

Torngat Mountains National Park Archaeology 2014: Silluak (North Arm 1 (310A)) Visitor Experience And Satellite Camp Survey

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For several years, the Torngat Mountains National Park (TMNP) has used the head of Silluak (North Arm) in Saglek Fiord as a satellite campsite for visitors. A recent archaeological survey and assessment of the area led to Parks Canada's decision to stop using the location as a campsite, instead opting for short term guided visits to the area (Stopp 2014). Taking into account the site's rich cultural and natural resources, I was hired in July 2014 to work with Parks Canada staff to determine and map a route for a visitor experience at North Arm 1 (310A) and also to find an alternate location for a satellite camp within the southern limits of the park in Saglek Fiord, before the park opened to visitors in mid-July (Figure 1).

Aligning with Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy to ensure that all cultural resources in and from the national park are managed and protected, the following work was conducted as part of Parks Canada commitment to document, preserve and present the cultural and natural resources for future generations, whether they are from Nunatsiavut, Newfoundland and Labrador, or the rest of Canada.

Based out of the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station, located at the head of St. John's Harbour (kANGIDLUASUK) (Figure 1 & 2), the field season ran for the first two weeks of July with the financial, logistical and other support provided by the Torngat Mountains National Park and Nunatsiavut Group of Companies. Nunatsiavut Government's Assistant Archaeologist, Michelle Davies assisted me during the Saglek Fiord portion of the fieldwork.

Satellite Base Camp Survey

The decision to stop using North Arm 1 (310A) as a campsite also meant that Parks Canada needed to find an alternate location for a satellite camp. Taking into account topography, proximity to

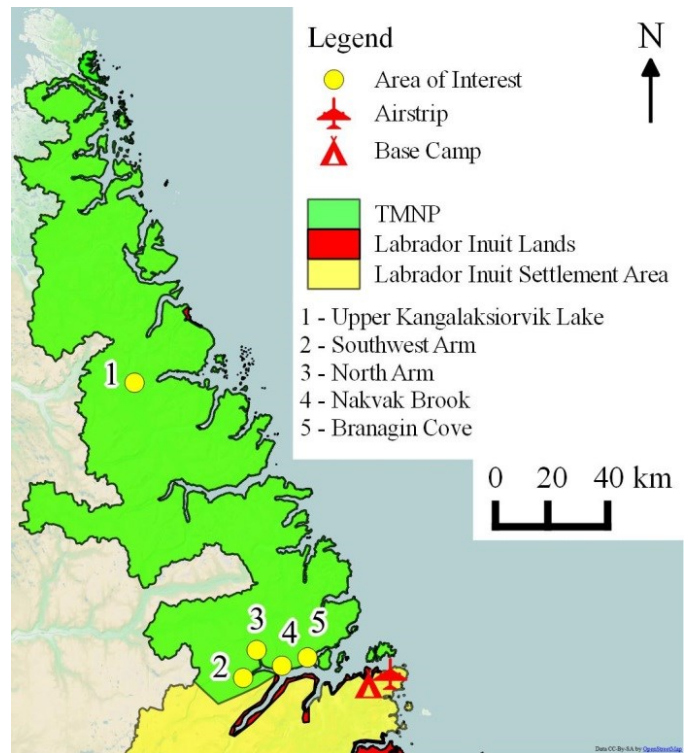


Figure 1. Map showing the location of areas discussed in the text



Figure 2. kANGIDLUASUK Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station.

water bodies, resources and previously documented archaeological sites, Parks Canada archaeologist, Jenneht Curtis, and TMNP Visitor Experience Manager, Gary Baikie, recommended three areas for archaeological survey and assessment within Saglek Fiord (Southwest Arm, Nakvak Brook and Branagin Cove), as well as additional survey areas for a research camp at Upper Kangalaksiorkvik Lake (Curtis 2014). Systematic terrestrial surveys and inventories of each area were conducted to identify and assess potential impacts on cultural resources within the potential landing, walking and campsite areas. With the primary goal of finding a suitable campsite that would not negatively impact archaeological resources, our survey also meant the recording of new or previously documented archaeological sites, which included determining the extent of each site, making initial observations about the nature of the site and recording the location of features, as time permitted. While no artifacts were collected, representative samples were photographed and recorded with GPS coordinates, in order to document the presence of various material types and diagnostic tools.

The following section highlights a sample of the new and revisited sites documented within each survey area.

Southwest Arm

The Southwest Arm survey area is situated at the western extent of Saglek Fiord, along the northern shore of the head of Southwest Arm (Figures 1 & 3). Bound by a dry and sparsely vegetated talus slope to the north, ocean and river to the east and willow grove and a waterfall fed river to the west, terrestrial survey of the area confirmed the presence of a single previously documented site within the study area and another to the east.

312A Southwest Arm 1 (IcCv-1)

Previously documented by Eric Loring in 1985, 312A is a possible Maritime Archaic site consisting of a large rectangular boulder structure and two caches (Figure 4). Relocated to be at the northern extent of the survey area, 312A is a safe distance away from the moss covered and well drained satellite campsite situated along the northern shores of the unnamed river that feeds into Southwest Arm (Figure 5).

437A Southwest Arm 3 (IcCv-3)

Documented by Brice-Bennett as a post-



**Figure 3. Southwest Arm survey (Richard Martin, John Higdon, and Michelle Davies)
(Photo Credit: Jenna Andersen 2014).**



Figure 4. Possible rectangular Maritime Archaic feature at Southwest Arm.

contact Inuit summer site (1977:138, Map 38), Southwest Arm 3, is located at the eastern extent of the survey area, on a flat grassy area, east of the river delta and directly west of a talus slope. It consists of a number of possible tent rings, as well as a cache built up against a large boulder.

Nakvak Brook

The Nakvak Brook survey area is situated 40 km west of Cape Uivak and the mouth of Saglek Bay (Figure 1). The brook provides access to the interior of the peninsula, extending inland to the Koroc River and westward to Ungava Bay and Kangiqsualujuaq (George River) or northward to the Palmer River and Nachvak Brook's Tallek Arm. Situated along the western side of the river, the study area includes a landing area to the south of the alluvial flood plain and potential campsites to the north (Figure 6). Not only does a hike along Nakvak Brook serve as one of TMNP's visitor attractions, but accessibility to the area will be increased virtually in the coming year or two via



Figure 5. Southwest Arm satellite camp location, facing northwest.

Google Street View (Figure 7).

During the course of our multi day survey of the area, we documented two new sites and two previously documented within the study area.

306A Nakvak Brook 2 (IdCt-3)

Previously documented by Calum Thomson in 1985, this Maritime Archaic site features possible habitation structures, caches, hearths and numerous lithic scatters. Spanning the entire terrace, Thomson divided the site into two loci, a third locus was documented during the 2014 field season. Thomson’s Loci 1 and 2 were relocated with extensive field survey of the terraces and the relocation of a white Saglek quartzite block, mentioned in his field notes (Figure 8). Amongst the Ramah and Mugford (black and grey-green) chert flakes, there were also three bifaces and a few utilized flakes (Figure 9).

307A Nakvak Brook 1 (IcCt-1)

First tested by Schledermann in 1970, 307A is situated along the west bank of Nakvak Brook, south of the first prominent 15m terrace. It is a twentieth century Inuit habitation site with the remnants of three sod houses, tent rings, caches and several cairn graves, some with associated caches (Figure 10). Schledermann notes that the “winter and sum-



Figure 6. Nakvak Brook, facing north.

Figure 7. Morgan Anderson (L) and Andrew Andersen (R) walking with the Google Street View camera at Nakvak Brook.

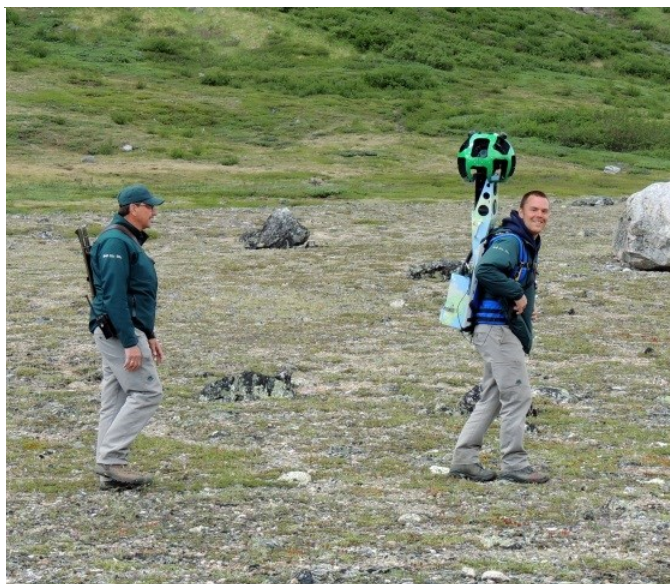




Figure 8. 306A Locus 1 and White Saglek quartzite block. (Left: Thomson 1985:2, Right: Higdon 2014).



Figure 9. Ramah chert biface from 306A Locus 3.

Figure 10. Nakvak Brook, overlooking 307A from 434A terrace, facing south toward Saglek Fiord.





Figure 11. Cast Iron stove fragment from 307A.

mer fishing camp structures, consisted of sods wall covered by a canvas tent” (1971:30). He noted that during his visit to the area, an Inuit family with a fishing camp on the opposite shore of the brook had indicated that they had in fact built and lived in one of the houses (1971:120). Coincidentally enough, during the course of my survey, I was told that the mother of two of my bear monitors was born and raised at the site as well. Spot finds included: a recent ceramic plate fragment associated with one of the tent rings, long thin



Figure 12. Orange flags noting the presence of lithics at 433A.

scraps of metal and the front of a stove (Figure 11).

433A Nakvak Brook 5 (IdCq-02)

433A is a newly documented site located along the western side of Nakvak Brook, on a low-lying gravel and cobble outcrop to the south of the prominent terraces. In the midst of the proposed camping area, we quickly noted the presence of five large lithic scatters and an amorphous possible tent ring. While no diagnostic flakes were observed, concentrations of Ramah, Mugford (black and grey-green) and quartzite flakes were recorded (Figure 12).

434A Nakvak Brook 6 (IcCt-10)

Also located on the western side of Nakvak Brook, 434A is located on a 15m high terrace overlooking the brook’s alluvial flood plain and the grassy terrace containing 307A. It consists of a rectangular structure with a large associated lithic scatter (Ramah and black Mugford chert); as well as two knapping stations and a number of spot finds. A rectangular rock formation appears to be eroding out of the bank and sandy blowout to the west (Figure 13).

The presence of four archaeological sites along the proposed camp and landing areas meant that this area was deemed unsuitable for use as a satellite camp location.

Branagin Cove

Branagin Cove is situated on the north shore of Saglek Fiord, west of the Jens Haven Island (Figure 1). Oriented to the northeast, the interior of Branagin Cove is a wet grassy area bound by steep hills to the

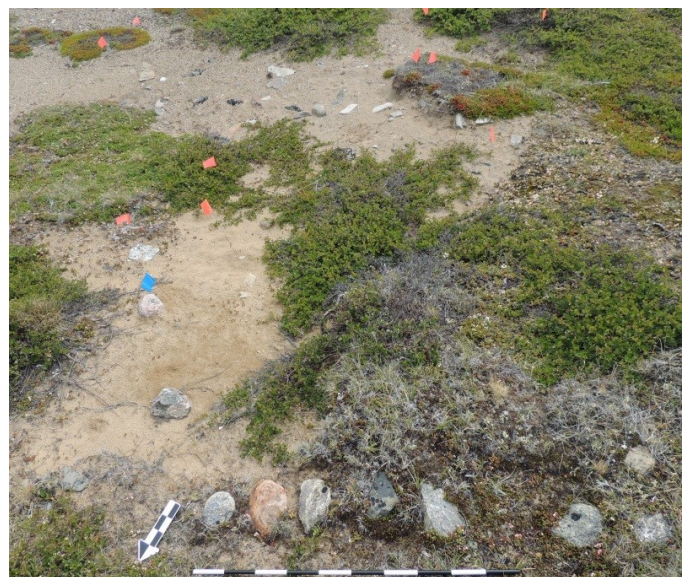


Figure 13. Rectangular feature (434A1).



Figure 14. Aerial view of Branagin Cove, facing northeast with 300A situated to the west of the snow bank in the middle of the image.

north, east and west, with limited access to the interior (Figure 14)

Situated at the mouth of the river, the landing area was quickly deemed unsuitable for practical use, as it was relatively inaccessible during low tide with no place to moor or bring ashore one's boat. Finding ourselves initially accessing the survey area by boat, we soon found out that any parties landing at the cove would have to come ashore to the south of the tidal zone, not surprisingly, in the midst of two previously documented Inuit sites, including well over 40 Inuit tent rings and the remains of Fort Lampson (298A), a former Hudson's Bay trading post and fishing station (1867 – 1878) (Archives of Manitoba n.d., Thomson 1994).

While no archaeological sites were documented during the course of our survey of the proposed campsites, located 0.5km and 1.5km north along the river, both areas were in the end deemed unsuitable for use as satellite camping areas. Not only were they generally wet and uneven, but the bear monitors that accompanied us avidly mentioned how the areas were too far away from the ocean and where they would prefer to moor their boats.

Two archaeological sites, 300A and 432A, were documented during the course of the survey.

300A Branagin Cove 4 (IdCs-9)

Relatively inaccessible by boat due to the low tidal zone and shoals, 300A is located on the eastern

edge of the stream. With a pre GPS location previously plotted by Thomson in 1988, we were tasked with defining the limits of the site, in the event that the area was deemed suitable for use as a satellite base camp. The site is comprised of a wet and mossy area punctuated by three gravel and boulder outcrops along the shore and an additional outcrop on the 8m a.s.l. terrace to the east (Figure 15). Thomson (1988) describes the site as a Maritime Archaic flaking station, lookout and fishing camp. With spot finds amongst three of the outcrops, the most substantial of the four outcrops, 300A1, measured approximately 40m x 50m. This area of the site contained three large lithic scatters and one centralized around a large rock (Figure 16), over 100 Ramah chert flakes, two black Mugford chert flakes and two utilized/retouched Ramah chert flakes (Figure 17).

432A Branagin Cove 6 (IdCs-16)

Situated on a rocky quartzite outcrop on the western side of the outlet for Branagin Cove, 432A is located at the south eastern extent of the survey area. The site was encountered at the end of the day, as we were waiting for our helicopter pickup; as such we were only able to note the presence of a possible cache (Figure 18). A more extensive investigation of the area is required.

In sum, coupled with a relatively inaccessible landing area and wet and uneven proposed camp site



Figure 15. Close up of gravel and boulder outcrops containing 300A4 (left) and 300A1 (right).



Figure 16. Close up of 300A1 knapping station and related lithic scatter.



Figure 17. Retouched Ramah chert flake from 300A1 lithic scatter.



Figure 18. 432A with close up of outcrop and potential cache.



Figure 19. Overlooking the recommended Upper Kangalaksiorvik Lake satellite camp location.

locations, Branagin Cove was deemed unsuitable for use as a satellite camp.

Taking into the results of the three surveyed areas, Southwest Arm was chosen as the ideal location of a satellite camp, within the park.

Upper Kangalaksiorvik Lake

Upper Kangalaksiorvik Lake is located 130km north east of Saglek Bay and 25km inland from Seven Islands Bay (Figure 1). Accessible primarily via helicopter, five potential camping areas were selected around the 7.5km long freshwater lake. A satellite campsite established here would start as a base for researchers with the potential to expand to include visitors (Curtis 2014:7). Assisted by Parks Canada staff and Nunatsiavut Government's Rodd Laing, unforeseen circumstances meant that we were only able to survey three out of the five locations.

During the survey we were able to clear one location as a suitable area for a satellite camp site (Figure 19) and dismiss two areas as unsuitable because they were too close to the high tide mark and the surrounding willow offered little visibility for keeping the place safe from polar bear and other animal incursions. Owing to the rich research potential of the area, in addition to locating three new and relocating a previously documented archaeological site, we were also successful in fulfilling Laing's mandate to determine the location and presence of harbour (ranger) seals (*Phoca vitulina*) within the lake (Figure 20). This would prove significant, as further research would be required to determine whether or not their presence in the lake is seasonal, or if they are amongst the rare populations of seals that reside in freshwater lakes year-round, as is the case in northern Quebec's Lacs des

Loup Marin (Baird 2001:664) or Russia's Lake Baikal (Miyazaki 2009:188).

Summaries of the three previously undocumented and single relocated archaeological sites are as follows:

130A Kangalaksiorvik Lake 2 (IiDb-02)

Situated on a sandy and grassy terrace along the southern shore of Upper Kangalaksiorvik Lake (Figure 21), Kaplan described this site as a Paleo-Eskimo and Inuit spring and summer habitation site, as evidenced by the tent rings, caches, grave and boulder features (1983:768). While we did not have time to touch down on the site, we able to spot archaeological features from the air and thus confirm the location



Figure 20. Harbour (Ranger) seals (*Phoca vitulina*) spotted at Upper Kangalaksiorvik Lake.



Figure 21. 130A Kangalaksiorvik Lake 2, facing south.



Figure 22. 439A Kangalaksiorvik Lake 4, facing west.

of the site. With an abundance of seals in the waters to the south of the site, it may be a worthwhile research project to try and determine whether or not aforementioned seals would have been in the area during the human habitation of the site.

438A Kagalaksiorvik Lake 5 (IiDb-04)

438A is located atop a 60m a.s.l. gravel terrace, to the west of the river that feeds into the northwestern end of the lake. Quickly noted as we departed the helicopter on route to the satellite camp survey area, this site consists of two features, a partially collapsed inukshuk and a cache against the leeward side of a large boulder.

439A Kagalaksiorvik Lake 4 (IiDb-03)

Also located at the northwestern end of the lake, 439A is situated on a 25m a.s.l. gravel terrace, 280m north of the lake and bounded by the hill to the north, with featureless gravel terraces to the east, grass and lichen to the south and willow and a small stream to the west (Figure 22). 439A consists of an indetermi-



Figure 24. Aerial view of hunting blind at 440A.

ing blind and a possible cache feature built up against a large boulder (Figure 24), but did not have time to set down at the site and adequately survey the area. Additional survey of the area is required to determine the nature and the extent of the site.

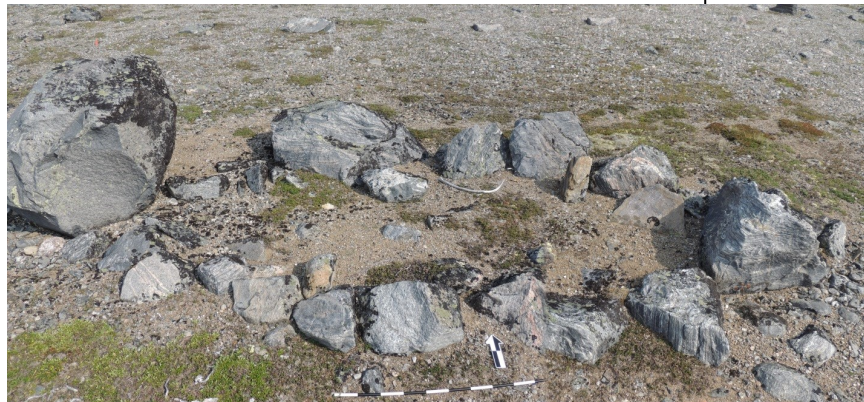


Figure 23. Oval feature 439A1.

nate 2m x 5m oval structure (Figure 23) and two amorphous structures, possibly tent rings. No artifacts were found in association with the features and as such, the culture of the site remains undetermined.

440A Kagalaksiorvik Lake 6 (IiDa-03)

Situated on the southeastern end of the lake, 440A is located atop a 40m a.s.l. gravel terrace along the southeastern end of the lake, approximately 1km east of the prominent river delta, and two of the proposed survey areas. With the areas surrounding the river delta deemed unsuitable for use as satellite camp sites, we quickly flew over the area to the east to find a viable alternative. In doing so, we came across a hunt-

In the end, paucity of time and fuel, couples with the need to find an adequate camp area, meant that the previously used camp location at the northwestern end of the lake was selected for use as a location for a viable research camp (Figure 19).

310A North Arm 1 Visitor Experience

Found at the head of North Arm, Saglek Fiord, 310A North Arm 1 (IdCu-02) is a 55 hectare site bisected by former creek beds and two active rivers that divide the area into three distinct areas (Figure 25). For the purposes of data organization, they were named Locus 1, 2 and 3. The site is comprised of over 113 features, ranging from ca. 3000 year old Pre-Dorset axial hearth and lithic scatters, to a rich range of cultural features associated with Inuit land use and settlement, namely cairn graves, caches, tent rings, fox traps and other stone features (Stopp 2014)

Building on Parks Canada’s 2013 fieldwork and recommendations, we visited the site with Parks Canada staff, Gary Baike, Jenna Andersen, Andrew Andersen and Jobie Unatweenuk to develop the North Arm Visitor experience. This included: mapping out a route from the landing area along beach, up to the

grassy terrace to a location that overlooks a sample of the site's features, and then northward to the waterfall and unnamed lake. Augmented with interpretive and conservation messages, this information was then presented to Parks Canada and base camp staff.

Conclusion

With the head of North Arm, 310A, no longer sanctioned for camping, alternate satellite camp locations were surveyed, so that that visitors could have the opportunity to stay within the Torngat Mountains National Park, as the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station is located just outside the park's boundaries (Figure 1). Survey revealed Southwest Arm to be the ideal candidate for use as a satellite campsite, as the others had too many archaeological sites and/or were too wet and inaccessible for use. In addition to this, a research camp location was surveyed and approved at the northwest extent of Upper Kangalaksiorsvik Lake. The documentation of seven new and five previously recorded sites within the survey areas not only aided in the selection of a suitable campsites, but add to the rich history of the area.

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Figure 25. 310A North Arm 1, facing north.

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