Walkers of the North

Crossing the Barren Grounds across the taiga and the tundra

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The North from the Northwest Territories to Nunavut

A crossing from the south to the north of the Barren Grounds
60 days, 800 km with skis and pulka, starting mid-march 2010

The route

This expedition is inspired by Samuel Hearne's journal, A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. We will discover a splendid nature while walking in the steps of aboriginal people. Starting from Yellowknife, near Great Slave Lake (Northwest Territories), we will progress towards of the east of the Great Bear Lake near the Arctic Circle.

A turn will bring us to the left bank of the Coppermine River which we will follow up to the sea shore and Kugluktuk, an inuit village in Nunavut. During the first third of the crossing a stop will be organized at Gameti, a First Nations community.





Two stages

- (i) Yellowknife Gameti, 300 km on the Déné territory
- (ii) 500 km to reach Kugluktuk located on inuit territory.

Godmother

Marie-Hélène Fraïssé is the godmother of the expedition

Journalist, writer, reporter and radio producer at France-Culture, she has established the french edition of the Samuel Hearne's journal in 2002.

The cost

Our overall budget reaches 25000 €, including the whole required equipment, clothes, food, fuel, flights and transportations, communication and insurances.

Communication and media exposure

Following of the expedition thanks to a blog
Film and videos for educational purpose
Conferences and festivals
Press covers and website



Expedition organized by Diagonale-Groenland An association created in 2003 www.diagonale-groenland.asso.fr



Samuel Hearne (1745-1792), the walker of the North

Samuel Hearne, an explorer and a fur trader of the Hudson Bay Company, was looking for the North-West passage by rivers and seas. "The Walker of the North" succeeded in the first crossing trough the tundra departing from Churchill, on the Hudson Bay, between 1770 and 1772. We came upon his travel narrative partly due to the French sailor, La Pérouse. Hearne was imprisoned in Prince-of-Wales Harbor in 1782 by La Pérouse, who confiscated his notes. Yet, La Pérouse gave back his writings to Hearne on the condition that they were to be published. The narrative only came out in 1792, a few days before Samuel Hearne's death.



From the taiga to the tundra

Two First Nations share the vast territory of the Barren Grounds. In the south, the Chipewyan and the Dogribs live in the sub-arctic taiga. In the days of Samuel Hearne, they were named Yellow-Knives or Dogribs. At present, they name themselves Dene: "the People".

In the North, one has to travel along a territory where trees are replaced by marshes and short grass. Those who were named "Copper Eskimos" live there, on the shore of the Arctic Ocean. Today, the Inuinnait are a sedentary people and live in Kugluktuk -- " where there are rapids" -- on the mouth of the Coppermine River.

Encounters between the Dene and the Inuinnait weren't always as friendly...





The Walkers of the North







Pascal Hémon

Our Expedition leader, 45

Has a passion for Arctic and ice. Crossing Iceland, Baffin Island, Greenland ice cap, Spitzberg, Labrador, East cost of Greenland, Lap land. His greatest assets: sens of human contact and masters organisational matters. Photographs, writes and films. Aerodynamics engineer in CNRS



Céline Espardellier

ORDOUES

42 years old

KEEWATIN

Fascinated by the Arctic and inuit world, studies inuit language and culture in Paris University. Crossing the Greenland ice-cap, Lap land, biking across France. Her greatest assests: creates shows and films inspired by her travels and passions. Theater director and actress.



Yann Couillard

37 years old

Skiing, riding, trekking (Island), biking (New Zeland tour), kayaking (Scoresby Sund , east Greenland). His greatest assests: fascinated by snow and wind, Yann cannot afford to live in any place other than in alps. Photographs and films.

Mountain guide in Vanoise



Dominique Simonneau

Logistic assistance in rear base, she is 62.

Numerous sailing trips in polar areas. Dominique will be based in Kugluktuk during the expedition and will bring her mastering of large projects to the benefit of the expedition. Her greatest assests: studies inuit language and culture, films and writes. Formerly was director for large industrial projects.

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