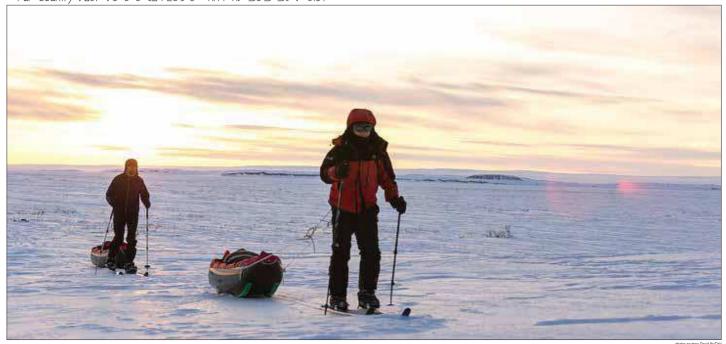
Epic voyage based on book

<\$P4 HAL°, ΔΥΓΊΤΙΝΟ Τ'ΘΕΊΝ, ΔΙΕ ΔΕΛ ΕΤΑ PUTE ΦΕΊΝΕΝΕΣ ΔΥΓΊΤΙΝΟ ΔΥΓΊΤΙΝΟ ΕΙΠ, ΦΩΥΔΙΓ, ΤΟ ΣΙΝΟΣΙΙ, ΑΦΙΘΛΙΚΑΤ ΔΥΓΊΤΙΝΟΣ ΤΗ Fur Country ΡΔΑ΄ ΑΦΙΘΟ ΚΑΤΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΘΕ ΜΠΕΘΙΝΟΣΙΑΙ ΑΘΕΊΤΙΝΟΣ ΤΗ ΕΕΝΕ Country ΡΔΑ΄ ΑΦΙΘΟ ΚΑΤΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΘΕΊΝΟΣ ΤΟ ΑΘΕΊΤΙΝΟΣ ΤΟ ΤΑΘΕΊΤΙΝΟΣ ΤΗ ΕΕΝΕΣΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΑΙΚΑΤΟΣΙΚΑΤ



photos courtesy David Ho/DnV

Pascal Hemon, expedition leader, left, and Philippe Garcia in the final stretch of their literary trek from Gameti, NWT, to Kugluktuk, based on the novel The Fur Country by French turn-of-the-century writer Jules Verne.

Adventurers passionate and determined, said Nunavut conservation officer

by Michele LeTourneau Northern News Services Kugluktuk

As a child growing up across the world in France, Pascal Hemon read adventure books by authors like Jules Verne, who wrote such best-sellers as Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea and Around the World in 80 Days.

Verne wrote 54 novels published between 1863 and 1905 under the master title Extraordinary Voyages. One such voyage, titled The Fur Country, forms the basis of the trek Hemon and his fellow adventurer Philippe Garcia completed April 22 at Kugluktuk.

"It's fiction. It's absolutely fiction, of course. But one of the characteristics of Jules Verne is that he had an amazing documentation. He was not a traveller, himself. He stayed in his house in France. But he received from all over the world huge documentation, and very precise," said Dominique Simonneau, logistic expert for the team, speaking for the men.

In the footsteps of literary adventurers

Their trek from Gameti in the Northwest Territories to Kugluktuk attempts to retrace the steps walked by the characters in the book. The 500km distance was covered over 35 days, while pulling 90-kilogram pulkas.

Outside Kugluktuk, at a cabin at Dismal Lake, they were met by hunters Johnathan Niptanatiak and Jeffrey Niptanatiak, sons of conservation officer Allen Niptanatiak, himself a seasoned hunter of 40 years. Allen Niptanatiak has

known these travellers since 2010
"I was originally involved with the last attempted trip

in May 2010 when the group

tried to walk and ski from

the south of Great Bear to Kugluktuk," said Allen. "I gave them the waypoints and

the route to travel so as to avoid the big hills or too much trees and soft snow which could hamper the travelling."

Allen explains that trip was cut short when the adventurers needed to be airlifted out.

"So when they were attempting this again I was kept up to date as to how they were doing and I was sort of on standby in case they had any emergencies or needed to be

rescued by snowmobile."

The Kugluktuk hunter and Government of Nunavut conservation officer says he often gets questions from people seeking advice.

"I am always willing to help someone whether it is from the community or it is someone from outside, foreigner or traveller. We have always been helped by our parents and elders, who have passed on some form of knowledge, and it is up to us to keep passing this on. The right knowledge has, and will always, make difficult travel much easier for someone who asks for help."

Though Allen has read a lot of other history books and journals, he has not read

Verne's The Fur Country. He intends on reading it now.

W h e n asked if anything about

"It is human

nature that keeps

us going on and

looking to seek

adventure or ful-

fillment in life."

and Garcia had

two harrowing

experiences. In

one, two wolves

says

Simonneau

Hemon

Hemon, Garcia and Simonneau stood out, Niptanatiak says, "It is their determination and passion to complete the trip that stood out, and I think that we all at some point in life are put through this similar test

"My first impression is, 'Why are they doing this."

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Lights

Allen Niptanatiak

e." separated from the pack, deciding the men might make a good meal. The two wolves stalked the two men – who carried no weapons – waiting for them even as they shifted their route.

"That was the only time they were scared. (The wolves) were sitting just in front on their route. They continued to walk, because they had to. When the wolves were at 150 metres, they remembered the best thing to do is stand tall and make big noises."

The two men yelled and

sang in loud, strong voices, using language that cannot be repeated. The two wolves left, running.
"They were facing real difficulties, very hard diffi-

difficulties, very hard difficulties, in between the north of Hottah Lake and the south of Great Bear Lake. They had to cross a part of the bush where no one is (travelling). It's not the route taken with the snowmobiles," said Simonneau.

Where the duo usually averaged about 20 km a day, during this leg they barely managed two kilometres a day.

day.

"For six days it was very difficult, very challenging. When you arrive in the evening, you set up the tent and you see that you progressed by two kilometres and you are exhausted, it's difficult for the morale."

And although they were used to cold weather, unrelenting daily and nightly temperatures well below -25C also challenged them.

"Because you are camping in the cold and exhausted, your body doesn't recover very much," said Simonneau, who added the two men never felt they were in danger.

The inspiration behind a challenging feat

Allen wonders wh motivates such people.

"My first impression is, 'Why are they doing this' and when I asked more questions, I understand the trip and the reasons better," he says. "It usually is to cover some past history of some group or to seek adventure in the repeating of the trip today compared to long ago."

He also sometimes thinks, "Why not just ask the aboriginals who have been doing his for hundreds of years who are doing this to survive and was the only mode of transportation?"

"But then I think about it and think what a great way to see the land and any wildlife that you may encounter along the way. Also, what a great and unique experience to do this."

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While Hemon and Garcia braved the wild, the wolves and the cold, Simonneau had a different task.

"I (made) inquiries from people who know about the land and verifying what Jules Verne was saying was right or wrong, fiction or actual fact. And except in a few, very few areas, it's really actual. So it's very precise description of the land," says Simonneau.

On her return to France, Simonneau will be investigating where Verne got his information, by studying at the museum where all of his archival material is kept. Eventually, the trip and the research will develop into a

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Pascal Hemon, expedition leader, and Philippe Garcia in the final stretch of their literary trek from Gameti, NWT, to Kugluktuk.