

Thunder Lake RR

routes from various

Viewpoints

**A Clinic by Roger G Blocks, P.E.
Three Lakes Model RR Club
For the WISE Division of NMRA
April 21, 2013 Brookfield, WI**



Aerial Photos 1938-39

- Wisconsin Historic Aerial Image Finder
- 38,000 aerial photos 1937-41 US Dept Ag
- An endowment by Ira & Ineva R Baldwin UW scanned, indexed and made accessible
- No fees or use restrictions: More info? See:
- WI Cartographer's Office www.sco.wisc.edu
- or Arthur H Robinson Map Lib (Dep of Geog)



CURRENT HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights Archives

Kaysen Railroad Maps Now Online

Logging historians, railroad buffs and everyone who vacations in Wisconsin's northern forests will enjoy a major new addition to the Society's online map collection. Some 1,200 topographic maps annotated by railroad historian James F. Kaysen to show defunct logging railroads and describe the lumber companies that owned them are streaming into the Society's [online map and atlas collection](#) this month.



Began under the CCC

Kaysen (1916-1994) graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1932 with a degree in civil engineering. He joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and spent most of the 1930s as a camp engineer in northern Wisconsin. During those years he made notes on abandoned logging railroads throughout the region and published the first comprehensive [book on Wisconsin railroad history](#). Part of his research included tracing the railroad rights-of-way on foot and then drawing them on U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps.

From 1938 until the mid-1950s, Kaysen served as an engineer for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (Milwaukee Road), which made him intimately familiar with Wisconsin's

Research & Document

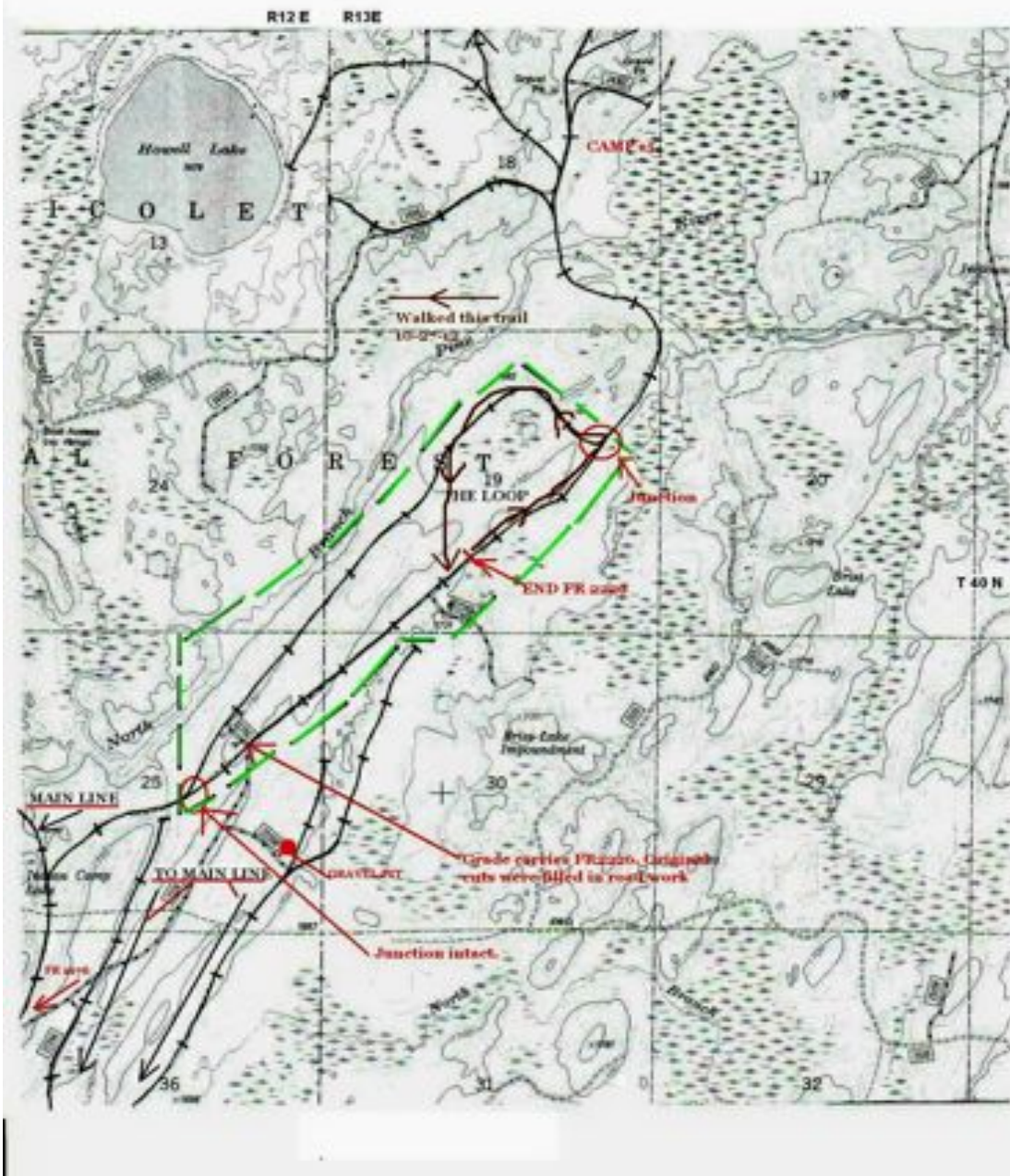
- **Engineers** need scientists to figure out what's going on in nature (the theory) ..
- **Scientists** need engineers to enable theory with evolving applications for man's benefit ..
- **Model builders** (*we* sometimes) need pro forma construction by the real railroad builder.. to copy
- **Real rail builders** (*they* at times) need to 1st build models to help visualize desired outcomes.. to copy

My Reality Vs. Yours

The Ayes (or eyes) Have It

- **Many** of us are rail-buffs .. a common thread
- It's exciting to see millions of pounds in motion, with noise, odor, vibration, danger, commerce ..
- **Years ago** I could not see a rivet in Z gauge..
- **Now**, I cannot see a rivet in Z and HO..
- **Evolution** am O gauge now dreaming of bigger.

THE LOOP
THUNDER LAKE LUMBER COMPANY
ROBBINS RAILROAD

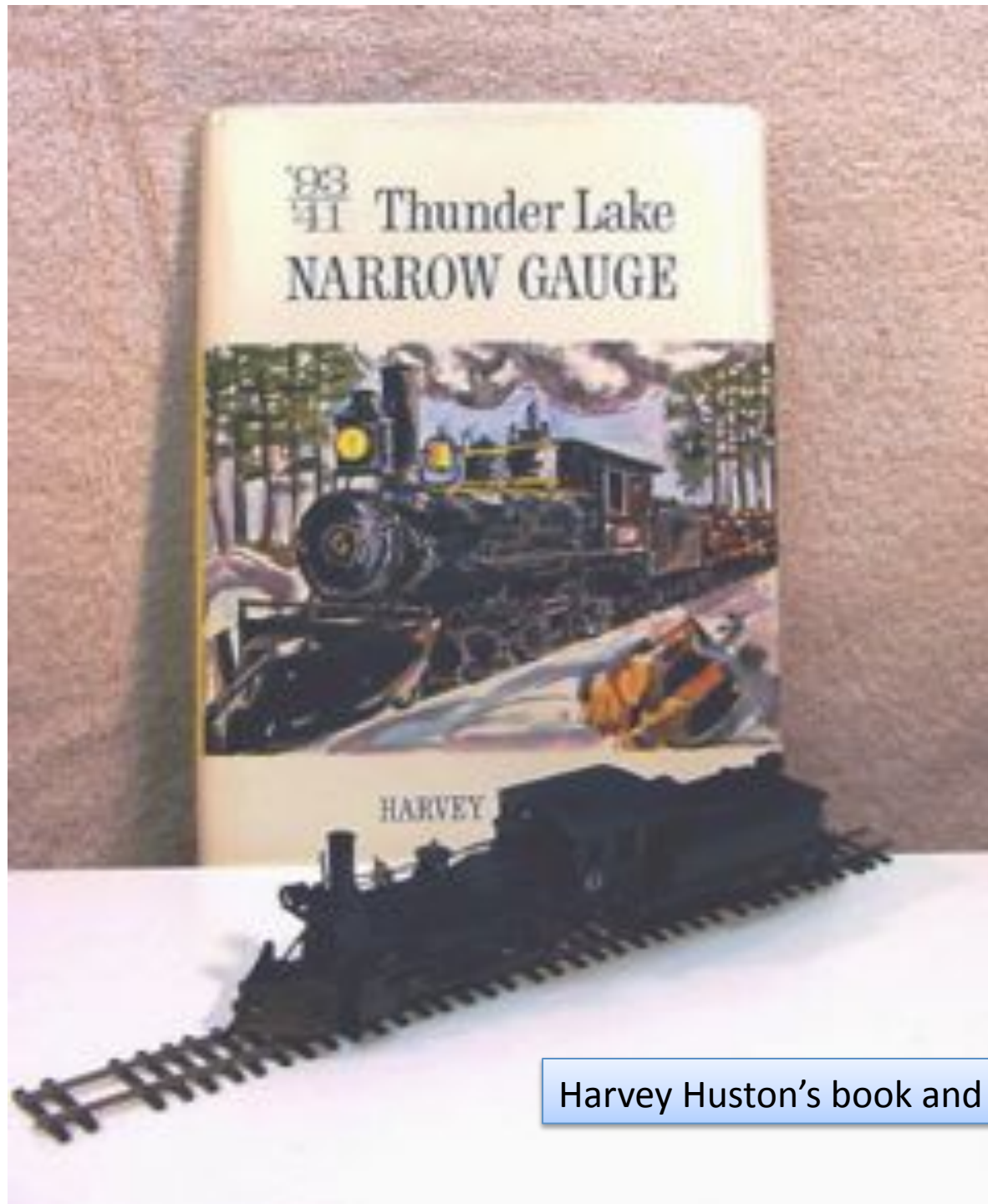


Brad Pagel's The Loop

My Reality Vs. Yours

Senses used for railroading

- **We** are losing hearing; so, visit quiet woods, blaze trail, listen to bird songs.. (discover old road-beds)
- **Feel** the past by your presence: a living museum
- **Smell** old ash dumps, coal piles, maintenance points, and the smell of success..
- **Evaluate** natural growth on mostly un-ballasted roadbeds after 50-100+ years.. (are gradually losing trails)
- **Document** when you can afford to do it.. (now)



Harvey Huston's book and Dave's model

Purpose for Finding Road-bed

The road-bed was partially mapped by Harvey Huston, for his book Thunder Lake Narrow Gauge, 1982

It was remapped by James P Kaysen, a Civil Engineer of the Milwaukee Road on USGS Topographic Maps, 7.5 in series with resolution 2.64 inches per mi (~1970s)

Another mapping program has begun by Brad Pagels of Eagle River detailing the road-bed and providing a description with contemporary clues from existing landmarks (Using Kaysen as a 1st approximation).



Brad Pagel: Outdoorsman, rail buff, author, woodsman, speaker, explorer and good guy

Whet your Appetite

Start in Rhinelander Logging Museum with blacksmith shop, cook shanty, bunkhouse old school house and CCC museum.

Authentic TLRR Engine & tender on track with a log car and coach adjacent to Depot

A narrow gauge turntable sits among the trees

Within the 1892 Rhinelander Soo Station is a collection of RR equipment and home of the Rhinelander Railroad Assn's Pelican Rapids Route











THUNDER LAKE LUMBER CO.





S SPOT

Built in 1925 for the Thunder Lake Lumber Company by Baldwin Locomotive Works. It was operated in the Rhinelander Area until 1941 when it was sold to a company in Mexico. It was returned home in 1973 as part of a threeway trade.

This narrow gauge locomotive was the only locomotive ever bought new by the "Thunder Lake".















TURN TABLE
WOOD TO TURN A RAILROAD
CARRIAGE ENGINE. THIS WAS
MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT IN
A COOPERATION WITH

Remember this Turntable



Tractor for off rail operations







Thunder Lake RR Fact & Fiction

- Eight lumber mills on Boom Lake (circa 1892)
- Baird & Robbins started line north in 1893
- 1895 Baird gone: added rail to Sugar Camp
- Brown & Robbins became common carrier '98
- 1901 Brown gone: Sugar Camp to NE 15 miles
- Lake Julia then to Kentucky Lake area
- 1919 Sold and became Thunder Lake RR

Thunder Lake Fact & Fiction

- 1920 no longer a common carrier: has about 40 miles of rail and six engines.
- Logging in the Butternut – Franklin area ends in 1941.
- Rails torn up shortly thereafter.
- Kevin Marks (an Ohio rail buff), Brad Pagel, Paul Wussow (Dupage Div) and I have various interests in TLRR, Soo, & C&NW.
- I am building the Thunderlake & OutaSite RR

Viewpoints Compared

From Three Lakes, WI (TLMRC 1st 100% NMRA) :

Our old Thunder Lake RR narrow gauge was local
Our logging RR until 1941 ran thru nearby woods

What's to change...

Our trees are smaller but there are twice as many

The forest is thick ...

Road-bed was minimal: a fill only where needed: heavy growth

Now it's tougher to find..

Road-bed can be found with difficulty on the ground

So, we need to find from the air.. And have a variety of aids..

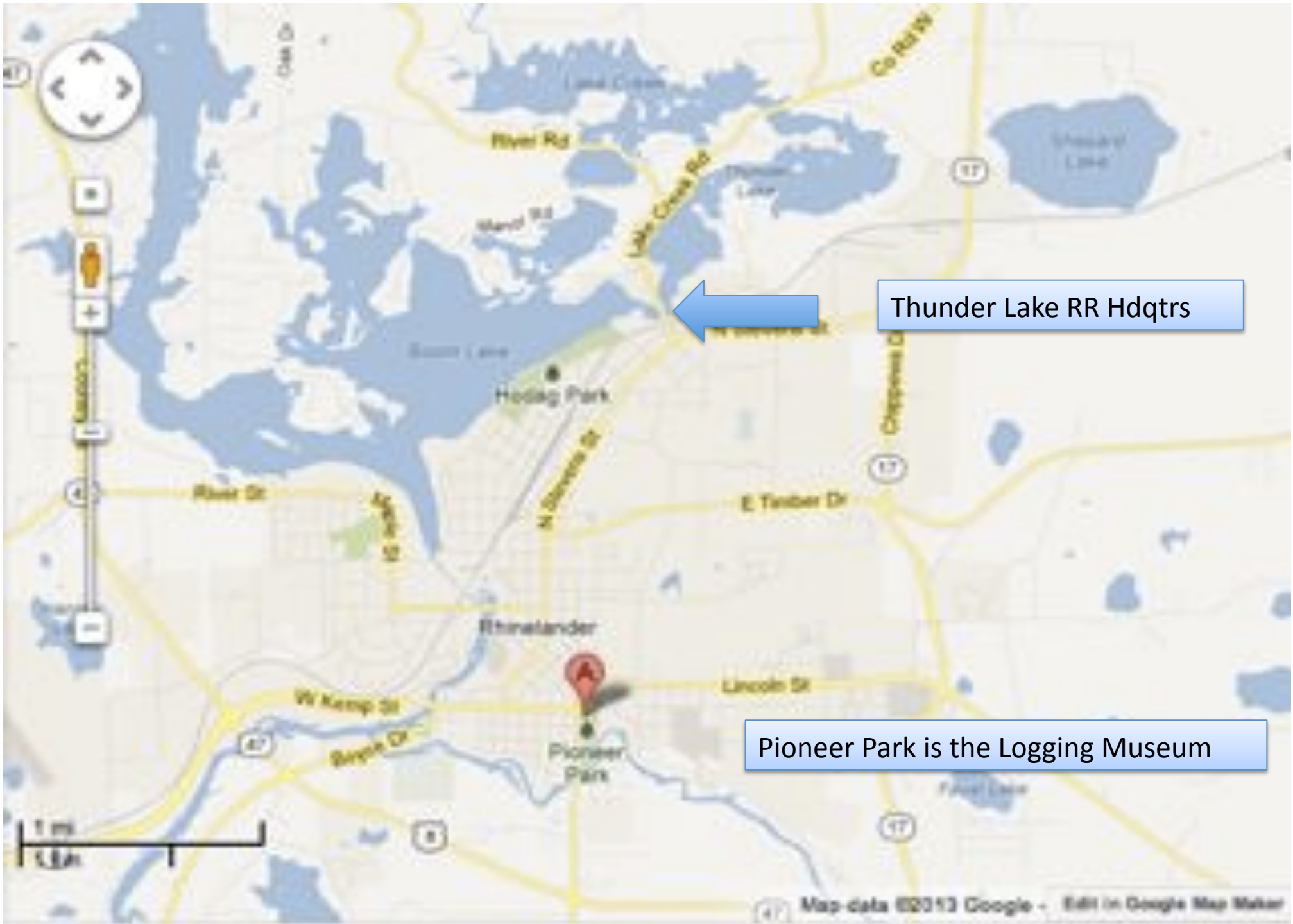
Road-bed can be found with difficulty from the air..

So we need some intermediate help.. Old maps, landmarks, notes and lots of walking



Follow the Roadbed

*We go to the south shore of Boom Lake
to the RR Headquarters and dual
gauge track (three rails)*



Thunder Lake RR Hdqtrs

Pioneer Park is the Logging Museum

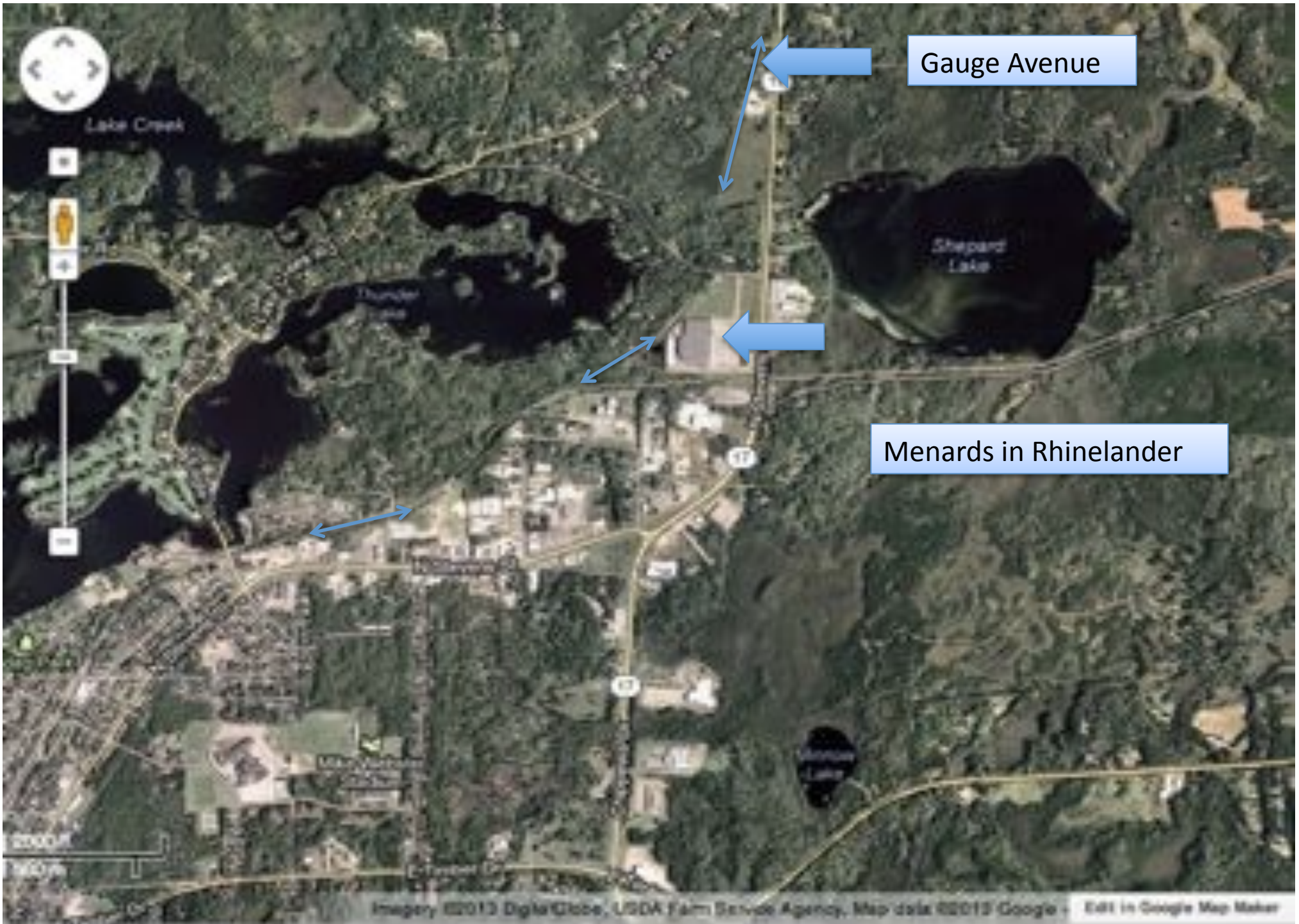


Boom Lake: Thunder Lake RR + Soo – at Headquarters and Lumber Mill: 1939





Headquarters TLRR: 2012



Gauge Avenue

Menards in Rhineland

North of Rhinelander Main Splits

One route goes to Sugar Camp, Indian Lake, towards Eagle River (North)

The other route goes to Three Lakes and today's Nicolet Forest area (NorthEast)



Original Main Line: 1890s on



One of several ways to locate a view



Pine Lake and Creek: old logging path

North of Rhineland

*The main goes toward Sugar Camp via
the East Shore of Lost Lake*



Lost Lake: and Railbed





Turntable at Sugar Camp

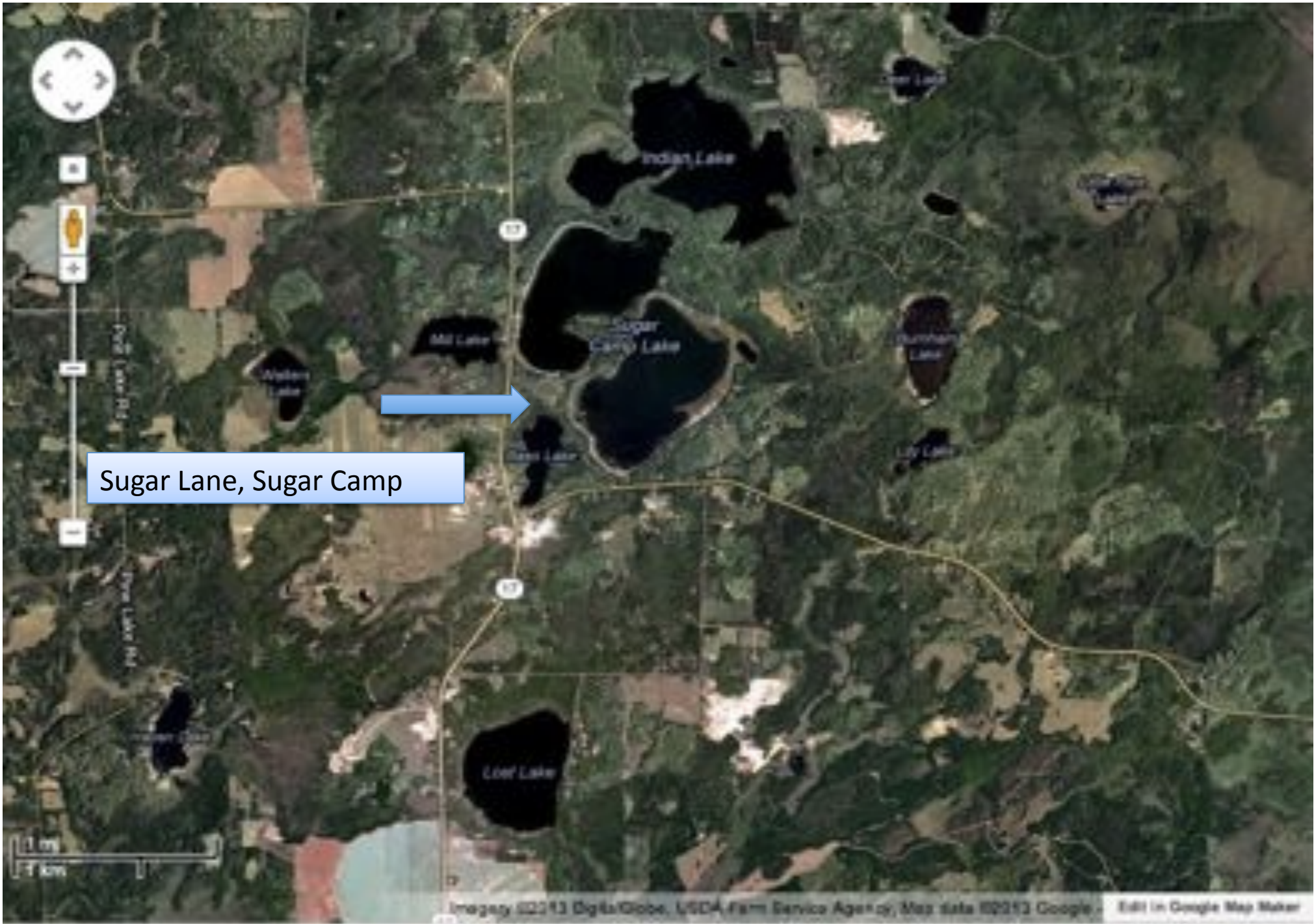


Railway Lane: at Sugar Camp

Sugar Camp

This was a major logging area and once cleared: great potato fields..

Frito Lay has its corporate camp here



Sugar Lane, Sugar Camp







Indian Lake Area

North of Sugar Camp various pockets of trees were harvested.

This point overlooking Indian Lake is an example



Indian Lake north of Sugar Camp

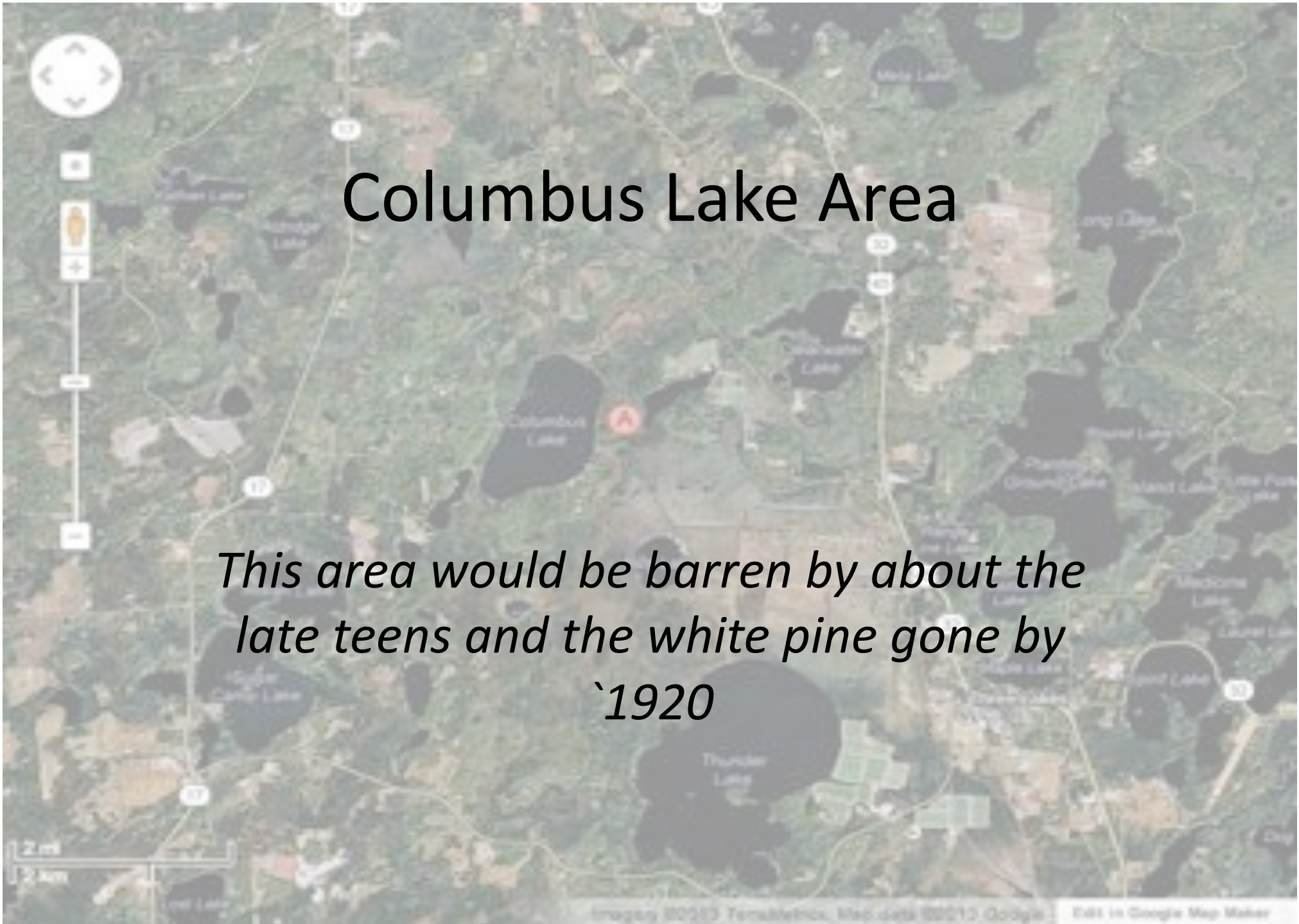






Columbus Lake Area

This area would be barren by about the late teens and the white pine gone by '1920



A satellite map of a wooded area in Three Lakes, Wisconsin. The map shows numerous lakes and a network of roads. A blue rectangular box highlights a road labeled "Columbus Lake Road". A red location pin is placed on Columbus Lake. Other labeled lakes include Thunder Lake, Sugar Camp Lake, and many smaller ones like Maple Lake and Pine Lake. Highway markers for 17, 30, 40, and 52 are visible. A compass and zoom controls are in the top left, and a scale bar (2 miles / 2 kilometers) is in the bottom left. Map data is attributed to Google at the bottom.

Columbus Lake Road

Three Lakes, WI







Harvey Huston's Book has numerous clues: a Modest Map



Thunder Lake

Entry on private lands is always a concern. We are unarmed. Owners may not be. Best to have an OK 1st.







04/14/2012 07:44



Swamp Poling: akin to corduroy road construction





04/14/2012 07:48





Trees East of the Chain

The Three Lakes, Eagle River Chain is thought (by the Chamber of Commerce) to be the largest natural chain of lakes.

*The Nicolet Forest is East of the Chain: the
Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest is 1.5
Million Acres en total*





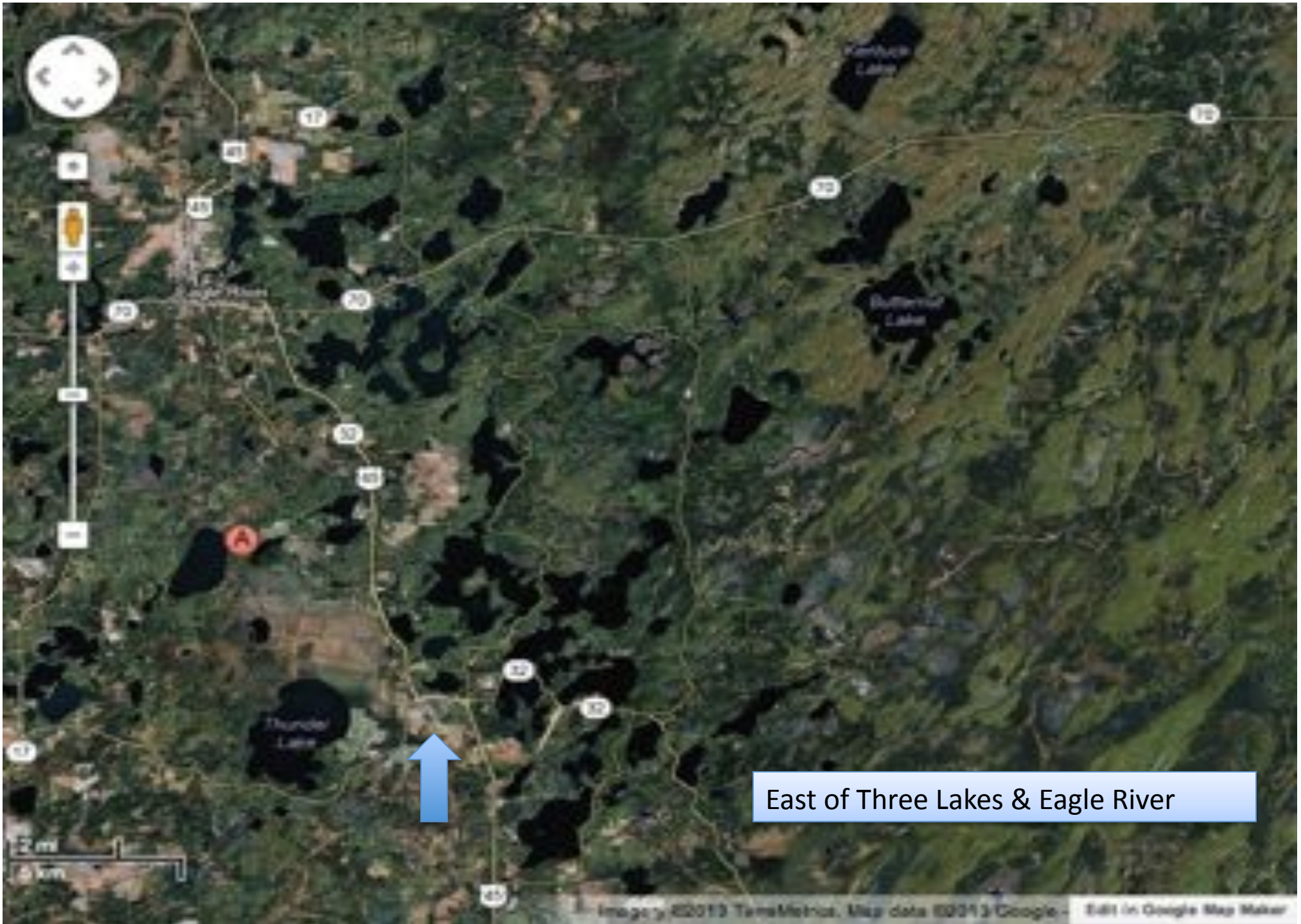
TLRR Crosses C&NW Line
Enroute to East of the Chain



Chain of Lakes looking North
above Three Lakes Airport



Site of longest trestle



East of Three Lakes & Eagle River



Thunder Lake RR Resort Camp









Military Road

The Thunder Lake RR was mostly east of here; but, CCC camps restored most of the forest in the 1930's



NICOLET NATIONAL FOREST

You are in the original Oneida Purchase Unit that marked the beginning of Nicolet National Forest. The first tract of land, acquired from the Thunder Lake Lumber Company in 1925, contained 12,940 acres. Today there are 640,000 acres rich in scenic, recreational, historical and economic resources.

Under the multiple-use management program of the United States Forest Service, the forest offers resources for industry and a wide variety of recreation. Thousands of acres whose trees were removed through logging or were ravaged by fire were reforested by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's.

The Nicolet National Forest is named in honor of Jean Nicolet, who in 1634 was the first white man known to have traveled into what is now Wisconsin.

Erected 1962



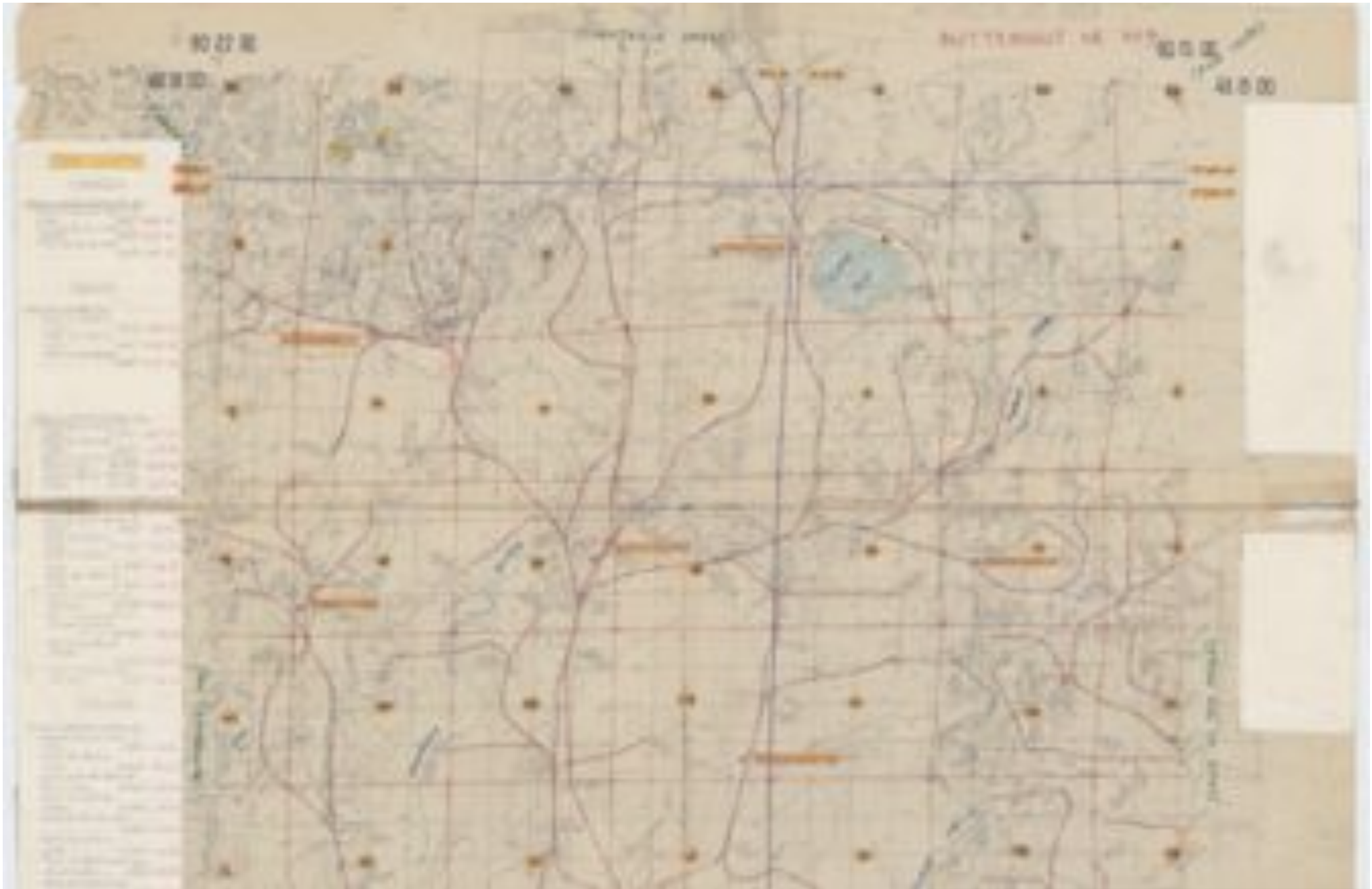
Where camps & horses were.. Weeds now



Further Down the Road



Butternut and Knapp Roads

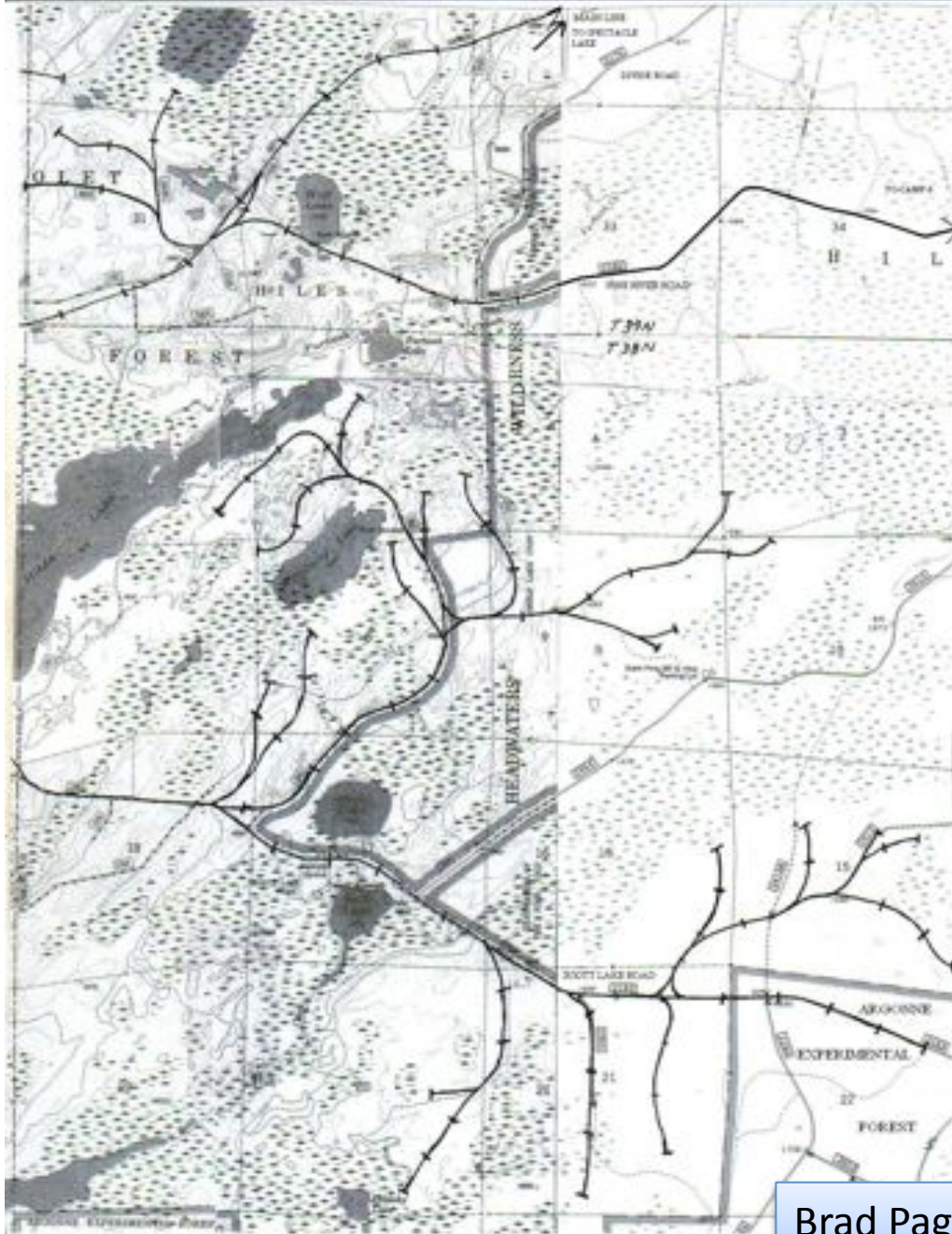


Kaysen: Butternut Lake, NE





Divide Road & Camp Cut



Brad Page's Giant Pine Trails

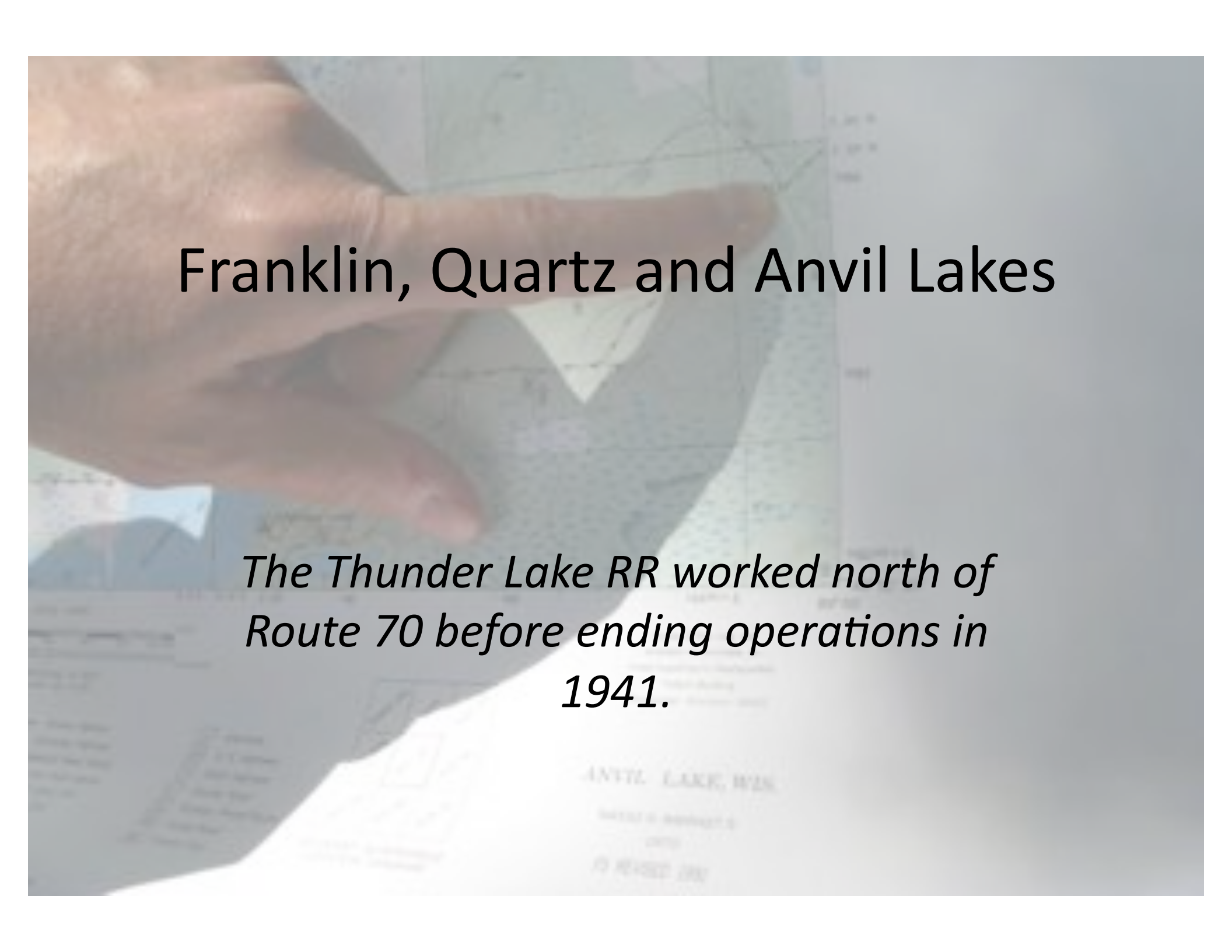


THUNDER LAKE LUMBER COMPANY
ROBBINS RAILWAY COMPANY
CAMP 13 SPURS



Brad Pagel's East Divide



A close-up photograph of a person's hand pointing to a specific location on a map. The map is partially obscured by a semi-transparent grey overlay containing text. The background shows a map with various lines and text, including the words 'ANVIL LAKE, WIS.' and '1910' visible in the lower right quadrant.

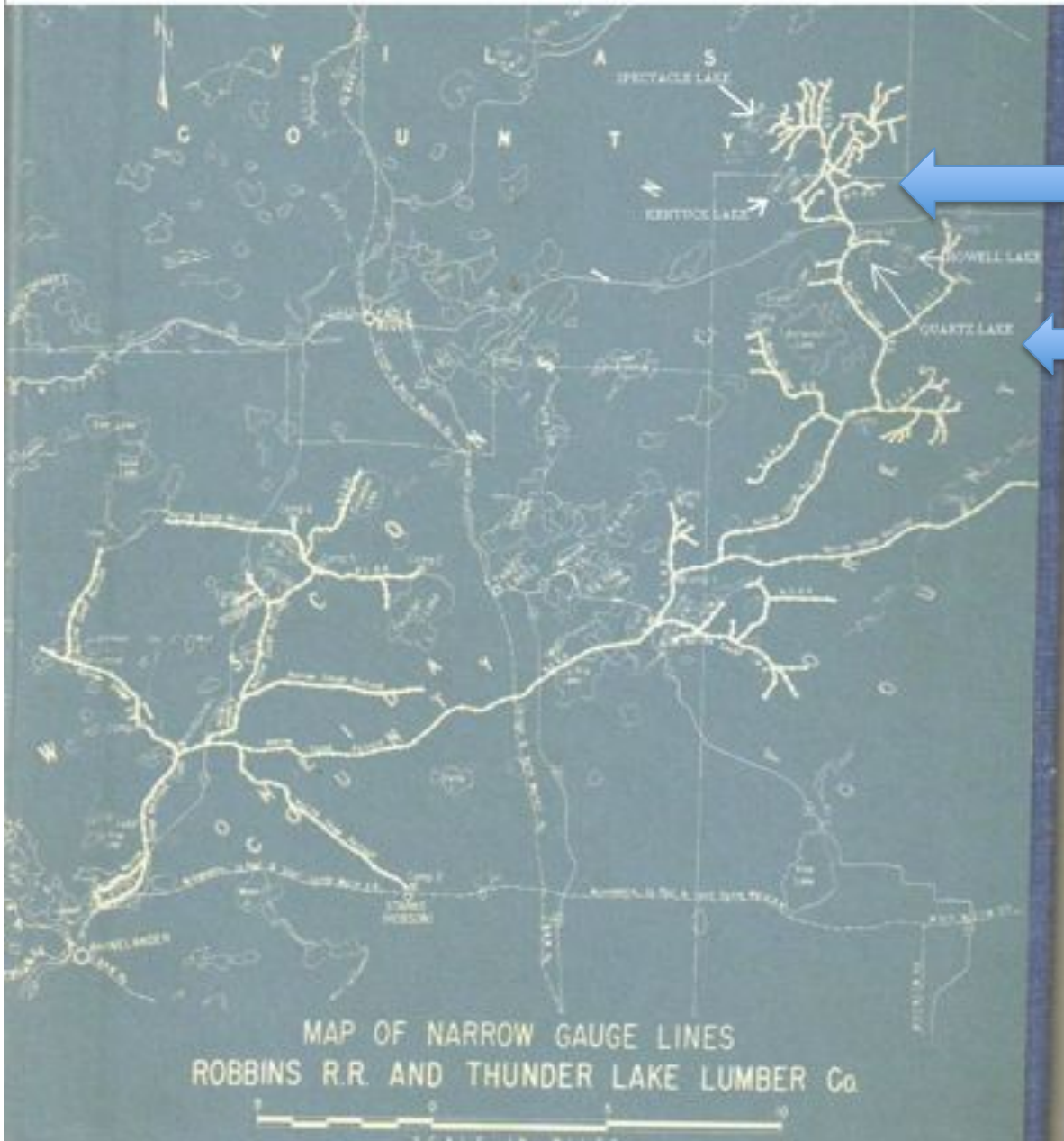
Franklin, Quartz and Anvil Lakes

*The Thunder Lake RR worked north of
Route 70 before ending operations in
1941.*



Kaysen: Anvil Lake Ski Area

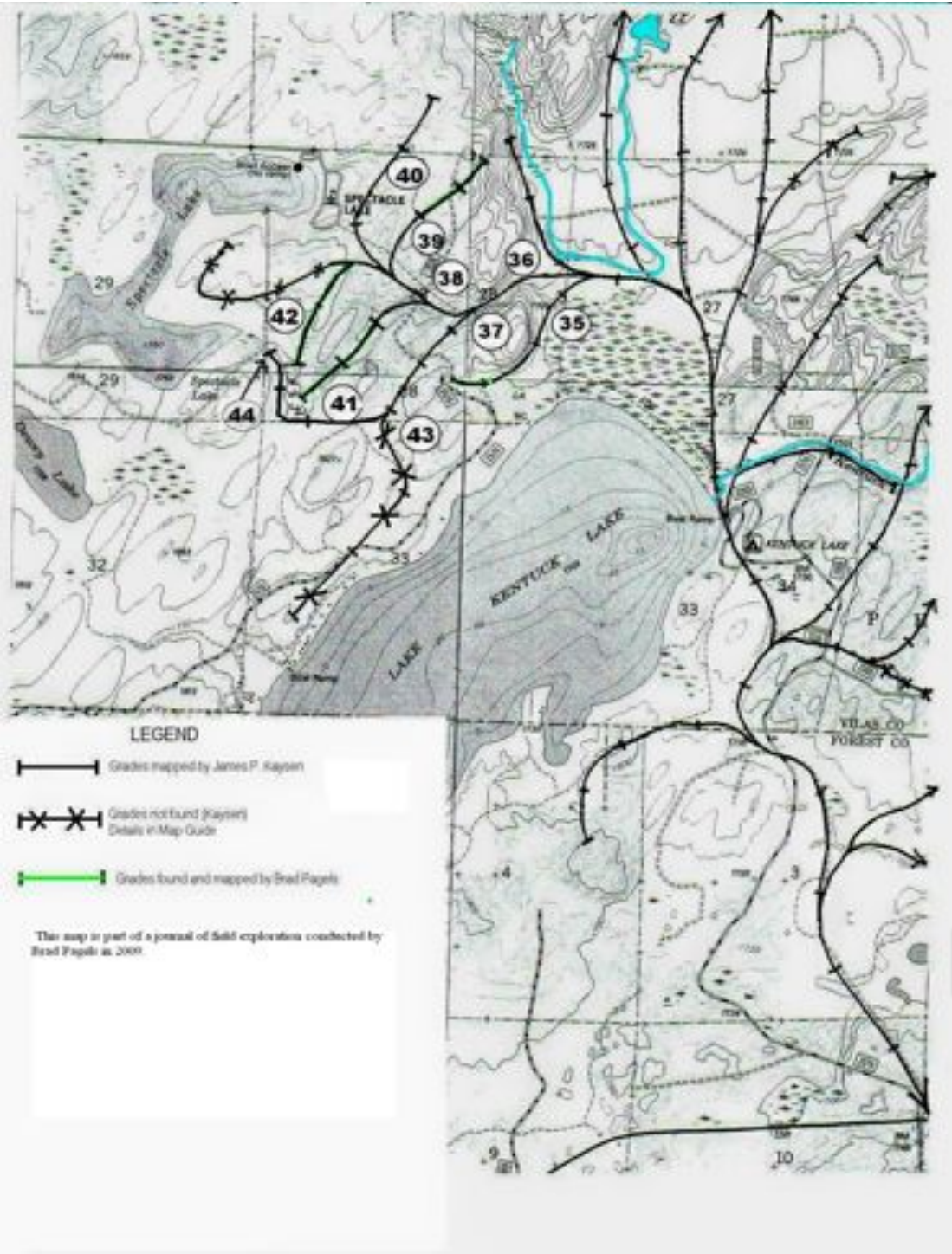
Inside cover of the book "The Thunder Lake Narrow Gauge 1893-1941" written by Harvey Huston.
Re-defined lake names added by Brad Pagels.



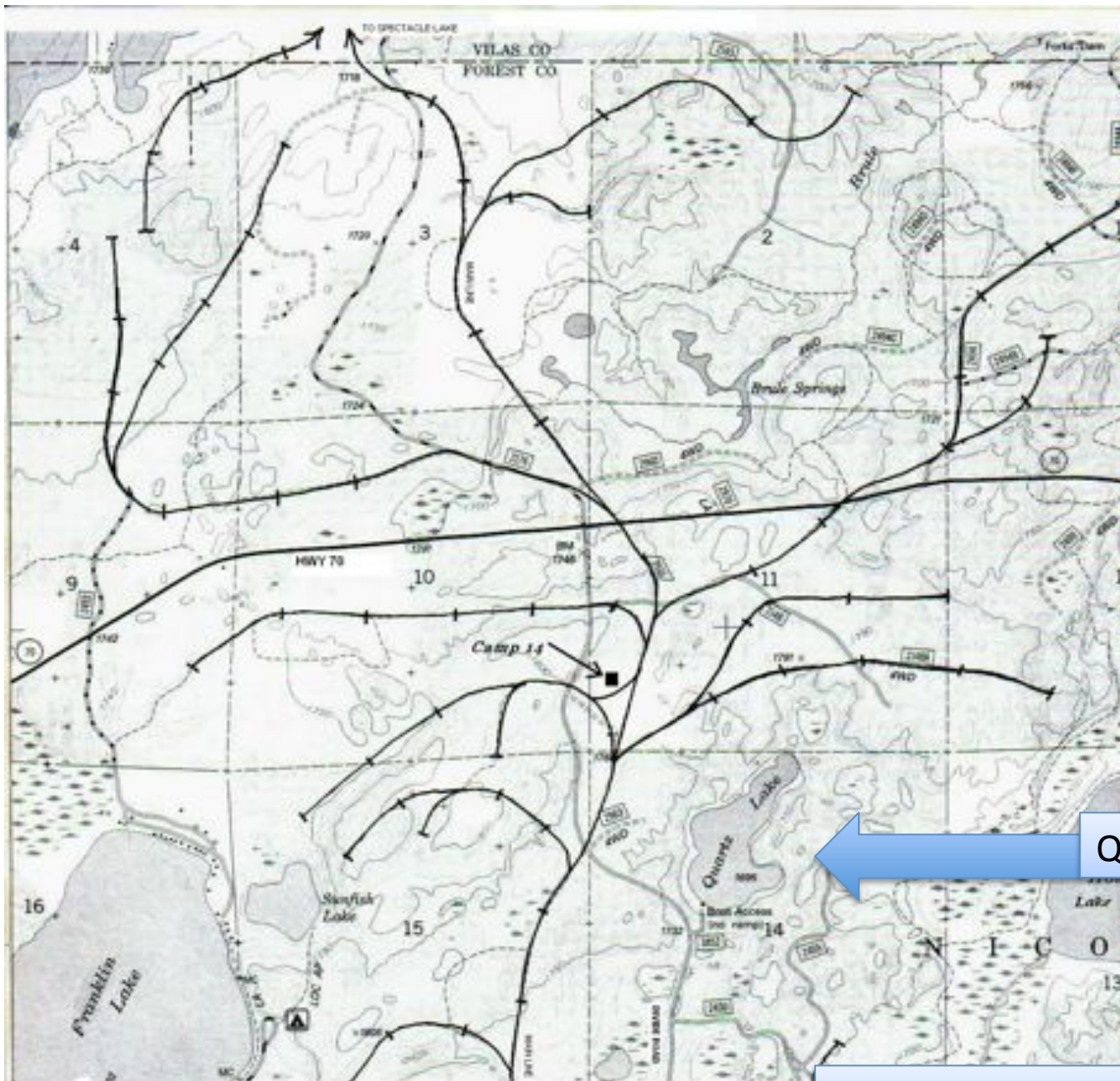
Kentucky Lake

Quartz Lake

Brad Pagel giving credit to:
Harvey Huston's work and book



Brad Pagel's Kentucky Lake



Quartz Lake

Brad Pagel's Camp 14

THUNDER LAKE LUMBER COMPANY
CAMP 14
T40N R12E
TOWNSHIP OF HILES
FOREST COUNTY

JUN 27 '38

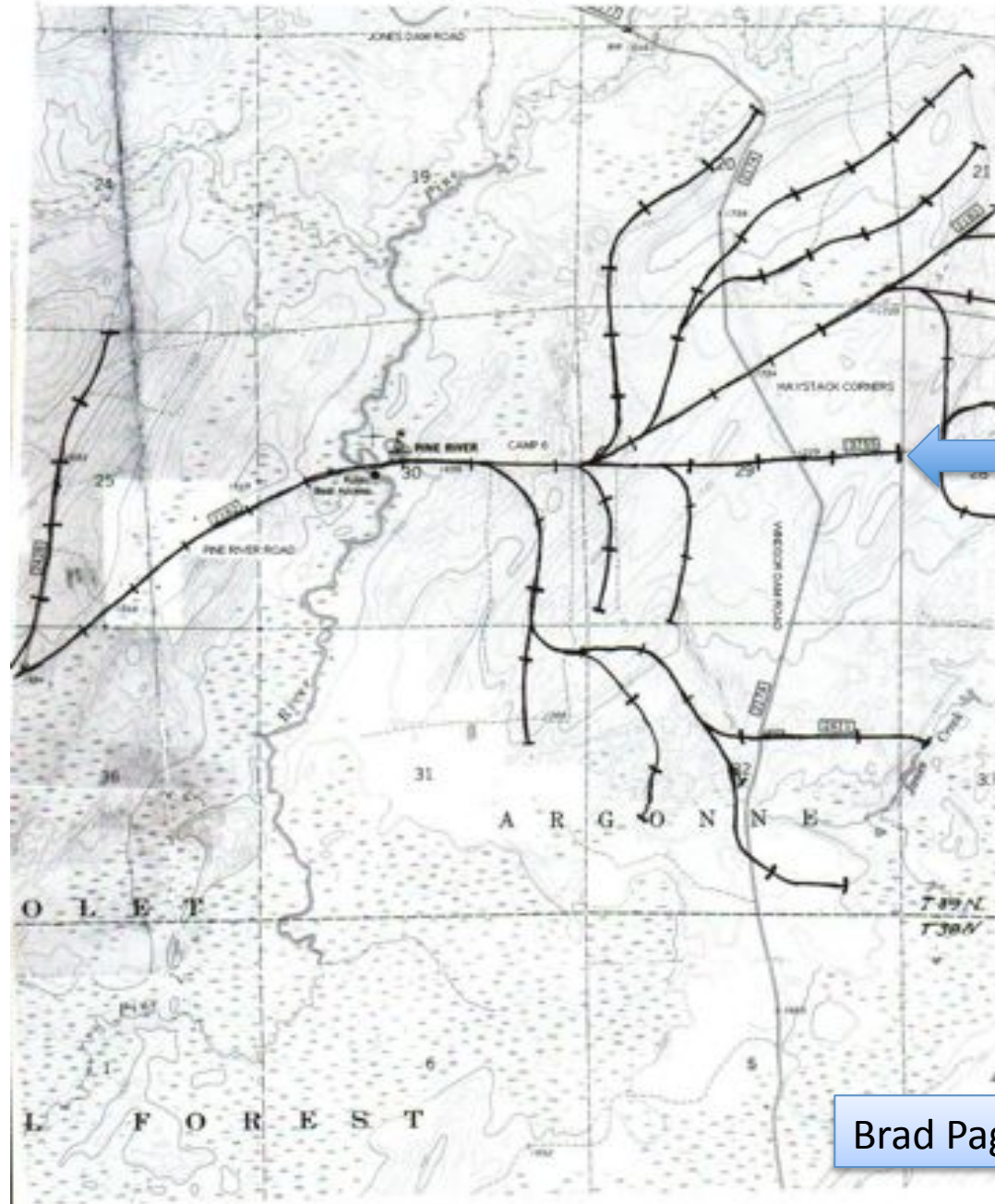
B 14-53

BHR FL 3

← Quartz Lake

1938 Series of Aerial Photos were used by Kayser to annotate the grades on the USGS Maps. This photo corresponds to the map in the previous file. I believe it was his wish that others would go and verify the location of old rail corridors.

THUNDER LAKE LUMBER COMPANY
CAMP 6 SPURS



Haystack
Corners

Brad Pagel's Camp 6

Haystack Corners

*Here, the area was last logged perhaps
25 years ago to remove Elm blight..*

© 2012 Google
Image U.S. Geological Survey

Google e

imagery Date: 5/17/1992



1992

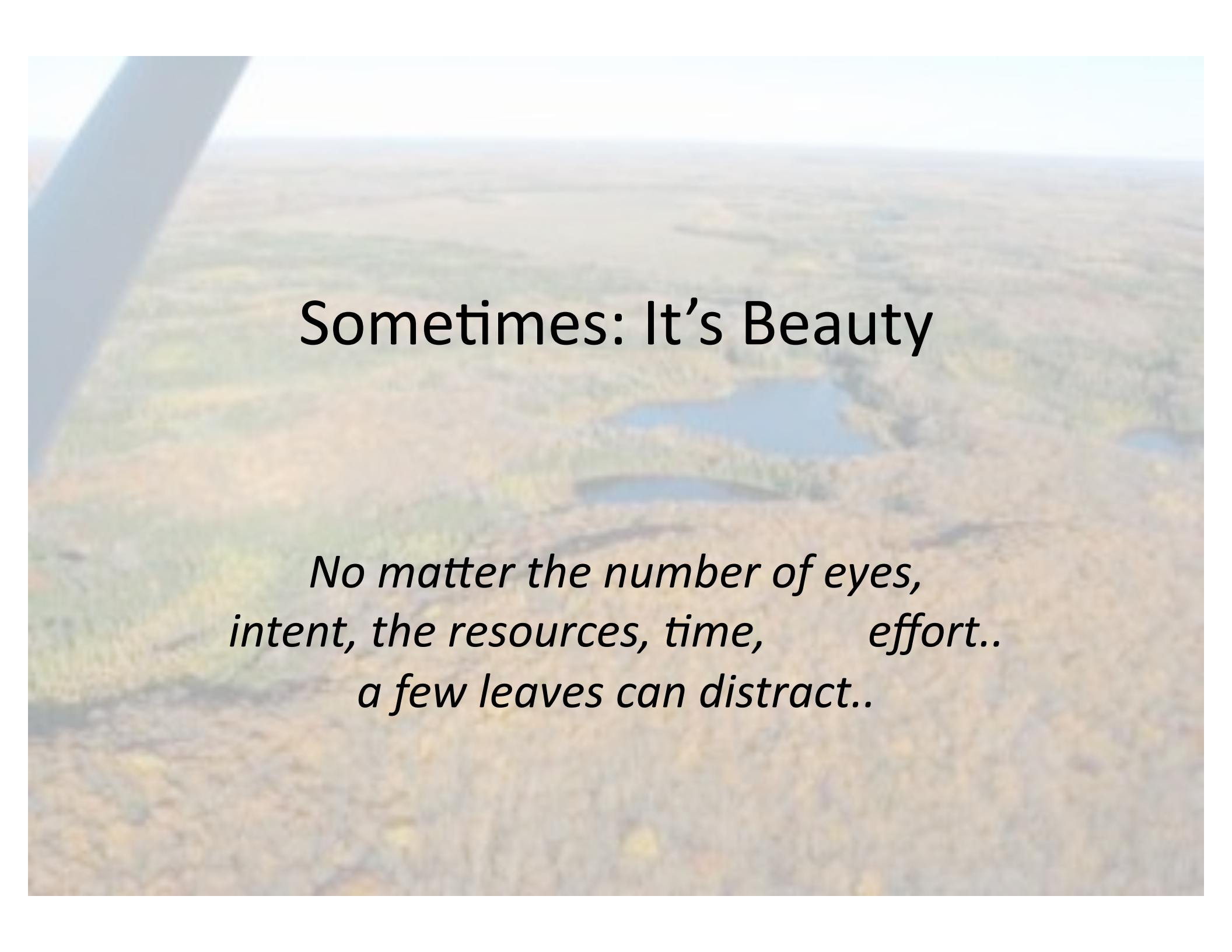
45°51'08.22" N 88°55'33.42" W elev 515 m

Eye alt 4.93 km



Corky Bark Elm: found near Haystack Corners



An aerial photograph of a vast, flat, arid landscape. The terrain is a mix of brown and tan colors, suggesting dry earth and sparse vegetation. In the center of the image, there is a small, irregularly shaped blue pond. The horizon is visible in the distance under a clear sky. A dark, diagonal shadow or artifact is present in the upper left corner of the image.

Sometimes: It's Beauty

*No matter the number of eyes,
intent, the resources, time, effort..
a few leaves can distract..*











Summary

Brad Pagel is improving the knowledge of TL RR Roadbed
We will then have a more accurate record of this railroad
It is very apparent that the amount of rail laid is manyfold the
forty miles usually ascribed to this enterprise.
We should have learned that bridging can take unusual form
Thank goodness that everyone's viewpoint is different
Perhaps some will find the north woods beautiful and worth
modeling. Fall makes for a beautiful setting.