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***Within Katahdin's Realm:
Log Drives and Sporting Camps***

Part I

Logging

Chapter 5

The Debsconeag Lakes Watershed

First and Second Debsconeag Lakes

Third through Eighth Debsconeag Lakes

Discovering More History on My Explorations

January 2018

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Chapter 5

The Debsconeag Lakes Watershed

The Debsconeag watershed rises in Eighth Debsconeag Lake and passes through Seventh Lake below which Sixth Debsconeag Lake joins the flow before the watershed reaches Fifth Lake. Here an unnamed string of tiny ponds enters from the north and Stink Pond drains in from the northeast. The watershed continues through Fourth and Third lakes to Second Lake where two streams flow into the lake. One comes from Moose, a no-name, and Big Beaver ponds. The other stream drains from Big Minister, Little Minister, and Daisey ponds. Second Lake flows into First Lake with its thoroughfare into the West Branch of the Penobscot River at the northwest corner of the Debsconeag Deadwater.

The only logging most of this watershed has been subject to is by men with hand tools, animals, and their supporting tote roads. A primary reason for the lack of mechanized logging was a 1924 forest fire that swept from Rainbow Stream east onto the upper shores of Third Lake. Even though substantial regrowth covers much of the area, it has always been difficult to reach from a main tote road network.

Loggers cut their way into the watershed in the mid- to late-1830s from three different starting points. Those who cut below Third Lake came from the Debsconeag Deadwater through First Lake. Loggers at Third Lake entered the watershed via the Nahmakanta supply route from the head of Pemadumcook Lake at Nahmakanta Stream. Crews in the uppermost portion of the watershed came in from the head of Nahmakanta Lake. All early cutting done between Third and Eighth lakes was within hauling distance of either Nahmakanta or Pemadumcook lakes.

No dams existed in the watershed before 1869, and it is not clear when a crew built the first one. A charter granted to the West Branch Dam and Improvement Company in 1871

Debsoneag Chain,
Nahmakanta,
West Branch

Nesowadnehunk Tote Road

floating bridge

Millinocket Tote Road

dam: red bar on waterway logging
camp: unfilled red box
major tote roads: red lines
sporting camp: unfilled green box

White House

Michaud

Farquhar

Spencer

river ford

Millinocket Tote Road

1924 Rainbow fire boundary

sluice

McPheters

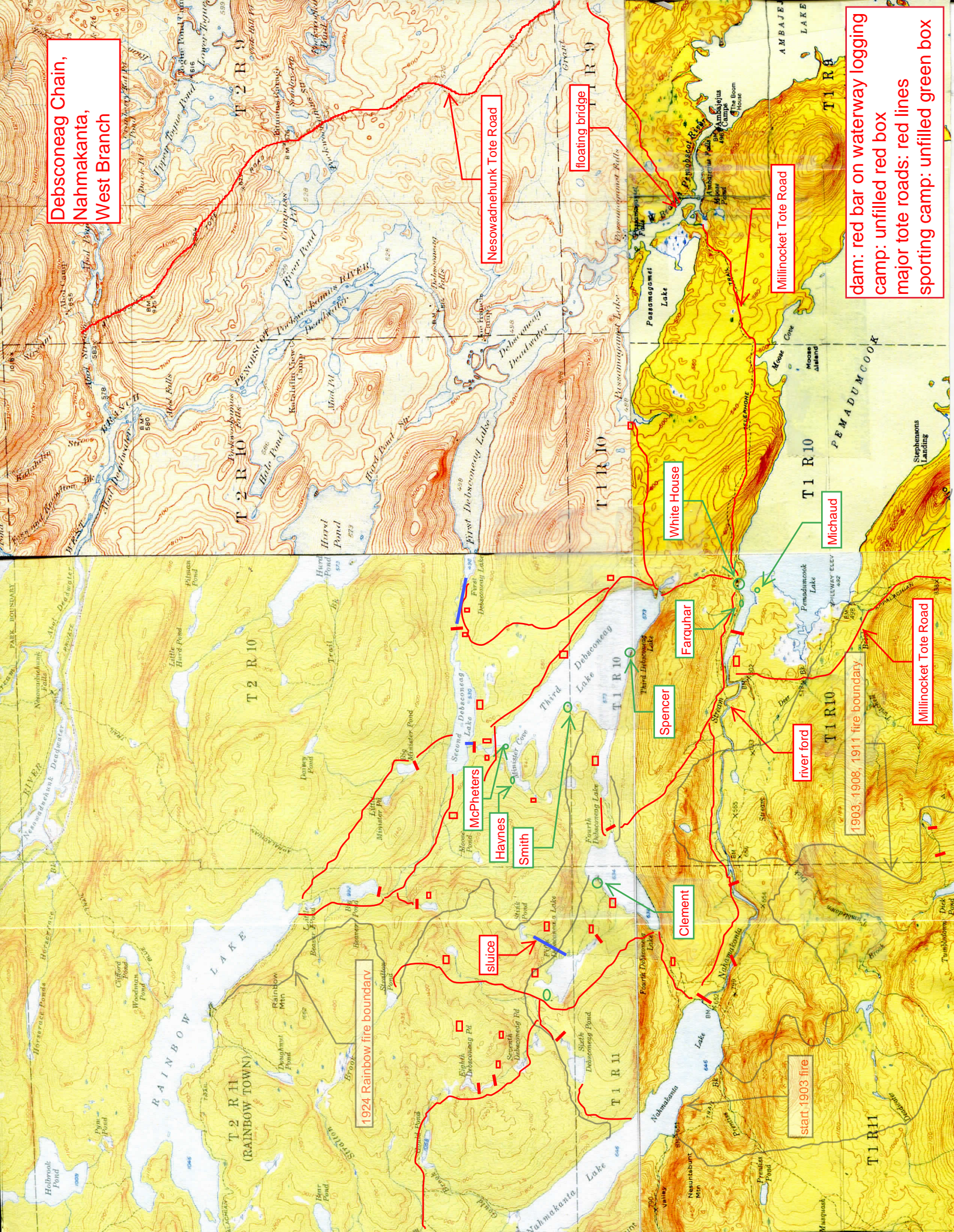
Haynes

Smith

Clement

start, 1903 fire

1903, 1908, 1911 fire boundary



provides for dam construction and waterway improvements on the West Branch and its tributaries.¹ Once the company recouped its expenses plus interest, a structure became the property of the Penobscot Log Driving Company (PLDC). Absent other information, the new West Branch Company likely built the dams after 1871. The dams at Second and Third lakes were operating in 1905, and in February 1910 Thomas W. Clark, the GNP hydrology engineer who oversaw the 1905 rebuilding of the Ambajetus Dike, visited the dam sites, perhaps in preparation for their 1912 rebuilding.² A 1911 summer water report indicated sufficient heads of water in both lakes.³ Great Northern Paper Company (GNP) invested \$1,233.45 for waterway improvements in 1911.⁴

First and Second Debsconeag Lakes

An 1832 timber survey indicated that lumbermen had not yet harvested the top-quality pine at the Debsconeag Deadwater.⁵ Robert Gibson's crews were in the area by 1835 and haying the swales for their oxen.⁶ Given the close proximity of First Lake and its negotiable thoroughfare, it is likely loggers cut the pine close to the lake about this time. Unknown loggers cut around First Lake over the next forty-five or more years. In 1880, the camp at the deadwater was in operation

¹ Acts and Resolves and Special Laws of the State of Maine passed by the Legislature of the State of Maine, 1822–1945.

² Thomas Welcome Clark Papers, privately held

³ Fred Gilbert letter to Garret Schenk dated June 26, 1911, GNP Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections

⁴ West Branch Driving and Reservoir Co. January 1903 – March 31, 1913 available at Katahdin Forest Management Maine Division of Acadian Timber Archives

⁵ Kelsey, Joseph L. Field Notes for Survey of September–October 1832 of T2R9

⁶ Jackson, Charles T. *Second Annual Report of the Geology of the Public Lands Belonging to the State of Maine and Massachusetts*. Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, State Printers, 1838.

and that suggests loggers were cutting on the lower reaches of the Debsconeag chain. In 1882–1883, Howard Perkins cut and hauled his cut to the Debsconeag Deadwater with four horses and twelve men from an unknown camp location.⁷ Loggers cut the area within a mile or so of the upper end of the lake at least once before 1890 when they hauled logs to the landing at the inlet. Although someone probably cut elsewhere on the lake in the ensuing years, the next documented logger was Ernest Ladd, who cut pine logs in 1932 on the south side near the inlet and on the north side near the outlet.⁸ Crews cut the south side of the lake from about the midpoint to west of the inlet in 1935.⁹ In the early 1950s, men logged the area south of First Lake and hauled to either the lake or the deadwater. These were likely the watershed’s last operations that drove logs to market.

The Chesuncook and Ripogenous dams and Mother Nature controlled First Lake’s water level. The mouth of the thoroughfare between the West Branch and the lake may have been narrowed by what appears to be a side dam, which in 2014 supported substantial tree growth.¹⁰ Both the outlet and inlet are shallow at summer water levels. However, in April 1894, the Prescott H. Vose party came through the thoroughfare and noted the islands in the Debsconeag Deadwater were beneath two to three feet of water.¹¹ With the added depth, drivers towed small booms through the thoroughfare. Two usable headworks were on the lake’s 1921–1922 Great Northern Paper Company (GNP) inventory.¹²

⁷ *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 25, 1883, p. 3,

⁸ GNP Division of Forest Engineering, Township 2 Range 10, April 5, 1932

⁹ cuts mapped on Township 2 Range 10, October 10, 1934

¹⁰ Geller exploration

¹¹ Vose, Prescott H. “Katahdin in ’94.” *Appalachia* 15, no. 7 (June 1949).

¹² GNP Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections

When logs first passed down-stream into First Lake is unknown, but it may have been after 1870. Oxen had a reasonable hauling distance and gentle terrain between any point around Second Lake and the well-used landing at First Lake's inlet. Early lumbermen may have been able to drive their small cuts from Second Lake on the stream before a dam existed; however, the stream appears not to have been cleared of rocks. Given loggers were working farther up in the watershed and driving logs by at least the early 1880s, a dam was likely in place by then.

In 1912, GNP rebuilt the Second Lake's dam, which was 100 yards down the outlet.¹³ The new dam incorporated a sluice on the stream's south side. This sluice was one of the first built by GNP. Whether true or not, stories persist that some loggers rode logs down the sluice at night for the thrill of it. A small camp probably for men working the sluice was on the north side of the stream not far above First Lake. Loggers had another camp at about the midpoint on the tote road to Second Lake.¹⁴

Second Lake received logs from four sources: the area surrounding its shore, Big Minister Pond, Big Beaver Pond, and Third Lake. Loggers built at least three camps on Second Lake. One was on the south side at the dam, another was at the third brook on the south shore, and the third was at the foot of the sluice from Third Lake. When loggers used the south shore camp is unknown, but it may have been the abandoned one Vose stayed in on his 1894 journey. The drivers used the camp at the dam and sluice in 1909, and each year they drove the stream.

Although no specific documentation of logging in the Big Minister watershed has been found, a tote road (c. 1906) ran from Second Lake to Big Minister Pond on the east side of the brook and connected to a tote road from the West Branch via Daisey Pond and Big Beaver Pond

¹³ Hempstead, Alfred G., *The Penobscot Boom*. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1931. Hempstead wrote that the dam was built in 1912, but old maps and scalars reports indicate it was in place much earlier.

¹⁴ ground evidence still exists at the sites in this paragraph

to Rainbow Lake's southeast cove.¹⁵ Loggers cut the area from Big Minister Pond westerly through Little Minister Pond to Big Beaver Pond and Rainbow Lake sometime before the 1924 Rainbow fire and did not return until 2002–2003.¹⁶

The outlet stream of Big Beaver Pond flows into Second Lake's west end, which was a meadow in 1936.¹⁷ When loggers started cutting along the brook is unknown. About 1910, they had a camp up the valley at the junction with the brook from Moose Pond. Those cutting southeast of Moose Pond on the slope to Third Lake hauled, with the aid of a snub line, a little over a mile to Minister Cove on Third Lake.¹⁸ No discovered documentation indicates the pond had a dam.

The next tributary from the west was from a no-name pond, called "Saddle Pond East" by area sportsmen. The loggers built a camp at the pond's outlet and drove the stream.¹⁹ The crews likely dynamited the dam to release the water all at once to flush the logs into the valley and the drainage from Big Beaver Pond. At one time, loggers also used a snub line to aid in lowering horse-drawn sleds down the steep hillside on the west side of the outlet stream. The last cut from this camp was about 1922 because of the 1924 forest fire. Given the topography and distance to either Third Lake or Second Lake, a dam was necessary for each operation.

¹⁵ Katahdin to East Branch, Pleasant River (October 1935), Appalachian Trail map appearing in the 1936 issue of *Guide to the Maine Appalachian Trail in Maine* and GNP Division Forest Engineering, Township 2 Range 10, Feb. 12, 1915

¹⁶ Geller's presence in the area after 1990

¹⁷ "In the Maine Woods, 1936"

¹⁸ conversation with Doug Farquhar

¹⁹ Geller explorations and undated map Township 2 Range 11, State Ass. Report 1912

Big Beaver Pond probably had a dam given the dam at Saddle Pond East and that the tote road ran across the middle of the south hillside well above the valley floor. Loggers cut in the valley in 1911 and on the west side of the pond two years later.²⁰

I was surprised about how little documentation I found on logging in the First and Second lakes area. My explorations of the area helped fill in some information. Beginning with a trip in 1987 and puzzling me until 2009 was a rock crib in the stream at the head of First Lake. In 2009, I walked down across the rocks to the very foot of Second Lake and found the dam. The opening on the right side suggested a sluice and I followed it to the rock crib. In some places, the sluice rested on the ground, in others on a trestle, and in another used a man-made cut in the land. On another trip, I fished the connecting stream, found no indication of rock removal, and wondered how the drivers got logs around a garage-size rock below the last deadwater—probably with a lot of water.

In weighing whether or not loggers drove the outlet stream from Big Minister Pond, I noted a small delta and extensive sandbar at its mouth on Second Lake. That sand came from the stream when water released from a probable horse dam took much of the soil on either side of the current stream, leaving a ground of exposed rocks now covered by moss, decaying trees, and young tree growth. Current spring runoff does not reach these sections. No sign of a rock crib dam remains, but the narrow outlet could have been easily blocked. No signs of a dam exist at Little Minister Pond, which drains from a small bowl to Big Minister Pond and is within an easy hauling distance. The headwater of the Big Minister watershed is Daisey Pond, about a mile through swampy area to the north. The outlet has no indicators of a previous dam, but with a horse dam and its outlet stream clear-cut, loggers could have driven it or hauled to Big Minister

²⁰ cuts and camps mapped on: GNP Division Forest Engineering, Township 2 Range 10, October 10, 1934, and Township 2 Range 11, October 1922

Pond. Daisey Pond sits in a saddle with the north side falling away to Hurd Pond and the West branch. Hauling could have gone northeast to Trail Brook.

I was equally curious about Moose Pond, Saddle Pond East, and Big Beaver Pond. To reach Moose Pond, Bob Kimber and I left from the end of Second Lake on a compass course. The Moose Pond outlet has no indicators of a dam, and its channel is narrow and crooked all the way to the valley floor. Logs cut could have been hauled into the valley. At Saddle Pond East, we found a logging camp of three buildings at its outlet as evidenced by tools left behind, new trees growing up through old barrel hoops, and the outline of the buildings on the ground. The Big Beaver outlet had no dam remains, but a huge cut pine log still rests on a ledge at the outlet. The waterway below the outlet is steep and rocky with the appearance of being undisturbed, but given they drove logs from Saddle Pond East, then in comparison, driving from here would be no harder, and water was likely needed to support driving farther down the valley.

On our way to Moose Pond, we crossed two barely discernable tote roads. The first was at the midpoint of our route, and after following it later, we found it ran between Minister Cove on Third Lake and Rainbow Lake via Big Beaver Pond. The second was near Moose Pond and went down the hill and intersected the lower road on a knoll above Minister Cove. Beyond Moose Pond, we lost the road that from at least 1910 to 1922 continued on to Saddle Pond East.

For years, I remained puzzled regarding Third Lake's current dam. It seemed to me that its expense and size were unnecessary before 1900. In connecting Third Lake to Second Lake, the stream makes a large sweeping reverse "S" turn. Lumbermen who built the earliest dam at Third Lake probably constructed it about the same time as the one at Second Lake and likely placed it at the middle of the backward "S" at the foot of what now is a small pond that is at best a couple feet lower than the lake. A small dam here would have flooded out the upper part of the

“S” and created a smooth channel, though not deep, from Third Lake. The currently exposed channel at the outlet has no large rocks, and all the small ones appear to be the result of blasting. Given a tote road crossed at this point, it was necessarily shallow.

In 1912, when GNP rebuilt the dam with a 590-foot sluice on the east side, the company relocated the dam to the foot of the final turn in the “S,” flooding out the old dam and creating an open smooth body of water between the old dam and Third Lake. Although the dam was 150 feet long and nearly 27 feet high, it only controlled a maximum 2 feet 10 inches of lake level because of the elevation difference between its base and Third Lake.²¹ However, the storage capacity was 107 million cubic feet of water, and that capacity, combined with a water-saving sluice, was of great value to GNP in 1912 and worth the expense. Such a volume of water was of no value to anyone before 1900. Before 1903, once a drive was over, the loggers left a dam’s gates open.²²

Third through Eighth Debsconeag Lakes

In the mid- to late-1830s, crews were working their way up the Nahmakanta watershed and cutting within two miles either side of it as long as the haul was level to downhill. This suggests that the area around Third Debsconeag Lake was probably culled for its first quality pine at this time. The Bradley 1842 survey of T2R11 W.E.L.S. found that loggers had cut the first quality pine on both sides of the upper portion of Nahmakanta Lake.²³ The easternmost cut reached the area between Fifth and Eighth Debsconeag lakes, and teamsters hauled the logs to Nahmakanta

²¹ Measurements of Dams, April 1913, Book #150, GNP document, Marc Johnson Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections

²² “Water Course. Detention. Rights of Dam Company.” Private and Special Laws, 1903, chapter 174, section 15. This law provided conditions for water storage that was not previously allowed year-round.

²³ Bradley, Zebulon. Field Notes for Survey of August 15, 1842 of T2R11.

Lake. Given the area's small streams, loggers likely used this same strategy when they came back for more pine perhaps twenty years later. Thus, logging in the area in this era probably did not reach over the ridgeline north of Nahmakanta Stream into Fourth and Fifth lakes.

Loggers cutting in the watershed after the 1870s likely drove their logs through it into Third Lake. The alternative, hauling to Nahmakanta Lake, was not practical, especially from the far east side of the watershed given the distances and terrain. At some early time, perhaps between 1870 and 1880, loggers built rock crib dams at Fourth and Fifth lakes. The Fifth Lake dam, which was at the foot of the deadwater below the lake, was about 20 feet high with a side dam of 100 feet.²⁴ Given a scalar's 1913 report that logs could not be driven at the time and that loggers cut in past years, it seems likely that they rebuilt both dams about 1913.²⁵

Loggers cutting above Fifth Lake either hauled to Fifth Lake or drove the stream with the aid of horse dams or both. One exception was a sluice that linked Stink Pond and Fifth Lake. When they first built it is unknown, but likely after 1900. It ran between some unknown site on the north shore and Stink Pond. The 1924 forest fire consumed the camp and the sluice. Whether Fifth Lake's other tributary from a no name pond, referred to as Saddle Pond West by area sportsmen had any dams is unknown. However, the hauling grade along the stream was reasonable.

Crews worked into this upper Debsconeag area via pre-1900 tote roads with a main hub at southeast corner of Third Lake, the terminus of the old and continuously used tote route from Pemadumcook Lake.²⁶ From the Third Lake landing, one tote road went up the east side of Third

²⁴ Geller on site estimation

²⁵ Penobscot Development Company Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections, Report Twp. No.1 R.11 W.E.L.S. Piscataquis County, Maine, April 1913

²⁶ Topographical Map T. 1 R. X September 1909; Plan of T. 1 R.10 State Ass. Report 1914

Lake, passed through a large logging camp about halfway to the dam, and crossed the outlet to a camp on the north side. On a rise behind the camp, the road intersected another from Minister Cove to Rainbow Lake and continued on to Moose Pond, Saddle Pond East, and Stratton Pond. In the late 1950s when Doug Farquhar Sr. and his son Doug were flying over the tote road, he noticed a reflection. When they went in on foot, they found the remains of a snubbing machine, two brass plates, and rock ledge gouged by sled runners on the tote road between Moose Pond and Saddle Pond East. A second road went to the dam at Second Debsconeag Lake, the supporting lumber camp half way along the sluice, and the inlet of First Lake. The third tote road terminated at the west end of Passamagamet Lake. At some point, the Great Northern Paper Company (GNP) built a garage at the carry from Pemadumcook Lake for housing the vehicles brought in over the ice and used on the tote roads leading to Third Lake, Second Lake, and Passamagamet Lake (c. 1920–1950).

At the head of Third Lake, one road went along the north side of the stream to reach the Fourth Lake dam site before continuing to Fifth Lake and Eighth Lake on the east side of the drainage with connections to Rainbow Stream, Rainbow Lake, and Nahmakanta Lake.²⁷

For the logging at Fourth Lake between 1912 and 1924, an early tote road, starting from the head of Pemadumcook Lake, ran a short distance up Nahmakanta Stream before moving northwest over a low point in the ridge to the dam at Fourth Lake. A tote road, the centuries-old portage route, ran from the head of Fourth Lake past a horse hovel just short of the height of land to the Nahmakanta Dam. Loggers used this road network until the fire of 1924.

²⁷ GNP Division Forest Engineering Township 2 Range 10, Feb. 12, 1915; Township 1 Range 11, Piscataquis County, undated and Ira D. Eastman, Township No. 2 Range 11 (W.E.L.S.) as explored October 1900

The other road hub was at the head of Fifth Lake, which loggers reached on a tote road from Fifth Lake dam along the east side of the lake to the inlet and camp at the north end.²⁸ From there, a tote road (c. 1900) went northwesterly to the ridge above Sixth Lake and along its crest to the head of Nahmakanta Lake. A side road went to the outlet of Sixth Lake, crossed it on the ice, and dropped over the hillside to Nahmakanta Lake. Another tote road went up the valley as far as a camp near the west side of Saddle Pond West.

When the ice was solid, the teamsters crossed Third Lake on the ice, but when there was none, they used both bateaux and headworks. The 1921–1922 inventory listed one headworks in use on Third Lake. In 1913, GNP built a 30-foot boathouse near the landing at the southeast corner of the lake. In the early years, the boathouse was for bateaux, but given the close proximity to Pemadumcook Lake, motorized craft may have been operating on the lake by the early 1920s.

By 1867, loggers had cut the second-quality pine. A 1913 cruiser's map indicated that logging took place north of Third Lake and up to and at least surrounding Fifth and Sixth Lake well before 1900.²⁹ The map designated heavily cut areas where spruce and fir reproduction were excellent. This would suggest loggers cut the area previously, perhaps in the mid-1870s. Documented cutting occurred in the watershed from Fifth to Eighth lakes around 1882.³⁰ Logging camps at Fifth Lake, near Seventh Lake, east of Eighth Lake, and on Saddle Pond West likely opened in support of this early cutting.

²⁸ Plan of Township 2 Range 11 W.E.L.S., December 19, 1900 and Growth Plan of TWP. 2R11 W.E.L.S., January 1922

²⁹ GNP, T2R11, cruise map, July 23, 1913

³⁰ Ira D. Eastman, Township No.2 R.11 W.E.L.S. as explored October 1900

Loggers cut again in the Fourth to Seventh Lake area in the 1890s. A crew built a logging camp on the south shore of Fourth Lake at the outlet. They cut the area around both Stink Pond and Saddle Pond West in 1899.³¹ A 1900 map places a camp of five buildings including a blacksmith shop at the midpoint of the stream to Stink Pond and another near the junction of the drainage from Seventh Lake and Saddle Pond West.³² A 1908 scalar's report indicates that logs were going into one or more of the Debsconeag Lakes at Fifth or lower.³³ Loggers cut at Stink Pond again in 1908 and in pockets between Fifth and Eighth lakes in 1911. In 1910, a camp, presumably a logger's camp, was on Fourth Lake at the stream from Fifth Lake. Given loggers drove the stream, the camp may have supported booming operations. In 1911, loggers cut the north side of Third Lake's southwest finger. They cut the area around Fourth Lake in 1912 and 1913.³⁴

At Third Lake, loggers cut in 1907 and 1909 from a logging camp on the north shore in the northwest finger opposite the end of the tote road from the head of Pemadumcook Lake. In 1909, they had camps at the Second Lake dam (south side), Third Lake dam, the westernmost corner of Minister Cove, and the west side of the body of water the outlet flows into above the dam. The location of the depot camp for these operations is unknown; they predate the GNP Debsconeag depot camp on Pemadumcook Lake at the portage to Third Lake.

Before 1910, Francisco O. Estes, a sawmill operator at South Twin Lake's Partridge Cove near the railroad, had a few buildings and a hovel at the head of Pemadumcook Lake. He

³¹ Ira D. Eastman, Township No. 2 Range 11 (W.E.L.S.) as explored October 1900

³² GNP Division of Forest Engineering, Township 2 Range 11 W.E.L.S., October 1922

³³ Northern Maine Land Company. "Plan of Township 2 Range 11 W.E.L.S. December 19,1908."

³⁴ cuts mapped on: GNP Division of Forest Engineering, Township 1 Range 10, Sept. 18, 1940

selectively cut pine and spruce in the area, but whether he cut on and hauled from Third Lake is unknown.

Beginning in 1912–1913, the Debsconeag depot camp at the mouth of Nahmakanta Stream was the supply hub for the Debsconeag lakes' loggers for the next twelve years.³⁵ In 1912, a boom of logs was ready and waiting in Third Lake for the completion of the rebuilt dams. The extent of the operations from 1912–1924 is evident in that seven different camps operated in the area in 1913 and 1914, logs were put on the lake by at least one operation in 1916, and six camps were running in 1918. The depot camp also supported crews landing logs on nearby Passamagamet and Pemadumcook lakes.

Cutting continued into the 1920s. The four-building camp on the east shore in the north cove at Fifth Lake burned about 1921, but loggers replaced it with two buildings above the Fifth Lake dam on the east side. The January 1922 GNP report recommended that teamsters haul logs from Fourth and Fifth lakes to Nahmakanta Lake, but a March 1922 report of the Penobscot Development Company indicated that logs were going into Fifth Lake and spilling into Fourth Lake.³⁶ Teamsters may have hauled some logs as recommended. In 1923, GNP made an investment of \$20,000 in an unknown project in the Debsconeag area.³⁷ The investment was not in camps or roads, but was most likely in its rock crib dams or sluices or both. An April 1924 GNP report reiterated the hauling recommendation of the January 1922 report, but there is no

³⁵ Fred Gilbert Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections Penobscot Development Company. "Growth Plan of TWP 1R11 W.E.L.S. January 1922." Penobscot Development Company. "Growth Plan of TWP 2R11 W.E.L.S. January 1922."

³⁶ Penobscot Company Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections, Report Twp. No.2 R11 WELS Piscataquis County, Maine, March 1922

³⁷ GNP Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections

information on what action the loggers took.³⁸ A summer 1924 GNP report indicated that 4 foot of head was still available for the drive at Second Lake dam.³⁹

Logging stopped in the watershed after the fire of 1924, the Rainbow fire.⁴⁰ Not much standing timber of value was lost in the fire because crews had already cut most of it. The fire burned east from Rainbow Stream engulfing the watershed above Fifth Lake. Its north line moved southeast from the middle of the south side of Rainbow Lake, crossed the hilltop north of Fourth Lake, and continued easterly, burning the south half of Third Lake's largest peninsula. The fire's southern line came down the shore of Nahmakanta Lake, stopped at about the lake's midpoint, stayed along the north side of Sixth Lake, swung around north side of Fifth Lake, burned to the shore of Fourth Lake just east of Pleasant Point, continued to the dam where it jumped to the south side of the stream connecting Third and Fourth lakes, and soon died out. Logging has never returned to this burned area or the north side of Third Lake. Modern-day logging came near Sixth and Fifth lakes via the Nahmakanta Dam area about 1975.

In the early 1930s, loggers returned to the south side of Third Lake and used the tote road on the east side. By 1932, the dam at Third Lake was unsafe to walk across and needed rebuilding to support a drive, and the dam at Second Lake could be used with some repairs.⁴¹ Loggers repaired Third Lake dam, and it was on GNP's 1936 list of dams supporting key water storage areas.⁴² How long GNP maintained the dam after that is unknown. Loggers cut the east

³⁸ Penobscot Company Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections, Report Twp. No.1 R.11 W.E.L.S. Piscataquis County, Maine, April 1924

³⁹ Fred Gilbert Papers, University of Maine Fogler Library Special Collections

⁴⁰ *The Northern*, August 1924 and mapped burn on GNP Division of Forest Engineering Township 2 Range 11, July 14, 1950

⁴¹ Sewall, James W. Field Explorations for Township T2R10, 1932.

⁴² Prouty, E. W., "Report on Storage Dams Particularly Small Ponds on West Branch Penobscot River,

end and south edge of Third Lake in 1944 and likely hauled the logs to Pemadumcook Lake.⁴³ Long pine logs, cut by Ernest Ladd to the north of the lake and south of Second Lake, were in the lake in 1946 and as late as 1948.⁴⁴ Those operations reused the circa 1912 logging campsite at about the midpoint of the east side of the lake and a camp near the old Debsconeag depot camp where Ladd had a barn for his horses. Some further cutting took place east of the same general area in 1951, and the logs probably went out through Passamagamet Lake.⁴⁵

During midwinter, Ladd's teamsters hauled the logs across Third Lake's ice and the tote road to Pemadumcook Lake where they unloaded them on the ice. His crew used a water wagon to keep the haul road between the two lakes iced. Before ice-up, Ladd's men boomed logs in Third Lake and towed them to the carry where teamsters hauled them to Pemadumcook Lake. Here, a drive crew boomed them again and towed them to the Ladd mill at Perkins Cove on South Twin Lake.

In the early 1940s, local folks, such as Rex Hale and Ray Campbell, ran the Second Lake sluice in canoes, but by the mid-1950s, the structure had collapsed and folks such as the Doug Farquhar Sr. family were soon salvaging the ironware that they used in constructing their docks on the Lower Chain Lakes. Shorty Budreau, who worked at the sporting camp on Fourth Lake in the mid-1940s, remembered the sluice at Third Lake as still very evident. Ralph Boynton, who traveled through the area in the late 1940s, described the sluice as decrepit. Some of it was still

Summer 1936"

⁴³ cuts mapped on: GNP Division of Forest Engineering, Township 1 Range 10, Sept. 18, 1940 and October 5, 1927

⁴⁴ Shorty Budreau

⁴⁵ cuts mapped on: GNP Division Forest Engineering, Township 1 Range 10, April 18, 1950

standing in 1966 when Larry Ferguson passed through on his way to Big Minister Pond. None of it was there when I first passed through in 1987.⁴⁶

Discovering More History on My Explorations

On my first canoe trip through the Debsconeag lakes in 1987, Bob Kimber and I paddled to the portage at the head of First Debsconeag Lake where we saw the rock crib whose position puzzled me. The portage was the old tote road to Second Lake and went on to Third Lake. Along the way, we walked across corduroy, preserved in the wet mud, and found a couple old logging camps. The logs of logging camp walls may rot, but they leave telltale fertile lines with trees whose roots run their length. Flour and pork barrel hoops, axe heads, camp dumps, and old sled runners somehow have escaped years of being covered by falling leaves.

From Second Lake, we portaged along the east side of the stream draining from Third Lake. Less than halfway to Third Lake was its startlingly huge dam holding back a small but deep pond of water that the stream exited at its south corner. We canoed across to the pond's inlet and carried around a logjam. Years later on another visit I realized that the logjam covered the original dam site, and that the big dam below, at one time even bigger, flooded out the original dam site and its impoundment extended into Third Lake. We looked for a camping place in Third Lake's southwest finger, but only found the remains of two old boats, perhaps at the end of the tote road from Nahmakanta Stream. Between Third and Fourth lakes, the cold spring under the large boulder is still a welcome rest spot, and the perched rock is a notable landmark on the Native American canoe route. We slept in the Fourth Lake dam's barrow pit. Below the outlet is a small gorge cleared of blockages to ensure the flow of logs.

⁴⁶ conversations with Jack Hale, Larry Ferguson, Doug Farquhar, Ray Campbell, Shorty Budreau and Ralph Boynton

On our way to find the old tote road at Fifth Lake, we stopped at the old camp on Pleasant Point. An old bateau rests on the bottom of the lake in front of the camp. The tote road to Fifth Lake made for an easy walk. At the dam site at the foot of the deadwater below the lake and at the head of a ravine, I could see the old rock cribs. The wing dam I walked the top of to get there was as firm as ever.

I was curious about the precise location of the old sluice between Fifth Lake and Stink Pond. After zigzagging across the mountainside for half a day, all I found was the old logging camp that might have been near the sluice. The camp is about the midpoint of the pond's outlet brook whose upper portion runs over smooth sloping granite that may have been used as the base of the sluice. In the afternoon, I canoed the shoreline looking for a quantity of sunken logs that might suggest the end of the sluice. I discovered nothing.

I lost the old tote road in the open hardwoods where it swung across the northeast edge of the Fifth Lake and did not pick it up again until I reached the lake's northernmost point. The road ended at the remains of the old camp near the mouth of the stream from Saddle Pond West. I walked the stream to the pond and found no evidence to suggest loggers once drove it even though horse dam construction at the head of each bog and the pond would have been easy and the stream's channel is well defined and lacks obstructions.

I returned to Fifth Lake to follow the stream to Seventh and Eighth lakes. A side trip to Sixth Lake took me to the first bog downstream of the lake, the only feasible place for a dam, but I found nothing other than a beaver dam. The water flow is low, and Sixth Lake is only spring fed. Loggers hauled from the lake to Nahmakanta Lake, and I left thinking they probably also hauled to Fifth.

The stream connecting Fifth Lake to Seventh Lake passes over a set of six forested terraces. At the edge of each terrace is a beaver dam creating a small bog. The outlet at Seventh Lake is a natural opening between granite outcrops that loggers could have easily blocked with a horse dam, but no evidence of that remains. The stream enters Seventh Lake on a long, sloping, smooth granite sluice with a van-size rock near the bottom that diverted the water to the east. Above the granite sluice, the stream comes out from under a side ledge, having flowed down another sloping granite sluice from the bog immediately below Eighth Lake. Cut logs and an ideal horse dam site between granite outcrops are near the top of the sluice, but I saw no hints of a dam. The channel through this bog to Eighth Lake is clear and defined. The Eighth Lake outlet has the remains of an old dam, but it may only be an old beaver dam. The pond is small and has one tiny entering stream from a bog so it would have provided a limited water supply. Given the terrain and distances from Eighth Lake to either Fifth Lake or Gould Pond in the Rainbow watershed, loggers may have generally hauled from the area.

I have made numerous trips into the Debsconeag Lakes to look for different things, and I still have a list of corners to visit or revisit. When I first visited the watershed, I naively thought large portions of it had never been logged. How wrong I was. Every bit of it was logged, but the logging stopped before it became mechanized and has never restarted. A piece of Maine history remains undisturbed; the area is a natural museum. Water preserves any cut logs or rock cribs beneath it. Sharp edges of blasted rocks endure. Old telephone wire and insulators hung in trees makes it possible to follow an old tote road. The old thick heavy iron tote sled runners that are part of old camp remains will be present for another century. Trees growing in lines will mark the walls of the old camps. The relics of the past, if left at rest, will be present for future generations to discover.