

Archaeology in Torngat Mountains National Park and kitjigattalik - The Ramah Chert Quarries National Historic Site

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Figure 1. Kitjigattalik National Historic Site, facing southeast.

Located in northern Labrador, Torngat Mountains National Park became a park reserve in 2005, with the implementation of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and officially obtained national park status with the ratification of the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement in 2008. From the Inuktitut word Torngait, meaning “place of the spirits”, this area has been home to Inuit and their predecessors for thousands of years. This rich cultural heritage is reflected in oral and written histories, as well as the by 413 known archaeological sites documented throughout the park.

New visitor experience programs are current-

ly being developed to showcase the cultural and natural richness of the park. As such, archaeological impact assessments were conducted to ensure that these resources are protected for Nunatsiavut and Nunavik beneficiaries, as well as visitors, for generations to come. The two projects assessed in July 2016 include the kitjigattalik - The Ramah Chert Quarries National Historic Site (NHS) Visitor Experience and the Aggiak Satellite Camp Assessment at Branagin Cove. “Inuktitut for ‘place where there is chert’, the name kitjigattalik was chosen by Co-Management Board (CMB) of Torngat Mountains National Park in 2012. The lower case is used in the spelling of



Figure 2. Ramah Chert Quarry Bowl (kitigattalik NHS, Locus 1).

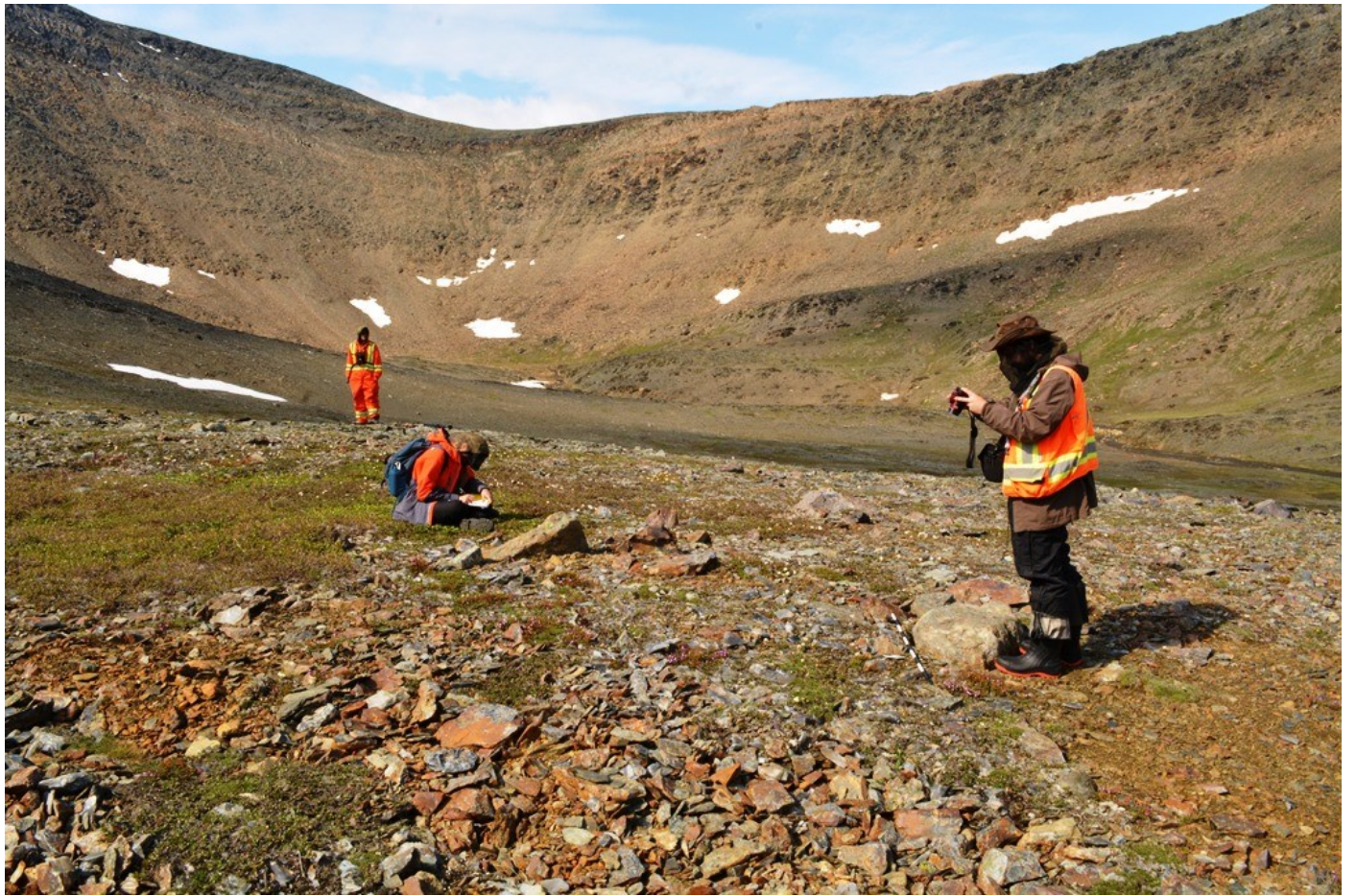


Figure 3. Recording Ramah Chert outcrops, facing west (228A Ramah Bay 1), Ryan Merkeratsuk, Michelle Davies, and author (Whitaker 2016).

Table 1. New Sites kitjigattalik NHS Visitor Experience Assessment

Parks' Number	Borden Number	Site Name	Description
456A	IfCt-20	Reddick Bight 3	Prehistoric lithic scatter with possible stone feature.
457A	IfCt-22	Ramah Bay 6	Prehistoric quarry and workshop with cores, hammer stones and debitage.
458A	IfCt-23	Hilda Creek 5	Prehistoric workshop with cores, flakes, stemmed endblade preform and with a possible tent ring.
459A	IfCt-24	Hilda Creek 6	Large pieces of Ramah Chert atop a large boulder. Lack of lichen growth indicates that it may be relatively recent.
460A	IfCt-21	Reddick Bight 4	Multi-component site - Prehistoric lithic scatter, Inuit cache and cairn grave, and possible historic grave marker.



Figure 4. Ramah Chert blocks, cores and hammer stone (228A Ramah Bay 1).

“kitjigattalik,” conforming to Labrador Inuktitut rules of pronunciation wherein a small k is pronounced as in “kite” and a capitalized K has an “h” pronunciation” (Stopp 2013:16).

Taking into account topography, proximity to water bodies, natural resources, such as char, seal, etc., and previously documented archaeological sites, brief helicopter and systematic terrestrial surveys were conducted to identify and assess potential impacts on

cultural resources within each area. This included walking five metre transects of potential visitor experience and satellite camp areas, and noting the location, extent and features associated with new and previously recorded archaeological sites. Features were flagged during the course of the survey and then recorded with GPS coordinates, photographs and measurements, as time permitted. While no artifacts were collected, representative samples of tool and material



Figure 5. Ramah Chert cores and preforms (228A Ramah Bay 1).



Figure 6. Ramah Chert lithic scatter, showing evidence of workshop (230A Hilda Creek 1).



Figure 7. Paleoeskimo (Dorset) double side notched and base fluted endblade. 229A Hilda Creek 2).

types were photographed and recorded with GPS coordinates.

kitjigattalik - The Ramah Chert Quarries National Historic Site Visitor Experience Assessment

Designated as a National Historic Site (NHS) in November 2014, kitjigattalik NHS is comprised of three locations along Ramah Bay. Each location contains Ramah chert outcrops, as well as evidence of quarrying, tool making, and camping activities (Stopp 2013:1). The quarries were designated as a national historic site primarily because they were: “actively quarried from 5,000 to 600 years ago for Ramah chert, a visually distinctive and important stone type used by several ancient cultures of the Northeast in the manufacture of tools and other objects of material culture. Ramah chert was the most widely traded

toolstone known in the Canadian Northeast and was the basis of long-distance exchange networks that extended throughout easternmost Canada and into New England” (Stopp 2013: 16).

Taking into account recommendations outlined in Curtis et. al. (2010) and discussions with Torngat Mountains National Park staff, it was determined that the focal point of the visitor experience would be the main quarry bowl (Figures 1 & 2). The area was assessed to confirm the extent of the archaeological sites in the area, and whether or not any of these areas could be incorporated into visitor experience protocol, without compromising the integrity of the cultural resources in the area. With ten known archaeological sites documented in the immediate area, this assessment also included survey of potential hiking routes and potential boat landing areas from Ramah Bay and Reddick Bight.

Preliminary Results

Five previously unrecorded archaeological sites were documented during the course of the assessment (Table 1). The assessment also expanded the extents of the main quarry site, 228A (Ramah Bay 1), pre contact workshop 416A (Hilda Creek Terrace 1), and lithic workshop and habitation sites, 229A (Hilda Creek 2) 230A (Hilda Creek 1). In line with the national historic site’s designation, these archaeological sites clearly show a progression from Ramah chert outcrop (Figure 3); to cores, preforms and hammer stones (Figures 4 and 5); to flaking debris (Figure 6) and finished tools (Figures 7 & 8).



Figure 8. Ramah Chert Labrador Archaic Biface Base (230A Hilda Creek 1).



Figure 9. Reddick Bight survey area, facing east (460A Reddick Bight 4).



Figure 10. Possible grave marker, facing west (460A Reddick Bight 4).

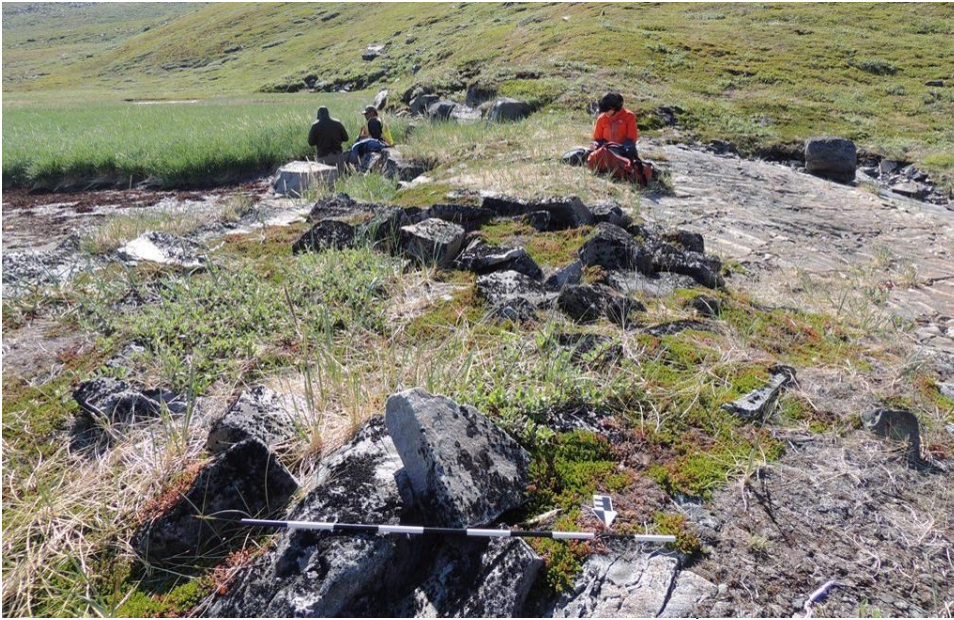


Figure 11. Documenting cache features with Michelle Davies, John Andersen and Jacko Merkeratsuk, facing south (460A Reddick Bight 4).

Given the archaeological significance and nature of the deposits, Parks Canada is proceeding with extreme caution to develop a protocol which will allow visitors to visit and learn about the area without compromising the natural and cultural integrity of the site.

Aggigiak (Branagin Cove) Satellite Camp Impact Assessment

Branagin Cove is situated on the north shore of Saglek Fiord, west of Jens Haven Island and 21km northwest of the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station. Aggigiak refers to the inland portion of Branagin Cove, namely the head of the cove around where the river empties into the ocean (Martin Loughheed, pers. comm. 2017). While potential satellite camp locations within Branagin Cove were assessed in 2014, they were not recommended because they contained archaeological sites, were too wet and uneven, and/or were too far from the boat landing area (Higdon 2015a & b). The cove's extensive low tidal zone means that the only suitable place to bring a boat ashore is at least one kilometer southeast of the river mouth, along the periphery of 298A and 299A (Table 2). A renewed interest in having a satellite camp located closer to the base camp in St. John's Harbour prompted the re-assessment of the area to the east of the river mouth and the known Maritime Archaic site, 300A (Table 2). Not only

would a satellite camp in this location be more accessible than the one currently located within Southwest Arm, but it would offer more visitor experience opportunities, including hiking, bird watching and potential guided archaeological tours.

Preliminary Results

A potential camping area was located on the east side of the river mouth in an area void of surficial archaeological features and flake scatters. The nature and extent of 298A and 299A were also re-examined, to record baseline data for cultural resource management and potential visitor experience purposes (Table 2).

Three previously unrecorded archaeological sites were also documented along the 15 to 20m elevation terrace overlooking 298A and 299A (Table 2). Survey of a sample of the exposed gravel blowouts revealed lithic scatters, but no discernable stone features (Figure 13). These lithic scatters were at the same approximate elevation as the Maritime Archaic and Paleoeskimo lithic scatters, boulder features and paving stones described by Thomson (1988) at nearby 297A. Additional research is required to determine how the occupation along these terraces relate to the cultural history of the immediate area.

References

- Canadian Intellectual Property Office
 2017 Canadian trade-mark data: 991907 (BROWNING HARVEY LIMITED, ST JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. Electronic Document, <http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/opic-cipo/trdmrks/srch/vwTrdmrk.do?lang=eng&fileNumber=991907>, accessed January 6, 2017.
 Curtis, Jenneth E., Jamie Brake, Pierre M. Desrosiers and Adrian Burke
 2010 TMNPR-2009-3232 Ramah Bay Quarry Archaeological Research Project Permit Report. On file at Atlantic Service Centre, Parks Canada, Halifax. p. 29-38. Higdon, John
 2015a Torngat Mountains National Park Archaeology 2014: Silluak (North Arm 1 (310A)) Visitor Experience and Satellite Camp Survey. In Provincial Archaeology Office 2014 Archaeology Review, Vol. 14. St. John's.
 2015b Torngat Mountains National Park Archaeology 2014: Silluak (North Arm 1 (310A)) Visitor Experience and Satellite Camp Survey. Permit Number: TMNP-2014-16437. On file,

Table 2. Branagin Cove Known archaeological sites discussed in text.

Park's Number	Borden Number	Site Name	Cultural Summary	Revisit/New
298A	IdCs-15	Fort Lampson	Hudson's Bay Post (AD 1867-1878) with house structure foundations with +40 tent rings, 16 caches, exterior hearths, indeterminate boulder features, historic artifact scatters (i.e. nails, wood, ceramics, and glass) (Thomson 1994). A jar fragments with the image of a Partridge and the words "Highest Class Preserve" were also located outside a tent ring. According to the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (2017), Browning Harvey Ltd trademark a stylized ptarmigan/willow grouse/partridge in 1931. While they initially focused on biscuits and other dry goods, they opened up a bottling plant in St. John's in 1933 (St. John's Board of Trade 2014:8).	Revisit
299A	IdCs-07	Branagin Cove 2	Inuit habitation site. +17 tent rings, cache features and artifact scatters.	Revisit
300A	IdCs-09	Branagin Cove 4	"Maritime Archaic flaking station, lookout and fishing camp" (Thomson 1988).	Revisit
453A	IdCs-17	Branagin Cove 10	Prehistoric lithic scatter (Ramah Chert, Saglek Quartzite) and weathered bone (Figure 13).	New
454A	IdCs-18	Branagin Cove 11	Prehistoric lithic scatter, Labrador Archaic Ramah Chert biface fragment (Figure 14)	New
455A	IdCs-19	Branagin Cove 12	Prehistoric lithic scatter, including Ramah Chert microblade, flakes/shatter (Ramah Chert, Mugford Chert and Saglek Quartzite)	New

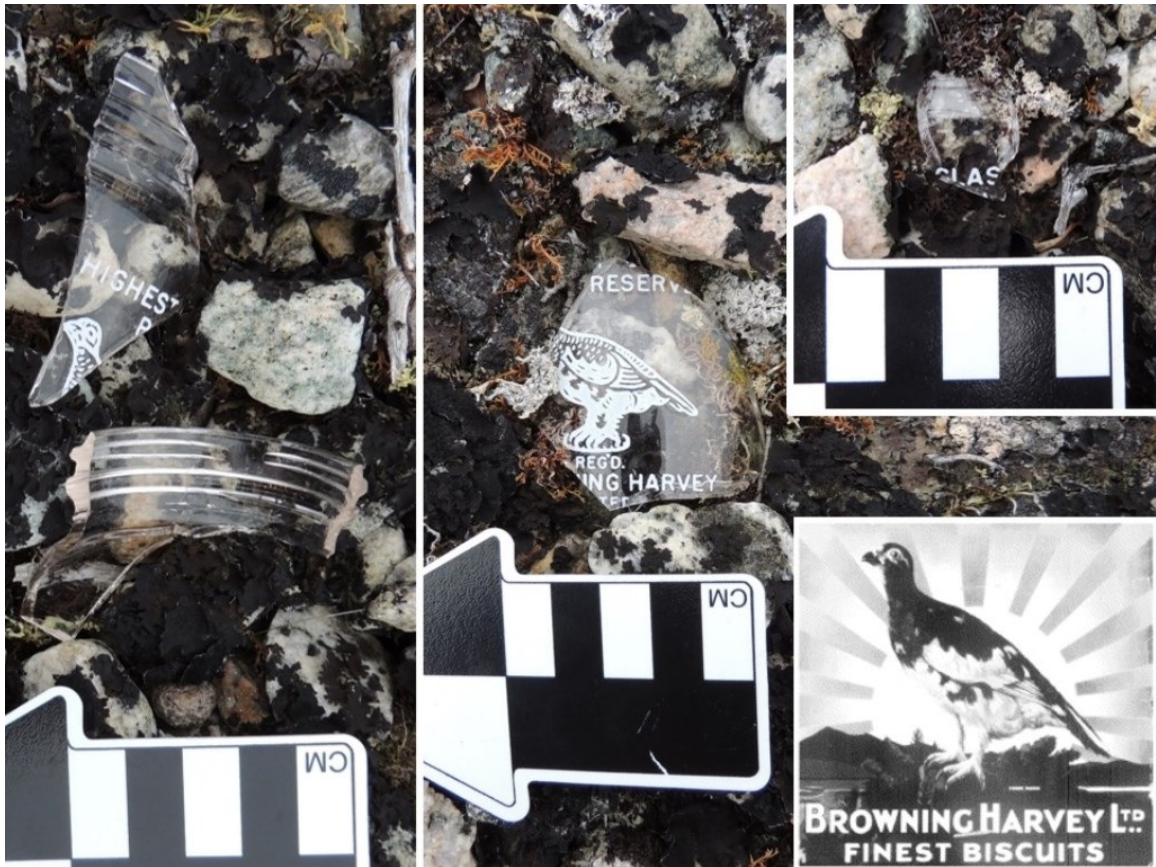


Figure 12. Browning Harvey "Highest Class Preserve" jar fragments with trademark image of Ptarmigan, Willow Grouse (Partridge) (Canadian Intellectual Property Office 2017).



Figure 13. Surveying 453A with Herman Merkeratsuk, Joe Atsatata and Wayne Broomfield.



Figure 14. Labrador Archaic biface base, 454A.

Parks Canada, Halifax. Stopp
 Stopp, Marianne
 2013. Kitjigattalik - The Ramah Chert Quarries. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Submission Report 2013-15. On file, Parks Canada.
 St. John's Board of Trade
 2014 Browning Harvey Ltd. Innovation Continuous Improvement and a Green Environment for Success. St. John's Board of Trade Business News. 29(5)8.

Thomson, Callum

1988 300A Branagin Cove 4 (IdCs-9) Site Record Form. Form on file, Provincial Archaeology Office, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's.

1994 298A Fort Lampson (IdCs-15) Site Record Form. Form on file, Provincial Archaeology Office, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's.

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