

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHITBY AUTHOR HEADS NORTH TO RESEARCH RARE PONY

Heather M. O'Connor to be artist-in-residence at Quetico Provincial Park

WHITBY, ON, July 27, 2017— Freelance writer and author Heather M. O'Connor flies up to Quetico Provincial Park next month. The Whitby writer will be artist-in-residence at the northwestern Ontario backcountry park from August 28 to September 10.

She invites visitors to join her on a writing hike Friday, September 4. As participants explore Quetico's Teaching Trail, they'll also explore their senses. After the hike, they will use the experience to create a short piece of writing. The hike begins at 7 pm at Teaching Place in the Dawson Trail Campgrounds.

Heather's two-week stay in the park's lakefront artist studio doubles as a research trip. Ms. O'Connor recently received a Marion Hebb Research Grant for a new project on the endangered Lac La Croix Indigenous Pony.

"The Anishinaabe People living around Quetico bred these horses to help them run traplines in the winter. The rest of the year the herds ran wild in the forests. Imagine that!"

"Today, there are only 150 Lac La Croix ponies left. It's the only Indigenous-bred horse in Canada, one of only three Canadian breeds, but most people have never heard of it."

Ms. O'Connor's visit coincides with Quetico's Ponies in the Park event September 5 and 6. The annual meet-and-greet brings Lac La Croix ponies from Grey Raven Ranch to the park. Park visitors have an opportunity to view and learn about this friendly breed from youth in Grey Raven's Indigenous heritage program.

"I'll come face-to-face with a fascinating piece of history, one that I couldn't explore without the help of Ontario Parks and the Quetico Foundation, which support the artist in residence program, and the Access Copyright Foundation, which is funding my research."

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ABOUT HEATHER M. O'CONNOR

[Heather M. O'Connor](#) is an accomplished freelance writer and author. Her feature stories for adults and children have appeared in national and regional publications. Her novel [Betting Game](#), published by Orca Books in 2015, received excellent reviews and is already in its second printing. She lives in Whitby with her family.

Heather is available for interviews in Whitby until August 22 and at Quetico between August 28 and September 10. Photos and further details are available on her website.

ABOUT GREY RAVEN RANCH

[Grey Raven Ranch](#) is a Canadian non-profit located at Seine River First Nation, an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) community in Northwestern Ontario. Its mission is to help First Nations youth develop confidence and leadership skills by entrusting them with the future of the Lac La Croix Indigenous Pony. Youth manage the facilities, care for and train the horses, and organize educational events.

ABOUT THE ACCESS COPYRIGHT FOUNDATION

The [Access Copyright Foundation](#) promotes and supports Canadian culture by providing grants to assist with the development and distribution of publishable Canadian works. The [ACF Marian Hebb Research Grants](#) program provides grants for research projects designed to facilitate the creation of a publishable work, an innovative program, strategic initiative, study paper or report.

ABOUT THE QUETICO ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

[Quetico Provincial Park](#) is a northwestern Ontario wilderness park located near Atikokan. Its artist-in-residence program, supported by the [Quetico Foundation](#), seeks to inspire artists with the park's renowned and unspoiled beauty. Residents may work and stay in the artist studio in Dawson Trail campground, or explore Quetico's countless lakes and rivers on foot or by canoe.

BACKGROUND ON THE LAC LA CROIX PONY

Video: Interview with Darcy Whitecrow of Grey Raven Ranch <https://youtu.be/tB8g-v-Oleg>

Video: Lac La Croix Ponies at Quetico <https://youtu.be/ZQIWmD0fEr8>

Ontario Parks blog: Lac La Croix Ponies at Quetico <http://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/lac-lacroix-ponies-at-quetico/>

Canadian Encyclopedia <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lac-la-croix-indigenous-pony/>