preferences at a site-specific, place-based level. My research approach was based on a landscape research concept developed by Tress and Tress (2001), with additional ideas from Davenport (2005) and Dakin (2003), and other researchers who have examined sense of place and landscape-people interactions.

Based in the cottage sub-division of Flanders Lake in Nopiming Provincial Park, I invited cottagers to focus on their perceptions through an experiential exercise. Photo-elicitation, also known as resident employed photography, was used as the principal method, based on Beckley et al. (2007), Stedman et al. (2004), and Kopra (2006). In addition, I also referenced photo-based methods used in Morris-Oswald (2007) and Foley (2005). Semi-structured interviews, mapping and participant observation were also used to achieve my research objectives. Data collection and analysis were iterative, using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 7).

1.5 Need for Research

A largely unexamined form of leisure travel is maintaining a second home, or for the purposes of this study, what is referred to as cottaging. Cottaging has become increasingly desirable and there is increased public pressure to designate more Crown land area for cottage development, primarily along lakes and rivers. As a consequence, the Government of Manitoba over the last number of years has made commitments to release property for cottage development.

In this study, I explored the appeal of cottaging in a provincial park cottaging sub-division setting in Eastern Manitoba, and what makes that experience meaningful to cottagers. I selected the cottage sub-division of Flanders Lake in Nopiming Provincial Park because a) my cottage is located at Flanders Lake and I have an established connection with the community, b) research is lacking on second-home use in the province and in the eastern region, and c) research is also lacking on perceptions of cottagers in multi-use parks. The research findings provide a greater sense of how people relate to their cottage and surrounding landscape and what assets - material and experiential, are meaningful and why. Practically, the research contributes applicable qualitative data for park and natural resource management.

There is little known or documented about the values of forest recreational users and cottagers in Nopiming and other areas in Eastern Manitoba (Watson et al. 1994). This study attempted to provide some perspective on the importance of the South Nopiming area as told by cottagers using photography. The participants of this study had the opportunity to articulate through pictures and words, what is special and meaningful about the area and the practice of cottaging. I also endeavoured to draw attention to the human dimensions of natural resource management, so as to encourage stronger linkages between socio-cultural and physical aspects of the landscape, and draw attention to place meanings in cottage country.

1.6 Limitations of the Research

Limiting this research to one cottaging sub-division decreased the ability to make generalizations of the findings to other cottagers and sub-divisions. However, asking cottagers to photograph their landscape and allowing them to speak about their photographs during interviews provided candid and honest descriptions and perceptions of their experiences at the cottage.

Practically speaking, participant availability to commit to the research limited the number of participants and cottaging sub-divisions that could be studied. Because the research was exclusively conducted during the summer season, the findings may not adequately expose the significant aspects about other seasons. Nonetheless, the research design allowed individual participants to deeply engage in the research and consider their history and experiences at their cottage and surrounding area. This both helped fulfill my research objectives, and proved to be a very empowering experience for cottagers. It is likely that shared experiences and meanings exist to a large extent, within the general park area, region and in cottaging sub-divisions both provincially and nationally. However, the focus of this case study was on one cottaging community and on their cultural landscape.

1.7 Organization of Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two provides an overview of literature I felt was appropriate and important as foundations to understand and explore my research questions. Chapter three describes

a conceptual approach that was used as my research methodology and methods in order to achieve my research objectives. Chapter four presents the research findings and analysis of the results. In chapter five, I discuss the results presented in chapter four, and explore and compare the findings to the literature and through personal observations. I conclude with chapter six, where I provide a summary of the research, and present conclusions and recommendations for consideration.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE



Plate 2. Fire on the water

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents a general review of the literature on cottaging or second home use. I introduce the importance of looking at the human dimensions of natural resource management and cultural landscapes. I then examine literature related to place, and present information on sense of place and place attachment as concepts that may describe how places become meaningful to people. I conclude by exploring photo-elicitation as a method to assist the discovery of place-based meanings.

2.1 Exploring Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management

Generally speaking, the concept of natural resource management is perceived to include four domains: 1) ecological, 2) economic 3) political and 4) socio-cultural (Krueger 1986). The socio-cultural domain includes traditions, norms, and philosophies of people. This component provides much of the impetus for natural resource

management to occur. In order to understand how people relate to environments, such as forests, lakes and recreational environments, we should understand how people experience these environments. Certain environments are essential for sustaining certain kinds of human experiences and those experiences are important to consider because they display peoples' preferences and values. The human dimension of natural resource management plays a critical role in developing management goals, policies, objectives and actions and depends to a large extent on understanding human preferences and anticipating responses to actions. Exploring the human dimensions of natural resource management can help identify opportunities for integrated and collaborative natural resource management and planning and where barriers may occur, and can both help identify potential conflict sources and solutions.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of natural resource management rests on the extent to which human dimension insights have been incorporated into planning. Research that looks at public participation processes can reveal the extent of the stakes people and communities hold, perceived magnitude of problems, and acceptability of proposed options. It is fair to conclude, that human dimension research is not a panacea, but it should be recognized as a part of the overall information pool which managers rely on to make decisions and qualitative assessments relative to management options. The cultural landscape of cottagers provides information when considering the human dimensions of natural resource management.

Researchers have called for an increase in understanding how people interact with our environments, to improve sustainable natural resource management (Measham

and Baker 2006). One of the challenges in natural resource management is finding ways to integrate social and cultural dimensions and seeing environments as places.

Measham and Baker (2006) contend that place is a context in which people can base their learning as experienced. One of the most important ways of learning about what makes a place significant is to visit places and ask local community members to explain what is significant. Spending time with locals in their places would improve policy making and decision making. If we can think about environments as places it may also help integrate linkages between culture and a location.

Recreational places, such as cottages and adjacent areas, have common connections among individuals that can result in place attachment. A positive relationship between emotional attachment and civic action indicates that place attachment influences public involvement (Payton et al. 2005; Williams et al. 1992). Payton et al. (2005) suggests that place attachment is worthy of management attention because not only does it provide insight into the human dimension – meanings, motives and actions, but can also influence the creation of trust between the public and managers. Place attachment has the ability to unite people in collaborative management processes. If individuals are encouraged to be attached or develop a sense of community identity to or around a resource, and get involved in management and conservation, better relationships and networks could be developed and fostered.

2.2 Cottaging and Second-home Use

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term cottage is frequently used to represent a summer residence at a watering-place or health or pleasure resort. In Canada, the term cottage is broadly used to describe a second-home. Generally, the term cottage in Canada refers to a structure in a particular setting, and usually close to water bodies. The definition often entails travelling to a place which becomes a “ritualized process of recurrent mobility” (Luka 2006). Similar terms are used to describe second-home settings in north eastern United States and parts of Canada (cabins or camps), central Europe (*swill* with their chalets), Norway and Sweden (*hytte* or the *sommarstuga*), Russia (with its *dachas*), and New Zealand (a *bach*) (Luka 2006). All of these terms point to a practice of having a second dwelling, usually in a non urban area. The prominence of the word cottage has given rise to the term cottage country. Cottage country, for the purposes of this study is recognized as “a geographical place in space and an imagined landscape” (Luka 2006). Svenson (2004) describes cottage country as an urban phenomenon and that the cottage for many Canadians, “...is a place where extended family and friends gather together, where work is meaningful, where there is time for leisure and contact with nature, and where community feels present”.

There are many signs of cottage life in Canadian popular media, including televisions series, documentaries and magazines (Cottage Life, The Cottager, Cottage, etc.). But even if the term cottage is reminiscent, it does possess a geographical context which varies.

Gordon (1989, 6-7) provides an appropriate analysis:

“In Northern Ontario, around Thunder Bay, people don’t go the cottage. Cottages are effete eastern creations, for sissies who eat quiche on screened verandas and sip white wine before retiring indoors to watch something on the VCR. Around the head of Lake Superior, people go to camp. Albertans near the Rockies go to the cabin. In Saskatchewan, people go to the lake.”

Over the last few decades, visible intensification of buildings and use of water-oriented second homes has occurred in many parts of Canada (Luka 2006). In many respects, demand has increased and challenged supply, sending real estate soaring in most parts of Canada. Halseth (2004) describes cottage country as “increasingly elite landscapes of second homes in Canada”. With this intensification comes the potential for issues, such as negative ecological impacts, planning conflicts, and transformation of the natural landscape.

Research on cottages, cabins, second homes, vacation homes, and/or multiple residences has occurred sporadically over the last few decades. Luka (2006) provides a thorough review of second home research in his doctoral dissertation. In Canada, the bulk of the research has taken place in Ontario. Researchers engaged in second-home research include: Greg Halseth (British Columbia, Ontario), Nik Luka (Ontario), Norm McIntyre (Ontario); and abroad by Gunther Tress (Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands); and Bjorn Petter Kaltenborn (Norway), and Vitterso (2007), among many others. A desired outcome of this research is to expand the body of knowledge on cottaging and second home use.

2.3 Sense of place

“Place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world. Place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power. Places are integrations of nature and culture.” (Cresswell 2006, 12)

Sense of place is suggested as an influential factor for making second home experiences as more authentic (Kaltenborn and Bjerke 2002). Fundamental tenets of meaningful places include 1) location, 2) locale, and 3) sense of place (Agnew 1987). Places have fixed coordinates or location. They are also situated in a particular locale, generally in terms of the physical and material or built setting. By sense of place, Agnew (1987) implies the subjective emotional relationship or attachment that individuals have with a place. Cresswell (2004), in *Place: a short introduction*, contends that the best films and books often evoke a sense of place; that readers or viewers have a feeling of what it is like to “be there”, and that we develop a sense of place about where we live or where we spent time growing up as a child (Cresswell 2004). Lucy Lippard in her 1997 book, *Lure of the Local: Sense of a Place in a Multi-Centre Society*, calls this the lure of the local, a sense of place or attachment developed by a relationship with a place over time.

Over the years, sense of place research has crossed many disciplines – geography, landscape architecture, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and, more recently, natural resource management. A commonality across disciplines seems to be a three component view integrating physical environment, human behaviour and social-psychological processes. Most research has focused on how much a location means to a

person and less on the particulars of what a setting means (Stedman et al. 2004).

Traditionally, place was a concept that emphasized subjectivity and experience rather than hard logic and spatial science (Cresswell 2006, Relph 1976). Sense of place is very much an interdisciplinary concept – definitions are both diverse but share commonalities. Geographers have commonly taken a phenomenological approach to sense of place (Relph 1976; Tuan 1974) looking at how spaces become places through personal activity and experiences. According to Tuan (1977, 6), personal experiences are at the heart of place creation: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value”. Sociologists have applied a social constructionist perspective, exploring the shared values and symbols that when applied to the landscape create common meanings (Greider and Garkovich 1994). Psychologists have taken a cognitive approach to sense of place, assuming people process information internally about environment which shapes their attitudes and behaviours (Proshansky et al. 1983; Stedman 2003)

Cross (2001) contends that sense of place is composed of two different aspects: relationship to place: 1) the ways people relate or the types of bonds we have with places; and, 2) community attachment – the depth and types of attachments that one has to a particular place. If we think about these two aspects as separate but related aspects of sense of place then a more meaningful understanding of people’s attachment to a place might be achieved. Based on her research, Cross (2001) identified six different types of connections or relationships to place: biographical (historical, familial); spiritual (emotional, intangible); ideological (moral, ethical); narrative (mythical, story-telling);

commodified (cognitive, desirable traits and lifestyle preferences); and, dependent (material, physical). These connections have the potential to act as a framework to compare the experiences and perceptions of cottagers.

Sack (1992) contests that places underlie how we make sense of the world and drive our actions. Throughout the literature, it is shown that places not only represent physical settings, but also meanings and emotions that people associate with those places. Relph (1976) sees sense of place as “first of all, an innate faculty, possessed in some degree by everyone, that connects to people to the world... an integral part of our environmental experiences, and it is only because we are first in places that we can then develop abstract arguments about environment, economy or politics.” It appears that sense of place is an experience created by the setting combined with what a person brings to it, that is, we create our own places – places do not exist independent of us.

2.4 Place Attachment

Attachment is defined as “a strong, positive bond between a person/group and a setting” (Altman and Low 1992). Stedman (2003) contests that symbolic meanings underpin place attachment, that is, we attribute meaning to our settings and in turn become attached to the meanings. Some argue that settings are imbued with multiple meanings because people use a setting for various reasons; however, meaning emerges through individual experience, so place meanings are individualistic (Relph 1976). Others assert meanings are based on social categories and are potentially shared by others (Greider and Garkovich 1994). Nonetheless, place attachment is generally built

through experience (Stedman et al. 2004). According to Relph (1976), place attachment “is an experienced-based continuum of sense of place based on a steady accumulation of experience”; therefore, the more time spent the greater attachment to a particular setting. However, Tuan (1977) notes that sense of place may develop rapidly in chosen places especially where dramatic landscapes and intense experiences lead quickly to attachment. Much of the research on leisure and place attachment relates specifically to recreational experiences and less often on sense of place of permanent or second home residents. This presents a great opportunity for research. In addition, based on the literature review, many studies isolate either ecological or socio-economic bases of attachment (Beckley 2003; Stedman et al. 2004) and use quantitative-type surveys (Kaltenborn 1997), as opposed to more experiential, qualitative approaches.

It is apparent that places play a role in developing self-identity and group identity (Davenport and Anderson 2005). Proschansky et al. (1983, 90) contends that place attachment is important to one’s well-being in that it reflects “a sense of belonging and purpose which give meaning to his or her life”. Relph (1976, 43) asserts that everyone experiences a strong connection with the place they were born or where they had significant experiences, and that “this association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security”.

Based on the literature, researchers have shown that place attachment is influenced by socio-demographic characteristics, recreation activity involvement, experience preferences, and landscape type (Davenport and Anderson 2005). Warzecha and Lime (2001) showed a relationship between place attachment and attitudes. In their

research, park visitor attitudes' towards management varied with the strength of attachments to the park. As attachments to place increased in intensity, evaluations of setting and experiences were more positive.

By and large, a great deal of research uses a positivist or hypothesis testing approaches to assess place attachment strength. However, the strength of attachment does not really inform why place identity is important. Human dimensions research in natural resources management which uses qualitative research methodologies to explore human-environment relationships and meanings of places, is expanding (Ewert 1996). By examining people's relationships with places, in their own words, lived experience is expressed and more can be learned from stakeholder perspectives beyond traditional public involvement strategies.

Schroeder (1996) examined people's values and emotional attachments to a Michigan river through their place descriptions, and reported that local people are attached both to the natural characteristics and human dimensions of the area. Hull, Robertson, and Kendra (2001) discovered that people living near a forest value "cultural naturalness" or an appropriate balance between human amenities and high-quality natural environments. Brandenburg and Carroll (1995) conducted interviews with rural residents near a national forest to understand their worldview. They found that personal experiences are major factors in a group member's values.

Davenport and Anderson (2005) argue that possibly the biggest contribution of sense of place research is that it extends our understanding of the human-environment relationship beyond the tangible to include symbolic and emotional. Schroeder (1996)

calls this line of study “ecology of the heart”. Dakin (2003) revealed in her study of perspectives on landscape, fields of meaning centred on sense of place: 1) landscape as heritage, a legacy of human and natural recreational activities; 2) landscape as a way of life, as a place to work, live and play; and 3) landscape as nature, as the outcome of natural and human processes.

A place is usually anchored to a specific location which can be identified cartographically, but absorbs the landscape found at that location and the meanings which people assign to that landscape through the process of living in it (Ryden 1993). Sense of place develops gradually and unconsciously from inhabiting the landscape over time, becoming familiar with its physical properties, accruing a history within its boundaries. Knowledge of place is grounded in those aspects of the environment that are appreciated by the senses: colour, texture, slope, quality of light, sounds and scents (Tuan 1974). Ryden (1993) argues that since places are fusions of experience, landscape and location, they are bound up in time and memory as well, and for those who have developed a sense of place, there is an unseen layer of usage, memory and significance—superimposed upon the geographical surface and the two-dimensional map. The key to seeing, understanding and sharing with others the invisible landscape, that is, the way to give maps that layer of meaning which they incorporated as a matter of course, is to return to words or narration; “A person is in a place when the place evokes stories and, conversely, stories can serve to create places” (Ryden 1993). Art and photography may be a means to reveal the physical appearance of a place in a way that maps cannot and may capture something of the mood and meaning of that place, but lack the exploratory

depth of words. However, by superimposing a layer of meaning, for example, developing map biographies by mapping out areas of land through narratives and story telling that have been used for hunting, berry picking, fishing, camping sites, a map or picture can stand as a catalyst for “imaginative wanderings, associations, memories, a sense of geographically anchored personal identity” (Tobias 2006; Ryden 1993).

Current scales of place attachment in natural resource management research tend to concentrate on identity and recreation-related meanings, particularly visitors’ attachments to recreation areas (Beckley 2003). Many studies support the need for more holistic and integrative models of human-environment relationship (Davenport and Anderson 2005) which have linked place-based meanings with landscape perceptions. Some researchers assert that landscape characteristics are important in the production of place meanings and consequently place attachment and attitudes (Stedman 2003; Davenport and Anderson 2005). Arguably, natural resource management and land use development issues could be better grasped and resolved by identifying and examining place meanings (Davenport and Anderson 2005).

2.5 Landscape Research and Studying Cultural Landscapes

The term cultural landscape is most often used in the context of describing landscapes that have emerged out of complex relationships of Aboriginal people and the land, and tend to include traditional knowledge about places, land use and ecology (Buggey 1992). Parks Canada defines cultural landscape as, “any geographical area that has been modified, influenced, or given special cultural meaning by people.” This

would imply that the term cultural landscape could equally apply when describing the cultural landscape of cottagers. A cultural landscape is in essence a representation of the relationship of people with their environment in a specific geographic place in time. If we are to understand a group or society's cultural landscape, it is recommended that one enters that landscape under the guidance of people who are intimately aware of the landscape (Ingold 2000).

Environment-behaviour studies unites a diversity of approaches with a common thread of interdependency of human activity and the environment (Rapoport 1982). A current of environment-behaviour studies is cultural landscape studies (Luka 2006). A key mechanism for linking environment to behaviour, according to Rapoport (1982), is examining individual processes of thought and activity in a place to help make sense of cultural practices and meaning. Rapoport (1982) contests that an individual makes sense of a setting by way of perception, cognition and evaluation. If cognition and evaluation are influenced by cultural and social practices, it would seem that what a person grasps as meaning is based on what is processed and filtered through attitudes, values, beliefs and preferences, which have been learned over time (Luka 2006).

Cultural landscape studies is an approach to describing and analyzing the interconnections of natural and cultural environments at different scales (Luka 2006). Groth and Wilson (2003) define cultural landscape studies as "the critical scrutiny of the intricate webs of mental, social and ecological spaces that help to define human groups and their activities with attention paid to how individual experience and action become the basis for shared social and cultural ideas and actions." They also refer to cultural

landscape studies as a “many-voiced polyphony” noting its “essentiality yet complexity.” Virtually all landscapes have cultural associations because most landscapes have been affected by human action or perception.

Tress and Tress (2001) have called for a theoretical framework that enables a trans-disciplinary approach to landscape research. They introduced a concept with five dimensions illustrated by a people-landscape interaction model: 1) landscape as a spatial entity; 2) mental entity; 3) temporal dimension; 4) nexus of nature and culture; and 5) a complex system (Tress and Tress 2001), and proposed a theoretical way to understand landscapes. According to Tress and Tress, the landscape is represented by a complex, dynamic system, made up of the interrelated subsystems known as the geo-, bio- and noo-sphere where landscape is the nexus of nature and culture. People are a part of the landscape through their actions and thoughts and through human thought landscape also becomes part of people. The noosphere is described as the mental space of people, structured by perception and adaptation. By means of the noosphere, humans influence the physical-material reality of the geo and bio spheres (Tress and Tress 2001). The concept supports a systems-oriented trans-disciplinary approach to landscape research. According to Capra (1996), a system approach is beneficial because it brings us closer to a full understanding of relationships and people-landscape interactions. Tress and Tress’s concept combines the physical-material and cognitive systems developed into a conceptual model to apply when investigating landscapes. The concept has potential for direct application when looking at an individual or group’s cultural landscape, and was further explored and applied with this research.

2.6 Use of Photography to Understand a Place

When studying places, many researchers suggest using an holistic research approach to explore the sense of place (Kruger 1996; Hummon 1992). Use of photographs has a long history in social sciences (Collier 1986). Adaptations include self-directed photography, where participant rather than researcher, chooses what to photograph (Dakin 2003). Photo elicitation is a collaborative process where the researcher becomes the listener and the participant interprets the picture for the researcher; photographs are inserted into a research interview in an attempt to evoke deeper elements of human consciousness (Harper 2002). According to Harper (2002), photo-elicitation was first named in a paper published by Collier, who first proposed photo interviewing to help researchers agree on categories noting that “pictures elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helped subjects overcome fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews” (Collier 1955 in (Harper 2002).

Authors have documented the need to bridge gaps between worlds of the researcher and the researched (Harper 2002). Because photo elicitation is anchored in an image that is somewhat understood, it may well overcome this gap. Photographs have the ability to expand a subject’s awareness of their social existence (Harper 2002) and appear to capture many things that can retrieve something that has disappeared and lead to a deep and interesting discussion. Photo elicitation is claimed to be an ideal model for research because when two or more people discuss the meaning of

photographs they try to figure out something together. Photo-based approaches offer an advantage for understanding multi-faceted constructs (Stedman et al. 2004) and their use is supported in the fields of visual anthropology and sociology (Rose 2000; Pink 2006).

Self directed photography, where a participant chooses what to photograph, rather than the researcher, is a technique increasingly used by researchers and has great application for understanding place. Leisure researchers have used visitor employed photography (VEP), giving cameras to participants in order to assess their perceptions of parks, particularly relating to scenic and aesthetic preferences (Loeffler 2004, Smaldone 2005). Visitor-employed photography has been used in parks and recreational areas to find out the significance of landscapes (Taylor et al. 1995). Stedman et al. (2004) modified the VEP technique to address place attachment and sense of place. Using follow-up interviews, these researchers were able to clarify the intention of the participants and probe into the deeper meanings and stories behind the photos.

Stedman et al. (2004) also suggested that photographic methods were a logical progression of how to understand sense of place. Where survey research allows quantitative testing and analysis, photo-based methods with interviews allow in-depth discovery. However, Stedman et al. (2004) contended that in order to maximize the effectiveness of the photo-based methods, research subjects should take the photos themselves; subjects should be local residents; and to keep in mind that participant experience may transcend aesthetic appreciation. Also, researchers should not assume the content of the picture by only examining it – participant intent should be

triangulated through the interview process which allows feedback to the researcher. In this way, both the pictures and the interviews are forms of data to be reconciled –photos serve as a reference point and focus for the interviews.

Stedman et al. (2004) also found that distinguishing between social and natural elements of place attachment is difficult but that attachment to the social landscape accumulated through repeated experience made places more meaningful over time as memories accumulate. By using photography, participants are able to capture a wide array of mundane phenomena which contribute to place attachment. They may also be able to reveal special places that may not solely be based on aesthetic beauty or outstanding recreational quality but rather on the memories of accumulated experiences and social relationships.

Another example of the use of photo-based techniques is Beckley's (2005) work on photo-mapping through the Sustainable Forest Management Network. The goal of this work was to provide information to forest managers about public and stakeholder social values for forests, driven by the higher demands for public involvement but low participation in planning processes. His research, in part, involved the creation of photographs, maps and narratives that reflect the social values of forest district stakeholders.

Beilin (2005) asserts the power of photo-elicitation as a participatory process in which photographers/participants as subjects, not objects of research, construct images of their experience. She asked farmers to photograph significant landscapes in their everyday experience and select 12 images. By asking farmers to select the images, the

participants were able to reflect on the concept of significance. Significance in the landscape and photograph was real because the participants perceived it. Dakin (2003) used an experiential methodology to embrace a broad range of landscape values and meanings, capture an insider perspective, encourage a reflective stance. She accomplished this by engaging participants with their surroundings by using self-directed photography, written comments in journals, and oral interviews, calling it 'participant directed landscape imaging.'

Harper (2002) suggests that the photograph and not the researcher's question, becomes the focus of the discussion. He also emphasizes the importance of creating a narrative when organizing photographs, which exposes a story that is part of the culture. This narrative requires the researcher to be part of the culture in order to gain a clear understanding. The photographs are a deliberate narrative, organized by the narrator, to tell a story to the researcher (Beilin 2005). Photo-elicitation gives "participants a tool to explore deeply held thoughts and it gives researchers insight into the usefulness of the landscape metaphor in connecting activity and outcomes, history and daily experience" (Beilin 2005).

Some limitations exist with photo-elicitation including ethical, privacy, sampling and validity issues. Even so, based on the literature, photo-elicitation can be a powerful tool as it challenges participants, provides nuance, triggers memories, leads to new perspectives and explanations, and help the researcher avoid misinterpretation (Hurworth 2003). The technique can also help with building trust and rapport between

the researcher and participant, promote more detailed interviews and provide a part of triangulations to improve rigour (Hurworth 2003).

2.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the literature on cottaging and second home use. I also explored the value in considering the human dimensions of natural resource management. In order to better understand the importance of place-based concepts I reviewed literature on sense of place and place attachment. I also reviewed literature related to photo-elicitation or participant based photography to more fully appreciate the versatility and utility of this technique for research on cultural landscapes. In the next chapter I present my research approach and details on the methods used for this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH



Plate 3. Outreach.

3.0 Overview

The methodology for documenting the cultural landscape of cottagers at Flanders Lake is presented in this chapter based on cultural landscape studies approach. A describe my conceptual framework and methods used for this research including photo-elicitation, semi-structured interviews and mapping. I provide a description of the participant selection, data analysis, as well as validity and reliability of the results. I close with personal reflections on the research process.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

For this research, I used a cultural landscape studies approach as described in Groth and Wilson (2003) and further explored in Luka (2006). I was interested in exploring and adapting the people-landscape interaction model presented by Tress and Tress (2001), and described in chapter two, page 25, to discover through photographs, personal stories and narratives, what cottagers find meaningful about a place. In order

to achieve this, I attempted to collect information during the immediate recall stage of the experience. A cultural landscape studies approach assisted with the discovery of cottagers' sense of place by exploring the place-based relationships that cottagers have to their surroundings (Cheng, Kruger, and Daniels 2003).

By using an experiential framework, this research considered the use of photo-elicitation which could improve participatory involvement in land use issues. This supports a more integrative, participatory paradigm for natural resource management. Experiential approaches are subjective and qualitative, so they generally tend to be seen as less valid, particularly compared to current science-dominated, objective, quantitative management regimes. The experiential approach, as was used in the study, is a philosophical reorientation on the standard approach and uses local knowledge as part of a bioregional perspective, focusing on common ground and shared meanings (Dakin 2003).

3.2 Methods

I used a qualitative, interpretive approach for this research using a case study format. Case studies focus attention on instances of some social phenomenon specific to a time and place. Yin (1994, 92) emphasizes that case studies are a comprehensive research strategy that can draw on multiple sources of evidence, which assist in developing "converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation". An interpretive research design enables the researcher to document the subjective nature of real world

phenomena, reveal findings, and embrace context of study (Davenport and Anderson 2005).

The primary data collection method for this study was photo-elicitation, followed by semi-structured personal interviews and some mapping. I adapted methods from Stedman et al. (2004), Kopra (2006) and Beilin (2005). Stedman et al. (2004) reported that the photo-elicitation method was useful for understanding place attachment; subjects participated enthusiastically and were grateful to the researchers for allowing them to reflect on the importance and meaning of their surroundings. The photo-based method also allowed subjects to be anchored in specific landscapes which helped reveal special places for mapping. In addition, I consulted photo-based methods used in Morris-Oswald (2007) and Foley (2005).

I provided cottagers (n=19) with a 24 exposure, single use camera and instructed participants to take photographs of what makes their cottage and the surrounding area a meaningful place for them. The 19 participants had no restrictions as to the subject of the photograph; participants were free to take photographs of people, things, places, objects, scenery, and activities. After a four to six week period, I collected the cameras for processing and provided two sets of prints back to the participants – one for the researcher and interview process, and one for the participant to keep.

I used a qualitative semi-structured interview approach which provided access to certain kinds of knowledge that questionnaires could not and was useful for uncovering complexities. It was also a collaborative effort between the interviewer and participant in the form of a conversation with a general direction in which the

participant did most of the talking. This technique complimented the goals of case study research. To begin, participants were asked to complete a consent form (Appendix A). Using an interview questionnaire as a guide (Appendix B), the interview allowed for flexibility to ask additional questions and allowed participants to share stories. As a result of my ties to the community, it was easy for me to strike a rapport with participants.

During the 1-2 hour interviews, participant walked me through each photograph and described why it was taken and what was meaningful about it. The complete list of questions and instructions is provided in Appendix B. Using photographs selected by the participants, I asked the following questions to elicit the meaning and importance of their pictures:

1. What is meaningful about this photograph?
2. Where was the photograph taken?
3. Why did you choose to take this photograph?
4. What is the title of this photograph?

I then asked participants to select their top six photographs. Participants ranked their photographs in terms of content significance, and not the quality of the photograph. The process of selection encouraged participants to reflect on what was significant to them about the photographs. This was the first step in identifying their relationship with the land and their surroundings. Participants were asked to provide a title for their top six photographs, and select the three favourite images, or those that held the most meaning and significance for them. In addition, I asked participants to identify places of meaning or significance on a topographic map of the area.

Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed with permission of the participant. A summary of participant characteristics including gender, age, duration of time spent in the area and cottage was taken (Table 1).

3.3 Participant Selection

All 19 participants of this study were from the Flanders Lake cottage subdivision in Nopiming Provincial Park. The sample plan for this study did not represent a large population rather it aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of place meanings from a cross-section of cottagers. Participants were a heterogenous mix of cottage owners with a diversity of perspectives. This entailed identifying participants through contacting the local cottage association for volunteers by email and telephone calls, in addition to on-site door-to-door visits. Key informants also provided names of other cottagers who could have an interest. The goal was to maximize as many points of view as possible to ensure a wide representation of interests. An information sheet and email was prepared and circulated to prospective participants (Appendix C).

Table 1. Profile of study participants.

Participant characteristics	Number of participants (n = 19)
Gender:	
Male	9
Female	10
Age:	
25 to 40	3
41 to 50	4
51 to 60	4
61 to 70	7
71 +	1
Generation:	
First generation owner	16
Second generation owner	3
History:	
Cottager visited park before purchasing	12
Ownership:	
Original cottage owner	6
Non-original cottage owner	13
Years of ownership:	
1 to 9	6
10 to 19	7
20 +	6

3.4 Data Analysis

I examined the photographs and commentary at length, particularly the images that ranked highly (in the top three) by participants in the interviews. After transcribing the interviews, I used qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 7) to help organize the data and visually represent it to discover patterns and meanings. I first analyzed the data for common themes, patterns and relationships. I then began coding individual interviews using basic categories (free nodes) and coded specific text into themes (tree

nodes) and sub-themes (sub-nodes) as the data was further analyzed. The analysis was an iterative and reflexive process. Field notes supplemented the transcripts in order to ensure validity. Codes were categorized and refined, and ideas and themes reviewed and revised. I referred to participants' photographs and descriptions repeatedly, and ensured that direct quotes were associated with each photograph. Analysis was completed when all the interviews were reviewed.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Despite inherent problems with a qualitative approach, resident employed photography followed by semi-structured interviews provided compelling and reliable results. The extent to which qualitative interviews affect validity is influenced by the information generated being filtered through the interview process and interpretation. As much as possible, I asked participants to describe in their words the significance of their photographs, so that the data was as unfiltered as possible. Triangulation through the use of photographs, interviews and ground truthing, enabled me to close the loop on the research process.

3.6 Reflections on the Research Process

Because this research set out to explore what is meaningful about cottaging in one particular cottaging sub-division in Manitoba, it was important to capture perceptions in a way that allowed cottagers to truly reflect on and spend time exploring what meant most to them about their cottage and the surrounding area. Resident

employed photography proved to be an excellent way of engaging people to examine their landscape and why it is meaningful on a personal level. Participants were very interested in the process and spent time and thought to document and explain the elements of their cultural landscape at the cottage. The interest and response from the Flanders Lake sub-division cottagers was greater than expected, with only a few cottagers declining due to time constraints and schedules during the summer months. In the interviews, participants took considerable time and effort to describe the images that were most meaningful to them and explain their cottage experiences and perspectives.

3.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the conceptual framework I used for this research, based on a people-environment model for cultural landscape studies. I described the methods used – photo-elicitation with semi-structured interviews, and included information on the sampling and data analysis techniques. In the next chapter, I present the research findings and identify key themes that emerged.

CHAPTER 4: DOCUMENTING A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE



Plate 4. Peanut and the dragonfly.

4.0 Overview

The following chapter presents a summary of the findings – the characteristics, perspectives and values which emerged through the participants’ review and interpretation of their photographs. I begin by presenting core themes which emerged through participants’ explanations. I also provide representative examples of photographs with participant comments on their photographs, in their own words. Participants also provided titles for each of their photographs.

4.1 Meanings of cottagers

The analysis of study findings showed that cottaging or recreational home use spans a diverse range of meanings, but converges along certain dimensions. As a first

step in the analysis of the results, common themes and sub-themes were graphically represented (Figure 3). The themes closest to the centre were cited most frequently by participants, and decreased toward the outside of the circle.

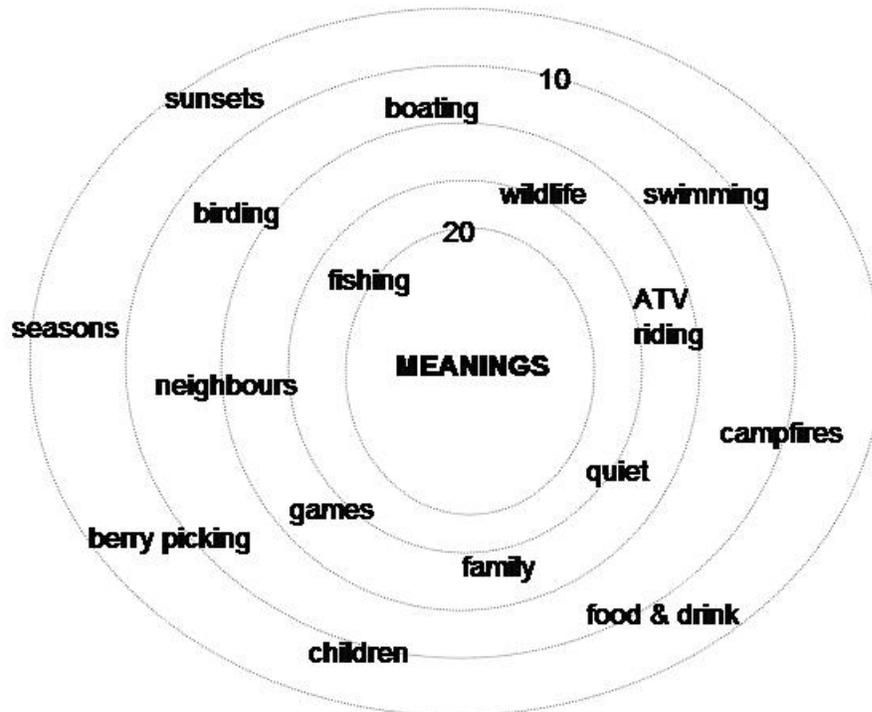


Figure 3. Diagram of preliminary emerging themes and sub-themes.

After further analysis, five major themes or dimensions appeared to emerge from the study findings as follows: 1) recreational activities, 2) nature, 3) tonic, 4) people, and 5) special places. This was also based on a coding exercise using NVivo 7 software with tree nodes (themes) and sub-nodes (sub-themes). Table 2 shows the frequency that sub-themes were noted by participants.

A web of cottager meanings or framework (Figure 4) was then constructed, based on Davenport and Anderson (2005), which shows four primary themes with surrounding sub-themes. The meanings are positioned around the notion of special places. Many special places were articulated by participants, which will be described in further detail later in the chapter.

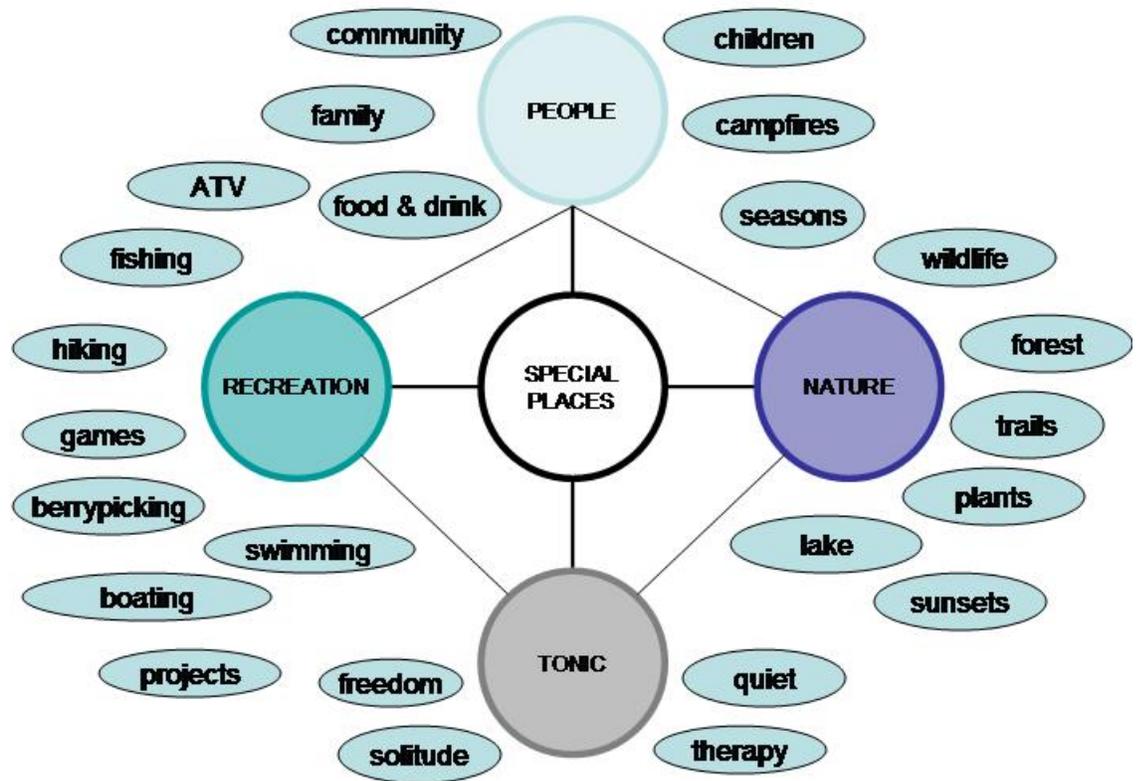


Figure 4. Web of cottager meanings (themes and sub-themes).

Table 2 shows the frequency that each sub-theme was cited as being a meaningful aspect. The theme of recreational activities such as fishing was cited frequently, which will be examined more closely in the following section.

Table 2. Frequency of theme in top three ranking.

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency in Top 3 Ranking
Recreational activities	fishing	13
Nature	wildlife	6
People	family	6
Nature	sunset	5
Nature	lake	5
People	kids	5
People	friends	5
Nature	animals	5
Recreational activities	work	4
Recreational activities	wood	4
Nature	landscape	4
People	campfires	4
Nature	berry picking	4
Recreational activities	ATV riding	4
Tonic	memories	3

Table 3. Major themes and sub-themes of cottager meanings.

Themes (tree nodes)	Sub-themes (sub-nodes)		
Recreational activities	fishing	18	95%
	ATV riding	13	68%
	boating/pontoon	9	47%
	swimming	9	47%
	berry picking	7	37%
	snowmobiling	6	32%
	building projects	6	32%
	hiking	5	26%
	cutting wood for heating	5	26%
	canoeing/kayaking	4	21%
	hunting	4	21%
	photography	4	21%
	gardening	4	21%
	exploring	2	11%
	mushroom picking	2	11%
	different routine	2	11%
wildcrafts	2	11%	
Nature	wildlife watching	15	79%
	bird watching	9	47%
	sunsets on the lake	7	37%
	different seasons	7	37%
	night sky/star gazing	5	26%
	lake/water quality	5	26%
	animal diversity	4	21%
	problem wildlife bears/beavers	3	16%
	plant diversity	3	16%
	park lands/protection	2	11%
	boreal forest	2	11%
People	family time	11	58%
	games/cards	10	53%
	neighbours	10	53%
	growing up/experiences	7	37%
	campfires	7	37%
	food/drink	7	37%
	experiences with pets	7	37%
	kids experiences	6	32%
	cottage association annual funday	5	26%
	behaviour change	3	16%
	family bonding	3	16%
Tonic	motor restriction/quiet	13	68%
	peaceful	6	32%
	memories	5	26%
	no congestion/minimal development	5	26%
	love of place	4	21%
	recovery/rejuvenation	4	21%
	nature/respect	3	16%
	place as home	3	16%
	general park area/trails	5	26%
Special places	their cottage	4	21%
	Summerhill Creek	4	21%
	Tulabi Falls	3	16%
	Ryerson Lake	3	16%
	Abitibi trail	3	16%

4.2 Recreational Activities

By far opportunities for recreational activities were cited as the most meaningful part of cottaging. Fishing or angling was cited as one of the most meaningful parts about being at the cottage, 18 of 19 participants or 95% of participants. Cottagers noted that fishing was an important part of being at the lake because it allowed them to spend time with family and friends. It also provided a chance for relaxation in a quiet environment, to observe the landscape, shorelines and forest, and witness spectacular sunsets on the lake. Fishing was also linked to children's experiences at the lake – the first time catching a fish or filleting it and cooking it for dinner. Male participants cited fishing as the most meaningful part about being at the lake. Of nine male participants, four chose fishing first, and seven of nine males chose fishing in their top three reasons.



My guys going out fishing together. I love to see all three of them doing something that they all love together. They were heading out for a fishing day. I didn't want to go, but it makes me feel good to see them go out together, knowing that they'll all have a good time together.

Plate 5. Guys fishing.

Female participants ranked fishing to be important, but not as high as males. Four of ten females picked fishing in their top three. However, fishing was cited as meaningful as a means family bonding and was often linked to experiences with children and grandchildren. For instance, many participants noted the easy access to fishing opportunities which encouraged family bonding, at all ages.

A unique feature of the Flanders Lake sub-division is the proximity to other high quality fishing undeveloped lakes which are only accessible through a trail system restricted to all terrain vehicle (ATV) use. Many of the participants noted the many occasions that they regularly visit lakes in the area for day fishing trips. The fact that they would usually be the only ones on the lake was a very appealing aspect that contributed to much appreciated quiet and solitude.

My dad and I, on our way to Ryerson Lake to fish. We do that a lot. We have a little two horsepower motor which is great.



Plate 6. Getting ready to go fishing.

The chance to catch the largest fish or a master angler- whether a walleye, smallmouth bass or northern pike, was commonly cited as an ideal goal but not essential

for participants involved in fishing. However, fishing for “eating-size” walleye, was usually the desired goal. Protecting the fishery was noted as essential protecting the lake’s future health, and participants noted that they were respectful of this ideal. The quality of the fishery was often cited as an important element to owning a cottage at Flanders Lake.

This is a trophy jack fish. Just another picture about fishing. This is about ‘bragging rights’.



Plate 7. Mark’s massive pike.



We keep very few walleye but we were going to have a meal that weekend. Linda caught three fish and we cooked them up. Linda hadn’t been fishing for ten years. Linda’s parents were up that weekend. We ate them in the morning. Our son had to get in the picture to hold them for Linda.

Plate 8. Linda’s walleyes.

The network of trails used for ATV and hiking were often mentioned as important aspects of cottaging and a unique characteristic of the area. Access and close

proximity to high quality trails was cited frequently by participants as a positive attribute of cottaging in the area.



We're big hikers so that's why I took this picture. We love to explore the park on foot. Just look at the different terrain. One of the beautiful areas is the bogs. There's a huge marsh behind us in this picture. We really like that open country where you might see a moose or beavers or otters. It's just very scenic. We love bogs, marshes, open country, and wildlife. It's good exercise too. This is on the Osis trail on the way to Osis Lake. We took a picnic lunch with us.

Plate 9. Hiking on Osis Trail.

Abitibi Trail – if it wasn't for the trail...I wouldn't buy a cabin anywhere else, it just opens up the entire area.



Plate 10. Trail that never ends.

The use of ATVs is fairly prevalent among cottagers at Flanders Lake for trail riding and accessing lakes in the area or to assist with work around the cottage. Some participants noted that they had owned ATVs in the past but sold them because of the hazards for children and the temptation they presented for friends and family visiting. 68% or 13 of 19 participants noted that being able to go out trail riding whether to tour the trails or access remote lakes or areas for berry or mushroom picking, was an important and meaningful part about owning a cottage at Flanders.



Quadding gives me freedom to go out in the backcountry. This is about getting around. This was my only out when I was recovering from surgery.

Plate 11. Freedom.

This is about enjoying nature and getting back into the bush. Our backyard out here has different lakes and trails. We can go hunting, blueberry picking with friends. Be spontaneous. Just pack a lunch and go. We feel safe here. We have good neighbours and people look out for each other and their possessions.



Plate 12. Nature and ATV opportunities.



We take many pictures along the Abitibi Trail. Down trails, things are always changing. We do a lot of quadding. Even when we were dating we did lots of quadding. It's a great way to see the backcountry and see the wildflowers. It just smells so great. And it's always changing; it looks like a different landscape every season.

Plate 13. Trail blazing.

The network of trails is maintained to a large extent by the area's snowmobile association (Nopiming Sno-mads). Snowmobiling was noted as a common activity in the winter season. Many areas of the landscape are more easily accessible in the winter by snowmobile, for ice fishing or touring, or visiting other cabins in the area.

Snowmobiling is my way out. It's never too cold for me. This reminds me of my old corvette. There's my baby. The polaris ad says 'the way out'. This is my way out, I get on my snowmobile...it's a sense of freedom. Now I know what's over the top of that hill. There's a lake and I can go places. I meet people through the snowmobile club. We have two snowmobiles and we go for snowmobile rides. I've met a lot of people that I like or like to be around.



Plate 14. Fun.

In addition to fishing, other recreational opportunities on the lake were noted as important and meaningful aspects of cottaging. All of the cottages on Flanders Lake are

waterfront, so access to the lake is immediate. Every participant noted recreational activities on the water as essential such as canoeing, kayaking, swimming, boating, and pontoon boating. Due to the 9.9 horsepower motor restriction, no high speed watercraft are allowed on the lake such as jet skis or boats used for water skiing or wakeboarding. Consequently, many of the recreational water activities are non-motorized. The motor restriction was often cited as the reason for a quiet environment conducive to relaxation, wildlife watching and an overall therapeutic experience.



Plate 15. Canoeing in the wilderness.

The 10 hp limit – it really helps maintain the natural setting. I think if we had a lot of boats ripping around we wouldn't have that. This is in Finger Bay on Flanders. We canoe down there quite a bit. We've seen deer down there. We've seen the otter at the portage into Summerhill. We portage a lot into Summerhill. We've done the loop into Booster Lake. There's people that camp on the islands in Summerhill. They're not supposed to be there but they've got great campsites. It is certainly a campsite, it's been beaten down. There's a beautiful rock looking back.

Land based recreational activities are also important to most cottagers such as berry picking (37%) and mushroom picking (16%). One older cottager was quite knowledgeable of mushroom species and noted that he shared his interest and

knowledge with other keen community members. Another cottager noted that his grandmother had introduced him to mushroom picking and was fascinated by the activity.

I thought this year would be good [for mushroom picking] because it was so wet but now it's so dry and the nights are too chilly. What you need is hot sun and humidity that's when the ground forms fungi. I pick chanterelles, boletes, morels. There's others like shaggy manes, you've got to pick them before the spores turn black. I don't care for them, they're too soft. Oh, lobster mushroom! That's my favourite. It's very bright orange in colour and it hasn't got a stem, it's like a 'V'. It always grows in the same spot. It's actually a parasite of the mushroom, if you study up on it. Actually, if you cook it's crunchy, that's why I like it.



These morels were harvested right around our yard and there are some all over this year. These are exotic. My grandma used to pick these orange globby-looking mushrooms with white spots. I like to berry pick too. I get personal satisfaction from picking even just a handful.

Plate 16. Spring mushrooms.

I love to go blueberry picking. It allows you to focus in a totally different way on just the here and now. Right now, this berry, and how did it get here?



Plate 17. Picking blueberries.

Blueberry picking was frequently noted as a meaningful aspect of cottaging in the area. Many cottagers noted that they have “their spots” which they return to year after year. The locations are prized and are only shared with family and close friends.



These bucks came from this area. This one's my son's first buck. Not many bear this year. I don't bear hunt. Trophy hunting – what's become of white hunters? Guys put a bunch of food in barrels, and they go up in the stand. That's not hunting.

Plate 18. Son's first buck.

Hunting was noted by 22% of participants, all male, as meaningful recreational activities, who mostly noted spruce and rough grouse as species most often hunted. However, some cottagers noted that they also participate in deer and moose hunting, but most often in other areas of the province. Hunting activity in the area was noted by some cottagers as a concern, particularly when gunfire can be heard close to the cottage subdivision and when, on occasion, hikers have come across bear baiting stations.

Playing games at the cottage with family and friends were noted frequently as important recreational activities at the cottage ranging from card playing, board games and jigsaw puzzles. Often the games are played around kitchen tables or

screened in verandas or porches. Many participants have built horseshoe pits on their cottage lot and frequently play horseshoes in the summer months with family and friends.

This is my mom in the screened porch working on a jigsaw puzzle. We love to get a jigsaw puzzle going. Everyone comes over and puts a piece in. Most of our time in the summer is spent in the porch playing games or socializing. I think what's interesting is that we've done this ever since we got the cottage. We do play a lot of games and crib with my mom and dad. Now the kids are older, and they are off doing other things. So now my mom and dad and Bill and I have crib tournaments – guys against the girls. The screened in porch has really been huge, this is where we spend all of our time. If bugs are out, it's just too much. It's so nice to sit out here, read the newspaper, and not worry about things crawling on you. That was sort of neat, when we started to think about building, we went to look at a lot of cottage plans, and none of them appealed to us. So we designed it ourselves. We've had 12 people in here, when the kids were little, you've got couples, and kids sitting at the table and we have breakfast out here.



Plate 19. Linda's mom with a jigsaw puzzle.



We never played cribbage until we came up here. We play two or three hands of crib a day – once in the morning and in afternoon. I feel guilty about taking a break from work. We've never spent this much time together. Games are part of the experience.

Plate 20. Playing cards.

Working on cottage projects, mainly maintenance-related, was also cited as a meaningful aspect of cottaging. Some cottagers spoke of the satisfaction of completing projects such as building woodsheds, chopping wood for the winter season, building decks or docks, garden beds and wild crafts. Many times the projects involved friends or family helping out to complete a project. Most projects were noted as a ‘labour of love’, for other family members or friends to enjoy in years to come. It was noted that work at the cottage is part of a different routine from the city schedule. Cottagers spoke about the importance of preparing for the winter season – having sufficient firewood, ensuring water systems are closed down or working, maintaining holding tank systems, etc.

This is a picture of my woodshed that I’m kind of proud of. Again, being out here as opposed to in the city, I don’t have a wood stove in the city, but the idea of fuel being gold when it’s minus 30. The whole idea is it’s a different routine out here. Firewood is such a huge factor aside from water – fire is definitely up there.



Plate 21. Woodshed Z.



Work crew on deck. Lots of work gone into the cottage. This indicates the work that’s gone into this place and that will continue to go into this place.

Plate 22. Never-ending work.

Work that you do that helps you survive. This is part of the winter thing. I built a nice solid building. It needs to be filled. We took back pictures of all the wood chopped. No one understood. This is like gold. We expected people we know to appreciate more what we're doing.



Plate 23. Woodshed.

4.3 People

Friends and family, gatherings and communal experiences, were noted as an essential parts of life at the cottage. 11 of 19 participants or 58% noted spending time with family in their top three most meaningful aspects of cottaging. In addition, 10 of 19 or 53% of participants noted neighbours and community as an essential part of the experience.

Happen spontaneously. Happy hour. Cocktails or coffee, you name it. At 4:00 every day. We'll get a call or we'll call them.



Plate 244. Gatherings and casual get-togethers.



Plate 255. Friendship garden.

This is my friendship garden in the front. Whenever people came to visit they brought presents so I got this idea that they could just bring a perennial for the garden. And people have taken out in to the garden. The reason I love this garden so much is I have plants from my Dad. My dad has been gone for 16 years, but his irises and daylilies are still growing. He gave me a plant I put it in the front, I never grew, it just survived, but I transplated it into the front, and last time I got flowers on it for the first time last year. It's just so neat that I have his plants in here. And that's thing about this place. There's a piece of everyone here. Mikhail has made inukshuks. There are bits and pieces of everyone here. Parents, friends helped build it. It's a piece of everybody.



Dinner with our neighbour...this guy has been a very good friend for all of us here. He's just part of our family in such a short space of time. I never met him until last summer. The reason I met him is because the picnic was going to be at his place and I volunteered to get things set up so we started hanging out and things have taken off.

Plate 26. Family

The annual Flanders Lake Cottage Association family fun day during the August long weekend, was often cited as memorable element of cottaging at Flanders Lake. There is usually a barbeque, with entertainment, followed by organized children's games. Cottagers donate books for a book sale, and also donate an extensive array of prizes for a silent auction, which is a popular and anticipated event for many.

Fun day. Annual picnic. Games for kids. Our granddaughter is in the pink hat. They come up every year for the picnic.



Plate 27. The picnic.

Campfires with family and friends was often cited as a meaningful aspect of cottaging, however, campfires were more common during spring and fall months. Seven of 19 participants or 37% noted campfires in their top three aspects of cottaging.



Campfires in the front yard...we enjoy having campfires with friends.

Plate 28. Friends and nature.



This shows the good times I have with my friends, this time it's with my friend Al on a hike. There's so much cool natural beauty around here. I like the rugged changes on the landscape. I like going out and exploring. This was the first time I took Al out for a quad ride. We saw this beaver pond that looked to be overgrown so we walked along and came across this wall of rock. I could spend weeks exploring things.

Plate 29. Balancing act.

An important part of the cottaging experience is preparing and sharing meals with family and friends. Seven of 19 participants or 37% indicated that food or meal preparation was one of the top three elements of cottaging. Many participants indicated that due to busy workweek schedules, being at the cottage is the one time that family meals are prepared and everyone sits down together. Diet and "the menu" were cited as critical elements to the cottage experience.



The cottage is for family time. Here is the dinner table set with turkey dinner. We really enjoy cooking at the cottage.

Plate 30. Turkey dinner.

This is probably one of our most favourite things to do... have friends over and bring the BBQ on the pontoon boat and cook up stuff. We do that all the time. At sunset, it's the greatest. The first time we had a roast. We've had loads of friends up here.



Plate 31. Cooking on the pontoon boat.

Growing up at the lake or children and grandchildren's experiences at the cottage was noted frequently as very meaningful aspect about cottaging. Extended conversations about children's experiences during interviews arose. It was evident that having children up at the cottage was very important from first experiences, interacting with wildlife or exploring the outdoors generally.



My grandson with the fish he caught at Flanders. The grandkids love fishing.

Plate 32. Proud fisherman.

*Our grandson's first fish.
Kids experiences are so
important out here.*



Plate 33. The fish.



Plate 34. Splashing fun.

*We always have bonfires and always roast
marshmallows. This is his first ever
marshmallow roast. We have lots of fires
in the fall and spring. It has to be pretty
calm to have a fire. We recycled this new
fire barrel from the dump.*

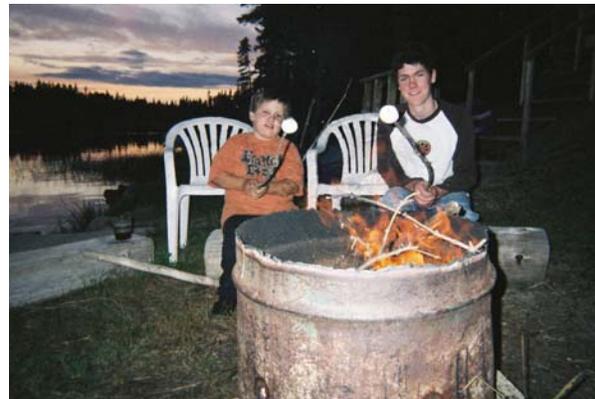


Plate 35. Parker's first marshmallow roast.



Plate 36. Danika and Mikhail.

Our children spent their entire childhood at the lake. They just happen to be up at the same time (that I took this picture) which is very unusual because they are very busy kids and barely get up (to the cottage) now. They like to come up by themselves, but that's okay, because we want them to love this place. They spent their hold childhood on the dock, with their fishing nets, minnows, and creating little environments... hours and hours. The dock looks so bare now, because they were on it for years. They had a great, great childhood out here. I feel so fortunate that we were able to give them that.

We put this Smokey the Bear height chart up when the kids were two years old. I think we got it at one of the first Flanders Lake meetings. The kids always enjoyed it. All the kids who visited got to get measured. We tracked the kids' growth on the chart. It's the history of the kids growing up at the lake.



Plate 37. Smokey the Bear growth chart.



They're always down there near the lake, ever since they were tiny kids. I think the lake has made them close. They have to amuse themselves. They are really close and get along great. They both like being around each other. This is about bonding. Even with us and the kids. There are no computers or TV at the cottage, and no phone calls from friends.

Plate 38. Kids shoulder ride.

Family experiences were frequently noted as an important, meaningful part of cottaging, particularly opportunities for inter-generational gatherings.

That's my dad reading. People like to bring their books. It's the only time we actually read books. Also, it's important to share this place with family. My dad is 83 years old. My mom and dad really like to come out and visit with the family, and it's not just two hours at dinner. It's a weekend or a few days, and you get to know what everyone's about.



Plate 39. Grandpa reading.

I love sharing this place. Here is my son and his girlfriend. It was her first time out here and fishing. She had never been to a cottage or in a boat. She was up for anything. She went quadding too. It was a big weekend.



Plate 40. Family.

For many participants, it was equally important that their pets could experience the cottage, as a member of their family.



Plate 41. My two buddies.



Plate 42. Ringo's paradise at the end of the road.

It was interesting to note that for is important for many participants to maintain journals or guest books at their cottage. Some participants write in their journal every time they come up to their cottage, and have detailed accounts of the weather and activities.



These are our guest books. We started in 1993. We're on our fifth book. I'm sure glad we started because you just get everybody to write or draw a picture. It's become international – we've had people from Japan, Holland, England. It's become very interesting. When they are writing, they'll look back at past entries.

Plate 43. Memories.

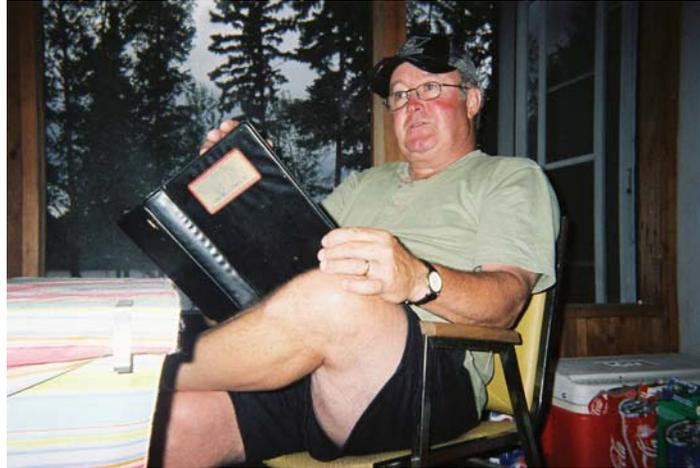


Plate 44. Stories

We started the log in 1987 but what I was reading here was remembering what had happened from 85 to 87. We keep track of the weather, when people were down. Even for our guests, they'll pull it out. It's almost expected that people write in it. One of the things I like about the log is we'll be sitting here in January and somebody will say, 'I remember when it was so cold that one year and go back to January 1990'. Somebody always puts what the temperature was.

4.4 Tonic

It was apparent through photographs and discussions with participants that the cottage is a place for rejuvenation and a break from the weekday activities. I originally came across the term 'tonic' in Davenport and Anderson (2005)'s investigation of place meanings and perceptions of landscape change where they examined the meanings of community members attribute to a Nebraskan river landscape. This term appropriate describes what many cottagers mean as a place to be refreshed and energized; a place for recovery and renewal.



Plate 45. Therapy.

The cottage is a place for spiritual and physical rejuvenation, a place for recovery. If you have a bad week, the closer you get to the cottage, you feel the weight is lifted.

Many participants noted how fortunate and appreciative they felt for having the opportunity to own a cottage in Nopiming Park. The appreciation was also evident when participants noted the hard work and effort spent in either building their cottage or working on cottage projects, calling it “a labour of love”.

Ain't it grand to be retired at Flanders. My husband likes to sit on the dock more than I do. Sometimes I find it too hot. He really likes it. It's like those old movies looking at the north 40. Sometimes we think how lucky we were to find this place. I found it a little scary to take this on. We were in our early 50s.



P

Plate 46. Appreciating what you have.

Our son is fishing on the rock pile. I'm watching him from the cabin. It's so peaceful. He loves to fish. He's fishing off the rock pile, just enjoying it all. It was so nice to sit here and watch him. He was having a good old time. The lake was calm, like glass - picture perfect!



Plate 47. View of the lake.

4.5 Nature

It was evident that nature, the ecological aspects of the landscape, was very meaningful for participants. Most themes discussed touch on or involve nature to a degree. Cottagers have a special affection in particular for the lake, since all of the cottages are lakeside.



This is just a scenic shot. Just that reflection. Showing the lake and the boreal forest.

Plate 48. Lake like glass.



Plate 49. The beach.

The lake... isn't that pretty. It's called the blue planet.

I like it all...wilderness, no congestion, 10 hp restriction, hunting, fishing, berry picking, mushroom picking, everything...I like the wilderness that's one answer for everything. No 'no trespassing' and 'no private property' signs. In the beaches area, everything is private, private, private. That's what I like about this place.

Opportunities to view wildlife are extremely important to cottagers of Flanders Lake. Many cottagers indicated that they wished they had captured more wildlife on camera for this study. 79% of cottagers ranked watching wildlife in their top three most meaningful aspects, only behind fishing. Some of the participants were fortunate to capture some wildlife on camera, including a snapping turtle eating the remains of a walleye, a pileated woodpecker in a stand of old growth spruce, a hummingbird feeding at a feeder, or a garter snake sunning along the shore. Others were able to provide clues of wildlife in the area such as a tree used as a rub for a deer or 'Buck Rub' and the track of a wolf made in the soft soil at the foot of a trail.



Plate 50. Hummingbird feeder.

I love bird watching. It's fascinating to watch their mating flights and ownership of the feeders and how they compete between one another. I often see them perched outside on the wind chimes.

It's nice to know they are around. Keep the mouse population down. Just showing the different wildlife around. I've always found garter snakes fascinating. They way the sliver through the grass and how they eat. Wildlife is so important.



Plate 51. Garter snake.

This deer rub was discovered with my Dad. It's one of those father-son moments. You can see that there is an animal trail behind the rub. I was following it and came across this rub. It's nice to see the traces of animals out here.



Plate 52. Buck rub.

I like this because it reminds me of the times that Mark and I have out here. Hand beside wolf track. I like to know that they're around and that there's a wolf population here.



Plate 53. Wolf track.



Plate 54. Spongy forest floor.

It's neat seeing fallen trees in the water, rocks. Time to see nature, turtles, birds, frogs, beavers, fish jumping, things washed up on the shore.

4.6 Special Places

Many participants made a point to capture specific places of special significance in the surrounding area of their cottage. These were also identified on a topographic map during the interviews and represented in Figure 5. Most places were connected to recreational activities of study participants, or associated with picturesque vistas or lookouts. Most cottagers spoke frequently about the use of trails adjacent to Flanders Lake Road. Many noted that they use the Abitibi Trail, a former logging road, and the many trails to access lakes and places of interest by ATV, bicycle or by foot in the summer months, and by snowmobile, cross country skis or snowshoes in the winter.

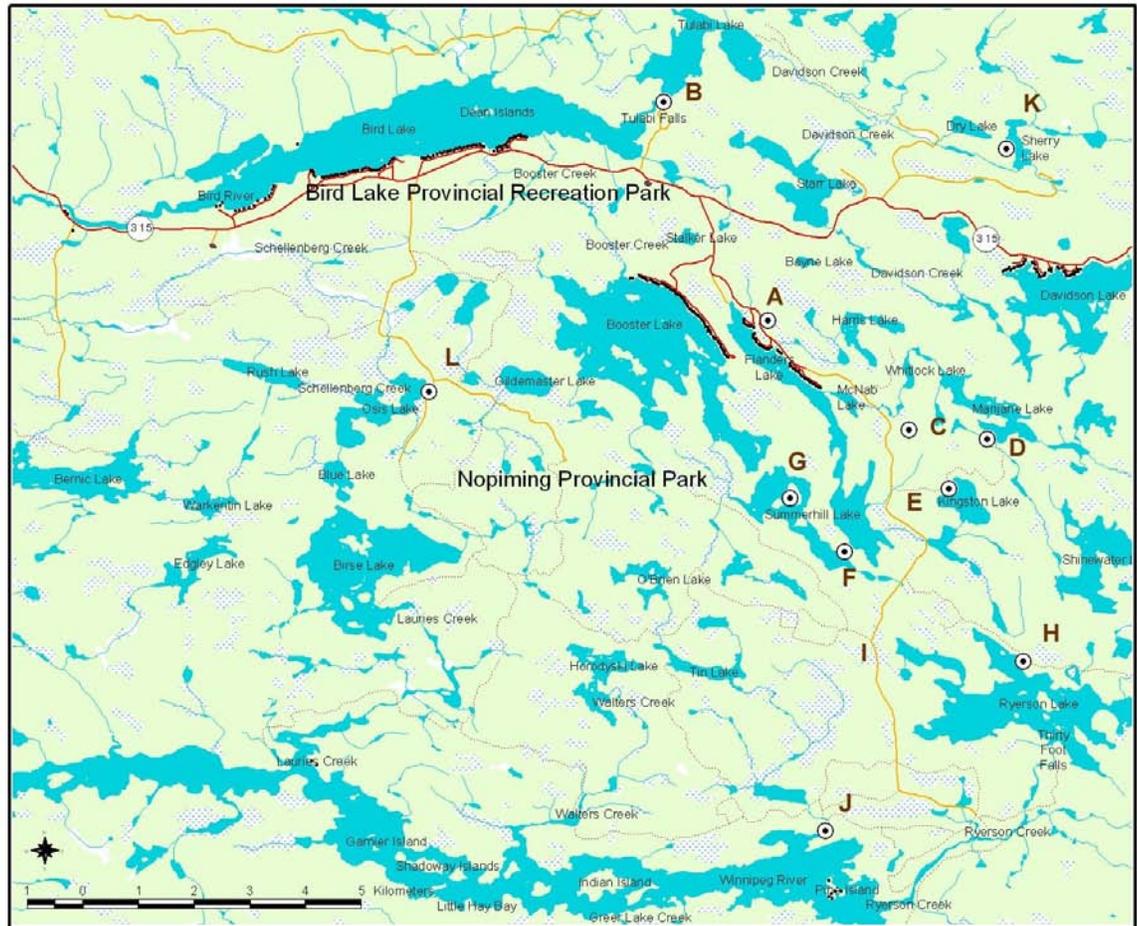


Figure 5. Map of special places cited by cottagers.

Location		Plate
A	Flanders Lake	62, 63
B	Tulabi Lake & Tulabi Falls	57, 58
C	Blueberry Hill	
D	Mary Jane Lake	
E	Kingston Lake	
F	Summerhill Creek	61
G	Summerhill Lake Island	
H	Ryerson Lake	56
I	Abitibi Trail	55
J	Winnipeg River	
K	Sherry Lake and Trail	59
L	Osis Lake and Trail	



Plate 55. Abitibi Trail – the trail that never ends.

Abitibi Trail – if it wasn't for the trail...I wouldn't buy a cabin anywhere else. It just opens up the entire area. This picture is between Ryerson Lake trails, closer to the second entrance. I included it because we love this area. We bought the cabin and we knew about the lake and someone mentioned this trail and now we have a quad and we've been on the trail a lot. You couldn't get me to buy anywhere else because to get out into the wilderness and the bush. We're gone – snowmobile, quad (I actually like the quad better). We have seen such amazing things out there – beavers, turtles, and a couple weeks ago, Nestor and I and the girls came to one swamp where we've seen deer, and Nestor was waiving because there was a huge male moose.



Plate 56. Exploring trails near Ryerson Lake.

An often cited place of interest was the Tulabi Falls area which is 5 km northwest of Flanders Lake. Tulabi Lake empties into Bird Lake and Tulabi Falls separates the two lakes. There is a seasonal campground and boat launch, where many backcountry canoers launch to enter the Tulabi-Seagrim canoe route. On Tulabi Lake there are many rock faces and trails that lead up to a lookout over Tulabi Lake that is a popular place to visit.



Plate 57. Memories.

Tulabi Lake, what I used to do. That's what brought us up to this paradise. Part of it's because you can see where we go up to the river, and the old campsite that cub scouts used to stay at. The view from the cliff is unbelievable. You can walk up where those pictures are. Walk down and there is a path that goes past where they jump off cliff. Rock face and caves. I just love the rock structures around here.



Plate 58. Tulabi Falls.

Another meaningful place identified by cottagers is located 6 km northeast of Flanders Lake, accessible by a trail. Interestingly, it is an unnamed lake according to the topographic map of the area, however, the participant's neighbour stated that the lake was called Sherry Lake. The cottager who noted this place was taken by the vast rock face which overlooks the lake.

This is probably our favourite hike. It's not labeled on the map. Go past Starr Lake next to Dry Lake on the way to Davidson. There's a snowmobile trail that we hike down. We hear this is called Sherry Lake. When you get there, there's a slab of rock. It's a gigantic slab. It would be the best toboggan slide. We've actually seen moose there. It's a nice lake and it's our favorite spot in the park.



Plate 59. Sherry Lake.

Other special places noted by cottagers were specific to each participant's cottage; usually a particular room at the cottage that acts as a gathering place for family and friends such as a screened in porch or an all season room. This was noted as being particularly important in the summer months during mosquito and black fly season.



Our 4 seasons room. Where we have friends over. This is one of our favorite spots to sit. We use it in the winter time too. We have baseboard heaters in here. Just having people over. It's like our dining room.

Plate 60. Our sun room.

Many cottagers noted the Flanders Lake outlet at the south-eastern end of the lake where Flanders Lake flows into Summerhill Lake through Summerhill Creek. Cottagers noted that they often bring friends and family to watch the suckers spawn in

the spring, where many eagles come to eat. At times more than a dozen have been seen feeding.



Plate 61. Summerhill outlet.

*The trail between Summerhill Lake and Flanders Lake...
this was the first cool spot that I discovered. It's at the end of Flanders lake.
There's a small creek that drains from Flanders to Summerhill. We go there every year and watch
the suckers spawn.*

All cottagers noted the sunsets on the lake as an important and fulfilling aspect of owning a cottage on Flanders. Whether on the dock, deck or out on the lake in a boat, cottagers reminisced about the wonderful sunsets and the feelings that they evoked.



The most photographed picture, it's everybody's picture. When Gary built the cottage, he asked which way do you want it to face. And I said right at the sunset, and in the summer, it's right there. That's just beauty.

Plate 62. Sunset on Gerylo Bay.

In the evening when it's calm like this we like to throw out the still line and bobber. Sit up on the deck and watch the line and talk. Sometimes you catch and sometimes you don't.



Plate 63. Perfect evening on Flanders still fishing.

The study findings showed a range of elements that contribute to the appeal of cottaging. As a whole, the elements form the cultural landscape of cottagers. Perhaps, the most striking observation by a participant on the sincere appreciation of owning a cottage in Nopiming was stated as follows:

It's like 'may your every footstep be a prayer'. I'm just glad that my footsteps and what footprints I have are here. I'm gravely concerned about the place – I sure want to take care of it. It's nice to know we have a nice quiet little slice of heaven. I feel pretty lucky.

-Flanders Lake Cottager, July 2007

The collection of meaningful aspects of cottaging described in this chapter illustrates that there is inherent value in examining the qualitative and cultural aspects of second home ownership.

4.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented the research findings using photo-elicitation, semi-structured interviews and mapping. Five major themes, with associated sub-themes were revealed. The most meaningful aspects of cottaging were engaging in outdoor recreational activities, experiencing nature, sharing the experience with family and friends, and the tonic-like effect of spending time at special places and the cottage. A discussion chapter follows which examines the most meaningful cited elements of cottaging. I also revisit second home and place-based literature and describe commonalities and differences between the literature and results. Finally, I present comments on the use of photo-elicitation as a method for exploring stakeholder perspectives, and offer personal observations and reflections on the research experience.

CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION



Plate 64. We love this place.

The reason for the heart is this place has always been a labour of love for us. If not, you look at it as a money pit. It's always been a great place for our family.

5.0 Overview

In this chapter, the results previously presented are synthesized drawing upon the literature review (chapter two) and the conceptual framework (chapter three) by returning to the original research questions. To help communicate the cottagers' cultural landscape, I discuss the patterns and themes that emerged from cottagers' perspectives based on the study findings (chapter four) and refer and apply the reviewed literature on second-home use, cultural landscape studies, and place-based research. Finally, comments are presented on the use of photography as a method for exploring cottager or other stakeholder values and perspectives.

5.1 Cottaging as a Meaningful Practice

This study examined the phenomenon of cottaging in a water-oriented second home setting. I wanted to reveal how cottaging demonstrates aspects of how people think about space, place and landscape. The study showed that having a cottage on a lake in this area of eastern Manitoba was important and, quite possibly, intrinsic to participant's personal psychological well-being.

Cottage country has been described by some second home researchers as "a vital part of both the collective imagination and primary life-space for a great many households" (Luka 2006, 1). This was very true based on my research findings and personal observations. Cottaging has a special place in each of the participant's lives. Participants spoke about the importance of experiencing nature-based recreational activities, from fishing to wildlife watching, to sharing memorable moments with family and friends, and taking time off from weekday transactions of urban life. Luka (2006, 229) was accurate in his statement that, "cottaging is perhaps also a way in which people live 'on the edge' at least for a short time."

A goal of this study was to make sense of the practice and significance of cottaging in a particular area of eastern Manitoba. Because of the heightened amenity value of owning a cottage, motivating forces, which contribute to an individual's desire to own a cottage, deserve consideration. So, why is cottage country a cherished or even "sacred" cultural landscape? Roy MacGregor's (2002) book *Escape: In Search of the Natural Soul of Canada* suggests that cottage settings embody how we associate nature with an escape from the city. In this study, the appeal of leaving the city routine for

something very different and linked to nature was definitely apparent among participants.

Place meanings that were described by participants in this study, appeared to integrate values attached to natural places such as beauty, utility, and recreation, representing a multi-faceted landscape. The study findings show evidence of a catalogue of values, many similar to those identified by McKintyre and Svanqvist (2004) including access, recreational experiences, solitude, wildlife, aesthetics, intergenerational, social (friends, family), exploration, fishing, wilderness, therapeutic, lakes and water.

As supported in McKintyre and Svanqvist (2004), the most important values in this study were associated with lakes/forests, family, recreation and wilderness/solitude. Fishing and hunting followed, along with recreation diversity. Lakes as a focus of family recreation and wilderness/solitude are the main values combined with the desire that these assets are sustained for future generations.

My research took a bottom-up approach to making sense of the cottaging by exploring what cottagers themselves find meaningful about cottaging. A big factor in the appeal of cottaging was the quest for pleasant surroundings which provide privacy, space, security and tranquility as in Luka (2006). Another vital motivation was leisure – fun and free time for social recreational activities which are relaxing. The study showed evidence that cottager motivations were associated with nature and wilderness for the most part, grounded in the pursuit of restorative physical and mental wellbeing.

Participants in the study spoke of the opportunity to reconnect with nature, at very close proximity to real wilderness, but with the security of a home base of their cottage.

It is no secret that cottage country is considered a good place for raising children, at least as a summer setting. There appears to be a similarity between certain structures such as water-oriented cottage settings and the cultural values that parents want to instill in their children. There is a belief that these are places where children can properly learn about the world (Luka 2006). The practice of cottaging was most definitely a learned behaviour, passed from one generation to the next, but on occasion learned in a short frame of time.

Peter Ward (1999) suggests that much of the appeal of cottage life is in its nostalgic 'promise of a simpler life'. There is definitely a tension between the nostalgia of 'roughing it' and a desire to have the conveniences of urban city life (Luka 2006). This was very true with my research findings. The participants in this study had access to electricity, telephone, appliances, and conveniences found in city homes, but at the same time appreciated less available technology like television and computers.

Cottage settings have been described as clusters of more or less like-minded individuals, and because of the high level of controlled access (associated with cost), they are elite landscapes comparable to suburban enclaves and gated communities (Luka 2006). Based on the study findings, market forces are increasingly contributing to the 'elitism' of cottaging in Manitoba. Lake front cottage prices have risen substantially in the last 10-15 years. Unless a cottage was passed down through family, the ability to own a cottage today is a distant reality for many low and middle income families.

There is a central role of the landscape – rock outcroppings, lakes, plant and animal life of the area, the boreal forest and Canadian Shield, was evident throughout the research imparting a heightened value to experience. The distinctive sensory, aesthetic and experiential qualities associated with experience the boreal forest landscape were of prime importance in motivating participants to build or purchase a cottage in the area. In addition, the water-oriented setting was hugely important, just as landscape ecologists recognize shorelines as the most vital and productive parts of ecosystems in water systems (Marsh 2005). The proximity to water and forested areas allow cottagers to engage in a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities, such as fishing, boating, swimming and berry and mushroom picking.

The interviews revealed certain attributes and dimensions of participants' connection to places. Some participants described what made places important to them such as specific recreational activities, and also described how these attributes worked together to influence the person they are today. Significant life stages described by the participants included childhood and early teenage years. Changes of place meanings were noted to have evolved through time – places and meanings tied to periods in life. It was evident that these meanings were connected to important experiences with special people in participants' lives.

Many participants noted a variety of feelings that could be classified as restorative, including relaxation, being free from distractions, escaping worries or problems, finding inspiration, experiencing a sense of connection with the natural world, and experiencing freedom, renewal and other similar feelings. Many feelings

discussed by participants were said to have developed over time. Some aspects were too difficult to dissect or define at times, but the feelings remained by the experiences at the cottage and in the area.

Sense of discovery, adventure or exploration was apparent in the discussions of ATV rides or hiking in the backcountry. A sense of awe, excitement and wonderment accompanied the descriptions of these travels; discovering something new or intriguing was a part of people's connection to places. This contrasted with the feeling of comfort of home which was mentioned frequently by participants in contrast. Many participants described how the cottage was a place to regulate their emotions and search for or experience a feeling, also noted in Smaldone (2005). A common feeling was that feeling of restoration – renewal, peacefulness, quietness, and freedom. It was also evident that the cottage also symbolized the powerful notion of escape from the city, a sort of ritualized process.

Svenson's description (2004) of cottage country as "...a place where extended family and friends gather together, where work is meaningful, where there is time for leisure and contact with nature, and where community feels present" is a very appropriate description, based on my research findings. The importance of community, neighbours and friends was often cited, as was opportunities to work on projects that had personal and functional meaning. Enough cannot be said about the time for leisure and contact with nature. Cottaging for most participants in this study, was a way for people to encounter, know and transform a place, an effort to construct an identity anchored in a place, as in Williams and Kaltenborn (1999).

Sievanen et al. (2007) approaches recreational home use as a behavioural phenomenon that reflects a “way of life”, which is often described as the “natural” way to live or how to organize social life as being natural. In this study, stage of life had a strong effect on how much time was spent at the cottage, and played a role in determining outdoor recreational activities and the lifestyle of the cottager (Sievanen et al. 2007). Some researchers contest that traditional ideals concerning what to do at the cabin are challenged by newer norms and desires (Vitterso 2007). What constitutes recreational activities appear to be constant, but maintenance and refurbishing standards change. The findings confirm that work, in terms of maintenance and refurbishing, is seen by many as a central part of leisure time at the cabin (Vitterso 2007). Some of this work is challenging and different from normal routine tasks, so it is interpreted as more of a recreational activity rather than work.

Outdoor recreational activities are a very important part of cabin life. In some respects, they may be challenged by new and more commercial recreational activities, new standards of outdoor equipment (Vitterso 2007). New and more extreme outdoor challenges have increased in popularity. However, the study findings indicate that most cottagers are interested in traditional recreational activities like hiking and fishing (Kaltenborn et al. 2005). The majority of the outdoor recreational activities follow the different seasons and are mostly communal, which also applies to indoor recreational activities such as playing cards or games. Time spent at the cottage was preferably spent outdoors. However, during certain periods of the summer months, insect populations drive cottagers to their indoor screened in sanctuaries. Many cottagers did not want

computers or children to play video games in the cabin, in addition to watching television. A preference for the whole family to spend time together outside was articulated by most participants. These ideals were often transferred from grandparents or parents to their children, and not just related to leisure activities, but also cooking, eating and meal practices at the cottage which differs from general daily routines in the city. The routine at the cabin allows for traditional family meals that are often not possible during the regular work week. Meals and breaks tended to be adjusted around recreational activities and times of the day. Cooking and preparing meals is associated with something that is very enjoyable at the cottage.

Social interactions with neighbours and community appear to be much more important at the cabin – seeing family and friends and enjoying the good times. Some participants noted that they cherish the relationships with their neighbours at the cottage, which struck them as an oddity, since in the city they barely knew their neighbours by name. It would appear that cottagers have more things in common with their neighbours at the lake, which facilitates the formation of lasting and positive relations. Cottagers share in common their enjoyment of the lake, the outdoors, recreational activities, and the different routine and tasks associated with being at the cottage. One participant mentioned that lake represents “a microcosm of the city - you get all types of personalities just like you do in the city. It’s representational, really”. Conversely, some cottagers visit the lake for quiet and solitude, without socializing with others. Cottagers who lived year round tended to value friendships and community and place a high value on gatherings with fellow cottagers. Age may have been a factor

in the inclination to strike up friendships, as well as duration of stay at the cottage, for example, year round residency.

A major motivation for acquisition of second homes is theorized as 'escape' principally from normal working lives to an idealized way of life. A contrary view was expressed in McIntyre and Svanqvist (2004) where participants expressed a view that life at the cabin complements life at home. Their study participants were appreciative of the contribution of cottage life to their overall lifestyle. In this study, only a few participants indicated that their cottage was an escape; however, many noted that given the opportunity, they would enjoy living at the cottage year round, even though they mentioned that a connection to urban life would be inevitable.

In this study, cottagers appeared to be engaged in an effort to reclaim a sense of place or identity, as described in Williams and Kaltenborn (1999). Because cottagers are simultaneously tourists and residents of their cottage locale, cottaging tends to represent an interesting context in which people come to encounter, know and transform a place, an attempt to thicken the meanings associated with places in response to the modern tendency for places to be "thinned out" (Williams and Kaltenborn 1999). Cottaging is also seen as a rich context for examining how people work through issues of identity by showing how leisure that is practised at the cottage contributes to a person's life (Williams and McIntyre 2001). Many researchers contend that cottage stories and practices help us understand the ways in which people resist commodification, homogenization and recapture tradition, home, family, community and nature (Williams and McIntyre 2001). This was evident in the stories that were shared during

the interview process of this study; cottagers tended to distance themselves from technology and reminders of a metropolitan way of life at the cottage, in an effort to get back to nature through time spent with family and friends.

5.2 Applying a People-Landscape Conceptual Framework

The research approach used for this study was based on a conceptual model that examined the linkage between environment and people. Tress and Tress (2001) have called for a theoretical concept that would enable a trans-disciplinary approach to landscape research. Based on their model, I compared the research findings and applied their framework to understand the linkages of people to a place, and examine people-landscape relations in cottaging.

Based on their model, the cultural landscape of Flanders Lake is a result of bio, geo and noo-spheres (described in chapter two, page 26). Cottagers are part of the biosphere but because the noosphere, the mental dimension, they shape the landscape. Interactions with landscape change over time. There are also natural and cultural aspects of the relationship between cottagers (people) and the landscape. Not only do the cottagers have an impact on the landscape through their actions, the landscape creates the medium for cottaging to take place by virtue of its forests, lakes and terrain. The relationship between cottaging and landscape is a system of relations expressed by arrows and loops in the people-landscape model (Figure 6). Cottagers have an impact on the spatial dimension of the landscape in terms of travel, construction and activities on the land. That spatial dimension allows for cottagers to pursue recreational activities,

which were shown to be very important for this study's participants. In addition, to the physical consequences of cottagers' impacts on the landscape, motivations behind why people engage in cottaging exist as do their perceptions of the landscape. The mental loop in the framework represents the fact that cottagers have expectations of the landscape which determine what activities they undertake. The landscape is then shaped by the activities and expectations of cottagers. There is a continual loop of perception and use, so cottagers and the landscape mutually influence each other.

This conceptual framework when applied to cottaging or other natural resource management issues has the ability to show how impacts of cottaging and other activities in natural resource management can be represented and how actions are interlinked with the environment. It can also be used to determine the suitability and appropriateness, in qualitative terms, of a landscape for sustaining cottaging or other human-environment linked activities. In addition, it could be used to determine the motivations of cottagers or others and how cottagers perceive the landscape and consequences of their activities. This framework can also help create a vision for planners or groups that incorporates thoughts and actions to describe different types of relationships between people (in this instance, cottagers) and the landscape, which ultimately represents people-landscape interactions.

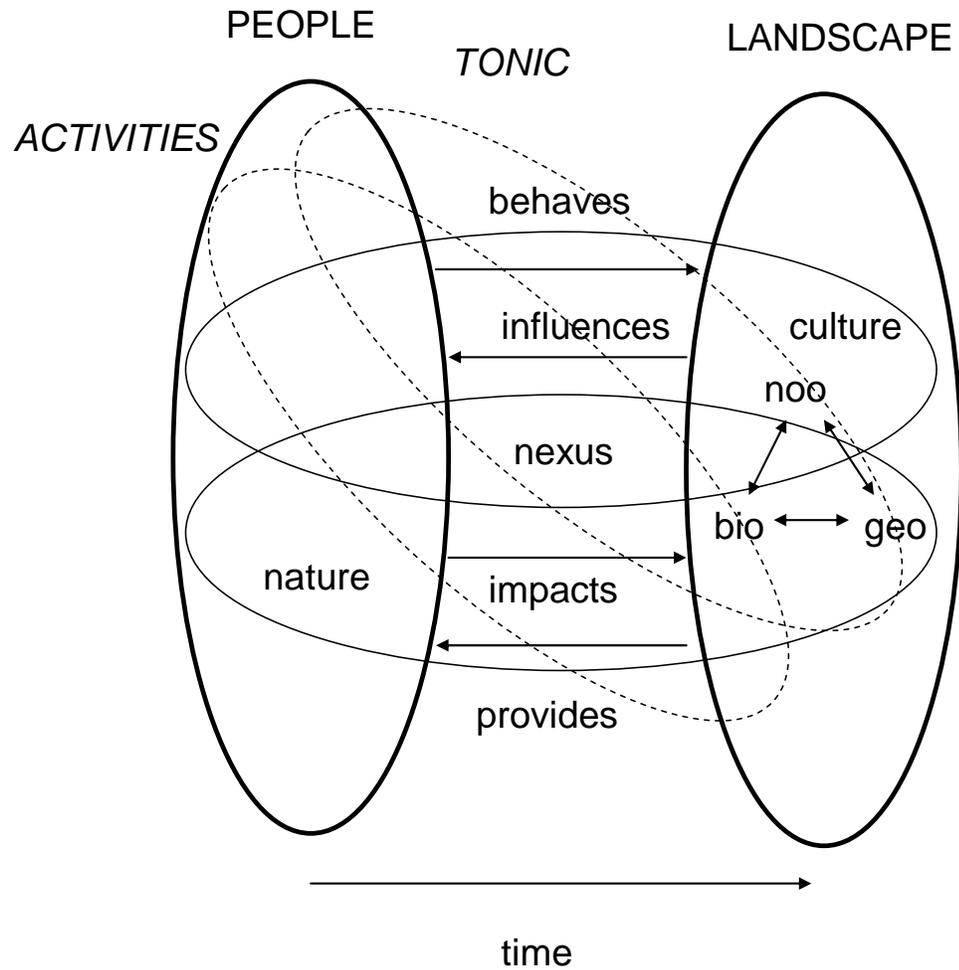


Figure 6. Conceptual framework for describing relationship of cottagers to the landscape. Based on Tress & Tress (2001)

5.3 Linkages to Sense of Place and Place Attachment

The results of this research expand on current notions of sense of place and place attachment. For instance, Davenport and Anderson (2005) showed four interlinked dimensions of river meanings in their research. River as “identity” described by Davenport and Anderson (2005) parallels the construct of Williams et al. (1992) and Stedman (2002) labeled as place identity. Davenport and Anderson went further to distinguish place identity as individual identity, family identity and community

identity. They also used the term 'tonic' to encompass the recreation participants recognized as "good for the mind, body and soul", comparable to what Williams et al. (1992) calls "place dependence". The dimension of "nature" was also identified by Davenport and Anderson (2005) as integral to participant's sense of place and emotional attachments to the river. This aligns with the findings in this study as described in the results.

Current discussion of place attachment in natural resource management research tends to concentrate on identity and recreation-related meanings, perhaps, simplifying the phenomenon. Much of the latest research has focused on visitors' attachment to recreation areas as opposed to resident or second-home residents. This study supports the need for more holistic and integrative models of human-environment relationship to examine the bonds people have with places (Davenport and Anderson 2005).

The research findings revealed that the biological or environmental attributes (nature and wildlife), combined with socio-cultural processes and psychological elements contribute to the sense of place experienced by cottagers. A number of researchers have hypothesized that places are based on three inter-related components that give rise to meaning: 1) the physical setting, 2) the person (psychological and social processes and attributes), and 3) the activities or rituals done at that place (Smaldone et al. 2005; Stedman 2002; Relph 1976). This study also supports that hypothesis – the cottage (place) is meaningful because of the physical setting (lake, forest, terrain), the people (friends, family, neighbours) and the activities (recreation, work).

Sense of place is described as being composed of two aspects 1) relationship to place – the ways people relate or the types of bonds we have with places; and, 2) community attachment – the depth and types of attachments that one has to a particular place (Cross 2001). Both aspects were evident in this study. All of the participants spoke about their relationship and attachment with their cottage and the area. Based on the findings, cottagers at Flanders Lake exhibit a strong place attachment to the area. That attachment can be attributed to the top ranked meanings that cottagers attributed to the setting, and which the cottagers have become attached to – peace and quiet, people, recreation, and nature.

Based on the results of this study, sense of place or formation of emotional bonds to a place can happen very quickly at the cottage. Some of the cottagers who had owned their cottage for less than five years, had a deep sense of place. This might be attributable to previous time spent involved in nature-based recreational activities in the surrounding area, like canoeing or camping, or experiences at other family or friend's cottages. It is evident that cottagers have put down roots at Flanders Lake. These roots have enabled cottagers to get a grasp on their world view, and experience a significant spiritual or psychological attachment to the place. These places become "fields of care" – settings where people have multiple experiences that involve many affections and responses, and result in a profound commitment to a place. (Relph 1976).

Many past place-based studies support the need for more holistic and integrative models of human-environment relationship linking place-based meanings with landscape perception (Davenport and Anderson 2005). Some researchers assert that

landscape characteristics are important in the production of place meanings and consequently place attachment and attitudes (Stedman 2003; Davenport and Anderson 2005). Arguably, natural resource management and land use development issues could be better comprehended by identifying and examining place meanings (Davenport and Anderson 2005).

5.4 Photo-elicitation as a Tool in Natural Resource Management

The use of photography to explore cottagers' perspectives about what is meaningful about cottaging and defining the cultural landscape of a community proved to be effective in several ways. First, it was possible for cottagers to capture abstract notions through symbols on the landscape. There were many examples of this from fishing with the family, to wildlife, to relaxing on the dock. These symbols, stories and descriptions illustrate the concepts of sense of place and place attachment. The photographs and associated narratives confirmed the close relationship cottagers have with the lake and the land, as well as their attachment to and knowledge of a place.

Photo-elicitation powerfully depicted a range of cottager meanings about Flanders Lake and the area. Photographs of fishing, swimming, boating, hiking and berry picking conveyed the importance of the land and the lake. It reaffirmed the notion that high quality water bodies and wildlife habitat, and management of those resources, are critical for sustaining quality outdoor experiences and learning. It showed the genuine importance of establishing a 9.9 horsepower motor restriction for the lake.

Cottagers have a great appreciation for the low level of traffic and noise generated by such a restriction.

The process of having participants take photographs was quite rewarding for participants. Cottagers decided what to photograph and communicate what was meaningful through their eyes and words. The results showed that many cottagers thoughtfully considered what they wanted to capture on camera. The process appeared to have brought about a renewed awareness for most cottagers on the appreciation they have of life experiences at the cottage.

The process of being engaged in taking photographs seemed empowering to cottagers. Each cottager chose what to photograph and explained each photograph. It was evident that many of the photographs triggered memories; stories were shared through laughter and tears. Furthermore, management issues, comments and concerns were also raised through photographs of objects and places. For example, cottagers remarked on the number of wildlife viewings or the level of resource development, and general activity levels in the park.

Finding participants was not a challenge with this method. This may have been attributed to the comfort level of participants with the researcher, since I am a member of the community and fellow cottager. Initially contacts were made with one individual cottager owner. However, many of the participants consisted of couples, i.e. spouses.

Photo elicitation was a very useful tool for initiating dialogue, which imparted an in-depth and integrative understanding of place-based perspectives. This technique has the ability to provide managers opportunities to meaningfully engage the public in

planning processes and policy development. Other researchers have successfully employed the technique to elicit perspectives in forested and water-oriented environments (Beckley et al. 2007; McIntyre and Svanqvist 2004).

Scientific, objective expertise is only one of source of data which informs planning processes. Qualitative methods that integrate a range of data including place meanings should be considered like interpretive techniques which provide site specific values that are difficult to ascertain if using quantitative methods. Place-meanings also have the ability to be spatially represented using GIS technology, which could be integrated visually along side resource characteristics and management practices to identify places of socio-cultural importance, if desired (McKintyre and Svanqvist 2004).

5.5 Personal Observations and Reflections

As stated in the methods, I belong to the community of cottagers at Flanders Lake. As a fellow cottager, I felt that I was able to strike a good rapport with the participants, which allowed more candid and open conversation and interesting results. In reflecting on what makes cottaging a meaningful practice, I had to revisit the days of my childhood and interactions with nature. I cherish the opportunity of being able to go to the cottage on the weekends and over extended holidays. This may be due to my close relationship with cottage life or adventures in the backcountry of Eastern Manitoba growing up. I spent time at family cottages in the Lake of the Woods area of Ontario and at Falcon Lake, Manitoba, as a child and remember spending countless hours

exploring nature, and engaged in recreational and social activities with family and friends.

I too like most of the cottagers in the study have a sincere appreciation for the lakes, the boreal forest landscape, the hiking trails and plant and animal diversity and opportunities for viewing. One of the most important aspects to me is the peace and quiet attributed by the low level of development in the cottaging sub-division, in addition to the horsepower motor restriction imposed on the lake by the cottage association. I enjoy all four seasons equally at the cottage because of the diversity of recreational and social experiences that each season brings. The feeling of rejuvenation acquired by spending time at the lake is unequalled. I too, not unlike the participants in this study, have developed a strong sense of place and attachment to the cottage and surrounding area of Nopiming.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research findings as they apply to other research on cottaging. I also examine application of a conceptual approach to the results using an environment-landscape model. Sense of place and place attachment concepts are compared to the results. I also provide a commentary on the usefulness of photo-elicitation, and close with personal reflections on the research. In the final chapter, I provide a summary of the finding along with conclusions and recommendations for consideration.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



Plate 65. Kayaking on Flanders.

6.0 Summary of the Findings

Researchers have proposed many theories and frameworks about people, their environment and the interactions that give rise to place meanings (chapter two). Based on the findings of this study, cottagers (as people) impart meanings to their cottage and surrounding area (a place) in different ways and for a number of reasons. As many other researchers have noted (Altman and Low 1992, Smaldone 2005, Stedman et al. 2004), places, to cottagers, become meaningful because of the interaction of various attributes such as recreational experiences, natural landscape features, social ties, and length of association.

This research attempted to identify what makes a place, specifically Flanders Lake and surrounding area of Nopiming Provincial Park, a meaningful place for cottagers, and tried to determine if there were any shared meanings among cottagers which contribute to a cultural landscape of the area. This case study showed that the

attributes and dimensions that give places their meaning arise through intertwined processes with constantly shifting focus.

The participants' descriptions and analyses of their photographs revealed the following shared meanings or themes: 1) recreational activities, such as fishing, ATV use, boating, hiking, berry picking; 2) nature or opportunities to view wildlife and explore the wilderness, 3) the tonic-like effect of experiences at the cottage, 4) interactions with people – family, children, neighbours and friends, and 5) special places with unique physical features.

The cultural landscape framework of cottager meanings developed in chapter five helped to visually represent why a place is culturally meaningful to cottagers. It was evident that any changes to the attributes and processes identified by cottagers as meaningful could have an impact on their cultural landscape, and consequently on their happiness and satisfaction as a cottager.

The findings point toward the importance of understanding what factors contribute to peoples' connections to places and how connections form. The search for meanings, like the meanings themselves, is and always will be a continuing and evolving process. Hopefully, these findings will add to the growing body of studies on cottaging and second home use, which help us understand how places acquire and maintain meaning in peoples' lives.

This study underscores the need to further assess the role that physical and ecological attributes of a place play in enabling or facilitating feelings of restoration (Smaldone 2005), and to distinguish between preference and attachment. By examining

people's relationships with places, in their own words, lived experience can be expressed, and more can be learned from stakeholder perspectives, beyond traditional and more orthodox ways of engaging the public.

Place-based approaches to natural resource management are increasing with an emphasis on collaborative planning (Cheng et. al 2003; Galliano 1999; McIntyre and Svanqvist 2004). Planning involves negotiating with a variety of place meanings. It is essential to consider the full breadth of a particular group's place meanings.

Determining those meanings is challenging and suggests that an interpretive rather than survey based data collection is useful if not essential (McKintyre and Svanqvist 2004).

Cheng et al. (2003) and McKintyre and Svanqvist (2004) have called for interpretive approaches such as narratives, mapping, photography and diaries to uncover values and meanings attached to specific places, and this study has attempted to answer that call.

The cultural values of cottagers in this study are grounded in an appreciation for experiencing nature through nature-based recreational activities, and by sharing those experiences with family and friends. A profound appreciation for the therapeutic value of the experience – physical, spiritual and emotional, which the environment of a second home or cottage situated in forested and lakefront environment, is also a shared value among cottagers. Having the opportunity to experience cottage culture, has contributed to each cottagers' life in a positive and life altering way.

The human dimension of natural resource management plays a role in developing management goals, policies objectives and actions and depends to a large

extent on understanding human preferences and anticipating responses to actions.

Exploring human dimensions can help identify where opportunities exist for integrated natural resource management and planning, where barriers may occur, and can both help identify potential causes for conflict and possible solutions.

The effectiveness of natural resource management rests on the extent to which human dimension insights have been incorporated into planning. Research that looks at public participation processes can reveal the extent of the stakes people and communities hold, perceived magnitude of problems, and acceptability of proposed options. It is fair to conclude that human dimension research is not a panacea, but it should be recognized as a part of the overall information pool which managers rely on to make decisions and qualitative assessments relative to management options. The cultural landscapes of all stakeholders can provide valuable information when considering the human dimensions of natural resource management.

Recreational places, such as cottage developments and adjacent areas, have shared meanings among individuals which can result in place attachment. A positive relationship between emotional attachment and civic action indicates that place attachment influences public involvement (Payton et al. 2005; Williams et al. 1992). Payton et al. (2005) suggests that place attachment is worthy of management attention because not only does it provide insight into the human dimension – meanings, motives and actions, but can also influence the creation of trust between the public and managers. In this study of cottagers at Flanders Lake, place attachment was evident because of the close relationship to the land and local environment. Land use managers

have an opportunity to tap into what makes people attached to a place, and form collaborative and long lasting relationships with stakeholders, by acknowledging and building upon place-based relationships.

6.1 Study Conclusions

The objectives of this research were to identify what makes Flanders Lake and surrounding area of Nopiming Provincial Park a meaningful place for cottagers; determine if there are shared meanings among cottagers; and consider the implications of the cultural landscape of cottagers for natural resource management.

This study contributes to a further understanding of the social and cultural importance of cottaging. It confirms previous findings (Kaltenborn 1997, McKintyre and Svanqvist 2004, Vitterso 2007), especially on the significance of recreational activity and contact with wilderness. Outdoor recreational activities, however, are only one aspect among a wider set of reasons for owning or visiting a cottage – individuals want to connect with natural processes.

This study demonstrates and supports an interpretive approach which can be used to define perspectives and meanings by a particular stakeholder group, in this case, cottagers. It also details a process for eliciting those meanings from stakeholders. Researchers have contended that ways in which valued places can be located and integrated into planning processes are lacking (McKintyre et al. 2004). This study also shows that participant-empowering techniques are available and should be used when possible.

The research findings suggest a number of conclusions. This case study showed that it is possible to determine what people value about a place and the most meaningful aspects, and that many of those attributes are shared between community members. Nonetheless, dissecting constituent parts of a collective body of shared, interrelated and sometimes dependent meanings is complex, and is not always possible, nor desirable. A holistic system best represented by the nexus of nature and culture can provide insight into the complete set of shared meanings for individuals in a community.

Shared meanings of cottagers include the importance of recreational experiences on the land and lake; relationships and experiences with people; interactions with nature and wildlife; the tonic-like and therapeutic effect of cottaging; and the collection of special places in and around their cottage at Flanders Lake and the Nopiming Park Area. These meanings represent the unique cultural landscape of cottagers, which may very well share similarities with other cottaging communities and area stakeholders, or could be very different. Cottagers are interested in a range of experiences linked to specific places (for example, Abitibi Trail, Summerhill Creek in Figure 5).

The cultural landscape approach used for this research, combined with photo-elicitation, proved to be an effective way to decipher peoples' perceptions about a place. It was also an empowering way for people to engage in meaningful consultation. This technique showed that stakeholders may be emotionally attached to a place, and place attachment should be taken into consideration.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this qualitative study examining cottagers' cultural landscape, the following recommendations are proposed:

1) Managers should pay attention to the subjective, place-based perspectives of stakeholders to ensure that the human dimensions of natural resource management is considered in decision-making. The use and integration of cultural landscapes is recommended as a means of integrating ecological and socio-cultural stakeholder perspectives by revealing shared and/or diverse place-meanings. For example, during the development of management plans, cultural landscapes of communities and groups who use or occupy the landscape should be considered and integrated. By investigating the cultural landscape of stakeholders, complex and shared meanings are better able to be negotiated, and potential areas of conflict can be identified and considered particularly in multiple land use situations.

2) Institutions and governments should investigate and conduct more research on the cultural landscape of cottaging communities and other stakeholder groups in multiple land use areas, in Manitoba and Canada. For example, this study exclusively examined the cultural landscape of one particular cottaging community. This cultural landscape may or may not have shared or similar meanings with another cottaging community. In addition, those meanings may or may not be shared with other interest groups or First Nations communities that use or visit the area. Future research should continue

investigating cottaging communities in other areas of the province and country, and cultural landscapes of other stakeholder groups that use or visit those same areas.

Future research could also explore ownership patterns with respect to age, gender and ethnicity. Cottagers, based on the results of this study, were predominantly Caucasian, and of European descent. It would be interesting to explore the perceptions of recent immigrants to Canada and whether they have been exposed to cottaging since arriving in Canada, and if they have a desire to experience cottage ownership. It would be interesting to determine any shared cultural values between cottagers and immigrants new to cottaging.

3) Institutions and governments should expand the use of photo-elicitation as a tool to investigate stakeholder perspectives on natural resource and park management

issues. Self directed photography is a very empowering tool that is easily accessible and can break down barriers of communication between researcher/manager and participant/public. Using photography to identify stakeholder perspectives and values has great potential and should be used more frequently to decipher natural resource management issues and to help determine best suited options and alternatives.

Triangulation of results is easily obtainable when using resident employed photography combined with mapping, interviews and ground truthing.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

This study assessed a relatively small number of people (n =19) and their connections to a place. All of the participants were cottagers at Flanders Lake – a unique cottaging community with its easily accessible wilderness areas, 10 horsepower motor restriction, and numerous opportunities for recreational activities.

If decision-makers engaged in land use planning and natural resource management are to effectively manage multiple land use areas, the human dimension of natural resource management must be thoroughly considered. Scientific, objective and quantitative data is only one source of information to base decisions; the cultural landscape of individuals and groups provides valuable information that can contribute to effective and integrated planning processes.

This study showed that subjective, interpretive research techniques, such as photography and narratives, have the ability to provide complementary information on place-based meanings for land use planning and management. Managers and researchers contend that natural resource management is most effective when based on adaptive, science-based and place-centered approaches. Investigating stakeholder perspectives on land use planning and management would benefit from interpretive assessments of place meanings using photo-elicitation, as was demonstrated in this study, which supports a more holistic and integrative approach to natural resource management.

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APPENDIX A – CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Cultural Landscapes of Cottagers in Nopiming Provincial Park

Researcher: Anjanette Zielinski

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to explore landscape meanings of cottagers with the goal of understanding cottagers' relationship to place. This study has the potential to improve current decision making and park management in Manitoba and to influence public participation processes in resource management.

You were asked to participate based on personal communications with the researcher and other participants. As part of this research, you will be asked questions about your perceptions and experiences at your cottage and in the park. Only the researcher (Anjanette Zielinski) and supervisor (Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt) will have access to the answers you provide.

If you choose to take part in this study, you will be given a 24 exposure single use camera and to photograph people, places, or objects that are meaningful to you in and around the area of your cottage. Once you have completed taking photographs, you can contact Anjanette to schedule a time for camera pick up. The film will be developed, printed and brought to the interview. An interview (1-2 hours) will be conducted to discuss the meaning of the photographs and elaborate on the significance. An audio voice-recorder will be used to record the interview and stored in a multimedia database. Participants are asked for permission to use their photographs and/or interview by the researcher in print form. If you would like to remain anonymous, you can do so by using a pseudonym or choose to have the photograph or interview omitted. A draft copy of the interview transcript will be provided to you to verify and change to protect your anonymity.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. Your name will remain anonymous and any information you provide is completely confidential and will not be shared with any other participants or appear directly linked to any information in future documents. At the end of the project, a copy of the research results will be made available to you, and a gift of gratitude for your participation.

Please indicate the following:

1. I wish to remain anonymous for this research but you are free to use my photographs and interview data for your research. Yes ____ No ____
2. I give you permission to use my photographs and interview data in your research for publication. Yes ____ No ____
3. I give you permission to use my photographs and interview data for your research but I request that you review with me and obtain my permission to use photographs and direct quotes in your publications. Yes ____ No ____

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you have any questions please call the researcher, Anjanette Zielinski at (telephone and email) or my supervisor Iain Davidson-Hunt at (telephone number and email).

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you.

Participant's name (please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Information

Name, Age, Occupation, Number of children, Original or non-original owner

1. How many years have you owned a cottage at Flanders Lake?
2. How often do you come to the cottage? Year round?
3. How many years have you visited Nopiming Park, and what areas of the Park?
4. Do you have past experience cottaging, and where?
5. Why did you or your family decide to purchase or build at Flanders Lake?
6. What areas (on topographic map) do you visit around Flanders Lake and in Nopiming?

Photographs

A) Describe the following for each of your photographs:

1. Why did you take this picture?
2. Where was the picture taken?
3. Who or what is in the picture?

B) Select your **6 favorite** or most meaningful photographs.

(Note: Have participants focus on the content or what they were trying to capture on camera, and not the photographic quality of the picture.)

4. Why did you pick these specific pictures?
5. What is meaningful about each picture?
6. Can you provide a title or name for the 6 pictures?

D) Select your **3 favorite** or most meaningful photographs.

7. Is there anything else that is meaningful about cottaging and the area that you were unable to capture on camera? Please describe.

Thank you for your time and sharing your photographs with me.

APPENDIX C – STUDY INFORMATION

SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FOR STUDY ON COTTAGING IN NOPIMING PROVINCIAL PARK

Hello fellow cottagers. I am undertaking a graduate research project to explore landscape meanings of cottagers. The goal of the project is to better understand cottagers' relationship to a place and determine what is meaningful about cottaging in Nopiming.

I am seeking first and second generation cottagers, 18 years and older, both male and female. If you agree to participate, I will provide you with a single use camera and ask you to photograph people, places, or objects that are meaningful to you at your cottage and around the area.

Once you are done taking pictures, I will pick up the cameras, print the photographs, and meet with you to talk about your pictures. The interview should last 1-2 hours. After the study is complete, I will give you a copy of the interview transcript, along with copies of your photographs as well as a gift of appreciation for participating in the study.

If you are interested in participating in this research project, want further details or know another cottager on Flanders Lake that might be keen, please contact me at telephone or email.

Thanks.

Anjanette Zielinski
Master's Student
Natural Resources Institute
University of Manitoba

http://www.umanitoba.ca/institutes/natural_resources/