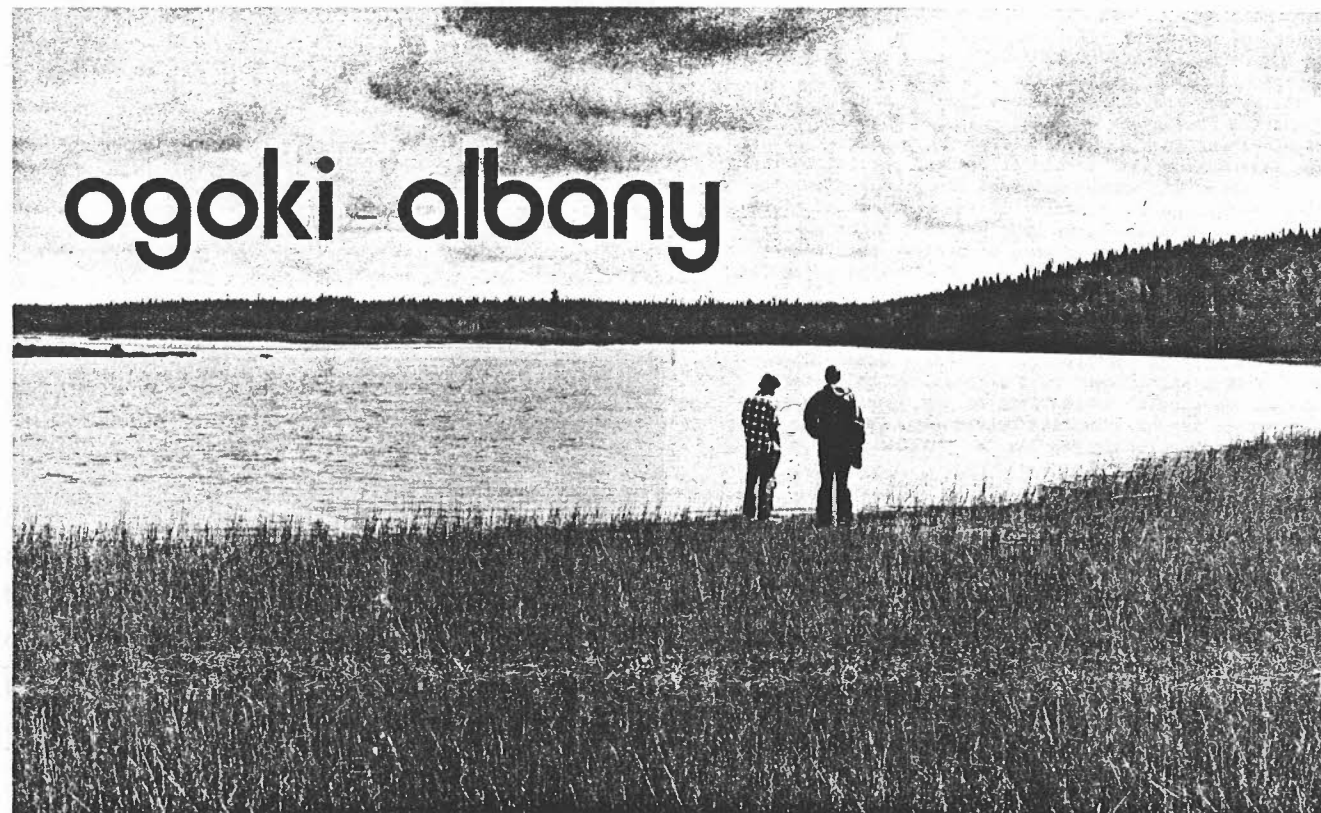




the wilderness canoeist

volume 8 number 2

summer 1981



ogoki albany

a proposed wilderness park

The concept of a major wilderness park, linking the Ogoki watershed to the Albany River corridor, has been endorsed by conservation groups including the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Sierra Club of Ontario, Wilderness Canoe Association, Canoe Ontario, Algonquin Wildlands League, National and Provincial Parks Association, and the Conservation Council of Ontario, along with many smaller local groups and individuals.

The proposals presented here represent a synopsis of a major brief now under review by these groups prior to submission to the Minister of Natural Resources. They have been prepared by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, with the advice of numerous individuals from the Sierra Club of Ontario, Algonquin Wildlands League, and others.

Wilderness Parks are substantial areas where the forces of nature are permitted to function freely and where visitors travel by non-mechanized means and experience expansive solitude, challenge, and personal integration with nature.

Wilderness parks provide a benchmark for future scientists, a remnant of our natural heritage for generations to come, and a unique form of recreation. But the broad swath of boreal forest that cuts across northern Ontario is poorly represented by wilderness parks. In recognition of this need, and spurred on by the proposals of the Strategic Land Use Plan of the Ministry of Natural Resources, this proposal for a new wilderness park among the scenic lakes and rivers of the Ogoki and Albany watersheds was born.

Wilderness parks are governed by the Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies. These policies, approved by the Minister of Natural

Resources in 1978, specify that wilderness parks must meet the objectives of protection, recreation, and heritage appreciation. This brief proposes the size and configuration of park necessary to meet these objectives.

A SPECIAL KIND OF PROTECTION

Wilderness parks are intended "to protect a system of provincially significant wilderness environments", including a range of undisturbed natural landscapes to represent the diversity of wildlife and landforms in Ontario.

This part of Ontario, classes as site regions 2W and 3W, are high priorities for a new wilderness park, because the boreal forest landscape is not well represented in existing parks.

To ensure that the plants and wildlife of the new park can be preserved as the surrounding area is increasingly disturbed, the principles of the World Conservation Strategy suggest that a relatively large, rounded (as opposed to linear), and well-connected area is necessary. The entire range of the small woodland caribou herd should be included, along with an area sufficiently broad to encompass the range of large predators such as wolves. As well, a wilderness park should be sufficiently large that a single fire would not convert it entirely to one age class of forest, even though fire should continue to play its vital ecological role in this boreal ecosystem.

The Ogoki-Albany park should include ecological features of special interest, such as the sand dunes and peatlands near Whitewater Lake, productive wildlife

habitats such as the Berg and Mischekow Rivers, the wild rice stands of Metig and Rockcliffe Lakes, and the speckled trout waters of the Albany and Mischekow. The productive alluvial soils along the Albany River valley provide a natural environment distinct from that in the shallower soils to the south.

Wherever possible, boundaries for the park should follow watershed lines to provide buffering from adjacent activities.

RECREATION TO REPLENISH THE SOUL

Wilderness recreation is characterized by "expansive solitude, challenge, and personal integration with nature". A series of studies carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources have identified watersheds of high recreation potential. Areas such as Smoothrock, Wabikimi, Kenoji, and Whitewater serve as canoe traffic nodes and can carry relatively heavy use. Others such as the Flindt, Allenwater, and Lookout provide special opportunities for white-water canoeing. Brennan, Granite, and Grayson watersheds provide many interconnected routes and excellent camping potential. More remote areas such as the Palisade and Montcrief reward the adventurous with scenic cliffs and special seclusion.

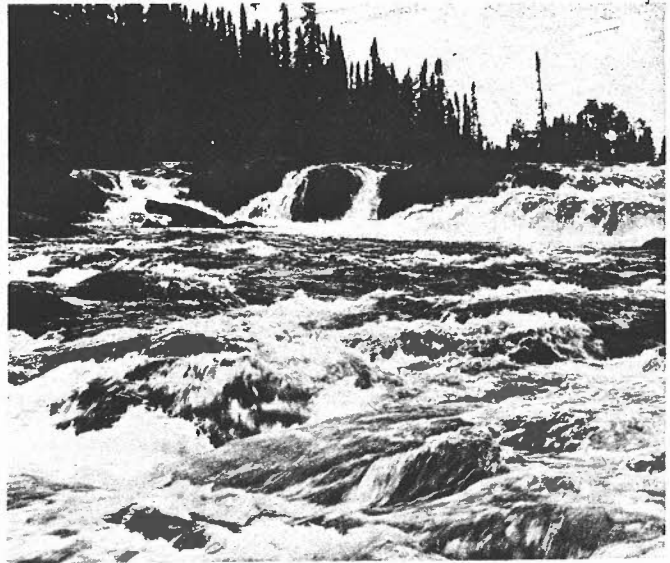
To allow wilderness trips of longer duration, the linkage through the Mischekow to the spectacular river canoeing of the Albany is crucial. Few other areas in Ontario combine the existence of rail or road access to the fringes of a wilderness park with the potential for such high-quality extended trips.

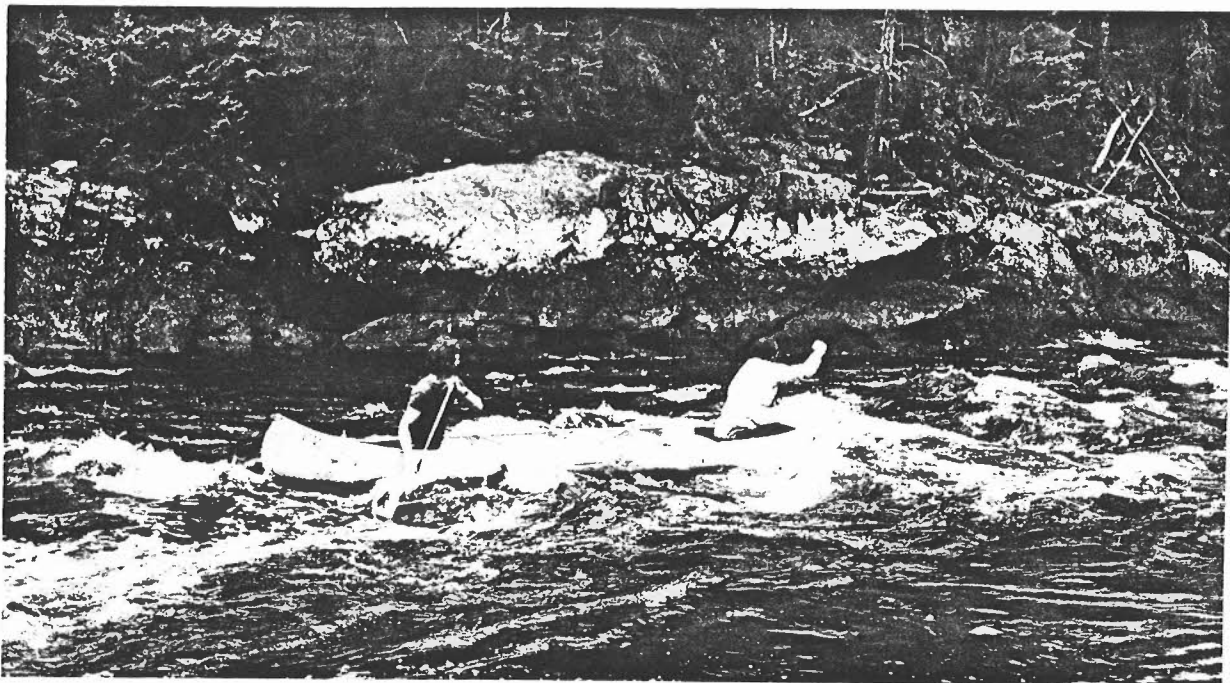
The demand for wilderness recreation, and the associated tourism benefits, are predicted to grow substantially in northwestern Ontario. Ogoki-Albany will play a significant role in meeting that demand. One of the special attractions of the Ogoki-Albany wilderness is the extensive opportunity for white water river canoeing, which has limited potential in existing parks such as Quetico.

A HERITAGE TO BE CHERISHED

The heritage objective of wilderness parks is "to provide opportunities for unstructured individual exploration and appreciation of the wilderness heritage of Ontario." That heritage in Ogoki-Albany includes remnants of the fur trade days on rivers such as the Albany; ancient pictographs (rock paintings) on Brennan and Wabikimi Lakes and the Palisade River; Indian grave sites on the Albany and Nemo Rivers as well as Lower Wabikimi and Rockcliffe Lakes; and the continuing native usage of wild rice stands in the Metig and Rockcliffe Lake areas.

The natural heritage of this area is perhaps best expressed in the beautiful and remote sections such as the Tew and Montcrief watersheds, and the southern channel of the Albany around Kagami Island. As well, the collection of the cultural heritage of the area contained in the Wendell Beckwith residence on Whitewater Lake could become a focus for interpretation of the history of this region.





A BOUNDARY AND A BUFFER

The challenge of establishing boundaries for a wilderness park is to incorporate all of the elements necessary for a viable park, while not conflicting unduly with other uses of the northern landscape. In this case, it is proposed that this challenge can best be met by defining both a wilderness park, pared down to the minimum feasible size, and a series of buffer zones, in which resource extraction activities could take place under restricted conditions.

The Ogoki-Albany park proposed here will include the critical caribou habitats, most of the areas of high recreational potential, the crucial linkages between the Ogoki watershed and the Albany River corridor, and many of the features of special biophysical and heritage significance.

Buffer zones are proposed along the major access routes from the west and the Brightsands River to the south; in the corridor between the railway tracks and the Kopka River to the south, and along the watersheds adjacent to Smoothrock and Whitewater Lakes to the east. In these buffer zones, forest extraction would be modified to reduce visual and noise conflicts. Major haul roads would not be permitted, although feeder roads for seasonal use would be necessary. Existing recreational developments could remain, and outfitting operations being phased out of the park itself could relocate. Mining, trapping, hunting, and motorboat activities would be permitted as well in most areas, subject to specific management guidelines drawn up to protect the park.

In some parts of the buffer, smaller waterway parks and nature reserves should be established to protect key features. For example, waterway parks on the Kopka, Little Savant, and Montcrief River areas should be investigated. Nature reserve status for areas such as the dune-peatland complexes east and south of Whitewater Lake should also be established.

This proposal would result in a wilderness park of approximately 561,000 hectares. This is slightly larger than Quetico, about one-third smaller than Algonquin, and only about a quarter the size of Polar Bear Provincial Park.



MINIMIZING THE CONFLICTS

Although a large portion of the proposed park is under license to Great Lakes Forest Products Limited, its viability as a commercial wood producing area is in serious question. Mr. Andrew Gordon, a professional forester from the Ministry of Natural Resources who analyzed part of the park area, reported that "Ecologically, timber harvesting in this area, especially large clear-cutting operations, could be disastrous. With the present knowledge of silvicultural practices on these sites, silvicultural regeneration of most sites would be impossible."

Approximately 352,000 hectares or 6.3% of the total area licensed to Great Lakes, is included in the proposed park. However, large sections of this acreage consist of bare and shallow bedrock, of swampland, and of sites on shallow soils or boulder tills that are not suitable for harvesting. The area of commercially valuable forest is more likely to be in the range of 50,000 hectares, with a potential yield of about a million cunits.

While this represents about one year's supply of wood to Great Lakes' Thunder Bay mills, it is a quantity that could be replaced from operations on the former "Reed tract," now allocated to Great Lakes. The only potential conflict with future mining activities is along the Miskow River. Only 1-2% of the areas of high mineral potential in the north-western planning region are involved.

A number of fly-in outfitter's cabins are located within the park area. It is proposed that these be permitted to continue as a non-conforming use, provided that no expansion or additions are permitted, that owners be given the option of relocation or buy-out at a fair price, that provision for restriction of motorboat size and area of operations be included in the park master plan, and that all operations except those deemed necessary for winter recreation or research be phased out over the next twenty years. Existing operators should also be encouraged and assisted in converting their business into guiding activities more compatible with wilderness use.



Traditional native uses should be permitted to continue in the park, including hunting, trapping, and non-mechanized wild rice harvest. As well, existing traplines by either whites or natives should be continued until either the trapper dies or ceases to use the trapline.

Any other potentially conflicting activities within the park should be governed by the Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies.

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Photos: George Luste



onaping lake - biscotasing area

Lennabelle Winn

Though many choose trips that travel from point "A" to point "B" following the downward flow of water, there are those who sometimes prefer a different kind of travel by canoe. There is also anticipation of enjoyment in planning a trip with only general guidelines and then just "letting it happen." Such was our two-person, single canoe trip in the Onaping and Biscotasing area.

We were fortunate enough to be able to spend an entire month on the water. We spent about two weeks in the Onaping area, exploring Lake Onaping north to the height of land. In choosing a fairly large, accessible lake in which to paddle, one does meet the occasional motor-boat-outfitted fishermen. On this trip we had the pleasure of visiting with several gentlemen who had been doing fly-in fishing in this area long before the road access was built. They inquired if we carried a gun to ward off the bears and "did we really carry all that gear and the canoe across the portages?"

Other evidence of the fly-in party were met at a remote lake several days travel north of the access point. In this swampy lake, the only area flat and dry enough to be camped on was festooned with a balsam bed, empty cans of pork and beans and trees decorated with playboy pin-ups. (I have surmised that the previous tenants thought they were so remote that surely no one else would come this way for many years. Thus should they take little care of the wilderness environment.)

One of the treats of just looking at the map and saying lets try to go there today, is that you never know how accessible (or non-accessible) the route is. One is often forced to bushwack. You soon find that you are pretty agile at jumping from hummock to hummock in a marsh, dragging the canoe along the "ground." Finding or making camp in a "non-canoeing" area also has its challenges and rewards. It does provide one with the opportunity to do "no trace" camping, finding a level patch on which to camp and leaving the site with no signs (other than footsteps) of your having used it.

Travelling south and then east, we eventually made our way up the uninviting shoreline of Scotia Lake to the headwaters of the Wanapitei where a trickle of water provided several runnable rapids. Where the Wanapitei begins its meandering course through a day's travel of marsh, we took a day off from paddling. We walked that day, hiking along the CN line where we had an extremely interesting visit with a retired "city" gentleman who had homesteaded in this area about fifty miles north of Sudbury.

Eventually we returned to our starting point at Lake Onaping, to begin the second leg of the month's journey. We arranged with a local scout leader in Cartier to drive in to the "Elbow" on the Spanish River to pick us up at the end of the trip. Then we boarded the "Budd" special to Biscotasing and spent another two weeks travelling the lakes and creeks in this area. Again, off the beaten track of most canoeists who use Bisco as their starting point for the Spanish or Mississagi River, we travelled in areas little seen by the river canoeists. It was quite a surprise, after having been out nineteen days and covered three hundred and fifty kilometres, when we saw a portage signmarking the Mississagi route. I have to admit that following, or attempting to follow, blazed trails that had not been cleared for several years had a little more adventure to it.

The float down the Spanish was a lazy way to end the month long vacation. And, since the water was low, the impression of sitting in a ditch all day was increased as was the frequency of scraping on the river bottom.

This entire adventure took place within a hundred kilometres of Sudbury and in an area populated by small railroad towns and lodges. Yet, because we chose routes less travelled by, we were able to experience remoteness and solitude of a kind seldom found on our well used river systems. The following trip song further summarizes this pleasant style of tripping.

"Bisco Paddling Song"

To the tune of "Tramps and Hawkers"

Come north with me to Bisco town, we'll take the CPR
Canoes and paddles and packs aboard, we'll ride the
baggage car
We'll struggle over forgotten trails where deadfalls
block the way
Then we'll pitch the tent in a berry patch and toast
another day

Chorus:

Come north with me, come north and see this wild and
rugged land.

Come north where Onaping stretches out it's fourty
miles of lake
Where fallen birches and toppled pines still mark the
high winds' wake
Where Muldrew Bay makes you want to stay but Vondett
Creek calls on
And the thought of pickeral for breakfast lures the
angler out at dawn

Come north with me, come north and see this wild and
rugged land.

Come north where waterfowl build their nests. See
how they guard their young
The frantic dance of a frightened loon will startle
anyone
The whimpering grouse ruffs defiantly. The sea gulls
dive and scream
And the mother duck with the broken wing decoys us
down the stream

Come north with me, come north and see this wild and
rugged land.

Come north where quiet is filled with tiny sounds on
windless nights
Where the solitude and the timelessness are trippings
pure delights
And after paddling upwind for hours, portages long
and rough
There's contentment putting the weary back to bed
on leafy duff

Come north with me, come north and see this wild and
rugged land.



news briefs

FALL WORKSHOP WEEKEND

Reserve the weekend of October 2 -4 for the WCA Fall Workshop Weekend at Bark Lake, near Kinmount. The basic format will be:

Friday Evening: Slides & films.

Saturday: Workshops, and in the evening Live Entertainment for wilderness enthusiasts.

Sunday: Outings.

Full details will be provided in a letter in late August. In the meantime, circle these dates on your calendar.

DEADLINE FOR AUTUMN ISSUE

Articles, trip reports, book reviews, equipment comments, etc. are needed for our next issue. We would particularly like stories and photographs of members' summer trips. Please send material to the editor by August 30 for inclusion.

ARCTIC EXPEDITION BOOK

David Pelly's book, EXPEDITION: An Arctic Journey Through History on George Back's River, about his trip down the Back River to Pelly Lake (See the December 1977 issue of the Wilderness Canoeist.) is being published by Betelgeuse Books. The book should be released this fall.

DUMOINE RIVER TRIP

One more team of experienced whitewater paddlers is being sought for a trip on the Dumoine June 28 - July 4. Three or four days may be spent on the Petawawa River. Contact Jamie Jennings in Toronto day 416-366-2741, or evenings 416-967-4171.

POWDERED EGGS

Gord Fenwick reports that powdered eggs are available in Toronto from Kwinter Packers Ltd. 367 Spadina Ave. Phone: 416-977-7087.

SPORTSMEN'S SHOW 1981

Thanks to the efforts of many members our display at the Sportsmen's Show was again a success. Considerable interest was stimulated, not only in the WCA, but also in the proposed wilderness parks - Ogoki-Albany and Lady Evelyn - featured at the booth. The maps seem to remain the feature of greatest interest, with many passersby wanting to pick out their favourite lake or river. If preliminary estimates hold up, it appears that the booth will even be a modest financial success (thus lessening the strain on Rob Butler's ulcers).

While many others contributed indirectly, we would particularly like to thank the following for contributions of time and/or equipment: Anneke & Dave Auger, Sandy Barnard, Graham Barnett, Tom Boardman, Claire Brigden, Rob Butler, Sandy Button, Bob Cherniak, Penny Clarke, Norm Coombe, John Cross, Diana Dennis, Ken Ellison, Gord Fenwick, Paul Fuller, Jim Greenacre, Barry Greenwald, George Haeh, Nelson & Bill King, George Luste, Paula & Blain Martin, Bob McLelland, Rita & Bill Ness, Sue Silverman, Glenn Spence, Ted Steeves, Duncan Taylor, Carol Thwaites, Jan Tisot, John Waller, and Howard Wickett & family. Special thanks to Anne Snow who took on the heavy job of organizing the staffing of the booth.

As I shall be assuming a less-active role in next year's show, a transfusion of new blood is going to be needed. Any members with time or talent to donate (in truth, more of the former than the latter is necessary) please contact me or one of the other directors.

Bill King

DIRECTORS REPORT

A directors' meeting was held on April 25th at Dave Auger's home in Lindsay.

Membership stands currently at: 153 Adult, 37 Family, and 1 Student. This represents a considerable drop from last year, however it was pointed out that the trend has been for renewals to drift in over the summer (40 last year between May and September). To stimulate the forgetful, a reminder will be mailed out with the next newsletter to those who have not renewed.

The treasury figures would seem to indicate that we have sufficient funds to cover our expenses for the rest of the year. The auditor's report was received, and special thanks were voted to Werner Bache for his labours.

A report was received from the Sportsmen's Show Committee. Our display was, in general, well received and preliminary figures indicate a modest profit. Suggestions from members that a brochure be developed, outlining the WCA's aims and activities were discussed. A draft brochure will be prepared and considered at a future meeting. Names were suggested as possible new blood for the Sportsmen's Show Committee, and these people will be contacted. A minimum of two new people will be required.

Interest has been expressed in developing WCA crests and/or decals. Preliminary information suggests that this could be done for a reasonable inventory cost. Specific details will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Fall meeting was discussed. It will be held at the Bark Lake Leadership Centre October 3 and 4. A workshop format is again planned. Topic suggestions include: demonstrations of equipment, make-it-yourself

kits etc., a "how I do it" session on all aspects of outdoor activities, wilderness navigation and route planning, a guest speaker for Saturday evening, and outings for Sunday.

The Annual Meeting was also discussed. The last meeting showed a loss because we had to commit in advance for more people than actually attended. For the 1982 meeting, our feeling was that we would go back to the idea of a weekend-long meeting combining both business and activities at the Frost Centre if it is available. If not, we will continue with the one-day business meeting, this time in the Toronto area.

Incorporation is proceeding at a snail's pace. We are now stuck over the use of the word "Association", whose legal interpretation may prevent us from incorporating in Ontario. The alternative of Federal incorporation is being investigated.

Directors were assigned to act as liaison with the various committees. Glenn Spence will "liaise" with the Outings Committee, Bill King with the Sportsmen's Show Committee, Dave Auger with the Conservation Committee, and Dave Berthelet with the AGM Planning Committee.

A volunteer is needed to represent the WCA at the Conservation Council of Ontario meetings held in Toronto on the last Wednesday morning of each month. New members are also needed to help Jerry Hodge and the Conservation Committee. Members who might not want to commit the time for full membership on the committee are encouraged to contact Jerry and perhaps to make written submissions about areas of concern for inclusion in the newsletter.

Bill King

CANOE ROUTES OF ONTARIO

Ministry of Natural Resources, Parks &
Recreational Areas Branch
Publisher: McClelland & Stewart

Reviewed by: John Cross

The subtitle identifies the book as "the definitive guide to more than 100 canoe routes throughout the province." It isn't, of course — definitive, I mean. No route guide could be in Ontario, which used to be described on Ministry Stationery as "The Land of 250,000 Lakes." It is, however, the first Ministry catalogue of its own route descriptions since Northern Ontario Canoe Routes became out dated. The Ministry has never before catalogued its Southern Ontario offerings, though private writers have (Nick Nickels in Canoe Canada; most MNR routes at the time of its writing; Scott & Kerr in Canoeing in Ontario; MNR and Conservation Authorities plus ponds and reservoirs for first-timers; Roger Smith in Canoeing the Rivers of Central and Southern Ontario; rivers WCA members have canoeed and enjoyed; the DVKC in their River Guide).

It will naturally be asked, how complete is it? The answer is, from our point of view, not very. A glance at the WCA outings list will show many routes which are quite popular with our members which the MNR has not explored, or at least not described in a public hand-out. Responsibility for which routes to include rested, I have learned, with the district offices, and reasons for not including a known route ranged from danger (from whitewater, fences, etc.) to insufficient budget money to recheck and update the guide. I did not learn, however, the particular reasons behind the omission of the Crowe River, Magnetawan branch routes, Kwatabbahegan River, upper Berens River, Pipestone River, Pukaskwa River, Witchwood - Attwood - Marten Drinking - Wapitotem route, or the Otoskwin - Attawapiskat Rivers, all of which the MNR has described in mimeographed route-guides available to the public. The Napanee and Salmon were surveyed by the Conservation Authority and deliberately excluded; the Madawaska, now that it has been signed "park", will probably be included in the second edition. We will, for our own routes, continue to do as we've done before: pick them off the map, use the MNR guides for those segments of our chosen route that are covered, and expect to find these segments more heavily travelled than those we've found for ourselves.

However, the catalogue had to be designed for everybody — which means in practice for anybody. Even if some long-distance wilderness routes are included, neophytes are bound to make up the majority of users, so that route abstracts have had to tread a fine line — between saying too little (which could lead a beginner to suppose that all routes are equal — cf. Gord Fenwick's telephone acquaintance who felt ready for the Ashweig after a day on the Credit) and saying too

much (which some beginners might understand as all the information they need). So it is that the topo maps for each route were deliberately omitted — so that seekers would be forced to go through the MNR district offices for the information.

We have often debated the advisability of publishing a canoe route list available to everybody, with the nays predominating. (Roger Smith's booklet was restricted to WCA members.) However, if one accepts the premise that canoeing, or the public, is well served by a universally available catalogue (as the MNR's decision to publish commercially shows it to do), the book must be judged on its presentation system: descriptions, ratings, cautions, and disclaimers. In this respect, the catalogue does very well. The introduction warns that it is not a navigational guide and urges that the district offices be consulted for specific descriptions of each route. Each entry then warns of unusual hazards along the way, and points out how conditions will vary with water level. The "rating" is broken down into four difficulty or danger categories: river portions, lake portions, portages, and remoteness. The river ratings assume all rapids will be lined or portaged, where possible (which is just as well; the self-rating inflation going on among novices — scratch-intermediates — scratch — experts makes public rapid rating a heavy responsibility). After giving the number of portages en route, like most guidebooks, this one then appends a list of particularly long or otherwise gruesome ones.

For the same reason that some reject route lists altogether, the compilers are wary of the effect of hordes of picnickers descending on the waterways, and have included sections on safety and low-impact camping. The bibliography concentrates on nature guidebooks, but otherwise is not overly long (only Bill Mason's 5 films are listed under "films"). It is true that a more extensive bibliography would be out of place here, but access to other bibliographies (like Adventure Bookshelf) would seem to me desirable; given the brevity of the Further Information list, a novice could be completely dependent on Canoe Ontario to broaden his vision of the world of canoeing. (While talking on the phone to a staff member who was "compiling a resource list this summer", I learned that she had never heard of Scott & Kerr or Nick Nickels.)

The layout of the book I found attractive, with a few good photographs in the section "Geography of Canoeing in Ontario". It will be more attractive still when a photo from each route is supplied, which is the purpose of the blank white spaces at the top of every page. The full-size fold-out map, though, seems unnecessary, since it duplicates the sectional maps found throughout the book.

How a readily available, extensive list will affect canoe route use patterns remains to be seen. Until it is, the debate on the merits of preparing such a list will continue. From the 'yea' school, Canoe Routes of Ontario is a careful and attractive product.

THE WHITEWATER CANOEIST

Whitewater ahead!

Bill King Jr.,

The faint whisper
of wind
in the trees.
The silent swish
as a paddle
slides through the water.
The sun,
glaring off the green water,
dances deceptively.
Suddenly,
the silent waters
strengthen
and gain speed.

His small craft
is carelessly tossed around
by the power of the current.
Cross draw.
Low Brace.
Duffek.
The strokes come naturally
as he quickly chooses
the safest channel.
The clash of metal
on rocks
as he abruptly meets
an unforeseen obstruction.

Soon the end
is in sight.
Through the last
chute
to the haven below.
He turns and
and laughs aloud,
for he has won...
this time.



Jerry Hodge

ACID RAIN

In 1962, Rachael Carson wrote a definitive book on the evils of DDT. It was a well-researched, thoroughly convincing survey of a serious ecological disaster occurring in the United States at the time. The problems were, at first, roundly condemned as alarmist by business interests and government ecologists but over the next few years as it became clearer that DDT was damaging the egg shells of major bird species, that concentrations were increasing in the fatty tissues of many animals, that human flesh would not pass government tests as an edible meat because of the pesticide it contained, measures were taken to remove DDT and other pesticides from the market. Testing procedures were tightened up and new products required more rigorous testing. Twenty years later new names have appeared in the news like dioxin, 2,4-D and Agent Orange, PCB's and mercury. But we are now better equipped by government regulation and by public awareness to deal with them. Miss Carson's book, "Silent Spring", was a powerful mover of governments and people. It appears we need a new book for a new sort of problem for which we do not have government regulations nor public support, Acid Rain.



Regions receiving acid rain.

Acid rain is an insidious poison. It is produced by some of our most powerful corporate enterprises both here and in the United States. There is every likelihood the problem will get worse through this decade and even into the next. Already the protectionists are beginning to defer, deflect and deny responsibility for the production of acid rain and for its effects. Governments are monitoring but seem unable to enforce their own environmental control orders. Smelters and power companies in Ontario have had abatement orders extended as companies continue to refuse to install equipment to scrub out toxic gases. Companies in the United States are expanding their facilities for burning high sulphur fuels to protect the country against escalating energy prices. Intergovernmental committees seem unable to make much headway, seem unable to convince us the problem is serious.



Approximate areas in North America containing lakes sensitive to acid precipitation

In the meantime, back at the lake, the accumulation of acid in the hard rock lakes

interferes with food chains, changes the number and type of organism and eventually kills all life in the lake except those plants and animals normally associated with bogs. Popular game fish are early victims ruining a large recreation industry in its acidic wake. As lakes die they become pathogenic, producing organisms of disease. Acidic water leaches minerals out of lakes, and out of copper pipes if it is left standing in it. In lakes the mineral, aluminum, has been implicated in fish death; in water pipes leached copper is simply poison for us.

KILLARNEY- ACID RAIN PARK

Killarney Provincial Park has just recently been in the news because of the Killarney Road, a highway of dubious merit, which was to cut through one of the most beautiful sections of Ontario wilderness. Killarney is spectacular country. The LaCloche range of white quartzite mountains slice across from east to west leaving dotted in its valleys perhaps fifty clear, blue lakes. The area was painted extensively by the Group of Seven to give it a little culture and several lakes bear their illustrious names. One of the lakes named in the 1950's is called Acid Lake. The Fisheries Research Board have been testing the Killarney Lakes' acidity for a long time. H.H. Harvey and R. Beamish have produced the following chart in a recent article for and international conference on Acid Rain in Norway:

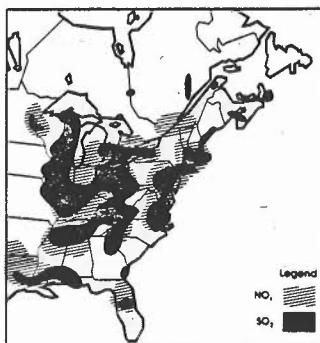
Table 1. Decline in pH of selected La Cloche Mountain Lakes

LAKE	pH 1961	pH 1971	LAKE	pH 1959	pH 1971
Broker	6.8	4.7	Grey	5.6	4.1
David	5.2	4.3			
George	6.5	4.7			
Johnnie	6.8	4.8			
Lumsden	6.8	4.4	Tyson	7.4	4.9
O.A.S.	5.5	4.3			
Spoon	6.8	5.6			
St. Mary's	4.8	4.4			

I find it quite ironic that the Killarney Road went down in a hail of environmental bullets while the Ministry of the Environment seems powerless to stop a much more serious depletion of the natural environment of this area.

DILUTION - THE CORPORATE SOLUTION

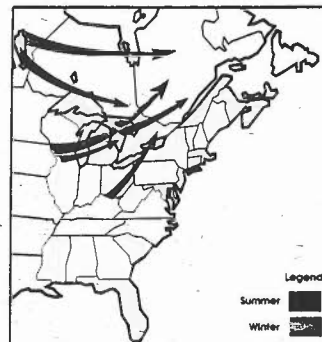
The critical mistakes of the sixties and seventies was embodied in the expression: "Dilution is the solution to pollution". Since monitoring activities for pollution are near the ground and since the smell from your local Hydro installation wafting in your kitchen window or covering your car with ash gave the public clear targets for criticism, the corporate planners hit upon a lofty superstack to carry the noxious gases and ash up into the upper reaches to fall 'diluted and harmless' upon distant lands. The toxins were safe from local air monitors and nasal tissue.



Distribution of emissions of Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) and Nitrous Oxides (NO_x)

The effects of those decisions are now being felt in Scandinavia and in Ontario, New York and other northern states. These areas are in the path of increasing numbers of smelter and power generator emissions. The pollutants end up in air masses which usually move north-east up the Atlantic seaboard and collect moisture laterally from the Atlantic as they move north.

The rains with which eastern Canada is blessed now contain the exhausts of hundreds of American companies and some Canadian ones as well. As the pollutants move away from their sources it is more and more difficult to prove their source and in large and complex air masses the sources of the pollution are impossible to determine. Whether the pollutants remain as a gas or fall as acids in rainfall, they have a very powerful toxic effect on food webs in aquatic environments, on the growth of some plants on car bodies and buildings and on human health.



Important Summer and Winter storm paths

SOURCES

The copper-nickel smelter complex in Sudbury generates one percent of the world's output of sulphur dioxide per annum. The areas around Sudbury in the lee of the prevailing winds from the 400 metre INCO stack show serious environmental damage. Lichens, crusty growths found on rocks and tree trunks are very susceptible to sulphur dioxide pollution. Lichens are missing from the urban environments of most North American cities. The rocks of Sudbury not only have no lichen growth, they are blackened in areas of high deposition of acids. The moonscape around Sudbury reached the heights of unwanted notoriety when it was used by NASA for test trials of the Apollo moon buggy!

In the late 70's the Ontario government gave INCO a control order which was to reduce the level of Sulphur Dioxide emissions to 750 tons per day. These standards were relaxed so that up until the middle of 1983 INCO is permitted to emit 2,500 tons per day, which is more than 900,000 tons per year. The wind patterns around Sudbury carry some of the acidic pollution to Killarney Park.

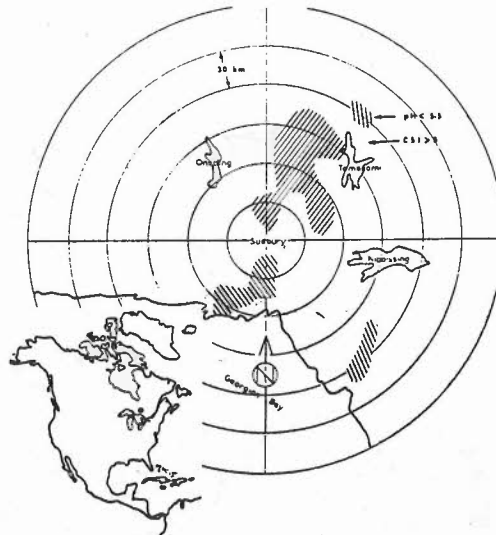
Another major polluter is Ontario Hydro. High sulphur coal from Pennsylvania is the primary source of Ontario's coal-fired plant's energy. Hydro has five coal-fired plants: Nanticoke, Lakeview, Thunder Bay, Lambton and Windsor. Pennsylvania coal is washed before firing to reduce sulphur content and in sensitive areas such as Toronto low sulphur coal from the West is used extensively. Pennsylvania coal is more than 2% sulphur and over seven million tons is burned in these five plants annually. The environmental load from this coal is in the vicinity of 400,000 tons per year of sulphur dioxide!

Car exhausts contribute another load of acid creators to the air. While burning gasoline engines also convert atmospheric nitrogen and sulphur traces into nitrogen and sulphur oxides. The amount of acid rain generated by the auto has been estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 800,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 20,000 tons of sulphur oxides in Canada per year.

In total, the production of acid rain components in Ontario is in the vicinity of 1.5 million tons per year.

The production of acid rain components in the U.S. that is dropped in Canada by air movements is estimated to be at least that same amount, 1.5 million tons per year. Major sources are in the Ohio valley and from power companies along the Eastern seaboard. A Research Consultation Group is currently working on the transboundary pollution

Distribution of low pH (< 5.5) and sensitive (CSI > 3 < 5) lakes in the greater Sudbury area. Note the northeast-southwest bias to low pH lakes. A similar pattern with a reduced perimeter exists for nickel at > 10 µg/l and copper at > 20 µg/l.



problem. The committee has members from both the U.S. and Canadian Federal governments. They are looking at the LRTAP problem: the long-range transport of air pollutants. U.S. involvement has been characterized by foot-dragging BUT recently New York and Pennsylvania are taking several Southern States to court for reducing the air quality in the two states below the acceptable standard. The Canadians are looking at that one with interest.

WHAT IS ACID RAIN ANYHOW?

What goes up into the atmosphere from stacks and exhausts is not exactly what comes down. In the atmosphere sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides are combined with water to form sulphuric acid and nitric acid. The acids form the nucleus around which droplets of cloud can form and when the moisture in the cloud reaches a critical level it is released as rain or snow. In their fall dissolved gases can be added to the rain but most (80%) of the acids are formed before the rain falls.

Normal rainfall is acidic anyway because it contains carbonic acid formed from carbon dioxide. This acidity is considered natural and produces a pH of 5.6 in 'pure' rainfall. Any additional acidity is considered to define the rainfall as acidic.

pH requires a few words of explanation. It is a common measure of acidity and alkalinity. The scale has a mid-point of 7 which is considered neutral. As the pH is lowered the solution, or body of water is considered to be more acidic.

The complication is that as the pH lowers from 7 to 5 the acidity has increased ten-fold, from 7 to 5 is a one hundred-fold increase in acidity. A body of water with a pH of 4 is one thousand times more acidic than one with a pH of 7. For an environmentalist it is important to know that each numerical reduction increases the acidity tenfold. Rainfall in Ontario is characteristically ten to fifty times more acidic than "normal" rain. A rainfall in Scotland in 1974 had a pH of 2.4, the strength of vinegar.

WHY SOME LAKES AND NOT OTHERS?

Some lakes and soils have the natural ability to neutralize acid rain. Lakes found on the hard rock of the Canadian shield in Muskoka, Haliburton and points north have the little protection from the strong acidity of current rainfall. Lakes in the Kawartha will have little trouble neutralizing acids from some time to come. The key to the difference is limestone. The chemical composition of limestone provides a natural mineral that acts as a buffer, calcium carbonate. It has the capacity to collect the acidity in acid rain and neutralize it. Hard rock lakes have little of this chemical occurring naturally. In Sweden attempts have been made to save the river system, Hogvadsen. Over a four year period over 10,000 tons of calcium carbonate have been added in various ways to the lakes and rivers of the watershed. The experiment kept the pH of the river system in the vicinity of 6 and permitted salmon to survive and breed. The cost for such a venture in Ontario would be astronomical.

In areas receiving high levels of acidic precipitation the pH of streams and lakes often reaches their maximum acidity during the early stages of snow melt. The adverse effects of the acidity has been documented in salmon in Nova Scotia, trout, snails, insect larva and algae in Norway and Sweden and suckers and pike in Northern Ontario. The acid released in the snow when it begins to melt lowers the pH very rapidly at a time when many organisms are producing eggs or returning from some form of hibernation. The effect is selective. Some organisms are more susceptible than others and some age groups are more affected than other age groups. The effect is missing elements in the food chain and missing age groups from some fish populations. The resulting changes in the structure of the food web in a lake permits other more resistant organisms to bloom. The lake begins to support quite a different mix of organisms for a while until all of them succumb and the lake is dead. In Plastic Lake where this event is occurring a report last year indicated some of the replacement bacteria were harmful to man.

METAL POISONING

As the research into acid rain continues the effects have been seen to broaden. Effects on crops, forest floors, tree growth and specific plants show the changes caused by acid rain. One of the more recent findings has to do with metals. Some of the metals come from the smelters and power stations in the form of impurities in their exhaust. Flin Flon, Manitoba delivers things like Copper, Lead, Iron, Cadmium, Aluminum and Arsenic to the surroundings in its plume. Acids are used commercially to extract some metals from their ores. In a lake the same process can extract metals from the lake sediments and deposit them in the water itself. Aluminum has been identified as a contributor to fish death by interfering in two different ways with their ability to breathe. Acid water standing in a copper pipe can leach metal from the pipe overnight and become a toxic glass of water first thing in the morning. Cottagers should flush their systems each morning in acidic lakes if they have copper plumbing.

MORE INFORMATION

A group called the Waterloo Public Interest Research Group has produced a fine book which chronicles in more detail some of the findings, called Acid Rain, The Silent Crisis published by and available from

Between the Lines
97 Victoria Street N
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

The next Conservation Report will discuss the politics of Acid Rain. If you have any comments about the matter of controlling acid rain and the work the WCA can do about it, please drop me a line.

nature

OLIVE SIDED FLYCATCHERS

Just about every visitor to Algonquin, and certainly every canoeist, has heard the rousing and yet strangely sad, whistled call "Quick, three beers!" come drifting across a boggy bay or from the tip of a tall, dead spire high overhead. It is a beautiful, lonely call which, for many people, is every bit as characteristic of Algonquin Park's wild and secret places as gaunt black spruce gently swaying in the breezes of early summer.

The source of the call, the olive-sided flycatcher, is not well known, nor could you ever consider it striking in appearance. (It isn't just the sides that are dull olive—the same goes for the head, the wings, the back, and the tail). Nevertheless, we would venture to say, especially in mosquito season, that any bird called a "flycatcher" just has to be of more than passing interest. We need all the help we can get!

Trusting in flycatchers for deliverance from the insect hordes is at least partly justified. For example, if you watch an olive-sided flycatcher for a while you will soon realize that it routinely spots, at distances of one-hundred metres or more, insects that you can't see at all. Within seconds the flycatcher has zoomed out to its prey, snapped it up, and flown back to a suitable perch. Even on the rare occasions when the insect sees the olive-sided coming and takes evasive action the result is the same. When it has to, the flycatcher is capable of seemingly effortless but nonetheless lightning-fast manoeuvres which are more than a match for any insect. In fact, when you get right down to it, the olive-sided (and flycatchers in

generally) are incomparably more efficient and deadly predators than say, wolves or eagles, both of which more often than not fail to capture their intended prey.

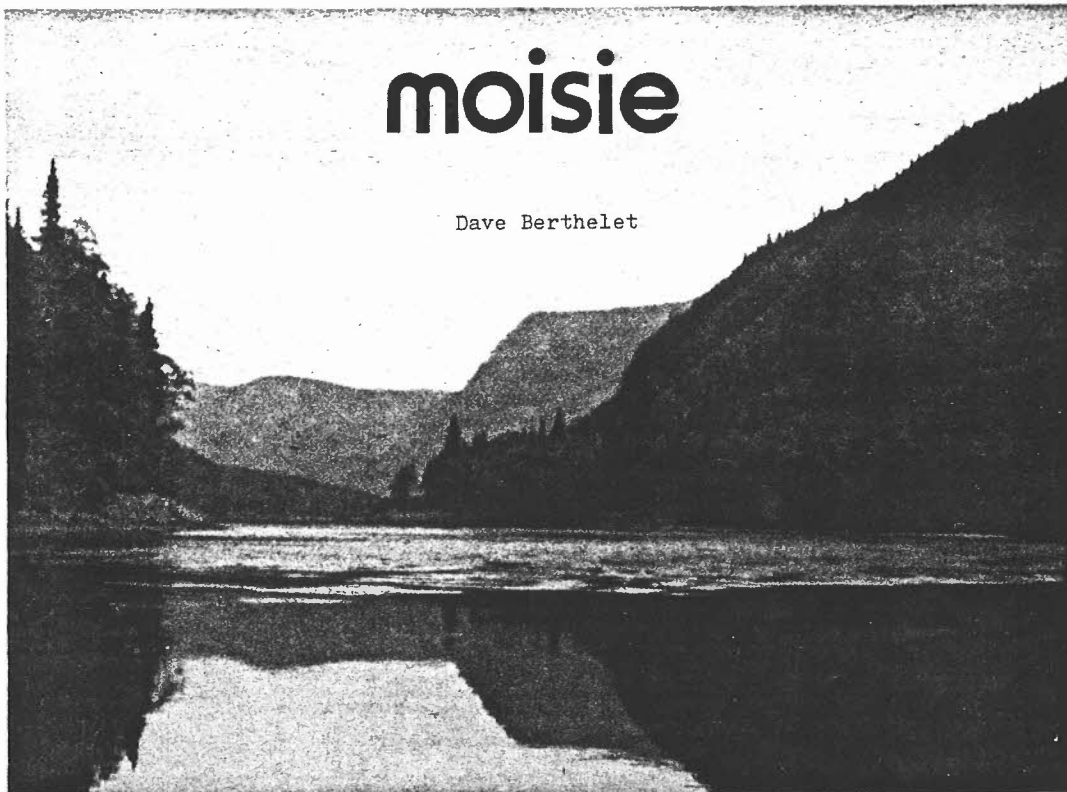
These powers are undeniably impressive but as you continue to watch, you will become uncomfortably aware (because of all the mosquitoes biting you, if for no other reason) that your olive-sided flycatcher is not having much of an effect on the local insect population. The trouble is that it spends far too little time pursuing insects and far too much time sitting around whistling "Quick, three beers".

A close examination of its diet, furthermore, would show that the olive-sided almost never bothers with insects as small as the mosquitoes which plague us these days. Instead, it goes after big game like bees and large flies. This may be disappointing to anyone who hoped olive-sided flycatchers would be prolific mosquito consumers, but it is a good strategy for the olive-sided. After all, why fly a hundred metres for a tiny mosquito when the capture of a large fly instead would give a far greater return? The only drawback to the "big game" approach is that there are many fewer large insects than small ones. This explains why olive-sided flycatchers usually have to wait relatively long periods between successive insect-capturing flights and why they often fly such long distances when they do catch prey—suitable insects just don't happen along that often and when they do the flycatcher can't afford to wait and see if they will approach more closely.

It also explains why the olive-sided flycatcher needs exclusive hunting rights in a rather large territory and secures those rights by constant repetition of its loud, unmistakable call. It may sound like "Quick, three beers!" to us, but to the "intended" audience of other male olive-sided flycatchers, the call means something along the lines of "If you can hear me, Mack, you are already too close for your own good".

moisie

Dave Berthelet



This description is about the trip David Barthelet and Penny Clark took during the summer of 1980 between Labrador City, Labrador and Sept-Îles, Québec.

Large scale maps (1:250,000) give a global view and they were instrumental in revealing the alternatives we had for accessing the Moisie River: Ashaunipi Lake, De Mille Lake, Carheil River, and Pékans River. There are no roads into Labrador, and the Quebec North Shore and Labrador (QNS&L) Railway provides the only practical way of getting to the interior access points. Ashaunipi Lake is conveniently located along the track, but no doubt this route would offer the opportunity of sharpening orienting skills in navigating across a complex body of water, along with the challenge of finding a way over the height-of-land. De Mille Lake, accessed by leaving the train fifteen or so miles east of Labrador City, seems to be the easiest and most popular way of starting the trip. This course is more straightforward, and the portage over the crest of the watershed into the St. Lawrence drainage basin is perhaps less difficult. The Carheil River can be reached from Fermont, Québec (a small community not too far from Labrador City); however, this way would likely require the services of a truck to carry canoe and whatnot from Labrador City. Others have put in at Labrador City and paddled and bushwacked over to the Carheil. The way this was done is not altogether self-evident from the maps, and no doubt some interesting portaging would have been encountered along the way.

We chose the Pékans River route which can also offer some initial challenges: the QNS&L does not offer a timely service, and arrival at the destination is somewhat unpredictable. The trip from Sept-Îles can take between 6 and 14 hours and arrival at Labrador City can be anytime between mid afternoon and late evening.

There was little ceremony in their way of handling baggage. Everyone (a few hundred passengers) clustered around the door of the baggage car in a dark parking lot, while two rail employees working with flashlights handed out luggage in a seemingly unsystematic fashion to an eager group. They didn't open the freight car containing the canoe and gear until everyone else's luggage was distributed. Initially we didn't think this was such a good idea but as time passed we became less critical of the order in which the freight cars were opened because it reduced the chances of our canoe stuff being distributed amongst the town's folk. We heard from the crowd, "where is the rest of my luggage?", and the reply from the darkness within the car, "it's gone". By the time we got our equipment, it was an hour later. It was impossible to find transportation to our destination, in the middle of the night, because no one up there seemed to know that there was a river nearby called the Pékans intersected by an unknown road of questionable quality.

Detailed maps (scale 1:50,000) are bulky and a bit of a nuisance. The impracticality of having a puzzle to piece together each time a new map is needed (daily) was reduced by pasting them together in long lengths and unfolding them in such a way that the appropriate part of the river was exposed. Though the detailed maps were not

entirely necessary, they were handy in foretelling where impediments might be encountered on the river and how they might be dealt with. In addition, from this set of maps it was practical to plot the river's profile (graph recording the elevation on the vertical and distance on the horizontal axis displaying the change in elevation with respect to distance). The Moisie's profile revealed that the gradient of the river was steeper on the upper reaches and became progressively flatter towards the lower parts.

Initially, it was thought that there was a simple relationship between the distance travelled in a day and the steepness of the gradient. This notion proved to be too simple. The evenness of the gradient is also an important factor. An uneven gradient means that there will be portaging and stopping to lift out and carry over which reduces the daily mileage. Because of such complexities, it is not always possible to tell before a trip from the maps, precisely how much time will be required to complete the voyage.

There is always some uncertainty and therefore some apprehension at the planning stage. A river with the Moisie's reputation can raise the anxiety level with the result that it is possible to overestimate the time required to do the trip, and we ended up carrying out a little too much food.

On the average, the two of us covered 24 km a day. We had one 6 km day and a couple of 17 km days when we were on the Pékans where there was some long difficult bushwacking. The lower part of the Moisie contains less portaging and we had no difficulty doing 50 or 55 km on some days. Others reported having done 80 km or more on a good day. A reasonable formula, for us at least, seemed to count on doing 30 km on the average, and if some of the terrain looked tough (less than one inch between contour lines that intersect the river and perhaps with lots of falls and rapids indicated) to throw in an extra couple of days supply of food. It's difficult to forecast the time required to do the trip for if we felt confident enough to use the spray deck to run some adventure-some waters, we might have finished the trip a day or so earlier.

The terrain was tough and in places the portaging difficult which meant that good footwear (solid boots with lugs to grip) were essential. There was more danger associated with falling while carrying a canoe or a heavy pack at some delicate spot than there was with coming to grief on the river. Clothes reflected the rigours and because of the beating they took in 12½ days, it is doubtful that they'll see another big trip. Needle and thread were helpful in holding things together until we got back.

The day after we started down the Pékans, the weather changed. It stopped raining, the skies cleared and it was sunny and warm nearly all the time. At one of the fishing camps on the lower part of the Moisie, it was 21°C indoors at 10 a.m. and it was reported that by noon it got so warm the local Indian guides found the unusually hot weather unbearable.

There are other sources of concern. Labrador and the North Shore can offer some trying environmental conditions. The QNS&L rail clerk we telephoned to get some rail information asserted that it was COLD and WET and that the bugs were absolutely ferocious. We wondered whether or not we would be able to make fires in an area where it rained every day. We were also concerned about the clothing to bring, eg, how many pairs of socks and were long underwear and a sweater really necessary.

Rational and irrational fears are always present before a big trip. What if we get sick? What if we dump and lose everything? What if there are rapids without portages requiring skills greater than we can muster? Will the water level be too high or too low? Initially, our uneasiness of mind compelled us to perhaps be overly cautious. As the trip progressed, and we became more accustomed to the personality of the river, our skills improved, we began to work more smoothly as a team, the tempo became more relaxed, and the trip became more enjoyable.

We found that if we worked very quickly and were well organized we could break camp in the morning in 2 hours and set it up and have supper in 3. Thus at least 5 hours of every day were spent performing unavoidable domestic chores. Servicing the camp fire was time consuming but worth the effort for the smoke kept the bugs down, and its warmth was appreciated in the evening when the dew was settling. The fire was instrumental in raising the comfort level and in keeping us up after 8:30 when the sun went down. Characteristically at the end of the day we were more worn out than sleepy, and we had a tendency now and then to stay up for an extra hour to chat and watch the stars.

Our perception of the river differed to that of others. We had been prepared for a very demanding trip, approaching the limits of the capacity of open boats, but when we confronted the real thing, it was not quite as intimidating as we had imagined it would be. This may have been due to the extraordinarily fine weather we encountered. Two weeks of warm sunny days can do much to lower the level of the river and the degree of malaise associated with the challenge. The river is demanding in the sense that a well developed sense of judgement is required to make the run or not-to-run decisions. Generally, all the difficult rapids can be avoided by a more circuitous land route. A spray deck, the confidence, and the ability to run waters with large waves would certainly add to the fun of doing the river and the sense of accomplishment after having completed it.

We heard a lot of unsettling stories of people coming to grief on the river. Just about everyone we bumped into who knew something about the river had a nightmare story to tell about the unfortunate experiences of others. My notion is that many of these stories were about canoeists who became disgusted beyond endurance with the dirty, mean, boring work of portaging, and attempted to run chutes that perhaps just slightly exceeded their skills and the capacity of their canoes.

The portage or run decision is influenced by many things other than those dealing with the particular challenge at hand, eg, the weather, the number of canoes along, fatigue, the time of day, and the sense of stimulation or uneasiness from the last chute. Operating on the principle that we should not attempt anything unless both parties felt fully confident, we perhaps sometimes were too cautious but not agonizingly so.

During the first few days of the trip, we were somewhat apprehensive, and because we were alone we portaged frequently and avoided, in particular, stuff that would have resulted in water crashing over the decking. After a few days we were getting the knack of things and became more adroit with the coordinated use of paddle and could make the canoe do things it somehow couldn't do earlier. We became increasingly more willing to attempt heavier water. Towards the end of the trip, we were becoming almost daring at times and perhaps a bit over confident. We even commented that there wasn't enough grade IV water around our bailiwick to develop our skills, and if the trip had been a few days longer and the water sufficiently adventurous, we might have had a dumping tale to tell.

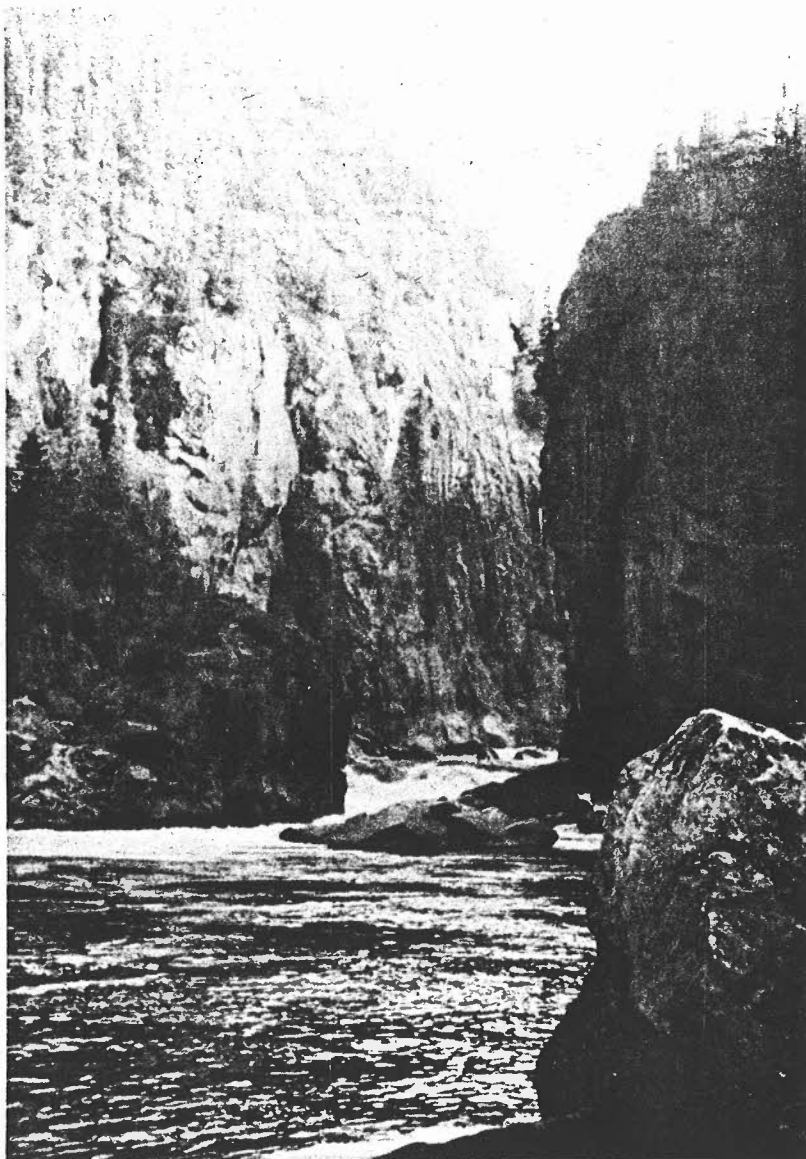
Fire seems to be very much a part of the natural scheme of things. Burns old and recent were everywhere. Some might say that the miles of standing dead were bleak, others might observe that it had an inherent beauty. We noted that the burns missed odd patches which remained lush. It was thought that these tended to be lower damp areas containing small tributaries of the Moisie, and being moist, avoided the ravages of flame. Many of the trees were only superficially burned. We were to find out later (from a wildlife biologist, with the Quebec Government, we met at one of the fishing camps) that these observations could be explained by the speed of the fire and the drafts created by it. The speed with which the fire travelled influences how extensively the trees would be burned and the drafts determine the path the fire would take and which areas would be spared. The updrafts would carry glowing embers up and when the air cooled the fragments would be carried to the opposite bank of the river, ensuring that both sides would be scorched.

Abundant young growth was effected from these burns and a large moose population resulted. At one point, near the Joseph River, we saw a bear cub along the shore. Its presence perhaps had more to do with the salmon in the river than the size of the bear population. Fishermen sometimes leave tasty morsels of their catch about, enticing the bears to remain nearby.

On the Pékans, deciduous trees were noticeably absent and the coniferous growth was small and scrubby by standards in the central and more southerly part of the country. In each area we passed through, there seemed to be a certain maximum size beyond which trees would not grow. As we travelled farther south, the constraint on size was less confining and the trees grew larger. Trees grow more slowly in a harsh climate because the season is shorter, but this does not fully explain why they do not grow after some upper limit.

The physical features of the ground changed as the trip progressed. When we were on the Pékans, the land tended to be sandy and lichen covered, and eskers were frequently observed. Near the Moisie, the composition of the landscape changed abruptly. Powerful earth shaping events took place here that resulted in a deep river valley being scooped out of the country-side.

Deciduous trees were first seen after our descent down the Moisie escarpment, and we got the impression that altitude was perhaps the determining factor in their presence. The farther we went down the river, the larger and healthier the trees became and the greater the proportion of deciduous trees in the escarpment, and the lichen which was omnipresent when we first started the trip seemed to be crowded out by the thicker growth.



One of the different things observed on the Moisie, were the cylindrical holes in the rock, typically at some impediment where a portage was necessitated. On one portage, high above the river we found a round hole 5 feet across and about 12 feet deep (we couldn't see the bottom because it was filled with stagnant water). It was thought that the world had not existed long enough for the waterworks to dissolve that such rock and for the river bed to erode as it did leaving the opening high on the escarpment. Pussling over this self-contradictory observation and observing other such holes, nearly all with an accumulation of small pebbles, we postulated that the process was caused by some hindrance in the river which redirected powerful hydraulics to drive the stones in a circular fashion and grind their way into the rock.

There are some turbulent waterfalls on the Moisie which would prevent or significantly reduce the number of salmon able to swim all the way up the river. About 32 km below the mouth of the Pékans, just above elevation 1050 (that point on the river where the 1050 foot contour line crosses the river), a set of falls occurs. Judging (with an inexperienced eye for such things) from the sight of the water there, it would seem unlikely that many salmon could make their way beyond this point. This was the first place where we saw evidence of salmon. One was seen attempting to jump up an impossible drop, and the signs on the beach there furnished proof of the superlative dining that occurred here earlier in the season.

A small salmon can run from 15 pounds (a whale of a fish) to as much as a 30 or 35 pound monster which could require as much as an hour to bring in. Canoeists planning to supplement their diet by this means should bring along heavy fishing gear, plan to fish in July, fish after 5 in the evening, and according to the guides use only the smallest of flies some of which should be yellow. Spoons are not allowed on the Moisie as this is supposed to make catching the salmon too easy. We did not find this to be the case.

The salmon don't consume any food while they are in the Moisie. Any insect or thing they snap at are thought to pass through their gills. In any case, it doesn't enter their stomachs. Consequently, they live off their oil from the time they arrive in July to the time they leave in October after spawning. (They wait for a water temperature of 4°C to spawn and this does not occur until then.) Presumably, it is the lack of oil in their bodies that makes them more tasty than anything found in frozen fish counters.

All the streams leading into the Moisie, including the Pékans, contain trout. The trout fishing is reported to be excellent at the mouths of these tributaries. Therefore both trout and salmon can be fished. Apparently, they bite best during periods of overcast rainy weather. When we went down the river, the weather was exceptionally fine and far too warm for fish to bite. That, at least, is how we account for our failure to catch any.

The day-to-day events are recorded below. Readers are warned, however, that they are based on foggy memories and scanty, illegible notes.



August 12, 1980

- spent the night in the truck in the parking lot of QNS&L railway station in Sept-Îles.
- people started to arrive at 5:30 a.m. By 6 a.m. a large group was there, and by 7 when the ticket office opened a rather large crowd was milling about.

August 13

- walked a mile back to town and arrived at a restaurant at 7:30 a.m. Within a few minutes, we were able to make contact with someone who knew an unemployed miner that might for a small sum (\$40), be willing to assume the risks associated with finding the Pékans.
- the trip to Mount Wright, an open pit operation, adjacent to the Pékans was uneventful. There is an excellent gravel road which passes through the Cartier Mining Company operation there. The ore is refined into iron concentrate before it is shipped, by rail, from the mine site down to the St Lawrence River. Lake Hesse located next to the refining plant is used as a retaining pond for the processing waste. There are some downstream effects from this. Judging from its colour (orange) and the unhealthy state of the vegetation along its banks, we assumed it was, by and large, lifeless.
- arrived at the Pékans at 12:40 p.m. to darkening skies, and after the canoe was loaded, spent a few minutes under the bridge there while showers passed over.
- as we headed out, we could hear the drone of far off diesel engines, and we could see the movement of large trucks on Mt. Wright about two miles away.

- it seemed that the train stopped at every conceivable spot to drop-off and to take on passengers. We were held up for a very long time while we waited for a maintenance crew to change a rail. We began to understand the significance of the notice in the rail station which stated that the QNS&L did not run a scheduled service.
- many of the passengers brought coolers and quantities of food with them on the train. We found out a little later that the snack bar was utterly inadequate for feeding the passengers and an unbearably long wait was required to get low quality high priced food. When you take the QNS&L, you bring your own food (lunch and supper).
- during the day we were able to stand in the vestibule between the cars, get some fresh air, and observe the scenic Moisie and Nipississ river valleys - absolutely beautiful country that rivals that of the Rockies.
- arrived at Labrador City rather late in the evening. Left our equipment in the rail station and made camp just outside of town off a side road in the headlights of a taxi.
- one of the tributaries leading from the mine area into the Pékans was highly polluted, or seemed to be, judging from its discolouration. The river remained off-coloured for some distance below (a couple of days travel).
- after a few hours of paddling, we were beyond the sights and sounds of civilization. The country there is characterized by low rolling hills sparsely covered by small perhaps even stunted growth. There was no evidence of deciduous trees or large wildlife.
- made camp about 5 p.m. after an afternoon of flat water paddling.

August 14

- rained all night. Got up at 5:30 and were off at 7:40.
- had a big day, portaged 4 times and ran 5 or 6 chutes. There is very little evidence of other people using the river. So far, the slippery lichen covered portages are more demanding than the river.
- the mining runoff can't be that bad because there are trout in the river, but we take our drinking water from side streams and store it in the large kettle under the back seat of the Grumman.

August 15

- got up at 5:40 to a misty river, and were in the canoe at 7:45 a.m.
- ran 3 sets and portaged 4 times during the day. The last portage, just before the confluence of the Carheil River, was tough. There was no portage trail and it took us from 2 until 5 p.m. to carry around. While we were performing the portage a helicopter landed at the base of the rapids. Two chaps tried their luck at the trout. Having none, they left, after saying 'Hi'.
- camp was made on a bluff overlooking a widening of the Pékans. The blackflies were troublesome despite a stiff breeze. However, the camp fire was helpful in keeping them within tolerable limits.

August 16

- up at 4:45 and were in the canoe at 7:45 a.m. after a leisurely breakfast under cloudless skies.
- we passed the framing of 6 large huts that had fallen down. They were of the type which were built without a roof, and required a tarp to keep the elements out. There was another framing still covered with clear plastic, hidden off in the trees. By the way last year's calendar was marked up, it indicated the place had not been occupied since the previous fall.
- a little farther down the river, we came upon an instrument shack containing battery operated electronic equipment which hummed and punched readings into rolled tape every few minutes.
- near elevation 1600 feet about 7 km from the Moisie, the gradient abruptly steepens. For about a kilometer, there is wild water too difficult to run not only because of the erratic character of the extended rock garden but also because of the falls midway through and at the bottom of the set.
- we had a long hot afternoon bushwhacking our way down along the troubled waters and camped at elevation 1500 feet overlooking the lower falls. There was a fine view of the canyon we'd have to go through the following day.
- we couldn't really tell if the rapids we could see far down the canyon were runnable. The terrain was too rough even to scout them properly let alone portage around them. We decided not to worry about them until the next day when we could paddle down and have a closer look.

August 17

- up at 5 a.m. and made our customary early departure.
- ran two moderately challenging chutes right off the bat. The third chute of the day called for the decking. Rather than take a diagonal wave head-on, we tried a difficult manoeuvre and clumsily lost control. The current whipped us around broadside and we ran the chute that way. Only a heavy down stream lean and the decking prevented a dumping.
- the character of the topography has changed. The sandy beaches, sandbars and eskers have now been replaced by rocky ground with larger trees and thicker vegetation.
- arrived at the Moisie escarpment about midday. It's about 1 km down the Moisie crossing 5 contour lines. On the right side of the Pékans where we put in, there was some evidence of an old portage trail which petered out about $\frac{1}{2}$ way down to the Moisie. In addition, it led in the direction of more difficult terrain. We followed it for a while but found the going easier by veering off to the right to avoid a gully like depression, and bushwacked the remaining distance down. A round trip took a full two hours.
- the Moisie at this location is not really suitable for camping. We had no choice and had to make do. We managed to find the remains of an obscure campsite. No doubt others were forced to make camp at this unseemly spot.

August 18

- got up early and headed back up the escarpment to get the canoe and a heavy food pack. We left in a thick early morning mist and returned under a warm mid morning sun.
- had a tiring day of loading and unloading the canoe for it seemed that the portages were only a few hundred meters apart on this section of river (elevation 1200 - 1150).
- helicopters flew by twice during the day.

August 19

- after a leisurely breakfast of eggs and toast, we headed out at 9 a.m.
- had only one portage during the day and this was in the morning. At elevation 1050 about mid afternoon, we stopped early to make camp at a set of falls where a salmon was seen attempting to jump its way up. This was the first place where we saw hard evidence of salmon.
- after many unsuccessful attempts, we were beginning to realize that it was possible to conduct a trip all the way down the Moisie and not have our diet supplemented with salmon steaks.

August 20

- were in the canoe by 6:45 and scouted the first chute by 7 a.m.
- under blue skies, had a great day running uninterrupted fast water in beautiful country with high valley walls on both sides of the river.
- just above elevation 900 feet, there is a marked narrowing of the river and we feared we'd encounter savage water in the canyon. At on point, the Moisie is only 25 feet wide, but there was hardly any current indicating that the river was very deep at this place.
- during the afternoon, we saw a whirlwind. It was about a meter wide and about 10 meters high. It kicked the water up as it twisted along giving us an eerie feeling.
- another helicopter flew over during the day.

August 21

- broke camp at 8 and completed the portage around two difficult sets of rapids at the 800 foot level by 9 a.m.
- at elevation 750, just above the Taoti River at the end of a long portage around two sets of falls, we noticed something in a shallow pool. This proved to be a kayak spray skirt which suggested that kayakers sometimes come to grief around things that canoeists portage.
- the pace picked up as we entered the High Moisie, that exuberantly beautiful part of the river where the valley walls tower 1600 feet above. Avalanche spillways were somewhat frequent, and in the early spring, the valley must echo to the charge of destructive forces surging down to the river.
- we came to a set of difficult rapids late in the afternoon. Fear dictated that we portage rather than attempt it with the decking. Coloured fiberglass and aluminum on the rocks at the take out and the put in points showed that we were not the first to make this decision. Just below the chute we made camp on a sandbar, deep in the valley with high cliffs on both sides. Here we found evidence of canoe repairs being effected, for bits and pieces of fiberglass repair material lay about.

August 22

- off at 7:30 a.m. Covered 49 or 59 kilometers during the day leaving the High Moisie country behind.
- at elevation 450 there is an obstructed gorge. The portage traverses a hill so steep in one spot that ropes have been placed there to assist the travellers up and to prevent them from experiencing an uncontrolled trip down. This improvement was effected by one of the fishing lodges which maintains a cabin at the upper end of the portage.
- at the lower end of the portage there was a disorderly camp with a landing pad adjacent to it. At one time, there had been two cabins here but one had been knocked down leaving only the floor on which a helicopter could alight.
- by the time we got over the exhausting portage, it was early evening. There was no campsite here. Because a very difficult chute prevented us from continuing down the river, in our depleted state, it was decided to stay in the unoccupied cabin.

August 23

- we hadn't planned on it, but we spent an hour and a half scouting the rapids just below. There is a huge boulder in the middle of the river, and the chute points the powerful flow directly at it. After looking at the current for a very long time, from every angle from both sides of the river, it was decided to crash through diagonally from left to right to avoid being crushed up against the rock. We just managed to clear the thing and got through taking hardly a drop. Uneasy feelings are still felt at the thought of this spot. If we had to do it again, we'd portage.
- we later found out that the guides take their paying guests up and down through this chute in their motorized freighter canoes. A ride, we were told, that is not forgotten.
- a couple of miles below we came upon the High Moisie Inc., a commercial fishing lodge, and were invited into an absolutely spotless camp. Two guests, a wildlife biologist and his wife, had spent a week there after having paid a ransom just to catch one salmon.

- about 3 p.m. after an exhilarating run in some extended rock gardens, we were called into another fishing camp for coffee. Here we bumped into the biologist couple again. The Beaver that was to take them out to Sept-Îles was over heating. This was, in part, due to the gorgeous weather. The plane would return later to pick them up.
- with all of our stopping off we managed to cover 38 km. This was in part due to the absence of portages.

August 24

- it was another hot sunny day, and we fought a persistent headwind to cover 49 or 50 kilometers.
- late in the day, we arrived at the Nipississ River. The two guides who were tending the camps and watching over the lease (poaching not permitted) invited us in for the evening. We found out that this was a private camp owned by 12 very affluent Americans who paid handsomely to maintain their private domain.
- we were again warned about the treacherous rapids a few miles below at the rail tressel and the ones under the powerlines that were not observable from the train.

August 25

- in the canoe at 7 a.m. and after a 3 hour flat-water paddle we arrived at the notorious stretch.
- we were a bit apprehensive after hearing all the horror stories of wrecked canoes and near drownings. Because of our nervousness, we lifted over 4 or 5 chutes we might have otherwise have run with the decking.
- the way that strong flowing water piles up against a large boulder redirecting the flow and guiding canoes around it, is a much appreciated phenomenon we experienced twice. At one moment it appears that the canoe is going to be crushed up against the rock and the next it is carried around it.
- at the chute just above the tressel, the one we had reconnoitered two weeks earlier, after a long look, we put the decking on. Ran the set down the right side pulling into the eddy just above the tressel, and performed a forward ferry to cross the river to avoid being crowded against the cliff under the bridge.
- for a short distance beyond the tressel, the water is not turbulent and its force was not fully evident. It was essential to take the lower set on the right side, and it was all we could do to get past a large boulder before we were into heavy water that crashed over the decking.
- after a 3 hour determined effort against a headwind, on flat-water, we arrived at Moisie Beach on highway 138 late in the afternoon. The hot showers at the provincial park were much appreciated.



to the arctic ocean



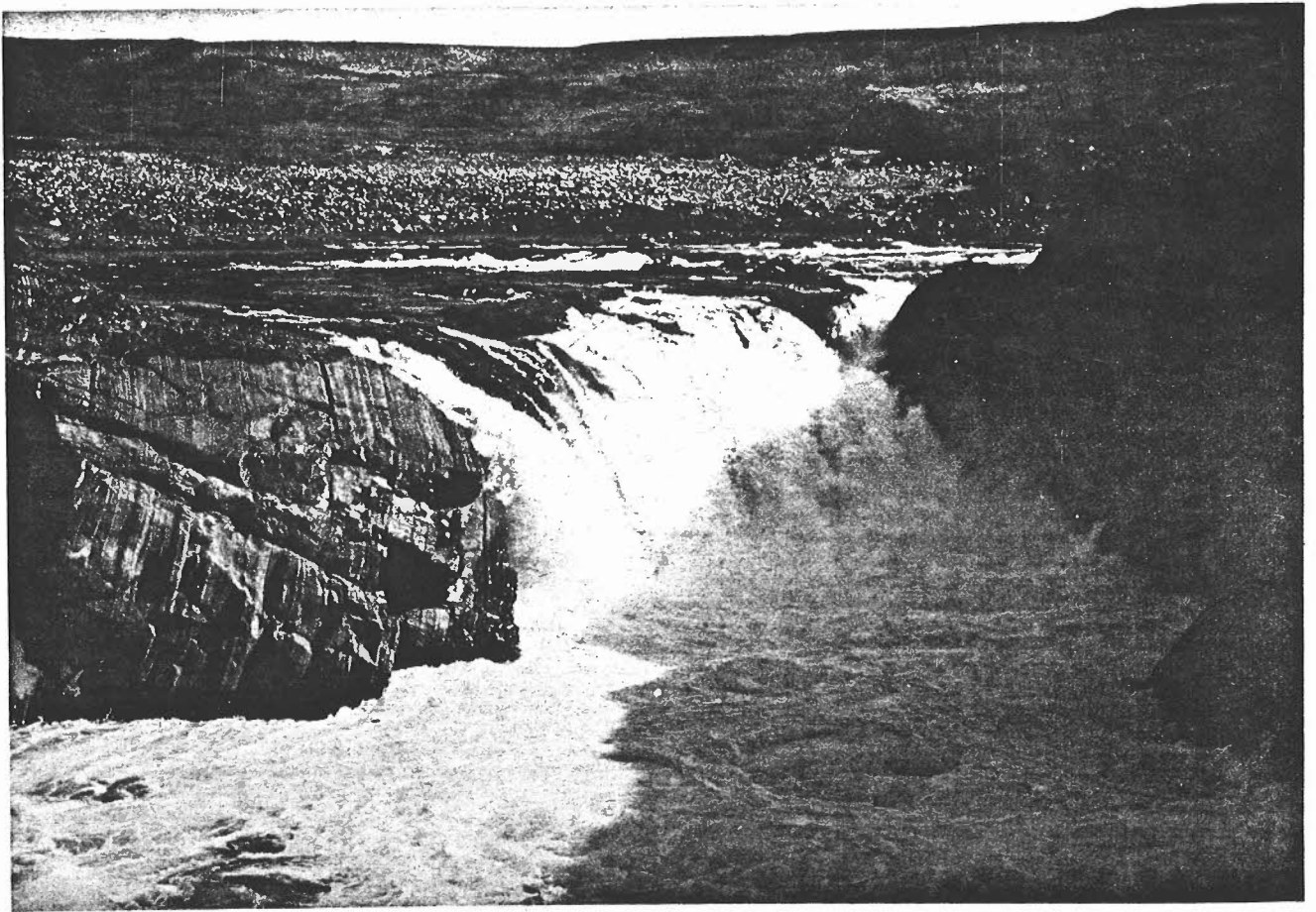
About this time last year, our small group thought we had a new, in relatively easy route from the Lockhart River system north of Yellowknife Inlet on the Arctic Ocean. We hoped to get overrun with caribou, accos falcons and scouted by wolves. We had anticipated a sunny July followe unstable August. We hoped for good whitewater and a moderate amount of

In actual fact our trip was almost the complete reverse of what we July was windy and unstable; August was sunny and warm. We portaged do because of a lack of water, and portaged up the Icy River because of fr caught glimpses of caribou herds, but had two unsolicited visits from g good viewings of elusive wolverines. We had superb whitewater on the B and also an enjoyable lengthy portage to the Arctic Ocean.

Our expectations were never realized, but the trip was a great succ the Arctic is quite often that way. You never get quite what you expec get is memorable and meaningful.

John Fal



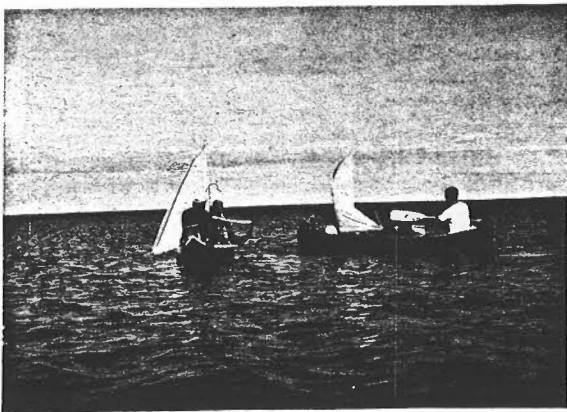
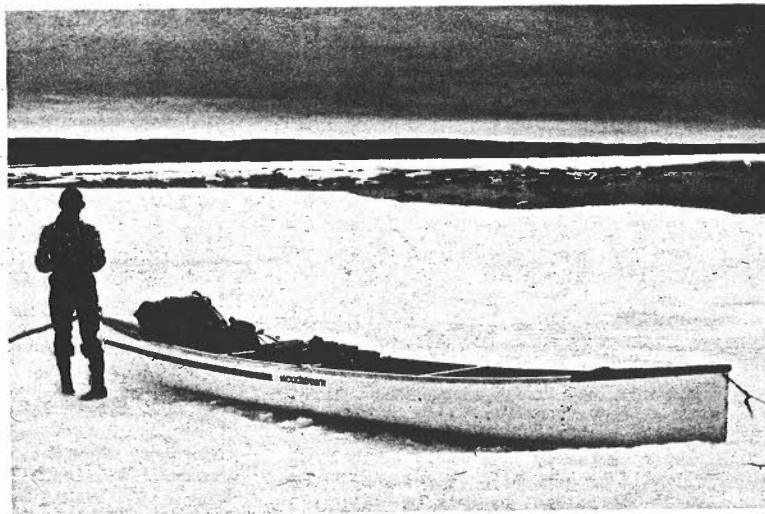


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muskeg song

John Cross

Some of the most difficult canoe-tripping in the province is to be found in the James Bay Lowlands, though it is by no means due to difficult whitewater (there isn't much). A portage to the Ekwan River was described recently thus:

"It is hard to describe the immense psychological impact of muskeg portaging on those unfamiliar with such terrain. The ever-prevalent wetness of the landscape, the need to jig-jag constantly around innumerable shallow lakes, the sinking of feet into quaking masses of floating peat and mud, the fatigue of lifting legs unnaturally high over peat hummocks, and the difficulty of negotiating cobweb-like networks of fallen trees and burnt timber, tend to induce a severe case of apathy among canoeists. Using a general compass bearing of southwest, the route should be carefully marked by placing lumps of peat on trees. The quaking muskeg, the portageur quickly learns, will bear weight only to a certain point. The thick white patches of lichen conceal mud holes and will not carry weight at all."

In 1901, D.B. Dowling of the Geological Survey of Canada was sent to make accurate maps of the Ekwan River for the first time. His manuscript notebook is mostly filled with bearings, distances, and geological notes, but on the last page appears the following:

"Muskeg Song" (Tune: Drinking, Drinking, Drinking)

In muskeg soft I like to pack, with flies around
me buzzing,
A bag of flour upon my back, my feet in water slushing.

A mile of more of this soft earth, two tiny lakelets
linking:
One foot breaks through, likewise its mate,
And I'm sinking, sinking, sinking.

Of long portages you may talk with muskeg...(things?
bogs? - illegible) not in it;
Two hundred yards of this will be it - a hard mile,
in a minute.
The crust gives way, my feet break through,
'Twas hard ground, I was thinking, and now I have to
struggle out
For I'm sinking, sinking, sinking.

"Tis well that men provided are with two legs to their
centre:
It saves their lives in this quagmire which no wise
man would enter
On hands and knees they can crawl out, breast deep in
water stinking,
Unable to put down their pack
Though they're sinking, sinking, sinking.

Now all young men who hear this song through muskeg
never travel:
Before you start be sure your trail is sand or stone
or gravel.
I'd rather far a friend of mine should take to
heavy drinking
Than see him stuck waist deep in slime
And sinking, sinking, sinking.

J.L. Biggar

Does anyone know the tune "Drinking, Drinking, Drink-
ing"? If so, please send it to the newsletter. If
not, make up your own, and sing it on the squishier
portages this summer.

equipment

EXTRA FLOATATION FOR ABS CANOES

George Haeh

Last June we took our shiny new ABS Old Town Tripper to the Whitewater Workshop at Palmer Rapids. One of the skills practiced was the canoe - over - canoe rescue. To practise this maneuver you need a swamped canoe full of water to rescue. We would roll a canoe on its side, allow it to fill with water, and then rescue it. We found that it was possible to fill the ABS canoes so completely with water that they could be made almost to bounce off the bottom before starting on their way up, where at best no more than 2 or 3 centimetres would protrude above the surface. A canoe in this condition floating down a rapids is highly vulnerable to damage or getting stuck under water due to the tonne of water inside. On the same day I saw a Mad River canoe trapped under water at the bottom chute of Palmer Rapids. By contrast, it was impossible to sink the Pinetree Ojibway because of its generous amount of floatation; it could not be filled more than one third full of water. It was also much easier to rescue and obviously much less vulnerable to damage or getting trapped under water.

What I saw on the weekend convinced me of the merits of adding floatation to the Old Town, and I began looking for a suitable material. The need was for a closed-cell foam that would be easy to shape to the space available, be durable, and not come loose. These considerations eliminated styrofoam because it would require a lot of fussy carving and an enclosure that would protect it and hold it in. That enclosure would require a good deal of work. At the Boat Show,

the Intertech booth offered two types of expanding foam and a knowledgeable salesman.

The recommended product is a polyurethane/freon expanding foam with a mixture time of 20 seconds and an expansion time of 3 minutes. The density after expansion is about 2 pounds per cubic foot which is about 3% that of water, yielding a lot of floatation for very little added weight. Once the weather became warm enough to work with the foam, I bought the necessary chemicals and accessories; and in a few hours' time, installed the foam in the canoe. At the end of the Credit River trip the next day, I tested to see how effective the foam was. It worked very well. The canoe, which before could be sunk completely under water, can now only be filled about one third with water - while being held sideways. It would now take a couple of hundred pounds of rocks to make it sink.

Last weekend I fell out of the canoe attempting to run a ledge. The boat floated through a small rock garden without getting stuck, and suffered only minor abrasions in the process.

I have spent \$125 buying the chemicals and accessories, and have enough chemicals left over for 3 or 4 more canoes. If you want to put floatation in your ABS canoe or a canoe you are building, I am selling off the extra chemicals and use of the accessories for \$25 per canoe, and will be happy to advise you on how to apply the foam. Given today's prices for canoes, it's a bargain in insurance; especially if it saves you having to hike back to civilization from a remote river. If you are interested, please call soon because the warm weather is coming and if the chemicals are not used up soon, I shall have to arrange refrigerated storage for them. Call George Haeh: 416-662-2951 (home) or 416-865-4644 (business).

easter vignette

Claire A. Brigden



...Just back from Haliburton. Canoeed Saturday night eight to ten kilometres on black glass with a cold moon bouncing and shattering off the rippleless low swells in reversed imagery against a black wall of shoreline. Three mergansers whirled past in formation, their intercoms turned up just enough to catch snatches of conversation relating to night lodgings. Two returned after an interval and hung-landing gear as they slid down into the cavernous blackness of a little bay where they would surely hunker down on some log motel to rest the night.

The treeline, like Pearson's bow tie, or one of those fold-out paper bells (turned horizontally) which we loved to open the whole 360° to hang on some chandelier at Christmas, lay against the ice water, cheek to cheek, each half reflected in the other, exactly in replica, with no line of demarcation visible at centre fold.

Felt as though we were floating on a viscous ceiling upside down, from which, at any moment, we would fall down the shaft of the moon's part into the heavens, starlit and vaguely blue, from which we could then look back in wonder at the black mirror imbedded in the surface of the black land.

Near the dam, the water frantically danced a Tarantella in a thousand silver shoes, murmuring and pleading in its last extremity as gravity sucked it toward the parapet over which it plunged with a roar, to dance with broken feet beyond. The giant fists and fingers of the rocky outcroppings at this place, moved not a muscle to save the twinkling feet from their destruction, but simply lay there another million, million years, wise in the knowledge of the inevitability of the fate of all things which move and dance and cry out.

Paddling back along another shore, we passed two lads playing beneath a string of coloured cottage lights, nursing a little bonfire and making spark

patterns in the air with wands of burning splinters which they waved above their heads. They remained totally oblivious to the silent shadow slipping past, Indian fashion, five metres away - an Arthur Heming painting in Three D.

Stumps and tree roots challenged us to detours or collision courses as we slid along, and little sticks rocked in the viscous cradle, their destinies dependent on an absent wind. The moon's eye followed us through fringes of the black lace plumes of tree tips, suspicious and persistent.

Close to home the Aurora Borealis suddenly turned up its power in a broad burst of subtle rosey glow across the sky, which faded and shifted into a line of white rockets fired against the northern backdrop of the heavens to salute the steely night, so windless, so spellbinding.

A pair of beaver wedged ahead of us through liquid ice which would have claimed our lives in seconds. How fragile we, how vulnerable, to cast our lot so cockily with Kevlar. We who rev up any "90 horse", or bulldoze some new tarmac strip to water's edge, or drive in pylons for "The Smuggery" of glass and cedar beams and barbecues and septic systems, we are the same who, at the plunge of Nature's thermostat past Zero, stroke of Zeus's firey spear, or over-balance through the beavers' looking glass, are gone in just the fraction of a sigh, as naked of wisdom as of carapace. So with renewed respect we saluted these engineers of dams who gave their great "kerplunge"ing cracks as tails signalled careless dives through subhuman temperatures, their comfort and security our potential nemesis. How fine that line of demarcation!

Next day the swallows arrived and after them the osprey. Some snow fell the second night, but winter had indeed melted away on silent feet, and spring had come to the High Lands.

my trip down ongopongo

R. Smith (Climatologist)

On a warm, sunny Friday evening (as I had predicted), we arrived at the Ongopongo River in the east end of Mungo Bungo Provincial Park. At the park office, I received a brochure entitled, "Mis-named plants of the Boreal Forest", and it reminded me what an uneven job the botanists of Ontario have been doing in recent years. The young man at the park office, a high school student on summer furlough, added up my fees as follows: (\$2.00 plus \$3.00 equals \$6.00) - what a typical product of a dying educational system, I thought.

By Saturday morning, skies had become mostly overcast, and a light drizzle filled the air. Although other campers were largely unprepared for

this, having made the common error of transposing the Toronto forecast to the Mungo Bungo Region, my group was ready for the worst. Heavy thunderstorms delayed our start, but at least we were still on shore, waiting for the front to clear the area. Others, notably a Hamilton area botanist and a high school teacher from some small town between Toronto and Kingston, were caught by surprise and had to be rescued by the park wardens from their overturned canoes. It just shows you how ignorant some folks are about modern, scientific, regional weather forecasting. Meanwhile, we set out a little later, soon making up lost ground by canoe-sailing in the southwest wind. By now, skies had cleared up and we were able to start a correct identification of various plant species along the shore.

It was a very enjoyable weekend, for the few of us who came prepared for the changeable conditions.

at school with orca

Jim Greenacre

Last year while tripping in northern Ontario, one of the group mentioned that he had his Level III Flatwater and Level II Moving-water (rapid running) Certificates from an Ontario Recreational Canoeing Association sanctioned course. Level II means you are highly skilled in the subject. Level II means you are also qualified to teach the subject. However, when there were rapids to navigate this person was the weakest in the group and always got into trouble even after scouting with guidance from the trip leader and watching other canoes navigate the rapids easily and safely.

This person's performance had me wondering about O.R.C.A.'s standards so this spring I decided to apply for an O.R.C.A. Moving-water Level III course. There are a number of pre-requisites (like having your Level I and II Certificates) before you are eligible for a Level III course, or you can be accepted by the course director based on his evaluation of your previous experience. My application was accepted and I found out later that many of my fellow students had been in the same situation.

It was a five day course on the long Victoria Day week-end and the following weekend and was held at Madawaska Kanu Camp, a location where kayaking and now open canoeing is taught throughout the summer. There were three instructors and fourteen students giving a very low teacher/student ratio. (O.R.C.A. recommends a teacher/student ratio of not more than one to six.) Instruction began promptly each morning at 9:00 a.m. and continued, with only an hour break for lunch, until 5:30 p.m. After supper there was some free time until 8:00 when there were classroom sessions on how to teach, how to organize a lesson, how to prepare a programme, all on an extremely professional level. The value of films as a teaching aid was also discussed.

Day one was spent on flat water and day two on moving water. The three instructors took us right through what is taught on the Level I and Level II Moving-water courses, basic strokes and manoeuvres, rescue and safety measures, communications, etc. During our on-the-water skills practice sessions, students were under constant observation and instructors were quick to point out any weaknesses, and equally quick to praise (standard practice of a good teacher).

Evening, day two, after our lecture period, all students were given assignments to prepare a written lesson programme for three subjects. Some students struggled with this (including myself) until near midnight. The smart ones, like the teachers who were taking the course, had their lesson programmes done in no time and were able to relax and have a sing-song around the log fire.

Day three started with the handing in of assignments. The rest of the day was devoted to each student acting out the roll of a teacher and giving a lesson on his three subjects to his fellow students. The course instructors simply observed and evaluated the teaching qualities of the student, making helpful suggestions after each presentation. Day three closed with each student getting a personal evaluation of his progress from his instructor. All students made Level I.

Day four commenced with a review of the three previous days and each student being handed three more teaching assignments. The rest of the morning was devoted to skills practice and manoeuvres on the river and running a prescribed course through the rapids as bowperson, sternperson and solo.

There was to be video coverage of these runs, to be shown after supper. Unfortunately a mal-function of the equipment prevented this. The afternoon session was more practice teaching and some free time to study or improve ones practical skills.

Day five, examination day, started with a written theory test. This was short and easy. Following the test, each student gave three more demonstration lessons and was duly assessed. After lunch practical skills were tested, each student having to run the prescribed course, bow, stern and solo using the manoeuvres suggested by the instructors.

The course involved getting into and out of a series of eddies on both sides of the river and behind one island. The current here was strong but relatively smooth with a few small shelves to avoid. It was not difficult. The next section of river was a "dog leg" bend with about forty metres of standing waves, the waves being about one metre high with two to three metres between crests and stretching right across the river. The prescribed manoeuvre involved a back ferry from left to right just before you reached the waves, looking for a narrow channel through the waves and then, because you were on a bend, keep moving right to avoid the larger waves on the outside of the bend. Once clear of the waves a backferry into an eddy on the left, then a front ferry over to the right bank and then an eddy turn to finish the test. Regulation safety measures and signals were used throughout the entire exercise as a number of students didn't make it through those waves. There was, in my opinion, an easier way through those waves, but we were being tested for our paddling skills, not our river reading abilities.

There was one chance only on these tests and if you goofed, no second runs were allowed. The fact that a crew made both tandem runs successfully did not guarantee a pass. Members of some crews made Level III while their partners only got Level I. The three examiners had you under observation during the entire test and obviously were able to assess who was leading who.

How did I do personally? I failed, miserably. First I elected not to go for the Level III Teacher's Certificate because I knew my teaching abilities were no where near the high standards required and then, after dumping twice in those waves during practice sessions, I began to doubt my own paddling skills and opted out of the skills test. However, my time was not wasted. Far from it, as I now have a much greater understanding of what is required to teach a subject. I also know which of my paddling skills need to be improved.

About that person I mentioned in my opening paragraph: he was either bragging or had taken a Level II course where the instructor/examiner was not living up to O.R.C.A.'s high standards. Another explanation could be location. Perhaps the rapids where he had taken his course were not true grade III rating. Familiarity with location is another factor. For instance, if the course I attended had been conducted at Palmer Rapids, I would have done much better as I know Palmer Rapids well from many pleasant week-ends spent there.

The only weak spot in the course I took was "river reading", which I feel is very important. If you cannot find the easiest and safest way through a rapid, then you have problems before you even start your run. The difficulty with teaching river reading is that you would have to scout many rapids and this would require a lot of time.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the level of instruction on this course, which was under the direct control of O.R.C.A. was of an extremely high calibre. The standards for student achievement were equally high. O.R.C.A. is certainly not handing out certifications, willy, nilly to anyone.

killarney canoe trip



Gary Dale & Kevin Banting

On the Victoria Day Weekend a group of 16 students and teachers from Monarch Park Secondary School, members of the Coureurs de Bois Club, left the lights of Toronto for the quiet, secluded wilderness of Killarney Provincial Park near Sudbury. This was our annual 5-day spring canoe trip.

After arriving by bus early Friday morning, we split into two groups of 4 canoes each and followed the individual routes we had planned in advance. Each group's route included paddling through lakes, swamps and creeks, and strenuous portages.

Our group set out for its planned destination of Sandy Lake deep in the Park's interior. After much paddling and many long and challenging portages, including bushwacking where no trails existed, we arrived and set up camp just before dark.



The next day we put on our hiking boots and climbed the La Cloche Mountains, which used to be the height of the Rockies, but now, after being ground down by 10 kilometre thick glaciers, stand at about 500 metres. From the summit of Silver Peak, the highest point in Killarney Park, the view was magnificent. We could see our whole route outlined below us, the many small blue-green lakes and distant mountains of the park, and the open waters of Georgian Bay.



The next day we were back in our canoes paddling towards Kakakise Lake. Our route took us through swamps, creeks with beaver dam lift-overs, and lakes surrounded by white quartzite ridges. From our campsite, the sun setting on the mountains blended with the assorted colours of the trees perfectly.



The following day we were on our way to the highlight of our trip: we were headed for Terry Lake where we had our solos. We spent 24 hours alone, cooking our own meals, setting up individual shelters and sleeping by ourselves. This proved to be an unforgettable experience.



In preparation for the trip we put in many after school hours planning routes, menus and equipment, went on two day-trips on the Black River and Nottawasaga River, and completed the necessary Survival Swimming Tests.

The club, whose activities also include backpacking and cross-country skiing, was started in 1973 for Monarch students and staff interested in wilderness activities. The club chose its name from the French Canadian Coureur de Bois who travelled the northern forests on snowshoe, by foot and canoe to trade furs with the Indians. The major aim behind the club is to get everyone involved in the planning, and preparing for, as well as participating in, wilderness trips.



wca - amis d'eau

rivière crowe

story: Penny Clarke
photos: Sandy Richardson

Our meteorologist predicted the sun to shine by 2 pm so we knew we were in for a wet cold weekend. However we could occupy our minds with French vocabulary rather than brood on the weather. Huddled around the bilingual fire Friday morning we finally got sorted out into the "Beaver" team and the "Crowe" team.

The Crowe team started down Deer Creek where there was a very long portage around a gorge. Here the art of portage scouting was explored on depth by George Haeh and Jan Tissot. We ran some exciting long sets of rapids that first day with the usual "break the paddle at the critical moment" routine in the Cross-Barnett canoe. We camped that night at a peaceful lake where Gord's energetic attempt at a sun dance next morning partially worked for a warmer day.

Saturday was a very strenuous day for our heads rather than our muscles as we were supposed to speak only French that day. The Montreal couple worked as hard as we did trying to understand us as we did trying to translate "cross bow draws" and "to the left of the rock" into French. Camped at a very scenic waterfall that night we watched with apprehension as George only backed off running it at the last minute. That evening we hiked down to scout the difficult gorge that would be run first thing next morning (in English).



The easter bunny managed to find us Monday morning laying chocolate eggs around at breakfast. Those bunnies sure have big feet!

The gorge was as difficult as it had looked the night before, and everyone made successful runs. An easy morning and we were off the river by 10:30, met the "Beaver" team as they finished their river a little later, and off for Easter dinner at "Matthews German Restaurant".

beaver creek

Photos: Michel Lemyre
Glenn Spence.

VOYAGE SUR BEAVER CREEK - DAVE AUGER

Vingt canotiers venant de deux provinces, dans deux groupes, sur deux rivières et neuf voitures à organiser: les détails pour un tel voyage de trois jours étaient formidables, même pour Gord Fenwick. Mais il n'a rien laissé échapper. Alors, à huit heures le matin du vendredi-saint, 14 membres de la Wilderness Canoe Association et 6 du Club d'Amis d'Eau de Varennes (ayant laissé deux voitures à la fin de la Rivière Crowe et de Beaver Creek) ont tenu un rendez-vous à un petit parc de camping près de Coe Hill en Ontario. Après avoir reçu les instructions finales en anglais et en français notre groupe est parti en sept voitures pour Beaver Creek.

Le premier matin, cette rivière nous a présenté beaucoup d'eau calme. Pour Dave Berthelet et moi, ça nous a donné l'opportunité de nous en familiariser - c'était la première fois que nous faisions le canotage ensemble. Plus tard, en après-midi, il y avait plus de rapides et de chutes (Une de mes premières préoccupations était de faire la distinction entre les mots pour "falls" et "runnable rapids".) Dans beaucoup de ces rapides, John Waller et Peter Eberhard on payé à rebours. Après un voyage l'été passé sur la rivière Missinaibi, ils ont fait une bonne équipe. Avec une styl
Avec un style très différent, Michel et son fils de 11 ou 12 ans, Stephan ont fait une bonne équipe aussi: ils se sont bien faufileés à travers des rapides serpents.

Vers 4:30, après avoir passé par Mt. Fenwick (nommé par Dave Berthelet qui se souvenait d'un portage très long et ardu au dessous de cette véritable montagne l'année passée), nous nous trouvions dans une étendue longue de rapides avant la confluence de Dickie Creek. Cette section manquait de terrains de camping. Heureusement, nous avons trouvé un terrain de camping avant la tombée de la nuit avec quatre sites horizontals (peut-être "pas verticaux" sont les mots précis).

Avec plusieurs poêles à gaz et un feu communal, le souper était bientôt prêt. Robert et Anne ont généreusement partagé quelques champignons, et Glenn et Cameron Spence nous ont donné un goût du ragoût de boeuf de Kamp Pak. Mais la crème de la crème était sûrement le dessert de pommes croquantes fait par Peter.

Autour du feu de camp, la conversation était vraiment bilingue. Souvent des questions en français par des membres de la W.C.A. ont reçu une réponse en anglais par un des membres du Club de Varennes, et vice versa. En effet pendant tout le voyage, c'était comme ça qu'on a communiqué avec nos amis du Québec. J'ai trouvé que chacun faisait un effort remarquable pour écouter et comprendre ce que disaient les autres. De temps en temps Robert a parlé un langage universel avec sa flûte de Pan. Le son de ses mélodies douces était bien plaisant avant de se coucher.

A 4 heures, samedi matin, un autre son nous a réveillé: le tonnerre et la pluie sur la tente. Deux heures plus tard, pendant que neuf personnes continuaient à dormir, Dave, notre chef du voyage, a trouvé un peu de bois sec, et à l'aide d'une chandelle inventée de toutes pièces, il a fait un bon feu. Enfin, quand nous autres nous restions sûrs qu'il ne pleuvait pas, nous nous sommes levés et ont mangé des crêpes, de la bouillie d'avoine, du granola etc.

Encore une fois en canot, nous sommes tombés sur de grandes étendues de rapides. Nous avons éclairé beaucoup de rapides et avons fait quelques portages, plusieurs rapides étaient navigables pour nos cinq canots. Après la jonction de Dickie Creek et Beaver Creek, nous avons trouvé un endroit idéal pour le déjeuner à côté d'une chute pittoresque. Ici nous avons goûté aux casse-croûtes des autres: du pain français des morceaux de banane, et de la gorp (à la Spence). D'ici jusqu'à notre terrain de camping dans un grand champ un peu plus loin que des lignes électriques, Beaver

Creek était très calme. Pendant tout le voyage, nous n'avons vu aucune évidence de castors... cependant nous avons vu son cousin, le rat musqué.

Samedi soir, après des menus variés, Stephan nous a rappelé la fête de demain en donnant des oeufs de Pâques en chocolat. Le lapin de Pâques était bien généreux à Stephan, parce qu'il m'a offert (et bien sûr je les ai mangés) quatre de ses bonbons. Le jour de Pâques, tous se sont levés de bonne heure. Et à 8:15 nous avons commencé à canoter. Aujourd'hui il y avait beaucoup de grands rapides et de chutes; en conséquence, beaucoup de portages; tant de portages, qu'Anne a demandé, "Qu'est-ce que vous (dans la W.C.A.) aimez faire... canoter, faire canoter, ou faire des portages ??". Une chose qui nous a ralentis c'était que peu des portages étaient bien indiqués. Une autre chose, était une nage inopportune par les canotiers dans le canot d'aluminium. Mais avec l'aide de tout le monde, nous avons fini le voyage vers deux heures de l'après-midi.



L'autre groupe de la Rivière Crowe a déjà fait leur changement de voitures, et nous attendait. Le plan était de faire un rendez-vous finale chez "Mothers' German Restaurant". Ici, avec du bon vin et de la bonne nourriture vingt canotiers de deux provinces se sont échangés des idées (par exemple au Club de Varennes, il y a une forme de canot par laquelle beaucoup de membres ont fait leur canot en fibre de verre); ont parlé avec plaisir de nos deux voyages maintenant terminés, et ont fait des projets avec anticipation du voyage réciproque à la Rivière Rouge en juin.

MA DESCENTE DE LA BEAVER CREEK

Stéphane Lemyre.



Salut la gang !

En descendant la rivière, on a eu beaucoup de fun, et je veux vous la raconter. Le meilleur c'était d'aller manger.

On part! Tout allait très bien quand tout à coup un beau petit portage. Ah! Moi, j'aime ça, en tout cas c'est passé, on continue. Là, c'était "tripant" au coton, devinez quoi? Un autre portage. On fait une dizaine d'autres portages. Durant une de cette série de portages, j'ai vu une belle couleuvre. Bon, on voit le pont où l'on couche. On monte nos tentes, pis on va manger. En tout cas, on a assez bien mangé que j'avais encore faim.

Je vais me coucher. On était assez confortable, car il y avait Robert Bergeron qui me servait d'isolant; le matin après une belle nuit confortable je me réveille et j'étais à moitié dehors. On déjeune; on part; là, vous devez savoir quoi? Un autre PORTAGE. Tout le monde avait envie de se garer à l'eau pis bien d'autres affaires. Enfin, un rapide qu'on peut passer, le premier qui passe y accroche un peu, mais y passe. Le deuxième lui y "pogne", pis là le canot vient tout croche et chavire. Mon père et moi ont "couraillent" après, et on rattrapent les bagages des malchanceux.

Là, on fait encore des portages, et on fait des beaux rapides. Un beau lac, on prend des photos, pis on voit le pont. Ha! je mange 3 sandwiches au miel, je m'électrocute sur une clôture à vache, il y a deux esclaves qui courent après moi pour me jeter dans la rivière, c'était Robert Bergeron et Cameron Spence qui se "pitchaient" sur moi. Là, on arrive au restaurant "AH" quelle pensée horrible de passer tout droit. C'était bon, même si l'achaland de Cameron me lançait du sel pis du poivre. Le pire, c'est qu'il se mettait tout le temps le doigt dans le nez, le cochon. Après le festin, on se dit bye, bye, pis on part pour le Québec content de notre voyage et des connaissances que nous avons faites.

skootamata-black

A spell of mild weather in mid-March gave us hope that winter, after changing its mind several times, had really decided to leave. Accordingly, we headed east to the Moira watershed to where three steep tributaries tumble off the Canadian shield to the St. Lawrence lowlands. The upper Moira again looked too shallow, so Bob Almack and John Cross ran the upper Skootamata on Friday, finishing at Flinton where we would meet the others next morning for the more exciting portion of the river.

The ice-covered expanse of Skootamata Lake, chilling the wind that blew beneath the deceptive bright sun, raised our apprehensions somewhat, on two counts. The upper Skootamata has several wide, slow expansions where the ice might well be, like that on the lake, unbreakable. (In fact, cottagers were still driving snowmobiles out to ice-fish.) And of course, the open, rapid sections posed the hazard of a dumping which, wool-clothed or not, we particularly wished to avoid.



Sure enough, several kilometres from the start, the river widened out and solidified in a white sheet far smoother than our thought-furrowed brows as we slid toward it on the following wind. We were now to run through our complete repertoire of ice-canoeing techniques, some of which we invented on the spot. The skin of new ice was easy to slice through with the bow of the aluminum canoe, though the jagged shards rasping down the sides gave out an unsettling roar. When the ice thickened, we paddled hard up on to it and broke it with out weight, ice-breaker fashion. It was quickly becoming apparent that we could not go far this way: we were tiring, our paddles were shredding, and the ice was thickening. We kept heading for shore until the ice became too thick for the canoe to break but not, we feared, trustworthy under our feet. It was now we hit on the "Isaac's Third" method of propulsion, which sometimes works in floating logjams as well as on ice, as the Dickey Creek trip was later to demonstrate. One or both partners inch the canoe forward by violent backwards jerks of their bodies. The good work accomplished by the equal and opposite reaction would be all undone as they moved back into position for another jerk, were it not that one partner has dug his paddle into the ice, thus retaining the gain made. So with Bob leaning on his paddle and me jumping like Cheetah, we reached shore to consider

the gloomy prospect of a bushwhack portage - around a lake! We cheered up when some careful experiments revealed that the ice near shore was very solid indeed; solid enough to "scooter" (Keep one foot in the canoe and push with the other). As we gained confidence in our ice, we transferred both feet to it so we could walk along, pushing. (We never dared go far enough from the boat to tow it on a rope.) In this way, we passed to the more orthodox obstacles of the open river.

The upper Skootamata has some attractive elm swamp meanders, fortunately with not many fallen logs; some steep chutes which must be portaged; and some runnable rapids, particularly lower down where the influx of tributaries raises the volume of flow. It is not really a "whitewater" trip, however; that epithet is better applied to the section below Flinton.

We were unable to do the whole of that section on Saturday because of a time-consuming episode on a rapid a few kilometres from Flinton. A large rock in the middle of the fairway might conceivably be passed on either side: Bob and I, perhaps because of insufficient planning and communication, were not entirely settled on which it was to be; the river impartially settled the matter by taking one end of the canoe to each side of the rock and wrapping it, with irresistible force, around the immovable object. We spent as few seconds as possible in the water, appreciating the value of helping hands, rescue ropes and canoes, water-proofed clothesbags, and hot drinks waiting on shore. Then we proceeded to the harder task of rescuing the canoe.

Luckily, a thirty metre line was attached to the stern of the canoe. Unluckily, it was attached to the little clevis-pin-and-split-right shackle that Grumman does not guarantee. Luckily, the shackle held together just long enough to haul the canoe off the rock. (It fell apart in Jim's hand when the canoe floated to shore.) John and Leslie rigged the rope to a tree on the bank and attached another rope, a slack-taker-upper, with a prussiking knot (which we should look up and learn). Then all seven of us pulled, tightened, stopped, rested, ate gorp, pulled some more, Cameron placed a lever, pulled, until off it came, looking like a beer can on a site invaded by conscientious WCAers. Since I left the trip at this point to run back to Jim's car, I'll pass the narration on to Jim.

The rest of the day went without further mishap, probably because what had happened to John's canoe made us, perhaps subconsciously, a little more cautious.

The Skootamata is not a good whitewater river for open canoes as compared with Beaver Creek, Crowe and Black rivers. The rapids are separated with long sections of flat water with many of the rapids being sharp drops over ledges and falls which means many short but bothersome portages. Those rapids which are runnable are mostly steep, narrow chutes with standing waves at the bottom.

We were off the river reasonably early, 4:30, but getting the car shuffle completed and then a second car shuffle to get John and Bob back to their car at Lake Skootamata took considerable time. It was dark when we parked on the main street of Madoc, searching for a restaurant. The only place open was a restaurant which hadn't been redecorated for decades. However, it was clean and offered both Canadian and Chinese food.

Supper over, we headed north to Bannockburn, then east to Cooper and continued east to the Black River. The last five kilometres were on a dirt road with lots of soft spots. It wasn't until driving out to do the car shuffle next morning that we realized just how soft and gooey that stuff was.

John Cross
Jim Greenacre

With the aid of our car headlights we set up tents right on the bank of the river. It was a beautiful, clear and warm evening for the time of the year. My winter sleeping bag only needed to be partially zippered up.

Sunday morning we woke to brilliant sunshine which encouraged us to linger over breakfast before doing a short car shuffle to Queenborough. We were to meet Bob Cherniak here. He was joining us for Sunday only. The shuffle took longer than planned because the other car missed a turn and were back in Madoc before they realized their mistake.

Right at the start of the trip the river makes a wide sweep and then disappears down a long narrow gorge with many rocks, waves and chutes to navigate. A lot of time was spent scouting and debating whether it could be run. I made the first move announcing I would run it solo with an empty canoe. With the others watching from the rocks above I made it successfully, so much so, that the other two canoes decided to try it, tandem, again with success. The only person to miss out on this, the first of many exciting rapids was my partner, Penny. However she had her turn later in the day when she ran an equally challenging rapid, solo.

We had one incident further downstream. This involved a rapid which ended with a shelf and a four metre drop with one deep cleft cutting through it at an oblique angle. After much discussion and log throwing to see which way the current went, Penny and I were elected to try it first. Everything went perfect as we slipped sideways into the cleft and rushed down the chute towards the curling wave at the bottom. The bow went up, and up, and up until there was no water left for Penny to brace on and over we went. The early spring water was cold but we suffered no ill effects as both of us were wearing wet suits.

Bob and Cameron, seeing what we had done, went into the ledge a little deeper and a bit further to the right before dropping over into the cleft and made a successful run, taking in only a small amount of water.

Because of our late start it was dark before we finally paddled across the pool above the dam at Queensborough to finish an exhilarating day of whitewater.

Participants: John Cross, Bob Almac, Bob Cherniac, Cameron Hayne, Leslie Cameron, Penny Clarke, John Weinstein, Jim Greenacre.

two creeks

John Cross

Since Dickey Creek had aroused our interest by fooling us last year, we decided to find out if it was canoeable from the source. We picked an early weekend in April to benefit from reasonably high water but to avoid the ice. Under such conditions, Dickey is an interesting canoe route, its narrow curves and frequent log jams forming a stimulating contrast to pretty, island studded Big Burnt Lake, the high valley sides of lower Dickey, the flat, elm-lined reaches of upper Beaver Creek, and the exciting white water near the bottom of Beaver, where we finished.

We completed the shuttle in good time Friday night so as to be comfortably in bed by 10:30 and on the water by 7:30 the next morning. Early starts are advisable on exploration trips, lest the exploration extend into next week. We found, however, that the passage from Dickey Lake to Big Burnt Lake took about three and a half hours, given very high water. There are a number of small rapids, falls, and beaver dams, but the most frequent obstacles are logs, whose numbers permit a novice log-hopper to feel he has acquired a new skill in the course of a morning. Just as we were taking pleasure in the techniques we had invented, and before their exercise could become tedious, the beaver pond above Big Burnt, familiar to us from a snowshoe trip in February, came into sight.



Big Burnt Lake is very pretty, and fortunately, fairly isolated. There is only one (not very obvious) cottage thereon whose access road, perhaps deliberately, has been left in a state to scare even four-wheel drivers. Interestingly, though, Jack remembered his family being guided there by an Indian, forty years ago. They had had to climb the steep hill by the outlet falls, which we now bushwhacked down after lunch.



The remainder of Dickey Creek passed quickly, since it was familiar to us from last year. We made such good time that we were able to do the flat-water section of Beaver Creek, almost to the big "S"-bend, enjoy a leisurely supper in daylight, and carry out an Evening Program: we collected the garbage on the campsite, burned it, and crushed the cans for packing out next day. Why anyone would venture so far up Beaver Creek to dump his Kik Cola sign or his dress suit carrier we can't explain.

The whitewater section of Beaver Creek is more familiar, and we were able to run some rapids we had been used to portaging. The water was high enough to permit paddling through the elm forest at the "S"-bend (thus saving a kilometre of portage and flatwater) and yet low enough to run the gorge below Hell's Gate Rapids (a strikingly similar young brother of Hell's Gate on the Nahanni) without difficulty. We finally ran the Devil's Eye about one and finished, anticipating the excitement of trying it in French (Gord's weekend du riseau Castor et de la riviere Corneille) at Easter.

salmon - moira

Glenn Spence

Our annual run down these rivers was, once again, very successful despite the very low water levels this year. Our full complement of canoes negotiated the various obstacles very well.

However, we probably had our first case of mutiny on a WCA trip. Just because the trip organizer stated that camping was available (it was not) at a nearby conservation area, the trip participants (in the safety of their hotel room) decided to change Sunday's starting point without consulting nor notifying the trip organizer (who went home). Was this fair? Was this decent? After all, the conservation area was open during April only five years ago. Couldn't one just assume the status quo? What should we do with trip participants who usurp the organizer's authority? Kindly send your opinions to the Newsletter Editor (who was on the trip)!

But seriously, though, we had a great trip followed by some good fellowship back at my house while consuming French bread and chili (in honour of 'beans' Barnett).

If you want more details about our trip please consult the April 9th edition of the Globe and Mail.



bonnechere • madawaska

John Cross

The upper Bonnechere, which drops a hundred and twenty metres in thirteen kilometres, may be the steepest river in southern Ontario. While some of the drop comes at three falls and two ledges we decided to portage most of it is in runnable rapids. The catch is in the size of the river: it is too small for canoeing except in very high water. This means that when the rapids are at their best, the shore scouting walkways are at their worst (under water), the landings at their worst (under water), and the black flies usually at their worst (but we were lucky this year: the flies didn't think it was spring until long after the river did.)

The MNR had closed off our secret access route this year by chaining the gate to a live tree (which was sacred to us) instead of to a rotten old post (which wasn't), so we had to find a new put-in point close to the powerlines, which meant the day-trip was almost doubled in length. The extra distance was by no means unpleasant, however, since the current is very swift through the sandy meanders. We took about an hour and a half for the first half, and about six hours for the second, rocky, half.



The water level, even at the beginning of May this year, was unusually low, so Tony and I in our rented ABS canoe had many opportunities to sympathize with Penny and Chris in a Grumman. Progress tended to mean slithering down a rapids and then turning to wait while they unstuck their aluminum from whichever rocks it had bonded to. Jim, paddling solo, was in somewhat better position than they. The thought occurred that here was one of the few times when we could use those awful-looking Coleman Ram-X canoes: when they use a slogan like "You can't miss all the rocks all the time", you know they are aiming their sales pitch at people who don't miss any rocks ever.

The steep rocky sides of the valley, though they contribute to the scenic value of the route, are not helpful for portaging or scouting. The brush tends to be very dense, so a first time trip takes on the character of a bush thrash. Luckily, two of us had been here before and so knew where the falls were. The ministry portages are not much help, since they tend to bypass everything far away from the river. In one way this is not so bad, since the method of clearing employed is downright dangerous: they clear saplings with a scythe, which leaves a forest of little spears sticking up to trip and impale the unwary. A letter of complaint is being sent off.

We finished at Basin Lake Depot, which provides ample camping space for many cars (and fortunately is undeveloped). Although the weather was excellent during the day, the previous night had been well below freezing. A few black flies and mosquitoes poked their heads out, but they were not in sufficient numbers to take us on, so they slouched around with their heads in their collars, trying to pretend to be mayflies.

Sunday we ran the upper Madawaska, which was high enough to be fun without being dangerous. Interestingly enough, the broken yellow canoe is still in place at Broken Yellow Canoe Rapids. I'm not sure why the ice hasn't taken it out.

The Victoria Day Weekend on the Madawaska and Opeongo Rivers will probably, due to falling water levels, mark the end of this spring's cycle of southern Ontario whitewater trips - in a season already three months old at this point.

guidelines for wca trips

1. The Outings Committee shall arrange a schedule of appropriate wilderness trips organized by unpaid volunteers from the membership of the WCA, to be published in the newsletter.
2. All trips must have a minimum impact on the environment. To ensure this, trips organizers will limit:
 - a) the number of canoes (or participants) permitted on the trip,
 - b) the type of equipment and supplies used for camping.
3. Participants must register with the organizer at least two weeks (but not more than four) prior to the trip. This is necessary:
 - a) for participants to get detailed information about meeting places, times, changes of plan etc. (It is suggested that organizers send out written information),
 - b) to avoid having too large a group,
 - c) to screen participants as to skill, if necessary.
4. Food, transportation, canoes, camping equipment, partners, etc. are the responsibility of each participant. (In some cases, however, the organizers may be able to assist in these areas; particularly the pairing of partners.)
5. Participants are responsible for their own safety at all times, and must sign a waiver from. (Organizers should return completed waivers to the Outings Committee to be kept on file.)
6. Organizers reserve the right to:
 - a) exclude participants based on experience level,
 - b) determine paddlers' positions in canoes by experience,
 - c) exclude any canoe deemed "unsafe" for any particular trip.
7. In the event of any dumping or other potentially dangerous situation occurring on a trip, the organizer and participants involved will fill out a Mishap Report to be sent to the Outings Committee, immediately after the trip.
8. Lone paddlers and / or Kayaks are permitted on trips at the discretion of the organizer.
9. Non-members are permitted to participate in only two trips.
10. Organizers should write a brief description of the trip (or arrange to have this done) and send it to the newsletter editor as soon as possible after the trip.

trip ratings

In order to avoid confusion over the level of difficulty of WCA canoe trips each newsletter description will state the level of experience required. The following international river rating system, advocated by the Canadian White Water Affiliation, should serve as a guide.

CLASS	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
	<u>Very Easy</u> : moving water with no rapids, some small riffles, and wide passages.	Beginner (with some instruction)
I	<u>Easy</u> : some small rapids with small waves and few obstacles. Correct courses easy to recognize. River speed is less than hard backpaddling speed.	Novice (beginner with some practice)
II	<u>Medium</u> : frequent but unobstructed rapids. Passages easy to recognize. River speed occasionally exceeds hard backpaddling speed.	Intermediate
III	<u>Difficult</u> : numerous rapids, large waves, and many obstacles requiring precise manoeuvring. Courses not easy to recognize. Current speed usually less than forward paddling speed. General limit for open canoes.	Advanced
IV	<u>Very Difficult</u> : long rapids with irregular waves, boulders directly in current, strong eddies and cross-currents. Scouting and fast precise manoeuvring is mandatory. Courses difficult to recognize. Current speed often exceeds fast forward paddling speed.	Expert
V-VI	<u>Exceedingly Difficult</u> : very strong current, extreme turbulence, big drops, steep gradients, many obstacles. <u>Limit of navigability!</u>	Team of Experts in covered canoe)

NOTE: This rating system is flexible, and just a rough guide. It is not based exclusively on the above descriptions. Factors such as remoteness, water temperature, river width, etc. can make a river more or less difficult, and vary the level of skill required. Further, a river may change its rating drastically depending upon the time of year. Finally, a stretch of river may be classed as easy, but may contain rapids of any grade which may influence the overall rating of the trip very little.

Lake trips cannot be so readily rated for difficulty. Generally, lake trips are suitable for beginners; however, strong winds on a large lake can be dangerous for any canoeist, no matter what his experience.

THE RATING OF TRIPS IS THE DECISION OF THE ORGANIZER.

canoe safety rules

(These rules are to be applied at the discretion of the trip organizers.)

- 1.) Paddlers will not be allowed on any trip without:
 - i) a flotation jacket that can be worn while paddling,
 - ii) a "safe" canoe (minimum length 15 ft for 2 paddlers),
 - iii) lining ropes (at least 25 ft) on bow and stern.
- 2.) Paddlers should always bring:
 - i) spare clothing, well waterproofed,
 - ii) extra food,
 - iii) matches in waterproof container.
- 3.) The signals used on WCA river trips should be known ahead of time.
- 4.) On rivers, canoes should maintain a definite order. Each boat is responsible for the one behind, giving signals after finishing any rapid, and positioning itself below the rapid ready to assist in case of trouble. Always keep the canoe behind in sight.
- 5.) Canoes should keep well spaced in rapids. Do not enter a rapid until the preceding canoe has successfully completed its run and signalled.
- 6.) The organizers' decisions on all trips are final.

SIGNALS



difficult - use own judgment



danger - do not run



all clear - with caution



The Outings Committee sincerely thanks our volunteer trip organizers for their continuing support which this time has produced the most varied and complete set of outings for a summer season. I hope that these outings will be safe, enjoyable and successful for all involved and that many of you will take the opportunity to participate and perhaps try out something a little bit different.

Presently the number of members on the committee is quite low making it very difficult to do an adequate job. Personally I consider all trip leaders with 2 yrs. of experience with the W.C.A. as members of this committee. We of the committee would welcome trip leaders & others to become active members of the committee.

The outings committee recently received a letter questioning the observance of W.C.A. guidelines by trip participants and organizers. The guidelines are fairly general and minimal but emphasize determination to have trips with low impact on the environment and to have a reasonable degree of safety for participants on these trips. It is in all our interests to see that the guidelines are respected.

We are considering further the matter of having insurance for the W.C.A. and its members regarding all club outings.

Wishing you all a great summer, and we look forward to seeing you all at the fall meeting Oct. 3-4 and talking over our many experiences.

Gord Fenwick

Exchange canoe trip entre le club d'amis d'eau de Varennes et le W.C.A. le 27,28 juin.

organizer for W.C.A Gord Fenwick, 431-3343

A two day canoe trip down the upper stretches of the Rouge river in the northern section of Mont Tremblay Parc qui inclura une longueur des rapides qui s'appelle "le vingt-et-un" de niveau de difficulté deux en été.

South Branch of Muskoka River, Sat. July 11

Organizer: Bill Ness, 1-416-499-6389
Book as soon as possible.

This is a relaxing 30 km. day's paddle through the heart of scenic Muskoka from the village of Fraserburg down to Bracebridge. There are four short portages and one medium length (805 m.) portage. There could be some runnable whitewater depending on water levels.

Suit. for novices with moving water experience. Limit 5 canoes

The Kawarthas-Indian River July 18-19

Organizers: Dave & Anneke Auger, 705-324-9359
book after July 12

This will be a leisurely paddle from the junction of hwy 7 to Rice Lake with a visit to Lang Century Village, with our overnight campspot at Hope Mill Cons. Area, Lim. 3 canoes. (*Esp. for parents with kids 5 yrs. & under*)

French River Upstream Workshop July 18-19

Organizer: John Cross, 416-487-0678
Book between June 22 and July 10

The art of upstream rapid travel, so necessary before the highway system, has been largely lost. We will try to relearn the techniques of poling up and lining up the rapids of a fairly forgiving river, the French. This will be a workshop with a difference: no instructor. (We have to teach ourselves.) Omer Stringer thinks going up rapids is the peak of the canoeists' art. Limit 4 canoes, Level: Inter. or better in good shape.

Dumoine River July 25- August 1

Organizer: Bill Ness, 1-416-755-5784
Book as soon as possible

Parks Canada's Wild Rivers Surveys describes the Dumoine as displaying "all the characteristics of a wild river: tumbling waterfalls, rolling rapids and long chutes on its way to the Ottawa River". From Rolphton on the Ottawa River we will be flying in to Lac Laforge to begin our trip. Ample time will be available for us to fully enjoy this beautiful river as we work our way back down to its mouth. Suitable for advanced paddlers. Limit - 3 canoes

Georgian Bay Canoe Sailing Workshop Aug. 8-9

Organizer: John Cross, 416-487-0678
Book: July 10-24

This is another workshop without an instructor in which we try out improvised sailing rigs to see if we can make the canoes work upwind. If there is no wind then we will have to paddle and enjoy the scenery. Required: a big tarpaulin, lots of cord, spare paddles (for improvised leeboard).

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: intermed., or better

Upper Eel's Creek Work Weekend Aug. 15-16

Organizer: John Cross, 416-487-0678
Book: July 21 to Aug. 7

Upper Eel's Creek is said to have some good rapids on it, but it is almost never done because of the many logs down across it. Indians kept canoe routes open by clearing a bit each time they passed, but Upper Eel's needs a big push to make it fit for use. We will clear all but the largest log jams, which will be left in because of our limited equipment & because they contribute to the character of the route. After we have made a canoe route it will probably be some years before any groups dare to try it. Everyone bring a large saw.

Level: canoeists in good shape

Black River in Haliburton Highlands, Aug. 22-23

Organizer: Karl Schimek, 416-222-3720
Book: June 22-26 or Aug. 1-8

This is a flat water trip down the Black River from Vankougnet road to Cooper's Falls, with a few easy portages along the way.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: suit. for novices

White Water Practice Session at Aumond's Rapids on the Madawaska river, Aug. 29-30

Organizer: George Haeh, 416-962-2951 (Home)
968-0989 (Bus.)
Book: Aug. 1 to 16

This will be a weekend devoted to the fundamentals, Reading the water, doing low and high braces, etc. The time & location offer warm water and a set of rapids that give a wide variety of conditions and challenges, free of serious hazard.

Level: Suitable for canoeists with flat-water experience. Limit: 4 canoes

Killarney Park September 5 to 7

Organizer: Joe Keleher 1-705-436-1300 (home)
1-416-675-5800 (Work)
Book: Aug. 17-27

This will be a three-day canoe-backpacking trip to explore a section of the La Cloche Mountains in this rugged wilderness region. Depending on the group we will; (a) canoe from George L. to Killarney Lake, cache the canoes and backpack 5-6 km. to Little Superior L. and set up a two-day camp with the second day open to exploration or relaxation according to individual interests, or (b) an exploratory trip up the Mahzenazing R. to Johnny L. and north to Clearsilver L. where a base camp will be set up in position for a hiking trip to the top of Silver Peak the following day.

Level: Suitable for physically fit novices,
Limit: 4 canoes

Noire, Coulonges & Ottawa River Adventure

Date: Sept. 5-7, Book: August 1-15 (G. Haeh)
Organizer: Dave Berthelet 1-819-771-4170
Assistant Org. George Haeh 416-962-2951 (Home)
968-0989 (Bus.)

This will be three rigorous days or river running and road bashing involving early starts and late finishes with bumpy roads and long shuttles. Spray decks an asset, solo canoeist welcome. Suit. for advanced canoeists only! Limit: 4 canoes

Temagami Tour Sat. Aug. 29-Mon. Sept. 7

Organizer: Bill Ness, 416-499-6389
Book: As soon as possible

This week-long excursion will be comprised of two trips in the rugged Temagami area. The first will take us via a chain of lakes to the Cininiguchi R., which we will descend to its mouth in the Sturgeon R. From here we will paddle the Sturgeon to the trip's end at the village of River Valley. Then to conclude the week we will run the swift Temagami R. from its head to its mouth at River Valley. These rivers offer the canoeist many challenging whitewater stretches that require precise maneuvering. A great way to end the summer!

Limit: 4 canoes
Level: Intermediates with good white-w. skill

Tim River-Rosebary L. (Algonquin Park)

Organizer: Jack McGinty, 416-281-4519
Date: Sept. 12-13, Book: Aug. 24-Sept. 3

After meeting Saturday morning we will descend the Tim R. into Rosebary L. The Tim R. is narrow and meanders through a wide valley, twisting and turning through marshland with 2 or 3 liftovers.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: Suit. for beginners

Elora Gorge September 13

Organizer: George Haeh 416-962-2951 (Home)
968-0989 (Bus.)
Book: Aug. 1 to 22

This is a short but highly scenic paddle down the Gorge with easy white water. If the weather is good, we might run it twice.

Limit: 6 canoes, Level: intermediate

Burley-Harvey Recreational Zone Sept. 19-20

Organizer: Glenn Spence, 416-355-3506
Book: Sept. 2-12

This trip offers 35 km of canoeing through lakes, along creeks, with the unforgettable experiences of liftovers of beaver dams, & portages. There is no white-water. Participants must be prepared for single trip portaging.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: novice

Moon River Loop Sat. Sept. 26-Sun. Sept. 27

Organizer: Bill Ness, 416-499-6389
Book: Sept. 8-22

This is a pleasant 38 km lake and river circle trip from Healey Lake. There are 12 portages, most of which are quite short. This area has superb fall colours, so bring your camera along.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: Novice

Upper Magnetawan R. trip Sept. 26 to 27

Organizer: Don Austin, 416-293-7872
Book: September 8 to 18

This will be a 30 km trip from Ahmic L. to Wahwashkesh L. with ten or 12 sets of short and challenging rapids which can be easily portaged if water levels are too high. Good campsites are scarce but the river is lightly travelled despite its scenic beauty.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: Intermediate

Wilderness Canoe Association Fall Meeting
Bark Lake October 3 and 4 !!!!!

Upper Credit River Outing October 18

Organizer: Jim Greenacre, 416-759-9956
Book: October 1-8

This will be a 20 km trip down the easier sections of the river between Terra Cotta and Huttonville. Low water could mean "wet feet" when walking the canoes over shallow spots, or the trip may be moved to the Head and Black rivers.

Limit: 6 canoes, Level: Novice with flat. exp.

St. Nora Lake, Kennissi Lake Loop (near Dorset)

Organizer: Rob Butler, 416-487-2282
Date: October 25, Book: Sept. 25-Oct. 11

This will be a long day of flat water paddling through the scenic Haliburton countryside. We will pass through a number of lakes via a number of portages the longest of which is 3/4 km.

Limit: 4 canoes, Level: novices in good cond.

products and services

Canoe For Sale

Sixteen foot Old Towne ABS river canoe. Almost new condition. Price \$690 (one-third off new price). John Sprague, 166 Maple St., Guelph, Ont. N1G 2G7. Phone 519 824-8329.

Canoe Wanted

Used Grumman Whitewater, in reasonable condition wanted. Contact Dave Berthelet, 107 Froment St., Hull, Quebec J8Y 6E2: phone 319-771-4170.

Coleman Craft Canoes:

Coleman Craft Canoes, of hand-layed-up fiberglass, are available in 12'8", 14'8", and 16' L.O.A., with either a lake keel or shallow keel for river use. Custom made and sold only at our shop. Maximum production is limited to 100 per year. Please phone if you are interested in viewing films of our canoes and discussing their features. Bill Coleman: (519) 623-1804/1894. Shop located at 333 Dundas St. (Hwy. 8), Cambridge (Galt), Ontario.

Spray Covers:

Custom made for any canoe from waterproof nylon. Contact Rockwood Outfitters, 45 Speedvale Ave. E., Guelph, Ontario N1H 1J2. Phone 519 824-1415.

Bluewater Canoes:

Lightweight Kevlar-S-glass, fibreglass, and nylon canoes made with epoxy and vinylester resins. As well, we have an excellent line of canoes - Mad River, Nova Craft, Woodstream, Bluewater Royale - and canoeing supplies. Rockwood Outfitters, 45 Speedvale Ave. E., Guelph, Ontario N1H 1J2. Phone 519 824-1415.

Trippers:

Rentals of exceptional quality canoe and trail equipment. Cannondale tents, Lowe Alpine Systems backpacks, Mad River and Bluewater canoes. For information and reservations call Tripper's at 416 489-4378, Toronto.

Discounts on Camping Supplies:

WCA members who present a membership card will receive ten percent discounts on many non-sale items at:

Margesson's, 17 Adelaide St. E., Toronto.
Don Bell Sports, 164 Front St., Trenton.
A.B.C. Sports, 552 Young St., Toronto.
Rockwood Outfitters, 15 Speedvale Ave. E., Guelph.

Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

Biggest Camp Sale Ever

at Margesson's, The Camping Specialists, June 24-27. These are just some of the excellent values you will find:

Vasque Sequoia Hiking Boot	\$69.88
Gore-tex Parka by Far West	\$99.88
Equinox Superlite Sleeping Bag	99.38
Eureka Timberline 2 person tent	\$169.88
Camptrails Travel Half Dome Pack	\$99.88
River Runners Kayak Accessories	\$324.88
Wilderness Canoeing Vest (wool)	\$29.88
P. Storm Sweaters (waterproofed wool)	49.88
Silva Polaris Compass (with instr.)	\$5.95

All sales final, no layaways, no phone orders, limited stock on some items.

Adventure Bound

Adventure Bound offers quality equipment for all light weight travellers; including: Eureka tents, Camp Trails backpacks and sleeping bags, Old Town Oltonar Canoes and much more. Write or phone for personalized services and price lists. Adventure Bound, 3535 Braemore Place, Burlington, Ontario, L7N 2N1. Phone 416 637-3645.

Long Range Weather Forecasts

To help with planning your trips, thirty-day forecasts for all of North America are offered in a monthly newsletter. Send \$24.00 for twelve issues to: Future Weather Inc., Box 2632, Station "A", London, Ontario, N6A 4B9.

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