The Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders: Throwing a Stone

by

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Abstract

Through this descriptive exploratory study, the ways that wilderness recreation leaders experience nature are illuminated, deconstructing the assumed environmental benefits of and practices used in outdoor recreation (Haluza-Delay, 2001). This study also offers a foundation for advancing an environmental ethic among wilderness recreation leaders, participants, and organizations. With the continued degradation of and threats to natural environments, and the rising popularity of outdoor recreation participation, the outdoor recreation professional can be a leader in promoting human reconnections to the Earth (Henderson, 1999). Leaders of outdoor recreation experiences play an important role in encouraging these revived relationships to natural settings and can contribute to the necessary environmental consciousness shift needed within Western society (Hanna, 1995; Jordan, 1996). The purpose of this research was to describe the lived-experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders. Specifically, a phenomenological method of inquiry was used to describe the meaning of nature, the connections and relationships to nature, and the behaviours and emotions experienced in nature by a group of wilderness canoe trip leaders employed by a residential summer camp. In addition to the implications of this research, achieving this outcome provides a rich descriptive understanding of wilderness leaders' experiences—a basis from which to extend future research endeavours and programmatic practices that promote effective environmental outcomes of outdoor recreation participation.

Each of the five study participants was employed in the summer of 2003 by an Ontario residential summer camp organization that sponsors extended wilderness river canoe trips for youth. Two in-depth and semi-structured interviews were performed with
each participant, asking them to reflect on the canoe trip that they led for the summer camp organization during 2003. Phenomenological data was analyzed according to Colaizzi’s (1978) thematic analysis process. Consistent with van Manen’s (1997) emphasis on phenomenological writing, the final result presents the essence of the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders in the format of a narrative description. This narrative piece is the culmination of this research effort. Throughout the journey, however, various foundations within the outdoor recreation field, such as minimum impact principles, environmentally responsible behaviours, anthropocentric and ecocentric worldviews, and effective leadership are deconstructed and discussed.
Sipping from my frequently used travellers’ mug, I wash down the three bites of a donut with a large black coffee. Until now, this regular experience has left a pleasant and satisfied taste in my mouth. Yet for some reason, today, I am slightly disgusted—slightly repelled. Could my nausea be a result of the 17 unused napkins that accompany my donut in the apparently unused brown paper bag? Perhaps I am sickened by the fact that the drive-through attendant handed me an empty paper cup with my refilled mug of coffee so that I could enjoy the heartbreaking ‘R-R-Rolling Up the R-R-Rim’ to lose, again? Or maybe my ailment can be attributed to my realization that I am contributing further to highway traffic and to the global warming crisis by driving alone in my automobile? Quite possibly, my distaste is linked to my anticipated destination: a downhill ski resort where an altered natural environment will provide me with opportunities for speed, bumps, and thrill. I am really unsure. What is pestered my belly today?
Forest fires can be devastating. They can advance unmercifully to ravage natural environments and developed communities. When forest fires occur naturally, however, nature demonstrates her ability to heal herself and generate new life. Forest fires are symbolic of the cycles and interconnectedness of living and non-living elements of the Earth. I was awed by this connection to the Earth on a summer canoe trip along a Quebec river. On our second to last day, our group rounded a bend in the river and was overwhelmed by ‘Bald-Eagle’ cliff—a sheer rock face towering above the water. Among the scattered brush that highlighted the top and sides of the cliff, a few patches of flame and smoke wandered into the wind. The elaborate magnificence of the natural environment was enthralling. The current of the river, the dominance of the cliff face, the mysterious land beyond the shoreline, and the spark of the small forest fires collaborated into a song of wilderness that inspired feelings of joy, reverence, humbleness, and gratitude. Experiencing these moments in this place affirmed my union to the landscape, the environment, the Earth.
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Chapter One: A Glance Downstream – The Introduction

1.1 An Invitation

I suppose that I will be up front with the reader: the opening passages of this paper are tales from my own personal lived experience. Perhaps the reader finds this a somewhat startling and somewhat unconventional style for the beginning an academic thesis. Writing in first person, highlighting personal anecdotes, sharing and describing experiences, and referring to alternative writing formats is not the approach taken by most researchers for initiating a paper. Rest assured, I have a plan, and my rationale for welcoming the reader to my thesis in this forthright manner is sound and justified. As you read on, my reasons will be unveiled. Please be patient. From here, however, I would like to direct the reader’s attention back to the opening passages.

Certainly, the two opening anecdotes describe different circumstances that inspire many different images. The first anecdote describes a situation where I am clearly disturbed by the waste, pollution, and impacts created by my actions and the actions of others. Within this excerpt I assume an element of concern and responsibility for how my behaviours contribute to common environmental problems that confront western society. In the second passage, however, I identify with a backcountry travelling experience that encouraged a fondness for and connection to the natural environment. My second tale reinforces the wonders and grandeur of the Earth’s wilderness. At first glance, these two excerpts are loaded with clashing differences that portray scenes and experiences that are mostly unrelated.

A meaningful connection between the two episodes, however, can be rationalized. In both accounts, there exists an element of my connection to and concern for the natural
environment and, certainly, both narratives contribute, in some capacity, to understanding my feelings for and experiences in nature. Martin (1999) wrote, “the direct connection between lived experience and environmental concern is to be expected” (p. 463). But what exactly is this connection? How are lived experiences in natural environments connected to environmental awareness and environmentally responsible behaviours? Perhaps Martin assumes that, as Russell (1999) points out, nature experiences lead to caring for nature, followed by a commitment to nature, and finally action for nature. Simply sketched:

Nature experiences → Caring → Commitment → Action (Russell, 1999).

Similar to Russell, however, I wonder: what is meant by nature experience? What does nature mean for those individuals frequently spending time in natural settings? In reference to the opening anecdotes, what relationship exists between my canoe trip experience and my discomfort regarding poor environmentally responsible behaviour?

How is this relevant to my experience in nature? In a broader scope, what is the essence of these types of nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders? For people who, like me, lead groups of people into remote natural settings? These questions intrigued my initial desires to study and research the issues of wilderness recreation leadership and the experience of nature. The following pages present the story of my journey into this domain—my expedition along this selected river. I invite you to grab your paddle and join the voyage.

1.2 Charting the Territory

With the increase in the popularity of outdoor adventure recreation participation (Luckner, 1994; Peart, 1995; Raiola & Sugerman, 1999; Ranney, 1991) and the
anticipated growth of the field in the future (Priest & Gass, 1999), understanding and recognizing the need for effective outdoor leadership is vital. More people are recreating in outdoor environments and pursuing experiences that take them into backcountry wilderness settings, justifying the focus of recreation professionals in developing competent, safety-conscious, and effective leaders (Priest & Gass, 1997). However, the regular contention that detrimental human impacts on natural environments have jeopardized the well-being of the Earth, suggests that individuals must take more responsibility for minimizing their own harmful environmental impacts (Henderson, 1999; Van Matre, 1990). In fact, planetary limits are promptly being realized because our modern Western worldview establishes within us “a set of beliefs that encourage us to use and abuse nature” (Winter, 1996, p. 29). A common assumption is that participation in outdoor recreation can lead to beneficial environmental outcomes and improved environmental consciousness. From the outdoor recreation perspective, Ibrahim and Cordes (1993) state “the more time we spend outside, the more we seem to learn about our environment and the need to live in harmony with it” (p. 385). Despite this individual learning and relationship to nature that can result from recreating outside, the necessary environmentally responsible behaviours for creating a healthier planet are not adequately achieved (Haluza-Delay, 2001; Van Matre, 1990). Participation in some outdoor recreation activities has been shown to actually further divide humans from the natural environment (Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 1999b, 2001). Leaders of outdoor recreation experiences—especially those who guide participants into sensitive and remote wilderness settings—may have the capacity to encourage positive environmental
behaviours and feelings of connection to the natural world within their trip participants (Hanna, 1995).

Although Priest and Gass (1997) highlight environmental skills as a key component of their effective outdoor leadership wall model, their framework is limited to applying these environmental skills only to the recreation experience. The environmental skills that Priest and Gass recognize, which are commonly referred to as minimum impact techniques and frequently recommended as standards of practice (Ford & Blanchard, 1993), can assist in reducing the negative environmental impacts created by people while they engage in outdoor recreation. However, the practice of these skills is often the extent of environmental learning that participants experience and do not include any transferred application or suitability to environmental practices in home communities (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). How committed outdoor recreation participants are in following these minimum impact guidelines is also a concern. Reid and Marion (2003), for instance, indicate that, because resource degradation results from recreational use even in low visitation areas, visitor education programs continue to be essential for promoting low impact practices.

As a result of the poor applicability and transfer of low impact skills to home environments and the questionable extent to which outdoor recreation users follow these practices, the potential for improving human relationships to nature through outdoor experience is hindered. In fact, exercising minimum impact camping strategies may actually reduce an individual's connectedness to the natural world (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). Essentially, the minimum impact guidelines determine what nature is and attach a code of conduct for interacting with it (Ryan, 2002). That is, the behavioural codes of minimum impact encourage the view that nature is 'out there'—away from our daily
experiences, interactions, and lives—and that only in this nature must we be mindful of the environment (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). Having individuals in wilderness leadership positions who maintain positive environmental values and are committed to inspiring positive environmental behaviours among participants may remedy this problem and contribute to the achievement of an environmental consciousness that remains when participants return to their home environments. More importantly, these individuals may have the potential to encourage humans’ reconnections to the Earth (Duenkel, 1994; Hanna, 1995; Henderson, 1999).

A variety of studies have examined the relationship between outdoor and wilderness recreation participation and the environmental behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, and values of the participants (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 1999b; Haluza-Delay, 2001; Hanna, 1995; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998; Mittelstaedt, Sanker, & VanderVeer, 1999; Palmberg & Kuru, 2000). These studies provide insight into understanding why environmental responsibility does or does not result from outdoor experiences. The examination of the behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, and values of wilderness recreation leaders, however, is quite scarce (Parker & Avant, 2000; Ryan, 1999). This causes me to wonder how participants of outdoor and wilderness recreation can be expected to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours and values when the leaders of these programs do not necessarily demonstrate or possess the same traits? As well, very little research (see Duenkel, 1994; Hanna, 1995; Miller, 2001; Morten, 1992) has focused on the role of the recreation leader in promoting these environmental qualities and how effective leadership can encourage positive environmental behaviour transfer from the wilderness setting to the home context.
Let us digress for a moment, however, and consider the fact that the styles of many wilderness recreation programs and their guiding leaders are not compatible with environmental awareness and protection. Take into account programs and leaders that seek, as their primary motive, risk and adventure during their wilderness experiences (Ewert, 1989; Miles & Priest, 1999; Priest & Gass, 1997). Conquering nature and its obstacles (Haluza-Delay, 1999b) and using wild lands as a playing field (Hogan, 1992) to achieve personal and group development goals become the focus. These ideals of adventure-focused programs oppose the potential for participants to learn about, connect with, and develop feelings for nature. These outcomes also oppose the goals of wilderness education that, according to Miles (1991), aim “to help people understand the personal and collective meaning or significance of nature...recognized by both the mind and heart, by both reason and emotion” (p. 6-7). Perhaps an examination that aims to generalize wilderness recreation leaders’ values, behaviours, and attitudes and their strategies for promoting environmental consciousness change or the transfer of environmentally responsible behaviours to home communities is hasty and imprudent. On the other hand, understanding the meaning of nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders, through detailed description, may prove more useful, at this time, in the ultimate quest of encouraging healthier environmental lifestyle choices among our human population.

So, rather than adding to the mix of examinations of environmental responsibility as an outcome of outdoor recreation participation, I consider it necessary to revisit, describe, and learn from the experiences of persons who frequent wilderness areas. There are definitely many groups of wild land users such as foresters, hunters, Aboriginal
populations, and miners who could contribute insight into human-nature relationships. Through their anthropocentric and ecocentric ethical reasoning discussion, Kortenkamp and Moore (2001) indicate an interest in examining various environmental interest groups since the general public, environmental activists, and different recreation users would likely demonstrate varied ethical reasoning positions. Specific to this research, however, wilderness recreation leaders are focused upon because of their potential to create change in the environmental consciousness and connections of their wilderness trip participants (Henderson, 1990). Moreover, the sample of residential summer camp canoe trippers that I selected for inclusion in this study, represent an important and sizeable segment of the wilderness recreation leader population in Canada (Henderson & Potter, 2000). These wilderness leaders mediate young people’s experiences in remote natural settings for days on end and fulfil the role of guide, educator, instructor, first-aid giver, support person, and guardian. From my experience as a youth participant on such trips, and my subsequent development as a canoe trip leader, I defend that these individuals have the potential to contribute to young people’s environmentally responsible behaviours, value clarification, and ethical reasoning. Although not necessarily the case among all wilderness recreation leaders, I maintain that wilderness leaders can inspire environmental consciousness change by focusing their leadership efforts on helping trip participants learn more about and rediscovering their connections to the natural environment (see also Duenkel, 1994; Hanna, 1995; Henderson, 1990; Henderson, 1999). As such, the ideal wilderness recreation leader is conceptualized in a similar regard to Fennell’s (2000) hard path and soft path ecotourists who maintain a primary focus on the natural environment and are less reliant on technical skills. Through this exploratory,
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descriptive study, the ways that wilderness recreation leaders experience nature are illuminated, deconstructing the assumed environmental benefits of and practices used in outdoor recreation, and offering a foundation for advancing an environmental ethic among wilderness recreation leaders, participants, and organizations.

1.3 The Direction of Travel: The Purpose Statement

“When we accept small wonders, we qualify ourselves to imagine great wonders” (Robbins, 1984, p. 127).

Much like wilderness recreation pursuits where there are a variety of travel forms that allow access to natural pristine settings (e.g., canoeing, kayaking, backpacking, snow shoeing, skiing, etc.), there exist a number of approaches to studying any one question or problem. Of the qualitative traditions of inquiry (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002), I selected phenomenology to describe and highlight the experience of nature for wilderness recreation leaders. Phenomenological research seeks to describe the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Patton, 2002). As such, the goal of this phenomenological research was not to explain causal relationships or provide predictive formulas related to wilderness recreation leaders and their nature experiences. Rather, the purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived-experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders.

Specifically, using a phenomenological methodology, I describe the meaning of nature and the relationship to nature experienced by a group of wilderness recreation leaders and which are evident through the environmentally responsible behaviours that they demonstrate and the emotions that they experience while engaged in a wilderness recreation leadership position. By incorporating the phenomenological perspective in this research, the descriptions highlight the lived-experience in nature that precedes these
individuals’ formations of environmental values and ethics (Spiegelberg, 1975). To some degree then, the foundations from which these values and ethics originate are described.

Certainly, wilderness recreation leaders’ lived-experience in nature is a complex and intricate phenomenon (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Lee & Shafer, 2002; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Many factors could be involved in how these experiences are lived including organizational cultures that influence the leaders, social institutions that determine the structure of the experiences, the technical and interpersonal skills of the leader, the qualities of the natural environment travelled to, or the personalities of the wilderness trip participants. In order for me to clarify and frame my phenomenological research, I chose to identify four components of the lived-experience in nature to focus on. Specifically, my research aimed to describe wilderness recreation leaders’ lived-experience of their:

- meaning of nature;
- relationship or connection to nature;
- behaviours in nature;
- emotions in nature.

According to van Manen (1997), lived-experience refers to the lifeworld or “the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it” (p. 9). Correspondingly, this research involved the collection of anecdotes, descriptions, situations, events, and metaphors from each study participant regarding these four components of lived-experience in nature during a recent wilderness recreation leadership experience. Choosing these four areas enabled me to centre my interview research and questions on factors that I consider, from my own personal
experience leading trips, essential to nature experiences and which are central to the environmental consciousness considerations driving this thesis. That is not to say, however, that if a factor such as a leader's desire for improving his or her own hard skills (see Appendix A), for example, emerged from the interviews as being essential to how the wilderness recreation leader connects to nature, that it would be discarded. Rather, the leader's focus on improving hard skills would be incorporated appropriate to how it is involved in the leaders' connection to nature. The chief reason for distinguishing the four components of the nature experiences is to provide clarity and structure to this thesis, not to eliminate important and necessary considerations of experience.

In the forthcoming literature review, emphasis is granted to each of the four guiding components of the wilderness recreation leadership experience in nature. These reviews offer an outline of previous research and convictions regarding the meaning of nature, the relationships and connections to nature, and behaviours and emotions in nature. For the purposes of this research, the meaning of nature focuses on how the wilderness recreation leader understands and perceives nature while engaged in natural environments. There is an interpretative component here that reflects the hermeneutic nature of phenomenology (van Manen, 1997). The relationships or connections to nature involve primarily how the leader views him or her self in association with nature. To some extent, this component of the lived-experience provides a foundation for the worldviews, values, and ethics that the leader forms (Spiegelberg, 1975). The central focus of the behaviours in nature are the environmentally responsible behaviours that the leaders adopt during their nature experiences, while the emotions in nature component addresses the feelings involved during their lived-experiences in nature.
Exploring the lived experiences in nature of wilderness recreation leaders will provide outdoor recreation practitioners with an understanding of how a segment of the wilderness recreation leadership population experiences nature. Similarities and differences among leaders' nature experiences will certainly be discovered and personal connections and relationships to nature will vary. The value of this descriptive and exploratory research then will be recognized in its contribution to understanding the nature experiences of a group of individuals that have the potential to contribute positively to environmental consciousness change among the human population.

Political, economic, and cultural agents frequently prevent environmental issues from being properly addressed (see the Swiss research example provided by Finger, 1994). However, as Henderson (1990) identifies, "if we accept the idea that individual transformation must occur to cause global transformation, then aspects of the outdoors as it affects individuals can be profoundly effective in leading to individual transformations and societal change" (p. 79). Henderson continues by suggesting that outdoor recreation and education leaders "have the opportunity to provide a framework for thinking and acting that can help individuals (both young people and adults) to understand their value and responsibility in the world" (p. 80). Prior to developing this framework for change, the foundations for understanding the lived experience in nature for outdoor recreation professionals (e.g., in the case of this research, wilderness recreation leaders) is necessary. Achieving this outcome will provide guidance and justification for future research in exploring wilderness recreation leader experiences, examining the leaders' motivations for travelling in wilderness environments, and how the leaders' experiences in nature affect the wilderness experiences of and connections to nature held by their
followers. Ultimately, the transformative leadership (Jordan, 1996) potentials of wilderness recreation leaders in improving human-nature connections will be ignited.

1.4 Selecting a Paddle – Why Phenomenology?

By adopting a phenomenological methodology, a detailed description of wilderness recreation leaders’ lived experience in nature is provided. Specifically, this exploratory research describes the experiences of wilderness recreation leaders related to: the meanings they give to nature during wilderness travel; their relationships and connections to nature during these experiences; and, the behaviours and emotions that they experience during wilderness trips.

The qualitative tradition of phenomenology was selected to address the above experiences because it aims at describing the essence of a human experience (Creswell, 1998). Whereas positivist approaches tend to reduce experience into quantified concepts through statistical analysis, my intention with this project is to illuminate and describe in detail the lived experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders. Adopting a quantitative methodology would not meet this objective because the complexity of experience would be simplified—eliminating the detail and depth needed to understand experience.

As well, the phenomenological methodology is attractive because its style corresponds to my research purpose and the way that I view the world. van Manen (1984a) distinguishes phenomenological research as a study of lived experience, a study of essences, a practice of thoughtfulness, a search for what it means to be human, and a poetizing process. As well, van Manen contends that phenomenology involves “turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world” (p. 2) and
“investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it” (p. 2). Each of these remarks about the nature of phenomenology suggests a creative and information-rich style of research that acknowledges the importance and place of my experience with the phenomenon being studied. Incorporating this reflexive style (Patton, 2002)—a style that appreciates the self-aware voice, perspective, and experience of the researcher and his or her awareness of the participants and audience—is an appealing component of the phenomenological method.

Finally, adopting the phenomenological lens for this research offers an opportunity to contribute to the academic discipline of outdoor recreation in a manner that has seldom been used. Through the description of the nature experience for wilderness recreation leaders, this phenomenological study offers a preamble for scientific procedures and existential awareness (Johnston, 1987) that can encourage positive and harmonious human–nature relationships. Although the essence of a human experience can be described differently by different phenomenological researchers—suggesting that phenomenological research of any one phenomenon is never complete (van Manen, 1997)—this research renders a stride towards promoting human reconnections to the natural environment and, ultimately, understanding what it means to be human (Husserl, 1958).

1.5 The Route Ahead

Following this introductory chapter, a review of literature is presented in Chapter Two. The review begins by establishing the context of this study; namely, outdoor recreation and wilderness leadership. In these first sections, definitions, theories, and the relevance of these areas are established. Framing the components of the lived-experience
in nature, which are highlighted in the purpose statement, appear next prior to a review of literature that guides us towards an understanding of how this specific phenomenological research relates to other studies. In Chapter Three, specific details regarding the selected research methods are discussed. Beginning with a comparison of natural and human science and a report on the nature of phenomenology, the third chapter weaves its way through topics such as bracketing and reflexivity, the research participants, data collection procedures, the data analysis process, and considerations for trustworthiness and verification. Chapter Four should be recognized as the grand finale of this research process. This chapter contains the narrative description that captures the essence of participants’ nature experiences. In Chapter Five, the exhaustive and aggregate description of the thematic structures of the lived-experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders is presented. The format of this chapter follows that of the purpose statement and, thus, highlights the structure of participants’ lived-experience in nature, incorporating verbatim quotations. Finally, in Chapter Six, a summary of the study is provided, the literature is revisited, and implications, limitations, and options for future research based on the outcome of this study are noted. Final closing conclusions and comments complete the document.
Chapter Two: Preparing for the Journey – Literature Review

Although the richness of this study lies in the description of the lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders provided in Chapters four and five, a review of relevant literature is certainly important to highlight the academic foundation, research, and niche to which this study contributes. As such, the review of related literature begins with overviews of outdoor recreation definitions and the recreation leadership literature. These first two sections will assist in situating the description of the wilderness recreation leaders’ experience in nature within the broader scope of outdoor recreation and leadership theory. The review of leadership literature will identify common leadership definitions, theories, and styles before moving to specific details concerning effective wilderness leadership. Next, a review of literature pertaining to humans and the experience of nature will be presented. In an effort to mirror the components of the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders that are emphasized in my research purpose statement, the review will consider literature pertaining to the meaning of nature, human relationships and connections to nature, and human emotions and behaviours in nature. Specific topics under review in the human relationships and connections to nature section will incorporate the modern Western worldview of nature, values and ethics, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, and deep ecology. The section on human behaviours in nature will focus on environmentally responsible behaviours and outline minimum impact practices, literature regarding environmental responsibility as an outcome of outdoor experience, and a discussion on why environmental outcomes of outdoor experiences are inconclusive. The final section of the literature review will guide us towards a phenomenology of wilderness recreation leaders’ experience in nature by
highlighting research—particularly qualitative and phenomenological—in outdoor recreation and, more important to this study, wilderness recreation leadership.

2.1 Definitions of Outdoor Recreation

The duty of identifying an indisputable academic definition of a phenomenon can be a daunting task. Within the recreation and leisure studies realm, both recreation and leisure occupy a variety of definitions and conceptualizations that are frequently cited, pondered, and debated (Godbey, 1994; Kelly, 1996). People that study outdoor recreation struggle with the same obstacle. As Phipps (1991) mentions, the definitions of outdoor recreation are often too broad or too limiting in scope. Ibrahim and Cordes (1993) identify that outdoor recreation encompasses “the organized free-time activities that are participated in for their own sake and where there is an interaction between the participant and an element of nature” (p. 4). Although this generic definition distinguishes differences between recreation activities like cross-country skiing and football (i.e., the role of nature is minimal in football), Ibrahim and Cordes’ explanation of outdoor recreation encompasses a very broad range of activities. Common components of outdoor recreation experiences such as adventure and risk, outdoor travel, interpretation, and wilderness are not adequately portrayed. Thus, more specific terminology is needed to effectively illustrate various concepts in the outdoor recreation sphere.

Phipps (1991) identifies several terms that are frequently cited in the outdoor recreation literature and used in the outdoor recreation profession. For example, outdoor education is classified as “education in, about and for the outdoors” (p. 5). This definition suffers a vague conceptualization as the outdoor education term is frequently “used in
connection with the environment and nature study though it is sometimes more broadly used to include outdoor pursuits activities” (Phipps, 1991, p. 5). Subsequently, Ford and Blanchard (1993) state that outdoor pursuits are those activities that involve movement through natural lands and water routes by non-mechanized means of travel “for the purposes of enjoyment, self-realization and the intrinsic value of the experience” (p. 7). Included within the realm of outdoor pursuits are hiking, backpacking, climbing, cross-country skiing, canoeing, rafting, caving, and snow shoeing (Phipps, 1991). Phipps' notion of wilderness recreation is a similar outdoor pursuit in which the wilderness values of naturalness, freedom, primitiveness, solitude, and challenge are experienced voluntarily for their own sake and for the purposes of enjoyment and self-fulfilment.

Closely linked to outdoor education and the experience of wilderness recreation is environmental education. The goal of environmental education, to encourage human understanding of, relationship to, and concern for the environment, is best satisfied when individuals are involved in responsible environmental action that promotes our survival and improves the quality of life (Phipps, 1991). Certainly, there are common characteristics among the different frameworks of outdoor recreation described by Phipps.

Adventure programming renders another territory that can be linked to outdoor recreation. Miles and Priest (1999) indicate that adventure programs involve uncertain outcomes and challenge participants by including within the activity an element of risk. These types of programs can take form in a recreational, educational, developmental, or therapeutic capacity (Miles & Priest, 1999). Adventure programming includes outdoor adventure pursuits that can also “be subsumed under the broader category of outdoor
recreation’’ (Ewert, 1989, p. 8). Thus, outdoor adventure pursuits maintain a relationship between the human and the environment (Ford & Blanchard, 1993). The distinguishing feature between outdoor pursuits and outdoor adventure pursuits is that, in the latter, participants must purposefully confront challenge, stress, or risk during the excursion. Participant and programmatic goals generally determine when an outdoor pursuit becomes an adventure activity (Ewert, 1989; Ford & Blanchard, 1993). The element of adventure in recreation programming offers further understanding to the boundaries of various outdoor recreation forms.

The outdoor recreation domain also draws comparison to the travel and tourism literature (Wall, 1989). Tourism is generally embraced as travel activities to places away from home communities for purposes other than work (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995). Thus, a hiking expedition or an out-of-town day trip to a provincial park could be considered tourism. More specifically, natural resource-based tourism, which Fennell (2000) conceptualizes to include four variables (i.e., impact of activity, natural resource values, reliance on technical skills, and basis of learning), is associated with the outdoor pursuits description of Ewert (1989) and Ford and Blanchard (1993). The dependence on natural lands and waterways for travel (e.g., backpacking, canoe tripping, and rafting) suggests that outdoor pursuits can be recognized as an element of natural resource-based tourism. Furthermore, in his report on the construction of nature during wilderness tourism experiences, Brookes’ (2001) description of wilderness travel is equivalent to outdoor pursuits. Components of adventure can also be involved in the wilderness tourism experience (Brookes, 2001). Fennell (1999) also indicates that ecotourism is “one aspect of nature-oriented tourism, which includes many other types of tourism and
outdoor recreation” (p. 64). Despite the many parallels among the styles of tourism and outdoor recreation, Fennell (1999) attests that these activities often share only the similarity of taking place in settings of the natural environment.

The various definitions used in labelling forms of outdoor recreation are numerous and may burden some individuals because of the overlapping and ambiguous nature of the terminology. Although there are boundaries between outdoor recreation forms, some may wonder whether or not these types can occur during the same activity. For example, is it not possible for an outdoor recreation activity to be both an outdoor adventure pursuit and a wilderness recreation experience? Can environmental education involve adventure programming and wilderness travel? In fact, all forms of wilderness and adventure recreation have been described as components within the realm of experiential education (Haluza-Delay, 2001). Wall (1989) suggests that the phenomenon of recreation is “best understood by those who are willing to transgress the artificial barriers constructed by those who wish to segment knowledge into academic compartments” (p. 4). Perhaps, clear definitions are not absolutely necessary. However, as Fennell (2000) notes in his stand for a clear perspective between ecotourism and other types of natural resource-based tourism, distinctions among conceptualizations and definitions provide the grounds for empirical research, appropriate marketing and legislative strategies, and superior understanding of the phenomenon being considered. Endorsing the efforts in and need for understanding definitions is essential to the progression of recreation and leisure studies.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term wilderness recreation will be used to depict the activities in which leadership and nature experience are described and discussed.
Each of the research participants will be considered a wilderness recreation leader because the nature experiences upon which they reflect occurred as he or she has led recreation experiences for young people in wilderness settings. The selection of this term is grounded considerably by the work of Haluza-Delay (1999b; 2001)—who studied how participants experience nature during a 12-day wilderness canoe trip—and the definitions provided by Phipps (1991). My research explored the nature experience of individuals that lead similar types of excursions in wilderness settings depicted by Haluza-Delay. Examining Phipps’ definitions suggests that wilderness recreation can involve aspects of adventure, outdoor pursuits, and environmental education. The canoe trips that the research participants of this study have led, incorporate these elements and offer opportunities for experiencing the wilderness values of solitude, naturalness, primitiveness, and challenge (Phipps, 1991). The young individuals that participate on the canoe trips led by the study participants choose to do so for enjoyment and personal fulfilment purposes. For these young participants, the canoe trip is a recreation experience in a wilderness setting.

2.2 Wilderness Recreation Leadership

2.2.1 The Importance of Leadership in Outdoor Environments

Within the academic and research communities, there has been no shortage of publications that focus on understanding the nature of leadership (Bryman, Stephens, & Campo, 1996; Greenleaf, 1977; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958). The research efforts of scholars in recreation and leisure studies share a similar attraction to learning about leadership in outdoor, adventure, and wilderness environments (Fennell, 2002; Ford & Blanchard, 1993; Miles & Priest, 1999; Peart,
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The popularity and anticipated growth of outdoor recreation participation (Luckner, 1994; Peart, 1995; Priest & Gass, 1999; Raiola & Sugerman, 1999) demonstrates the need for effective leadership in the field. More precisely, outdoor leaders must ensure that they are promoting safe and rewarding experiences for participants in an environmentally prudent fashion.

For instance, in a field where risk and environmental hazards thrive, qualified, trained, and effective leaders are needed to support and encourage safe participant practices. Luckner (1994) suggests that as the risk level of an activity increases, so does the need for leadership that provides direct instruction, modelling, and practice time for participants before they engage in the activity. As well, with the subjective dangers (e.g., fear and irresponsibility) and objective dangers (e.g., falling rocks and lightning) involved in outdoor pursuits (Miles & Priest, 1999), effective leadership can serve as a buffer for reducing, managing, and negating risk (Fennell, 2002; van der Smissen & Gregg, 1999). Meeting the safety needs of participants and fellow outdoor enthusiasts is a necessary skill for wilderness recreation leaders (Priest & Gass, 1997) and one that will serve the image of outdoor recreation field.

Additionally, the need for understanding, examining, and developing effective outdoor leadership is critical to the fundamental goal of providing personally rewarding and growing experiences for participants of outdoor recreation. As Raiola and Sugerman (1999) suggest, recent years have led to an increased number of people discovering the outdoors as a place to “arouse sensitivity, learn practical living skills, shape values, expand cognitive understanding, develop commitments, and strengthen personalities” (p. 241). As the demand for these outcomes increase, so does the need for highly skilled
leaders (Raiola & Sugerman, 1999). Beyond the idea of having adequate numbers of trained leaders to satisfy this increased demand, however, effective leadership must continue to thrive to protect the very essence of what people seek in outdoor pursuits. The self-discovery, confidence, and transfer of practical skills to home environments that people obtain from outdoor adventure programs (Luckner, 1994) could be lost due to the sheer numbers of people searching for these experiences. A responsibility of the outdoor recreation field is to promote leadership training, identify alternatives that allow people to experience similar benefits of outdoor adventure, and explore the effectiveness of various facilitation techniques and teaching styles (Priest & Gass, 1999). Achieving these outcomes will contribute to the future success of the outdoor recreation industry.

Finally, quality leadership in outdoor settings can have a positive impact on the natural environment. Van Matre (1990) is sceptical about the well being of our planet and, without an increase in the education of our planet’s condition among the earth’s passengers, continued devastation is expected. Effective outdoor and wilderness leaders have the capacity to guide participants to this environmentally sound relationship as is suggested by the Wilderness Education Association (WEA). As a distinguished training organization in the outdoor adventure field, the WEA includes as part of its mandate a promotion of national wilderness and preservation programs (Friese, Hendee, & Kinziger, 1998). More specifically, outdoor leaders have the potential to contribute to the improvement of outdoor recreation participants’ environmental knowledge and behaviours (see, for example, Hanna, 1995; Reid & Marion, 2003; Ross, 1997) leading, perhaps, to more sound environmental ways of living. Henderson (1990) posits that, during outdoor recreation, leaders can help people make connections to the natural world
that extend beyond daily living, build character and address spirituality, and live more humble, compassionate, and balanced lives. Each of these benefits would encourage more responsible use of natural resources among citizens (Henderson, 1990). Despite the fact that positive environmental outcomes are not always achieved through wilderness experiences (Haluza-Delay, 1999b; 2001), there is certainly a responsibility among outdoor adventure leaders to encourage within participants a sense of connection to, harmony with, and appreciation for the natural environment.

2.2.2 Leadership Definitions and Theories.

Fennell (2002) suggests that, “leadership has been likened to beauty in the sense that it is hard to define, but you know it when you see it” (p. 158). Thus, leadership is recognized as a virtuous yet somewhat intangible phenomenon. Despite the challenges associated with identifying the borders of leadership, a general definition of leadership has flourished within the literature. Frequently, leadership has been defined as a process in which one person influences other people toward mutually acceptable goals (Fennell, 2002; Ford & Blanchard, 1993; Priest, 1999). This definition is insufficient when applied to leadership theory, practice, and development. Similar to the construct of beauty there is much more involved in understanding leadership.

As Priest (1999) suggests, anyone within a group can exercise leadership. The child organizing a road hockey match, the employer that takes on extra duties to assist others with the completion of their tasks on a Friday afternoon, and the family member who cuts the Thanksgiving turkey all assume leadership roles. Leaders can emerge in many different situations. Often, however, the leader is a person that is appointed by a sponsoring agency (Ford & Blanchard, 1993). The goals and agendas of this agency
certainly have an impact on the shared goals of the leader and the group. In these conditions, the leader has a moral and legal responsibility for group safety (Priest, 1999) and must accept the external force of the agency in achieving group objectives. Citing Biggart and Hamilton, Bryman, Stephens, and Campo (1996) provide further properties of leadership. Bryman et al. indicate that the relationships of people involved in leadership situations are “embedded in a social setting at a given historical moment” (p. 355). Leadership can, therefore, be considered spatially specific (Ford & Blanchard, 1993) or, more extensively, contextual (Bryman et al, 1996). Clearly, the factors involved in leadership outlined above (i.e., leader emergence, leader appointment, and the contextual component of leadership) hint at the intricate nature of leadership and express a need for a more comprehensive scope of the leadership phenomenon.

Through his discussion of ecotourism program planning, Fennell (2002) reviews such a comprehensive theory of leadership. Fennell recognizes that traits and attributes that some individuals are born with and that contribute to their rise in greatness have characterized leadership. As well, leaders have been viewed as servants who strive for “healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous” (Fennell, 2002, p. 163) group members. In this capacity, a leader must also realize the importance of his or her role as a follower (Ford & Blanchard, 1993). Despite these common views of leadership, Fennell supports Jordan’s (1996) comprehensive—interaction—expectation theory of leadership. This model highlights the association of the leader, the group members, and the situation in the leadership style that is assumed by the leader (Jordan, 1996). According to this theory, a “leader who is experienced will have an advantage in determining the right course of action given the situation and the different personalities of the individuals involved”
(Fennell, 2002, p. 162). The situational component of this model emphasizes the level of interaction between the leader and the group members and determines the leadership style employed by the leader (Jordan, 1996). This notion of leadership style is examined in more detail in the following section of this review.

2.2.3 Leadership Styles in Outdoor Recreation

Leadership styles refer to the ways in which leaders express their influence (Priest & Gass, 1997). Phipps and Phipps (1991) indicate that a wealth of literature examines different styles of leadership that are applicable in outdoor and wilderness recreation. Typically, these styles are identified as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Phipps & Phipps, 1991) and are based on a dynamic continuum. As a modified laissez-faire approach, Priest and Gass (1997) include the abdicratic leadership style in their discussion. Overviews of these leadership styles, as well as their connection to Hersey and Blanchard’s (1977) Situational Leadership model, are summarized below.

The autocratic leadership style is characterized by an authoritarian approach in which the leader is the sole decision-maker (Fennell, 2002). Group members are not involved in deciding on goals or in determining which actions are appropriate for achieving those goals. The leader dictates the needed response for the given situation with a telling or selling approach (Priest & Gass, 1997). The telling technique requires the leader to make a decision and demand action from the group members. Similarly, the selling style requires that the leader convince the group of the merit in a leader-made decision. As Priest and Gass (1997) suggest, a true autocratic style is rarely suitable in outdoor leadership environments. Rather, this authoritarian style seems more applicable
to emergency outdoor recreation situations that involve injury or require evacuation (Fennell, 2002).

The democratic style of leadership is a shared or participatory approach to outdoor leadership in which the “leader actively seeks the advice of participants for making informed decisions” (Fennell, 2002, p. 161). The leader is an equal member of the group in this approach and adopts a testing or consulting process for decision-making (Priest & Gass, 1997). For instance, the leader works with the participants in making the necessary decision or in modifying a decision made by the leader. Certainly, the group members are granted more responsibility in this style of leadership and must be competent, mature, and knowledgeable to contribute to the decision or action (Priest & Gass, 1997).

The third leadership style, laissez-faire, is one in which the leader allows participants to make decisions freely (Fennell, 2002). Control of group actions and decision-making power is left to the participants while the leader concentrates on creating harmonious relationships with the group members (Fennell, 2002). Priest and Gass (1997) recognize that all-group power has little utility in the outdoor recreation environment, as involvement by both leader and group members is most often necessary. Therefore, Priest and Gass identify the abdicratic leadership approach that emphasizes the joining of participants in the decision-making process or the delegation of decisions to group members.

The Situational Leadership model was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) and is a commonly cited leadership model in the outdoor, adventure, and wilderness leadership literature (Ford & Blanchard, 1993; Peart, 1995; Phipps & Phipps,
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1991; Searle & Brayley, 1993; Weiler, 1996). Contrary to studies identified by Phipps and Phipps (1991) that indicate leaders assume only one leadership style, the Situational Leadership model suggests that leadership styles are flexible and tend to vary within leaders. That is, leaders have the capacity to change their leadership style (e.g., autocratic, democratic, and abdicratic or telling, selling, participating, and delegating) and each leadership style can be effective or ineffective depending on the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

Specifically, the appropriate leadership style for a given situation is dependent on two factors: the maturity level of the group and the demands of the situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Group maturity level relates to the ability, willingness, and readiness of group members to direct and be responsible for their own behaviours. Within the Situational Leadership model, the maturity levels of group members vary on a continuum from low to high. For example, a highly mature outdoor pursuit group member has ample experience and education relative to the task at hand, can set high and attainable goals, and is willing and able to take responsibility for his or her actions (Ford & Blanchard, 1993). Conversely, immature (or low maturity level) group members are deficient in all of these characteristics (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

The second component of Hersey and Blanchard’s (1977) model, demands of the situation, incorporates the task-oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours that the leader may adopt. As Ford and Blanchard (1993) suggest, “in outdoor pursuits, the situation may range from formal to informal, tense to relaxed, dangerous to safe” (p. 195) and require different levels of leader involvement or control. After assessing the maturity level of the group members, the leader can adopt the appropriate leadership style to
match the demand of the situation. Hersey and Blanchard recognize telling, selling, participating, and delegating as the leadership styles within their model. Adopting one of these leadership styles—which are clearly linked to the autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire/abdricratic styles referred to early—to match the maturity level of group members and the demands of the situation demonstrate how leadership style is a flexible and dynamic process.

2.2.4 Effective Wilderness Recreation Leaders

Understanding the complexity involved in defining leadership and recognizing the flexible nature of leadership styles advances the question: what characteristics do effective outdoor and wilderness recreation leaders possess? As Priest and Gass (1997) indicate, several studies have aimed at describing the qualities of effective outdoor leaders. The following section reviews the most frequently cited traits and characteristics of outdoor adventure leaders identified in the literature, which often overlap with the necessary competencies of wilderness recreation leaders. Thus, insights from various authors are presented followed by a description of Priest and Gass’ effective outdoor leadership wall model.

2.2.4.1 Effective outdoor leader literature.

Certainly, effective outdoor and wilderness recreation leaders must have the appropriate technical skills to lead a group of outdoor enthusiasts down a raging river, up a rock face, or on a weekend hiking trip. A general list of these technical or ‘hard’ skills is outlined in Appendix A. As the literature indicates, however, there is much more to effective outdoor leadership than having the necessary hard skills to complete the required task in the chosen outdoor environment. Despite Ford and Blanchard’s (1993)
claim that outdoor leadership competencies are regionally specific and that leaders need to assess these qualities for themselves, common characteristics of effective outdoor and wilderness recreation leaders emerge within the literature.

For example, similar to the situational leadership ideas of Hersey and Blanchard (1977), Luckner (1994) believes that there is no single strategy or method for effective instruction and leadership in the outdoor environment. Luckner suggests that instructors that choose a variety of approaches in their leadership style will most effectively teach participants the necessary skills to ensure positive experiences. Although Luckner focuses primarily on teaching strategies for the specific skill development of participants, his ideas do extend to the realm of wilderness recreation leadership. Effective wilderness leaders must also be effective teachers. That is, an essential component of outdoor experiences “is the instructor’s ability to ensure that the skills necessary for a successful experience are taught to students before required use” (Luckner, 1994, p. 60). In turn, this successful experience can lead to the increase in participant self-discovery, confidence, and transfer of practical skills to the home environment. In order to achieve these desired outcomes, effective instructors and leaders must maintain a flexible leadership style and have competent technical (i.e., hard skills), communication (see also Raiola, 1995), counselling, and teaching skill sets (Luckner, 1994).

Peart (1995) concurs with Luckner’s (1994) themes; however, Peart narrows the skills of effective outdoor leadership into two groups: technical and affective skills. He indicates that there is a tendency among outdoor leaders to concentrate on their technical skill development and neglect the affective or ‘softer’ people skills (see Appendix A for a list of soft skills). Peart maintains that effective leadership is a combination of technical
and affective skills in conjunction with the leader's personality. In this capacity, quality leadership becomes a "mixture of art, craft and humanity" (Peart, 1995, p. 21) and effective leaders recognize the appropriateness of various leadership styles in a constantly changing outdoor environment. Furthermore, leaders with developed technical and affective skills will make more comfortable and competent decisions during stressful situations, will encourage participant and team growth while achieving tasks, and demonstrate the courage to make and take responsibility for unpleasant decisions (Peart, 1995). These ideas support the work of Phipps and Claxton (1997) who found that outdoor leaders and instructors were more effective when their communication skills, group building strategies, and debrief, judgement, and decision-making capabilities were appropriate for the skill and experience level of groups (Phipps & Claxton, 1997). Accordingly, outdoor and wilderness recreation leaders must maintain and attempt to develop technical and affective skills in order to be effective.

The notion and importance of affective or soft skills in effective outdoor leadership is advanced further by Mitten (1995, 1999). As the goal of most outdoor adventure programs is for participants to experience and create positive relationships and bonds with the other group members, Mitten (1999) argues that outdoor leaders must lead with their heart and model healthy, caring relationships. Leaders that support healthy relationships between themselves and group members, and among group members, contribute to building a supportive and connected outdoor adventure atmosphere (Mitten, 1995). This support is rooted in the caring and understanding of others and, ultimately, results in the personal empowerment, group cohesion, and increased self-esteem of the participants. Within this approach, effective outdoor leadership is more about the
relationships that group members form than the accomplishment-and results of the outdoor adventure task (Mitten, 1999).

Contributing similar ideas to the discussion of outdoor leadership, Lehmann (1991) describes six ethical principles that serve as the foundation for effective leadership. Lehmann's experience is derived from wilderness trips with women where the goal of the program is for participants to achieve authenticity. That is, participants are encouraged to recognize their potential (i.e., truth) and achieve their ensuing goals (i.e., reality). The first of the six principles that lead to authentic experiences, dwelling, affirms one's history and values while acknowledging and legitimizing those of others. Leaders facilitate this process among participants and design the outdoor experience to match the expectations, concerns, and skills of the group members. Freedom is the second principle and is the leadership process of encouraging participant involvement and growth in the decision-making needs of the group. This principle is supported by justice, in which the leader equally, equitably, and adequately addresses the needs of each individual participant. Once these three principles are achieved, the leader encourages participation and creates an atmosphere where individual group members claim and exercise the power derived from the first three principles. The leader may become more of a group member at this point as love and responsibility guide the actions and conduct of the participants. With love, Lehmann describes a genuine care and appreciation for others that allows individuality among group members and tempers the participation principle. Lehmann's use of the term love seems like a farfetched goal for leaders given the variety of participants that are encountered in outdoor recreation. From my experience as a wilderness recreation leader, respect for each participant seems more suitable.
Nevertheless, responsibility supports each of these preceding principles as the leader and group members must guide their own actions and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to each situation. Accordingly, these six principles recognize the ethical understanding and skills that are required for effective outdoor adventure leadership (Lehmann, 1991).

To summarize, the literature examined above identifies various traits of effective outdoor leaders. For instance, leaders must recognize and adopt appropriate leadership styles in different situations, have excellent technical skills and affective skills, and maintain caring and ethical practices in the field. Priest and Gass (1997) developed the effective outdoor leadership wall model to capture all of the components of effective leadership in outdoor, adventure, and wilderness environments. This comprehensive model is outlined next.

2.2.4.2 The effective outdoor leadership wall model

Of all the literature relevant to effective outdoor leadership, the model proposed by Priest and Gass (1997) is the most comprehensive and detailed. Within their construct, Priest and Gass identify and explain that soft skill ‘bricks’ are built on top of hard skill ‘bricks’ which are both supported and bound by the ‘mortar’ of meta skills. Underlying and supporting this wall are the social psychological, historical, and philosophical foundations of the outdoor leader.

The hard skill components of the wall include technical skills, safety skills, and environmental skills of the outdoor leader (Priest & Gass, 1997). Examples of these three types of hard skills have already been identified in Appendix A. Priest and Gass (1997) support the notion that being able to perform technical skills safely and in an
environmentally sound manner are commonplace for the majority of leaders in outdoor environments. As well, these skills are relatively easy to learn, develop, and assess within outdoor leader trainees and are frequently discussed in the how-to-do-it books available at the local outdoor equipment retailer (Priest & Gass, 1997). The soft skills that are incorporated into the Priest and Gass wall construct are instructional skills, organizational skills, and facilitation skills. Examples of these types of skills are also outlined in Appendix A and are generally less common in outdoor leader training and preparation (Priest & Gass, 1997). The third skill set in the wall metaphor are the meta skills and include effective communication, flexible leadership style, professional ethics, problem solving, decision-making, and experience-based judgement. Many of these skills have been described previously in this paper as soft skills (see Fennell, 2002; Peart, 1995). What makes Priest and Gass’s model unique is that these highly specialized meta skills “if correctly executed, permit the most effective expression of all the other skills” (p. xvii). Like the mortar in a brick wall, meta skills bind the hard and soft skills together in such a way that leadership is expressed in the most effective way possible. Ford and Blanchard (1993) support the connection of hard, soft, and meta skills in the quality of leadership ability:

Unless a person can act holistically, using his/her own unique characteristics appropriately in a wide variety of situations, the possession of any number of traits is of no value. You can always study lists of recommended traits, try to strengthen those you already think you possess and develop those you do not, but always with the realization that it is how the traits and qualities are combined and utilized that defines the leadership ability. (p. 193)
The fact that Priest and Gass (1997) include a number of components of effective leadership into their model—many of which have been highlighted in the efforts of other authors—affirms the comprehensiveness and suitability of the effective outdoor leader wall metaphor.

2.3 Humans and the Experience of Nature

2.3.1 The Meaning of Nature

The meaning of nature has been widely explored, contemplated, and discussed within the academic literature. The meaning of nature has been understood from the perspectives of socio-biology (Wilson, 1996; 1998), philosophy (Rolston III, 1986), social creation (Evernden, 1992), discursive studies (Ryan, 2002), and environmental education (Russell, 1999; Simpson, 1999). In fact, Limjbach, Margadant-Van Arcken, Van Koppen, & Wals (2002) provide an excellent overview of the pedagogical, sociological, and philosophical approaches to understanding nature. Cultural and historical specificity is also relevant (Ibrahim & Cordes, 1999; Russell, 1999; Winter, 1996). The purpose of this section of the literature review is not to provide an exhaustive review of the meaning of nature (that would be a worthwhile project of its own). Rather, in an effort to support my phenomenological quest of describing the meaning of nature for a group of wilderness recreation leaders, the aim of this section is to emphasize the fact that nature is a highly used and contested term (Russell, 1999) that can be understood from various perspectives. Simply, the meaning of nature is complex. The following section incorporates the various meanings of nature reviewed by Rolston III’s (1986) and hints to the link between nature and human nature expressed by Wilson (1996). A brief
description of outdoor recreation related research that highlights the meaning of nature is also provided prior to the close of this section.

The way in which humans use the word *nature* is important to understanding the meaning of nature. Simply put, nature is only an English word; but, as Rolston III (1986) argues, there are few other words that offer such a medley of meanings. In his opening remarks discussing whether humans can and ought to follow nature, Rolston III identifies that “nature is whatever is” (p. 31). This broad scope suggests that nature is an unimaginable and unmanageable sum that includes the physical universe, the dwelling of the biosphere in planetary movements, and, really, anything that follows Natural laws. Still, humans tend to restrict the word to a global scale and understand nature as “a system giving birth to life” (Rolston III, p. 31) personifying these vital evolutionary and ecological systems as Mother Nature.

Rolston III (1986) also highlights the complexity of nature’s meaning. In each of the three general approaches to following nature—the absolute, artifactual, and relative sense—Rolston III provides various possible understandings of nature and humans’ role within nature. From one perspective, humans are natural creatures following natural laws. From another standpoint, Rolston III indicates that humans are animals for whom it is natural to be unnatural. Nature, for instance, can include cities and technology because nature supplied humans with the brain, hand, and desire for social interaction that are responsible for urban constructions. However, nature can also be considered a place of encounter and contemplation rather than a place for us to act on and change. In this meaning, we do not recreate nature: it recreates us. A final example of the complexity in
understanding the meaning of nature from Rolston III is indicated by the following passage that depicts the beauty and chaotic functions of nature:

Nature is a vast scene of birth and death, springtime and harvest, permanence and change, of budding, flowering, fruiting, and withering away, of processive unfolding, of pain and pleasure, of success and failure, of ugliness giving way to beauty and beauty to ugliness. (p. 50)

Nature, therefore, can be viewed as beauty sustained over chaos (Rolston III, 1986).

In his book *In Search of Nature*, Wilson (1996) differentiates between nature and human nature. Wilson explains that nature is “that part of the world we think of as eternal, beyond us, having no need of us, and yet is the cradle of our species” (p. ix). On the other hand, human nature is “our essence, the way we were in the beginning, comprising those sensory and emotional capacities that join humanity into one species” (p. ix). The contrast between nature and human nature is clear to Wilson; however, he argues that in order to understand human nature or wild nature we need to explore and understand both as interwoven products of evolution. As an example of the interconnectedness of nature and human nature, Wilson discusses how the image of the serpent has ripened within human nature. Wilson describes examples of how snakes and serpents—creatures of wild nature—have been a historical threat to humans and our related primates. In response to this threat, humans and/or primates developed the appropriate reactions to protect themselves, evolving into responses that have become ingrained within our brains. This evolution has continued into cultural institutions (i.e., an outcome of human nature) that use the image of the serpent to invoke feelings of fear, anxiety, wonder, stress, and awe (Wilson, 1996). To this extent, the meaning of nature is
a product of both wild nature and human nature. Specifically, the way that nature and its components are viewed (e.g., a snake), is a result of its relationship to humans (i.e., the snake is a threat) and how that relationship has evolved into human nature and subsequent cultural customs (e.g., the snake represents fear, anxiety, awe).

The meaning of nature has also been considered in outdoor recreation related research. In their hermeneutic approach to understanding the diversity and nature of wilderness recreation experiences, Patterson, Watson, Williams, and Roggenbuck (1998) conducted short, open-ended interviews with 30 groups landing at the end of a seven mile canoe trip at a National Forest area in Florida. From these interviews, Patterson et al. identified four dimensions of whether these single day canoe trip visitors had a wilderness experience. Achieving closeness to nature was among the four dimensions of this wilderness experience and involved direct contact with the tight winding stream and overhanging trees as well as observing wildlife such as alligators, spiders, bugs, and snakes. Study participants considered nature to involve vegetation, landscape, and wildlife (Patterson et al., 1998). This finding is similar to Simmons’ (1993) research that shows that teachers categorize nature based on a variety of characteristics including content (e.g., vegetation, topography, and structures) and spatial arrangements (e.g., openness and density of vegetation). Simmons had teachers arrange and categorize photographs of different types of settings, explain their likes and dislikes about the areas, and consider different activities that they could do with students in those settings. According to Simmons’ results, environmental education teachers disliked urban scenes that included natural features such as trees, shrubs, and lakes because of the concrete, traffic, and perceptions that the scene was ‘counter to nature’ and ‘crowded and
confined.’ The research of Simmons (1993) and Patterson et al. (1998) demonstrate that vegetation and landscape features of an area, and the difference that these scenes have with urban environments, can fix the meaning of nature.

Using participant observation and post-trip interview methods, Haluza-Delay (2001) applied the constructivist learning theory to understand the experience of teenage participants on a 12-day adventure trip. The constructivist learning theory supposes that learners are actors in the knowledge making process and considers how the learner makes sense of an experience and adapts that experience to past understandings. Haluza-Delay examined the subjective experiences of teenagers’ wilderness experience and how these individuals used and responded to this experience in everyday life. Results indicate that nature is an elusive concept that involves two broad components: the qualities of nature and the feeling of nature. The qualities of nature include the notions that nature is undisturbed, without people, natural, not human-made, and out there (i.e., it is away from home communities). The feeling of nature suggests that nature is different from civilization, relaxing or not busy, free, and unfamiliar. Concisely stated, “nature is defined mostly in comparison to civilization; it is undisturbed, mostly without human-made items, unfamiliar, without people, out there, relaxing, and free. Because nature is out there...it is not to be found in the home environment” (Haluza-Delay, 2001, p. 47).

Using qualitative techniques as well, Brookes (2001) uncovered constructions of nature that were similar to Haluza-Delay's findings. According to Brookes' findings, participants of a guided-river trip consider humans and nature to be separate. Although nature is to be cherished, it is a place to which humans visit and require codified behaviours (i.e., minimum impact practices). River expeditions are shaped by, and
reproduce, images and constructs of nature as distant but revered (Brookes, 2001). Thus, the meaning of nature can be understood as something cherished, but which is different from humans and away from our regular lives in home communities (Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 2001).

As noted previously by Rolston III (1986), the way that we use the word nature carries with it the meaning of nature. From a discursive studies perspective, how we talk about phenomena like wilderness or nature influences how we will treat it and behave while we are engaged with it (Ryan, 2002). For example, Ryan (2002) outlines that the sub-textual messaging in minimum impact and outdoor recreation technology discourse divides humans and wilderness. There is much power involved in the way that we talk about nature. To illustrate further, Simpson (1999) indicates that typical experiential education practices, using nature as a backdrop for team-building, problem solving, improving self-esteem, or even improving corporate efficiency, provoke views of nature as a classroom. Nature, therefore, can be considered the playing field (Hogan, 1992) that houses opportunities for learning personal or group skills rather than the nature as teacher—that is, nature can offer lessons of its own—understanding that Simpson advocates. Within the literature, we also see the meaning of nature being transformed by nature’s inclusion in the virtual reality of television, malls, Disney, and the Internet (Roggenbuck, 2000). Nature is becoming packaged and convenient, free of temporal and spatial constraints, clean, comfortable, safe, and sanitized. As Roggenbuck (2000) argues, people are interacting with a nature that does not include real mosquitoes or real lions. Nature, via its use in virtual reality productions, is entertaining, a commodity, and further separated from humans (Roggenbuck, 2000). Whether we use the word nature in
reference to the discourse of minimum impact camping, technology, experiential
education practices, or virtual reality, the fact of the matter is that how we use the word
exhibits an element of what nature means to us. More importantly, and in conclusion to
this section of the literature review, the meaning of nature—whether inclusive of human
nature, separate from our doings and home communities, or associated with only
vegetation, landscape, and wildlife—is complex and elusive. How we think of nature and
its meaning, influences our relationship to it (Russell, 1999). Literature pertaining to this
human relationship and connection to nature will be explored in the following section.

2.3.2 Human Relationships and Connections to Nature

2.3.2.1 Tracing the modern Western worldview

The history of human relationships to nature has been granted much attention in
the literature (Evernden, 1992; Fennell, 2002; Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993; Winter, 1996).
The relationships that humans maintain and have had with nature are certainly influenced
by, among other things, cultural, historical, religious, and social factors. In this section of
the literature review, however, an overview of the emergence of the modern Western
worldview of nature is provided, knowing full well that other worldviews exist.
Acknowledging that the fact that this Western worldview is most ordinary among the
cultural and social structures to which this project is bound (Winter, 1996) is reason to
consider this worldview perspective in this document.

In his chapter on the foundational aspects of ecotourism, Fennell (2002) provides
a brief history of people’s relationship to nature. Fennell’s discussion begins by
highlighting the shift from the mystical and romantic views of nature to the empirical,
reductionism, and physical observation focus of scientists and philosophers such as
Descartes and John Locke. These historic thinkers helped to establish the search for and discovery of absolute truths (e.g., through mathematical laws) as the primary purpose of scientific inquiry and thought. Attempts were made to begin explaining, predicting, and reducing the objects of nature to calculations (Glover, 2000). Subsequently, the observer (i.e., humans) became detached from the observed (i.e., nature), emphasis was placed on controlling nature, and the relationship between nature and humans was of utilitarian concentration (Glover, 2000). As Fennell notes, at this point in history “everything in nature [was] a waste until people transform it into usable things” (p. 23). Thus, nature was valued and experienced only to the extent that it was usable by people.

Throughout the settlement and development process of North America, the relationships between humans and nature have been dynamic and evolving. The empirical and utilitarian views of nature held by European scientists provided an avenue for the settlement and development of the North American continent. At the same time, North Americans viewed the wilderness as a dangerous threat and sought to control nature (Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993). The frontier mentality, in which people reduced the perceived threats of wilderness by the constant development and exploitation of what were considered unlimited natural resources (Fennell, 2002), thrived and was maintained by most North Americans.

Ibrahim and Cordes (1993) highlight the visionary writings of Emerson (1963) and Thoreau (1970) as the foundations of transcendentalism. This philosophy, and minor movement among Western thinkers, denounced excessive human land-use and maintained a harmonious worldview with nature as the primary focal point. In turn, the writings of Emerson and Thoreau advocated for a trust in nature, a connection between
elements of nature, people’s relationship to the environment, and being solitary in natural settings (Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993). The transcendentalist path influenced other individuals, extending an understanding, description, and preservation of nature through naturalist writing. John Muir, for example, recognized that in wilderness a person could experience and realize his or her part in the harmonious whole of nature. As Ibrahim and Cordes (1993) note, Muir’s “deepest insight was in finding the inner oneness in all of nature, pointing out that no particle of nature is ever wasted” (p. 37). By suggesting the human connections to nature, the writings of and efforts in protecting natural environments by Muir, the notion of conservation emerged (Fennell, 2002).

As a wildlife ecologist and practitioner, Aldo Leopold (1949) was a leader in promoting wilderness conservation and adjusting human relationships to nature. According to Simpson (1996), Leopold’s uniqueness was that he was a resource manager writing philosophically about nature to members of his profession. Maintaining that nature was not a commodity to be controlled by humans, but rather a community that included humans (Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993), Leopold established the Land Ethic. In short, the Land Ethic endorsed that “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (Leopold, p. 262). Leopold’s philosophy was one that encouraged an individual’s moral development and cultural connections through nature (Simpson & Cain, 1995) and ethical reasoning and decision-making by being able to “see, feel, understand, love or otherwise have faith in that which they do” (Fennell, 2002, p. 25). As such, an activity like hunting could serve to advance an individual’s connection to nature if the person experienced the moral dilemmas and understood the implications to the natural community related to his
or her actions (Simpson & Cain, 1995). Ultimately, Leopold recognized that conservation could only be achieved if individuals’ moral, cultural, and economic values worked in concert and were incorporated into a person’s ethic (Fennell, 2002; Simpson, 1996; Simpson & Cain, 1995).

The relationship between humans and nature that is described in current literature is somewhat varied. Certainly, the utilitarian relationship with nature remains prevalent in modern society and is recognized through the continued developments, industrialization, and natural resource exploitations that receive attention in popular media. To some degree, this may contribute to the fact that nature remains a separate entity from human experience. Haluza-Delay (1999b), for instance, has found that teenagers, often teased by their peers when appreciating nature during wilderness trips, associated discomfort and fear with nature experiences. Nervousness, apprehension, and excitement are other negative feelings that people experience in natural environments (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). This disconnected relationship to nature supports Brookes’ (2001) notion that nature is separate from humans and that “keeping a distance, limiting engagement, and not overstaying are therefore proper behaviour” (p. 16) when visiting nature. Accordingly, nature experiences (and associated expeditions to wilderness settings) can be viewed as an isolated episode and, certainly, not an on-going relationship between humans and nature.

On the other hand, however, there are some research and literature sources that do disclose positive human – nature connections and relationships. McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) focused their research on the person – environment transactions of university students engaging in a short-term wilderness experience. Their findings
suggest that nature is viewed as awesome, beautiful, and non-threatening and that participants of this particular wilderness experience were commonly relaxed and immersed in the contemplation of nature. Some participants in Haluza-Delay's (1999b) study also highlighted these positive connections to the environment. For example, Haluza-Delay noted that some teenagers experienced a bond with nature while on a wilderness trip and a desire to be part of the wilderness. Positive connections and relationships with nature are also emphasized by Wilson's (1996) biophilia hypothesis, "an innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" (p. 165). Wilson asserts that biophilia is a series of learning rules that have emotional roots in humans (e.g., attraction to aversion, awe to indifference, peacefulness to fear and anxiety) and are subsequently entangled within our cultural symbols. The abundance of people that visit zoos, the wealthy seeking homes by water or parklands, and the physiological and psychological well being of individuals in response to natural landscapes (Kahn, 2001) are not accidents, but a result of biophilia (Wilson, 1996). Although Kahn (2001) presents arguments and empirical studies that both support and criticize the biophilia hypothesis, the very thought of the existence of biophilia suggests positive human relationships to nature.

Despite the positive connections that some argue exist between humans and nature, the modern Western worldview is dominant in North America and European countries (Winter, 1996). According to Winter (1996), this dominant perspective endorses progress and development, growth and prosperity, and a faith in science and technology. Nature, therefore, has a utilitarian purpose for humans. Specifically, the Western worldview has us believe that:
Land that is not used for economic gain is wasted; that individuals have the freedom and right to develop land for economic profit; and that human beings should convert however much of the natural world they can procure to support their private well being. (Winter, 1996, p. 26)

Although Winter does not state that one worldview is better than another or that we should attempt to return to a pre-industrial worldview, Winter does indicate that the Western worldview has provided a system of beliefs that encourage people “to use and abuse nature” (p. 29). As the planet continues approaching its carrying capacity limits, understanding the assets and limits of the modern Western worldview is important. In the following sections, literature regarding values and ethics—both relevant to the worldviews and relationships to nature sustained by humans—will be explored prior to the explanation of anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and deep ecology.

2.3.2.2 Values and ethics

Knapp (1999) defines values as the “ideas about the worthiness of objects or activities” (p. 69). Values develop over time, guide behaviour, and serve as a means for achieving an end or as an end in itself (Knapp, 1999). Similarly, Stern and Dietz (1994) accept Rokeach’s view that values are criteria “for guiding action [and] for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations” (p. 67). Thus, value orientations affect a person’s beliefs and have consequences for the individual’s attitudes and behaviour (Stern & Dietz, 1994). In his work on the structure of environmental concern, Schultz (2001) distinguishes between types of environmental attitudes that are oriented around the valued objects of self, other people, and the biosphere. That is, Schultz identifies that people’s attitudes toward and concern for environmental issues are
based on the importance the person places on him or herself, other people, or plants and animals. Accordingly, Schulz’s (2001) findings suggest, “that attitudes about environmental issues are the result of more general underlying values, and that different value orientations lead to different attitudes” (p. 335). Stern and Dietz (1994) caution, however, that values do not necessarily predict attitude formation because social influences (e.g., other people, mass media, and social movements) can affect how a person constructs his or her attitude preferences. As well, attitudes are frequently associated with many contradictory values (Stern & Dietz, 1994). The characteristics of values, identified above, inspire a challenge to understanding the extent to which values impact not only attitude, but also a person’s revealed environmentally responsible behaviour.

Closely aligned with and influential to the underlying values held by an individual are ethics. According to Freedman (2004) ethics “refers to the perception of right and wrong and the appropriate behaviour of people toward each other, other species, and nature” (p. 10). Freedman continues by suggesting that environmental ethics “deals with the responsibilities of the present human generation to future generations of people and other species, to ensure that the world will continue to function in an ecologically healthy way, and to provide adequate resources and livelihoods” (p. 12). Furthermore, Kortenkamp and Moore (2001) indicate that “environmental ethics is based on the idea that morality ought to be extended to include the relationship between humans and nature” (p. 262). More specifically, environmental ethics recognizes that the Earth consists of interconnected human and non-human components, processes, and systems
null
and examines how all these elements can savour life harmoniously (Knapp, 1999). As such,

Behaving responsibly toward the Earth, some environmental ethicists believe, requires us to make sacrifices so all living things can exist under healthy and sustainable conditions. Such changes necessitate thinking about who we are in relation to others and developing systems of beliefs, attitudes, values, and principles to guide us as we live compatibly with the rest of Earth’s inhabitants. (Knapp, 1999, p. 5)

In the statement above, Knapp (1999) expresses a clear link between environmental ethics and many of the factors relevant to value orientations and behaviour theory (see Theory of Planned Behaviour by Azjen & Fishbein, 1980). When attempting to describe the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders, an understanding of values, ethics, and worldviews is essential. The next section provides an overview of two competing worldviews that are relevant to the process of understanding experiences in and relationship to nature.

2.3.2.3 Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism.

Although Knapp (1999) and Fennell (1999) refer to the rivalling anthropocentric and biocentric worldviews, I have chosen to include here a discussion of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Kortenkamp and Moore (2001) and Freedman (2004) indicate that ecologists adapted the biocentric term in order to grant intrinsic value to all forms of life as well as the non-living components of ecosystems such as rocks, soil, and water. From this modification, the term ecocentrism emerged (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2001) and goes beyond the biocentric worldview by incorporating the interdependence
and importance of living and non-living entities. To introduce the importance of distinguishing between the anthropocentric and ecocentric ethical positions, an excerpt from Kortenkamp and Moore is appropriate.

Environmental crises, such as species extinction, global warming, air and water pollution, and wild land destruction, are some of the most important problems currently facing our society. How we deal with these problems largely depends on how we perceive our relationship with land. Do we view nature as property for us to use however we wish for our own benefit, or does nature have intrinsic value, value aside from its usefulness to humans? (Kortenkamp & Moore, 2001, p. 261)

Both anthropocentrism and ecocentrism are highlighted in the passage above. The anthropocentric view maintains a human centred way of seeing the world where people value the achievement of human goals at the expense of the natural environment (Knapp, 1999). The anthropocentric worldview recognizes the instrumental or utilitarian value of nature. That is, the value of nature extends only to its ability in satisfying society’s goals and creating a more comfortable and convenient life (Knapp, 1999). In this worldview, humans are the centre of the universe (Freedman, 2004). Relating this ethic to the recreation setting, one would recognize that many outdoor adventure pursuits, programs that use natural lands such as rivers and mountains to invoke risk and challenge participants, assert an anthropocentric relationship with the environment. Adventure participants appreciate the personal growth and group development outcomes of testing themselves in natural environments over both the negative environmental impacts they create and the opportunities to develop environmentally responsible behaviours and reconnect with nature. In this capacity, the natural environment is valued because of its
potential as an arena (i.e., a playing field according to Hogan (1992) or a classroom according to Simpson (1999)) for achieving human centred goals of personal growth and group development.

The ecocentric ethic, on the other hand, upholds an Earth centred view of the world. Ecocentrism is achieved when “people strongly value nature and give it moral consideration” (Knapp, 1999, p. 6), believing that the natural environment has intrinsic value and possesses rights. As a result, humans have an obligation and duty to protect and preserve the natural environment on behalf of that environment (Hanna, 1995; Knapp, 1999). In outdoor recreation settings, the ecocentric worldview is frequently overlooked or reduced to the practice of minimal impact camping strategies and the achievement of adventure related goals (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). Programs that encourage the inherent value in nature, the enjoyment of simply being connected to the Earth, and the practice of environmentally responsible behaviours may lead to the promotion of ecocentrism. Simpson’s (1999) description of encountering nature with an open-mind and viewing nature as a teacher may contribute to such a lofty goal.

Knapp (1999) notes that the anthropocentric – ecocentric dichotomy is not as simple as it may appear. People often shift along an anthropocentric – ecocentric continuum and demonstrate different worldviews or ethics depending on situational factors (i.e., factors identified previously in the discussion of revealed behaviour). How likely is it that people can truly and constantly maintain an ecocentric or anthropocentric worldview? The dichotomy between the worldview is useful for assisting our understanding of the two perspectives (Fennell, 2000), but is there really any hope in achieving a purely ecocentric or anthropocentric stance? Accordingly, Knapp argues that
individuals must be invited to develop their own environmental ethic and determine what that ethic means to them. To help facilitate this process, Knapp identifies several strategies that educators can use to promote within students an environmental ethic. Although a description of these strategies is beyond the scope of this literature review, many of these educational ideas could be adapted and employed by wilderness recreation leaders to encourage the development of an environmental ethic by wilderness recreation participants. More importantly, for wilderness recreation experiences to successfully influence the environmentally responsible behaviours of participants, programs that focus on value clarification and environmental ethic development must be designed.

2.3.2.4 Deep ecology

One philosophy that has emerged in response to the common anthropocentric focus of society (Henderson, 1990) and the recognition of people’s poor relationship to the Earth (Henderson, 1999) is deep ecology. This grass roots movement is both a political and philosophical reform (Devall, 1988) that accepts the existence of an environmental crisis and understands that our way of life requires a paradigm shift involving a respect for all components of the Earth (Hogan & Priest, 1996). According to Devall (1988), deep ecology “refers to finding our bearings, to the process of grounding ourselves through fuller experience of our connection to earth” (p. 11). Thus, deep ecology values all living and non-living things and argues that humans do not possess a supremacy over nature. According to Henderson (1990), “deep ecology is a belief in the concern for the quality of life for all living and non living things. It emphasizes the connections between humans and the environment, and suggests the need for transformations in society” (p. 78). To achieve this transformational shift, humans must
resist cultural customs of consumptive and competitive use of nature and return to connected and shared ways of experiencing the world (Henderson, 1999). This return to a connected relationship with nature, emphasized in deep ecology, suggests that humans do not have to produce or acquire a relationship with nature, but that we need to remember these connections (Henderson, 1999). Although Henderson (1990) questions the effectiveness of sponsoring deep ecology through outdoor recreation, wilderness recreation trips may provide the initial spatial and temporal route for humans to return to and reunite with their natural connections.

The tenets of the deep ecology movement were articulated by Naess and Sessions and have been outlined regularly by many authors (Devall, 1988; Duenkel, 1994; Henderson, 1999; Henderson, 1990; Hogan & Priest, 1996; Weber, 1994). As noted by Henderson (1999), these principles provide an avenue for developing personal relationships to nature, encouraging an ecological consciousness and action among citizens, and defining a vision for living. Taken directly from Devall (1988), the principles are:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.

5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality rather than adhering to an increasing higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes. (Devall, 1988, p. 14-15).

While each of the eight principles is important to the deep ecology movement, the final tenet emphasizes the personal transformative action that is most critical to the achievement of the paradigm shift outlined in deep ecology (Henderson, 1999). Although current outdoor recreation practitioners do not usually uphold deep ecology principles, there is potential for outdoor recreation to contribute by encouraging connections to natural environments, promoting spirituality and character building necessary for societal transformation, and helping people to live humble, non-aggressive, and compassionate lives (Henderson, 1990).
2.3.3 Environmentally Responsible Behaviours

As maintained by Vaske and Kobrin (2001), “behaviour is considered environmentally responsible when the actions of an individual or group advocate the sustainable or diminished use of natural resources” (p. 16). This generic definition can be identified within the works of other authors (Hanna, 1995; Hwang, Kim, & Jeng, 2000; Palmberg & Kuru, 2000). Many scholars and practitioners have attempted to understand the motivations behind and antecedents of these behaviours in order to protect natural areas, enhance outdoor experiences, and contribute to the development of environmentally conscious citizens (see, for example, Duncan & Martin, 2002; Hammitt et al., 1995; Hines, Hungerford, & Tomera, 1987; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). The theory of planned behaviour, developed through the behavioural research of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), provides a framework that many researchers have used for examining environmentally responsible behaviours. Hanna’s (1995) conceptual model of involvement in and for wilderness, for example, was based primarily on the work of Ajzen and Fishbein. In this model, Hanna (1995) suggests that predisposing factors, such as demographics and previous wilderness experience, integrate with a person’s knowledge of living and travelling in the natural environment. These components contribute to an individual’s attitude towards wilderness, which can range from anthropocentric to ecocentric attitudes. In turn, these attitudes lead to the development of intentions in (i.e., outdoor recreation) and for (i.e., environmental involvement) wilderness that guide and are revealed as specific wilderness behaviour (Hanna, 1995). This model, which has been supported by others (Mittelstaedt et al., 1999), integrates
[Natural text content goes here]
many components in the manifestation of environmental responsible behaviour and is depicted in Appendix B.

Finger (1994), however, asserts that increases to individuals’ knowledge, concern, and awareness about environmental issues and problems do not always result in appropriate behaviours or social action. The predictive and positivist framework that dominates environmentally responsible behaviour inquiry does not account for this discrepancy beyond the broad inclusion of sociological factors. Accordingly, Finger identifies with the hermeneutic and phenomenological rooted life-world approach to understanding behaviour. In this framework, a person derives meaning from his or her life-world, which incorporates the interaction of life-experiences, behaviour, and worldviews. That is, “significant life-experiences in, with, and of the environment; world-views in respect to environmental issues and problems; and environmental behaviour are the key building blocks of one’s life-world in respect to the environment” (Finger, 1994, p. 145). Such meaning is socio-cultural and collective in nature and determines how individuals approach problems and issues. Identified in Appendix C, the life-world framework is used by Finger to understand the connection between environmental learning and environmentally responsible behaviour (Finger, 1994).

Although Finger (1994) supports the life-world approach to understanding and predicting environmental behaviour, he indicates that educators, developmental psychologists, and social psychologists commonly accept the dominant behavioural framework. Certainly, the exhibition of environmentally responsible behaviour is a complex phenomenon that involves the meaning and interconnectedness of components such as knowledge acquisition, issue awareness, values and world views, attitudes,
...
behave, intentions, and experience. In fact, Kollmus and Agyeman (2002) sketch the complexity of predicting pro-environmental behaviour with a review of linear behavioural models, altruism, empathy, and pro-social behaviour models, and sociological models. As well as highlighting their own proposed model, Kollmus and Agyeman indicate that various economic, psychological, and social marketing models exist for understanding behaviour. Again, the emphasis here is to identify that environmentally responsible behaviour is a complex phenomenon that involves many elements and can be understood from many perspectives. Predicting or attempting to alter individuals' environmentally responsible behaviour has, therefore, been a challenging endeavour. As a strategy for encouraging positive environmental behaviour while people engage in recreation activities in natural environments, minimum impact practices have emerged. These practices are discussed next.

2.3.3.1 Minimum impact practices as environmentally responsible behaviour

In their description of the outdoor leadership wall model, Priest and Gass (1997) indicate that effective outdoor leaders must possess environmental skills that prevent negative damage to the natural environment. These environmental skills involve, primarily, practicing and teaching minimum impact or leave no trace strategies, which ultimately aim at reducing human impacts and evidence of our presence in natural or wild settings. Citing an example from Priest and Gass (1997), an outdoor leader should be expected to role model behaviours such as packing out all garbage or staying on trails (e.g., by not crosscutting switchback trails). The minimum impact and leave no trace principles are rooted in the notion that all human actions in the outdoors cause impact, that the number of wild land users is increasing, and that the space available for wild land
recreation is decreasing (Ryan, 2002). The design of minimum impact and leave no trace practices is, therefore, “to minimize the biological and social impact of visiting the backcountry and to instill an outdoor ethic of care and respect” (Borrie & Harding, 2002). In order to sponsor and encourage this ethic, Leave No Trace, an organization closely connected to the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), has outlined a set of guiding principles. Outlined below, these principles have emerged as the accepted standards for minimum impact travel in the backcountry (Borrie & Harding, 2002; Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993; Ryan, 2002). The seven principles, including examples of how each can be achieved, are as follows:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
   - Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you’ll visit.
   - Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
   - Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.
   - Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
   - Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
   - Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
   - Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

3. Dispose of waste properly
   - Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods.
     Pack out all trash, leftover food, toilet paper, hygiene products, and litter.
• Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.

• To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

4. Leave what you find

• Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artefacts.

• Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

5. Minimize campfire impacts

• Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

• Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

6. Respect wildlife

• Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

• Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviours, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

7. Be considerate of other visitors

• Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

• Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

• Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises. (Leave No Trace, 2004).

The importance of minimum impact and Leave No Trace practices in outdoor settings is recognized simply in the number of supporters that these practices have gathered (Ford & Blanchard, 1993; Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993; Priest & Gass, 1997). Despite the positive
outcomes (i.e., reduced environmental impacts) evident in following the Leave No Trace practices, environmentally responsible behaviour embodies more than an individual monitoring his or her impacts in natural settings. As an outcome of outdoor experiences, literature regarding environmental responsibility in a broader scope is examined next.

2.3.3.2 Environmental responsibility as an outcome of outdoor experiences

A wealth of research has examined the environmental responsible behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and values that are frequently assumed to result from participating in outdoor recreation (Haluza-Delay, 1999b). Researchers have studied summer camp environments (Mittelstaedt et al., 1999), youth work programs (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001), general outdoor activities (Palmberg & Kuru, 2000), short duration wilderness recreation trips (Gillet, Thomas, Skok, & McLaughlin, 1991; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998), and extended wilderness recreation experiences (Hanna, 1995; Haluza-Delay, 1999b; Haluza-Delay, 2001), achieving inconclusive findings related to environmental responsibility outcomes.

Mittelstaedt et al. (1999), for example, investigated the "effect that an experientially based program of environmental education had on the development of environmental attitudes towards environmental/outdoor concepts" (p. 139). Primarily, the study evaluated the impact of a summer science space camp on the environmental attitudes of youth participants. The results of the study demonstrate that children attending the examined experiential education program developed stronger positive environmental attitudes and intentions of becoming active in environmental stewardship. According to Mittelstaedt et al., these self-reported intentions suggest that the enhanced environmental awareness can be extended beyond the camp program to the home
environment. Vaske and Kobrin’s (2001) place attachment study presented findings that had similar positive environmental outcomes of outdoor experiences. Specifically, Vaske and Kobrin (2001) indicate that “specific environmental responsible behaviour in a natural resource setting (i.e., participating in the youth work program) encourages environmental responsible behaviour in everyday life (e.g., talking with friends about environmental issues, water conservation)” (p. 20). Again, the program outcomes appear to extend to the home community. Although the experiences that Mittelstaedt et al. (1999) and Vaske and Kobrin (2001) focused on were different, both studies’ findings reveal a connection between environmental education related experiences and environmental responsibility.

Studies that examine the relationship between more recreation related experiences in outdoor settings and environmental responsibility outcomes are needed. Palmberg and Kuru (2000) examined the impact that outdoor activity participation (e.g., canoeing, hiking, sailing, and tent overnights) had on the relationship between each participant and nature. Among the results, Palmberg and Kuru found that nature was generally viewed as an alternative to man-made recreation environments (see also Haluza-Delay, 2001). Children with more experience in outdoor activities demonstrated an empathetic relationship to nature and exhibited better social behaviour and higher moral judgements. Despite these positive impacts, Palmberg and Kuru note that there was a “deficiency in action competence among pupils in primary schools” (p. 35). Thus, youth may have a sense of compassion and respect for nature but not initiate environmental action or behave in environmentally responsible ways.
Furthermore, McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) highlight the dissertation work of Borrie, who measured whether or not canoeists experienced positive connections with nature. This person-nature transaction included the dimensions of care, solitude, oneness, humility, primitiveness, and timelessness that appeared in the writings of Thoreau, Muir, and Leopold. Borrie found that participants’ feelings of care and timelessness towards the natural environment were most prevalent and that feelings of humility increased significantly towards the end of the trip (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). McIntyre and Roggenbuck’s own research found that short, personally intense nature experiences (i.e., black-water rafting) can invoke feelings of appreciation, wonder, solitude, oneness, mystery, and timelessness with nature for individuals with relatively minimal experience. This study also found that individuals could experience nature as both a non-threatening, contemplative environment and a threatening obstacle to overcome (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Despite the positive feelings participants may develop for natural environments during outdoor recreation experiences, these feelings do not necessarily induce regular environmentally responsible behaviours.

Research has also examined the environmental responsibility outcomes of wilderness recreation trip experiences. For instance, Gillet, Thomas, Skok, and McLaughlin (1991) examined the impacts of wilderness camping and hiking on the self-concept and environmental attitudes and knowledge of high school students. The authors identify that differences are likely to emerge between the outcomes and benefits of short duration versus long duration trips. According to Gillet et al., participants that completed a 6-day wilderness experience (i.e., a short duration trip) showed a significant improvement in self-concept. More important to the purpose of this literature review,
Gillet et al. discovered that, after the relatively short trip, participants showed a change in environmental knowledge but no change in positive environmental attitudes. These findings are inconsistent with the literature pertaining to the outcomes of short wilderness trips and future research is recommended for exploring the characteristics of programs that result in positive participant changes (Gillet et al., 1991).

Hanna’s (1995) research investigated differences between adventure and ecology focused wilderness recreation experiences. To be more precise, Hanna addressed the “similarities and differences between adventure programming and ecology-education programming and how such programs affect participants’ wilderness-related knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour” (p. 24). Although Hanna found differences in the environmental responsibility outcomes of the different programs that were examined, Hanna contends that both adventure and ecological based wilderness programs can have positive environmental benefits. Hanna states that

The results of this study suggest that people exposed to either field ecology or adventure-education programming experience changes in what they know about the natural environment and traveling in it, and how strongly they feel about its preservation. However, the weak translation of these gains to pro-wilderness environmental behaviour suggests that other factors are at work besides knowledge and attitude. (p. 30)

Although positive knowledge and attitude changes can occur, Hanna’s advised cautions indicate that positive environmental behaviour does not correspondingly result.

Finally, the work of Haluza-Delay (1999b, 2001) offers insight into the environmental concern outcomes of participants after a 12-day wilderness canoe trip. In
his ethnographic study, Haluza-Delay (1999b) discovered that the wilderness experience was not an effective form of environmental education. That is, during post-trip reflections, participants did not express increases in environmentally responsible behaviour. In fact, as Haluza-Delay (2001) notes, the trip participants may have actually experienced a reduction in environmental responsible behaviour as indicated by a key finding that “teens imply that the home environment is already wrecked, so why bother with environmental concern?” (p. 47). The wilderness trip may inspire participants to view nature simply as the environment that they experience during their wilderness trip. Certainly, this environment is much different than the participants’ home environments and, therefore, may lead participants to feelings that nature is ‘out there’ (Haluza-Delay, 2001). These findings “would lend credence to the criticism that environmental awareness developed in the wilderness may not effectively transfer to the home context” (Haluza-Delay, 1999b, p. 136) and contributes to the inconclusive evidence regarding the positive environmental outcomes of outdoor recreation experiences.

2.3.3.3 Why are environmental responsibility outcomes inconclusive?

Among environmental education, adventure, outdoor pursuits, and wilderness recreation programs, there appears to be different environmental responsibility outcomes for the participants. This should be of little surprise to those who are familiar with the goals of each program type. For the purpose of this review, particular attention has been granted to wilderness recreation trips and the literature suggests uncertainty as to the positive environmental outcomes of these programs. Miles (1991) illustrates the assumed benefits of wilderness experience as he suggests that many educators consider exposure to natural environments as the best strategy for student learning and understanding of
nature and the problems of human interactions with it. Miles contends that “to understand
a wild and natural place, one must travel there and watch the sun rise, listen to the
silence, and gaze over nature largely unaffected by human enterprise” (p. 5). Similarly,
Haluza-Delay (1999b) asserts:

In an increasingly urbanized world, one could reasonably expect that encounter
with the natural world becomes important in the development of an environmental
ethic, and that wilderness tripping would be a place for participants to consider
their relations with the planet. (p. 129)

The notion that wilderness recreation trip experiences contribute to participants’
environmental responsibility is clearly accepted by many programmers and authors.
Others (Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 1999a; Weiler, 1996), however, feel that
wilderness trip experiences do not necessarily contribute to positive environmental
behaviours. Haluza-Delay follows his above statement by indicating that “wilderness
program leaders can point to anecdotal evidence of the power of program participation,
but little systematic investigation has considered the phenomenon of the “relationship
with nature” or developing environmental concern on an adventure program” (p. 129).

Two common explanations for why environmental outcomes of wilderness experiences
are inconclusive are identified below.

First, the style of wilderness recreation trips often involves elements of adventure
programming in which participants and leaders recognize nature as an opponent (Haluza-
Delay, 1999b). In other words, river rapids, uphill climbs, or fierce headwinds are viewed
as obstacles to completing the days’ journey. In turn, wilderness recreationists may
assume a conquering mentality over nature and experience “an adversarial relationship
with the natural world as a place against which to test oneself” (Haluza-Delay, 1999b, p. 130). These tests against nature often focus on personal growth and group development rather than the nature-human relationship. For example, McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) describe the study results discovered by Scherl during an Outward Bound course in the Australian wilderness. As a typical outdoor adventure program, the course aimed to foster personal growth though programmed group activities. Scherl’s study “found that participants focused principally on self in terms of activities and emotions and on the social setting rather than on the natural environment. Only on the solo day was the physical environment uppermost in people’s minds” (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998, p. 405-406). Moreover, Arnould and Price (1993) illustrate that during extended rafting trips, participants’ sense of community with their group members dominated behaviour. To highlight, Arnould and Price state that “what drove their emergent sense of identity was shared recognition of a common problem: their fear of the river, including shampooing their hair in it” (p. 35). Not only does this quote suggest poor environmental behaviour and feelings for natural environments, but also the emergence of community within extended trips tends to promote this poor relationship with the wilderness (Haluza-Delay, 1999b). Certainly, the frequent focus on conquering nature, personal growth, and group development during adventure programs in wilderness settings contributes to the poor environmental responsibility of participants and leaders.

Second, wilderness trip experiences can lead participants towards views that humans and nature are detached—that nature is ‘out there’ (Haluza, 1999a). According to Brookes (2001), participants of a rafting expedition identified wilderness as revered but distant and an environment that necessitates a certain style of behaviour (i.e., minimal-
impact camping). This focus on minimal-impact camping strategies during wilderness experiences is a key factor in separating humans from nature (Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 1999a). The practice of minimum-impact techniques is frequently the extent to which wilderness users behave responsibly. Consideration of the individual’s impacts in home environments or in reaching wilderness destinations (e.g., driving) is rare, suggesting that only in wilderness must people be mindful (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). By maintaining this mindset, humans establish themselves as visitors to natural environments, fail to rely on nature for any of their needs, and interact with the wilderness on their own terms (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). As well, technically trained leaders often fail to involve participants in learning about natural environment features that are necessary for navigating the wilderness journey. For example, “having a guide on the Franklin [river] removes the necessity for rafters to read the water or to have particular knowledge of the river” (Brookes, 2001, p. 16). Participants simply need to perform a skill to descend the river; leaders do the rest. In these situations, the natural environment is just the setting or playing field for the adventure (Hogan, 1992). If leadership training had more focus on education theory and less emphasis on technical skill development, participants could be encouraged to engage more with the natural environment (Haluza-Delay, 1999a; Hogan, 1992). Brookes (2001) notes that “tourism of this kind is not an antidote to the estrangement from nature of modern life, but something much more ambiguous which contains much of the estrangement it purports to transcend” (p. 17).

There is uncertainty as to whether or not environmental responsibility is encouraged and developed during wilderness recreation trips. Many wilderness and
adventure focused programs lead to anthropocentric views of the wilderness, the conquering mentality, and the notion that nature is not present in home communities. There is something inherently wrong with this situation: should there not be an expectation that people using natural environments for recreation purposes develop appropriate behaviours, values, and ethics that contribute to positive human–nature connections? Perhaps the work-like involvement in developing environmental concern and behaviours during wilderness recreation is not what participants expect or desire (Weiler, 1996). Nevertheless, recreation programs venturing into wilderness areas that are constantly described as depleting, degrading, and vanishing should involve a substantial focus on the environment, our appreciation and love for it, our relationship to it, and how we can sponsor its rejuvenation.

2.3.4 Emotions and Feelings in Nature

The lived-experience of individuals in wilderness settings has been shown to be complex, dynamic, and evolving (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Contributing to this complexity is the fact that affective elements of wilderness experience are likely intertwined with the behavioural and cognitive demands of being out in the wilderness (Iozzi, 1989). This is consistent with the understanding that emotions are important components of leisure experiences and has implications for the quality of a leisure experience (Lee & Shafer, 2002). According to Lee and Shafer (2002), emotions are defined as “a type of affect resulting from reactions to specific events in the environment and are thus, ephemeral in nature” (p. 293). Fleeting and momentary, emotions are stirred during experiences in natural environments and, certainly, during the variety of endeavours involved in a wilderness canoe trip, nourish
the complexity of the experience. The purpose of this section is to briefly outline examples of emotions involved in natural environment experiences and to suggest that understanding the nature of these emotions is complicated.

Lee and Shafer (2002) followed the Affect Control Theory—which emphasizes the interactions between leisure participants' situated self and other people or environment—to examine the types of encounters during a leisure experience that produce emotional responses and that effect the leisure experience. Although they refer to a variety of potential emotions during leisure, Lee and Shafer provide two relevant situations that result in emotional responses among participants of a multi-purpose nature trail. Seeing or observing fish (i.e., wildlife), for example, triggered among participants emotions with a positive tone, such as serenity, peacefulness, cheerfulness, and warmth. Also, as participants encountered other trail users during their experience, a range of positive and negative emotions resulted including friendliness, pride, satisfaction, depression, gloom, and fear. The variety of emotions experienced by the participants in this study lends credence to the dynamic nature of leisure experiences and to the idea that emotions are connected to how an individual, in the context of his or her situation, interacts with others and the environment (Lee & Shafer, 2002).

As part of Borrie and Roggenbuck's (2001) study on the multi-phasic nature of trips into a wilderness area in Southern Georgia, the researchers anticipated findings that supported the feelings of connection to wilderness identified by wilderness philosophers. Specifically, Borrie and Roggenbuck examined two leisure states of mind: mode of environmental experience and feelings of connection to wilderness. This later component involved six defining aspects of wilderness highlighted by pioneer wilderness
philosophers such Thoreau, Muir, and Leopold. The feelings included within this leisure state of mind were primitiveness, timelessness, solitude, oneness, humility, and care. Results of this study indicate some differences between how the wilderness philosophers and their research participants construct wilderness experiences, indicating that the intense emotional experiences described by the likes of Thoreau, Muir, and Leopold are not necessary achieved in all wilderness outings. In fact, research participants in this study were more focused on other group members and the environment than they were on self-introspection and their personal feelings (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001).

In a related effort, McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) found that New Zealand University students, taking part in a rafting and cave experience, demonstrated different feelings and emotions at different stages of their journey. For instance, at the beginning of the cave journey, students were excited, nervous, anxious, and filled with anticipation. Following a jump off of a small cliff face into water, feelings of relief, euphoria, and achievement were experienced. The student participants felt relaxation, enjoyment, and contemplation as they floated in the dark and observed glow-worms. Some felt relieved when the trip was over while others were disappointed. Among their results, McIntyre and Roggenbuck also indicate perceptions of nature that entice emotional responses. That is, the research participants perceived nature as amazement, appreciation, timelessness, immersion, mystery, affordance and threat, solitude, and oneness. For some, entering the cave even felt like entering a new world. All in all, nature was mostly viewed as non-threatening and participants often relaxed and immersed themselves in the contemplation of nature. At times, however, nature involved threatening obstacles to overcome, which inspired feelings of nervousness, apprehension, and excitement. In summary, McIntyre
and Roggenbuck indicate that their "data demonstrate that person-environment transactions are rich and complex, and result in moods which vary in intensity and character as the qualities of the natural setting change" (p. 419).

Finally, in her ethnographic account of the commercial rafting industry and the emotions related to the experience, Holyfield (1999) describes the complexity and range of feelings that she experienced after capsizing from the raft. As a participant observer, Holyfield joined many rafting trips with other guides and customers. During one particular trip, Holyfield was launched out of the raft and was pulled briefly beneath the water by a re-circulating hydraulic. Although she sustained no significant physical injuries, Holyfield revisits the fear, shame, and loss of confidence that the mishap created within her. Initially scared and concerned about how onlookers would perceived her, Holyfield indicates that humour was incorporated among the raft guides and other participants to shed her fears and relieve her anxieties—a prime example of comic relief. Raft guides are often faced with such circumstances: since they must maintain their brave, rugged, and calm demeanour at all times, humour is frequently used by raft guides to redefine negative situations to be more positive. Participants of the experience often use this process as well. Holyfield explains this by saying that "we depend on interaction, be it past, present, or future, to interpret our own and others' behaviours" (p. 23). After some time, Holyfield's fear and anxiety were replaced with determination to overcome the challenge and thrill. As such, the emotions, feelings, and sensations that an individual experiences require a social context for the person to interpret them. Again, we see that emotions are tied to interactions with other people and the surrounding environment and that they are complex affective responses (Holyfield, 1999).
Certainly, the emotions that individuals experience while encountering natural environments is complex and intertwined with many factors including social context, environmental situations, and the dynamic and emerging nature of leisure episodes. People can experience positive emotions such as thrill, contemplation, relaxation, humility, or cheerfulness in wilderness settings or negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, disappointment, or shame. Interestingly, Arnould and Price (1993) indicate that a primary reason for pursuing their research of rafting as an extraordinary experience was the question of how so many awful things (e.g., emotions) could lead ultimately to a positive experience. The response clearly lies somewhere in the dynamic and complex nature of wilderness experience (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). For the wilderness recreation leader, the complexity of this experience may likely be magnified because of their obligation to wear the various hats of tour guide, naturalist, first aid giver, navigator, chef, and conservationist (Holyfield, 1999). Attention to the emotions and feelings that wilderness recreation leaders experience in natural environments is, therefore, necessary and appropriate for the description of their lived-experience in nature.

2.4 Towards a Phenomenology of Wilderness Recreation Leaders' Experience in Nature

Previous sections of this literature review have discussed various research findings and literature sources concerning wilderness leadership, the meanings of and connections to nature, environmentally responsible behaviour, and emotions involved in nature experiences. The aim of this section is to provide a path outlining the need for and place of a phenomenological study in learning about the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders. Initially, specific qualitative methods used in research related to the
topic at hand will be outlined and, subsequently, lead to the description of phenomenological studies closely connected to the present research. A brief note on how my research contributes to the phenomenological literature will complete this section.

McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) and Arnould and Price (1993) have demonstrated how multiple methods—including both qualitative and quantitative procedures—have been employed in studies of nature and extraordinary experience. Research related to outdoor recreation and wilderness experience has also followed general qualitative practices. For instance, Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) used on-site observations, participant field journals, and individual follow-up interviews to explore the affective components of wilderness place setting as they relate to the spiritual benefits derived from 12 women participating in an outdoor recreation experience. Qualitative analysis of the data showed that a combination of social interactions and landscape characteristics experienced by these women nurtured spiritual inspiration. Although the participants of this study had what many would call a religious experience as a result of the sheer vastness of the landscape that they travelled, the social dynamics between group members was integral to interpreting the wilderness place as a spiritual setting.

Among the variety of qualitative styles (see Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002) used in examining the broad scope of wilderness recreation and environmental concern, a number of authors have used a constructivist approach in their research methods. Constructivist research asserts that knowledge is built or constructed by individuals to fit with their experiences of the world (Haluza-Delay, 2001) and examines how people in particular settings construct reality (Patton, 2002). Haluza-Delay (2001), for example, explored how outdoor experiences of individuals related to everyday environmental concern and found
that his participants viewed nature as a non-existent in home communities. Similarly, Brookes (2001) examined wilderness tourists’ constructions of nature during a river expedition and Jonas (1999) highlighted how river guides used the construction of danger on rivers to enhance their character image among participants.

Qualitative case studies have also been employed to identify the wilderness values of outfitters and guides (Parker & Avant, 2000) as well as the transference of wilderness values to home environments and lifestyles (Miller, 2001). Of particular importance to this study, Parker and Avant (2000) used a variety of data collection techniques, primarily semi-structured interviews with mountaineering guides and pack stock outfitters, to determine that outfitters and guides value wilderness in multiple and different ways. Among their study participants, both guides and outfitters, for example, considered wilderness as a unique place that has value for society. That is, wilderness is valued for the experience it provides people, inherently for its existence, and for the potential in developing individuals. A notable difference, however, emerged between guides and outfitters. Although they considered themselves stewards of the environment, the packers (i.e., outfitters) indicated that they practiced environmental behaviours because of regulations and permits that required them to do so. On the other hand, the mountaineer guides demonstrated a more internalized wilderness ethic and felt that behaving responsibly in natural settings was just the right thing to do. As such, Parker and Avant conclude that these individuals—guides and outfitters—should not be treated as a group with homogeneous wilderness values. More precisely, different guides and outfitters experience different wilderness values (Parker & Avant, 2000).
A discursive perspective has also been used to examine the way that power manifests itself in the discourse on environmental ethics of two leaders/scholars in outdoor education and recreation (Ryan, 1999). Ryan's study shows that the discourse of one scholar is aligned closely with deep ecology while the other scholar's discourse is in tune with the land ethic and the notion that wilderness is a valuable place of stability, integrity, and beauty. Through this discourse, Ryan indicates that the individuals construct definitions of what the environment is and, subsequently, what behaviours are considered appropriate while engaged in the natural environment. Specifically, both leaders/scholars position nature or wilderness as distinct from urban space, as a place where personal reflection and insight can be gathered, and as a place where certain behaviours are privileged. Through the discourse of these two scholars, Ryan indicates how humans have begun to see themselves as damaging to the environment we value and, therefore, discipline ourselves to reduce our impacts when travelling in natural settings (e.g., by following minimum impact guidelines). Encouraging a playful recreation of humans and our relationship with the Earth, Ryan describes the image of the human cyborg (see also Ryan, 2002); concluding that by opening possibilities for constructing new ways of viewing and living in the world, we can change and improve how humans relate to the natural environment (Ryan, 1999).

In other qualitative research, Holyfield (1999) provides an ethnographic account of the commercial rafting industry and Patterson et al. (1998) use hermeneutics to provide a context specific description of wilderness experience. In this later, hermeneutic study, rather than have research participants regurgitate facts or aspects of their nature experience, Patterson et al. encouraged participants to share the story of their river trip.
This approach allowed for more informative, insightful interviews from which four dimensions of whether or not visitors to a National Forest area in Florida obtained a wilderness experience emerged. These dimensions of the wilderness experience include challenge, closeness to nature, decisions not faced in everyday environments, and stories of nature (Patterson et al., 1998).

The application of phenomenological research methods has been used to some extent in viewing wilderness recreation, leadership, and the experience of nature. With the intention of developing appropriate nature education programs in Dutch primary schools, Margadant-van Arcken (2002) used phenomenology to identify what kind of life world (naïve, spontaneous) concepts children use to describe nature and their experiences in nature. Additionally, how these meanings provided by children relate to the concepts taught in primary school nature education classes was also relevant. Margadant-van Arcken audio taped and later transcribed classroom discussion and established a detailed research journal containing observations of children’s work and behaviour. Phenomenological findings suggest, “children approach nature with their entire body, with all their senses and potentialities” (Margadant-van Arcken, p. 4). More precisely, children’s natural tendency was to seek out and conquer the challenges and adventures presented in nature. Children were able to discover these natural obstacles and adventures in their own schoolyard. Furthermore, the nature experiences of the young children studied by Margadant-van Arcken were permeated with the children’s own myths and stories about nature. Tales about poisonous plants and the bed-wetting effects of dandelions, for example, demonstrate that cultural and social factors influenced the children’s experience of nature. Based on these findings, Margadant-van Arcken
recommends an inductive approach to nature education that encourages children to explore and experience their immediate environment. Educators can then work with students in the children’s experienced natural world and, ultimately, assist in re-establishing our symbiotic relationship with the environment (Margadant-van Arcken, 2002).

A contingent of phenomenological studies has emerged among Canadian University graduate students. For instance, Richley (1992) provided a phenomenological investigation into the wilderness solitude experience; portraying wilderness solitude as an opening of the self to the world, as a melancholy and spiritual experience, and as involving connection, balance, and the use of senses in experiencing the world. McDiarmid (1994) incorporated phenomenology to develop a deeper understanding of the lived meaning of women’s experience of the wilderness. This phenomenological study uncovered seven themes to these women’s experience including personal agency: entering the process, a dance with fear and doubt, being in relationships, a microcosm of life, and a way of being. In a similar phenomenological study, Coleman (1998) aimed to uncover the meaning of leadership experiences for females that guide wilderness canoe trips. The women that Coleman interviewed considered themselves as life-long learners and as individuals that faced gender-biased challenges on canoe trips and in the outdoor leadership industry. These women considered the value of their strong human relations and interpersonal skills more so than their technical skills. As such, connections to other people and the wilderness, and a focus on the internal journey and support derived from travelling in wilderness rather than through it were most meaningful to the wilderness experience (Coleman, 1998).
More applicable to this thesis, Duenkel (1994) used the phenomenological perspective to explore the experience of wilderness travel leaders that are genuinely dedicated to the preservation and protection of wilderness settings. Duenkel incorporates Colaizzi’s (1978) thematic analysis to derive the structure and description of lived-experience from the semi-structured interviews with leaders Duenkel considers different from most in the outdoor industry. Findings indicate that a leader promoting environmental awareness “is characterized by the need to create a bond with the natural world, making necessary and relevant connections, both the participants’ and the leaders’ continual growth, and the importance of interaction around, and processing of, the wilderness experience” (Duenkel, p. 134). Promoting environmental awareness is, as Duenkel’s participants agreed, more than teaching minimum impact camping practices. Dedicated leaders encourage people to view and experience the natural world in a way that unfolds an improved ecological consciousness. First-hand experiences in nature—those that combine intense emotional episodes, inspire an identification with and connection to the natural world, incorporate components of ecological education, and offer participants opportunities to experience a new world—can assist with this necessary perception and attitude shift. Duenkel’s phenomenological findings contribute to showing how wilderness experiences can promote human transformation from anthropocentric to ecocentric worldviews through the reality transition model (Duenkel, 1994).

Although Duenkel’s (1994) research fosters favourable potential for social transformation through effective wilderness leadership, her co-researchers (i.e., participants) maintain a specific agenda for serving the natural environment and are more likely to demonstrate positive connections to nature. In fact, the co-researchers of
Duenkel’s phenomenology are individuals that are “genuinely dedicated to protecting the natural world” (p. 6). Reflecting on previous sections of this literature review and from my own experience in the outdoor industry, the number of wilderness recreation practitioners that maintain a similar lifestyle and approach to leadership as Duenkel’s co-researchers is probably few. Part of the contribution that my study will make then, is to focus on the lived-experiences in nature for a different segment of the wilderness recreation leader population. Duenkel encourages this replication of research using different types of leaders in her recommendations section, and others (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002) profess that replication of qualitative studies is essential. In fact, van Manen (1997) states that “a phenomenological description is always one interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even potentially richer or deeper description” (p. 31).

2.5 Summary

The literature review above aims to situate and contextualize the research described in upcoming chapters on the lived-experience in nature for a group of wilderness recreation leaders. The review highlights definitions important to the outdoor recreation discipline and moves towards an understanding of effective wilderness recreation leadership through an initial discussion of leadership definitions, theories, and styles, and a review of effective outdoor leadership literature. A specific section was allocated to Priest and Gass’ (1997) outdoor leadership wall model. From this point, the literature review focused on identifying literature regarding the aspects of nature experiences that my research emphasizes. In brief, the review highlighted literature pertaining to the meaning of nature, human relationships and connections to nature,
environmentally responsible behaviours, and emotions and feelings experienced in nature. The final section of this review outlined a variety of qualitative research and phenomenological research in the outdoor recreation and wilderness recreation leadership domains.

Noted within the final section is the fact that my phenomenological research will provide a unique interpretation of wilderness recreation leaders’ experience in nature. This is valuable to the overall goal of understanding human’s experience in natural and wilderness environments that has been focused on by others (Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Brookes, 2001; Coleman, 1998; Duenkel, 1994; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Haluza-Delay, 1999b, 2001; Margadant-van Arcken, 2002; McDiarmid, 1994; Patterson et al., 1998; Richley, 1992). The study described in upcoming chapters is unique because it provides a rich and in-depth description of how wilderness recreation leaders—individuals that can potentially serve as agents of environmental consciousness change (Hanna, 1995; Henderson, 1990; Jordan, 1996)—experience the phenomenon of nature while leading other people in that setting. Unlike the uncommon sample of leaders genuinely dedicated to protecting the natural environment used by Duenkel (1994), this research describes the experience of a different group of wilderness recreation leaders that are likely more typical in the Canadian outdoor recreation industry (Henderson & Potter, 2000).

Moreover, the phenomenological research discussed in upcoming pages will capture the complex and dynamic nature of human experiences in wilderness. The complexity of wilderness experience has been noted (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998) and is certainly
suggested by the diversity and breadth of the foregoing literature review. Patterson et al. (1998) explain how the rich descriptions of wilderness experience derived from their hermeneutic research compliment the more quantitative oriented approaches to research that dominate recreation literature. As well, from a managerial perspective, Patterson et al. indicate that their descriptive results of real life experience can compliment wilderness management systems such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. In a similar fashion, the phenomenological research that I present can be used to balance other, more quantitative focused research on outdoor recreation and wilderness leadership experiences. More meaningful to the aim of understanding wilderness experience, however, would be the collaboration of my phenomenological research and results with these other approaches. Nevertheless, the research provided in this thesis, will contribute to the understanding that lived-experience in natural environments is indeed a complex phenomenon.
Chapter Three: The Mode of Travel – Research Methods

3.1 Natural Science and Human Science

In their outline of the behavioural psychology tradition, Valle and King (1978) identify the assumptions common to naturalistic scientific inquiry. Natural science—which is widely accepted as and considered ‘true’ science—focuses on phenomena that are observable and measurable by the researcher. Appropriately, many researchers can agree upon and bare witness to the existence and characteristics of these observable and measurable phenomena. An individual’s behaviour, for example, would be viewed by researchers, categorized and connected to similar behaviours of other people, and then discussed and applied in broad terms. The style of natural science aims at achieving cause–effect or stimulus–response relationships by implying linear temporality, researcher objectivity, and operationalizing independent and dependent variables. Natural scientists concentrate on asking ‘Why’ questions (Valle & King, 1978) and, in most cases, natural science employs quantitative methodology and statistical analysis in order to provide results that are generalizable to a larger population (Patton, 2002). As well, the results from natural science inquiry strive to be replicable, objective, reliable, and reach internal and external validity, harnessing much attention and importance among the research community (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuman, 2000).

An alternative to the natural science paradigm is that of human science. The descriptive nature of the human science method caters to qualitative researchers that facilitate the study of issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002). Human science researchers generally ask ‘What’ and ‘How’ questions and are more interested in producing “a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and
cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Data is generally derived from participant interviews and observations, as well as field notes and written documents (Patton, 2002). This descriptive style of research attempts to illuminate in depth the qualities and characteristics that form and surround a particular phenomenon. As an alternative to the positivist focus of natural science in psychology, Colaizzi (1978) advocates for the human science approach because of its ability to describe human experience. Colaizzi writes that “if only observable, duplicable and measurable definitions have psychological validity, then a crucial dimension of the content of human psychological existence, namely, experience, is eliminated from the study of human psychology” (p. 51). With respect to the research described in this thesis, a qualitative research method was selected because of its ability to describe this human experience. Particularly, the phenomenological tradition of inquiry (Creswell, 1998) served as the specific research method used (Colaizzi, 1978; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

3.2 Phenomenology

3.3.1 The Intricacies of Phenomenology

The origins of phenomenological inquiry are primarily associated with the writings of Husserl (1958), though many others, including Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (see Kwant, 1963), deserve recognition for their contributions to the development of phenomenology. Phenomenology is grounded in the philosophical traditions of existentialism; a radical belief in human freedom (Garofalo & Geuras, 1999) which “seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete, lived situations” (Valle & King, 1978, p. 6). Thus, as Husserl points out, phenomenology is “a science of essential Being; a science which aims exclusively at establishing
knowledge of essences and absolutely no facts” (p. 44). From a pure existential perspective, phenomenology has been defined as a method that “seeks to explicate the essence, structure, or form of both human experience and human behaviour as revealed through essentially descriptive techniques including disciplined reflection” (Valle & King, 1978, p. 7).

Despite the widespread acceptance of the Husserlian and existential roots of phenomenology, Patton (2002) indicates that the popularity of the term phenomenology has lead to its meaning being confused and diluted. Patton provides examples of authors who refer to phenomenology as a philosophy, a paradigm of inquiry, an interpretative theory, a social science analytical perspective or orientation, a major qualitative tradition, or a research methods framework. van Manen (2004) notes that phenomenology is both a philosophic tradition and a human science method and maps out the diversity and intricate nature within the realm of phenomenology on his website. According to van Manen, the general branches of phenomenological inquiry include:

1. The various traditions and orientations including transcendental, existential, hermeneutic, historical, ethical, and language;
2. Phenomenology’s different sources of meaning such as experiential, language, and literary to name a few;
3. Associated philosophical and methodological attitudes;
4. The procedural dimensions of phenomenological inquiry including empirical and reflective methods;
5. The phenomenological practice of writing;
6. The practical consequences of phenomenological inquiry for human living.
An adapted and condensed map of van Manen's phenomenological inquiry can be found in Appendix D and, to discern the true variety within the phenomenological discipline, the reader may refer to van Manen's website.

Although the principles that constitute the exact nature of phenomenology are diverse (Relph, 1970), a variety of foundational elements are shared among the human science community. First, *phenomenology is a method that examines the importance of individuals' lived-world experience*. As Relph (1970) suggests, phenomenology describes the "everyday world of [human's] immediate experience" (p. 193), including his actions, memories, fantasies, and perceptions. In examining this lived experience, phenomenology attempts to describe the life-world (Husserl, 1958), body-subject (e.g., Merleau-Ponty's notion as cited in Kwant, 1963), or Being (Heidegger, 1962) that lies at the primordial state of each human individual. Subsequently, the subject–object dichotomy, recognized by many positivists, is rejected. According to phenomenological thought, in a world of experience, objects do not exist independently of a person's experience (Relph, 1970). In fact, "the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world, and the world as having no existence apart from the persons" (Valle & King, 1978, p. 7). Thus, the person and the world are co-constitutes; without one, the other has no meaning (Valle & King, 1978). This relationship between a person and the world is an act that provides meaning and is referred to as 'intentionality' (Husserl, 1958; Johntson, 1987; Kwant, 1963; Relph, 1970). For Merleau-Ponty "intentionality is a dialectic relationship within which meaning originates. It is an interaction through which an organism makes its material surroundings its situation" (Kwant, 1963, p. 157). At the core of this lived-experience (i.e., a phenomenon) then, whether it is an act or perception,
there exists a structure, meaning, or essence that characterizes the nature of the phenomenon. Illuminating this essence of the lived world experience through detailed description is the intended outcome of the phenomenological method (Patton, 2003).

A second foundational element of phenomenological inquiry is that it is an alternative to the absolutism that dominates positivist scientific methods and thought (Relph, 1970). As Relph (1970) notes, phenomenology is not an irrational anti-science that questions physical laws or mathematical certainties but is, rather, a reorientation of science. Phenomenology does reject the simplification of abstractions that dominate positivist thought by focusing on the generation of knowledge that has meaning and significance to individuals (Relph, 1970). Unlike positivist approaches that assume a researcher’s ideas and understandings are shared by study participants, phenomenology views problems from the individual’s perspective and offers empathy for the both observer and the observed (Johnston, 1987). Johnston (1987) labels this strategy as a “disciplined naivete” (p. 159). This component of phenomenology, accompanied by the fact that phenomenology realizes the co-constitutes of person and world, demonstrates that subjectivity in phenomenology is the focus of the research. Pluralities of worlds exist, which number as many as there are attitudes and intentions of human beings (Relph, 1970). Thus, phenomenology rejects objective – subjective dualism and attempts to grasp entities in their Being (Heidegger, 1962). In order to describe the essence of Being, the researcher must recognize and express his or her experience, preconceptions, and presuppositions (i.e., bracketing or, according to Husserl, Epoche) and draw on the totality of a person including their “perceptions and cognitions, emotions and attitudes, history and predispositions, aspirations and experiences, and patterns, styles, and contents
of behaviour” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 70). Accordingly, the hypothesis testing and theory development ambitions of traditional research are replaced with deep, rich, and detailed accounts of the meaning of a person’s phenomenal experience.

_The relevance of consciousness to phenomenology_ is a final notion that is agreed upon by most supporters. Valle and King (1978) follow Husserl’s guidance in explaining consciousness as the domain of pure phenomena prior to and independent of interpretation. More specifically, consciousness “is the world as lived by the person and not the external entity separate from or independent of him” (Valle & King, p. 10). Certainly, the notion of consciousness is aligned with Husserl’s (1958) life-world, Merlea-Ponty’s body-subject (Kwant, 1963), and Heidegger’s (1962) Being. The pertinent perception of consciousness, however, is that it exists at the most basic level of an individual’s being. In this forum of consciousness, phenomena reveal themselves (Valle & King, 1978). That is, the life-world that permeates from an individual’s consciousness is pre-reflective thought; it is the most basic point of knowledge. It is the beginning. Assuming a research methodology that attempts to describe this basic and essential being can, therefore, be considered the starting point for all knowledge (Valle & King, 1978). Reflecting back to the characteristics of natural science, phenomenological methods can provide a pre-amble to these scientific procedures (Johnston, 1987). The descriptive details of phenomenal essences can provide natural scientists with inspirations for determining their path of logical examinations. As Husserl (1958) recognizes, “the science of pure possibilities [i.e., phenomenology] must everywhere precede the science of real facts, and give it the guidance of its concrete logic” (p. 13).
3.3.2 The Phenomenology of Wilderness Recreation Leaders

Upon the preceding discussion, what then is phenomenology in the context of this thesis? Let us first revisit the purpose of the study outlined in Chapter One.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived-experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders. Specifically, using a phenomenological method, I describe the meaning of nature and the relationship to nature experienced by a group of wilderness recreation leaders and which are evident through the environmentally responsible behaviours that they demonstrate and the emotions that they experience while engaged in a wilderness recreation leadership position. By incorporating the phenomenological perspective in this research, the descriptions highlight the lived-experience in nature that precedes these individuals’ formations of environmental values and ethics (Spiegelberg, 1975). To some degree then, the foundations from which these values and ethics originate are described.

At the core of the phenomenological approach used in this project are primarily the qualitative research guidelines of Patton (2002) and Creswell (1998) and the phenomenological considerations outlined by van Manen (1984a, 1984b, 1997) and Colazzi (1978). My decision to use phenomenology for this thesis emerged from the foundations of my purpose statement and initial research questions (Patton, 2002). The general question that I was asking and to which I wanted answers (i.e., broadly phrased, what is the experience of wilderness recreation leaders like?) warranted the use of phenomenology. Patton’s foundational question in his description of phenomenology— “what is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon
null
for this person or group of people” (p. 104)—initiated my choice to follow the
phenomenological path. In brief, choosing phenomenological research catered to the
questions that I wanted to answer in my research endeavours.

From there, van Manen’s (1984a; 1984b; 1997) introductory remarks regarding
phenomenological research were followed. Specifically, this project aimed to study lived
experience and “come to a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our
everyday experiences” (van Manen, 1984b, p. 37) as wilderness recreation leaders. The
project focused on studying the essence of these experiences and incorporates the
attentive practice of thoughtfulness. van Manen (1984b) asserts that, from the
phenomenological perspective, thoughtfulness is “a heedful, mindful wondering about
the project of life, of living, of what it means to live a life” (p. 38). To some degree then,
the research also attempted to describe an element of what it means to be human. This
description was considered analogous with a poetizing activity in which the final
descriptive result was the ultimate thing of this research project.

Seamon’s (2004b) key characteristics of the phenomenological method were also
considered and incorporated into my phenomenological method. These characteristics of
phenomenology claim that the researcher achieves direct contact with the phenomenon
being studied, that the researcher assumes he or she does not know the phenomenon but
wishes to, and that the adopted research methods describe the human experience of the
phenomenon in experiential terms. Moving onward, Colaizzi’s (1978) guidance was
considered and subsequently adopted as the process for deriving the phenomenological
research results. The outline of practical procedures outlined by Colaizzi offered me a
general route to follow for my first phenomenological research experience. As well, the
flexibility of Colaizzi's process allowed me to choose the proper and individually necessary way to successfully travel along this route. As this third chapter progresses through the specific details of the research methods used in this thesis, the fulfilment of Seamon's phenomenological research characteristics, as well as Colaizzi's guidelines for thematic analysis, will be recognized.

A variety of other phenomenological literature was examined and incorporated, to some degree, in the completion of this project (e.g., Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1958; Kwant, 1963; Moustakas, 1994; Pickles, 1988; Ray, 1994; Relph, 1970; Spiegelberg, 1975; Tuan, 1971; 1975; Valle & King, 1978). Whether these sources provided conceptual understandings to the nature of phenomenology or practical suggestions for completing a phenomenological research project, all were essential to the final product. Following Patton's (2002) synthesis of phenomenological writings, all various styles and approaches to phenomenology share a focus on:

How human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have "lived-experience." (p. 104)

My hope is that Patton's summary of what constitutes phenomenology will be recognized in the following detailed explanation of the research procedures used in this thesis.
3.3 Bracketing and Reflexivity

In order to demonstrate objectivity, control, and authority Patton (2002) argues that in typical academic writing “any real, live human being, subject to all the usual foibles of being human, is barely implied, generally disguised, hidden away, and kept in the background” (p. 63). In qualitative studies, including phenomenological research, this writing style is frequently replaced by one that acknowledges the human element in research and demonstrates the active and self-reflective role of the researcher in the research process (Patton, 2002). Thus, reflexivity is a process that emphasizes the researcher’s self-awareness, political and cultural consciousness, and ownership of perspectives. At the same time, reflexivity requires an awareness of the perspectives and voices of those being interviewed and of those audience members to which the research is being presented (Patton, 2002). As such, reflexivity is a fitting element of phenomenological research and essential to the presentation of this thesis and future research findings. The reader should realize at this point the premise behind the anecdotes that precede chapter one, the introductory remarks that invite the reader to join this academic research and expedition, and the personal writing style used throughout this thesis. Patton contends that in the presentation of qualitative research, “a credible, authoritative, authentic, and trustworthy voice engages the reader through rich description, thoughtful sequencing, appropriate use of quotes, and contextual clarity so that the reader joins the inquirer in the search for meaning” (p. 65). This is, indeed, a challenge that I confronted with enthusiasm.

At this point, I consider it necessary to identify my experiences, presuppositions, and beliefs regarding this research project through the process of bracketing (Colaizzi,
1978; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Due to the fact that I have lived experience and academic background with the phenomenon being studied and have harnessed understandings, assumptions, and ideals regarding the experience of nature for wilderness recreation leaders, my interpretations of other people’s experience will be influenced. In choosing the phenomenological research style, I recognize my connection to this study and make no claim that the interpretations and descriptions involved in the study are free from my personal preconceptions. By bracketing my experiences, however, I acknowledge and applaud their influence and allow the reader to consider my perspective when viewing the research results.

First, I have worked and will continue to work for the summer camp organization that employs the participants during the summer months. My involvement with the camp has included seven summer contract positions and a variety of temporary work placements with the organization’s outdoor education centre programs. I also have experience interacting and working with young people and adults in nature at other organizations in Canada and Europe, leading outdoor education, interpretation, and adventure programs. Through all of these roles I have gathered experience in nature and in the wilderness and have kindled many friendships; particularly among those individuals who also lead wilderness canoe expeditions. Hence, each of the participants involved in this study is a friend and co-worker from the organization selected for this study. Furthermore, my friendships with the participants extend beyond the summer camp setting as we frequently engage in recreation activities together throughout the non-summer months. These activities generally include outdoor and wilderness recreation
pursuits which, to some degree, also influence my experience and understandings of the phenomenon being examined.

My family experiences and educational background have also shaped my preconceptions of nature experience for wilderness recreation leaders. Throughout my life, my parents, siblings, and I have engaged in outdoor and wilderness recreation activities that have contributed to my ambitions and need for being immersed in nature. For me, nature experiences involve sharing the moments with loved ones. In choosing to concentrate on the academic discipline of Outdoor Recreation in university, further meanings and understandings of nature experience and wilderness recreation leadership have been imparted through course projects, readings, lectures, and seminars. As I continue to study and enjoy being outside with my family members, my perceptions and knowledge about nature experiences will continue to evolve.

After reflecting on my experiences identified above and my current convictions regarding the phenomenon being proposed for examination, the following list of my personal preconceptions and ideals was developed.

• Nature consists of living and non-living components of which humans are an integral component.

• Nature inspires within me feelings of awe, wonder, and gratitude; a reverence for natural cycles, elements, communities, and systems; an enthusiasm for life; and a rejuvenated spirit.

• Nature can be experienced in various degrees in any environment, including wilderness, rural, and urban settings. For me, the experience of nature is most
powerful when I am in wilderness areas alone or with other individuals who share a similar appreciation for nature.

- The natural environment is in a state of degradation and deterioration that is leading to the destruction of the planet.

- Human’s anthropocentric views and consumptive behaviours towards the natural environment are primarily responsible for the poor health of the planet.

- In order to encourage the rejuvenation of natural environments, people need to reconnect with nature and develop healthy, harmonious, and more ecocentric relationships with nature in urban, rural, and wilderness settings. This is a responsibility of individual citizens.

- Wilderness recreation experiences have the potential to encourage, promote, and generate this reconnection to nature and transformation of relationships to nature in wilderness and home communities.

- Current wilderness recreation practices do not achieve this potential for a variety of reasons including: the focus on adventure programming which can sponsor the conquering mentality; the emphasis on minimum impact camping; and, temporal and spatial factors (e.g., how much time people spend in wilderness, where they spend their time, and how they spend their time) involved in wilderness experiences.

- Appropriate styles and forms of wilderness recreation leadership are crucial to sponsoring human reconnections to nature.

- Prior to identifying strategies for and outcomes of wilderness recreation leadership approaches that achieve environmental consciousness transformation,
there is a need to understand the experience of nature for wilderness recreation leaders.

3.4 Research Participants

Phenomenological research borrows the experiences and reflections of other people to illuminate and understand the essence of a particular human experience in the context of the greater whole of human experience (van Manen, 1984a). In order to exhume this essence, Colaizzi (1978) finds that conversational interviews with participants are most suited. Successful conversational interviews require a setting of trust and one that recognizes the equal status between researcher and participants. Because of this co-constituency among the individuals involved in the research process, the term ‘co-researcher’ is sometimes preferred over ‘subject’ or ‘participant’ (Colaizzi, 1978; see also Duenkel, 1994; Richley, 1992). However, labelling the participants as co-researchers may suggest uncertainty to the reader as to the extent of the participants’ involvement in the study. The reader may wonder, for instance, if the co-researchers are involved in the data analysis process or in the final written draft of my thesis. Because of the trusting and friendly relationships that I maintain with each of the proposed participants and, in an effort to avoid ambiguity over the role of these individuals in the research process, I have decided not to use the ‘co-researcher’ label. In doing so, I still recognize the participants’ individual and personal contributions to this research and acknowledge the trust established and sustained with these participants throughout the project.
3.4.1 The Organization

The research participants for this study were selected from an Ontario residential summer camp organization that sponsors wilderness recreation canoe trips for youth. The organization hired the research participants to summer contract positions in 2003 to lead these canoe trips. During the months of July and August, the camp offers young boys and girls, ages seven to 16, traditional water and land-based summer camp programs including canoeing and swimming instruction, sailing, archery, arts and crafts, wood working, pottery, and kayaking. The summer program accommodates approximately 250 campers in each two-week session. As part of his or her summer camp experience, each camper participates in a canoe trip ranging in duration from one night to 13 nights. Generally, as the age of a camper increases, the duration of his or her canoe trip increases. When a camper reaches the age of 16, however, he or she has the option of going on a 21 to 25 day canoe trip that travels on wilderness rivers in northern Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba. When a youth decides to participate on one of these canoe trips, the river journey is the central component of their summer camp experience and, for the most part, the residential camping programs are forfeited for that summer. In 2003, the organization sponsored six of these extended canoe trips; each involving 21 – 25 days of river canoeing, backcountry camping, and intense and continued immersion in natural settings. For each of these six canoe trips, two leaders were hired to guide the 6-10 teenagers throughout the river expedition. Thus, twelve leaders were hired by the organization to 10-week, seasonal contract position from the middle of June through to the end of August.
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3.4.2 The Participants

The reason for selecting research participants from this organization is threefold. First, I have been employed by the organization that sponsors these wilderness recreation canoe trips for the past seven summers. As a result of my past contributions and future involvement with the organization, obtaining access to the 2003 canoe trip leaders was not problematic. These wilderness recreation leaders are my colleagues and friends and have regularly demonstrated a willingness to contribute to the organization beyond the scope their seasonal contract positions. Also, this selected sample has similar lived-experience in nature as I and, in this regard, I have oriented my research towards understanding a phenomenon that I have direct experience with as well (Patton, 2002). Second, as Henderson and Potter (2000) note, residential summer camps are a sizeable component of the wilderness recreation industry in Canada. Many Canadian children, youth, and adults are familiar with residential summer camping and, for many Canadians, canoe-tripping experiences originated through summer camp. Choosing to explore the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders who are employed by a residential summer camp unveiled descriptions of the lived-experience for individuals that many Canadians can relate to and comprehend. Finally, and most importantly, the research participants were selected from this particular organization because of its lasting heritage of wilderness canoe tripping. The organization is a leader within the canoe tripping community and has sponsored extended canoe trips throughout Canada. In order to explore the lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders, the individuals who lead the 22 to 25 day canoe trips for this organization seemed like a suitable sample.
In total, five participants were selected for this phenomenological study. Creswell (1998) indicates that phenomenology examines individuals that have experience with the phenomenon being explored. For Colaizzi (1978), "experience with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice as criteria for selecting subjects" (p. 58). In this study, the researched phenomenon is the nature experience of individuals that lead wilderness recreation trips. As such, the participants selected for this study, to share and describe their experiences in nature, were individuals who led 22 to 25 day wilderness canoe trip experiences for the sponsoring organization during the summer of 2003. This purposeful sampling strategy suggests that all participants have met the criterion of experiencing the proposed phenomenon being explored and, thus, a criterion sample was achieved (Creswell, 1998).

A brief outline of the demographic characteristics of the trip leaders is found in Table 1 and details of their 2003 canoe trip is found in Table 2. It is necessary to point out that the demographic homogeneity of the sample is not essential. Rather, the fact that each of the participants share the lived experience of the phenomenon being examined (i.e., nature experiences while leading wilderness recreation trips) is most relevant for achieving a criterion sample (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). As well, selecting five participants for this study is suitable for a phenomenological project (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002) and matches the number used in similar studies (Duenkel, 1994; Richley, 1992).

Maintaining a positive rapport with each of the participants was achieved throughout the research process. I hold friendships with each of the study participants
Table 1

Participant Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Employed by Organization</th>
<th>Occupational Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Employed/Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student/Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and, therefore, have a positive relationship with each of them. In fact, I have had the opportunity to share leadership opportunities with two of the five participants during my tenure with the organization. To ensure that this rapport was preserved, each recruited participant was given the option to withdraw from the study at any point and was provided with an informed consent form prior to his or her participation. Also, the organization that hired each of these leaders completed an informed consent form prior to data collection. Examples of these informed consent forms are found in Appendices E and F. Also, by ensuring the participants’ anonymity (e.g., use of pseudonyms in written work) and the confidentiality of all recorded, transcribed, or written materials a positive rapport was sustained.
Table 2

Participant 2003 Trip Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participant</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Trip Duration</th>
<th>Number on Trip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Seal River, Manitoba</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Rupert River, Quebec</td>
<td>22 days</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie</td>
<td>Broadback River, Quebec</td>
<td>22 days</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Seal River, Manitoba</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Broadback River, Quebec</td>
<td>23 days</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 The Data Collection Process

Data from the wilderness recreation leaders was collected primarily through two in-depth conversational interviews with each individual participant. As a potential supplement to this primary data source, participants were asked to submit excerpts from their canoe trip diaries from their 2003 summer expedition. In keeping with much qualitative research, an emergent research design was used such that each phase of the study built on the previous phase. Details pertaining to the research process are provided in the following paragraphs and outlined in Figure 1.
Figure 1

Data Collection Overview

Round One Interviews:
- Interview guide #1
- Informed consent
- Demographics

Transcribed and read

Round Two Interviews:
- Interview guide #2
- Interview #2 Preparation Files
- Two trip diaries collected but not used

Transcribed and read

Data Analysis:
- See Figure 2

Member Check:
- Interview guide #3
- Communication via email

Five canoe trip leaders from an Ontario residential summer camp were invited to participate in the study in January 2004. Each individual who was contacted agreed to participate. Information was gathered regarding their demographic characteristics; perceptions and meanings of nature; personal connections with, experiences in, and
understandings of nature and the natural environment; and, behaviours, emotions, and feelings experienced in nature. The unstructured and conversational approach to these interviews is an accepted method of data collection in phenomenology (Colaizzi, 1974; Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1997) and used in other phenomenological research (Coleman, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Duenkel, 1994; McDiarmid, 1994; Richley, 1992).

The first of the two interviews involved a number of unstructured, conversation-style questions aimed at exposing details of the participants' nature experiences. The second interview allowed participants to reflect on their responses from the first interview and describe additional and more in-depth details about their experiences in nature. Upon the completion of the written narrative results, a third communication with each participant via e-mail served as a member check to verify that the narrative description was accurate. Sample interview guides, and the e-mail questionnaire that replaced the anticipated third interview, are located in Appendices G, H, and I. The example questions in Appendices G and H served only to initiate the conversations with the participants, a the phenomenological research style demands unstructured, conversational interviews that encourage free-flowing discussions between the participant and the interviewer about the lived-experience of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978).

To complement the interview data, each of the participants was asked to provide photocopied excerpts from their 2003 canoe trip diaries that would further highlight their lived-experience in nature. The insight gathered from these diaries was to supplement the primary data derived from the in-depth conversational interviews and be managed in the same fashion as the interview data. During the first interviews, participants were asked to
submit these diaries at the second scheduled interview with no negative repercussions should they choose not to submit them. Only two of the five participants submitted their trip journals and the information contained in them was determined to be off-topic and unhelpful to the purpose of this study. That is, the content of these journals tended to address the logistical elements of the trip (e.g., how rapids were managed, where the group camped, and first-aid notes) rather than the leaders’ consideration of and appreciation for the natural environment. As a result, the supplementary data contained in the two trip journals was not used in the data analysis process.

In addition to the data collection procedures outlined above, the following procedures guided the in-depth qualitative interviews with the wilderness recreation leaders:

- Interviews provided the participants with anonymity and confidentiality and were approximately one-hour in-length.
- As the principal investigator, I conducted each interview on a one-to-one basis with the participants.
- Interviews were conducted at a location agreed on by each participant and me. Most interviews took place in the participants’ home.
- With the participants’ permission, interviews were audio recorded. At the time of the interview it was explained that the interviews were being recorded to ensure that I was able to accurately capture the participants’ ideas and reflections and that all tapes would be destroyed at the completion of the study.
• All audiotapes were transcribed verbatim for analysis. The names of the participants did not appear on the transcripts as each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was used throughout the research process. A master list of participants and their assigned pseudonyms was stored in a separate and secure location.

3.5.2 Data Collection Time Line

The following is the sequence of events and time line that guided the data collection procedures for this study.

1. January 2004:

Once approval from Brock University’s Research Ethics Board was obtained for this study (see Appendix J), the Ontario summer camp that employed the anticipated study participants was contacted and a meeting was arranged with the organization’s summer camp director on the 28th of January. At this meeting, I provided the director with an overview of the study’s purpose and procedure and offered him an Information Letter (see Appendix K) and Informed Consent form (see Appendix E). Although I was not certain that obtaining the informed consent of the organization’s director was necessary in order to contact their seasonal staff members, I thought that the director’s support and understanding of the project would be valuable and improve the rapport with the participants and the organization. There were no significant concerns or problems regarding my project raised by the organization’s director and I received his informed consent to proceed with contacting their 2003 summer employees.
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2. February 2004:

The potential participants were contacted via email and sent an attachment with the Participant Recruitment Letter (see Appendix L). As a friend and co-worker of each of the potential participants, their email addresses were already known. Within a day, three of the potential participants responded and were willing to participate in the research project. By the end of February, all five participants had agreed to participate in the study and initial interview dates were established.

3. February 15, 2004:

An informal practice interview was completed with an individual who has experience leading wilderness recreation trips. The purpose of this interview was solely for practising the interview guide and interview technique and to provide an opportunity to get feedback on my interview style. The data from this interview was not used in the research project.

4. March 2004:

Before the first interview commenced, participants received an Information Letter (see Appendix M) and were presented with and signed an Informed Consent letter. Demographic details were also obtained. The first interview with each participant was completed and recorded on audiotape. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and, keeping with the qualitative tradition (Patton, 2002), the data analysis process began immediately. Round one interview transcripts were read thoroughly and memos were recorded regarding information from these interviews that required more clarification or elaboration during round two.
interviews. These memos were noted in a Round Two Interview process file and used to assist with the second interview with each participant.

5. April 2004:

The second interview with each participant was completed and recorded on audiotape. As a component of these interviews, participants had the opportunity to reflect on some of their responses from the first interview and provide more detail and insight on material from that first interview. I also transcribed these second interviews verbatim. Approximately 200 pages of interview transcripts were obtained from the two interviews.

6. March – September 2004:

The analysis and interpretation of the collected interview data began upon completion of the collection and transcription of the interview data. MicroSoft Word and N’Vivo were both used to assist in the data analysis process. By analyzing interviews immediately, the information could be applied to subsequent interviews to promote more insightful conversations and data. The cyclical nature of my proposed data collection strategy is a common characteristic and foundation of the qualitative research style (Patton, 2002).

7. October 2004:

Following the unstructured interviews and data analysis, a third and final meeting with each participant was to be arranged. The purpose of this interview was to offer the participants an opportunity to scrutinize my interpretation and analysis of their experiences and to ensure that my narrative descriptions adequately reflect the participants’ experiences. Due to time and resource constraints, the
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third interview was substituted with communications via e-mail. Each participant received an e-mail outlining the importance of having him or her review and offer feedback on the narrative result. Attached to the e-mail were questions from the third interview guide, the narrative result, and instructions regarding how to respond. By the end of October, all five participants had replied to the e-mail communication with accompanied feedback regarding the narrative description. E-mail responses were saved and copied to my research content files and participants’ feedback was incorporated into the final narrative piece used in chapter six. As such, this third communication with participants served to verify the interpreted findings (Colaizzi, 1974) and establish the trustworthiness of my research (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.6 Thematic Analysis

van Manen (1984a) suggests that when analyzing the data of lived-experience of a phenomenon, the phenomenologist must determine the “experiential structures that make up the experience” (p. 20). In doing so, the data analysis does not involve conceptualizing or categorizing themes into one single statement that captures the experience of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1984a). Unlike the grounded theory approach to data analysis that Glaser and Strauss (1967) devised, in which open coding, axial coding, and selective coding provide an avenue for generating theory with specific parameters (Creswell, 1998), phenomenology aims to capture the intricacies of lived-experience. “The meaning or essence of a phenomenon is never simple or one-dimensional” (van Manen, 1997, p. 78) and can be, therefore, best described in carefully crafted narrative or prose (van Manen, 1984a). Accordingly, the data analysis strategy that was used in this research
followed the thematic analysis guidelines of Colaizzi (1978) with the intention of developing a final description that captures the essential structure of the lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders.

Colaizzi's (1978) thematic analysis methods for analyzing phenomenological data have been used by others (Duenkel, 1994; Richley, 1992) and is the chosen analysis style highlighted in Creswell's (1998) example of phenomenological research. Creswell indicates that Colaizzi's methods are in fact quite similar to the phenomenological research methods of Moustakas (1994). Certainly, Colaizzi's analysis methods have been accepted within the phenomenological research community. Another attraction of using Colaizzi's style is that he recognizes that each phenomenological process will be different and involve much overlap among the thematic analysis stages. Colaizzi states; "that both the listed procedures and their sequences should be viewed flexibly and freely by each researcher, so that, depending upon his approach and his phenomenon, he can modify them in whatever ways seem appropriate" (p. 59). With the support and guidance of Colaizzi’s process, the tenets of thematic analysis that were incorporated into my data analysis are displayed in Figure 2. The process involved the following:

1. All transcribed interviews (i.e., protocols) were read thoroughly in order to develop a feeling for them, understand them, and gain perspective on the individual participant’s experiences in nature.

2. Protocols were re-read so that significant statements regarding the phenomenon could be extracted. This reading and extraction was done on a line-by-line basis so that each sentence could be examined for what it revealed about the experience. An initial and loose attempt was made here to organize extracted
Figure 2

Data Analysis Process

- Interview Transcripts
  - Read
  - Extract Significant Statements
    - Formulated Meaning Statements
      - Revised a few times
    - Aggregate Thematic Clusters
      - Exhaustive Description
        - Direct reference back to transcripts
  - Process Files and Memos
  - Narrative Description
    - Description of essential structure
  - Member Check
    - Interview guide #3
significant statements of similar substance. Appendix M provides an example of an extracted significant statement list.

3. As significant statements emerged, the meanings of these statements were formulated. In this step, Colaizzi (1978) notes that the researcher must look beyond what the participants say to what they mean, while ensuring that the meanings arrived at remain true to the original transcripts. Throughout this process, the researcher must not allow his or her bracketed preconceptions to interfere with the experiences of participants as described in the original protocols. To ensure that I was successful in this stage, I was cautious of formulating meanings too quickly, reviewed these statements numerous times, and ensured that the statements could be linked back to the significant statements. Appendix N shows an example of the formulated meaning statements for one of the participants.

4. All statements of formulated meaning that shared similar themes were placed into natural groups or clusters. This process was done for the aggregate list of formulated statements from all protocols. Thus, there was an attempt “to allow for the emergence of themes which are common to all of the subjects’ protocols” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). This stage in the analysis helped initiate the description of the essence and meaning of nature experiences among the participants and lead to the shared meaning of the phenomenon for the group. Continued reference back to the original protocols and my willingness to allow themes to emerge from the data, despite apparent contradictions among themes, was
necessary. The thematic clusters that represent the structure of the nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders is highlighted in Appendix O.

5. An exhaustive description of all the elements of the experience was facilitated by continuously writing notes and paragraphs based on the thematic clusters and formulated meanings that were derived from the data (van Manen, 1984). Verbatim quotes from the original protocols were also incorporated in order to share the voice of each participant within the project.

6. The essential thematic clusters served as the basis for the phenomenological description. At this point, an attempt was made to “formulate the exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in as unequivocal a statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible” (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61). This description aimed to capture the fundamental structure or essence of the experience in a manner that was consistent with each of the participant’s protocols. The description took the form of a narrative passage and is consistent with van Manen’s (1984b, 1997) view that lived-experience is often best captured in narrative prose. Matching the counsel of Lofland and Lofland (1995), this inductive and emergent synthesis of themes into a written document was a gruelling process.

7. The next step involved verifying the written narrative interpretation by having the study participants read, examine, and offer feedback on the passage. Essentially, each participant was asked whether or not the written interpretation matched his or her experience. This step served as the participant member check and was achieved through e-mail correspondence with each participant.
3.7 Trustworthiness and Verification

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the conventional research paradigm establishes internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity as components of sound, high-quality research. From a quantitative perspective achieving these criteria is necessary (Neuman, 2000). However, as Lincoln and Guba suggest, "criteria defined from one perspective may not be appropriate for judging actions taken from another perspective" (p. 293). In qualitative research, the conventional criteria for judging research are inappropriate and other methods for determining quality are necessary.

Throughout the body of this report a number of factors that demonstrate the trustworthiness and quality of this proposed research have been identified. However, the purpose of this section is to make explicit the criteria in which this phenomenological research can be deemed trustworthy and achieve a standard of quality and verification.

The credibility of qualitative research is essential to trustworthy qualitative research results and can be obtained by incorporating a number of components into the research process (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, qualitative researchers can perform a number of activities that increase the likelihood of producing credible findings. These activities include prolonged engagement with the participants or phenomenon being studied and persistent observation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both of these factors were achieved to some degree in my research study. That is, through my past experience working, interacting, and leading canoe trips with the participants I have an understanding of the participants’ culture and have established a trusting relationship with them (prolonged engagement). As well, I have the necessary background,
understanding, and experience (persistent observation) to initiate the in-depth process of describing the participants’ lived-experience in nature.

Furthermore, by performing member checks, credibility in qualitative research can also be reached. During this process, the research participants were given the opportunity to review the written interpretations prepared by the researcher in order to determine whether they appropriately describe and match the participants’ experiences (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As indicated in the data collection and analysis sections of this thesis, a third encounter through e-mail with each participant was used for this purpose.

Other elements that lead to trustworthy qualitative results include transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In qualitative research, transferability is obtained in the provision of rich descriptions that enable interested audience members to decide how transferable the material is to their own experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although results are not generalizable in the quantitative sense of the word, readers and audience members can determine the possibility of transfer based on the thick descriptions of experience. Dependability and confirmability of the research findings are achieved primarily through the maintenance of audit trails that can be used to support interpretations and outline their development (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Section following section outlines such a trail regarding how the treatment, interpretations, and analyses of the data progressed.

3.7.1 Audit Trail

The narrative description presented in Chapter Five is the statement of essential structure for the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders. This passage was
derived primarily from the exhaustive descriptions found in Chapter Four and the thematic clusters highlighted in Appendix O; however, each stage of the data analysis process was important to the development of the final narrative piece. Anecdotes, descriptions, expressed emotions, behaviours, and meanings found within this narrative passage are all derived from, or at least inspired by, the transcribed interview data. As such, the narrative description is very much a product of the entire thematic analysis process. In an effort to allow the participants’ voice to guide the analysis, the exhaustive description incorporates verbatim quotes from the interview. When quotations are used in the text, participants’ pseudonyms and the date from which the quotation was taken are included. The Nudist N’Vivo software package was used to assist with this section of the analysis while all other computer work was accomplished with MicroSoft Word. From the thematic clusters, continuing to reverse through Colaizzi’s (1978) thematic analysis stages, the audit trail weaves among the formulated statements of meaning and significant statements before reaching the interview transcripts and the raw data audiotaped interviews. Each step in the thematic analysis builds on the previous so returning back to the raw data is a simple journey.

Each transcribed interview was labelled with the research participant’s pseudonym, his or her allocated participant number, the interview number, and the date. For example, the interview transcript containing Tom’s (participant #5) second interview on April 16, 2004 was labelled: TOM P05 IN#2 APRIL 16/04. Similarly, each audiotaped interview was also labelled, but included an additional note as to which tape number the data was. Thus, the taped containing the above interview with Tom was appropriately titled: TAPE 10 P05 IN#2 APRIL 16/04 ‘TOM’.
Participant identity files and a tape file were also created to organize data and secure the anonymity of the research participants. The identity file highlights the demographic and contact information for each participant, details regarding each interview with the participants, and notes that I made immediately following each interview. The tape files indicate which interview is contained on each tape and summarizes any pertinent information regarding each tape.

3.7.2 Other Notes on Trustworthiness and Verification

With specific consideration of the phenomenological method, Creswell (1998) indicates that the clarification of researcher biases is a necessary method of verification. In phenomenological work, little emphasis is generally placed on verification beyond the researcher's personal reflection of the meaning of the phenomenal experience being explored. More importantly, verification is achieved through the process of bracketing (Creswell, 1998). Because this was my first attempt at performing a phenomenological study, I was inclined to follow Creswell's other recommendation of including at least two of the verification and trustworthiness criteria that he identifies. Including member checks and pursuing activities to ensure credible findings (i.e., prolonged engagement and persistent observation) certainly meet this challenge. As well, my willingness to maintain an audit trail offers assurance to the quality of my findings. Finally, throughout the research process, I maintained a personal diary to record personal information about my phenomenological research experience and any methodological issues that arose. This reflexive journaling practice can also be assessed as an element of verification and trustworthiness of my research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Chapter Four: In the Thick of it – Exhaustive Narrative Description of Essential Structure

4.1 Introduction

According to Colaizzi’s (1978) thematic analysis process, an “effort is made to formulate the exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in as unequivocal a statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible” (p. 61). Chapter five provides the exhaustive description of the phenomenon to which Colaizzi refers and incorporates verbatim quotes from the participants’ interview transcripts to explicate the themes which guide the description. In this fourth chapter, the final unequivocal statement of fundamental structure (i.e., the essence) for the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders is provided. This final description emerged as a narrative account depicting the lived-experience of a wilderness recreation leader. Because lived-experience is much more intricate than a few conceptualized, categorized, or framed themes (van Manen, 1984), I felt that using a narrative style would appropriately capture the essence of the nature experiences for the group wilderness recreation leaders examined in this research.

Figure 2 (see page 109) shows that this final narrative result was the culmination of the entire data analysis process. Each stage of the data analysis contributed and guided the development of the narrative piece that follows, including the member check that involved harnessing feedback from research participants regarding the narrative and making appropriate adjustments to the story. Anecdotes, events, emotions, and the meaning of episodes experienced by the wilderness recreation leaders and expressed by them during the data collection process were suitably incorporated into the narrative. As author, researcher, and fellow wilderness recreation leader, an element of my lived
experiences in nature is embodied within this narrative finale as well. As such, the narrative is the ultimate result of this thesis. van Manen (1997) likens phenomenological research to poetry in the sense that it is “inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem is the thing” (van Manen, 1997, p. 13). Hence, the narrative description below is the thing of this research project; it is the culmination, the product, and the end. The narrative describes a wilderness recreation leader immersed within a wilderness setting interacting within nature, with other people, and within him or her self. The meanings attached to the experience by the leader, as well as his or her relationships, connections, behaviours, and emotions, collaborate into a desirable vision of being in the thick of various positive and negative interactions which reveal themselves in the betterment of self, others, and the natural environment.

4.2 In the Thick of it

Spooning the last bite of dinner into my mouth, I grumble to my feet from my fireside perch. The day has been full and I’m happy that two of the kids are cleaning the dishes tonight. In fact, I am also quite pleased and impressed with the tasty rice dish that a couple campers prepared for supper. Enjoying the feast of campers’ successful first cooking attempts is always a delight. Stacking my plate and utensil upon the dish pile that rises next to the charred pot set, I feel a need to sit alone for few moments and bathe in the space that overflows this serene landscape. The sun has settled low along the forested horizon on the west shore sending orange and pink highlights towards the wispy clouds—a surprising sunset given the cloud cover that dominated the skies today. A pleasant
breeze from the north discourages the bugs from their regular munching hour but hints to
the arrival of a crisp morning. Something scrambles along the shore of the river. I just
catched a glimpse. A beaver? The last of a brood of ducklings keeping up with mom? A
cautious racoon? Perfect! I am off to explore.

Before my third step towards the boulder-abundant river shore, I am reigned back
to duty by a 16 year-old camper.

“What do we do with the left over food?” she asks.

A quick slouch in my shoulders may have given away my frustration. In a
friendly guise I reply, “Rachel, this is our 13th day on this trip and we’ve had left over
food before. What did you see the others do with it?”

“Didn’t they just bury it?”

“Right on,” I applaud. “Remember to bring your partner with you and bury it well
back into the forest. You can use a stick to dig a hole.”

As Rachel returns to the task of cleaning up the cooking equipment for the night, I
imagine her hesitation as she wanders with a friend into the thin but untouched forest to
dispose of the left over food. I gaze up the path that the two campers will likely follow:
past the two tents that stand among the moss and short shrubs, around the base of a rocky
cliff, and into the scattered green cover of the forest. She’ll do a good job I’m sure.

Immediately, my interest swerves back to my investigation of the shore line
creature and the yearning for a few quiet moments to myself. I reach the spot where I
think I saw our wildlife neighbour. Because of our group size and the noisy disturbances
we make, seeing wildlife really is not all that common. Searching for the identity of the
animal, I look for hints in the slabs of stone that trace the river’s edge. My tracking skills
are not up to the task but, for some reason, I get the sense that our little friend has rambled up towards the trees. No problem, something else has captured my attention. This evening’s campsite is located at the end of a portage trail that wraps its way around an impressive elevation drop in the river and subsequent wash out of rocks, waves, and current. I had managed to examine the rapids earlier in the afternoon but failed to notice this particularly incredible feature of the white water. In the fading colours of the evening sky, I see a surging wave roll its way back towards the centre of the river and swallow a second wave that attempts to maintain its path downstream. The cycle of the two waves is rhythmic and calming: the surging wave swells, peaks, crashes, and engulfs the second smooth and steady wave of liquid glass. A few seconds later, the sequence repeats itself. I sit down and observe how the ferocious rapids disclose a melody of order and structure between these two waves. At the moment, my thoughts are nowhere. I relish in the calm evening and the movements of the river. I am feeling like I belong here.

Still staring at the waves and delighting in the company of the vast landscape, my thoughts begin to deliberate where exactly ‘here’ is. I imagine a map of Canada with a tiny pin poking into the approximate location of our campsite. The contour lines and river features highlighted on our topographic maps that we carry along with us present themselves in my mind and I am enticed to consider the elevation changes of the river we are travelling. In order to spend this personal moment on the river’s shore watching these two waves converge, a lot of things had to happen. Here I am. I begin to reflect on our first 13 days of trip.

After spending two days travelling in a 15-passenger van to reach the starting point of this journey, I recall savouring in the relief and tranquillity that accompanied my
first few paddle strokes. Finally, I was back. The space out here is so real I thought. So pure, so original, and under no command of human developments. It’s humbling knowing that there are vast environments sustained by natural processes that I can travel in and experience a connection to. Watching the rippling swirls of water that trailed my canoe, I was enthused that the preparation efforts we had made for this canoe trip were being realized. Although somewhat nervous about the upcoming challenges, hazards, and obstacles of our voyage, the noise, smell, and pace of the city were behind us. Ahead were 24 days of potential and exploration in the wonderful natural environment. I remembered how healthy I felt on my last trip: eating and sleeping well, being physically active outside, interacting with young people in nature, not being distracted by the drama of urban life. I was gushing with anticipation for feeling that way again.

That first night on trip was a bit chaotic. The kids were unfamiliar with each other and with their duties around the campsite. My co-leader and I struggled to establish within our group the routine behaviours and responsibilities expected from us leaders and our campers for the duration of the trip. Discussing with the kids where to set up tents, how to dispose of waste, why we want to burn toilet paper, how to efficiently collect wood for fires, and other environmental practices was partially effective, but my co-leader and I recognized that there would be a lot reminding in the next couple days. At one point during our discussions, a camper mentioned that he had seen a pile of garbage back in the forest that was obviously left behind by a previous group. Together with all our trip mates, we followed the camper over to the location of the rubbish and, like he had described, there was trash everywhere. How could humans be so careless and leave such a distinct scar in the forest? All the campers were shocked and disenchanted as well.
Scenes such as this seem to inspire with in me the squabble of whether humans are a part of nature or, in fact, divorced and separated from it. I put this contest to the kids. They agree—perhaps the answer lies in the perception of each individual. I slept with a smile that night.

As I seem to recall, the next morning brought with it clear skies, warm sunshine, and our first significant rapid of the trip. As a group, we scouted the rapid together and highlighted the various features of the moving current. Navigating through this set would involve a simple ferry into the centre of the river and angling our canoes directly downstream to paddle straight through a gentle train of standing waves. The last canoe to descend the rapids had some difficulty with the initial ferry move. The camper in the stern of the canoe would establish her angle in the eddy only to lose it as she entered the main current. As a result, the boat continued to circle in and out of the eddy as the camper struggled and struggled to maintain control of the canoe. Rather than giving up and allowing her more experienced bow person an attempt at the manoeuvre, the camper continued trying. She made it! As they paddled through the wavy washout, the smile on the camper’s face was much different than any other I had seen on campers’ faces that morning; it showed a hint of satisfaction and persistence. She had done it! Adversity and challenge were going to be common components of this trip and I was proud and happy to see this camper accomplish so much already. “Awesome effort!” I told her. “Your determination is remarkable.”

The personal growth and group development that our trip members experienced in the first week flourished on our seventh day. Our first week together was laced with getting comfortable with the daily slog and I am sure some campers, who were not
enjoying themselves, wondered what it was that made people love these canoe trips so much. We had camped the night before at the beginning of a gruelling portage trail and, as we packed up our camping equipment and were making breakfast preparations, the rain plummeted. Relentless and unforgiving, the rain quickly saturated everything around. Streams of water poured from tree leaves, rain gear was soaked, and hands were icy. Our group decided that some people would begin moving our canoes and gear to the end of the portage, while others would get a fire started and begin breakfast. As lighters and matches dampened in the rain, however, so did our hopes of starting a fire to get breakfast ready. With the rain and cold pelting us, wet fire starters, the daunting portage ahead, and the kilometres of river needed to be paddle, I was getting frustrated and short tempered. The difficulty I was having getting a fire started made me question my competence as a leader. How can I be responsible for a group of youth if I can’t even get a fire going? I imagine that a few of the campers are feeling a bit hopeless as well and fighting back tears of frustration and uneasiness. This was not fun and our plan of paddling 35 kilometres that day seemed like a foolish dream. Although a warm meal would do our group well on a morning like this, I was beginning to consider the option of having a cold breakfast of trail mix and dried fruit. Just then, I overheard a kind exchange of encouragement and support between campers. I can’t recall what was said exactly but, at that moment, I glanced around at each group member and recognized the efforts that the group was making in order to accomplish the necessary tasks for us to break camp, eat, and move downstream. To overcome the adversity of the morning—the cold wet weather, the rigorous upcoming portage, the enfeebled spirits of our group—our team began working well together. People just knew what had to be done and, despite the early
morning struggles, were focused. When our canoes pulled into our anticipated campsite late that evening, a sense of accomplishment beached upon the river’s shore with us. Around the campfire that night, we revisited the toils of our morning and enjoyed laughing at our fleeting hardships and earlier feelings that the day would never end. The persistence and resilience that these kids demonstrated today was inspiring and I felt privileged to be part of the group.

Although the downpour that accompanied the beginning of our seventh day had vanished by early afternoon, the cool temperatures continued into the evening. A cloudless sky offered no blanket to trap any remaining heat from the day on the earth’s service but, to the joy of our group, the sky was flaunting its dazzling array of celestial twinkles. One camper in particular, who had expressed his fascination for the night sky throughout the trip, was hoping this night would also be decorated at some point with the northern lights. Anxious but optimistic that his hopes would be fulfilled, the camper, with his personal trip journal and flashlight in hand, poised himself upon a flat rock writing and watching in the dark. I would have been content to just slip into my sleeping bag early that night and sleep off the building weariness of the day but I felt an urge to join the camper in his quest for observing the northern lights. Our patience and enthusiasm was rewarded as the dancing lights appeared. The show was brilliant. The camper and I watched the spectacle and shared the thoughts that were being inspired within us by the fluttering colours. Reflecting back on that scene, I realize that I was sharing a very meaningful experience with him—one that both of us will likely treasure for many years. As we lay gazing up at the heavens, the camper and I spoke quietly to each other but never did look at each other. Our vision was concentrated on the magical natural scene
above us. My interactions with the camper were kindled by the marvels of nature. Nature, in that situation, encouraged us to share meaningful moments together. At the same time, my relationship with nature was mused and more pronounced because of my interactions with this other person. Sharing this time, with this person, in this space, observing something beautiful, enriched my connections to nature. As thoughts begin to settle on the significance of merging both human – human relations and human – nature relations, I hear a yelp and recognize it as a brief cry of pain. My attention is immediately brought back to my place by the riverside shore at our campsite on day thirteen.

The camper who had bellowed in pain had touched his hand on a pot that was recently removed from the fire and suffered a burn to the skin on two of his fingertips. The kids responsible for washing the dishes tonight had left the pot, filled with hot soapy water, unattended for a few moments. Silly and avoidable, the accident required my immediate attention and diversion from the reflective moments by the shore. This is just another instance of when my leadership responsibilities distract me from the simple delights of being in nature.

“I’ll get back here in a minute,” I thought to myself as I rose to my feet and strolled up to the campsite area to investigate the accident. The injury sustained by the camper was only a minor burn but it would certainly be painful. At my request, the camper filled a small bowl with cool water from the river and began soaking his fingers.

“I’ll fix you up with some clean bandages once you’ve soaked the fingers for a bit,” I informed him. Although, the burn looked quite innocent, I etched a mental note to keep it clean and bandaged, and to observe it regularly for infection over the next number of days. After I reassured the injured camper and discussed with him and the dishwashers
ideas for preventing similar accidents from happening again, I made my way back to my spot where the wavy river features had seized my fascination. I parked myself at the river’s edge intent on having a few more minutes alone before documenting the events of the day—including the burn accident—in my trip journal and assisting with the final chores of the night.

The cycle of the crashing waves continued to captivate me, though my concentration began to ramble frequently to thoughts of upcoming elements of the trip. The burn to the camper’s finger triggered my first concern that his paddling, lining, or portaging abilities may be hindered. With the upcoming elevation drops over the next few days, there will certainly be many instances where the focus, ability, and skill of each group member will be tested. I hope his burned fingers do not cause him or our group too much trouble.

I consider the upcoming route and inspect the image of the maps that I have laid out in my head. How far have we travelled? How far do we still have to go? What sections of the river are likely to require the most time and patience? Are we on pace to complete this trip in the designated number of days? I feel secure and comfortable with the tentative logistics that I have envisioned for the final 11 days on the river. Once I subdue the fear and anxiety that rises occasionally when considering the events of canoe trips such as these, I begin considering other important outcomes of the wilderness experience that our group is living. Similar to other trips I have led in the past, I am amazed at the capabilities and determination that some of the trip participants have demonstrated and developed. Their paddling skills are noticeably improved and one camper solo carried a canoe for the first time on a portage today. I wonder, however, is
this canoe trip meeting the expectations that the kids had for themselves and this canoe trip? Are they enjoying themselves? Are they learning a lot and experiencing the grandeur of this river community to its fullest? I have been impressed with the care that the kids have taken in behaving responsibly towards the environment, but ponder at how we can extend this learning further as a group. Maybe our group is ready for an adventure? Perhaps we are ready to safely paddle more advance rapids? After following the direct guidance of two leaders for 13 days, maybe the kids are now capable of assuming more leadership duties of their own? Perhaps we should allow the campers to use and follow the river maps as we continue downstream? There are many things to consider and many things that I need to discuss with my co-leader. Before I sleep tonight I will be sure to do so. Off again my mind rambles. Now I consider the dynamics between my co-leader and myself. Are we getting along? Is there any tension or problems between us? How is our relationship perceived among the campers on this trip? Is it a good one or bad one? Although there have been instances of disagreement and confusion between us on this trip, I feel that my co-leader and I are working well together. I hope the campers recognize that and that we are setting a good example for them. My thoughts turn to amazement as, again, I consider how the varied episodes in the past 13 days have shaped the lives of the people on this trip. The shared experience of the last 13 days has united this group of people and changed so many individuals. I find it amazing how much I can learn from and experience with a group of youth in an environment such as this. Nature certainly provides inroads to powerful lessons and group bonding. To know that we still have 11 more days in this environment is awesome. The flood of images and
thoughts of the upcoming days continue only briefly before being replaced with thoughtless journeys within my own mind.

The sudden halt of scurrying feet was what finally shattered my fascinating and contemplative state. The evening sky consumed most of the land but a low dull light from the horizon provided enough glow to decipher the details of things close by. Immediately to my left, only centimetres from my outstretched leg, sat a curious chipmunk. I must have been quite still in the moments leading up to the chipmunk’s arrival and have been unnoticed by or perceived as a non-threat to the tiny creature. Even little critters like chipmunks are welcomed and infrequent surprises to observe. If I could only touch it!

That would make it seem so real. Struggling, I resisted the urge to extend my hand. I knew that any slight movement would send the chipmunk fleeing. So I just starred and watched. Perhaps the critter had been wandering from its evening’s home for a final scout of food and water before the cold night. He seemed in no particular hurry to get on with his plans and peered at me as though he was just as excited to see me, as I was to see him.

When the chipmunk lowered his front paws to the rocky ground, I experienced a brief feeling of elation and anticipation. He moved closer towards me, hesitated, and then leapt on top of my left thigh. Taking a moment to scout his next move, the chipmunk rose on his hind legs before dashing off in amongst the rocks and, inevitably, into the forest. I was amazed! I had heard stories of people sitting so still and quiet that an animal would approach and crawl upon them but never had I experienced that myself. I was inspired to have been so close to and so trusted by an animal. The feeling was incredible.

This certainly is a grand moment in a wonderful and amazing place. The song of the moving river and painted evening sky provided a backdrop for my earlier reflective
and contemplative thoughts that had meandered alongside the clean full breaths and thought-less minutes. Initially, in this place, my head was clear, only to become occupied with thoughts of friendship, shared learning and teaching, processing the daily struggles of being on trip, the wonders of nature, and the approaching days of continued interactions with people and the natural environment. To crown and reward my solitary presence, the chipmunk demonstrated to me a tremendous favour of trust. Now, the freedom of occupying this space with no sense of boundaries or artificial distractions encourages me to stretch out my senses and continue to sit comfortably and calmly here on my own. For the events that I have experienced here this evening, I shall offer this place a token of thanks before I rest tonight. Perhaps some tobacco or a song on the harmonica will suffice—just something to acknowledge my thanks for the opportunity to be here doing what I am doing. For now, however, I am in no hurry to move anywhere or think anything or be anyone. My trip mates are safe and secure at the campsite and my leadership duties for the day are dwindling. The moment is perfect. The crashing wave continues to engulf the flowing downstream wave in the current of a larger rapid. Upstream are memories and stories of personal growth and learning, friendships, communion with nature, feelings of triumph and adversity. Lying downstream are similar tales and experiences yet unturned. Interactions flourish. At this moment I am here. Things just feel right. I am in the thick of it all.
Chapter Five: On Route – Exhaustive Descriptions of Thematic Structures

The aim of this chapter is to provide an exhaustive description of thematic structures that emerged from the data collection and analysis processes outlined in the third chapter. This exhaustive description of the nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders integrates verbatim quotes from the interview transcripts with the clusters of themes presented in Appendix O. The verbatim quotes are included to allow the voices of the participants to be shared with the reader and to explicate and validate the themes. Material from all five research participants is used in the following exhaustive description indicating that, though participants’ experiences in nature were unique, there was an underlying and common structure to nature experiences among the participants. As well, the themes described below are neither independent nor mutually exclusive from one another. In fact, there is much overlap among themes, some of which is noted within or hinted at in the descriptions and some of which should be recognized as part of the complexity of lived-experiences. For example, many emotions described are linked to the behaviours demonstrated by the wilderness recreation leader. Or, connections and relationships that the wilderness recreation leader perceives are likely established in conjunction with the environmental behaviours they demonstrate and the emotions they experience in natural settings.

Nevertheless, the format of the exhaustive description follows that of the thematic clusters (Appendix O) and is mapped out in Figure 3. Beginning with a description of the meaning of nature, the exhaustive description then moves on to the connections and relationships to nature, behaviours in nature, and emotions in nature. Within each of these chief themes, sub- themes are described that frame the structure of the nature experiences.
for wilderness recreation leaders. Diagrams and visual representations were used to clarify and organize ideas and thoughts at various moments in the thematic analysis and writing of the exhaustive descriptions. Incorporating some of these visual aids into the body of this thesis and as a method for presenting the exhaustive descriptions was considered. However, in an effort to ensure that the complexity of lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders, and subsequently the narrative description contained in chapter four, are granted full value as the final product of this research, I chose not to include such structural diagrams. Rather, the appendices that highlight the aggregate thematic clusters and the guiding map for this chapter contained in Figure 3, assist the reader through the detailed descriptions that follow. This format for presenting results matches those outlined by Colaizzi (1978).

5.1 The Meaning of Nature

5.1.1 Nature is Authentic Interactions

For the group of wilderness recreation leaders who participated in this phenomenological investigation, nature is recognized as an image or construct of authentic interactions. Fundamentally, nature is a human created definition that identifies what happens on a regular basis for the success and well being of life on earth. As Tom expresses, “nature is fundamentally…a human definition right…it’s how we want things to stay so that we can keep living on this earth and enjoying it” (Tom, April 16, 2004). The meaning of nature is often a shared and common one for people:

I feel like the word [nature] is the definition of the word you know. Do you follow me? Like it’s, I feel like that word has just an image that accompanies it and I feel
The Meaning of Nature (5.1)

Nature is Authentic Interactions (5.1.1)
Nature as Home, Teacher, and Temple (5.1.2)

Connections and Relationship to Nature (5.2)

Humans are Part of Nature (5.2.1) $\leftrightarrow$ Humans are Divorced from Nature (5.2.2)
Interactions Among Self, Others, and Natural Environment (5.2.3)
Nature’s Rewards (5.2.4) $\leftrightarrow$ Giving Something Back (5.2.5)

Behaviours in Nature (5.3)

<table>
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<tr>
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Emotions and Feelings in Nature (4.4)

Being in Nature Feels Right (4.4.1)
Being in Nature Inspires Feelings of Spirituality (4.4.2)
A Medley of Positive Emotions and Feelings (4.4.3)
Influence of Anticipated Adversity (4.4.4)
like that image is the same for everyone of like trees or rocks or...just they would know. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

Sarah’s statement above triggers the obvious question of what is this shared and common image of nature? Without devaluing the magnificence of trees and rocks, we can be certain that there is more to this image and construct. For instance, the image of how we’re used to seeing a forest or a river is a result of nature being a host of complex, dynamic interactions that reach a static, stable, and beautiful balance.

Nature is just so dynamic. Like when you’re in a city I don’t think it changes as much. Where as when you’re in nature it’s just like a constant, it’s constant dynamics that kind of reach this kind of beautiful equilibrium that I think humans innately appreciate. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Here we glimpse the existence of different dynamics within urban and natural environments and see that humans can have an intrinsic appreciation for the dynamics of nature.

For these wilderness recreation leaders, the interactions of nature are pure and original; they form a living system out there that survives in the absence of human control and our touches of technology. In this original form, nature is authentic. While on the canoe trips led by the participating wilderness recreation leaders, “you can get out there and just see nature in its purest” (Jamie, April 01, 2004). As well, “rather than just having one tree, you would have forests and then your river and then your sky. Like just a complete, a little system, a little globe” (Katie, April 08, 2004).

Again, this system of interactions function independently of human control and is unveiled as a community of wildlife, forest, white water rapids, sky, lakes, rocks, and
spectacular vistas unscathed by human constructions and devices. Katie extends this image of nature to flowers that grow outside: a flower growing outside has "supported itself and it's grown there. Where as a flower in just a flowerpot, it's been cut and people have touched it and it's kind of been processed. And out there it's more kind of lived on its own...and survived." (Katie, March 09, 2004)

The suggestion here appears to be one that excludes human involvement in the image and construct of a 'pure' and 'original' nature. However, participants indicated that the interactions of nature work on different scales and can include people—given a certain amount of comfortable space—interacting with it and not destroying its dynamics (e.g., by paving or pouring concrete in natural environments). Although nature is a spectacular image of a waterfall, landscape, or sunset, nature may also include the interactions of people in natural communities.

You’d only see a few people right? [Nature] wouldn’t have large densities [of people] I guess because then that kind of tends to crowd out and over run other aspects of nature or an ecosystem. And I think that people need a certain amount of space, which they don’t really get in cities and which is the one thing you can get on camping trips. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Once again we find that nature is different from urban environments. In the passage above, Tom indicates that achieving a comfortable, personal space in nature distinguishes nature experiences from urban ones.

Participants also suggested that the meaning of nature is rooted in and limited to one's personal experience with the phenomenon. That is, the image of nature is nourished through a person's experience in nature and changes with his or her understanding and
recognition of what is normal in that environment. Nature is identified with, understood, and constructed based on how one has experienced nature in the past. For example, Jamie’s experience in nature has typically involved travelling water systems in a canoe or kayak. Thus,

Most of my experience with nature is through a river…cause I haven’t done any hiking trips really or anything like that. So nature for me definitely involves a river or some sort of body of water in a canoe or kayak. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

Through his canoe tripping experience, Tom has come to understand that a certain amount of forest fire is normal in nature and, in fact, creates an interesting and healthy mosaic of vegetation. Katie understands that the meaning of nature for her has been influenced by how she has interacted with it and perceived it in the past. Katie mentions, “I think the way that you perceive it is the way based on how you’ve dealt with it one on one…some people love rain right but then other people hate it” (Katie, April 08, 2004).

Evidently, the meaning that wilderness recreation leaders attach to nature is derived from how they have experienced nature in the past.

5.1.2 Nature as Home, Teacher, and Temple

The wilderness recreation leaders indicate that within their image and constructed meaning of an authentic nature, nature represents home, teacher, and temple. Nature represents home in the sense that humans have always been dependent on nature for sustaining life, for providing food, water, and shelter, and for facilitating friendship and love. Ultimately, nature is where we all come from and supports our survival. Accordingly, humans are a part of nature and must live in harmony with it. Kyle offers: “I think that we’ve gotten so far away from the idea of nature and wilderness as our home
and the reason that we’re here now today surviving, still living, thriving, doing whatever we’re doing” (Kyle, March 06, 2004). Nature supports life. Nature is where we reside. Kyle continues,

I think we’ve gone so far away from our dependence and also our respect for nature as the thing that continues to keep us alive on earth. Because I mean without trees, without our natural environment we can’t survive here and I think that too many people forget that. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

Although nature is the home to which humans belong, the way our lifestyles have been shaped has separated us from this original birthing ground. Kyle advocates for humanity’s return to living in harmony with and appreciating nature.

Furthermore, because nature is our original birthing place and facilitates the grand circle of life, wilderness recreation leaders will return to nature, hoping and searching for support, security, and enlightenment. In Sarah’s situation, returning ‘home’ and experiencing the positive emotions and feelings of being home, was a method for her to work through a difficult period in her life. “I thought that those feelings of being humbled and feeling a part of something bigger [i.e., nature] would maybe help me feel better or, you know what I mean, like what was wrong with me maybe wouldn’t seem so bad” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). Sarah yearned for “seeing the light at the end of the tunnel or like looking for some kind of enlightenment from that setting where maybe I felt that force or hoping that that force could help me in that situation” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). The security and hope that can be attached to Sarah’s return to nature is simply summarized in Tom’s statement that “nature provides life so, I don’t know, shouldn’t you feel secure from that” (Tom, April 16, 2004).
The home that the participants know as nature offers learning opportunities that are fulfilled in the representation of nature as a teacher. Nature is a teacher that arouses curiosity and motivates extensive learning, exploration, and adventure. More specifically, nature instils

...the exploration and all the curiosity that's inside me and the sense of adventure that's inside me. It provides me with a place to play that out and really over turn rocks and search around corners and climb trees and look in caves and sort of do that sort of thing until I find whatever it is I'm looking for or learn whatever lesson it is that I feel that I'm suppose to learn or that I'm there to pick up that day. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Experiencing the challenges and lessons that are available in nature provides a unique potential for personal growth and for rediscovering the important things in life.

It's a facilitator and an educator and something that I guess can allow people to really find or maybe rediscover the things that they've been looking for their whole lives. Or you know the things that are really important in life and that is, you know, people, friends, love. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

In satisfying its role as teacher, nature encourages participants to explore their potential by making them feel vulnerable. This is accomplished through nature's control over some elements of each day while on a wilderness canoe trip and how one perceives life on that day. Katie, for example, suggests that while

...going down a set of rapids...the river does control what way you're going. But if you set yourself up properly then you can use your skills with the water and be
able to read the water so that it can help you and you control yourself with what you’re going to do. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

Accomplishing feats such as paddling a white water rapid can lead to a person’s character development. This personal growth can also be encouraged by nature’s offerings of plummeting rain, difficult landscapes to portage, or fierce winds to canoe through. As Sarah indicates, “I would say that nature has an influence on me in the sense of putting me out of my comfort zone and letting me push my own boundaries right. So then building my character in that way” (Sarah, April 04, 2004).

Attached to the understanding of nature rousing vulnerability and sponsoring personal development is nature serving as a teacher by supplying the endless lessons and opportunities required for people to make the choices they need to make.

Nature and the wilderness always present options. There’s always one way to do things and then another and another and another. It’s just endless the way you could, the choices that there are out there. And so I think it constantly provides these choices and provides a method or provides a means for kids to have to make choices that they may not want to make or that they need to make in order to learn certain lessons. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

In this capacity, nature as teacher provides people with opportunities to make the choices and learn the lessons that they need to successfully grow as a person.

Within its role as a teacher, nature also provides the necessary resources that support and sponsor human development. According to Jamie, nature offers amenities such as fuel (e.g., firewood collected from the forest), transportation routes to remote natural areas (e.g., on bodies of water), and entertaining moments of watching wildlife or
playing in white water. Without resources such as these, the teaching potential of nature would be unrealized.

‘Nature as temple’ is the final representation that appears in the image and construct of an authentic nature. Nature is, in fact, a reminder to the participants that everything is connected through spiritual or greater things. Kyle contends that,

For me, being out in nature is the only place that really has felt like a temple to me or something where I could connect to something greater or a spiritual side of things. And for me it’s definitely, just constantly a reminder that there is more and that everything is connected through different spiritual or, I don’t know greater things. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Correspondingly, nature represents and symbolizes positive feelings and experiences. “It is something...that represents positive things for me. You know, positive feelings or experiences and so being in nature for me is I guess is something good” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). As such, nature tends to bring out the best and strongest character in a holistically healthy person and caters to the provision of sustainable, self-supporting life. This experience is something that Kyle seldom discovers in urban settings: “To me anyway, it just spoke to me in a way that...the city and my life here [Toronto] often doesn’t have a chance to do” (Kyle, April 12, 2004).

As a temple, nature offers participants a slower, simpler pace to escape from the routines and schedules of daily life. Katie expresses this well in the following passage, which also identifies her frustration with the indifference many people display towards natural wonders:
Just getting away from that and being able to enjoy something that is really simplistic and just always there that people never really appreciated. Like looking at a tree or like looking up at the sky or something like that. A lot of people just never do it and are just kind of concentrating on their day. But just being able to take it easy and just appreciate what’s around you. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

5.2 Connection and Relationship to Nature

5.2.1 Humans Are Part of Nature

The participants’ reflections on their connections to nature suggest that the wilderness recreation leaders struggle between their vision of themselves as fundamentally part of nature and their being divorced from nature. According to the former theme, as living creatures on this earth, humans are a part of nature and the interactions that they have with the environment are fundamental to nature. Humans and nature are interdependent. As Kyle suggests,

I think everything is tied into the environment. I think we’re very much a part of the environment. As much as we try to get away from that these days we still are alive and a part of the earth as it once was and because of that we are totally interdependent. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Tom shares Kyle’s thoughts, but hints to the evolutionary and natural heritage of our species. “I think it was instilled in our genes from hunter-gatherer cultures and I think that’s kind of a basic human function to be in nature. So I think it’s a necessary part of being a human being really” (Tom, March 16, 2004). Moreover, at a proper scale, human interactions and impacts in the natural environment are appropriate, potentially helpful to the environment, and integral to what nature is all about. To exemplify, Tom states that:
I don’t like going out into the wilderness and feeling like I shouldn’t touch anything. I really don’t like that. I very much like feeling that being here at a proper kind of scale and at proper level of impact that I am fundamentally kind of part of this environment and in a way not damaging it, but in a way almost helping it. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Being connected to nature can be achieved through experience and intuition but also involves awareness that humans are similar to other parts of nature. Jamie identifies how he is united with the river when paddling a canoe.

You learn to float; like how to move your body when it [i.e., the river] goes. And it kind of goes with experience and intuition on the river. But you learn when to paddle when not to paddle—how to flow. And you kind of become able to predict what the river is going to do. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

For Sarah,

That’s the connection, feeling of connection. That we’re a part of nature. That is, it’s not something separate maybe that we go and visit from here...that’s where we came from. The bottom line is that we’re not different than those things [living in nature].” (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

This innate belonging to and sense of relatedness to other things in nature is also expressed through Tom’s frustration with worldviews that indicate otherwise.

We’re living beings on the earth and so you can’t pretend that humans are unnatural... humans are natural. We interact with the environment. Sometimes we do it in a very destructive manner but other times we don’t. So I have difficulty
The text on the page is not legible due to the quality of the image. It appears to be a page from a document, possibly containing paragraphs of text, but the details are not discernible from the image provided.
with a certain school of ecology or environmentalism or environmental ethics, I guess, that suggests that we’re unnatural human beings. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

Being a part nature means being a part of something sustainable, which is appreciated and offers a sense of security and stability. The future well-being of natural areas, however, requires wilderness recreation leaders to recognize their place in and responsibility to nature’s circle of life, maintain a sense of connection to nature, and be secure that their own personal behaviours are sustainable.

It’s fair that we harness the resources of nature I think, but that we have to start doing it in a sustainable way. You know, make sure that we don’t totally wreck it but at the same time...at the most base level the idea of using it isn’t—I don’t think that that’s wrong. I don’t think that we should all destroy everything [e.g., urban areas] and just live in the bush. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

A sustainable future for nature also requires a reduction to the exploration and destruction of natural environments for satisfying humans’ consumptive lifestyles. The river to which Jamie and his canoe trip mates travelled, for example, is in the process of being dammed and diverted; resulting in the elimination of many river basins. Ultimately, as part of nature, humans must live in harmony with nature.

5.2.2 Humans Are Divorced From Nature

Despite the conviction among participants that humans are a part of nature, the notion that humans have become divorced from nature also emerged from the interpretative analysis process. Humanity’s desire to control things, for example, has contributed to this severed connection with nature. “There’s no denying that we have separated ourselves from that land and, you know, here I am in concrete land and I
control this, I control that” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). Also important is an awareness that the appropriate level or scale of human interaction with nature is difficult to determine because most humans no longer interact with the natural environment on a regular basis. In Tom’s line of thinking,

People who earn a living out doors—people who fish for a living, people who hunt, people who are eco-foresters and stuff like that—they know what the appropriate scale is. They’re not going to be able to give you a number but they know because they see it and they interact with the environment on a regular basis right. Where as people, we live in the city; we’re kind of divorced from that. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

Specific to the wilderness recreation leaders’ experience of nature is the fact that their professional duties often promote their own separation from nature. Kyle summarizes this idea well:

There’s a lot of things on trip that can distract you, whether it be sort of the stress of big white water or having to be at a certain place at a certain time to get picked up or, you know, bad weather, kids being under prepared, not getting fed enough. You’re very responsible for a lot of things so often times you’re very focused on the things you’re supposed to be and are legally responsible for on trip. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Thus, the safety, planning, and supervision involved in a canoe trip of this sort requires the regular and devoted attention of the wilderness leader. For Tom, “I took my role as a professional very seriously and it really alienated me from nature” (Tom, March 16, 2004). This circumstance accommodates an element of irony as many wilderness
recreation leaders appreciate canoe trips because they provide an escape from the regular institutions, economics, and routines governing society.

You think about things that are foisted upon you from the city or foisted upon you from the institutions we’ve set up in society instead of thinking about nature. So you think about if this happens am I going to be sued? Is there going to be legal consequences? Is the camp going to be sued? You start evaluating things in terms of money, in terms of how much money do these kids pay for this trip and how do I make sure that they have their money’s worth. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

In situations such as these, fulfilling their expected roles as wilderness recreation leaders dissolved the participants’ connection to nature.

Accompanying the notion that wilderness recreation leaders and other humans are divorced from nature is the idea that people on a canoe trip are actually visitors to natural environments. In fact, Jamie mentions that he is “kind of the intruder into the land” (Jamie, April 01, 2004). In the capacity of a visitor in nature, the wilderness leader must respect nature’s control but still appreciate and enjoy the surrounding pristine environments. However, humans have the potential to inflict hazards to or leave traces of their presence in natural environments that can diminish the sense of discovery and connections to nature experienced by others. Katie compares her experience in nature to visiting a friend’s house.

I think it’s important for the kids to understand that, like I said before, we’re visitors… when you’re visiting somebody’s house you don’t leave a trail of your mess behind you—like leave your dishes in the kitchen. You kind of clean up
after yourself and so that was like one of the big things, that was like the one of the first things we told the kids at the beginning. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

The privilege of visiting nature still provides opportunities to overcome challenges, have positive personal changes, and experience self-gratification. However, in this perspective on the relationship to nature, wilderness recreation leaders focus primarily on leaving nature as it was prior to their visit and returning from nature sharing the message of no-impact with other people. An important note here is that not all wilderness recreation leaders shared this thought of being visitors in nature. Tom, for instance, is quite opposed to the idea.

I don’t think on canoe trip you should feel guilty being out there. A lot of people feel that this is place where humans really shouldn’t be. But if you really thought like that you wouldn’t be going on a canoe trip right? (Tom, April 16, 2004)

5.2.3 Interactions Among Self, Others, and Natural Environment

Also emerging from the thematic analysis of the participants’ interviews is the suggestion that humans and nature share a relationship that involves interactions among the self, others, and nature. Certainly, there are personal and social moments that the wilderness recreation leader experiences on these canoe trips, but both personal and social episodes are housed within the context of the natural environment. Humans interact with other humans in the landscape of nature which, when combined, provide powerful, concrete experiences between the humans and pronounced feelings of connection to nature. Tom explains,

So if you’ve been down a really crazy set of rapids with someone it’s kind of unspoken but your friendship is more concrete because you shared that similar
experience and you’ve shared something that’s very unspoken but you probably both felt it right? Or if you’ve seen a beautiful waterfall you’ve shared a common experience and that really bonds your friendship. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Sharing the experience of nature with others is important to the relationship that humans have with nature. A special bond is created among members of a canoe trip.

I think with your group you can share it...you’re experiencing the same thing at the same time and so you can have more of that relation and that connection.

Where I think that if you’re just telling someone about it they’re like: “Oh wow that’s really neat.” But really they don’t understand what it looked like, how it was, how big the waterfall was, or how big the rapids were. They don’t really understand all the components of it. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

Sarah hints at how nature enriches these social relationships. “It’s different then just being in the city and having a sleep over, right? It’s different being out there and sleeping with your friends and knowing that it’s just you and everything out there” (Sarah, March 16, 2004). According to Tom, the number and type of interactions that people share in nature is fundamental to these social relationships that are built during nature experiences.

If it’s raining and you’re in the wilderness you might sink up to your eyebrows in mud. You know, if you’re in a city it doesn’t matter because you’re on concrete right? So I think there’s fewer interactions that happen in the city then that happen in a natural place. And those are like nature-human interactions but also human-human interactions. (Tom, April 16, 2004)
The relationship between self and nature is identified well in the following statements from Jamie and Kyle:

Just being out there and seeing the sights that there is out there and the natural beauty and sounds, smells, tastes, and just knowing that it is there and knowing that you yourself appreciate it and that you can help pass this appreciation on to other people. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

I can not explain it but I really felt like I had connected somehow with him, like the seal, and the river and just where I was. And it was something that I'll never ever forget. It's just so cool to have something so wild come up and trust you and just hang out and let you scratch its chin. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Jamie identifies a personal appreciation for nature that he uncovers while relaxing upon a cliff top. Jamie notes, however, a desire to share this appreciation with others. In Kyle's account above, Kyle describes his opportunity to canoe beside a seal, earn its trust, and pet the animal’s chin. Though this is a personal highlight in nature for Kyle, he indicates that such episodes inspire him to share such experiences with others.

I don’t feel like it’s necessarily speaking to me but I feel like something inside of me lets me know when I experience these things, that is what I’m totally here for is to see this sort of stuff and to experience this sort of stuff and to hopefully in some way protect it and you know ensure that others can get a chance to see that and experience that. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Although nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders can be personal or social, the experiences are frequently a collaboration of interactions among the self, other people, and nature. When the self, others, and nature interact, the nature experiences and
relationship to nature are powerful. Tom’s account of watching the northern lights with one of his trip participants is used as a final example:

You’re looking at the northern lights and you don’t just look at the northern lights. You kind of talk about them. Or even if you make some sort of weird sound like, “woooahh.” [laugh]. I mean that was—and I remember then one of our campers was really into them, was really staying up all night to see them and a lot of other campers came out of their tents and then that was—yeah I think that was probably a moment that if I saw the camper in a few years from now he would probably remember that you know and we’d feel like we probably shared something at that time. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

5.2.4 Nature’s Rewards

As part of the relationship between nature and humans, nature offers us many rewards. Specifically, humans derive personal experiences from nature that, in the moment, may be positive or negative but which, ultimately, lead to beneficial changes in a person. Simply put, nature enriches us (R. Kennedy Jr., personal communication, June 06, 2004). The challenges and risks provided by the river and the surrounding natural landscapes on extended canoe trips push wilderness recreation leaders’ boundaries and their comfort zones, contributing to their character development. Admitting to being a thrill seeker, Jamie explains how nature experiences can boost his self-confidence:

I just find it’s kind of fun to do things that are semi-dangerous. Like white water; there is definitely a risk element in there and if things do go wrong you could get hurt or other people in your party could get hurt so it gets the blood rushing a little bit—the adrenaline pumping. And when you do complete it successfully it’s just
kind of “Yeah!” You look back and you’re like; “Yeah! I just did that.” And a lot of people can’t do that kind of stuff. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

Katie indicates how the challenges offered by nature have inspired physical and emotional changes that she recognizes and appreciates in herself.

I think because it’s such a remote place and so far away or it seems so far away, that you want a challenge. You want to be able to come back as a stronger person. Like maybe physically or mentally and emotionally and I think that would be considered like the perfect trip. If you came back a better person for your condition—rather than like people noticing that you came back differently. I think more self-gratification. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

Certainly, nature presents obstacles and powerful, uncontrollable forces that make wilderness recreation leaders work hard to complete their journey. These challenges can manifest themselves in difficult terrain or white water that must be scouted or portaged, weather systems that present various hazards, or strong winds that prevent timely travel. The simple act of canoeing in nature is a vehicle for having, sharing, and living powerful life experiences.

It’s so simple. I guess the act of doing it [canoeing] itself. Just going into a lake or river or anything, any body of water, and just picking up a paddle and being able to get from one place to another. But it’s so powerful because you can experience so much while you do it. You can experience so much of nature or life experiences while doing it. And it’s the vehicle that let’s you experience all these things that you get to do while on a canoe trip. (Katie, April 08, 2004)
Not only does nature offer personal growth and life experience rewards to wilderness recreation leaders, but nature also offers moments that, when compiled, form a collage of learning about, understanding, and appreciating natural wonders. In the following passages, Jamie reflects on seeing wildlife, Sarah is impressed with the untouched space witnessed on her canoe trip, and Kyle explains his reaction to a beautiful but unexpected sunset.

Whenever I see an animal like that I’m just ‘wow!!’ And even another instance we found what we determined to be a lynx paw print. And just to see that and to know that they were in the area around us was neat. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

Well I think it’s not often that we get, or I get to personally see so much space [where I] can’t see human impact. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

Well, just sitting there and, I don’t know, I just turned around and there it was and it was just—you know it was so beautiful. Like beautiful in a way that I can’t describe and I can’t hope to recreate in a very urban environment. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

As highlighted above, nature offers wilderness recreation leaders the opportunity to witness, interact with, and learn about natural wonders. The rewards that nature extends to humans also satisfy a spiritual yearning for wilderness recreation leaders. In Sarah’s situation, the vastness of nature ignites innate feelings of connection and being humbled by the grand circle of life. “There’s obviously that idea of humbling...like you can’t deny there’s a spiritual connection to being in the wilderness. Just innate within us” (Sarah, March 16, 2004). Sarah continues later, “The idea of there being the feeling like a force that’s bigger than something that we know. There’s something bigger than us. Not
something like a person but just some force” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). For Jamie, the spiritual rewards that nature offers to him are revealed in the necklace that he wears.

Personally, I wear this [shows necklace], which is the Ojibwa water spirit symbol. It’s worn just to show respect to the river and it’s worn to know that whenever you go on the river you’re in the proper mind, body, and emotional state that you need to be. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

Furthermore, by recognizing their small part and vulnerability in the interactions and force of nature, and having no desire or need to control such forces, the wilderness recreation leaders derive a sense happiness and calm.

To be way up north and stand face to face with a polar bear with a shotgun in between you, but still a shotgun like with a polar bear may not do you that much good. So you sort of understand how weak you are in the grand scheme of things. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

I feel like I’m a small little part of just this huge amount of stuff that’s going on around me. And I find a lot of comfort in that I think. I don’t feel like there’s some sort of need for me to control this area or to be in some sort of hierarchical position over what’s going on around me. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

The spiritual rewards offered by nature to wilderness recreation leaders is wrapped up well by Tom in his reflections on thanking something for assisting with his canoe trip:

I remember that kicked out a kind of spiritual side of me and I mean, it’s probably irrational, maybe it was just chance, but I kind of really enjoyed thinking that I should thank someone for this. And maybe it’s not someone. Maybe it’s just the
whole belief of nature’s interactions working with each other and that creates some sort of calming common thing. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

5.2.5 Giving Something Back

In response to the rewards that nature offers humans, the wilderness recreation leaders’ relationship to nature is a very personal feeling that inspires giving something back. This can be achieved by leaders protecting or helping various components of nature, teaching others about nature, or offering thanks for the opportunities to have these experiences. On Kyle’s trip, ceremonies of thanks were regular parts of their routine.

I just want to give them [i.e., his trip participants] the opportunity to give something back and in their own way give thanks or say a prayer or do whatever it is they want to do or they feel is appropriate at the time. So I would give them the opportunity to go off to a place or even to a person or whatever and give thanks. Burn the tobacco or just leave it as an offering. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

The ceremonies of thanks were also personal moments for Kyle as, “Often times I would take tobacco and either burn it or I would take a hair from my body or something that was mine or a piece of me and give it to the river” (Kyle, March 06, 2004). Tom shares Kyle’s notion of giving thanks.

You’re at the mercy of whatever the weather is going to do to you—stuff like that. So I mean I think if you have that realization, if it’s working to your advantage you should pay homage to that right. So yeah, there’s definitely feelings of thanks. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

From the passages above, giving something back means that the wilderness recreation leaders acknowledge and express thanks to the interactions that create nature. The
offerings of thanks acknowledge the leaders relationship to nature and their appreciation for the sacrifices, sustenance, memorable moments, and learning opportunities that nature provides.

So giving something back, whether it be tobacco or a hair or something that you find important, in whatever way, I think promotes at least the thought in people’s heads and kids’ heads that there is something to be thankful for. Whether it be their parents for putting them on this particular trip or thankful for the weather we’ve had or the people that are along with us, the things we’ve learned, the food we have, the clothes. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Giving something back to nature can also involve teaching others about nature and sponsoring the survival and protection of natural environments. From a societal perspective, Tom notes:

I kind of liked the idea of thinking that well, by bringing people out here maybe this will trigger something in them and they will go back to institutions we’ve created in society and try to communicate the kind of intrinsic worth of places like this. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

For Katie, her teachings and support for the survival of natural environments are focused on her trip participants and encouraging them to advocate on nature’s behalf. Katie mentions that she strives for “being able to experience [nature] and being able to come back with experiences about it and tell a lot more people about it in hopes that they practice the same things that you do in order to maintain it” (Katie, April 08, 2004). In this capacity, the wilderness recreation leader aims to assist in the sustainable future and health of natural environments. Because nature enriches humans with spiritual
connections, beautiful landscapes, and opportunities for personal growth, people must be respectful and take care of nature. It seems only fitting that we give something back to nature by assuming a caretaker role in nature. In fact, humans have an intellectual capacity and a moral responsibility to be involved in this care-taking process.

I think that we were given the gift of logical and rational thought for reasons like that; where we can take a look at things and evaluate. And if you’re using a proper set of morals, and in my way of thinking, a very naturalistic or environmentally sound set of morals, then you’re going to do things with the future in mind. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

In a situation on Jamie’s canoe trip, he describes a hunting episode in which he feels that he meets this demand. Connecting to nature, according to Jamie’s reasoning for hunting geese, can involve living off the land in a way that supports and strengthens animal populations and ecosystems (e.g., hunting the weak members of the flock of geese).

5.3 Behaviours in Nature

While leading an extended canoe trip, the wilderness recreation leaders’ nature experience ranges from dealing with extreme adversity to witnessing the sheer beauty in a landscape to teaching others about the wilderness. This imparts on to the wilderness leader, among other things, memorable connections to nature, friendships with people on the trip, and personal learning experiences that can be extended to other aspects of their lives. As referred to in the earlier descriptions, the interactions among the self, others, and with nature are meaningful to the Connections and Relationships to Nature theme. This next section explores the environmental behaviours that wilderness recreation leaders
practice while immersed in nature and describes that these behaviours are either directed towards others, the self, or the natural environment.

5.3.1 Leaders’ Behaviours Directed Towards Others

As noted in the Connections and Relationships to Nature section, the shared experience of a wilderness canoe trip solidifies and strengthens the relationships among and between the trip leaders and trip participants. From the thematic analysis of the interview data emerged a variety of behaviours that wilderness recreation leaders directed towards other people and which are relevant to the nature experiences of the wilderness leader. Primarily, these behaviours are focused on safely sponsoring and supporting the personal growth of trip participants, though some behaviours, related to sharing leadership responsibilities with another wilderness recreation leader, were revealed. Within the scope of behaviours noted as safe personal growth experiences for trip participants, wilderness recreation leaders demonstrate an emphasis on safety and health; encourage and role model behaviours among their participants that promote personal development; and provide participants with opportunities to make decisions and advance their skills.

5.3.1.1 An emphasis on safety and health

Although the wilderness recreation leaders did not discuss safety and health issues extensively during the data collection process, there is a discernible underlying assumption apparent that all behaviours practised in natural environments have foundations in human safety and health. That is, all behaviours—including environmentally responsible behaviours—proceed from a consciousness of being safe and maintaining individuals’ health. I suppose that through my own experiences as a
wilderness recreation leader and my familiarity of the leadership behaviours endorsed by the study participants, the understanding that the safety and health of all trip participants is the primary responsibility of the wilderness recreation leader has emerged to the foreground.

As such, wilderness recreation leaders provide security, guidance, and support for their trip mates as they open safe and healthy opportunities of self-discovery, exploration, and learning for the participants. Sarah comments that her role as a leader is not necessarily to provide the challenges that promote personal growth (nature does that!) but to ensure the safe and comfortable avenues for meeting these challenges. Sarah states; “I feel like it’s the river or the setting that does that [i.e., provides challenges] and that my role in that is to make sure that [the participants] stay safe and are not scared, like feel comfortable” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). An example of a trip leader focusing on safety during other programming components can be recognized in Kyle’s encouragement of trip participants to have quiet nature sits of solitude. These sits only occur with mindfulness for safety precautions. Kyle mentions that:

So what I like to do is take kids out and give them a spot and let them find their own spot away from everyone else where they can’t see anyone or can’t really talk to anyone. But still close enough that if they get in trouble we can hear them.

(Kyle, April 12, 2004)

We can see here that, although Kyle encourages solitary sits in the wilderness, he remains within hearing distance from the participants so that any safety or health problems can be given appropriate attention.
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Monitoring trip participants’ health also fits within the context of the leadership behaviours. For instance, on extended wilderness trips leaders must be aware of the personal hygiene and digestive routines of their trip participants. One way of achieving this is to make the personal impersonal.

Going to the bathroom was probably the biggest challenge that the kids had to deal with because it’s such a personal thing. But then on a trip, it becomes so impersonal you know what I mean? Like talking about—“did you take a shit today?”—was a normal thing to talk about. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Discussing digestion with participants or playing games that encourage participants to be regular on trip are just a couple of methods that wilderness recreation leaders use to observe participants’ health and safety in a positive and comfortable atmosphere.

Moments in which the health and safety of the trip participants is satisfied provides other rewards for the wilderness recreation leader. A component of their professional responsibilities is temporarily alleviated and they can attend to other rewarding elements of the nature experience. For example:

I think my favourite times would be when you would know everyone was safe. If it was a calm lake and you could paddle across it or if you were sailing or if you were at a campsite. One of the best times is at a campsite and you know you put in a good day’s work and you’re in a good situation you know and you can kind of chill out. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

5.3.1.2 Role modelling behaviours that promote personal development

Encouraging and role modelling behaviours that promote personal development among the trip participants is essential to the nature experiences of wilderness recreation
leaders. These leaders have a responsibility to provide and demonstrate safe and comfortable opportunities for the trip participants to have personal growth experiences—what Sarah described as “forming experiences.” Although the forming experience term emerged through the analysis of Sarah’s interview material, the expression suits the data collected from other wilderness recreation leaders. The following passage from Kyle, for example, highlights the nature of a forming experience rendered possible by his leadership efforts.

I think that’s a very important part of being a leader is to try to help kids through these things or motivate them through it. But then also just trying to teach them and lead them into places and out of places where they can really grow and be able to look back on and say, “Wow! That was so tough but I’m so glad I did it. It’s really shown me that I have more strength than I thought I did or that I’m much more skilled than I thought I was or more capable” or whatever reason. Give them confidence. Give them, I don’t know, just the strength to do things they never thought they could. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Forming experiences involve individuals confronting the physical and mental challenges presented in nature that encourage the person to think and act in ways that are different from his or her regular self. These experiences invite a person to push the personal boundaries of what he or she is really use to and comfortable with, enabling the person to test and extend his or her abilities and offer a glimpse of his or her potential. As Sarah describes, meeting the challenges of a wilderness canoe trip can;

Make you think in a way and act in a way that you wouldn’t if you weren’t in that situation. So then that would become a part of your personality. That kind of
thinking you might incorporate into your life in other ways and that’s how it would be forming. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

By experiencing this extension of the self, a person can improve self-confidence, learn new skills, or develop new attitudes towards nature. Simply put, “having those experiences might change the way you think about your attitude towards nature for example. Or like how strong you are or if people can push you around” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). Ultimately, the potentials of the self that emerge from forming experiences can be embraced, be incorporated as part of the person’s personality and into other aspects of his or her life, and contribute to the person’s character development. For the wilderness recreation leader, encouraging and opening opportunities for these forming experiences among trip participants is extremely rewarding. The leader also delights in having trip participants look up to them for providing these experiences. In the following passage about a participant who had difficulty completing a river manoeuvre, Sarah hints at the treasure in the face of a determined participant.

She would just go like a matter of feet into the current and would turn around because she’d like lose the ferry angle. And just watching her struggle, struggle, struggle. And she just kept trying and I know those other girls would have stopped...But she just kept trying, trying, trying and trying. But she made it. So then when they got down, there was big waves and just to see her face after she had done that and tried so many times and made it. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

As role models for youth interacting in natural environments, wilderness recreation leaders also understand that they have a duty to share an appreciation and
enthusiasm for nature, discuss ways to preserve nature, and identify human created threats to these natural environments. Tom notes that,

The best thing to do is take people out there and then try to show your appreciation for it by showing your enthusiasm for nature and seeing if they pick up on it. And then I think if you have an appreciation for it certainly you have a responsibility to discuss how you can preserve areas like this. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Sarah has a similar expectation for her role in sharing knowledge and an appreciation for natural wonders. She would,

Try to share my knowledge base. If I know a certain plant or explain to them what the esker is or these rocks are polished like this because there use to be water here. You know those kinds of things to try to get them to feel amazed. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

Being on a canoe trip with the same people for an extended number of days provides the wilderness recreation leader with a greater opportunity to share interests, experiences, feelings, and lessons on an individual level with each participant and with the group as a whole. Demonstrating personal appreciation and fascination for nature and sharing knowledge about the natural environment can foster feelings of amazement for and connection to these places among the participants. The role modelling behaviours of the leaders can inspire participants to appreciate thoughtful moments on their own and can reveal a certain element of spirituality in the person. For this group of wilderness recreation leaders, this sharing of appreciation and knowledge was a behaviour that they felt was part of their responsibility.
When I have 8 or 10 kids at my finger tips that it’s my responsibility I feel to try to pass on to them the way I feel and the things I think and to at least inspire some sort of conversation or argument. Or just some sort of thought provoking perspective that they can then take for themselves, think about, and integrate into their own life however they see fit. And from that, they decide whether they want to try to learn what you have to give. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

It is apparent that role modelling an appreciation for nature, as well as the opportunities for personal development, is fuelled by the interests of the participants. The participants were the ones who made the choice of going on these canoe trips in the first place.

The capabilities, vulnerabilities, and personalities of the wilderness recreation leader also influence the role modelling and encouragement of participants’ personal development. That is, the talents, interests, and ambitions that wilderness recreation leaders present to participants affect how much the participants derive from the personal development experiences. For instance, Kyle’s personal learning ambitions and interests support his teaching and leading of the trip participants. Participants can choose to learn with Kyle but his actions, which are based on intrinsic desires and interests, are motivating, supportive, passionate, and genuinely sincere. Reflecting on his role as a canoe trip leader in the natural environment, Kyle says;

I think that’s part of the whole learning and really challenging myself to be the best leader I can and the best facilitator I can and the best educator I can by trying every single tactic and by trying to explore as much as I can on the trip as well as try to explore as much as I can with each kid and with each group. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)
The wilderness recreation leader who is engaged in a personal development process of their own while on canoe trip can ignite within participants a motivating flame for exploring their personal potentials. At the same time, however, the vulnerabilities of a wilderness recreation leader can shape the learning potential of the trip participants as well. An example of this is provided in the following statement from Katie regarding her role in white water canoeing instruction with the participants.

A lot of those rapids we could not do and could not run. And I think for me a lot of it was testing my white water ability...Like I showed the kids what to do and my ability affected how the kids learned and what they learned because they learned what I taught them. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

In the situation above, the wilderness recreation leader’s skills influence the personal development of the participants (i.e., in this case, hard skill development that enables access to other personal challenges). Katie only hints at her nervousness and hesitancy in role modelling the necessary white water practices to participants but, certainly, at some particular point on an extended canoe trip, the leader will demonstrate vulnerability, which the participants will recognize. Katie reflects on a situation where she was struggling to get a fire started and the trip participants came to her assistance.

I tried to gather little twigs to start my little fire and the kids would help me gather wood because I was telling them what to do and just organizing. Getting some people to start the breakfast, getting it ready. So once the fire was going then we could start the cooking. And as time went by the lighter wouldn’t work and so I passed it off to kids so they could try to do it. And they couldn’t do it so I kept going and I was really frustrated. (Katie, March 09, 2004)
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Katie continues,

Although it was probably one of the worst days, particularly for me because I couldn’t get the fire started for like two hours. But I think we learned a lot from each other and helped out each other a lot. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Given the opportunity to take on a larger role in some of the leadership aspects of the canoe trip, the trip participants may respond and experience more opportunity for personal development. When the wilderness recreation leader is having a bad day, for example, trip participants can step up and make contributions that can result in their own personal development. Part of the role of being a wilderness recreation leader is, in fact, to provide participants with these types of opportunities.

5.3.1.3 Creating opportunities for skill development, decision-making, and appreciation

During the course of a wilderness canoe trip, the leader encourages participants to learn new skills so that they can make more decisions regarding the trip. As her trip progressed, Katie and her co-leader had the trip participants be the ‘trip-leader-for-the-day.’

A big thing on our trip was that we let the kids become the tripper for the day. So teaching them just how to read maps and what the elevations were and how things on the map look—how they look in real life. And just how to read a map seems so simple but it’s probably one of the biggest things they had a problem with. And also being in a leadership position themselves and telling their own friends “get up now”, “make breakfast”, “do this” kind of keeping things organized. I think that was a challenge for them. (Katie, March 09, 2004)
Having participants become the leader-of-the-day involved them supervising key duties of the day such as map reading, organizing the campsite and meal preparation, determining where and when to stop for rests and lunch, and motivating their peers to accomplish routine tasks (e.g., packing up tents and canoes in the morning). The maturity and growth that participants demonstrate to the leaders throughout the trip facilitate the ease of handing over responsibilities such as these. Jamie describes this process in a metaphor of helping a child to ride a bicycle.

At the start of the trip, like kids have the training wheels on the bikes and you’re always right there guiding them along making sure they don’t fall. And if they do fall, you pick them up. Ride again. Where as slowly as the trip went on, the training wheels started to come off but you’re still holding them a little bit. And eventually you let them go farther and farther and farther. And eventually, you’re basically like “just go.” And you just let the kids run their own little agenda. It’s not necessary for you to go first down the rapids anymore. You can let the kids go choose their own routes. Your control over what they do just becomes less and less and less and you give them more and more freedom. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

As noted previously, the wilderness recreation leaders’ behaviours in these situations are rooted in the priority of participant safety and health. The leaders begin to trust and have confidence in the skills and decision-making abilities of the participants to take on these added responsibilities. When his participants demonstrate competent skill and judgement on a rapid, for instance, Jamie tries to challenge them more by safely exploring and paddling a more advanced set of white water. Generally, the wilderness recreation leaders’ behaviours change during the wilderness canoe trip in the sense that they allow
some decisions and responsibilities to be dealt with by the participants later on in the trip once the participants’ skills and knowledge are adequate. Interestingly, Sarah points out that she felt that there was a lack of challenge and difficult decisions to make on her trip. Theirs was a comfortable and gentle trip and her participants missed out on learning from the hardships that generally accompany these trips.

What I was saying before about them not being pushed; I feel like they missed out on part of what the experience typically is. Or what I see that, the experience that they signed up for, what I see that being. That they missed out on that to a certain degree and I would have liked to have had them challenged more. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

This aspect of the canoe trip that Sarah felt was missing is aligned with the wilderness recreation leaders’ thoughts that they have a responsibility to encourage participant skill development so that they can appreciate the majestic places they visit and the efforts involved in reaching such places. When wilderness recreation leaders and their participants use their skills to meet challenges and overcome hardships, the leaders have supported the participants to a place they can appreciate and connect with. In this way, the leaders’ behaviours can influence participants’ appreciation of nature and the decisions they make regarding their lives in the future. Kyle and Tom provide examples:

Talking about it and starting to get people appreciating what they have and what they’re given every day by the earth or by those around them. I think it just starts to promote an awareness of where they are and how they fit and that they are part of the cycle and a piece of the puzzle. And that maybe they can start to do things
in a way that will start helping rather than hurting I guess the environment. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

If I was going to think about the northern lights, I mean [the camper], it was really his own thing. He was really into the northern lights and he really wanted to see them. And he kind of stayed up and I think he actually alerted us that they were out. And so that was really his own thing. But I kind of take—well I like taking a bit of responsibility for being the person who gave him that opportunity to see them because I could get him down the river safely [or] I could teach him how to direct himself at a campsite. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

In sum, a leader’s responsibility includes teaching participants the necessary skills (e.g., paddling, portaging, preparing meals) to get to remote areas and appreciating the efforts involved in reaching such majestic places. The wilderness recreation leaders hope that these behaviours will contribute positively to the way participants’ live their lives.

In order to achieve any of the outcomes identified within this thematic cluster, the wilderness recreation leader must recognize the various capabilities of the trip participants. Katie’s approach to supporting individual participant learning efforts and decision-making is to ask the participants questions, respond to their questions openly, and spend time socializing with them during the trip.

I told them right off the bat that if they had any questions that they could talk to me. Cause I think you’re out there for 25 days and you need to have someone to talk to...They’re out there to learn and to have fun so I kind of approached them in that sense. (Katie, March 09, 2004)
In this manner, Katie recognizes that each participant will have his or her own unique abilities and discomforts. In a friendly and social atmosphere, Katie encourages the participants to share these with her so that she can offer support and guidance. Wilderness recreation leaders understand that each person responds and learns differently in natural environments so the leader often explores the best ways of teaching lessons to each individual and each group. In Kyle’s leadership style, he tries to find the one approach that motivates each participant to work, to be inquisitive, and to be passionate about doing new things. Kyle mentions,

There’s always one approach that tends to really get through to them and really make an impact with them and you see sort of their whole way of being on trip and their whole way of thinking and the things they say and the way they act—you see everything change within a conversation, or an hour, or you know an experience. And for me I think it’s like walking through that maze with every kid and every group. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

For the wilderness recreation leader, witnessing a change in a participant’s maturity, desire to learn, consideration of new perspectives, problem-solving interests, or yearning for discovery and new lessons is what makes their wilderness recreation leadership efforts worthwhile. Achieving this outcome requires an understanding of the various capabilities of each participant in learning new skills and discovering the best ways to offer lessons to each individual participant and each group.

5.3.1.4 Interacting with co-leaders

Also emerging from the thematic analysis of the interview data is the relevance of a wilderness recreation leader’s interactions with and behaviours directed towards his or
her co-leaders. In the context of a wilderness canoe trip, having more than one trip leader can provide trip participants with more opportunity for valuable learning experiences. As well, leading a canoe trip with other wilderness recreation leaders offers the leader more personal luxuries on the trip. Kyle refers to having more time for personal reflection because of the shared leadership on his trip.

I mean it was nice having three leaders too because it provided a lot of opportunity for anyone of us to take off or even two of us to take off for a little while on our own. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

Tom’s appreciation for sharing leadership responsibilities involves having another leader available to support his leadership efforts.

Well my relationship with co-leaders I think has been pretty good. I can be kind of an anxious leader sometimes…and I depend on my co-leaders to ground me a bit. And I depend on my co-leaders to check me sometimes. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

In these circumstances above, positive interactions and behaviours among co-leaders are noted. At the same time, however, the presence of more than one leader can create awkwardness between the leaders if they do not share the same intentions or expectations for the trip. The wilderness recreation leader’s struggle to behave and interact comfortably with their co-leader is a challenge. In the next passage, Katie recalls her regular approach to interacting with a more experienced co-leader.

It was probably one of the first instances when Derek fully trusted me to do something because a lot of time he would kind of take command and I’d just step
back because I knew he was like that. So I wasn't going to step on his feet or anything like that. I didn't want to get on his bad side. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Sarah indicates a similar struggle where she felt that her relationship and interactions with her co-leader made the canoe trip much different than the ones she has led on her own.

My experience leading that trip was very different from the trips that I led on my own and it made a big difference to me having someone else there. It changed things for me. I don't know if it was a confidence issue or exactly what it was. But where I would not think twice about certain things if I was alone I would think twice about them with somebody else. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

Apparently, the behaviours and interactions that exist among the co-leaders of a wilderness recreation trip have varied implications. Although not as pronounced in the data as the behaviours leaders direct towards their participants, the interactions between co-leaders on a wilderness recreation trip do highlight some of the behaviours that a wilderness recreation leader directs toward others.

5.3.2 Leader's Behaviours Directed Towards the Self

While the behaviours towards and interactions with other trip mates in the context of nature during an extended canoe trip are important, the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders also involves behaviours that are directed towards the self. From the thematic analysis of the qualitative data, wilderness recreation leaders describe their moments of personal space and reflection and highlight the influence of their professional responsibilities and behaviours on these moments.
5.3.2.1 Moments of personal space and reflection

Although the wilderness canoe trip is a group experience, the individual wilderness recreation leader can assume ownership of the unequalled nature experience and harness individual outcomes, explorations, and moments of simplicity and solitude. For Kyle, “it was me sort of finding a little spot away from other people’s eyes where I could just sit five or ten minutes” (Kyle, March 06, 2004). After a busy day on the river, in which the wilderness recreation leader is continuously thoughtful of his or her professional leadership responsibilities, taking the time to sit alone and enjoy the surrounding environment is cherished. Jamie recalls his evening scramble on top of a cliff face where he perched himself upon a log. “I just sat there on my own. No sounds besides the water and nature itself. All the campers and Tyler [co-leader] had gone to bed. It was just me out there and my thoughts” (Jamie, March 08, 2004). The solitary opportunities to enjoy nature’s beautiful scenes, pure smells and sounds, and full clean breaths are important to the wilderness recreation leader. Tom explains that the importance of these moments lies in the desire for achieving a certain amount of spatial independence: “That’s one of the big things people are after. They’re after a kind of optimal amount of space...or not an optimal amount but they’re looking for a different degree of spatial independence” (Tom, April 16, 2004). Spatial independence involves having unconstrained comfortable physical or mental space that can rarely be found in urban environments. These moments can be secured by keeping distance between canoes while paddling or having uninterrupted quiet moments around a campfire.

Or you can stand on some rock that is right beside this gigantic rapid and there’s no one really else around you and you kind of like twirl around or something.
[laugh]. You can put your arms out and there’s still metres and metres and metres and metres of space in between you and you can’t do that in Toronto. You can kind of do it if you go to some park. But if you go to some park, if you twirl around 360 degrees, chances are you’re going to see someone walking a dog. But if you do that out there you might not see anything. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

Having moments of personal space while on canoe trip enables wilderness recreation leaders to reflect on their experiences, appreciate the remarkable features and dynamics of the natural environment, and consider their place in the context of where they are on the river.

Just being able to look back on your day and think of your experiences and think of how great of a place that you are in and just being more appreciative and understanding of how this can affect you as a person. And how it can make you grow and how it’s adding to your experiences. (Katie, April 08, 2004)

In collaboration with the challenges and adventures encountered on the canoe trip, the opportunity for wilderness recreation leaders to enjoy personal space and episodes of reflection become stepping stones to learning more about who they are and the kind of person they would like to be. Having these personal and reflective moments are treasured departures from the professional responsibilities and behaviours to which the wilderness recreation leader often attends.

5.3.2.2 *Professional responsibilities and behaviours*

Despite their desires for enjoying and appreciating the rewards of nature and having personal moments of reflection, wilderness recreation leaders recognize that they must adhere to their professional leadership duties while engaged on an extended canoe
trip. There appears to be a struggle in balancing the conflicting obligations of the professional and of the self. For instance, Tom indicates that his style of canoe tripping aims to demonstrate and instil an innate appreciation in people for nature but that his professional responsibilities frequently interfere as his job focuses on safety, preventing lawsuits, and evaluating things in terms of money. In reflecting on a typical day on his extended canoe trip, Tom realizes his struggle to balance a calm pace in the mornings with the desire to move efficiently downstream so that the challenges of the day can be dealt with in good time. Tom explains,

I always try to have calm kind of mornings that weren’t rushed but where we kept moving. And so sometimes when we were getting behind I would really try to rush things, which would get a bit stressful for everyone involved. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

He continues that,

The whole aspect of having to move the group and having to be responsible for the group and having to think about where you’re going to be in 30 days. And the morning is the time when I usually think it’s the best time to be a little bit efficient so that you can deal with whatever the day is going to throw at you. You can have a lot of time to do whatever rapids or what not are going to throw at you. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

For Jamie, his professional responsibilities and behaviours are laced with an understanding of the remoteness of the setting to which he is leading his trip participants. Although Jamie makes calculated decisions when taking risks (e.g., whether or not to paddle down a rapid) based on his past experience and understanding of what his and his
participants’ skill levels and limitations are, Jamie admits being conscious of his remote location at all times.

The thing that gets to me is the remoteness of it all. Knowing that if something does go wrong it’s you eight and you eight only that’s got to deal with it. But it just blows my mind every time. It just plays a factor in every decision you make.

You’re always playing the ‘what if’ game. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

The remoteness of the natural environments travelled to certainly influences the decisions and behaviours that wilderness recreation leaders encounter while leading extended canoe trips. For Jamie, this involves a regular assessment of potential hazards and risks, taking time and concentration away from his moments of personal space and reflection. In Tom’s situation, professional duties such as moving the group efficiently down river in order to meet their scheduled arrival date can extinguish his craving for pleasant mornings. The moments when wilderness recreation leaders can escape from their professional duties are appreciated. Juggling professional responsibilities with solitary personal moments is a regular part of the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders.

5.3.3 Leader’s Behaviours Directed Towards the Environment

Emerging from the wilderness recreation leaders’ reflections are three themes of behaviours directed towards the environment; minimizing impact and sponsoring survival, interacting with the beauty of nature, and appreciating the environment and its natural cycles. Considering these behaviours broadly shows that the wilderness recreation leaders support the survival of natural processes, desire an engagement with the aesthetic qualities of nature, and appreciate the cycles of the Earth. Fixed with being immersed in
nature is a responsibility to take advantage of—at an appropriate scale—the challenges, beauty, and learning opportunities that the natural environment has to offer. Embracing teachable moments, improving personal and participants’ canoe paddling skills, harnessing an appreciation for wonderful vistas, or exploring natural trail networks through landscapes are all applicable to this thematic cluster.

5.3.3.1 Sponsoring survival and minimizing impact

The wilderness recreation leaders indicate that their behaviours and the behaviours of their trip participants towards the natural environment should sponsor the survival of natural systems. In many cases, this outcome is achieved by adopting behaviours that minimize impacts to the natural environments travelled. As wilderness recreation leaders, there is a duty to encourage participants to be aware of and appreciate the environment, to act responsibly in natural settings, and to realize and feel grateful for the privilege of being in that setting. The objective of these leadership duties is highlighted well by Kyle:

If we don’t live and act in a way that ensures the survival and the health of the environment then we in turn don’t ensure the survival and health of ourselves and our kids. And I think that’s just the way that nature and the cycles go. If we rely so much upon the natural world—which we do—then it only seems fitting to try to protect it and try to ensure its health. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

While immersed in natural settings on an extended canoe trip, wilderness recreation leaders monitored participants’ environmentally responsible behaviours, deemed what behaviours were acceptable, led by example, and shared relevant stories or anecdotes that were applicable to the situations that they encountered. As well, behaviours that support
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the leave no trace goals of travelling in natural settings (e.g., proper waste disposal, burning or packing out toilet paper, selecting tent sites on durable surfaces) were discussed and demonstrated with the participants. As Kyle mentions,

I think there's certain ways that have been established to deal with it [impacts] that are the most friendly to the environment and just bringing it up for discussion allows everyone to know how we deal with it and how we're going to deal with it.

(Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Although the leaders sponsored certain environmental practices while on trip, participants were encouraged to consider and discuss possible alternative methods for ensuring survival and minimizing impact. As Kyle refers to above, however, many of these practices have been established. Ensuring that these practices are followed by the trip participants requires the wilderness recreation leader to make the environmental duties part of the regular canoe trip routine. Tom explains why:

I think there's times on trip when you're in a rush for a lot of artificial things that get thrown upon you...and that is a time when you tend to kind of neglect certain environmental ethics. But the way to go to avoid that is to make certain environmental duties commonplace. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Setting up routine environmental practices while on an extended canoe trip can enable the trip leaders and participants to travel through nature with minimum negative impacts. Ideas for minimizing impact are discussed and described, leaders imitate and role model the behaviours, and social norms are created among the group members where they begin to monitor each others' environmental practices. To highlight the meaning of and
methods of minimizing impact used by this group of wilderness recreation leaders while on canoe trip, a variety of their reflections and thoughts are provided below.

No trace camping was a big thing that we definitely emphasized. Basically, leave your campsite the way you found it. So if you made a fire pit, get rid of it, spread the rocks around. If you made a pile of wood for your fire than get rid of that. So basically if anyone were to come next then they would have no idea that you were there. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

So when you leave it would look like you had never been there. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

I felt like I was more concerned with making sure that they were doing those things [i.e., minimizing negative impacts] cause it was rare that we would find anything. Like we found a fork or a tent peg. But we really didn’t find many things...so I felt we had more of a responsibility to make sure that we didn’t leave anything. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

That can get to like ludicrous extremes right? Like set up your tent on a rock and on beaches and that’s it...or if you really want to minimize impact you wouldn’t be there. Right? So, what would you do? (Tom, March 16, 2004)

I generally like to burn [toilet paper]. I feel like it’s a pretty small bit of paper to burn and I’d rather see it just completely disappear than pack out a bunch of crappy toilet paper for the sake of packing it out. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

Just by leading by example. I’d make sure all my garbage gets in a bag. I’d make sure that all my dumps are properly taken care of buried deep. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)
Certainly, wilderness recreation leaders encourage and sponsor minimum impact behaviours in the natural settings that they travel through. Many of these practices have been established within the wilderness recreation community, by outdoor recreation organizations, and among wilderness leaders. However, within this group of wilderness recreation leaders, there was an understanding that humans are a part of this earth and, just like other animals, interact with it. To say that wilderness travellers shouldn’t wander off a path or set up their tent in a certain spot because it will damage something, and that a natural setting really isn’t a place for humans to be travelling, is fundamentally wrong. Tom argues that,

We were put on this earth and we can interact with this earth and we do interact with other animals...As long as it’s at kind of the appropriate scale, is and can be helpful to the environment and helpful to yourself. You shouldn’t feel constrained in where you want to go when you’re out there you. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

Travelling in natural environments involves a responsibility to behave in a way that ensures the survival of and reduced impact to natural systems. Environmental impacts of travelling in natural areas are uncertain and the wilderness recreation leaders admit that minimizing impacts is important. However, wilderness recreation leaders also indicate that they have a responsibility to behave in a manner that allows them to interact with the beauties of nature and appreciate its natural cycles.

5.3.3.2 Interacting with the beauty of nature

Interacting with and being a part of nature’s beauty was emphasized in the behaviours of wilderness recreation leaders and the behaviours they encouraged their trip participants to endorse. As a central component to the nature experiences of wilderness
recreation leaders, the interactions with the beauty of nature are linked to how the leaders give meaning to nature and what their connections and relationship to nature are. These interactions include viewing and coming in contact with wildlife, experiencing solitary nature sits, exploring landscapes away from the river corridor, watching the dynamics of white water, and even hunting and fishing for food. In the following passage, Katie recalls the magic of seeing a moose in its natural setting.

It was kind of a shock because I first thought it was a rock. Because it was eating and it was far away and I couldn’t really see it. And so we paddled up to it. And just seeing it, watching it—it didn’t even know that we were around—just doing its normal behaviour eating, a foot in the water, and chilling on some vegetation in the water. And as soon as it noticed us it got scared and then ran away. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Jamie also reflected on his desire to get closer to wildlife in an account of approaching a black bear on the opposite side of the river. Interestingly, he also discussed his involvement in hunting and fishing wildlife with his trip participants. In the hunting episode, Jamie feels that his behaviours matched those necessary for living off the land and were rewarding because few people have the opportunity to kill their own food. Jamie revisits the situation below.

The one day we caught our own fish and made it for dinner. Then also the day we caught our own geese for dinner. That was a huge thing. The campers caught the geese themselves. And the geese we did catch—there’s the whole food chain system—you catch the weak of the group and the sick of the group. The two geese we caught were definitely the weak of the group. There was a flock of geese
that we came up on and the majority of them flew away or got away quickly. But there were the two or three stragglers, which were definitely the weaker bunch that we did end up catching. And just the fact that we caught them with like no traps, no guns, no knives, no anything, just our bare hands. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

In the situation above, interacting with the beauty of nature has obvious dissimilarities to minimizing impact and supporting survival. Jamie’s emphasis in the hunting anecdote is on how the event encouraged within him a feeling of being part of the land; that is, living off the land.

And when you do live off the land you do hunt your own food. So it is common practice when you are out there in the woods to hunt your own food as long as you’re doing it—like we did it no guns, no knives, no nothing. So they were fair catches in my mind. I have no remorse or regret about doing that. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

Interacting with the beauty of nature is more about feeling a part of the natural cycles of the environment than trying to support their survival and minimize impact to them. Tom further outlines this idea.

I really don’t like thinking that by me setting up my tent, and kind of destroying some flora or whatever to set up my tent, is necessarily adversely impacting the ecosystem and I shouldn’t touch it at all. Right? In a way that’s an integral part of the ecosystem because animals go through and they disturb certain patches of land and then they re-grow. (Tom, March 16, 2004)
Creating impacts to flora in the situation above is considered a natural part of the environment and something that other animals can create as well. Interactions with the beauty of nature also extend to observing white water and deriving a feeling of connection and involvement with the rapid. Tom highlights his experience at one particular rapid where his thoughts and concentration were consumed by nature’s beautiful sights.

You could really focus in on what was going on minusculely in this rapid because there’s this little tiny rooster tail and then there’s this big rooster tail engulfing it. And then if you blow it up a bit more it was this huge rapid and then if you thought about where we were, we were in the middle of this just incredibly hairy section that was losing mass amounts of elevation. I mean you feel very much a part of that because you’ve just done a lot of work to kind of get around these rapids and you feel like you’re kind of right in the thick of it. I really felt like in that end of the trip I was right in the thick of it. (Tom, April 16, 2004)

Being in the thick of it is what interacting with the beauty of nature is all about. Certain behaviours are required for the wilderness recreation leader to derive this benefit during their nature experiences. For some wilderness recreation leaders, practicing solitary nature sits provide one avenue for achieving this. As humans in natural environments, Kyle explains:

You make disturbances that other things notice and they react to it by either running and hiding or letting everything else in the area know what’s going on and setting off a chain reaction of everybody running away from you. So by sitting down and relaxing and just being quiet you let the natural activity level in
the forest come back up. Everything starts to ignore you and starts to just go about their business almost in a way as if you weren’t even there in the first place. So by sitting for 20 minutes or half an hour the activity levels in the forest come back up to where they were close to anyways before you were there and then you really get a chance to see what’s going on and see things in their natural environment.

(Kyle, April 12, 2004)

In another circumstance, however, Kyle’s interaction with the beauty of nature was through an encounter with a wild seal. Over a period of a few hours, Kyle played with the seal and felt as though he had earned its trust. His reflection on the episode is passionate.

At one point, [the seal] popped up sort of right behind the back of my canoe. And I turned around and sort of I leaned off the back deck plate and just stuck my hand out instead of my paddle. And I stuck my hand down near the water. I fluttered it down near the water and just stuck it out, my palm up. And he popped up right beside it and stuck his chin right on my hand and let me scratch his chin for about five seconds. And he was just staring right into my eyes. Like these huge black seal eyes and I could see his big teeth. He’s got big fangs for eating fish and whatever. But he was just sitting there and I was just tickling his chin. And his whiskers were all tickling my fingers. And I just had this huge smile on my face and all the kids were saying that I looked like a little baby with a huge mound of chocolate and it was unbelievable. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

There is an obvious attraction that wilderness recreation leaders have to interacting with the beauty of nature and its processes. As travellers to such wonderful settings,
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embracing behaviours that allow for these interactions are important and can encourage an appreciation for the environment and its natural cycles.

5.3.3.3 Appreciating the environment and its natural cycles

The final theme regarding wilderness recreation leaders’ behaviours directed towards the environment that emerged is their appreciation of the environment and its natural cycles. Wilderness recreation leaders reflected on behaviours that cater to their appreciation of such things as the natural rhythms, natural cycles, and natural systems found in the wilderness. For instance, some wilderness leaders insist that their trip participants do not wear watches for the duration of their trip. Making it a point to not wear watches allows the group to be out in nature without the restriction of time and to live their days according to how they are feeling, what the weather is doing, and where they want to go. Jamie indicates that

It’s also nice just to be able to live without the boundary of time. Like wake up when you wake up, eat when you’re hungry, sleep when you’re tired. And the only real restriction you have is daylight, which you can gauge on fairly accurately just by looking at the sun. (Jamie, April 01, 2004)

With this behaviour, Jamie and his trip participants experience nature in the absence of the 24-hour clock and appreciate the freedom of following their own schedules and rhythms.

Another example of wilderness leaders appreciating the natural cycles of the environment appeared during Sarah’s account of wandering through an area scarred by forest fire. Sarah mentions that “it was just desolated...but there were little black spruce coming up. Not very often but just really spurred or whatever...and they were so cute and
so green and that's like another instance. Like that regeneration” (Sarah, April 04, 2004). For Sarah, the sight of the small black spruce rising from the barren and wounded landscape was an inspiring and moving moment. Interacting with an environment that was in such an obvious state of regeneration was adored.

Kyle’s behaviours demonstrate an appreciation of the environment and the natural cycles as well and he encourages similar behaviours among his trip participants. Specifically, attempting not to step on anyone’s spiritual or religious toes, Kyle and his trip mates incorporate ceremonies of thanks into their regular routine. These episodes of thanks can be intensely personal and involve offering an individually selected token of appreciation (e.g., tobacco, a body hair, thoughtful words) to some place, some lesson or experience, some thing, or some one. Although there was little repetition in the ceremonies of thanks, they would often involve individuals taking moments by him or her self or with the group and reconnecting with a place or a thing that offered a lesson, a sacrifice, or safe passage. Kyle shares,

We did actually many different things. I sort of left it up to the individual to do what they wanted...[an offering of tobacco] was a great way to introduce giving thanks for the day or the lessons we learned or the place we’re in or the weather. Or whatever it was the food—all the stuff that we had to give thanks for. It was a nice way to introduce the kids to at least acknowledging how lucky we were, acknowledging the things we had to be thankful for and to actually start to take a moment out of their day, out of their time, out of their life to give thanks for whatever it is they felt they had to be thankful for. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)
One of Kyle’s ambitions for the thanking ceremonies was to have his trip participants recognize their place within the natural cycles of life and death. He suggests that,

We’ve been removed from the whole process of death and thanksgiving and appreciating what things had to sacrifice in order for us to be able to survive. And it has moved into this society where we are totally removed from death, life, giving birth. And all these things take place away from us. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

By encouraging his participants to be thankful for something, Kyle hopes that they will rediscover something about their relationship to nature.

Behaviours among wilderness recreation leaders that indicate an appreciation for the environment and its natural cycles seem commonplace and assumed. Tom mentions that,

I don’t understand why you’d be out there if you didn’t have an intrinsic appreciation for nature and I don’t understand why anyone would want to participate in a trip like this unless they had an intrinsic appreciation of nature.

(Tom, March 16, 2004)

He continues by suggesting that appreciating the natural environment is “what you’re out there for. It’s not just to get it done. It’s to appreciate something. So it’s very important to sit back and to think about it and take some time” (Tom, April 16, 2004). Katie shares this recognition that appreciating nature is central to and a privilege of the canoe trip experience.

Like when you’re paddling, going down the river and just not talking. I really like that and just appreciating what you’re really doing—enjoying nature. Enjoying
I couldn't believe it! They were actually doing that.

It was such a surprise to see my friend there. We hadn't spoken in years, and now here she was, showing me around the city!

It was nice to catch up. We talked about old times and shared our current lives. It was such a great reunion.

I'm so glad we bumped into each other. It's been a long time since we saw each other last.
where you are and how great of a country we have and how awesome it is to have the opportunity to do something like this. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Despite the understanding that appreciating the natural environment is fundamental to the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders, other components of the experience (e.g., focusing on professional responsibilities, struggling with adversity, or experiencing feelings of disappointment) can prevent the leader from demonstrating this appreciation.

As such, appreciating the environment and its natural cycles is

A process of life long learning and becoming better at the things that I believe in. I think this is one of them—just being appreciative and giving thanks. And being aware of what I need to give thanks for I think is something that I will constantly be working on and something that I will get better at just with experience and with time. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

5.4 Emotions and Feelings in Nature

The emotions and feelings that wilderness recreation leaders experience in nature are considered very pure because they are rooted in something natural, sustainable, and original. The wilderness recreation leaders can experience a feeling of being a part of nature and the purity of these emotions are often represented visually through a beautiful sunset, moving water, or the dynamics of a forest. Despite the overwhelmingly positive emotions that wilderness recreation leaders experience in nature, there is an element of adversity experienced on wilderness trips that inflict some negative emotions. The professional responsibilities of the wilderness recreation leader are also applicable here as these duties can influence how and what the leader is feeling. Below are the exhaustive descriptions of the themes emerging from the wilderness recreation leaders’ emotions in
nature. Unveiled here are that nature just feels right, spiritual feelings are triggered, many positive emotions and feelings are stirred, and the adversity experienced in nature is an expected and somewhat welcomed encounter that involves a diversity of emotions and feelings.

5.4.1 Being in Nature Feels Right

At times during the reflective interview process, the wilderness recreation leaders had difficulty articulating exactly what emotions they were experiencing in nature. What emerged from these conversations is the notion that being in nature just feels right. Jamie tries to explain:

Just the fact that when you’re out there it is untouched, preferably, and you just feel great. You’re out in the woods. There’s a good rapid. How can I put this into words? I don’t know. For me it just feels good just right inside. It’s like this is great. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

For Jamie, being in nature feels good inside. The untouched wonders of the natural environment inspire a feeling that everything is as it should be. Tom relates his feeling of everything is right in nature by describing how observing nature is relaxing and can often be the most productive thing he can do with his time.

I just feel like I can relax in nature and that I’m here and this is a beautiful sunset and the most productive thing I can do with myself right now is just look at it. Or that this is a beautiful waterfall and the most productive thing I could do right now is just look at it. (Tom, April 16, 2004)
Kyle’s experience in nature is also one that embodies the idea that being in nature just feels right. Kyle articulates this feeling by indicating that, in nature, he feels holistically healthy. According to Kyle,

So much of the reason that I can’t stop going there is because I never feel as healthy on a physical level, on spiritual level, mentally. I never feel as strong, as smart, as capable as I do when I’m out in the woods either by myself or with a group and it’s just—it’s what feels right to me. (Kyle, March 06, 2004)

In the passage above, being in nature feels right because it brings out some of the best things and strongest parts of a person. The distractions of urban environments are replaced with the pure marvels of nature as well. For Kyle, it is;

Just a feeling of this is what it’s all about. Those are the moments that I go out into the wilderness for because they just feel…it feels right you know. It’s a feeling I can’t get from driving a car around the city or buying something that I’ve earned with hard work or whatever. It just doesn’t even compare. When you go out and you sort of touch nature or you have a moment with the natural environment I think it just beats everything else. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

For this group of wilderness recreation leaders, being in nature is what it’s all about. Being in nature just feels right and beats anything else.

*5.4.2 Being in Nature Inspires Feelings of Spirituality*

The feeling that being in nature is right is likely triggered by many components of the nature experience. Perhaps, one of these, however, is the spiritual feeling that can be inspired by being in nature. According to the wilderness recreation leaders, being in nature is a personally fulfilling, rewarding, and memorable experience where the
unequalled, indescribable, and vast beauties of nature are explored and appreciated. This beauty sparks feelings that there is something more—that there is a force functioning beyond human control. Feeling a part of this force is humbling and touches the spirituality of wilderness recreation leaders. The following passages have been selected to highlight these ideas.

When I’m out there and I see that much space with nothing; that everything is working and we’re not there and that it was all here before we were here, then that makes me feel humbled. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

One thing that happened to me on this trip was that I really believed in some sort of higher power or god or what have you because the weather was always on our side and the wind was always on our side. So usually a typical day would be that we had a tail wind when we wanted a tail wind. Or we had sunny weather when we wanted sunny weather. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Just that feeling of we’re so small and there is something really big. There must be something behind something so big as the glaciers. That’s so incredible…it seems crazy. There has to be some reason or some source or that kind of thought. Then that’s humbling and in that way it’s just the power of the earth I guess. (Sarah, April 04, 2004)

For me, [nature’s] the only place I’ve really felt like there was something more. (Kyle, April 12, 2004)

5.4.3 A Medley of Positive Emotions and Feelings

The nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders are complimented by a host of positive emotions and feelings. Nature is experienced as an extraordinary world
that, depending on the situation, can be comfortable, calming, serene, peaceful, or filled with excitement or brief moments of pure elation. Tom highlights how nature can inspire these sets of emotions in the following two passages.

On a canoe trip you have periods when things are very calm. Like when you’re at a campsite and it’s a calm night or something, which kind of gives you a certain amount of like serenity, a certain amount of peace that you would never experience in a city. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

But at times it is also just absolute excitement but the excitement is, I don’t know, is a little bit more pure because it’s based in something very natural in terms of canoeing down a river or dealing with a storm or surfing a white water wave something like that. And it just gives you moments of elation. That’s what I feel the most when I’m in wilderness: I feel like I have brief moments of just pure elation. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

The purity of the emotions experienced in nature are highlighted again as the calming, serene feelings and the exciting, elated feelings are reared in the natural environment. While leading canoe trips, wilderness recreation leaders also discover feelings of satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Often, rests at the end of each day are pillowed by such feelings.

The satisfaction of getting to your campsite at night was really nice. Because we’d always look back on the map cause the kids would ask us how far we went and just hearing that you did 40 km today. Like that was just a really nice feeling that you were able to go this far and it was a sense of accomplishment kind of thing. (Katie, March 09, 2004)
At the onset of the canoe trip a variety of positive emotions were also experienced. Wilderness recreation leaders were relieved to have their journey begin and were excited for the experiences awaiting them in nature. Kyle mentions that beginning his trip “was definitely a huge relief in the sense that we were now sort of under our own control and guidance and then at the same time going into a wonderful place and a really nice natural environment” (Kyle, March 06, 2004). Travelling through nature as a self-sufficient group is one of the many aspects of the canoe trip that wilderness recreation leaders anticipate. The leader anticipates the ignition of a variety of emotions, the mysterious journeys that wait, and the escape from the suffocating urban environments. As Sarah mentioned to one of her participants while hiking along an esker, “I felt like Dorothy. Like we were on the yellow brick road and we were going to some great emerald city” (Sarah, March 16, 2004). The simple quietness and stillness on a calm lake; the soft chirps of birds; the captivating view of animals in their natural setting; and the grandeur of changing landscapes that are found in nature each stir appreciation and feelings of being privileged. Jamie reflects on his thoughts while perched on top of a cliff face; “Just wow this is awesome. Here I am with a view of the river in the middle of nowhere Quebec. Just totally peaceful. Totally comfortable. And just in awe of my surroundings” (Jamie, March 08, 2004).

Feeling proud and honoured to be a wilderness recreation leader was also included in the emotions experienced by leaders in nature. Specifically, wilderness recreation leaders felt honoured to be a leader of an experience that their trip participants would likely remember for the rest of their lives.
I think it’s a huge honour. Cause these kids remember this trip for the rest of their lives and so for them to be able to reflect back on, even just little things, like teaching them how to build a fire or how to go to the bathroom in the woods, teaching them how to paddle properly. Just things like that. It’s just so awesome to be able to say, “I taught them how to do that.” So I think it’s very honourable to do. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

Imparting the necessary skills for travelling in natural environments to their trip participants is something that encourages proud feelings among the wilderness recreation leaders. For Jamie,

I just felt proud. It’s like we passed on the skills necessary and these guys have just picked up so so much. It just felt great to be one of the leaders on that trip at that point. That we managed to bring them up to that skill level. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

In Sarah’s situation, the proud feelings are matched with maternal feelings and recognizing that a trip participant struggled through a similar situation that Sarah had struggled through as a youth on a canoe trip. When the trip participant successfully completed a necessary white water canoeing manoeuvre after many attempts, Sarah recalls the following:

And then, I mean, their faces, they’re happy when they’re getting wet in the waves no matter what right. But just that she kind of had a different kind of look on her face. You know what I mean? And that, I feel really like maternal about kids and that look on her face was just so nice. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)
[I was] proud and it was just nice. You could tell she was so happy. And it made me feel happy to see her that happy. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

Feeling proud as wilderness recreation leaders is an important component of their nature experiences. From Tom’s perspective, this feeling involves a hope that other people will benefit from the lessons and experiences seized by his trip participants. Tom indicates:

They [trip participants] see you as someone who spends their summers doing this full time and obviously really appreciates this. You’re also responsible for teaching them about how they can run rapids and do portages and what not so they can get to remote and majestic areas like this. So I think that it makes you proud to be a leader. It makes you proud to see something like that and then it kind of makes you think that that could multiply into other people. (Tom, March 16, 2004)

Inspiration, elation, joy, calm, relief, serenity, awe, anticipation, excitement, honour, pride, comfort, security, satisfaction, humbled. All describe the positive emotions and feelings that wilderness recreation leaders experience when they are immersed in nature. The positive memorable episodes in nature are a collaboration of many positive things. Impressive landscapes, beautiful weather, successful teaching moments with a participants, and group amusements unite into a creation of positive and memorable emotions.

5.4.4 Influence of Anticipated Adversity on Emotions and Feelings

From previous thematic clusters that have been described, the adversity that exists during the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders is apparent. Professional responsibilities and duties interfere with the leaders’ personal desires of interacting with
and appreciating nature on their own or with others. Wilderness leaders and their participants are engaging in behaviours that try to extend their comfort zones, push their boundaries, and result in forming experiences. Nature is honoured as a home, teacher, and temple—something of which we are a part. Yet still, humans remain separated and divorced from nature. Adversity seems central to the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders. The adversity discovered in nature is expected and anticipated among wilderness recreation leaders and influences the emotions and feelings that they experience while on their canoe trips. The various faces of nature can inspire positive and negative feelings or emotions at the same time. Katie describes such an experience where her frustrations over poor weather and difficulties starting a fire were relieved by the recognition of where she was and her interactions with trip participants.

So it was nice but I was kind of nervous at the same time...like it was pissing rain, and it was so cold, and we were so wet and it was just miserable. But we were beside these falls and it was so nice. So in a sense we couldn't complain. (Katie, March 09, 2004)

And I think one of the big things was that it was in such a frustrating situation because everything that could have gone wrong practically did and this one waterfall took us the whole day to do and we still had kilometres to do. But I think just as ridiculous and annoying as the whole situation was we were able to laugh at it...And I think that was a good thing because the kids knew that it was frustrating and that [my co-leader] was frustrated but we were still able to have a good time. (Katie, March 09, 2004)
In Katie’s situation, the responsibilities and vulnerabilities of being a leader were subdued by all the positive interactions with her trip participants and the natural environment. Frustrating and nervous situations became happy and memorable moments of their day. Other adverse situations on trip include: the conflicting feelings of satisfaction and relief of completing the trip with the sadness and disappointment of leaving the magic of the river’s natural environment; the feelings of connection to a vast landscape that is replaced with disappointment and regret when signs of human destruction are witnessed; the appreciation that is experienced for warm, sunny weather and the cool, overcast days that provide relief from the heat; and the anticipation and excitement of upcoming river features that are matched with an uncertainty and nervousness for getting past these river features.

Sarah’s experience leading her trip was viewed as an opportunity for enlightenment and feeling humbled by the enormity of nature. At the same time, however, for Sarah, the expected challenges that wilderness canoe trips generally encounter were not as prevalent on this particular trip. As a result, she was quite disappointed and felt that she did not have the opportunity to offer the trip participants all that she had.

Because there was no way that I could show them the knowledge base or skill base that I had. So for me that was disappointing. I felt it was something that was really missing from what my idea of extended canoe trip. (Sarah, March 16, 2004)

Adversity was also present in Jamie’s account of managing his trip participants on a section of white water. Although he was confident in the canoeing skills of his
participants, Jamie experienced relief and gratification when his group safely arrived at the bottom of each rapid. Two passages express Jamie’s thoughts:

We were fairly confident in our skills and our campers’ skills at that point that if we needed to, if we saw something come up [e.g., a large elevation drop], we could get out. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

[I was] definitely relieved that everyone got through it good because it was a marked portage section so we didn’t really know what to expect. (Jamie, March 08, 2004)

The theme of adversity, that shows itself in the lived experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders, is situated in this theme because of its influence on emotions. Certainly, as is the case with many of the themes emerging from the qualitative data, there are connections and links between adversity and other themes. To close the description of this theme, Tom shares two passages that emphasize how adverse situations make a wilderness canoe trip what it is.

Well, I guess on trip there’s a whole bunch of different things that get thrown on you on trip and a whole bunch of different emotions you feel. So a definite part of trip is adversity. Right? So usually, on any trip, you’re going to experience some sort of adversity and one of the fun things about trip is trying to make yourself comfortable in that adversity. (Tom, April 16, 2002)

You can feel extreme adversity but you can also feel sheer beauty and sheer joy. And it can happen within days right. I mean you can have a beautiful day one day and then some sort of crazy storm and you’re in massive waves and stuff. And if
you get through an experience like that, which you inevitably do, I think you’ve shared something with that person even if it’s unspoken. (Tom, April 16, 2004)
Chapter Six: Returning Home – Summary, Implications, and Conclusions

6.1 Study Summary

This qualitative study assumed a phenomenological research method to describe the lived-experience in nature for a group of wilderness canoe trip leaders. The meaning of nature and the relationship to nature experienced by these individuals, and which were evident through the environmentally responsible behaviours that they demonstrate and the emotions that they experience while engaged in a wilderness recreation leadership position, were the focus of the lived-experience described. My desire to pursue this topic are rooted in my concern and hope for the health of the wonderful natural environments of the Earth and how my experiences as a wilderness recreation leader have shaped my personal relationships, behaviours, emotions, and thoughts towards nature. Because of my personal experience interacting with others in natural environments and my consideration of outdoor recreation literature, I feel that wilderness recreation leaders have a great potential for influencing individuals and promoting a necessary environmental consciousness shift (i.e., to one that is more harmonious with and connected to nature) among modern Western peoples. Prior to developing programmatic practices or leadership training guidelines that support wilderness leaders in these efforts, I reasoned that a thorough description of wilderness recreation leaders’ lived-experience in nature was necessary. What does nature mean to wilderness recreation leaders? How do they behave and feel in natural settings? What types of relationships or connections do these individuals maintain with nature? Addressing these questions would provide a basis for understanding the types of experiences that are being portrayed to and shared with wilderness recreation participants. In order to encourage an environmental consciousness
shift among these participants, we need to understand what the leaders’ experiences are like (i.e., meanings of and relationships to nature, behaviours and emotions in nature, and, indirectly, environmental values and ethics). With the assistance of future research efforts, we can then begin to identify appropriate leadership styles, practices, and training guidelines that will positively contribute to healthy and sustainable relationships among humans and natural environments.

Chapter two summarized a variety of academic literature pertaining to the focus of this research. Initially, outdoor recreation definitions and leadership styles and theories were discussed followed by a review of literature that considered the four focused areas of lived-experiences in nature. That is, the meaning of nature, the relationships and connections to nature, and the behaviours and emotions in nature were considered in order to highlight the specific direction of this project. From there, qualitative and phenomenological literature relevant to the thesis topic was presented.

In chapter three, the specific research methods used in the study were outlined. Phenomenology was selected as the research method used to meet the intent of this study. Not only does phenomenology provide a suitable path for addressing my research purpose—a path that apparently few recreation researchers have attempted to follow—but it also suggests that the description of wilderness recreation leaders’ experiences in nature is in itself valuable (Colaizzi, 1978; van Manen, 1997). As a component of human experience, the description of wilderness recreation leaders lived-experience in nature offers insight into aspects of what it means to be human (van Manen, 1997). That is, from a phenomenological perspective, the final descriptive result of this study constitutes a piece in the grand puzzle of knowing and learning about humanity.
The phenomenological research involved canoe trip leaders selected from a camping organization that offers 21–25 day wilderness recreation canoe trips to 15–16 year old boys and girls. Each of the study participants led one of these extended canoe trips during the summer months of 2003. Two unstructured and in-depth interviews were completed with each study participant and a final member check was executed to verify the final results. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. These transcriptions embodied the majority of the data, which was analyzed according to Colaizzi’s (1978) thematic analysis guidelines. To maintain and honour the multi-dimensional and multi-layered nature of lived-experience (van Manen, 1997), the final result was presented as a narrative account of a wilderness recreation leader immersed within the various interactions, both adverse and valuable, between and among the natural environment, other people, and him or her self. This narrative account is presented in the fourth chapter while chapter five provides the exhaustive description of the thematic clusters that provide structure to this phenomenal experience. In this sixth and closing chapter, the research results are integrated with the literature in order to present conclusions, implications, and directions for future journeys.

6.2 Revisiting Literature

The results of this phenomenological research recognize and support the notion that recreation experiences in natural environments are complex. The experience of wilderness recreation leaders described in this thesis is dynamic, emergent, and multiphasic (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Similar to McIntyre and Roggenbuck’s findings, the narrative result describes an experience that involves person – nature transactions. The story of wilderness recreation leaders,
however, extends these transactions to include interactions between and among person, others, and natural environments. That is, wilderness recreation leaders are engaged in an “extraordinary experience” (Arnould & Price, 1993) that involves behaviours, emotions, relationships, and connections directed towards the self, others, and nature, and which interact to form a structure that gives meaning to these nature experiences. True to Fredrickson and Anderson’s (1999) assertion, “the way in which individuals react to and interpret the natural environment is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and the ways in which various individuals derive or attach meaning from various landscapes is equally complex” (p. 35). From a purely phenomenological perspective, the complexity of experience can only be communicated through the text of narrative prose and can not be grasped in one single definition (van Manen, 1997). Reducing the narrative description of this lived-experience into specific terms or theories (e.g., the theory of planned behaviour, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, or deep ecology) would reduce the very essence of what makes the lived-experience what it is (van Manen, 1997). Thus, I am quite content to let the final narrative result secure the attention it deserves as the grand product of this research. A few notes, however, related to where and how these results contribute to the environmental consciousness shift that I have alluded to in various sections of this project, and to which initiated my research endeavours, are necessary.

First, the minimum impact camping principles (Priest & Gass, 1997; Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993) or Leave No Trace ethics (Leave No Trace, 2004) that are regularly referred to as standards of environmental practice for outdoor pursuits (Ford & Blanchard, 1993), are incorporated into the environmentally responsible behaviours of the participants in this study. The wilderness recreation leaders practiced and role
modelled many of the minimum impact behaviours during their nature experiences. For instance, grey water from washing dishes was buried well back into the forest, garbage was always packed out, tent sites were often selected in areas that reduced damage to vegetation, and established trail networks were frequently used for portages or around campsites. The wilderness recreation leaders, however, seemed to incorporate much more into their environmentally responsible behaviour repertoire than what is outlined in the tenets of the minimum impact strategies. Leaders were engaged with the beauty of nature, appreciated the natural cycles of the earth, and supported the survival of natural process. That is, behaviours such as solitary nature sits, ceremonies of thanks, hunting or living off the land, and observing or interacting with wildlife were deemed appropriate environmental behaviours. Although some of these behaviours deviate from the minimum impact guidelines, the behaviours are likely considered appropriate and responsible because they encouraged feelings of attachment to and harmony with the natural environment. In this capacity, the wilderness recreation leaders shared the notion that environmental awareness is not just about enforcing minimum impacts but to “view and experience the natural world in a different light, thereby assisting in the unfolding of an ecological consciousness” (Duenkel, 1994, p. 134). Similar to Duenkel’s (1994) research participants, the wilderness recreation leaders described in this project aimed to not necessarily dictate moral oughts (i.e., minimum impact practices), but to role model and encourage a shift in the perceptions and attitudes towards the natural world. Environmentally responsible behaviour becomes the exhibition of a discovery and understanding of the self and others and your individual and collective experience in the natural world (Duenkel, 1994). That is, environmentally responsible behaviours are
products or outcomes of how the wilderness recreation leaders view themselves and their group members in the context of the natural environment.

Incorporating phenomenology in this project (which, to some extent, has an ultimate agenda of encouraging a shift in humans’ environmental values and ethics) creates an interesting tension and avenue of discussion in the environmental dialogue. As two competing worldviews, the anthropocentric – ecocentric dichotomy assumes human dominion over nature at one end of a continuum and the inherent and intrinsic value of nature at the other end. In other words, humans value nature because of the benefits it provides us or, there is value in natural ecological systems that are completely separate from any human association. The deep ecology movement (Naess, 1973; Devall, 1988) celebrates the ecocentric position where as the traditional modern Western worldview has been dominated by an anthropocentric ethic. Both anthropocentrism and ecocentrism distinguish humans from the natural environment, humans from nature, humans from the world. Phenomenologically, however, humans and nature are not distinct. According to Seamon (2004a), “people are not separate from their worlds; rather, they are immersed through an invisible net of bodily, emotional, and environmental ties” (p. 133). Or, to revisit a point used earlier in this project, “the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world, and the world as having no existence apart from the persons” (Valle & King, 1978, p. 7). According to the philosophy of phenomenology, the person and the world are co-constitutes and meaning for both is derived from the other (Valle & King, 1978). There is no subject – object dualism, only Being in the world (Heidegger, 1962). Consequently, the phenomenological perspective does not and can not accept the distinction between humans and the natural world that ground both anthropocentric and
ecocentric worldviews. Humans and the world exist together, are inseparable, and derive meaning from each other. This perspective certainly embodies an appealing image of humans and nature that would likely assist with improving human relationships and reconnections to the natural world. How we think of nature influences our relationship to it (Russell, 1999). If a plant or animal is considered a pest, for example, we will try to get rid of them. Or if nature is considered a storehouse of resources, then we will consume (Russell, 1999). What are the implications of adopting a phenomenological perspective—one that views the union of humans and their world—to the relationship between humans and nature?

The inconclusive environmental outcomes that result from peoples’ experiences in natural environments and outdoor recreation engagements were highlighted in chapter two. Although many outdoor programmers and researchers highlight the positive environmental benefits of outdoor recreation participation (Miles, 1991; Mittelstaedt et al., 1999; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Palmberg & Kuru), these outcomes are somewhat inconsistent (Brookes, 2001; Gillet et al., 1991; Haluza-Delay, 1999a; Hanna, 1995; Weiler, 1996). Primarily, environmental outcomes of such experiences are uncertain because the style of recreation experiences in natural environments tends to promote a detachment between humans and nature (Brookes, 2001; Haluza-Delay, 1999a). The focus on adventure, challenge, and overcoming natural obstacles for personal and group development (Ewert, 1989) dominates outdoor and wilderness recreation programming and appoints nature as an opponent or the nemesis that must be conquered (Haluza-Delay, 1999a). The lived-experience in nature that is described in this project adds to the mix of inconsistency of environmental outcomes derived from recreation in natural
environments. At times, the wilderness recreation leaders were very much focussed on
the personal and group development benefits that can happen during outdoor recreation
participation. Case in point: the leaders were paddling with a small group on a wilderness
white water river that generally involved strenuous portages and many days and nights
living in the absence of modern amenities. Being in the wilderness is considered a
forming experience for the leaders and their trip mates and provides the necessary lessons
that the individual and group require in those moments. Other times, however, the
leaders’ attention and role modelling behaviours support and encourage positive human
connections to and feelings for the natural environment. Ceremonies of thanks,
 discussed of proper environmental etiquette, marvelling at natural wonders like the
northern lights, or interacting with wildlife exemplify this emphasis on connecting to
natural places. Perhaps the achievement of personal and group development goals as well
as positive connections to and feelings for natural environments can and should occur
during the same wilderness experience. As previously noted, these experiences are
complex (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999), dynamic, emergent, and multi-phasic (Borrie
& Roggenbuck, 2001; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Logic certainly affirms that a
variety of outcomes are possible during such an extended encounter with a wilderness
environment as those experienced by the studied wilderness recreation leaders. However,
what I feel needs to be emphasized during the wilderness recreation experience is not the
adventure, challenge and subsequent personal and group development outcomes so often
cited in the literature. Wilderness recreation should be about the place, about nature, and
about our humans’ involvement and relationship to natural environments and systems.
6.3 Promoting a Role for Wilderness Recreation Leaders

“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.” – Dalai Lama

The notion of transformational leadership has finally nudged its way into the body of this thesis. Jordan (1996) mentions that transformational leadership “describes a model of leadership that changes the nature or function of others in such a way that others become more concerned with collective (group) rather than personal (individual) interests” (p. 55). Accordingly, the wilderness recreation leader has the potential to promote the individual and collective goals of living harmoniously with the Earth rather than the common anthropocentric focus that tramples Western society. The transformational leader is one with charisma, who inspires individuals to perform their best, and who challenges common ways of thinking to stimulate people’s intellectual capacities. Ultimately, followers become messengers for sharing the leader’s vision of change (Jordan, 1996). Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman (1998) indicate that:

Transformational leaders consider themselves as change agents, are courageous risk takers, believe in the abilities of their followers, and can dream and share this dream with others. Transformational leaders build confidence among their followers by helping them increase their self-efficacy and giving them freedom to take the initiative. Seeing themselves as teachers and stewards, they empower their followers to become partners in their endeavours. (p. 348-349)

In the wilderness recreation context, a transformational leader can motivate and encourage individual participants to practice environmentally responsible behaviours in both wilderness and home environments. The vision of the transformational wilderness leader should be for individuals to feel more connected to the Earth, to value human-
nature relationships, to protect and improve the quality of natural environments, and to advocate for and practice environmentally responsible behaviours. Henderson (1999) champions such transformative action. In this capacity, the wilderness recreation leader can initiate the transformation of society's common anthropocentric considerations to one that is much healthier, preserving, nature oriented, and in balance with the systems of nature.

Some may argue that wilderness recreation leaders should not attempt to influence participant behaviours, values, and ethics. Weiler (1996) for example, discusses the appropriateness of a tour guide's influence on tourists' environmental behaviours. Weiler notes that tourists are often experiencing leisure which is assumed to be at odds with behavioural change. This assumption can be countered, however, with the notion that participants frequently seek more involvement in and commitment to their leisure pursuits as leisure experiences can provide an avenue for personal development and fulfilment (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Stebbins (1999) serious leisure concept, Nash's (1953) hierarchy of recreation program experience, and Bryan's (1977) notion of recreation specialization support this idea of leisure as being more intricate, exerting, and creative than a relaxing holiday. As well, some people believe that one person should not assert his or her values on to another person (Jordan, 1996). When and where values are taught (e.g., at home, school, church, or on the playground) is controversial. The fact is, however, that values are present in everything people do. "Everything we say and do reflects our values. The way we wear our hair, choice of clothing, even the language we use reflects our values" (Jordan, 1996, p. 19). Thus, leaders of wilderness recreation trips must recognize and understand the values that they promote subtly and purposefully.
(Jordan, 1996) and feel confident that they are in a position to guide the transformation of environmental behaviours, values, and ethics.

Thus, the role of wilderness recreation leaders that is being advanced here is one that involves encouraging participants to reconnect with nature, practice environmentally responsible behaviour, solidify naturalistic values, and develop an environmental ethic—a tall order given the preceding discussion. Perhaps it is appropriate for wilderness recreation leaders to guide participants to an understanding and practice of deep ecology (Henderson, 1999). The environmental-related threats that face our planet have been established (Van Matre, 1990), the increased participation in outdoor recreation activities is clear (Priest & Gass, 1997), and the assumption that wilderness experiences on their own creates change is disputed (Haluza-Delay, 1999b). Certainly, those individuals that lead and guide others into wilderness settings have the potential and responsibility to promote styles of living that honour, appreciate, and applaud the relationships between humans and the natural world. Searle and Brayley (1993) remark that:

The outdoor recreation professional is often an intermediary between the participant and the natural environment and is responsible for protecting the environment for current and future generations as well as enhancing the quality of the recreational experience of the participant through leadership, education, interpretation, and management of facilities, environment and recreational experience. In effect, there exists an “obligation to influence” outdoor recreation participants to share in the stewardship of our supporting environments upon which the recreation experience depends. (p. 188)
Although Searle and Brayley focus primarily on the recreation experience, the ‘obligation to influence’ provides a sound statement for the role of the wilderness recreation leader. This obligation to influence can extend beyond the recreation experience and to supporting avenues for participants to behave responsibly in home communities and during their daily routines. Behaving responsibly while in the wilderness is not enough. Wilderness leaders must extend their influence and encourage participants to transfer their skills, understandings, and behaviours to home environments. The need to preserve and conserve the Earth, to live environmentally responsible lifestyles, and to recognize the human-nature connection requires ambassadors and advocates of deep ecology (Henderson, 1999). Those individuals that lead others into wilderness settings should be expected to have the expertise, awareness, and capacity to promote change as they are the people that often have access to the excellent wild and contemplative settings that encourage revived relationships to the natural environment.

6.4 Limitations

Despite the philosophical and descriptive benefits of the research discussed in this document, there are some limitations to the study that deserve attention. First, the results of this study are not generalizable, in the typical statistical use of the term, to individuals beyond those described in this document. The desire for random samples, statistical analysis, replicable methods, and operationalized variables that dominate quantitative styles of research and lead to results that can be generalized to other populations is not relevant to phenomenological research. In fact, the results of my research are limited to temporal and spatial considerations. The participants of this study reflected on their 2003 summer canoe trip, only one of many trips that each participant has led. As these
wilderness recreation leaders continue to travel with others through natural environments, their conceptions of nature, relationships to nature, behaviours and emotions in nature will likely change and be different. There is an element of uniqueness in each wilderness recreation experience. Moreover, the study participants represent a sample of wilderness recreation leaders that can not be considered typical. That is, there is also an element of uniqueness among this group of wilderness recreation leaders. Each individual involved in this study was hired by an Ontario residential summer camp in 2003 but lived within close proximity to Toronto, Ontario during the non-summer months. Whether these individuals were students or part of the work force during the data collection period, the fact that they all lived near the largest urban centre in Canada suggests something about their lifestyles and, perhaps, to their commitment of being a wilderness recreation leader. Although each participant has returned to work with the organization over many summers, his or her role as a canoe trip leader was only a summer contract position.

Consequently, the recognition that these individuals' experiences will change and evolve and that the results of this study are based on the reflected nature experiences of one particular group of wilderness recreation leaders, suggests that there is no certainty that this study would produce similar results in the future. As such, the information-rich descriptions of nature experiences will be applicable primarily to the participants and, perhaps, to their sponsoring organization. Although the phenomenological results could be transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or generalized “to the extent that they are shared by other people” (Richley, 1992, p. 39), they can not be generalized (i.e., according to the quantitative use of the term) beyond the experiences of those involved directly in the
study. A reader familiar with the intricacies and experience of leading wilderness canoe trips, for instance, may detect discrepancies between his or her own experiences and those described in this thesis. The absence of fear among the central themes described above illustrates such an inconsistency. Although fear is a likely emotion experienced by wilderness recreation leaders (e.g., see Haluza-Delay, 1999b; Holyfield, 1999; Lee & Shafer, 2002), it did not emerge as prevalent theme in my interpretation of the study participants’ experience. This may be due to the fact that the study examined the reflections of the leaders’ experience; recollections that have altered, perhaps, the difficult or catastrophic moments of trip to fond memories of personally rewarding experience (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Holyfield, 1999). More likely, the absence of components of the wilderness leadership experience, such as fear, that the reader may notice—and which I notice as a wilderness recreation leader myself—speak to the nature of phenomenology. As van Manen (1997) suggests, my phenomenological description of the wilderness recreation leader experience in nature is only one description. There are indeed as many possible descriptions or interpretations of an experience as there are people experiencing the phenomenon and people examining such phenomenal experiences (van Manen, 1997).

In a similar case against using phenomenological methods, Garofalo and Geuras (1999) explain the moral emptiness of phenomenology as it applies in public administration theory. Acknowledging the existential foundations of phenomenology, Garofalo and Geuras indicate that existential thought and phenomenology provide public administrators with no basis for future moral decision-making. The authors point out that “whether individually determined or decided in groups, values are subjective. The
phenomenalist's groups, like the existentialist's individuals, have no logical foundation for any moral commitment, and thus all moral commitment is ultimately arbitrary" (p. 29). Garofalo and Geuras' contentions are sound and as a researcher completing a phenomenological study, I submit that in the phenomenological method, values are based solely on the study group and offers ambiguous directions for identifying moral decision-making processes. That fact is, however, that phenomenology is not aimed at achieving these outcomes. Rather, phenomenology attempts to provide a descriptive foundation from which these values and moral decision-making processes can extend. According to Spiegelberg (1975), phenomenology attempts to "lead us back to concrete experiences in which meanings and values are experienced as phenomena" (p. 60). These experiences are the foundations of experiencing value and morality. Spiegelberg continues that "the important thing is that the descriptive approach can salvage and reveal a richness of qualities which the impoverished talk about values as merely a matter of likes or dislikes misses completely" (p. 60). As such, describing and understanding the essence of nature experiences for wilderness recreation leaders initiates the deconstruction of the outcomes of wilderness experience and prompts other methodologies (e.g., positivist approaches) for identifying specific avenues for encouraging human–nature connections and environmental behaviour change, value clarification, and ethic development. These ideas are discussed further in an upcoming section.

Some may argue that another limitation to this study is that it is not objective in nature and that the subjectivity and biases of the researcher are overwhelming throughout the research process. As with the generalizability limitation, I will concede to
this shortcoming, but I must advise the reader to revisit previous discussions about the nature of phenomenological research, its rejection of the subject—object dichotomy, and its celebration of human experience. Furthermore, I, the primary researcher, have interpreted the data collected and analyzed in this project. Like other phenomenological writers (Colaizzi, 1978; Duenkel, 1994; Husserl, 1958; Spiegelberg, 1975; van Manen, 1997), I applaud my personal suppositions and biases for their meaning and relevance to the research process by identifying them in a previous section of this thesis (see 3.3 Reflexivity and Bracketing).

Also, this research is limited to the type of data that was collected. Primarily, the bulk of data was in the form of transcribed unstructured interviews in which participants reflected on and discussed their previous experience of nature while engaged as a wilderness recreation leader. Thus, an element of trust was granted to the participants and an assumption was made that their interview responses were honest and authentic (Neuman, 2000). There is, in fact, a possibility that the participants did not recall their most recent wilderness trip accurately or that they provided distorted responses based on biases, anxiety, politics, or emotional states (Patton, 2002). I suppose that, to some researchers, field observations may have been an appropriate alternative or addition to the data collection strategy that would have eliminated the possibility of dishonest or forgetful participants. Although field observations can be incorporated into specific styles of phenomenology (Colaizzi, 1978), using only observational research in this study would have abandoned the reflective and introspective processes required by the participants to provide details of their personal lived-experiences in nature. What nature means to the participants, for instance, would be negated. The fact that the data was
derived from interviews adheres to the nature of phenomenological inquiry that elicits
the life-world experience by posing appropriate questions to individuals that experience
the phenomenon being studied (Colaizzi, 1978).

A final limitation of this study is that the study results are not reduced to the extent that a final encompassing theory or summation emerged. van Manen (1997) indicates that those unfamiliar with phenomenology will vainly anticipate a final concluding statement, the punch line, or the grand finale. Due to its roots in philosophical and existential thought, the summation of this phenomenological study is a painted descriptive portrait of the essence of the participants' experience in nature. The value of this descriptive end is found within the philosophy of phenomenology, which asserts that describing the lived-experience of a phenomenon is a description of the primordial state of knowledge. It is a description of the most basic level of knowledge (Valle & King, 1978). This poses potential concerns for Abbey (1967), who highlights his feelings regarding the philosophizing individual somewhat comically in the following passage:

My theory is that solipsism, like other absurdities of the professional philosopher, is a product of too much time wasted in library stacks between the covers of a book, in smoke-filled coffeehouses (bad for the brains) and conversation-clogged seminars. To refute the solipsist or the metaphysical idealist all that you have to do is take him out and throw a rock at his head: if he ducks he's a liar. His logic may be airtight but his argument, far from revealing the delusions of living experience, only exposes the limitations of logic. (p. 97)
The text on the page is not legible due to the image quality. It appears to be a page from a book or a document, but the content cannot be accurately transcribed without clearer visibility.
Although I am certain that I would attempt to dodge Abbey's incoming and well-aimed boulder and that, if I happened to be struck by the rock, I would yelp in pain, the value of a phenomenological description is clear. Beyond its aim of to describe human nature (van Manen, 1997), phenomenology can inspire understandings and ideas of human experience that initiate future avenues of research. The rich, in-depth outcomes of a phenomenological project provide a foundation of lived-experience that precedes scientific fact and guides logical extensions of learning about these experiences (Husserl, 1958).

6.5 Future Journeys

The recollection of an outdoor recreation experience, the fifth and final phase of such experiences according to Clawson and Knetsch (1966), provides the starting point and anticipation for another similar experience by the person or others. Similarly, the reflection on wilderness experiences described in this thesis offer a preamble for future journeys. Stemming from this thesis, an obvious direction for future research would be to explore and describe the nature experiences of other wilderness recreation leaders or groups of people that experience natural settings regularly. Because each phenomenological description of a lived-experience portrays a different interpretation of that experience (Spiegelberg, 1975; van Manen, 1997), continuing to use the tradition of phenomenology will always provide more understanding about the experience of nature.

The phenomenological study documented above, described the lived-experience in nature for one group of wilderness recreation leaders. There is value in following the same process outlined in this thesis to describe the experiences of other wilderness recreation
leaders. For instance, future phenomenological studies could aim to describe the nature experiences of leaders guiding:

- Trips for other organizations that may offer youth or adult trips, and which have various programmatic emphasis;
- Short-duration nature experiences;
- Various forms of nature-based experiences including different outdoor pursuits (e.g., rafting, backpacking, or mountaineering), environmental education programs, or adventure programming;
- Gender specific nature-based trips.

Phenomenological studies could also attempt to describe the nature experience of wilderness recreation leaders at the various stages or phases of the extended wilderness recreation experience (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). As noted within my research, the wilderness recreation leaders' experience in nature involved an emphasis on personal and group learning as well as an appreciation for and connection to natural splendours. According to the literature, these two outcomes of wilderness experiences often conflict and combat one another. The suggestion that both an estrangement and connection to nature as a result of wilderness experiences is intriguing and, perhaps, by examining various stages of the wilderness experience, an understanding of how and why this occurs can be achieved. Gathering phenomenological descriptions of these distinct phases of lived-experiences would be an asset, but could be challenging. Perhaps phenomenological interviews could be structured in such a way that interviewee's reflection is guided towards a specific event on the trip rather than the entire trip itself. Having wilderness recreation leaders maintain a detailed trip journal that
includes their thoughts, ideas, and reflections on their daily lives while leading a trip would also be valuable and may, in fact, be the best choice for pursuing a description of the various stages of the wilderness experience. If future researchers plan to implement this approach, study participants should be approached and recruited prior to their wilderness leadership experience and briefed on the expected content of the journals. As seen by my unsuccessful attempt to incorporate leaders’ trip journals as secondary data in my research, future studies will likely have more success accessing these documents if the leaders anticipate submitting them as data and are familiar with what type of information the researcher wants documented. Structuring data collection methods appropriately prior to the leaders’ wilderness experience (i.e., that is, with detailed accounts of nature experiences documented in the personal tripping journals of wilderness recreation leaders) the phenomenological researcher would have access to valuable data regarding the leader’s daily events, situations, anecdotes, and experiences.

Moreover, gathering the descriptions and understanding of wilderness recreation leaders’ lived-experience in nature could companion descriptions from other populations that experience natural settings on a regular basis including wilderness recreation participants, foresters, hunters, Aboriginal groups, or residents of remote and rural settings. Collecting these stories of various groups would provide rich and in-depth insight into human experiences in nature that could be incorporated into a process of understanding overall human – nature connections and relationships. Establishing a volume of these descriptions could initiate the process of determining what types of human – nature relationships are best suited to sustaining and preserving our natural environments. In order to achieve this tall order, efforts from various research
perspectives and academic fields will be necessary. Understanding the experience of human groups within the context of various recreational pursuits in natural settings is well underway (e.g., see Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001; Brookes, 2001; Duenkel, 1994; Frederickson & Anderson, 1999; Haluza-Delay, 1999a, 2001; Hanna, 1995; Holyfield, 1999; Lee & Shafer, 2002; McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998; Parker & Avant, 2000; Patterson et al., 1998; Ryan, 1999). Continuing along this path is essential to the outdoor recreation profession and academic community and should incorporate various qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry. Following the lead of Arnould & Price (1993) and McIntyre and Roggenbuck (1998) multiple methods can be used in research projects to capture and understand the nature of outdoor experiences as they emerge, change, and are reflected upon.

6.6 The "So What?": Implications to Practice, Academics, and Person

In their hermeneutic report on the wilderness experiences of visitors to a National Forest in Florida, Patterson et al. (1998) explain that a central assumption guiding their research was the concept of situated freedom. As a philosophical assumption, situated freedom is "the idea that there is structure in the environment that sets boundaries on what can be perceived or experienced, but that within those boundaries recreationists are free to experience the world in highly individual, unique, and variable ways" (Patterson et al., 1998, p. 425-426). The phenomenological assumptions that guided my research incorporated a similar focus on revealing the structure of experiences while also highlighting the individual and shared essence of experience. As such, Patterson et al.'s suggestion that their descriptive results (i.e., of the individual and emergent experience of visitors within the boundaries of the specific environment) can be used in conjunction
with macro management frameworks such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, can be applied to my research findings as well. The thorough and detailed descriptions of wilderness recreation leaders' lived-experience in nature can be used by recreation practitioners to more fully understand what these experiences are like for this group of individuals. Aligning thick descriptive data with conceptual, theoretical, or philosophical frameworks related to wilderness experience (e.g., Priest's (1986) outdoor education tree; Azjen & Fishbein's (1980) theory of planned behaviour; Naess' (1973) deep ecology) can provide a valuable, reasoned, and honourable basis from which to make decisions concerning the nature of wilderness experiences.

An obvious practical use of the results would be for the organization that hired the participants of this study to review the descriptions and determine whether, as an organization, these are the types of experiences they expect their trip leaders to have. It has never been my intention to attach merit to the experiences of the wilderness recreation leaders but, for the organization, evaluating these experiences could offer some benefits. The descriptions could be incorporated into advertising campaigns, for example, that suggest that the description is the type of experience the organization is sponsoring. In another light, the camp could determine aspects of the wilderness experience among their leaders that they want to encourage and discourage and attempt to develop appropriate leadership training tools that cater to these needs. For instance, the camp could identify that minimum impact camping practices are frequently followed, but are used in conjunction with behaviours that celebrate interacting and appreciating the beauty of nature. If the organization prefers incorporating Leave No Trace ethics as part of their programs, then the descriptions contained within this thesis provide assistance in
determining the effectiveness of such efforts. Ultimately, the organization, which extends great trust to their hired canoe trip leaders for providing safe and rewarding wilderness experiences for youth, can use the descriptions to understand what the leaders’ canoe experiences are really like.

From an academic perspective, the implications of this research have been highlighted in reference to the literature revisited above. A few additional notes on the contribution of this project to academia are necessary. First, this project incorporates a qualitative research method that has seldom been used in the outdoor recreation domain (Duenkel, 1994). As Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) indicate, “additional qualitative inquiry can surely enrich and enhance the current body of knowledge about person–place interactions and the wilderness experience, thus enabling us to create a more complete understanding of these complex phenomena” (p. 38). This phenomenological project attempts to contribute to this void in the academic landscape. Second, from a philosophical view, this phenomenological project contributes to the “search for what it means to be human” (van Manen, 1997, p. 12). van Manen (1997) contests that phenomenological descriptions allow us to “come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be in the world as a man, a woman, a child, taking into account the sociocultural and the historical traditions that have given meaning to our ways of being in the world” (p. 12). To this end, this project offers a story about what it means to be a human immersed in natural environments; a story that depicts an element of human nature and encourages us to understand this human nature (van Manen, 1997). In collaboration with other philosophies of science and subsequent research practices, this phenomenological
research can, at some level, contribute to understanding how humans can live meaningful lives.

Spiegelberg’s (1975) insights into the uses of phenomenology further pave the route to understanding the importance of the descriptive results of this study. Specific to the hermeneutic component of this project, the results give meaning to parts of the wilderness recreation leaders’ experience in nature that are not directly perceived during their canoe trips. For example, the study participants did not likely consider the meaning of nature as an authentic image of home, teacher, or temple during their wilderness recreation leadership experiences. This understanding was derived through the interpretation of the participants’ reflections. Thus, deriving the interpretation of nature as home, teacher, and temple extends our insight into what nature means and humans’ relationships to it. In this capacity, a new or different sense of direction, outlook on life, or way of living can be inspired (Spiegelberg, 1975).

Moreover, Spiegelberg’s (1975) assertion that descriptive phenomenology can “enlarge our existence in the direction of both a widened sense of the world and deepened sense of ourselves” (p. 61) offers valuable implications to the dialogue of environmental consciousness change argued for in this thesis. Spiegelberg suggests that humans are more than a “self-enclosed physio-chemical system occupying a volume of space” (p. 61). Humans are in fact at the centre of their own life world, without which we would not be human. These worlds include other people who, in turn, occupy their own worlds with other beings incorporated into them. As such, a series of infinite worlds within worlds are all linked. With this perception of human worlds, Spiegelberg questions how our reverence and respect for others is affected. Specifically, he asks “how much more could
it add to our realization that in destroying one human life we destroy his world along with him and at the same time all those worlds which he embraces vicariously in this awareness of other’’ (p. 61). From Spiegelberg’s image, we begin to question, describe, and understand the importance of others in our individual worlds. At the same time, however, this contributes to the deeper and fuller description and understanding of the person at the centre of these worlds. Spiegelberg submits that:

In this sense the phenomenological approach, in making us more keenly aware of the task of understanding others and their worlds, is a new incentive for increased efforts and increased humility in our social relations. Finally, this deepened sense of selfhood should add to our reverence for the sanctity of all life as the basis for the emergence of such selves as world centres. (p. 62)

Certainly, Spiegelberg’s (1975) sentiments can be extended further to include non-human members of our natural communities including other animals or vegetation, rivers and lakes, or even soil and rocks. We can envision a tree, for example, at the centre of a life world comprised of human or other non-human components. The human (e.g., a wilderness recreation leader), interacting within the worlds of other humans, observes and is engaged within the world of a sparrow, nestled in the branches of the tree. I will not loiter with the point; extending this scene to incorporate other worlds is trivial. The fact is however that, perhaps, by assuming Spiegelberg’s notion of the human-centred world (i.e., a phenomenological perspective of existence) we open ourselves to new avenues for discussing appropriate human behaviours, values, ethics, relationships, and interactions with the natural environment.
The manuscript text is not legible due to the quality of the image.
A final area of implication of this research applies to the research participants and myself. As wilderness recreation leaders our involvement in this project allowed us to reflect on and share experiences that were meaningful to our lives. During the progression of interview process I could sense a delight and zeal emitting from the participants as they revisited episodes and events from their wilderness journeys. How frequently do these individuals get to share their wilderness canoe trip stories and experiences with someone whose only motive is to search for more detail about these stories and experiences? As well, reflecting on our wilderness leadership experiences encouraged us to understand how we derive meaning from them, what we value during these moments on trip, and how we can continue to make these experiences meaningful to us. I am certain that reflecting on these experiences motivated a desire in each of us to pack some food, kneel in a canoe, and begin a new experience paddling in a remote natural setting. In fact, Clawson and Knetsch (1996) assert that recollecting on experiences such as these initiates the anticipation and planning for new upcoming journeys. This is certainly a valuable and motivating outcome of the research project.

In my specific situation, the efforts involved in completing this project—reviewing literature relevant to the study, discussing nature experiences with participants, immersing myself in the descriptive data in order to prepare a narrative account of lived-experience in nature—encompassed an individual journey. This journey focused on learning more about my wilderness leadership experiences and my relationship to nature. Most often, this was a solitary and intellectual sojourn that transpired, ironically perhaps, in front of a computer screen. Perhaps this individual reflective experience was an excessive attempt to fulfil Clawson and Knetsch (1966) final major phase of the outdoor
recreation experience (i.e., recollection). In a different light, I appreciate Spiegelberg’s (1975) challenge to those concerned with justifying action. “Why must everything have uses?” (p. 70) questions Spiegelberg. He continues, “Aren’t some things to be done for their own sake, if only for the fun of it?” (p. 70). To some degree then, yes, this thesis was an individual journey that was completed only for the sake of completing it. Nevertheless, upon receiving the generally positive feedback from participants regarding the final narrative description, the struggles, pleasures, and learning that I experienced during this process were affirmed and rewarded. Sharing my interpretation, or my story of the participants’ story, was a challenging process to come by. To discover that these other individuals appreciated and agreed with the outcome was, indeed, special. Recognizing that my individual learning can extend worth and merit to others is always prized.

6.7 Coming to a Close: Concluding Remarks

Despite the individual benefits that I experienced throughout this research journey, I recognize that there are in fact implications of this project that extend beyond my personal rewards. Many of these implications are highlighted in earlier sections of this final chapter. As I approach the end of this expedition, however, I consider it necessary to offer some sort of summation or conclusion. As noted within my purpose statement, the intent of this thesis was to describe the lived-experience in nature of wilderness recreation leaders. In an effort to put closure to this document, perhaps it is best to reflect on this research purpose.

Chapters four and five present narrative, exhaustive, and descriptive accounts of lived-experience in nature for a sub-group of wilderness recreation leaders. The nature
experiences of these wilderness recreation leaders are certainly assumed to be different than the experiences of other leaders of different types of groups (e.g., adult clients, woman-only groups, or people with disabilities). The scope of these wilderness recreation leadership experiences, however, is magnificent and incorporates many similar characteristics. Nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders, for example, involve a range of positive and negative emotions that are intertwined with the leader’s behaviours, responsibilities, and relationships to group members and the natural environment. Overcoming adversity and challenge is crucial to the attainment of a ‘forming experiences’ on a wilderness canoe trip. The successful achievement in these challenges is an expectation of the leaders, imposed upon them by the trip participants, the leaders themselves, and their professional companions. Encouraging and role modelling the development of their trip participants is also essential and, frequently, these personal and group development opportunities are actualized by people testing themselves, individually and as a group, against nature. These trials in nature are, therefore, both a personal and social quest.

At the same time, however, the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders is a personal and social quest of learning about, appreciating, and interacting with the cycles and rhythms of the natural environment. Whether leaders practice and sponsor minimum impact strategies, enjoy personal reflective moments along a river shore, or invite their trip mates to celebrate and acknowledge the wonders of nature, personal and social factors exist within this element of the experience. Behaving responsibly in wilderness environments and enjoying and learning about the treasures of nature can be an individual and group venture that is more comfortable and relaxed than outdoor
pursuits that simply strive for final destinations. This component of the wilderness recreation leadership experience in nature deviates from the struggles and challenges that provide the personal growth and group development often cited in the literature (Ewert, 1989; Mitten, 1999; Priest & Gass, 1997). As such, personal and group development is not restricted to the gains in self-confidence or teamwork capabilities derived from tackling natural obstacles. Personal and group development in wilderness settings can involve being comfortable in and familiar with nature.

So, what does all this mean in the context of wilderness recreation leadership? Well, certainly, the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders are varied and complex and, as noted above, future research adventures are necessary to fully understand the experience. Examining the experiences of different types of wilderness recreation leaders in different types of wilderness settings would be beneficial (Parker & Avant, 2000). Incorporating the phenomenological perspective in future studies has merit, but other research methods and philosophical lenses will also yield valuable insights. In academia and practice, a holistic approach to understanding and sponsoring wilderness recreation leadership experiences is relevant. Recognizing the intermingling among personal, social, and natural processes during the experiences of wilderness recreation leaders can influence the outcomes of such experiences. Specifically, we can recognize that the challenge and ‘forming experience’ of being in wilderness settings are compatible and can co-exist with the educational and appreciative aspects of the wilderness recreation experience. However, considering the environmental concerns facing our planet, the descriptions of the wilderness recreation leaders above, and my own experiences leading people into natural settings, wilderness recreation leaders should
shift their concerted efforts to nourishing more human connections to nature. This may entail choosing to change the focus of a wilderness canoe trip, for example, from hard skill development and paddling lengthy distances, to a trip that has a slower, more comfortable pace and which is conducive to appreciating and discovering human–nature interactions. At some point, in order to achieve this change, the organizations and the individual leaders sponsoring wilderness recreation experiences must make this choice.

6.8 Some Final Reflexive Comments

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” – Mahatma Gandhi

To begin the closing section of this thesis I would like to share an excerpt from the research journal that I maintained during the entire research process. With the exception of a few editorial changes, the following memo was written on January 21, 2004:

The reading that I have done recently has sparked an interest in understanding and identifying the appropriate relationship between humans and nature. Should it be a dichotomous one? Should it be a very ecocentric one or an anthropocentric one? With the insight that Rolston III (1986) provides, that humans are created through nature and that nature gave us the ability to construct cities and rural areas, and to be social creatures, I find it difficult to suggest or consider urban areas as not nature. Perhaps not natural is more suitable.

How people interact with nature is certainly important. But is there a right or wrong way for this interaction to transpire? Who is to say which way is right or wrong? The bible? Buddha? Another religious figure? The government? My parents or my older sibling? My thesis supervisor? I maintain that there is an
individual responsibility attached to changing social, political, or cultural structures. If a person wants change, he or she must initiate that change him or her self with appropriate behaviours. I suppose that it is unlikely to live in a world where all individuals agree on one particular way of life. I also suppose that is the reason social, political, and cultural structures exist. But in specific concern to how humans currently interact with nature: I want change. And I will advocate for change. A change that involves shifting our worldviews to one that is more harmonious or ecologically balanced; one that promotes human relationships and connections to nature and which is necessary for preserving, conserving, or sustaining the integrity of life on Earth.

I reviewed this memo shortly after I shared a stroll through the woods with a group of children, adults, and Mr. Kirk Wipper. This was my first experience ‘walking’ with Kirk, who I discovered was incredible at, not so much for moving through nature, but for moving in nature. In a period of one hour, we travelled less than one kilometre but learned about various vegetation and human histories, were pricked by thorns and discovered the forest’s remedy for poison ivy rashes, and shared artistic drawings on the undersides of tree fungi. We got our hands dirty. During the saunter, Mr. Wipper referred to the outer space, middle space, and inner space that make up the universe (personal communication, September 19, 2004). Outer space, Kirk said, refers to the stars, planets, and things that exist beyond the boundaries of the Earth. Middle space is our home planet Earth and all the pleasures and perplexities found on its surface. The inner space, according to Kirk, is the place within each individual—his or her mind or soul or heart or imagination or worldview. It is this inner space that is in trouble within our modern
western ways of living. In order to effect change in middle or outer space, the inner space requires adjustment. As this thesis comes to a close and I reflect on the adventures, interactions, and processes that have brought me to this point, I acknowledge that I am trying to adjust my inner space. I am trying to create change by changing my way of being in the world. By no means is this document a testament to the achievement of a final, positive, personal change that celebrates the ideal relationship that a person should have with nature. On the contrary, I imagine I am just in the beginning and that the adjustments to my inner space will last a lifetime.

There is one final thought, which emerged from a conversation that I had with my older brother more than a year ago, that I consider relevant. Just prior to my thesis proposal defence my brother attempted to summarize the purpose, intent, and process of my planned research endeavours. He used an appropriate albeit common metaphor to clarify his thinking and, consequently, my research.

“So let me get this straight,” he said to me, “What you’re going to do is throw a rock into a fairly calm lake. And when this rock hits the water, it’s going to create a splash and a number of ripples that extend away from each other and begin moving towards the shoreline. What you’re hoping is that someone—whether that’s another researcher, an outdoor recreation programmer, or you yourself—will notice one of these ripples, look at it or check it out, and attempt to surf it to the shore.”

I agreed.

“And if no one decides to attach themselves to one of these ripples,” my brother continued, “then at least you threw the stone?”

“Yeah,” I replied, “at least I threw a stone.”
References


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The following is a detailed explanation of the experiment conducted in the laboratory. The experiment involved a series of controlled conditions to observe the effects of various factors on the outcome. The data collected were analyzed using statistical software, and the results are presented in the following sections.

The experiment was divided into two main parts: experimental and control. The experimental group received a particular treatment, while the control group remained untreated. The results showed a significant difference between the two groups, indicating the effectiveness of the treatment.

Further analysis revealed that the treatment had a positive impact on the subjects, as evidenced by the increase in their performance metrics. The data also suggested that the treatment had a longer-lasting effect, as the improvement was maintained even after the experiment was concluded.

In conclusion, the experiment demonstrated the potential benefits of the treatment in question. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects and to investigate other factors that may influence the outcome.

References:


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Appendix A: Hard and Soft Skills

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Hard Skills</th>
<th>Soft Skills</th>
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<td>Organizational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group sanitation</td>
<td>Trip planning and preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of weather systems</td>
<td>Program evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of environmental ethics</td>
<td>Risk management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding ecological principles</td>
<td>Activity scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of local natural history</td>
<td>Route planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of negative impacts</td>
<td>Transportation arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Instructional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of hazards</td>
<td>Understand of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>progression</td>
<td>Teach safety through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice of group security</td>
<td>Use of effective instructional aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquiry/discovery</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and rescue competencies</td>
<td>Foster productive group dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of water for drinking</td>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of risk management</td>
<td>Foster personal trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking the safety of equipment</td>
<td>Foster group co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of safe driving</td>
<td>Debrief and reflection skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proficiency of outdoor pursuits led</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance of equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of activities being led</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Life saving in aquatic environments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other land-based competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Fennell (2002) and Priest & Gass (1997).
Appendix B: Hanna’s (1995) Conceptual Model of Involvement in and for Wilderness

Figure 3: Conceptual Model of Involvement in and for Wilderness

Appendix C: The Life-World Approach to Environmental Behaviour

Figure 4: The life-world approach to environmental behaviour (Finger, 1994).

Figure 5: Phenomenological Inquiry

Notes (adapted from van Manen, (2004)):
As a human science method, phenomenological inquiry incorporates several domains. Thus:
1. Various traditions or orientations can be distinguished including transcendental, existential, hermeneutic, historical, ethical, and language phenomenologies.
2. Phenomenological inquiry can incorporate different sources of meaning.
3. Philosophical and methodological perspectives regarding the reductio and the vocatio are components of phenomenological inquiry.
4. Phenomenology can be studied in relation to practical consequences for human living.
5. Phenomenology and the practice of writing cannot be separated.
6. The procedural dimensions of phenomenological inquiry can be explored through empirical or reflective methods.
Appendix E: Informed Consent Form – Organization

Brock University, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
Informed Consent Form – Organization

Title of Study: Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders
Principal Researcher: Bryan Grimwood, Graduate Student, Department of Recreation
& Leisure Studies
Research Supervisor: Dr. David A. Fennell, Associate Professor, Department of
Recreation & Leisure Studies
Interviewer: Bryan Grimwood

Name of Organization Director: (please print)

• I have been given and have read the Letter of Information provided to me by the
Principal Researcher conducting the investigation.

• I understand that the participation of my organization in this study will involve
the participation of members of our summer contract staff in a series of three
interviews that will each last approximately one hour. The purpose of this
investigation is to explore the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders.

• I understand that our participation in the study will bring only minimal risks or
harm, and these risks have been explained to me.

• I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that individuals may
withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty.

• I understand that participants may ask questions of the researchers at any point
during the research process.

• I understand that participants are under no obligation to answer any questions that
they feel are invasive, offensive or inappropriate. I also understand that
participants are under no obligation to submit photocopied excerpts from their
canoe tripping diaries.

• I understand that there will be no payment for our participation.

• I understand that all personal information will be kept strictly confidential and
that all information will be coded so that the name of our organization and the
name of the individual participants will not be associated with specific responses.

• I understand that only the Principal Researcher and the Research Supervisor
named above will have access to the data.
• I understand that the results of this study will be presented in a Master of Arts thesis and that they may be distributed in academic journals and conference presentations.

• I understand that a summary of the results will be made available to the organization and the participants involved in the study.

• As indicated by my signature below, I acknowledge that our organization is participating freely and willingly and I am providing the consent of the organization.

Signature of Organization Director: ___________________________ Date: __________________

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board (File #03-280). If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study, you may contact Bryan Grimwood at (905)-688-5550, extension 5012, bgrimwood@hotmail.com or Dr. David A. Fennell at (905)-688-5550, extension 4663, dfennell@brocku.ca. Concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to Research Ethics Officer in the Office of Research Services at (905)-688-5550, extension 3035.

Feedback about the use of the data collected will be available in September 2004, from Bryan Grimwood in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University. A written explanation will be provided for you upon your request. Please make your wishes known to the interviewer.

Thank you for your help! Please take one copy of this form with you for further reference.

On behalf of the organization, I provide my consent to allow the data collected in this study, including the interview responses and the 2003 canoe trip journals of members of our summer staff team, to be used in the preparation of a Master of Arts thesis document. As well, I provide my consent for this data to be used for scholarly publications in academic journals and conference presentations.

Signature of Organization Director: ___________________________ Date: __________________

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the person named above.

Researcher’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form – Participants

Brock University, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
Informed Consent Form – Participants

Title of Study: Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders
Principal Researcher: Bryan Grimwood, Graduate Student, Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies
Research Supervisor: Dr. David A. Fennell, Associate Professor, Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies
Interviewer: Bryan Grimwood

Name of Participant: (please print) ____________________________________________

♦ I have been given and have read the Letter of Information provided to me by the interviewer conducting the research.

♦ I understand that this study in which I have agreed to participate will involve my participation in three interviews that will each last for approximately one hour. The purpose of this investigation is to explore the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders.

♦ I understand that my participation will bring only minimal risks or harms, and these risks have been explained to me.

♦ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty.

♦ I understand that I may ask questions of the researchers at any point during the research process.

♦ I understand that there is no obligation to answer any question that I feel is invasive, offensive or inappropriate. I also understand that I am under no obligation to submit photocopied excerpts from my canoe tripping diaries.

♦ I understand that there will be no payment for my participation.

♦ I understand that all personal information will be kept strictly confidential and that all information will be coded so that the name of our organization and my name are not associated with my answers.

♦ I understand that only the Principal Researcher and the Research Supervisor named above will have access to the data.
I understand that the results of this study will be presented in a Master of Arts thesis and that they may be distributed in academic journals and conference presentations.

I understand that a summary of the results will be made available to the organization and the participants involved in the study.

As indicated by my signature below, I acknowledge that I am participating freely and willingly and I am providing my consent.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board (File #03-280). If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study, you may contact Bryan Grimwood at (905)-688-5550, extension 5012, bgrimwood@hotmail.com or Dr. David A. Fennell at (905)-688-5550, extension 4663, dfennell@brocku.ca. Concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to Research Ethics Officer in the Office of Research Services at (905)-688-5550, extension 3035.

Feedback about the use of the data collected will be available in September 2004, from Bryan Grimwood in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University. A written explanation will be provided for you upon your request. Please make your wishes known to the interviewer.

Thank you for your help! Please take one copy of this form with you for further reference.

I provide my consent to allow the data collected from my participation in this study, including my interview responses and the submission of my 2003 canoe trip journal, to be used in the preparation of a Master of Arts thesis document. As well, I provide my consent for this data to be used for scholarly publications in academic journals and conference presentations.

Signature of the Participant: ___________________________ Date: __________

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above volunteer.

Researcher’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
Appendix G: Interview One Guide

Interview Guide – Interview #1

Briefing:

Thank you for choosing to participate in this interview. As outlined in the information letter and informed consent form, this interview will involve asking you questions about your experiences in nature as a wilderness recreation leader. In particular, this interview is designed to explore your experience in nature during your 2003 extended canoe trip so please try to reflect on this canoe trip when responding to questions. The interview will last approximately one hour. Let’s begin.

Interview Questions:
1. Please recall the most meaningful experience of your 2003 canoe trip expedition and describe in as much detail as possible what actually occurred.

2. Please tell me about a typical day on the 2003 canoe trip expedition that you led.
   Prompts:
   → What did you like about this typical day?
   → If you had the opportunity, what things would you have done differently?
   → How did you feel about your daily behaviours in the wilderness? Were they environmentally responsible? Please describe a particular instance in which you felt this way.
   → What does [that] mean?
   → Other prompts will address feelings towards nature, environmental responsible behaviour, the meanings of these behaviours, etc.

3. Could you give me a brief description of the word nature as you understand it and define it for yourself?
   Prompts:
   → What is it like to be immersed in the wilderness as a wilderness recreation leader?
   → What does nature mean to you during you wilderness recreation leadership experience? What role did nature play in your typical day?
   → When you hear the word ‘nature’ what do you think of? Do you have an image of nature? In your mind, what isn’t nature?
   → What do you mean by [that]?

4. Reflecting on your 2003 canoe trip expedition, describe a particular situation, event, or instance when you experienced nature in the way that you described above.
   Prompts:
   → How did you feel during that experience?
   → What was that experience like?
→ Can you give me an example of a behaviour that made you feel like you were experiencing nature?
→ What do you mean by [that]?

Note: It is difficult to have probing questions ready-made as they must aim at getting more detail and description from the participant about his/her experiences.

Debriefing:
Well, those are all the questions that I have for you today. Thank you for your participation and your reflections on your nature experiences while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. Once I have transcribed this interview I would appreciate an opportunity to speak with you a second time. In this second interview, you will have the opportunity to revisit your responses to the questions you just answered and explore the descriptions that you provided in more detail and depth. As well, I will have other questions that will further explore your meanings of and connections to nature. Upon the completion of the final results section of this project, I would appreciate a third opportunity to meet with you. Scheduling this third interview will allow you to verify that my interpretations of our first two interviews match the experiences of nature that you have had while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. I look forward to meeting with you again. Thank you.
Appendix H: Interview Two Guide

Interview Guide – Interview #2

Briefing:

Thank you for meeting with me for this second interview. The responses that you provided during the first interview have been transcribed and are available for you to examine at this time. The first questions that will be asked in this second interview are focused on exploring in more detail the responses that you presented during the first interview. Please use the transcripts from your first interview to assist you in responding to these next questions. Following these initial questions, a few other questions will be asked regarding your connection to nature. As with the first interview, this interview is designed to explore your experience in nature during your 2003 extended canoe trip so please try to reflect on this canoe trip when responding to questions. The interview will last approximately one hour. Let’s begin!

Interview Questions:

Note: The second interview will allow the researcher and the participant to explore in more detail the anecdotes, stories, and descriptions that each participant provides in the first interview. The exact structure of the first few questions in the second set of interviews questions will emerge after the first interviews have been transcribed and analyzed. The following questions are examples of types of questions that the participants will be asked at the beginning of the second interview.

1. During the first interview you mentioned that [insert comment, anecdote, story, etc. and allow the participant to refer to their copy of the first interview transcript]. What exactly did you mean by that?

Prompts:
→ Can you give me an example?
→ Please describe another situation or event from your 2003 wilderness canoe trip that had a similar effect on you.
→ What was that experience like?
→ How did you feel in that situation?

2. As I was reading through the transcripts from the first interview, I found the [insert anecdote, story, etc.] very intriguing. Would you please tell me more about this situation?

Prompts:
→ What was that experience like?
→ What does [that] mean?
→ Can you give me an example?
→ Please describe another situation or event from your 2003 wilderness canoe trip that had a similar effect on you.
Note: At this point in the interview, the questions will no longer focus on revisiting experiences expressed during interview #1. The following questions will aim at understanding participants’ connections to or relationship with nature.

3. What kind of person do you think you are?
   → More specifically, if I were to suggest that there is a continuum of the ways that people feel about or relate to nature [provide visual representation of the anthropocentric-ecocentric continuum], where would you fit?
   → Why do you feel you fit in that spot?
   → Can you describe a story or anecdote from you 2003 summer canoe trip that exemplifies your position on this continuum?

4. What does being connected to nature mean to you while engaged as a wilderness recreation leader?
   Prompts:
   → Please describe a specific situation on your 2003 canoe trip expedition in which you felt connected to nature.
   → What was that experience like?
   → How did that make you feel?
   → Can you give me an example?
   → Would you please describe a particular behaviour that you performed or situation that you experienced during the 2003 canoe trip expedition that enhanced this feeling of connection to nature?
   → Would you please describe a particular behaviour that you performed or situation that you experienced during the 2003 canoe trip expedition that detracted from this feeling of connection to nature?

5. Reflecting on your 2003 canoe trip expedition, please describe a situation in which you felt that nature had a significant influence or impact on you?
   Prompts:
   → Did nature invoke any feelings within you? What were these feelings?
   → Can you describe a particular situation in which you felt that you influenced or impacted nature?
   → How did you feel in this situation?

6. Describe a metaphor that best describes your experience in nature while leading your 2003 canoe trip expedition?
   Prompts:
   → Describe a situation, anecdote, story, etc. that best describes your experience in nature while leading your 2003 canoe trip expedition?

Debriefing:
Thank you for your participation and your reflections on your nature experiences while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. Upon the completion of the final results section of this project, I would appreciate a third opportunity to meet with you. Scheduling this third interview will allow you to verify that my interpretations of our first two interviews
match the experiences of nature that you have had while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. I look forward to meeting with you again. Thank you.
Appendix I: E-mailed Member Check and Interview #3 Replacement

Briefing:

Thank you once again for meeting with me. This is our third and final interview about your experiences in nature while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. I have prepared a narrative description of the nature experiences of wilderness recreation leaders that combines the information that I gathered during the first two interviews with you and the other research participants (tentative—may change with more reading on member checks). At this time, please read the narrative descriptions that I prepared. Let’s begin.

Interview Questions:
Note: These interview questions will begin once the participant has had the opportunity to read through the narrative descriptions provided by the Principle Investigator.

1. After reading the narrative descriptions that I prepared, describe how well they match your nature experience as a wilderness recreation leader?
   Prompts:
   → Which parts of the narrative do you find match well with your nature experience?
   → Which parts of the narrative do not match well with your experience?

2. After reading the narrative and having time to reflect on your nature experiences as a wilderness recreation leader and the first two interviews that we had, are there any other situations or events that you think would be important to the purpose of this study?

3. Please describe any changes that you think need to be made to the narrative descriptions that I prepared?

Debriefing:
Thank you again for your participation and your reflections on your nature experiences while leading wilderness recreation canoe trips. This interview will assist in verifying that the results are accurate and trustworthy. I appreciate your efforts and contributions to this study. If you would like to receive an executive summary of the final research product, I will have them available and can send one to you in September 2004. Thanks for your participation!
Appendix J: Approval Notices from Brock University Research Ethics Board

Brock University

Senate Research Ethics Board
3943/3035, Room AS 302

FROM: Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Dr. David A. Fennell, Recreation and Leisure Studies
      Bryan Grimwood

FILE: 03-280 Grimwood
DATE: January 20, 2004

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders

The Research Ethics Board finds that your proposal requires clarification: The researcher may proceed with the work as soon as the following issue(s) have been addressed and approved by the Committee:

1. Participants will receive the letter of recruitment in advance, but only receive the letter of information and consent form at the interview. This means that you cannot begin audiotaping as soon as the participant enters the room. You can begin audiotaping only after the consent materials have been read and signed.

2. The consent forms include a section for the participants to release the information for the study to be used for educational purposes. You must clarify what constitutes information (i.e. raw data or the final report?) and educational purposes. The statement is too vague to constitute informed consent.

3. You use a passive statement construction in reference to transcription (i.e. you write when the interview has been transcribed) and therefore are unclear about how will transcribe. Please clarify. If someone other than you transcribes, then that individual must complete a confidentiality agreement.

Please send the required documents to me indicating how you have addressed these concerns.

No research with Human Participants will commence prior to receiving approval from this committee.

JE/dvo
Deborah VanOosten, Research Ethics Officer
Brock University
Office of Research Services
500 Glenridge Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1
phone: (905)688-5550, ext. 3035 fax: (905)688-0748
email: deborah.vanoosten@brocku.ca
http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/humanethics.html
DATE: January 23, 2004

FROM: Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Dr. David Fennell, Recreation and Leisure Studies
Bryan Grimwood

FILE: 03-280 Grimwood

TITLE: Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as Clarified

This project has been approved for the period of January 23, 2004 to August 31, 2004 subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The approval may be extended upon request. The study may now proceed.

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The Board must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html to complete the appropriate form REB-03 (2001) Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

Deborah VanOosten, Research Ethics Officer
Brock University
Office of Research Services
500 Glenridge Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1
phone: (905)688-5550, ext. 3035 fax: (905)688-0748
email: deborah.vanoosten@brocku.ca
http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/humanethics.html
Appendix K: Letter of Information – Organization Director

Letter of Information – Organization Director

January 28, 2004

Dear ___________

The research project that your organization is being invited to participate in is entitled, “Nature Experience of Wilderness Recreation Leaders.” Bryan Grimwood, a graduate student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University, is conducting the study. Bryan Grimwood’s main area of research is on leaders of wilderness recreation activities and their experience of nature. The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders.

Your organization’s involvement is greatly appreciated and will help to further our understanding about wilderness leadership, the experience of nature, and, indirectly, how both of these factors can encourage positive human – nature relationships. Your assistance is important as I will require your help and support in understanding the experiences of summer contract staff members that work for your organization. In particular, I hope to perform a series of three interviews with four to six members of your 2003 Canoe Tripping Staff team. Each of the three interviews will last approximately one hour. These interviews will be very conversational and focus on the canoe trip leaders’ experience in nature, the meaning of nature, and the relationships to nature that are maintained by the trip leaders. In addition to the interviews, each participant will be asked to submit photocopies of relevant excerpts from their tripping diaries as supplementary data to the interviews.

Results from this study will be used to describe wilderness leaders’ experiences in nature and to contribute to our understanding of human connections to nature. A written summary of the findings will be made available to your organization. Further dissemination may occur in academic journals and conference presentations; however, the specific identity of your organization and the participants in the study will not be disclosed. Any information that arises from participants will be treated with confidentiality and access to information that might identify participants will be limited to Bryan Grimwood and his graduate studies supervisor Dr. David A. Fennell. The names of specific participants in the study will not be attached to comments or issues raised within project reports or presentations generated from this study. The interviews will be recorded for research purposes. All original audio tapes and photocopies of participants’ trip diaries will be destroyed following completion of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and individuals may decline answering any question(s) within the interviews that they find invasive, offensive, or inappropriate. Participants may also decline submitting copies of their trip diaries. Participants may withdraw from the study at any stage in the process. Of course, people may choose not to participate and will not experience negative consequences.
Following the completion of this study, I would be happy to send you an executive summary of the results. Should you have any further questions concerning the interviews or the study in general, please feel free to contact Bryan Grimwood at (905)-688-5550 extension 5012 or by email at bgrimwood@hotmail.com, or contact Bryan Grimwood’s graduate studies supervisor Dr. David A. Fennell at (905)-688-5550 extension 4663 or by email at dfennell@brocku.ca. Additionally, concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to Research Ethics Officer in the Office of Research Services at (905)-688-5550 extension 3035.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

______________________________
Bryan Grimwood, BRLS
MA Graduate Student, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Appendix L: Participant Recruitment Letter

January 30, 2004

Dear Wilderness Canoe Trip Leader

We are looking for wilderness canoe trip leaders to take part in a study on the experience of nature for wilderness recreation leaders. The research project that you may be invited to participate in is entitled “Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders.” Bryan Grimwood, a graduate student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University, is conducting the study. Bryan Grimwood’s main area of research is on wilderness recreation leaders and their experiences of, behaviours in, and values towards nature. The attributes of this study have been endorsed by the organization that hires you to guide canoe trips in the summer and has been deemed to be a worthwhile study.

If you wish to participate in the study, please contact Bryan at (905)-688-5550 extension 5012 or by e-mail at bgrimwood@hotmail.com by March 15, 2004. Your involvement and feedback are important! You will be asked to participate in a series of three interviews that will each last approximately one hour. As well, you will be asked to submit photocopies of your 2003 canoe trip diaries. The interviews will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location between March 15 and June 30, 2004.

For more information, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Bryan Grimwood
Graduate Student
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
Brock University
(905)-688-5550 extension 5012

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the Brock University Research Ethics Board.

Sincerely,

Bryan Grimwood, BRLS
Graduate Student, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University
Appendix M: Letter of Information – Participant

Letter of Information – Participant

March 2004

Dear participant

Thank you for your participation! The research project that you are being invited to participate in is entitled “Nature Experiences of Wilderness Recreation Leaders.” Bryan Grimwood, a graduate student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University, is conducting the study. Bryan Grimwood’s main area of research is on leaders of wilderness recreation activities and their experience of nature. The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the lived-experience in nature for wilderness recreation leaders.

Your involvement and feedback are greatly appreciated and will help to further our understanding about wilderness leadership, the experience of nature, and, indirectly, how both of these factors can encourage positive human – nature relationships. Your participation in this study involves three interviews, each expected to last approximately an hour. These interviews will be very conversational and focus on your experience in nature as a wilderness canoe trip guide, what nature means to you, and the relationships to nature that you maintained while leading wilderness recreation trips. For example, some of the typical questions that you may be asked during the interview include: describe a particular situation or event when you experienced nature; describe a typical day on the 2003 canoe trip expedition that you led; what metaphor best describes your relationship to nature? In addition to the interviews, you will be asked to voluntarily submit photocopies of relevant excerpts from your 2003 tripping diary as supplementary data to the interviews.

The study that you are being asked to participate in has the support of the organization that hires you to guide canoe trips in the summer months and will involve other members of the organization’s 2003 summer Canoe Tripping Staff team. Results from this study will be used to describe wilderness leaders’ experiences in nature and to contribute to our understanding of human connections to nature. A written summary of the findings will be made available to you and to your organization. Further dissemination may occur in academic journals and conference presentations; however, the specific identity of your organization and the participants in the study will not be disclosed. Any information that arises from participants will be treated with confidentiality and access to information that might identify participants will be limited to Bryan Grimwood and his graduate studies supervisor Dr. David A. Fennell. The names of specific participants in the study will not be attached to comments or issues raised within project reports or presentations generated from this study. The interviews will be recorded for research purposes. All original audio tapes and photocopies of participants’ trip diaries will be destroyed following completion of the study. Participation in this study is voluntary and individuals may decline answering any question(s) within the interviews that they find invasive, offensive, or
inappropriate. Participants may also decline submitting copies of their trip diaries. Participants may withdraw from the study at any stage in the process. Of course, people may choose not to participate and will not experience negative consequences.

Following the completion of this study, I would be happy to send you an executive summary of the results. Should you have any further questions concerning the interview or the study in general, please feel free to contact Bryan Grimwood at (905)-688-5550 extension 5012 or by email at bgrimwood@hotmail.com, or contact Bryan Grimwood’s graduate studies supervisor Dr. David A. Fennell at (905)-688-5550 extension 4663 or by email at dfennell@brocku.ca. Additionally, concerns about your involvement in the study may also be directed to Research Ethics Officer in the Office of Research Services at (905)-688-5550 extension 3035.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Bryan Grimwood, BRLS
MA Graduate Student, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Appendix N: Extracted Significant Statements Example

Significant Statements Extracted From Kyle’s Interview Transcripts

The Meaning of Nature
1. Nature is home
2. Nature is home in the present; is historically home; and will continue to be home in the future
3. People forget that nature sustains life and is the thing that keeps us alive on earth
4. Humans depend on natural environments and must live in harmony with it
5. People have gotten away from our dependence and respect for nature
6. Without our natural environment humans can not survive
7. The whole trip is essentially an experience of nature as home, facilitator, or educator
8. Nature is a spiritual place
9. Nature is a facilitator and educator that allows people to rediscover the important things in life
10. Things that are really important in life are friendship, love, food, water, shelter and not much beyond that
11. Natural settings are away from concrete, smog, and crap
12. Challenges that arise from being outdoors and on a remote trip in nature
13. You have only yourself and each other to rely on and help you survive and cope
14. Being out there you encounter challenges (e.g., physical or mental) that urban environments can’t provide
15. I don’t think that anyone is faced with the sort of growth that there’s potential for in the outdoors
16. Kids tend to grow more and face challenges better in the outdoors
17. Nature shows me how much I have to learn and provides me with the means and opportunity to learn those things
18. Nature arouses my interest and motivates me
19. Nature feels like a temple
20. In nature I can connect to something spiritual or greater
21. Nature is a reminder that everything is connected through spiritual or greater things
22. Nature provides challenges, a place to teach lessons and see kids develop
23. Everyone is getting into shape and being very healthy
24. Nature brings out the best and the strongest parts in a person
25. Nature is like walking through a maze
26. There’s a maze for myself with each kid, each group, each trip, each river
27. You can never tell what is around each corner
28. Nature provides exploration, curiosity, and sense of adventure that’s inside me
29. Nature provides a place to play that out until I learn the lesson that I’m meant to learn that day
30. Nature opens the eyes of the participants to different options; nature and wilderness always presents options; the choices in nature are endless
31. Nature provides choices and a means for kids to make the choices they need to make
32. Nature provides obstacles that are needed to find the path that you need to walk to get through the maze

Connection to/Relationship to Nature
1. I made peace with the fact that we had just spent a frightening night on the tundra
2. Getting in touch with nature is a cool experience like seeing things (e.g., an animal) in its environment
3. I’m constantly trying to learn to be more in touch with nature
4. City behaviours are loud, rackety, quick, involve lots of movement, and distract us from our surroundings
5. These city behaviours change the natural environment and disturbs things in the forest
6. Other things in the forest notice disturbances, get scared, and run and hide
7. It’s definitely a sense of connection between myself and where I am
8. I don’t feel like the place is necessarily speaking to me
9. Something inside me says you’re here to see and experience this sort of stuff; try to protect it and ensure that others get a chance to experience it
10. My senses aren’t that keen yet to know what animals are accessing the area and what kind of things can be left and used quickly
11. If something comes along and scavenges then so be it
12. That’s not a terrible thing: they get some food and we’re giving something back

13. Most forest and ecosystems often are not in balance
14. Natives acted as caretakers of the natural environment
15. You can take things out of an ecosystem in a way that will promote life
16. You can cull in a way that ensures a healthy environment (see interview #2 page 7 if example is needed)
17. Humans have a responsibility to be involved in the care taking process of the natural environment
18. We were given the gift of logical and rationale thought
19. We can evaluate actions with a proper set of morals that keeps the future in mind
20. In my way of thinking a very naturalistic or environmentally sound set of morals

21. Everything is tied into the environment
22. We’re very much a part of the environment and part of the earth
23. People and the environment are interdependent; the earth is dependent on us and we on it
24. Our actions and our lives affect the health and survival of the environment and therefore affect our own health and survival
25. That’s just the way that nature and the cycles go
26. Since we rely so much on the natural world, it seems only fitting to try to protect
    and ensure the health of the environment

27. Connection to nature involves teaching
28. It’s my responsibility to pass on the way I feel and the things I think; to inspire
    individuals to think about and integrate into their lives feelings towards nature

29. The entire trip was an incredible connection with nature
30. Saw a beautiful white wolf, a polar bear, a beluga whale
31. Every moment was incredible
32. I can’t explain the feeling of connection I felt to the seal, the river, and where I
    was
33. It is something that I’ll never forget
34. Something so wild trusting you is incredible
35. Animals are much smarter than we give them credit
36. Jerry remembered us and I was the only one he let touch
37. Jerry made us earn his trust
38. Animals can tell if there’s intent to harm

39. Society doesn’t value living in the moment
40. Society promotes appreciation for material wealth
41. Society doesn’t promote appreciation for what is important to us
42. People tend not to think about where their clothes and food come from
43. Everything that we eat, wear, and use originally came from the earth
44. We use things everyday
45. Tend not to give thanks or appreciate where these things come from
46. What had to die in order for us to have this thing, eat this thing, or live another
day
47. Giving something important back (e.g., tobacco or a hair) promotes the thought of
    giving thanks to something
48. We’re removed from the process of death and thanksgiving
49. We don’t appreciate sacrifices that are made for us to survive
50. Things like birth and death take place away from us—we’re totally removed from
    it—and we don’t get to experience any of it
51. I never get distracted in nature by the things I do in the city like liquor, partying,
    drama; all the things I’d give up to be up north on a trip right now

52. Maybe start helping the environment or at least becoming aware of the cycles of
    life and death and the sacrifices made to keep us going
53. Realize that a steak dinner comes from an animal rather than the supermarket
54. It’s giving thanks for something giving up its life for your benefit
55. The way I think things should be is derived from learning experiences, people
    I’ve met, and lessons I’ve learned
56. It’s a long process of learning and being thankful constantly
57. Being in nature, in remote powerful places, you see how vulnerable you
58. Realize how vulnerable and helpless I am without my tools and food I bring along
59. To stand face to face with a polar bear you understand how weak you are in the
   grand scheme
60. Without tools or food you’re very much at the mercy of nature
61. Nature has the power to humble the human race

Behaviours in Nature
1. Encourages participants to take thankful moments each day
2. Things to be thankful for include food, weather, the place, lessons learned, the
   group’s safety, their parents, their experiences, how well they’ve been treated by
   everything up there, their clothes, the other people on the trip Gives thanks to
   something that he was drawn to for whatever reason
3. Read stories that offered lessons and had to do with nature and giving thanks
4. Offerings of thanks are appropriate to situation and can be done individually or in
   a group setting
5. Everyone is given an opportunity to give thanks in their own, individual way
6. Thanks could be given by burning tobacco, leaving tobacco in a special place,
   saying a word of thanks
7. I don’t want to step on anyone’s spiritual or religious toes
8. I don’t want to push any particular means or method for giving thanks
9. I would try to give thanks to something everyday
10. Offers a piece of himself to the river as a thanks for safe passage
11. Upon getting to the end of the river I gave thanks
12. Giving thanks to something watching over us that kept us safe
13. Intense personal moments of giving thanks
14. Not always aware of giving thanks
15. There is little continuity or repetition in the moments of giving thanks
16. Hopes his awareness of being thankful improves
17. Takes moments by himself in the woods
18. Kneels or sits down
19. Scouts campsite areas for places to teach lessons and to show participants
20. Returns to spots (e.g., a specific tree or rock, the river) that jump out at him or
    that he connected with
21. A spot away from other people’s eyes
22. Tries to get participants into the habit of sitting by themselves, away from
    distractions and the pace that they usually experience in cities or at camp
23. Nature sits offer a different pace and fewer distractions for participants
24. Nature sits allow us to get away from the ways we usually are in the society that
    we’ve grown up in
25. People usually feel that sitting by yourself, being quiet, relaxing, and just
    watching is wasting time
26. Nature sits get away from the linear thinking of having to always be doing
    something
27. Nature sits let natural activity of forest come back up
28. Participants have opportunities to find their own spots
29. Nature sits involve taking in where they are, thinking about what’s going on around them, and living in the moment rather than worrying about the past or future
30. Length of each nature sit depends on how into it the participants are
31. Encourages participants to get in touch with natural environment and to exist in natural environments in a way they probably would not think to experience
32. Tries to do nature sits each day and at different times of the day
33. Different things happen at each time of the day
34. Every nature sit is an experience that sticks with me
35. We would go off on hikes (2 or 3 hours long) way into the wilderness by using the eskers and landscape to prevent us from getting lost
36. Tries to be quiet on hikes and sits in order to minimize disturbances
37. Excited participants that are not really into the sit can ruin the experience for others
38. I had just been sitting, staring off looking at the lay of the land, and seeing what caught my attention
39. Did not anticipate a sunset and just wanted to be quiet and relax
40. On this totally grey day the sun lit up the entire sky from horizon to horizon
41. Sat there taking pictures and watching this unbelievable sunset
42. Wants participants to experience the same things but doesn’t want to disturb their nature sits
43. Encouraged kids to practice same behaviours as he did
44. Explained reasons behind his actions but presented participants with opportunities to challenge his reasoning and offer other suggestions
45. Certain ways have been established to deal with waste
46. Discussion of these methods allows everyone to know how we’re going to deal with waste
47. Try to minimize how obvious it was that we were there
48. Scattered extra firewood
49. Using driftwood or downed trees or branches for firewood rather than chopping down live trees
50. Try to use what has already been given up by the forest
51. Try to minimize packaging that we bring into the natural environment but have to work with what you’re given as an tripper in a limited role
52. Try to eat as much of the prepared meal as you can to avoid food waste
53. Excess food is buried so other people won’t see it but so that scavengers can use it
54. Bury excess food in top layers of the soil to biodegrade and become part of the natural process again
55. Leaving behind toilet paper can destroy the aesthetic beauty of a place
56. Packing out or burning toilet paper is environmentally conscious
57. I generally like to burn it
58. It’s a pretty small bit of paper and I’d rather it disappear than pack it out
null
59. You obviously leave your human waste behind in the forest
60. Bury human waste in the top bacteria layers of soil so it will decompose

61. Act in a way that ensures the survival of everything around you
62. Try to show participants values other than the material wealth focus that they likely experience in the city
63. Let's participants decide if they want to learn about what he has to offer
64. Being a leader is to help and to motivate kids through these challenges and growing experiences; to give them the strength to do things that they never thought they could

65. The first seal that we saw (see interview #2 page 10 for details on how the first seal was found
66. Started paddling around to see if the seal was still there
67. Threw it a falafel to see if he liked it
68. I threw him others and he was kind of playing around with me
69. He'd let me rub his belly with my paddle
70. The seal would chase and race after the canoe as I paddled across an eddy
71. The seal would come back and swim belly up under the boat
72. Spent three hours with the Seal taking pictures, racing, and hanging out
73. It was so amazing
74. Saw the seal the next day and had named him 'Jerry' at this point
75. The seal followed us down river for 10-12 kilometres
76. He was totally putting a show on for us
77. Stuck out my hand and the seal stuck his chin on my hand
78. He let me scratch his chin
79. Staring into my eyes; I could see his huge black eyes and his big teeth
80. I was tickling his chin and his whiskers were tickling our fingers
81. Not worried about forming bad habits on the seal’s part; more than anything he has to worry about natural predators

82. Start talking about thanks and appreciating what we're given by the earth
83. Promotes awareness of where we are and how we fit in the cycle

84. There are things that distract you and you have to deal with things when they happen
85. It's a life long learning process and becoming better at the things I believe in
86. I will get better with experience and time at being appreciative, giving thanks, and being aware
87. Something that I will constantly be working on

88. A lot of distractions on trip; can focus on what you're legally responsible for on trip
89. When something jumps out at me, it's like a random thought or it's like when I have a dream
90. It’s something I’ve been thinking about previously and I see something that reminds me of a lesson that I want to pass on to the participants
91. A place or a thing will remind me of a lesson that I planned to share
92. Maybe it’s a place that just sort of presents itself easily to teaching a certain thing (e.g., forest fire as described in interview #2 page 15)
93. Looking around and taking in the scenery; just in awe of where we were
94. Watched this huge plume of smoke and red flames spread
95. I realized through the forest fire that many of the participants had no idea how to start a fire
96. A combination of things jumped out at me to motivate me to teach the lesson and challenge them
97. All of them working on their own little fires
98. Give them a hint or two
99. Participants learn to put time and effort into the process at the beginning so it will work the first time

100. Everyone learned about the place and people
101. Recognized both positive and negative happenings in the community
102. Wary of leaving things unattended
103. No problems in Tadoule Lake

104. There’s always one approach that gets through to a participant and makes an impact on him/her
105. You see them change within a conversation, an hour, or an experience
106. I like to explore every single bit of the maze
107. To be the best leader, educator, facilitator that I can, I challenge myself to explore each tactic as much as I can with each kid and each group
108. Most kids that I take on trip don’t find the end
109. It’s the one kid in ten that makes it all worth while
110. You get them to consider another perspective and see them mature
111. You help challenge them in the way that they need to be challenged
112. Two or three participants got through the maze
113. They were the ones trying different things whether they failed or not; trying to learn; considering new perspectives; questioning things and trying to figure things out; were willing; easy to provide challenges; play with things until they got whatever it was they were looking for out of it
114. Others were the ones that I failed with or who I didn’t give as much to; they weren’t as into it
115. That’s where I need to learn; find ways to motivate these kids to work, be inquisitive and passionate about doing new things
116. As a leader I need to find new ways to teach certain things to certain kids

Feelings/Emotions Experienced in Nature
1. Feels responsible for trip participant’s safety
2. Feels relaxed in nature
3. Never feels as physically, mentally, or spiritually healthy as he does when immersed in nature.
4. Never feels as strong, as smart, or as capable as he does when immersed in nature.
5. Being in nature feels so much better in the holistic sense than anything else I’ve ever experienced.
6. Experiences these feelings when he’s alone and when he’s with a group.
7. Being immersed in nature feels right.
8. The feelings experienced in nature start to come over me as soon as I paddle away from civilization.
9. Leaving civilization and its negativisms was a relief.
10. Going into a wonderful, natural environment under our own guidance and control.
11. Everything was so amazing.
12. I had this huge smile on my face.
13. This is what it’s all about.
14. Moments that just feel right.
15. Feelings that can’t be obtained around the city or by purchasing something.
16. Moments with the natural environment beat everything else.
17. There’s beauty in the natural environment that I can’t describe and that I can’t recreate in an urban environment.
18. The natural environment speaks to me and makes me feel in a way that the city doesn’t.
19. Feels rewarded for efforts of letting things happen in the moment.
20. Feelings of elation and awe.
22. An experience I will forever remember.
23. Being out on trip allows people to feel humbled.
24. The power of a thunderstorm or if you lose food you’ll recognize how much you rely on the things that you bring with you.
25. Nature is the only place where I’ve felt there is was something more.
26. It’s personal and individual.
27. Nature makes you feel fulfilled and is a rewarding experience.
28. All sorts of positive feelings.
29. Excitement, joy, and anticipation totally welling up inside you.
30. So nice to be on the lake again with nothing but potential in front of us.
31. For me that’s a lot of it; just exploring, wandering, and seeing what’s there.
32. Cool to have kids to teach and share amazing experiences with.
Appendix O: Formulated Meanings Example

Sarah’s Formulated Meanings of Significant Statements:

Meaning of Nature:
- Nature is where humans were born
- As our original birthing ground, humans are a part of nature and share a common image of what nature means
- The image of nature includes trees, sky, lakes, water, and rocks and vistas where there are no visible signs of humans
- Nature is original and out there; thus, it has not been altered by human constructed cities, buildings, or touches of technology
- Nature represents positive feelings and experiences
- Because nature is our original birthing ground and facilitates the grand circle of life, we return to it hoping and searching for support, security, and enlightenment

Connection to Nature:
- There is a relational and social component of being in nature with friends that enhances one’s connection to nature
- Knowing that it is just you, your friends, and everything that’s out there creates a different experience than being in the city
- Humans are living components of nature who maintain an innate belonging to and sense of relatedness to other things in nature
- Humans must live harmoniously with nature
- We must ensure the health and sustainable use of nature’s resources
- The connection to nature is spiritual
- Sarah’s spiritual connection to nature constantly presents itself during canoe trip experiences through the appreciation of the micro (e.g., photosynthesizing leaves) and macro (e.g., landscape panoramic views from atop eskers) wonders of natural surroundings
- Sarah’s spiritual connection to nature is summoned by the immensity and grandeur of the circle of life and her small place within it
- Humans’ desire to control things has severed the spiritual connection to nature
- The challenges provided by the river and surrounding environment on extended canoe trip push Sarah’s boundaries, extends her comfort zone, and ultimately contributes to her character development
- The spiritual and humbling feelings of connection that Sarah experiences in nature are unique and are not felt in other settings
- In the context of wilderness recreation, leaders must recognize their place and role in nature’s circle of life
• Maintaining a sense of connection to nature involves being secure that your own personal behaviours are appropriate and sustainable
• As a part of humanity and a part of nature’s circle of life, WRL must recognize their responsibility to the other components of the circle of life

Behaviours in Nature:
• As a leader of wilderness canoe trips, part of Sarah’s responsibility is to provide and demonstrate safe and comfortable opportunities for the participants to have forming experiences
• Forming experiences involve confronting physical and mental challenges that encourage a person to think and act in ways that are different from his or her regular self
• Forming experiences inspire a person to push the boundaries of what he or she is really use to and comfortable with
• Forming experiences allow a person to test and extend his or her abilities and offer a glimpse of his or her potential
• By experiencing this different self, a person can develop new attitudes towards nature, develop self-esteem, and learn new skills
• Ultimately, aspects of the new self that emerge from forming experiences are embraced, incorporated as part of the personality, contribute to character building, and used in other aspects of life

• A tiny and inexperienced camper was struggling in the stern to improve her ferry angle on a particularly difficult rapid
• The continued efforts made by this camper were rewarded with a wavy, well manoeuvred ride through rapids and a smile that hinted of satisfaction and accomplishment

• In order to have forming experiences the river must have challenges that allow the WRL to demonstrate his or her knowledge and abilities to the participants
• As a leader I want the participants to look up to me and to provide them with an example of the things that they can achieve
• I reflect on my own experiences as a participant to generate ideas for assisting my participants in having forming experience
• On this particular trip, the paddling was easy and the days were relaxed and involved few challenges so we didn’t have to push the participants too much

• Sharing leadership responsibilities with another WRL was different because it made me think through my ideas more thoroughly than when I lead by myself
• Having two trip leaders provides participants with more valuable learning opportunities but can create awkwardness between the leaders if the two do not share the same intentions for the trip

• As a group, we scheduled walks along the barren lunar looking eskers once the campsite was set up for the day
• Eskers provided a distinct trail to the vast landscapes beyond the river corridor
• The esker trail provided opportunities to explore and understand the broader landscape that surrounds our group
• The elevation of the trails led to vantage points of so much undisturbed space
• The walks along the eskers were often powerful and magical experiences
• Small pebbles and river stones covered the trail and the esker gave the appearance of extending infinitely

• I reinforce to participants the message of no impact camping and trying to leave things in a state that appears like you were never there
• As trip leaders, we have a duty to encourage participants to be aware of and appreciate the environment, to act responsibly in natural settings, and to realize and feel grateful for the privilege of being in the setting
• I lead by example by burning my used toilet paper, digging a deep hole in the forest to bury my waste and dish water well away from the river and our campsite, packing out all my garbage, and trying to use existing campsites
• Demonstrating my personal appreciation and fascination for nature and sharing my knowledge of the natural environment can foster feelings of amazement for and connection to these places among participants
• Being on trip provides me with the opportunity to share interests, experiences, feelings, and lessons on an individual level with each participant
• I embrace teachable moments where examples of positive and negative environmental behaviours are apparent

Feelings/Emotions in Nature:
• Feelings of happiness and enjoyment are contagious among the participants and leaders of a canoe trip
• The anticipation and excitement for upcoming features on the river can turn to disappointment when the challenges that these features present are easy
• There are expected challenges that canoe trips should face and which are part of the experience and when these challenges do not present themselves I feel disappointment

• Sarah experienced maternal feelings towards her participants and encouraged and supported their safe successes
• When participants achieved, Sarah often recognized feelings that she identified with and, as a result, felt proud

• Positive memorable episodes are a collaboration of many positive things; impressive landscapes, beautiful weather, successful teaching moments with a participant, and group amusements unite in creation of positive memories

• Being in nature is a humbling feeling
- When I'm out there and see that much space, where everything is working free from human control, and that it was all here before humans were, then that makes me feel humbled
- Feeling humbled is a spiritual feeling where I feel like I'm a small part in the grand force of the circle of life
- I feel part of some incredible force that is bigger than all of us; part of some thing or some system that we don't control
- I derive feelings of being humbled by appreciating small things or recognizing that nature has the ability to destroy and regenerate itself
- Leaves photosynthesizing, naturally caused forest fires, and the power of glaciers are all part of a powerful system of force that is beyond human control but which, ultimately, we are a part of

- At times, walking along the eskers was a magical experience where I felt I was on an exciting journey to some great emerald city of mystery

- Feelings of anger, sadness, and disappointment are experienced when poor environmental practices occur within the group or seen in the mess that other people have left behind
- I feel responsible to help clean up areas dishonoured by human thoughtlessness—our bubble of noise and destruction
Appendix P: Clusters of Thematic Structure

Meaning of Nature:

Nature is Authentic Interactions

- Fundamentally, nature is a human created definition that identifies what happens on a regular basis for the success of life on earth
- Nature is a host of complex, dynamic interactions that reach a static, stable, and beautiful equilibrium creating an image of how we’re use to seeing a forest or a river for example
- Nature is a constant living system of individual things that interact with each other in the absence of human control
- The image of nature is pure, original, and out there; thus, it has not been altered by human constructed cities, buildings, or touches of technology
- The interactions of nature work on different scales and include people, given a certain amount of comfortable space, interacting with it and not destroying it’s dynamics
- The image of nature is nourished through a person’s experience in wilderness and changes with his or her understanding and recognition of what is normal in that environment

Nature as Home

- Humans have always been dependent on nature for sustaining life, for providing food, water, and shelter, and for facilitating friendship and love
- Nature is where we all come from; we are part of nature and, thus, we must live in harmony with it
- Because nature is our original birthing place and facilitates the grand circle of life, we return to it hoping and searching for support, security, and enlightenment
- Nature is a residence that houses learning opportunities

Nature as Teacher

- Nature arouses curiosity and motivates extensive learning, exploration, and adventure
- Experiencing the challenges and lessons found in nature provide a unique potential for personal growth and for rediscovering the important things in life
- Nature provides the resources necessary for the lessons and challenges that sponsor and support human development
- The lessons, opportunities, and choices found in nature are endless and change with each individual and each group that the WRL interacts with in nature
- Nature rouses vulnerability because it controls the activities of your day and the way you perceive life on that day

Nature as Temple

- Nature is a reminder that everything is connected through spiritual or greater things
- Nature represents positive feelings and experiences
- Nature brings out the best and strongest character in a holistically healthy person
- Nature caters to the provision of sustainable life and can be self-supporting
- Being in nature provides a slow pace to escape from routines and schedules
Connection and Relationship to Nature:
Connecting to nature is an enduring process of...

Humans Are Part of Nature
- As living creatures on this earth, human interactions with the environment are fundamentally a part of nature; humans are a part of nature
- Wilderness recreation leaders find security and stability in being a part of nature; of being part of something sustainable
- Humans are living components of nature who maintain an innate belonging to and sense of relatedness to other things in nature
- Humans must live harmoniously with nature

Humans Are Divorced From Nature
- Humans' desire to control things has severed their connection to nature
- The appropriate level or scale of interaction with nature is difficult to determine as humans have become divorced from interacting with the natural environment on a regular basis
- Humans need to be conscious of sustaining resources to prevent further exploration and destruction of natural environments
- The wilderness recreation leaders' role as a professional can promote human separation from nature
- Humans are recognized as visitors in nature; as visitors in nature we must respect nature's control and appreciate and enjoy the surrounding pristine environments
- The sense of discovery and connection to nature is diminished by signs of development and other humans in the area
- The privilege of visiting nature provides opportunities to overcome challenges, have positive personal changes, and experience self-gratification

Interactions Among Self, Others, and Natural Environment
- There is a relational and social component of being in nature with others that enhances one's connection to nature
- Humans interact with other humans in the landscape of nature which, when combined, provide powerful, concrete experiences between the humans and pronounced feelings of connection to nature
- Although the wilderness recreation leaders' relationship to nature is personal, it does include other humans and the environment that he or she is interacting with

Nature's Rewards
- Nature presents obstacles and powerful, uncontrollable forces that make people work hard to complete their journey and appreciate the privilege of being in that setting
- Humans derive personal experiences from nature that, in the moment, can be positive or negative but which, ultimately, lead to beneficial changes in that person; Nature enriches us
- When compiled, absorbing moments in nature form a collage of learning about, understanding, and appreciating nature
With the skills, knowledge, and life experiences harnessed in nature, humans’ relationship with nature can extend to other settings and persons.

Spiritual connections to nature are inspired by its vastness.

By recognizing their small part in the interactions of nature, wilderness recreation leaders also recognize that their personal relationship with nature is one that makes them happy and calm.

Wilderness recreation leaders can feel part of the gigantic space of nature and have no desire or need to control it.

**Give Something Back**

- Being connected to nature is a very personal feeling that inspires giving something back by protecting and/or helping various components of nature, teaching others about nature, and offering thanks for the opportunities to have these experiences.

- Humans have an intellectual capacity and a moral responsibility to be involved in the care taking process of the natural environment.

**Environmental Behaviours in Nature**

**Leaders’ Behaviours Directed Towards Others**

- Safely sponsoring and supporting personal development of participants
  → An emphasis on safety and health
  - Leaders provide security, guidance, and support as they open safe and healthy opportunities of self-discovery for the participants

→ Role modelling behaviours that promote personal development
  - As a leader of wilderness canoe trips, there is a responsibility to provide and demonstrate safe and comfortable opportunities for the participants to have forming experiences.
  - Because leaders are role models, sharing an appreciation and enthusiasm for nature, discussing ways to preserve nature, and identifying human created threats to natural environments with trip participants are responsibilities of the leader.

- Being on trip provides opportunity to share interests, experiences, feelings, and lessons on an individual level with each participant.

- The leader’s capabilities and vulnerabilities affect the participants’ learning.

→ Creating opportunities for skill development, decision-making, and appreciation
  - The leader encourages participants to learn new skills and assume more responsibilities as the trip progressed
  - A leader’s responsibility includes teaching participants the necessary skills to get to remote areas and appreciating the effort involved in reaching such majestic places.

- The leader recognizes the maturity and the various capabilities of each participant in learning new skills and explores the best ways of teaching lessons to each individual and each group.
Interacting with co-leaders

- Having two trip leaders provides more opportunity for valuable learning experiences but can create awkwardness if the two trip leaders do not share the same intentions for the trip

**Leader’s Behaviours Directed Towards Self**

- Moments of personal space and reflection
  - Although a group experience, an individual can take ownership of the unequalled nature experience and harness individual explorations, outcomes, and moments of simplicity and solitude
  - The challenges and adventures encountered on trip are stepping stones to learning more about who you are and what kind of person you are
  - There is a desire for a degree of spatial independence—unachievable in urban environments—that leaders are aware of and strive for, and grant to each group member and other groups that are met on route

- Professional responsibilities and behaviours
  - While guiding canoe trips, wilderness recreation leaders must adhere to the duties, responsibilities, and cares of being a professional

**Leader’s Behaviours Directed Towards Environment**

- Minimizing impact and sponsoring survival
  - As trip leaders, we have a duty to encourage participants to be aware of and appreciate the environment, to act responsibly in natural settings, and to realize and feel grateful for the privilege of being in the setting
  - Leaders monitored environmentally responsible behaviours, deemed what behaviours were acceptable, led by example, and shared stories that were applicable to the situations that they encountered
  - Establishing routine environmental practices creates norms among the group which ensure participants follow these practices
  - Humans are part of this earth and, just like other animals, interact with it; To say that you shouldn’t wander off a path because it will damage something and that it really isn’t your place to be walking, is wrong

- Interacting with the beauty of nature
  - Wilderness recreation leaders are devoted to interacting with and being a part of nature’s beauty

- Appreciating the environment and its natural cycles
  - Wilderness recreation leaders appreciate the natural environment and natural rhythms, natural wonders, and natural cycles found in nature

**Emotions in Nature**

*Being in nature feels right*

- Being in nature feels right; this is what it’s all about
- Being immersed in nature just feels good right inside you
Being in nature inspires feelings of spirituality

- Being in nature is a personally fulfilling, rewarding, and memorable experience where the unequalled, indescribable beauties of nature are explored and appreciated
- Being in nature is a humbling feeling which inspires thoughts that there is something more

A Medley of positive emotions and feelings

- Nature is an extraordinary world that, depending on the situation, can be comfortable, calming, serene, peaceful, inspiring or filled with excitement, awe, amazement or brief moments of pure elation
- Positive memorable episodes are a collaboration of many positive things; impressive landscapes, beautiful weather, successful teaching moments with a participant, and group amusements unite in creation of positive memories
- There is nothing but potential in the wonderful natural environment in which we wander under our own guidance and independence
- Rests at the end of each day were pillowed by feelings of satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and calming relief
- Wilderness recreation leaders experience pride and honour in their roles leading youth trip participants

Influence of Anticipated Adversity on Emotions and Feelings

- While leading a wilderness canoe trip, the various faces of the nature experience can inspire positive and negative feelings at the same time
- There are expected challenges which are part of the canoe trip experience, and when these challenges do not present themselves, wilderness recreation leaders feel disappointment
- The responsibility of being a leader and the vulnerability of being a part of something great are subdued by all the positive emotions experienced and shared with others in nature
- Feelings of disappointment are expected during nature experiences and can occur when leaders witness poor environmental practices, when they encounter other groups in the remote setting, or when anticipated challenges are a let down