

Whycomomagh Provincial Park

Whycomomagh is a Mi'kmaq word which means 'Head of the Waters' referring to the geographic location within the Bras d'Or Lake. Indian Island, which is visible from Whycomomagh Park, plays a significant role in the culture and heritage of the local First Nations' people. As a place detached from the main encampment lands, it has always been regarded as a spiritual place. Local stories indicate the island was never used for long term habitation, although within the past century it had been used as burial grounds. Indian Island has had active Bald Eagle nests in the past, usually in the majestic Eastern White Pine trees that are found scattered on the islands' interior.

Legend of the first Pine Tree:

There were three brothers dwelling together, when they heard that Glooskap had promised to fulfil the wish of warrior who reached his magic lodge, they decided to make the trip. The first brother was very tall, far above all his fellows, and vain of his height, but he wished to be taller, so that all the females would admire him. The second brother wished that he might remain forever in the forest, beholding its beauty, and that he need never work again. The third brother wished to live to a very old age, and always to be in perfect health.

So the three brothers started on their way along the dangerous trail that led to Glooskap's lodge. They came to a high mountain in a dark and lonely land. The side of the mountain was as smooth as iron, and the other side was worse, for there the trail led between the heads of two huge serpents, who darted out their tongues. The trail passed under the Wall of Death which hung over it like a cloud, rising, and falling, and rising again. And if it happened that any man passed beneath the cloud as it fell, he was crushed to death.

But the three brothers escaped all these perils of the trail, and came to the island where Glooskap dwelt. The mighty Magician welcomed them, and bade his younger brother, Martin the Fairy, place food before them. After they had eaten and were refreshed, they told their wishes.

In another lodge near by lived Cuhkw the Earthquake, he could pass along the face of the land, and make all things shake with terror. Glooskap called Cuhkw, and made him take the three brothers, and plant them with their feet in the ground. Immediately Cuhkw came rushing from his lodge, and, seizing the three, planted them in the forest. And they became three straight Pine Trees.

The first brother, who wished to be exceedingly tall, was the highest Pine Tree on earth. His head rose above the forest and the wind whistled through his boughs. The second brother, who wished to remain in the forest, and admire its beauty without working, could never leave it again; because his roots were fastened deep in the ground. The third brother, who wished to live to a very old age, in perfect health, gained his desire. Today he stands hale and hearty in the forest, unless men have cut him down.