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## Fort Chipewyan

Fort Chipewyan is the oldest settlement in the Province of Alberta and was established in 1788 as a fur trading post by Peter Pond. Peter Pond was the first white person to enter the Athabasca region (HCF website 2005). Alexander Mackenzie used Fort Chipewyan as a starting point to find the Arctic Ocean and when the Klondike Gold Rush started, explorers like David Thompson, and Simon Fraser as well as many other gold seekers used Fort Chipewyan as a starting point on their way to strike it rich. (HCF website 2005). Fort Chipewyan, generally referred to as Fort Chip by locals, is made up of boreal forest, shield, lakes, rivers, swamps and muskeg.

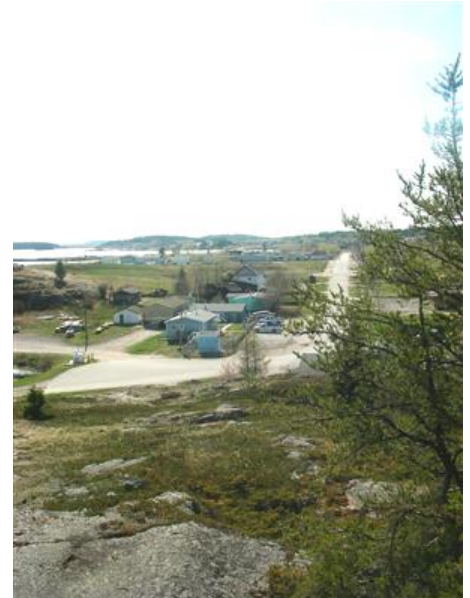
The original First Nations people consisted of the Chipewyan, Beaver, Cree and Metis. Today Chipewyan, Cree, Metis and non First Nations live in the community. Fort Chipewyan area is included under Treaty 8 that was signed in June 1899 (HCF website 2002).

To learn more about Treaty 8 go to [http://www.albertasource.ca/treaty8/eng/The\\_Treaty/](http://www.albertasource.ca/treaty8/eng/The_Treaty/).

The Fort Chipewyan community currently supports a population of 1,012 (RMWB website 2005). The community is located approximately 300 km north of Fort McMurray. It is accessible in the winter by a winter road and air. During the summer Fort Chipewyan residents fly out of the community. (HCF website 2005).

The original economic base was hunting, trapping, and lumber. Commercial fishing in Lake Athabasca started in 1926. Lake trout, lake-whitefish, walleye, and northern pike are still commercial fished today (HCF website 2005). In 1969, pickerel cheeks were a delicacy selling for \$16.95 per pound in New York (Huberman 2001).

Fort Chipewyan is on the boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park. Wood Buffalo National Park is home to free roaming bison and the nesting sites for the Whooping crane and peregrine falcons. The National Park includes both the Peace and the Athabasca River [deltas](#) combined making one of the largest fresh water deltas in the world. The delta is known for providing nesting areas, for sand hill and whooping cranes, and spring and fall staging sites for shore birds, geese and ducks and many other bird species. (UNESCO website 2008).



**Fort Chipewyan as seen from the lodge**  
Source: Hatfield Consultants  
( click to enlarge )

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