

Goodsoil

Goodsoil Gus

Goodsoil Gus, a 20-foot tall lumberjack wielding a 10-foot long axe, watches over the village of Goodsoil, just south of Meadow Lake Provincial Park. Gus is a fictional character created by the local chamber of commerce to commemorate the pioneers of the Goodsoil area. Felling trees to build a log cabin was the first thing that pioneers did in this heavily forested area.

In 1992, Allen Cop, a wood carver from Fort Assiniboine, Alberta, constructed Gus of laminated wood. The statue's feet are firmly planted in Goodsoil's good soil – five-foot long steel frames are attached to his legs which are mounted on a cement pad that has cement-filled steel frames extending 12 feet into the ground. To stand him in place, Gus was lifted with a large truck, then welded to the steel frame by local welder Walter Lange. To keep him looking his best, Gus is oiled every year with a cetral oil and zylene mix.

Gus has been the subject of many stories, and even songs. Here is the last verse of the song written for his official unveiling (meant to be sung to the tune of "Achy Breaky Heart"):

*Handsome I am not, but I hope to be sought,
For pictures and your tourist memories,
You can tell all, you see and meet,
Come see Goodsoil Gus on Main Street.*

Gus has been such a hit that some residents have suggested that Goodsoil should also have a Mrs. Gus, some little Gusses, and maybe even a doggie Gus.

How to get there

Goodsoil is on Hwy #26, about 46 km north of Loon Lake, the main route to the central entrance of Meadow Lake Provincial Park. Goodsoil Gus stands right beside the highway running through the village, next to the log cabin that serves as the tourist information office.



Vonda

World's Largest Still

Making home brew used to be fairly commonplace throughout Saskatchewan, but the area around Vonda was considered a moonshine hotbed, famous for both the quantity and quality of the less than legal liquid. The large RCMP detachment in town contributed in part to Vonda's reputation, with Mounties eager to conduct a raid whenever they got a whiff of something brewing.

When Vonda planned 90th anniversary celebrations in 1997, building the biggest still of all time seemed a great way to have some fun with the community's legendary past. It was the idea of Laurent Bussière, and to make sure that the still was built as authentically as possible, he travelled to the RCMP Museum in Regina to look at actual confiscated stills, and talked to a retired RCMP officer who served in Vonda in the old days. The Mounties were happy to cooperate, but only after they were convinced that the giant still would be just for show, and not for use!

Built by Laurent and his son Ronald, the still was donated to the town and installed in 1997 with the assistance of the chamber of commerce. Standing 18 feet high and 7 feet in diameter, the still could hold 550 gallons – enough for one heck of a party.

Although the model wasn't functioning, Laurent fooled quite a few people at the anniversary. He installed an artificial flame at the bottom, and had a smoke machine inside that belched out puffs every now and then. It looked so realistic that a surprising number of people carefully touched the copper coils to see if they were hot. While the big still is just for show, the small one next to it is real, with a capacity of three to four gallons. Who this still belonged to remains a mystery – it was anonymously dropped off one night.

Next to the still stands a piece of equipment that became even more important to the development of Vonda – the original prototype of the Rock-O-Matic rockpicker built in 1959 by Rosaire

Bussière and his son Laurent. This machine eventually led to the development of Highline Mfg. in Vonda, run by Laurent's brother Raymond. The company supplies rockpickers and other farm equipment throughout the world.

How to get there

Vonda is along Hwy #27, about 50 km northeast of Saskatoon. The still stands at the end of Main Street, next to the railway tracks.



Gorlitz

World's Largest White-tailed Deer Antlers

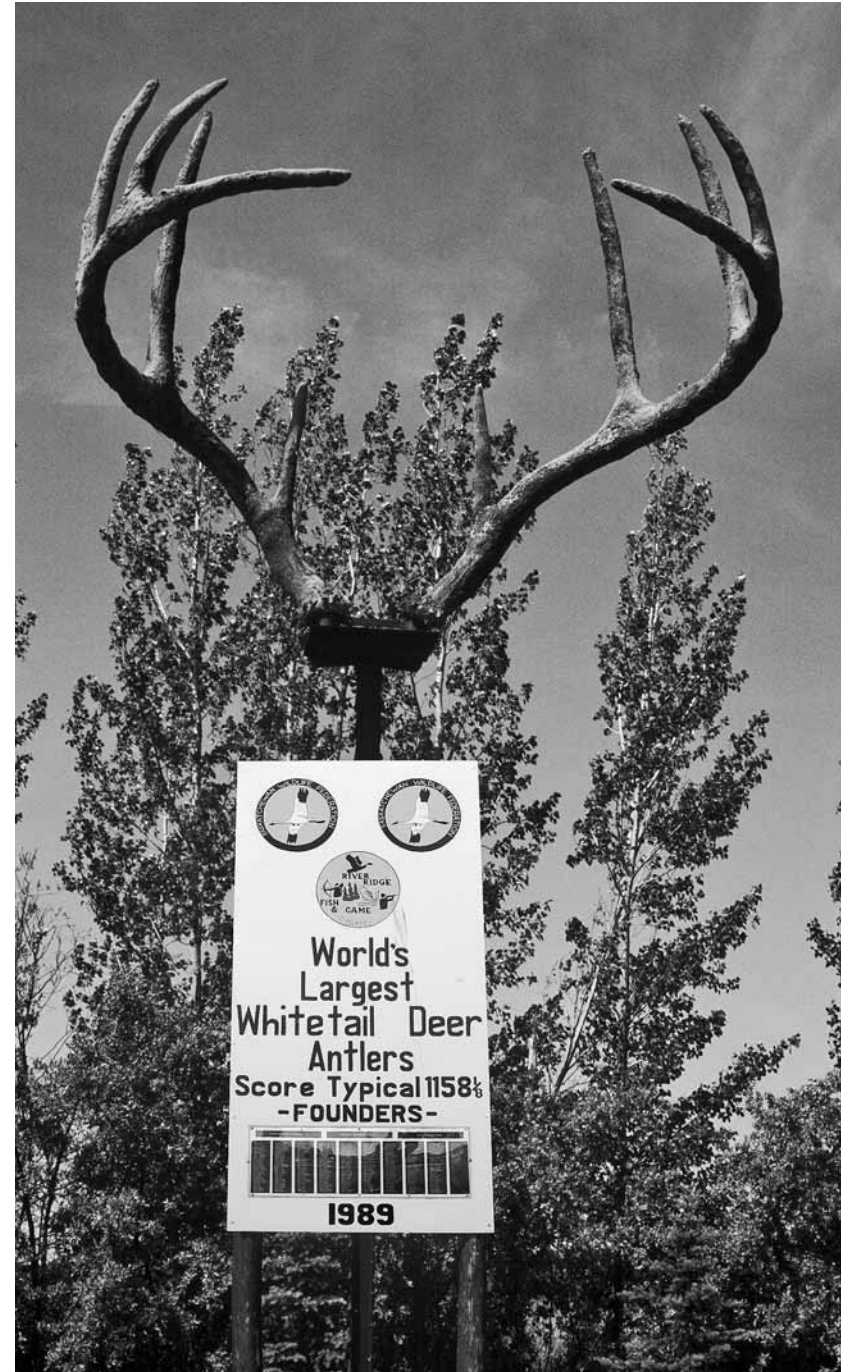
You have to see it to believe it – white-tailed deer antlers standing 25 feet or so high and around 20 feet across. Now that's some deer! Shortly after they were put on display, *Yorkton Enterprise* columnist Terry Chornomud penned the story of the "Legendary Gorlitz Whitetail Buck", an animal so big that it levelled entire bushes while rubbing the velvet off its antlers, and left small dugouts in its tracks (which turned out to be quite handy for watering livestock). When hunters went after the huge buck, they couldn't attract it by rattling two antlers together like they would for ordinary deer; instead they had to use two 24-foot cultivators. They had hoped to have the head mounted, but the taxidermist went into shock when he saw it.

The antlers were built by the River Ridge branch of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. Centred around Gorlitz and taking in the area between Canora and Yorkton, this new club wanted to do something to get noticed. Terry Chornomud was active in the formation of the club and came up with the giant antler idea. They used light standards for beams to hold up the antlers. The tines on the antlers were built from vehicle drive shafts that were welded together, then covered with chicken wire and cement. Club members did the work – one had a welding shop, and Terry drew on his experience as a taxidermist. Needless to say, getting noticed wasn't a problem.

Of all the big monuments throughout Saskatchewan, this one wins hands down for having your photo taken in front (see back cover).

How to get there

Gorlitz is in east-central Saskatchewan along Hwy #9, between Canora and Yorkton. The antlers are right beside the highway, opposite the entrance to Gorlitz.





Kyle



Paradise Hill



Elstow



Spiritwood



Cabri



Balcarres