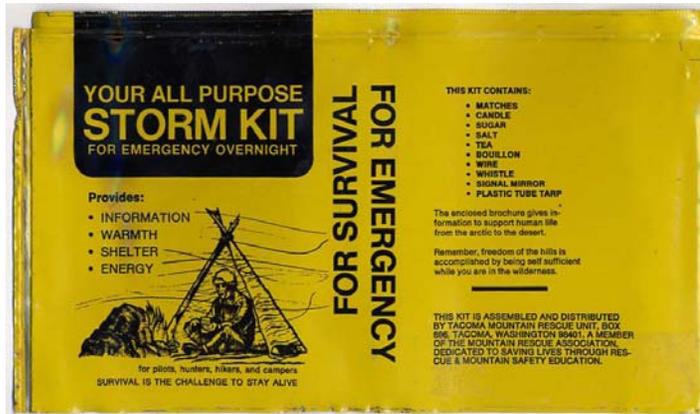


Donald Lawrence
For Camp(Sites), June, 2005

The Sled



Storm Kit (flattened)

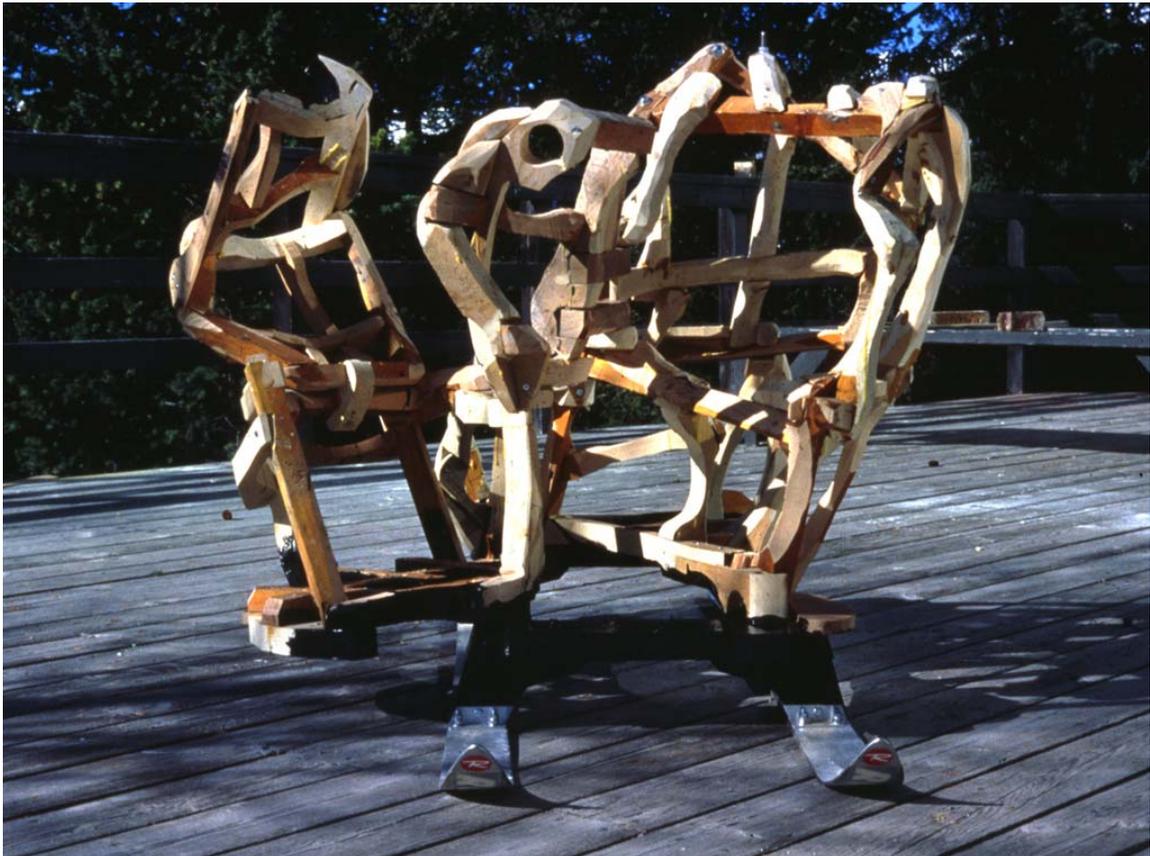
The Sled is constructed around a complex skeletal framework made of numerous shaped and fitted wooden components. Three parts of this frame are hinged to allow access to the sled's interior compartments, each of which is lined with copper and shaped to house some particular camping appliance — the whole construction mounted on top of two shortened skis. A poplar pulling pole swings up to form one of three shelter supports while two others are in sections and are strapped alongside the sled. Numerous other fittings allow such items as the shelter cover, tools, a sleeping bag, etc. to be tied on to the outside of the sled.



The Sled, Vermillion Lake, 1995

The Sled relates to a previously exhibited body of work: *Romantic Commodities* (1993), and particularly to a small survival, “Storm Kit” commonly found in outdoor supply stores around that time that was a source for several of the *Romantic Commodities* works. The careful packaging of teabags, matches, boullion cubes etc., within these survival kits is indicative of the commodification of our natural environment. On the front face of the can a figure is depicted in the manner of a nineteenth-century engraving — crouched beside a fire, and inside a makeshift shelter. He is protected from the environment by the contents of the survival kit and the slogans printed on its surface. This image lies behind the construction of *The Sled*.

From this scenario of survival and depravity *The Sled* becomes a situation of relative luxury. The fire depicted on the Storm Kit is replaced here by a “Coleman” lantern, “Coleman” heater, “Whisperlite” stove and an “Outback” oven. These are all carefully fitted within *The Sled’s* complex skeletal structure, a structure hidden underneath a rough, rocklike outer canvas shell. The copper-clad interior spaces emanate a golden glow and warmth when the appliances are fired up. In this way these objects are accorded a greater importance than we normally give to appliances in our day-to-day lives. The poles of the accompanying shelter (also mimicking that depicted on the Storm Kit) are collapsed and suspended alongside *The Sled*, its various hatches are fastened shut in a clam-like manner to complete the contours of the rock, and sleeping bags are strapped on; everything in its place. Once packed in this manner, the rock, mounted on skis, becomes a personal vehicle, the things inside carefully protected and stowed in a manner somewhere between a sixteenth century caravel and an RV of the 1990’s.



The Sled, skeletal framework