

Lac Le Jeune

SITE #100301

GC1TTQP

Written & Researched by Angela Wynton

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Logan Lake, V0K 1W0

Location/Parking: N 50°29.018'
W 120°29.011'

Geocache Location: N 50°29.045'
W 120°28.896'

Accuracy: 6 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing
clues page

UTM: East 0678656;
North 5595486 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,280 m./4,200 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1

Terrain difficulty: 1.5
(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1956

Ownership: BC Provincial Park

- Access:
- Public Road
 - Year-round
 - Vehicle accessible
 - Detailed access information on next page.

For more information or to report a problem
with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0
Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com or
www.GeoTourismCanada.com

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Here



A peaceful evening at Lac Le Jeune.

In 1956 the original 47 hectares, around what was known as Costley's Lake, was designated a provincial park. Also known as Fish Lake, but officially named Lac Le Jeune in 1957, the lake honours Father Jean-Marie Raphaël Le Jeune. In 1996 an additional 118 hectares of upland and 48 hectares of foreshore was added to the park with the intention for this section to remain in its natural state.

Father Le Jeune, originally from France, arrived as a missionary to St. Joseph's parish at Kamloops Indian Reserve in 1882. He became the traveling priest to the district and served fifty years in the region. He traveled by foot and pony, learned to speak many Indian dialects, and created a script based on the Chinook language using Duployé's method of shorthand. He published books in Chinook and from 1891 to 1905 wrote a local newspaper, *The Kamloops Wawa*.

Father Le Jeune would most likely have traveled regularly in the park area on his way to the many villages in his parish. He rode his pony alone across the Nicola Plateau on the trails passing through the hilly terrain of lodgepole pine, douglas fir and engelmann spruce. You may imagine Father Le Jeune surrounded by vast and isolated uplands dotted with ponds and small lakes as he journeyed along the shores and trails of the 5 kilometre lake that would come to be his namesake.

Ah, but was he alone as he rode the forested uplands and gentle shores? No. The woods were alive with a symphony of Steller's jays, pine siskins, juncos, finches, grey jays, chickadees, woodpeckers and brilliantly coloured rufous and calliope hummingbirds. The woodland music still plays on.

Trotting along the southwest side of the large lake he would have passed by the shallows of reeds, waving and dancing with dragon-



Photo: Royal BC Museum, BC Archives, in? A:06072

Father Le Jeune's tent chapel, Nicola. c 1883

flies and damsels. Seeing the lake drain into a smaller pond surrounded by a peaceful, green open meadow, perhaps a lovely spot to rest, have a meditative lunch and water his faithful pony.

Back on the trail, pleasantly eyeing the lake to the southeast, he would soon have reached the marshlands that too were a flutter. The songs of yellow-headed blackbirds, marsh wrens, red-winged blackbirds and loons were his choral accompaniment to the soft lilt of the hymns he sang in Chinook.

Moseying along further from the large lake, Father Le Jeune would come upon hundreds of ponds, the waters brimming with life. Barrow's goldeneye, common loons, ring-necked ducks and the stately great blue heron

greeted him on his many journeys. So like many of nature's traditions, water-fowl continue to greet those who roam the shores today.

His journey would often take him closer to heaven at the height of the far hills above Lac Le Jeune. The lookout in summer was a cool respite from the sweltering heat below, as he stood in awe at the splendor of his mission territory. Not only was he taking in the magnificence and wildlife of the glorious uplands and forests, but the mule deer, moose and lynx would be quietly watching the gentle priest from the secrecy of their woods.

Brook trout, mountain whitefish and lake chum still swim in the nearby glimmering lake waters and the 'fighting rainbow trout' continue to perform their magnificent aerial displays.

Gazing up into the deep blue heavens to see an osprey or eagle circle Lac Le Jeune eyeing the trout, you can feel Father Le Jeune watching over his parish from above, still enjoying the peace and beauty of his journeys along the shores and hills of Lac Le Jeune in Gold Country.

Detailed access information:

- Located 47 km north of Merritt on Hwy #5, take the Lac Le Jeune exit.
- Follow signs to day use parking area.
- Always wear proper footwear and carry water if exploring the Park trails.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

Balf, M. (Undated). *Father Le Jeune*. In Kamloops Museum and Archives.

BCGNIS Query Results: Lac Le Jeune Locality. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from B.C. Geographical Names Web site: <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/bcgn-bin/bcg10?name=34744>

Howie, R. *Birds of Kamloops*. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from Lac Le Jeune Resort Web site: <http://www.laclejeunerestort.com/>

Lac Le Jeune Park Provincial Management Plan. (2001). In B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks.