

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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An occasional one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex at the North Pole



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Lex Loci usually attempts to offer place-related commentary which is interesting and relevant to Australian readers. Sorry, folks, this time he has wandered off into the barren polar wilderness. Season's Greetings!

Conundrum: Where can we find a point on the surface of the earth, from which we can travel one kilometer south, then one kilometer east, then one kilometer north – and end up at the place from which we started?

It's an old conundrum, and the well-known answer is the North Pole.

Actually, there's another answer: any point on a circle whose radius is $1+(1/2\pi)$ kilometres from the *South Pole*. Think about it: we walk one kilometer south, and then our eastwards walk takes us around a circle whose circumference is one kilometer, then northwards back to our starting point.

But there's more! In fact there are an infinite number of answers. We could make such a journey from any point on *any* circle whose radius is $1+(1/2N\pi)$ kilometres from the South Pole, where N is any positive integer. If N is 5, for instance, then our southward kilometer gets us to a point on a circle whose circumference measures 200m (one fifth of a kilometer); our eastward kilometer has us circumnavigating the South Pole five times, and then our northward kilometer gets us back to the start.

Meanwhile, Lex Loci has some advice for Santa: relocate from the North Pole to the South. The ice is getting much too thin up there, mate!

Season's Greetings! Lex Loci

* * Photo from Tripsavvy.com

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