

CALLING LAKE RANGER STATION

HISTORICAL INTERESTS

The Calling Lake Ranger District once belonged to the old Athabasca Forest which had its head office in Athabasca. The Forest consisted of Wandering River, Smith, Calling Lake and Athabasca. Dexter Champion and Jack MacGregor were previous superintendents of this Forest District. In 1949, the Department of Lands and Mines were split forming the Department of Mines and Minerals and the Department of Lands and Forests. The Lac La Biche Forest boundary included the area north of the North Saskatchewan River to the northern boundary of Alberta. In 1955, the Lac La Biche Forest became the Forest as is known today.

The Fisheries separated from Lands and Forests in 1963/64 in the yellow zone. Previous to this, all Rangers were required to look after Fisheries as well as Forestry. In 1968, the Green Zone was also included in Fish and Wildlife duties.

Gisli Gislason was one of the Ranger/Fisheries inspectors followed by Charlie Carter, who retired about 1940 or 1941. Ludwig Silver took over from Charlie in 1941 and continued his duties until 1944. Bill McPherson worked as a Summer Ranger from 1943 to 1949. Ludwig

Bill McPherson became the first Ranger to be stationed in Calling Lake in 1949. Bill had moved to this area in 1938 where he had a homestead just south of where Frank Crawford now resides. Bill then moved to a house in the townsite of Calling Lake. Later he built his own home, which stood for a number of years in an abandoned state until it burned in 1985. Bill retired in 1961.

Ernie Stroebele came to Calling Lake in 1959 and became Chief Ranger in 1961, when Bill retired. Ernie took up residence in the new office/house unit #094 which had just been built in 1958/59. Ernie left Calling Lake in 1964 and now works in the Edson Forest.

After Bill McPherson's retirement, Owen Bolster transferred to Calling Lake in February of 1962 and became Assistant to Ernie Stroebele. Owen moved into unit #095 just completed. Owen transferred to Conklin in August of 1964.

Dennis Howells transferred in as Chief Ranger in August of 1964. He was Chief Ranger of Calling Lake until November of 1976, when he transferred to Whitecourt, where he is still stationed. As Chief Ranger, Dennis had the following personnel as assistants: Bernie Gauthier, Ed Jeskow, Ken Porter, Joe Smith, Larry Berube, Peter Rooke, Gary Mandrusiak, Tony Znak and Glen MacPherson.

-Gottfried-

RANGER REMINISCENCES

Most people can remember something that stands out in their memories, Rangers being no exception.

Here are some interesting points:

There is an excerpt from the Athabasca Echo, dated September 27, 1935; Charlie Carter was traveling to Athabasca from Calling Lake on horseback, when a monstrous black bear came out of the bush at him. Apparently, Charlie wasn't frightened, just moved out of the way, and let the bear have the road. The bear just went on by.

Ray Olsson once had to get a crew of firefighters picked up for export in a rush. When Ray and Butch went to find their crewboss, they found him in bed, having passed out from too much alcohol consumption. Between the two of them, Ray and Butch managed to dress him, put him in the truck and laid him down at the end of the airstrip while they went to pick up the rest of the crew. When the plane landed to pick up their crew, the still sleeping crewboss was loaded on board, the plane took off for its destination and the next morning, everyone was on the job firefighting, including the crewboss!

Ernie StroebeI remembers one weekend when he was busy painting a boat. At one end of the boat was his paint can and a gas can. A lady came running up and told him that there was a cabin on fire. Without hesitation, Ernie ran to put the paint brush into the gas can to soak before running to the fire. The lady reported him for his delay in coming to assist in fighting the fire. (Thanks, Lady!!)

One of the Rangers had to spend the night at the Calling River cabin. While he was there he had 3 visitors come in and offer him some refreshments. The Ranger thought it was sure nice to have company and the people thought enough of him to stop by. Actually, the visitors were there to set nets in the river (illegally, of course) and just made the best of their situation.

for O.V. GILSON
FISHING