



Every so often the 'CB' would chirp... "Caribou, Caribou!"  
Small groups of Caribou stay close to the roads to lick the salt.

edge of James Bay, Chisasibi is the most northerly Cree Indian community. Driving past the village we wanted to complete the journey, and find the actual end of the road. Passing the village the road had become blocked with drifted snow, it was time to have some fun.

Blasting through the soft powder gave the vehicle occupants a momentary white out and a jolt as the snow sucked the power and momentum, then panic: had the vehicle in front made it through the next drift? All of a sudden the convoy came to a halt. Jim and Peter both had their vehicles buried. Time for recovery!

Carrying on we only had a few miles to go. Ted and Mary had taken the lead and had blasted through several drifts. They had come to a halt and Jim had narrowly missed the back of Mary's Discovery by swerving to the right. I appeared in my '03 Discovery with the ABS pump working overtime, the '03 came to rest several feet behind the Discovery: we were on black ice. Then John appeared in his non-ABS 110. Having hit the black ice, John grappled with the task of stopping his vehicle, which he did - using my Discovery as a ground anchor.

No biggie, only a minor fender bender and dented pride. (Sorry, John I promised to make you famous!).

Meanwhile, Peter had turned around and had drifted off the road into a ditch - more recovery.

Having reached the end of the road we glanced out over the bay. We'd made it!

After more pictorial evidence of our achievement we made a 'management decision' to change the itinerary. The accommodation in Chisasibi looked decidedly dodgy, so we headed back to Radisson with the reassurance that we would all have the same rooms as the night before.

#### DAY SEVEN:

A minor snow storm had blown through overnight and the remnants were still expected to slow our progress on the road, due to low visibility and snow plows. As such, we cancelled our scheduled trip to Eastmain and plotted waypoints direct to Namaska. We checked into the relatively new hotel and inquired about the possibility of renting some snow mobiles. The hotel manager gave us the phone number of a local guy and Peter made the call.

#### DAY EIGHT:

The following morning we

tracked down our guide down and he was actually working on some hotel construction project. Having come to terms we mounted our snow steeds and headed out into the bush. Our Indian guide was very knowledgeable of the local area and took us to various points of interest: a provisional wind power installation and an all winter hunting camp.

The journey out was overland, with the obvious hazards of tree branches and stumps to contend with. The return journey was across the lake and our Indian guide made several detours to miss open water.

Heading south we knew that our expedition was nearing the end, entering Chibougamau we had the culture shock of having to deal with traffic lights again.

Chibougamau was the site of our final highlight: a cross country 25 mile dog sled run. The weather was co-operating, snow sprawls and continued cold temperatures had us all don the cold weather gear once again. Our dog sled provider/instructor was French so our training and instructions were entertaining to say the least. Typical instructions on how to turn left, right and stop were punctuated by saying: "this is very important." It turned out that everything was

"very important".

With all the dog teams hitched we were ready to go and the dogs knew it. The barking and howling from 30 or more dogs was deafening, but as soon as the individual sleds started moving the dogs were quiet and concentrated on the job at hand. By the time we returned we had found a great respect for the dogs and found aches from muscles that we didn't know existed. But this didn't matter, the adventure was cool, very cool and to top it off our host served up cups of hot Irish coffee so the aches and pains were soon numb.

#### DAY NINE:

Continuing south we completed the 320kms to Senneterre. Restaurants were closed so the only option was to order in a handful of pizzas, a bad move. Luckily we still had a variety of beers left over so what can be best described as the worst pizza ever was washed down with plenty of suds. Day nine, we were heading our separate ways. I ended up completing 3,000 miles without a hiccup, returning south on I-81; layers of clothing were being discarded as the return to Philadelphia felt almost tropical.

Would I do it again? Definitely, sign me up! 