

Wintergreen's great sub-Arctic Adventure:

## Dogsledding Hudson Bay to Churchill

10 days: pm Fri Mar 31 to am Sun Apr 9, 2017, \$3,600, all-inclusive from/to Thompson, Manitoba (arrive by air, bus or train from Winnipeg)

**(OR** 14 days: pm Wed Mar 29 to am Mon Apr 10, from/to Wintergreen, Ely, MN: add \$400 for van travel Ely to Thompson + meals/lodging at Wintergreen 3/29 & 4/10

While arctic experiences often require thousands of miles of travel, the Arctic Ocean's southernmost reach (Hudson Bay) lies just 500 miles from Wintergreen -- *lucky us!* And while arctic trips often involve complicated and expensive logistics with charter ski planes and helicopters, reaching Hudson Bay simply involves a ride on Via Rail's "Tundra Train" -- one of the world's most unusual train trips.

And when you step off that train, you're entering another world -- one of the wildest and remote of Canada's landscapes. Plus great "night life" -- in late winter this area sometimes features the most spectacular displays of colorful aurora borealis on the planet!



The sparse subarctic forest in this transition zone is home to animals of the boreal forest (moose, black bear, martens & fishers) but arctic foxes and caribou are equally comfortable here. And its one of the world's largest polar bear nurseries. Pregnant females occupy earthen caves dug deep into the frozen peat bog while birthing and nursing their cubs during the winter months. Then in late March they head out to sea to introduce their young to a life of seal hunting.

To avoid disturbing this migration, we've timed our travels for early April. As we dogsled through the 'nursery,' we're sure to see plenty of mom & cub tracks, we may spot their abandoned denning sites, and when we reach the coast, it's possible we'll see a bear or two on their way out to sea. Polar bear intrigue is always a key feature of this trip.

Our itinerary (one we pioneered back in 1995 and that we've enjoyed again last several years!) packs in lots of variety. After disembarking from the train onto the tundra, we'll sled to Wat'chee Lodge, a native-owned facility where we'll be introduced to the area's Cree cultural traditions as well as its wildlife and ecology. Then we sled northwards for 5 days, camping in sheltered tree pockets on the tundra along the edge of Wapusk (Polar Bear) National Park before reaching the shores of Hudson Bay. There we'll spend a night at the Northern Studies Center to learn about arctic research, especially the threat that climate change represents to the area's bear population. Next we'll spend a couple days sledging and a night camping on the Arctic Ocean to experience the dramatic beauty of the pack ice and scenery identical to that found at the North Pole.

Our final day of sledging will take us right into Churchill for a celebration dinner and lodging at the Seaport Inn. You'll have the next day to explore our continent's main Arctic Ocean seaport. Churchill is home to the "Eskimo Museum" with its renown collection of Inuit art, as well as many quirky features including the "Polar Bear Jail." where bears that loiter too close to town each fall are held pending release when the bay freezes over. You can also visit one of our continent's most bizarre cultural juxtapositions: astride the mouth of Churchill River is a 20th-century complex of grain elevators just across from a massive 17th-century stone stockade complete with crenulated lookouts and cannons. We board the train that evening for an overnight trip to Thompson (arriving noon) where you can continue by train or plane to Winnipeg or join us in Wintergreen van and dog trailer for the overnight drive to Ely.

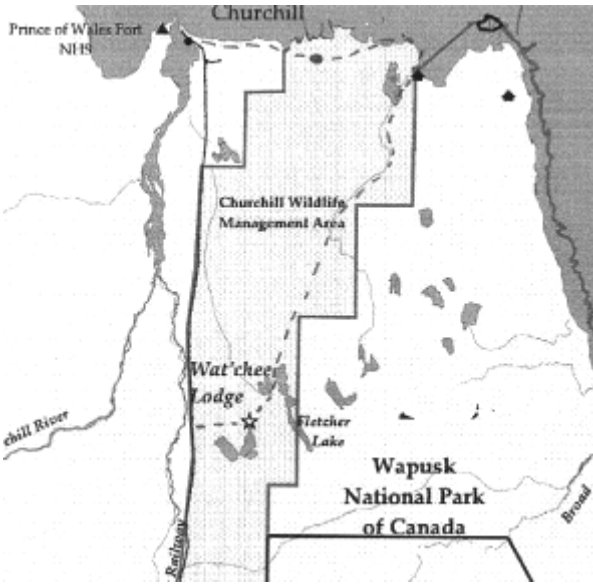


All participants on this trip will be driving dogteams -- skiing is strictly optional. And to help you prepare for this adventure, you are invited to join us earlier in the season for another Wintergreen trip of your choice at no additional charge.

Participants have the option of meeting us in Thompson, Manitoba, on Friday afternoon March 31 where we'll board the train for Hudson Bay at 5 p.m. **OR** joining us at Wintergreen a.m. Wed Mar 29 (or p.m. Mar 28) for the 2-day drive by van and dog truck. Or we can pick you in Winnipeg on Mar 30, OR you can take train, bus or air to Thompson, the end of Manitoba's paved highway system & gateway to the Arctic.

## Trip Itinerary

--Includes 7 days dogsled travel & camping near Wapusk (Polar Bear) National Park and along Hudson Bay with 1 night enroute at the Northern Studies Center to meet with arctic scientists; 2 days /1 night at the end to tour Churchill area; plus trip begins and end with overnight travel on the Tundra Train  
--Optional 1st & last nights at Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge in Ely, MN and 2-day van shuttle to/from Thompson, MA (additional fee)



**Midday, Friday, March 31:** Meet in Thompson, Manitoba, for trip orientation meeting at Lakeview Suites Hotel 204-778-8879 (NOTE: Participants arriving in Thompson by air or train before Mar 31 will want to book their own rooms here). Our Wintergreen van will shuttle group to train station for 5 pm departure -- with dogs & gear in the box car!

NOTE: Your transportation options to/from Thompson include:

1. Greyhound.ca has daily bus service Winnipeg-Thompson, 9 hrs, \$150 round trip
2. CalmAir.ca from Winnipeg, daily 1 hour flights, about \$800 round trip
3. Van/dog truck departs Wintergreen p.m. Wed, Mar 26, 16 hour drive over 2 days, \$450 round trip includes meals/lodging Mar 25-27 and Apr 6-7.

**Saturday April 1:** 7-8 a.m. arrival at Chesnaye train stop, load sleds, harness dogs, and travel about 5 miles to Wat'chee Lodge, trail lunch while we visit with lodge staff if present to learn more about area wildlife and Cree culture, continue on by dogsled and camp on the forested-shoreline of Fletcher Lake, explore the shoreline for signs of caribou and for abandoned polar bear denning sites

**Sunday April 2:** Dogsled northwards across Fletcher Lake area and through Wildlife Reserve, camp in the forest (*our dogsled route is dashed line on map at right*)

**Monday, April 3 - Tuesday, April 4:** continue sledding north through the reserve, camping at scenic sheltered bays along the frozen lakes and rivers

**Wednesday, April 5:** continue sledding beyond the treeline to arrive at the Northern Studies Center, dinner & lodging in the facility, meet with scientists to learn about their work at this premier base for arctic climate change research

**Thursday, April 6:** breakfast at Center, staff presentation/tour on NSC's science research projects on arctic wildlife and climate change, depart after lunch by dogsled to the shores of Hudson Bay (5 miles) and head out onto the sea ice, (*our chance to experience the challenge and beauty of Arctic Ocean pack ice!*), visit the massive shipwreck Ithaca and plane wreck "Miss Piggy" enroute, watch for seals and sea birds in the open leads among the massive ice blocks, spend a night camping on smooth pan ice among the bay's dramatic ridges or at the Prince of Wales 17<sup>th</sup> century stone fort.

**Friday, April 7:** continue sledding along the sea ice towards Churchill through Button Bay pass, visit the historic 1767 Samuel Hearn stone signature sight in Sloop's Cove, sled across the frozen Churchill River and arrive at Churchill's Seaport Inn late afternoon, R&R, dinner and lodging in hotel



**Saturday, April 8:** free day to tour town as you choose, visit the "Polar Bear Jail," great Arctic Museum, historic French fort set off against modern shipping port, native arts shops, Meet at train station for 7 p.m. departure

**Sunday, April 9:** noon arrival in Thompson, continue by train, bus OR fly to Winnipeg OR by Wintergreen van to Ely

**Monday April 10:** *OPTIONAL evening arrival at Wintergreen by van, dinner/lodging, depart for home next morning after breakfast and final hugs goodbye to your beloved sled dogs!*

**Group Size:** Generally 6-8 participants (who will be paired up to drive each dogsled) plus 2-3 Wintergreen guides traveling on skis.

**Safety:** We'll carry sat phones and 2-way radios for communication along with expedition first aid equipment. Regarding bears, nearly a thousand polar bears co-exist in the Churchill area along with nearly a thousand local residents -- conflicts are extremely rare. Bears tend to avoid people, especially those traveling by dogteam. But in the unlikely event that a bear became overly curious, we'll carry flares and shotguns with cracker shells to discourage them from approaching. We'll consider ourselves very lucky if we see a bear but we'll take every precaution to avoid a confrontation.

**Weather:** Daytime temps average in the teens and 20s though the nights can dip below zero. Conditions along the coast can get blustery and the variety of experiences offered by this trip might possibly include an arctic storm (a blizzard one year kept us tent-bound for a day). Along our inland route, we may find sufficient deadwood for evening campfires, but on the sea ice we'll cook in a group tent with campstoves depending upon the weather. Participants will be outfitted with Wintergreen's arctic sleeping tents and sleeping bag systems.

**Fitness:** Traveling the worlds "largest continuous wetland" means the route covers flat terrain. But assisting the freight sleds over hummocks and snowdrifts will require some effort and, if we encounter deep snow, the mushing may be challenging along some stretches. Skiing is strictly optional but participants should be prepared for a mushing experience that may be similar in rigor to that found on Wintergreen's advanced Boundary Water trips.

**Price:** \$3,600 for 10 days all-inclusive from/to Thompson (all meals, lodging, dogteams, guides, camping gear, sleeping bags). **OR** add \$400 for 14 days from/to Wintergreen. Price also includes an optional training trip: All registrants are welcome -- at no additional charge -- to participate on a dogsled camping trip at Wintergreen Lodge this season to become familiar with the logistics of dogsled camping.

**Gear:** All camping gear and sleeping bags will be provided. You just need to bring appropriate personal clothing according to the checklist we'll provide. Loaner anoraks & pack boots available at nominal rental charge.

**To secure a reservation:** Request our Arctic Registration Form and submit with \$500 deposit (refundable till January 1). Balance due February 1.

**For more info:** [www.canadapolarbears.com/articles/churchill-manitoba-vacations](http://www.canadapolarbears.com/articles/churchill-manitoba-vacations)  
The sub-arctic education & research center we'll be visiting: [www.churchillscience.ca/](http://www.churchillscience.ca/)

