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Review of *Light from Ancient Campfires:
Archaeological Evidence for Native Lifeways on the
Northern Plains*. By Trevor R. Peck.

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Light from Ancient Campfires: Archaeological Evidence for Native Lifeways on the Northern Plains. By Trevor R. Peck. Edmonton, AB: Athabasca University Press, 2011. xvi + 508 pp. Illustrations, photographs, maps, tables, references, index. C\$44.95 paper.

Despite the relatively long legacy of professional archaeological research in the northern Great Plains, few comprehensive syntheses of the region's 13,000-year human history have been produced in recent years. This is particularly the case for the Canadian side of the region, which has tended to be overlooked in most scholarly summaries of Great Plains prehistory. The shadowy nature of the Canadian prairies to the wider community of Plains archaeologists is not due to a lack of archaeological research in the region—Alberta, alone, has over 35,000 registered sites—but instead reflects the poor dissemination of CRM (Culture Resource Management) reports and other “grey” literature, where the bulk of archaeological information resides. By drawing extensively upon these unpublished sources, this book aims to provide a comprehensive synthesis and revision of the prehistoric record of, principally, southern Alberta.

Organized chronologically, beginning with “Pre-Clovis” (>11,050 BP) and the Early Prehistoric period and ending with the transition to the historic period (~200 BP), all of the book's chapters follow the same

pattern: first, a brief overview of an archaeological phase or complex (e.g., "McKean complex"), followed by a detailed summary of the key sites in Alberta, and ending with a broader discussion of each phase/complex in terms of technology, subsistence, similarity to sites/cultures elsewhere in the Plains, and so on. This is undertaken for no less than 29 phases/complexes spanning the entire breadth of the prehistoric period. Although some archaeological cultures (e.g., Country Hills complex) included in Peck's synthesis are only recognized in southern Alberta, most will be familiar to archaeologists working in other areas of the Northern Plains. Thus, the relevance of this book extends beyond its somewhat limited geographical scope. Excellent photos, tables, maps, and other illustrations occur throughout the text and greatly enhance the volume's overall usefulness.

With his focus on detailed description of the physical evidence, inclusion of large amounts of raw data, and generous use of unpublished sources, Peck brings to light a rich and diverse source of information on Plains prehistory that would otherwise have remained unknown outside of the Alberta archaeological community. This is a book that is long overdue, one that deserves to be regarded as a key source on the cultural history of the northern Great Plains. **Matthew Boyd**, *Department of Anthropology, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.*