

Nain Bay

## JOURNEY TO THE FRASER RIVER

Herb Pohl

I was sitting in Garfield Flowers' kitchen finishing off the last of a more than ample breakfast when my host announced: "The Taverner should be in shortly after lunch."

Garfield, a man of many talents and descendant of one of the early settlers in Labrador, is the mayor of Hopedale, an Inuit community of about 500 people located on the coast of northern Labrador. I had met him two years earlier at the conclusion of my Uqjoktok River canoe trip and had left my boat in his care. Now it was July 1987 and I was waiting for the arrival of the first ship of the season to take me to Nain, the most northerly settlement along the coast. Of the two ships which make regular runs from Lewisport in Newfoundland to Nain, the Taverner, at 600 ton displacement, is much the smaller of the two and a bit long in the tooth. She was now several days behind schedule, not unusual for the first run of the season, but most unwelcome to me, for I was operating within a strictly limited time frame.

There was an uneasy moment when the Taverner docked and the purser told me: "I don't know whether you should come on board; there is a lot of ice up ahead and we don't know if we'll be able to make it to Nain. Better go and see the captain." Well, captain French was agreeable and shortly I was exchanging gossip with a group of old friends and fellow-members of the Wilderness Canoe Association who had boarded the Taverner in Goose Bay and were on their way to the Torngat Mountains and the Koroc River some 400 kilometres north of Nain. (These were George Luste and his group of open-canoe paddlers; see the lead story in the Winter 1988 issue of *Nastawgan*. Ed.)

After a slow run to Davis Inlet in loose pack ice we anchored for the night near one of the many groups of islands which guard the mainland's eastern flank. With the first light of day we were on the move again, carefully manoeuvring among the ice floes at half speed or less. As time went on and the sea became more and more congested the thumping noise of ice brushing up against the hull came at more frequent intervals. Finally, the inevitable: "The captain wants to see you."

On the bridge the worried captain shook his head "I'm sorry, that's as far as I can go."

We (George's group and myself) previously had discussed the possibility of this happening and had asked to be put over the side to make our way north under our own power. We were still more than 60 kilometres from Nain and some 30 kilometres from the mainland, but we were confident that we could work our way to a nearby group of islands and there decide on the best way to proceed.

The next hour was one of frantic activity for us, and of more than passing interest for the rest of the passengers and crew. Cameras were getting a workout as the canoes were lifted out of the hold, loaded, and hoisted over the side. Finally we were all in the water, the captain bid us goodbye with three blasts of the ship's whistle, the propellers started to churn, and ever so slowly the Taverner turned and moved away.

A steady breeze from the northeast and the outgoing tide combined to make progress through the tightly packed ice difficult. It took several hours of pushing, shoving, and prying to create tiny leads which quickly closed up again. I was quite content and grateful to bring up the rear and follow in the openings created by the other boats.

Eventually we reached open water in the lee of the nearest island and headed for the highest elevation to survey the scene. There was a curtain of pack ice to the east of the outer islands, but to the west, towards Voisey's Bay and the mainland, the path was relatively clear. For me it was time to say goodbye to the other paddlers and soon the outline of their boats disappeared from view. I was headed for the inside passage and the mouth of the Fraser River just north of Nain.

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*We are let off amid the ice pack some 18 km east of Voisey's Bay*

A few additional hours of paddling provided sufficient evidence that pencil pushing and shuffling paper is not an adequate conditioning program for wilderness trips and I stopped on Kiuvik Island for an early camp. The next morning started out well enough, but as the day progressed the landscape became obscured by fog and drizzle, and a raw wind made things uncomfortable. At day's end I put up the tent at a spot where I had stopped some years earlier. Then, glorious sunshine had etched the rocks and trees and islands into sharp relief; now the world was small and grey and out of focus. Except for the muffled sounds from the shifting sea-ice, silence blanketed this forlorn place.

The following afternoon the sun emerged for a brief hour. I was in Nain Bay and heading west, and for the first time I could see the tremendous cleft in the precambrian rock which is the valley of the Fraser. Ten years earlier I had come across the book *Through Trackless Labrador*. It describes the 1910 journey from Nain to the George River by Hesketh Prichard and two companions. At the time the interior of the Labrador Peninsula was still largely 'Terra Incognita' and Prichard proceeded up the Fraser in spite of predictions by the Inuit that the valley was too congested with rocks and alders to be a suitable route. What riveted my attention were the photographs of the Fraser valley showing bare rock walls rising to impressive height on either side of the river. That was a sight I had to see with my own eyes, I decided.

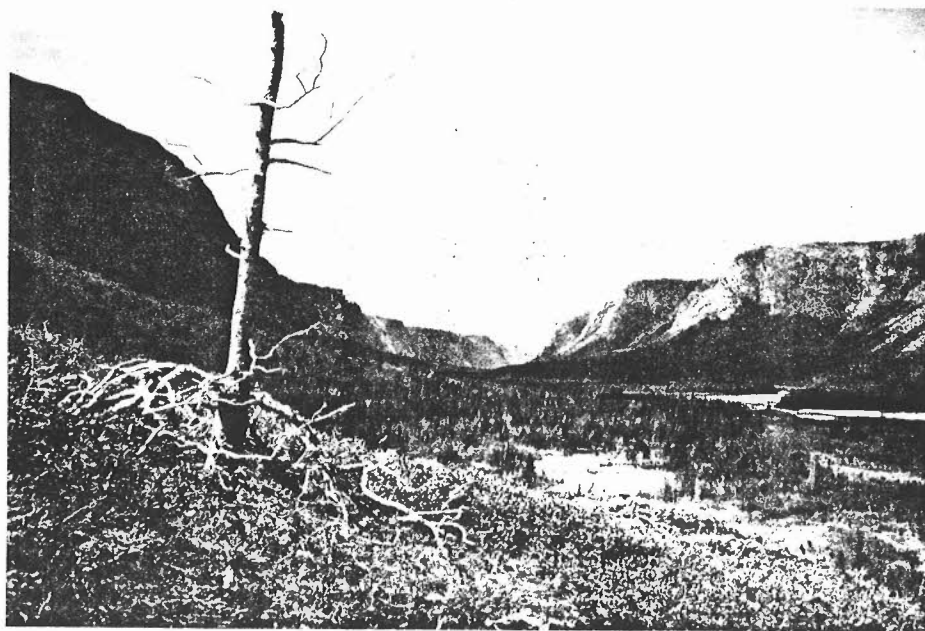
Nain Bay was a tranquil place. Around me everywhere was the evidence of the tremendous forces which ground and polished the steel-grey rockfaces during the last ice age. The valley of the Fraser, carved out of solid rock at that time, runs like a deep scar almost perfectly straight from west to east. Rock walls rise on either side to a height of 600 metres with nary a gap to allow egress to the barren highland. The valley becomes a troublesome wind tunnel even in moderate winds, as I was to find out rather quickly.

By evening the whitecaps were in full bloom, whipped up by a northeasterly breeze—a sure sign of bad weather in these parts—and my tent was safely tucked in among a small stand of tamarack. At four o'clock in the morning the rain came in gusty squalls and I was desperately trying to find an excuse for staying put. But the tide was coming in and it was time to move. The long and narrow bays which are so common to northern Labrador give rise to strong tidal currents and one is well advised to take advantage of them.

Before dissipating into Nain Bay the Fraser flows through a series of small intertidal lakes. Shortly after noon all but one of them were behind me and I headed for shelter. The wind had gradually intensified and the constant downpour had spawned numerous transient streams which plunged over the mist-shrouded precipices in wind-blown streamers to the valley floor. The rushing sound of wind and falling water, combined with the evidence of past storms, was an unsettling element which made for a restless night.



*A curtain of pack ice obstructs the way to Voisey's Bay*



*The valley is a natural wind tunnel*

*Gradually the valley becomes narrower*



Tasisuak Lake, some 40 km in length, is the last of the lakes on the Fraser and a bad place to be caught in a storm. It occupies the whole valley floor and there is virtually no spot to put up a tent except near the two extremities. After two wind-bound but sunny days and an early morning dash I reached the western end just in time to take shelter from the next blow.

From here on the Fraser is a small stream which rushes along in braided channels at a rate of descent which increases from three metres per kilometre to nearly 10 m/km further upstream. The sandy shoreline near Tasisuak Lake gradually gives way to coarse gravel and finally boulders. Prichard's party ascended this section a little more than halfway towards the height of land which constitutes the boundary between Quebec and Labrador. At a gap in the valley wall he called "Bear Ravine" he left the river and struck out over the barren highlands for the George River.

The next morning a cold gale blew out of the west and it was with some regret that I left the warm campfire and took to the tracking line. Two long days later I was stumbling along in the strong current at the foot of Bear Ravine. Two unscheduled swims in the numbingly cold water had dispelled any euphoria the grand setting might have evoked.

The walls of the valley had gradually moved closer so that now the sun reached the valley floor for only a few hours of the day. Several streams tumbled noisily from lofty heights down the north wall of the canyon. Interspersed among the alders and scrub-brush in the valley were large birch and massive, hundreds-of-years-old white spruce. Beneath a group of several of the latter at the water's edge a flat spot presented itself and wearily I took possession. Fatigue has a way of undermining efficiency and it was dusk by the time the chores were done and I began to roam farther afield in search of dry firewood. Not twenty metres away were the remains of an old camp beneath one of the large spruce.

Was this Prichard's camp?

I like to think so. Certainly the Inuit never travel beyond the head of Tasisuak Lake, because few caribou ever descend from the highlands into the valley and there is no other game worth mentioning save a large population of black bears.

My original plan was to portage up Bear Ravine and head in a southwesterly direction towards the first of the large lakes in the Kogaluk River watershed. With the delays at the start of the trip this was now out of the question, but there remained one ambition. Upon their return from the George River, Prichard's party abandoned a canoe at the top of the escarpment. I wanted to search for the remains.

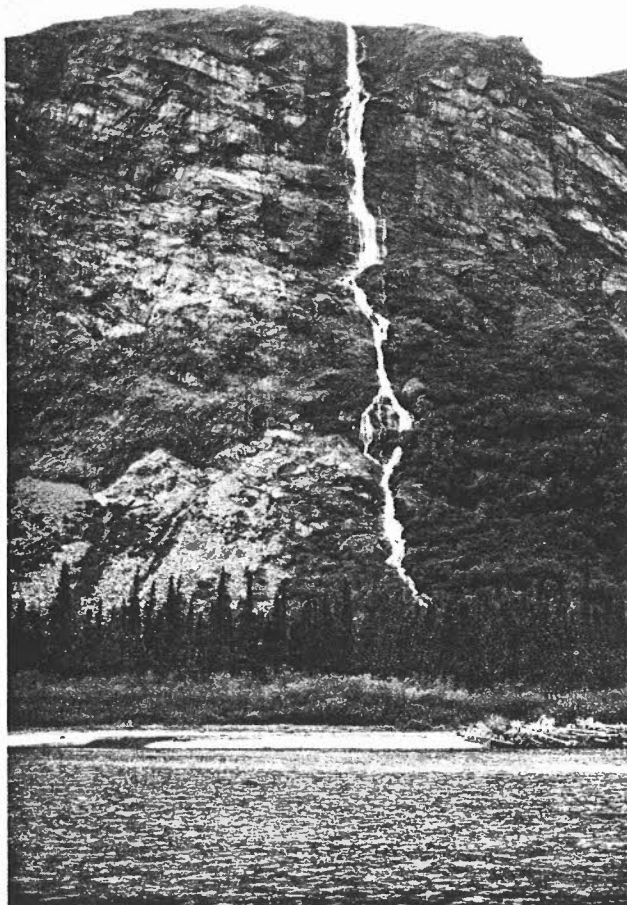


*A cosy hideaway while the winds streak down the valley just a few metres away*

From a distance Bear Ravine looked harmless enough in the morning sun. Closer inspection revealed a boulder-choked, shrub-infested incline, the bottom of which was occupied by a rushing brook; not what one might call prime portaging country. Once at the top one is confronted with utter desolation. A totally barren expanse of gently rolling hills extends in all directions with no prominent landmarks to guide the traveller. Cut into the stony ground along the edge of the precipice are caribou trails as far as the eye can see.

The search for Prichard's canoe came to a premature halt when my advance was blocked by a bear who showed no inclination to budge. Ever the reasonable man, I decided to change course by 180 degrees. Who cares about remnants of canoes anyway?

Five days later I was back in Nain after an as nearly uneventful return journey as one is likely to have in these parts. Out of the mists of pouring rain the Taverner gradually took shape as she slowly approached the dock. It was only after boarding her that I found out that there had been some concern regarding the whereabouts and safety of a party of canoeists who had been let off among the ice floes and had not been heard from since.



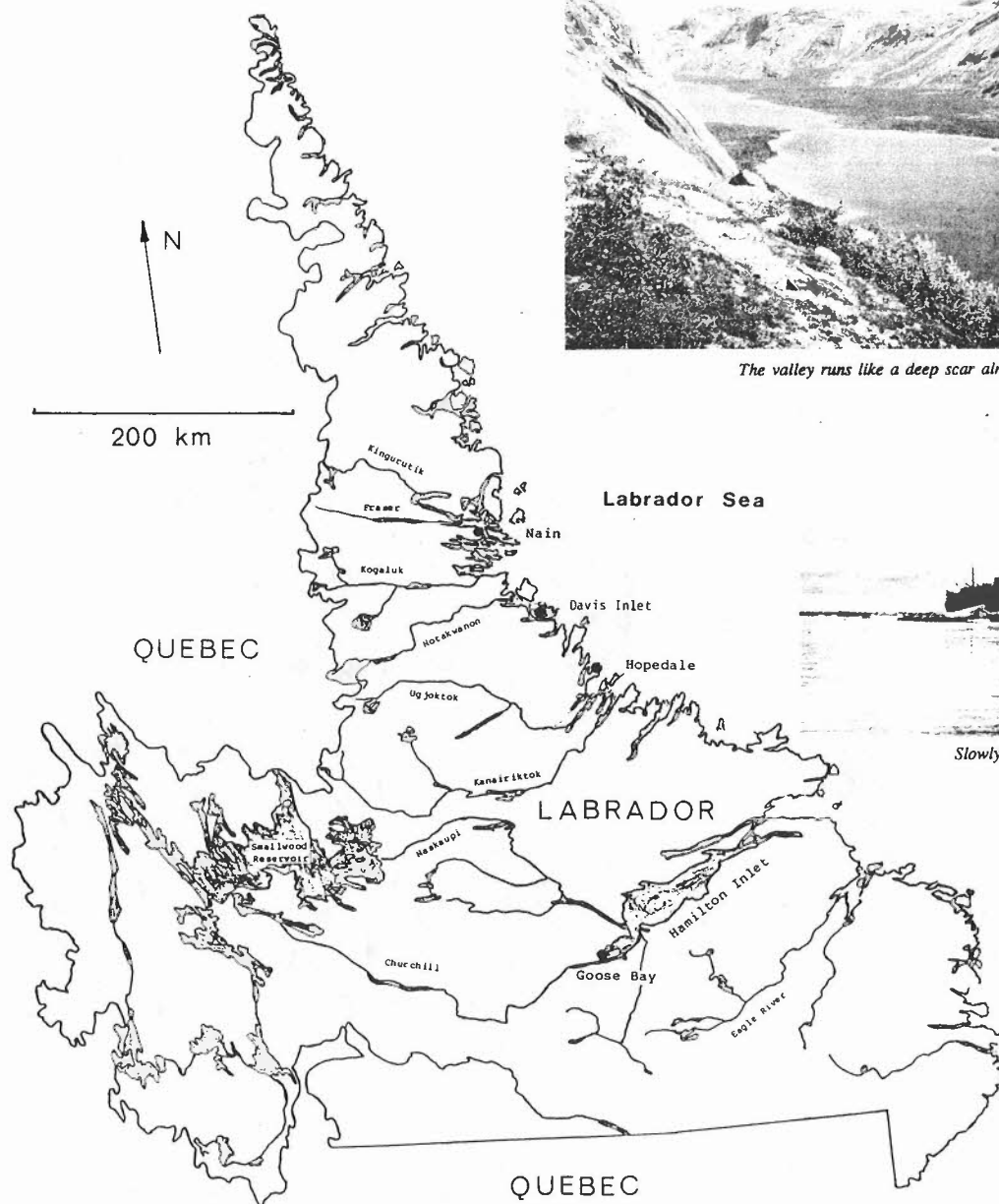
*After several days of rain, streams of water tumbled down everywhere*



*A look upstream from the mouth of Bear Ravine*



*What looks easy from a distance is really an exhausting portage*



*The valley runs like a deep scar almost perfectly straight from east to west*



*Slowly the St. Lawrence disappears on the horizon*



## DELUSIONS

John Winters

Nothing — absolutely nothing — is ever so good as described in the advertising. The quality of automobiles is never really "Job One," the fish never ever jump into your frying pan, and the blind date so glowingly described by friends has the personality of a dish rag. The lurking question in one's mind is how much expectations should be lowered to fit reality. The Wabakimi region (northwest of Lake Nipigon, Ontario) is touted as a wilderness paradise by those who promote the area, but is it? Probably not, but even my cynicism (often described as excessive) failed to prepare me. Reluctantly I pass on this sad tale and would not, even for a second, have you believe it to be the last word on the subject nor even the next to last word. It is, simply, the other side of the coin.

We didn't start well. The shortcut I talked us into taking from Highway 17 to Armstrong was shorter, but its name, Black Sturgeon Road, was misleading. There were no sturgeon, black or otherwise, and it was only a road in the loosest, most comprehensive sense of the word. Whether the Spences or their aging Plymouth suffered more as I demonstrated the back-road driving skills learned as a teenager in the deep south is a moot question. It is enough that we survived shaken but undaunted. The Hasketts, Bob and Peter, had arrived before us and were soaking up some highly touted northern atmosphere in the hotel. The atmosphere was as disappointing as the shortcut. The old hotel had been spruced up and now had a *government-grant* look with aluminum siding, cheap carpet, and the standard sanitized formica and knotty-pine interior. No doubt many people consider the change an improvement but to those of us who like people with character and a few warts, the hotel competes with sliced white bread for blandness.

Caribou Lake was our put-in point. We need never have left it. It had float planes, lots of fishing boats, fishermen (nice friendly fellows who were spending a small fortune to be up north in the "real" wilderness), and the most extraordinary quantity of mosquitoes (more on these later). Our route carried us northwest through Smoothrock Lake (the fly-in fishing lodge capital of the north) down the Berg and Ogoki rivers (some short, runnable rapids for those who do that kind of thing) to Whitewater Lake where there are more fly-in lodges and powerboats, as well as the famous estate of the old fraud Wendell Beckwith who guided passing canoeists into believing he was a mystic of sorts. After looking over his cabins, it is no wonder he abandoned his career as an engineer. The

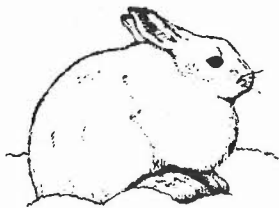
craftsmanship is excellent but the design work questionable. How disappointing to discover that his highly touted shingle roof was cosmetic and underlain with tar paper to prevent leaks. Nevertheless, touring Outward Bound types get a warm glow mooning about the buildings, dreaming of their own cabin in the wilderness, hopefully built and funded with the same outside help Wendell had. A foundation has been created to preserve the site and buildings. Good luck to them. The foundations are inadequate and rot will eventually set in along the bottom logs if the ubiquitous morons who vandalize anything that isn't guarded night and day don't destroy it first. Already there are windows broken and garbage strewn about.

Garbage! Now there is a worthy topic. Not just the usual cans, beer bottles, and plastic. This country abounds in fish guts left on the rocks at the best campsites. Imagine, if you will, a hot, sultry, windless day. For eight hours you've paddled and a swim and a bit of sunset gazing would be just the ticket. A gradually sloping rock landing on an island beckons. Ample space for your three tents and nicely spaced jack-pine complete the picture. Perfect! Except for three large, splendidly smelly pike artistically arranged on the landing. Ah, the romance of the north! A rare occurrence? Forty percent of our canoe sites had fish remains scattered about. Fortunately fish guts are removable. Mosquitoes are not. Never, even in the swamps of Virginia, have I experienced so many. We had been told — publicly — that there were very few insects in this area. Indeed, one outfitter bragged of the fact. Lies! All lies! There may have been none last year or even the year before but the fact remains that insects are a part of northern life and the Wabakimi area is no different from anywhere else except maybe a little worse if our experience is any indication.

There is one last incident to report. As we paddled through a remote lake we were accosted by two fishermen whose accents and demeanour hinted at more than a passing familiarity with the drug traffic in Detroit. "Just passing through?" they asked rhetorically. "Yes," we said. "We were told there wouldn't be any other people in here," said the one that looked like a heavy in Miami Vice. We said our goodbyes before they showed greater signs of irritation.

And so it goes. We were not the only ones sold a bill of goods. But I dare not leave you with the wrong impression. There is beauty aplenty here. This is Shield country and the distinctive feature, the moss-covered, park-like jack-pine forest has a distinctive appeal and the sand beaches are exquisite. See it for yourself. Get off the popular routes and the lakes large enough for float planes. Maybe there you will find the wilderness experience promised.

## FASHIONS FOR THE COMING WINTER



Time seems to stand still in Algonquin at this time of year. The campgrounds, so busy with throngs of campers just a few weeks ago, are now deserted and silent. The odd visitor, stopping for a picnic on his way through the Park, finds it very easy to drift off in the clear, completely silent air, and he hardly notices when a pair of Gray Jays quietly glide down to the table for a few leftover crumbs. At times, even the brilliant fall colors seem to bring on a mood of introspective daydreaming, and you get the impression that the Park will always stay the way it is now.

Of course, everyone knows that the snow and cold of winter are not really all that far away. The fall colors themselves are ample proof of that and there are plenty of other signs as well. Beavers are working day and night to lay in their food piles, bears are fauencing up for their long winter sleep, and most remaining birds will soon be flying south. In fact, just about every living thing in Algonquin is now preparing for the approaching winter.

Among mammals (which don't really have the option of migrating) a vital preparation is growing a new winter coat. With a few exceptions, fur is all that ever comes between these animals and the frigid air temperatures outside, and so the importance of a luxurious winter coat is obvious.

To us, the most interesting of the Park mammals now about to start their fall moult are the three species which not only change their coats, but also change their color at the same time — from summer brown to winter white. The three species are the Snowshoe Hare, the Long-tailed Weasel, and its smaller relative the Short-tailed Weasel (often called "Ermine"). In each of these animals, the color change is similar insofar as it starts on the underparts and spreads upwards. All told, it takes over two months to complete in the hare (from late September to early December), but in the weasels it may take place in just three weeks, generally starting before, and ending after, the arrival of the first permanent snow. During this short space of time, the weasels change from creamy yellow below and brown above to pure white all over — except for the tip of the tail which stays jet black.

Naturalists argued for many years over what triggers these color changes — the arrival of snow or cold temperatures. We now know that neither of these possible factors is responsible. What really counts is the day length; short days cause a weasel in moult to grow white fur, and long days will cause it to grow brown fur. This was dramatically demonstrated by a scientist who kept a moulting weasel indoors and subjected it to alternating periods of short and long "days" of artificial light. At the end of the moult period he had a weasel with alternating, horizontal brown and white stripes!

Out in the real world, of course, the internal chemistry of a hare or weasel could never be fooled in this way and they both end up being white after the fall moult. To the hare, the advantages are especially obvious. A whole range of predators, ranging from owls to fishers and foxes, are on the lookout for hares and anything which helps them avoid detection will contribute to their survival.

For the weasels, the rewards of effective camouflage are less apparent. Weasels themselves are predators and it is very doubtful that being white in the winter would enable a weasel to hunt mice and shrews more effectively than if it were brown.

Actually, the key to the problems seems to be that weasels aren't very big. Now, in some ways it is a distinct advantage for weasels to be on the small side. For example, it permits them to burrow into and under the snow in search of mice and shrews and it also allows them, summer and winter, to go right into the hiding places of their prey — rather than always having to wait for a victim to show up on the surface the way other predators have to. The catch is that even if being small gives weasels a competitive advantage over other, larger predators interested in similar prey, it also exposes the weasels to considerable danger from those same larger predators. A fox or goshawk will just as soon make a meal of an ermine as it will a snack of a mouse. In point of fact, predation by birds and larger mammals seems to be the major factor in keeping weasel numbers as low as they are. It therefore makes sense that weasels turn white in the winter for, as with the snowshoe hares, they should benefit from anything that helps them pass unnoticed.

But there seems to be one fatal flaw in this strategy of protective coloration. When weasels moult into their winter coats they replace the black tail tip of the summer coat, not with a white one, but with another black one. Contrasting with the rest of the coat and especially against a snowy background, this black tail tip is glaringly conspicuous. In fact, since no predator could ever fail to miss it, this obvious giveaway must surely cancel out all the benefits gained through the rest of the fur turning white.

This reasoning might seem logical but it has been proven to be wrong. True, the black tip is inescapably obvious when a weasel is running across the snow, but nothing much is lost here because most predators have such sharp eyes that they don't really have any trouble seeing a white weasel moving on a white background anyway. (The white fur is very hard to see, however, when the weasel is stationary.) What the black tip does seem to do for a moving weasel is to confuse an attacking predator. Actual trials using tethered hawks and a series of fake weasels with and without painted black spots have shown that the hawks usually caught the spotted white weasels but more often missed the spotted ones — because they aimed their attacks at the tail instead of the body. Thus it turns out that the black tips on the tails of winter weasels, far from being an evolutionary blunder, are really an important life-saving device.

To us humans, the beautiful white coats of the hare and the two weasels are the ultimate in winter attire — at least among Park residents. To the animals themselves, of course, their winter coats are much more than merely fashionable; right down to the last detail, they are vital adaptations for survival. Hard to believe as it may be, on these fine fall days when time seems to stand still, these adaptations will soon come into play. The Algonquin winter is on its way. . . .



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nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

## EDITORIAL

At last, the end of an era! After 16 years of publication, most of which as an 11x17 tabloid, *Nastawgan* will get an important face lift beginning with the next issue, Spring 1990. The new *Nastawgan* will be printed in Toronto in the standard magazine format 8 1/2 x 11 which is easier to handle and file. The lay-out will be tighter with slightly fewer photographs, and not only the text typesetting but also the page lay-out will be done via computer, saving time and, eventually, money, while improving the visual quality of our publication.

But *Nastawgan's* most important value, its unique subject matter provided by you, the members (and some non-members), will remain what it has always been: a strong voice informing us about the beauty of our threatened wilderness. Only with your input and contributions can *Nastawgan* continue to be the unique publication we can all be proud of.

"Going computer" also means the end of a cherished tradition in the production process of our newsletter: the quarterly *paste-up* which brought together a small number of dedicated cut-and-pasters who actually put together the pages from material prepared by the editor. Electronic paste-up only requires the presence of the editor and the computer operator. Alas!, no more fascinating exchanges of gossip, slurping of hot soup, and listening to loud folk music... Thank you: Joan Etheridge, Jim Greenacre, Ria Harting, Bill King, Stewart Mcllwraith, Dale Miner, Herb Pohl, Sandy Richardson, Cam Salsbury, Claire Smerdon, Chris Smith, Duncan Taylor; your help over the past four years and 18 paste-ups has been invaluable.

## ANOTHER HIDDEN TREASURE

On page 6 of the Summer 1989 issue of *Nastawgan* a short tribute was presented to three hard-working WCA volunteers who, outside the spotlight, do a tremendous job of helping keep the club healthy.

However, there is another treasure, a truly hidden one not mentioned on the newsletter's back page, who plays a vital role in the running of the WCA, and that is Mary Butler. She regularly collects the incoming WCA mail sent to our P.O. Box, then sorts and distributes it to the various WCA functionaries. Not a very glamorous task but one that is absolutely crucial because our almost 600 members and the many curious non-members writing for information do create a lot of mail that needs to be looked into. Thanks, Mary, we very much appreciate your dedication.

T.H.



## NEWS BRIEFS

**NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE** Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Submit your contributions preferably in typewritten form or on floppy disk; contact the editor for more information. Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue: Spring 1990	deadline date: 4 February 1990
Summer 1990	6 May 1990

**WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS** are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. Send two dollars in bills (no cheques, please!) to: Cash Belden, 77 Huntley Street, Apt. 1116, Toronto, M4Y 2P3.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL** Don't forget to renew your membership for the coming year. See the enclosed membership application form.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1990** Next year's AGM will take place on 24 February at the Hockley Valley Ecology/Retreat Centre a few kilometres north of Orangeville, Ontario. See the enclosed information sheet.

**SYMPOSIUM IN JANUARY** Set aside coming 26 and 27 January for the fifth annual Canoeists' Slide Fest and Wilderness Symposium. This year we focus on LABRADOR, one of the last and most spectacular true wilderness regions of North America with grand, unspoiled rivers, a sea coast, mountains, deep fiords, and an interesting history. A number of contributors are coming from some distance to share their knowledge and experience. There may never again be another opportunity to meet such a unique group of Labrador travellers. If you have not received a registration form in a separate mailing, please contact George Luste at 416-534-9313. Register as soon as possible because space is limited.

**LOGGING ACROSS ONTARIO** The Environmental Assessment Board has been holding timber management hearings which will affect logging across Ontario Crown Lands by streamlining the application process. Currently, the Ministry of Natural Resources is presenting its case. When they are finished, the Ontario Forest Industries Association will present its case. Other parties will follow with their presentations.

There are no public information sessions, but you can receive some of the correspondence and documents if you are on the list of part-time parties. To get on the list, call or write to Michele Devaul, Hearings Liaison Officer, Hearings Liaison Office, 17 North Cumberland Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7A 4K8; telephone: 807-345-3289.

**HYDRO PROJECT HOTLINE** Ontario Hydro has a collect 24-hour project information telephone line. Give them a call if you want to know what projects they are planning, and when public information and commentary sessions are being held. You can also write them at: Ontario Hydro, Community Relations 700 University Avenue, H8 B4, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1X6; telephone: 416-592-7943 (collect).

**ABITIBIKAPUSKASING TO NORTH BAY HYDRO LINE** Ontario Hydro is planning to sling a 230,000 volt transmission line from Abitibi and Kapuskasing to North Bay. If you want to be kept up to date on the Northeastern Ontario Transmission Reinforcement Study, participate in the study, or have someone from Hydro speak to your group, write or call C.L. Ognibene, Community Relations Field Officer, Community Relations Department, Design and Development Division/Transmission, Ontario Hydro, 700 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1X6; telephone: 416-592-3920 (collect).

**FALL MEETING** This year's WCA Fall Meeting was again held at the Minden Wild Water Preserve on the Gull River. The 90 members who attended enjoyed spectacular weather and beautiful fall colors.

A slide 'show-and-tell' on Friday evening got the weekend off to an entertaining start. Saturday was filled with interesting workshops and lectures, many of which were given by our knowledgeable members. Saturday evening's barbecue feast was enjoyed by the canoeists, who seemed to devour every morsel. Although our after-dinner speaker was unable to attend, we had an entertaining evening watching some of Bill Mason's classic films.

As always, Sunday was spent pursuing everyone's favorite pastime. Some paddlers left bright and early on flatwater day trips, while others remained at the Preserve to experience the thrill of whitewater or to test-paddle the sample boats made available by outfitters.

All in all, a great weekend was had by everyone.

**FALL PARTY** On 24 November, 111 members and friends of the WCA were present at the traditional wine-and-cheese party to share stories of their recent trips and to enjoy each other's company. The main slide presentations were on the Mississauga River and Eels Creek, the Mountain River, the Spanish River, and the French River. Once again, a very pleasant evening.

**WCA PHOTO CONTEST** The closing date for receipt of your entry in this rewarding and interesting competition is 21 January 1990. See page 7 of the Autumn 1989 issue of *Nastawgan* for all the information you need to participate. Contrary to what happened in previous years, the organizers will not make phone calls to solicit entries to get the number of participants to an acceptable figure. If you really want the contest to blossom, send in your entries as soon as possible.

## WCA ARCHIVE

*Complete set of newsletters to be made available*

In the Editorial, information is presented on the coming change-over to the new 8 1/2 x 11 format for *Nastawgan*, beginning with the coming Spring 1990 issue.

This appears to be an excellent opportunity to respond to requests for complete sets of WCA newsletters published since the founding of the club in 1973. Many of the older issues had been printed on newsprint that quickly turned yellow and became brittle with age, making it hard not to inflict damage when handling the delicate sheets. Over the years, the WCA newsletter has become well known for its priceless treasure of first-hand information on the Canadian wilderness, information that is often impossible to find anywhere else. It is obviously worth while to try and save this segment of Canada's culture so that future travellers may benefit from what we have collected.

The Board of Directors has therefore accepted a proposal to present (to members only) a one-time offer for a complete, 16-volume set of WCA newsletters, which includes the present Winter 1989 issue, photo-reduced to size 8 1/2 x 11 to make it compatible with the new *Nastawgan* format, at cost. Each set will consist of 650 to 700 sheets, printed on both sides, and will include an index. Presenting the sets in sheet form and not as bound books will keep the cost down and will enable each buyer to decide for her/himself upon the preferred way of binding the collection.

The cost of each set, including handling and postage, will depend upon the number of sets produced and will range between \$90 and \$120. To find out what number of orders can be expected and hence what the cost per set will be, a separate order form has been inserted in this issue. Anybody seriously interested in a set (one per member) at a cost of maximum \$120, but more likely around \$100, should fill out the order form and return it before 1 February 1990. Payment will be requested once the cost has been calculated and must be made before shipment will take place, probably before June 1990.

Remember, this is the only announcement of our one-time offer. It is not a money-making project because you will just be charged cost. Everything, except the printing, will be done by a small group of volunteers. Order your set now and safeguard your collection of WCA newsletters for the future.

Toni Harting

## LOGGING IN ALGONQUIN PARK

Your readers should be aware of the rather lopsided priorities that the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is pursuing for the province's first provincial park, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1993. In its present review of Algonquin Park's Master Plan, the ministry scarcely mentions its most controversial and incongruous activity, the logging which covers more than 80 per cent of the park with its network of roads and roar of heavy machinery.

If the principal purpose of a park is to maintain it as an area where natural ecosystems continue to exist, as the ministry frequently states, then logging has no place within it, or if it cannot be stopped, then it has to be carefully controlled and confined, with detailed studies comparing logged and unlogged areas. Yet, so far as I can find out, no such studies have been done, and the only areas left to act as baselines for such a study are a series of Nature Reserve fragments comprising in total only some 4 per cent of the park. Even these fragments are not safe. The review mentions possible expansion of the Nature Reserve system, but then notes that even the present boundaries of these reserves may interfere with logging and thus should be curtailed or altered. Whoever wrote such nonsense has the idea of a park completely backward; even if they did not already have a free run of 80 per cent of the park, surely the logging interests have to be fitted in only to the extent that they are compatible with the primary purpose of protecting the natural ecosystems.

Readers who have been visiting Algonquin Park since the 1950s, as I have, will have also noted the tremendous intensification of logging in the past two decades. Today major portage trails are frequently crossed by logging roads, while even from popular canoe routes one often sees a gap in the forest skyline, and on hiking inland to investigate discovers that the gap has been caused by "selective" logging — all the trees over about 8 feet have been "selected" out. However, this does not mean they all have been taken out to the lumber mills — one can also see great piles of good-sized logs at the assembly depots that have been left rotting.

Still on the issue of logging, we might also note the approach of the park authorities, in that on the one hand they profess to be encouraging tourism in the fall, winter, and spring, while on the other hand they have allowed logging to devastate at least one ski trail system put in by a lodge operator at his own expense.

A number of the changes being proposed in the new master plan seem praiseworthy, such as the reduction in motorboat horsepower on several lakes, and the installation of privies at interior campsites as a means of reducing human impact on these areas. Others are simply silly, such as the proposal for a new lodge inside the park, when it would be quite easy and appropriate to serve this market from Dwight and Whitney.

But none of these issues bears comparison with the damage caused by logging and logging roads. Some friends have suggested that if present trends continue, the ministry could celebrate Algonquin Park's 100th anniversary by renaming it the Algonquin Timber Reserve, with the Nature Reserve zones designated as provincial parks within it. This is what Algonquin Park is moving toward by default, unless all those who regard it as a park demand that the Ontario government treat it as such.

John Cartwright  
London, Ont.

## CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*The following are the platforms for candidates for the 1990 Board of Directors, received before our publication date. Any other members who wish to run for the Board may do so by letting the Board of Directors know, or by placing their name in nomination from the floor at the AGM in February.*

### TONY BIRD

I have been an active member of the WCA for ten years, including five years on the Outings Committee. I would now like to make a contribution as a member of the Board of Directors.

I see the WCA as a club where its members are bound together by an interest in canoeing activities, by canoe travel in particular, and by a love for travel in the outdoors by any means. Individual members may focus on wilderness tripping, canoe building, whitewater play, winter travel, or other similar activities, but within this diversity of interests there is found a common appreciation of our wilderness heritage and a desire to protect it.

If elected to the Board, I would seek to encourage this diversity of interests which, I think, is one of the principal strengths of the club. I have observed over the years that the Board has generally responded well to members' concerns and interests, and as a member of the Board I would seek to do the same.

### HERB POHL

One of the longtime members of the WCA said a few years ago: "I just don't feel right being a member of an organization without making some contribution." He wasn't talking of money, even though he has been the treasurer of the WCA since I was middle-aged. I have always had the same notion; in fact, I am convinced one cannot belong without contributing something of themselves, sometimes at the price of inconvenience. It is in this spirit that I have agreed to stand for election to the Board of Directors.

The attitudes which I bring to the Board have not changed over the years. They are that our collective energies should be directed towards generating an outings program which encourages active participation and self reliance; that the focus of activities should not be so much on social interaction among members, but on the interplay between the individual and the natural world around us; that satisfaction should not be sought by avoiding physical exertion and unpleasantness, but by challenging oneself in the face of adversity.

I also feel strongly that we must try to convey the concerns and attitudes of this organization to the political decision makers, not by picket line demonstration, but by the presentation of thoughtful argument before final decisions on specific issues are made.

I'm in favor of continued careful fiscal management—a practice considered almost heretical in the public sector—and in favor of whatever support is needed to produce a newsletter of the best possible quality in line with the former constraint. Most of all, my candidacy is an attempt to give someone else a chance to step back for a little while and take a rest.

### GLENN SPENCE

Member since year two of the WCA; past treasurer; past director; organized two fall meetings; past and current trip organizer; have attended numerous fall and annual meetings and symposiums; have contributed to *Nastawgan*.

Since I am of the "old guard," I believe that the original WCA concepts from about 13 years ago should still be followed by us today. We are not an organization that can be everything to everybody. We are an association of individuals and families who are interested in wilderness canoeing. Of course, our day and weekend trips are important to enable us to develop our skills for future wilderness trips.

I am concerned that some new members think that the WCA will teach them everything they should know about canoeing. This is not our role. We do not provide 'accredited courses' nor should we. The WCA allows members to share techniques and to network. This is what we should continue to do.

*Nastawgan* and our outings should be maintained. Communication and participation are important to the WCA.

Conservation activities on the part of the WCA must be increased. This must be done through the use of volunteers and monetary donations. If current trends continue there will be no free-flowing rivers nor forested tracts left for succeeding generations. We must act!

The WCA is a very successful organization which must continue to flourish.



## INFORMATION WANTED

**HARRICANAW RIVER** Anyone willing and able to give me information on the Harricanaw River in northeast Ontario, please contact Don Smith, Box 1115, Deep River, Ontario K0J 1P0; telephone 613-584-3973 or -2577.

# IS THERE A FUTURE FOR THE WCA?

Sandy Richardson

"The (Wilderness Canoe Association) is no longer the domain of the wilderness paddler!" I find this statement (emphasis mine) from Sandy Harris's article "A Concern for the Future of the WCA" (Nastawgan, Winter 1988) particularly troubling.

It is not that I disagree with the statement; sadly, I think it is an accurate description of the WCA in 1989, and I find that very disturbing. Equally disturbing is the fact that this profound change of emphasis in the WCA is so readily accepted by both the membership and, worse, the Board of Directors.

Indeed, this change is *not* the focus of Sandy Harris's "concern"; it is merely a fact of life that we should *accept* as a "healthy adaptation to a changing environment." Her concern is that "we should *not exclusively promote one aspect of canoeing over another* and as a result alienate those who want to follow different paths!" (Emphasis mine.) Well, what else would one expect the Wilderness Canoe Association to promote other than wilderness canoeing? The first of the aims and objectives under which the WCA is incorporated is, after all, "to promote and advance the interests of wilderness canoeists."

The real concern, I would suggest, should not be that we might alienate some paddlers by being what we are, wilderness canoeists, but that the once vital and dynamic Wilderness Canoe Association has lost sight of its aims and has drifted so far off its charted course. (In this context, it would be interesting to know how many members, or *how many directors* for that matter, even knew that the WCA *had* any aims and objectives, let alone what they were, before Sandy Harris listed them in her article.)

That the WCA is an organization in trouble should be clear to anyone whose ideas of quality go beyond having a large membership and bank account. Let me briefly chart what I consider to be the decline of the WCA.



Ten years ago, with less than half the current membership and little money, we were an active and recognized force in wilderness and canoeing fields. We regularly made submissions on park proposals and wilderness waterways and worked closely with other environmental groups. Consequently we participated in a Wild Rivers Conference in Jasper at the invitation of the federal government, and were one of three canoeing representatives at the Ontario Trails Council Conference. Would anyone invite the WCA to participate in similar conferences today? I think it unlikely. We now have a Conservation Committee in name only, and despite our large membership and surplus of funds, have become all but irrelevant in the area of wilderness preservation.

Contrary to the position taken by many members today, that involvement in such matters is not part of the WCA's mandate and is best left to other groups such as the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the WCA's active involvement in these and other environmental and political matters was the embodiment of four of the association's aims. The relevant aims are: "to aid in educating the public to an awareness of, and a concern for . . . the wilderness environment"; "to provide . . . information pertaining to canoeing and wilderness matters to members . . . and the public"; "to encourage closer communication among canoeists and related organizations"; and "to further explore new canoe routes, and ensure and preserve the right of way on those routes now established . . ." (For a complete statement of the Aims and Objectives of the WCA, see the articles on the future of the WCA by Sandy Harris and John Winters in the Winter 1988 and Spring 1989 issues of *Nastawgan*.)

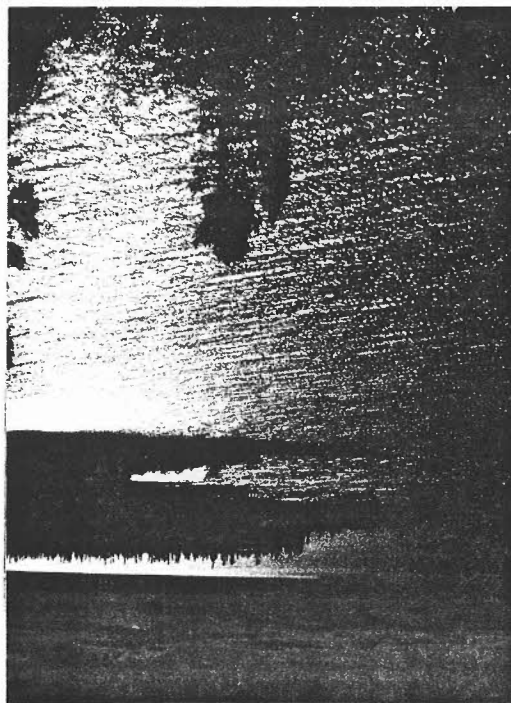


Photo by Glenn Spence

Today, with far greater resources at its disposal, what is the WCA doing? Instead of actively pursuing its aims and objectives, the WCA has become insular, putting all its efforts into organizing meetings and workshop weekends, social events and slide shows for our own enjoyment.

The decline of the WCA can be further documented by looking at the changes that have occurred in our trip program. I have compared, quite arbitrarily, the spring canoe trips listed in the newsletter ten years ago, five years ago, and this year, 1989. In 1979 we listed 28 trips, of which 13 (about 45%) were day trips and two (7%) were on Metro Toronto area rivers. In 1984 we listed 32 trips, of which 18 (55%) were day trips and four (12%) were on Metro area rivers. This year we listed 61 trips, of which 42 (70%) were day trips and 13 (20%) were on Metro area rivers. These figures indicate a disturbing move away from "wilderness" camping trips and toward "exciting" one-day whitewater trips with little or no "wilderness" component.

The WCA displays the sad symptoms of decline described by Hugh Stewart in "Wilderness Ironies and Contradictions" (*Nastawgan*, Summer 1989): "We are too psychologically flabby. People want adventure and thrill with none of the sweaty, buggy, cold, exhausting aspects."

In the same article, Hugh Stewart also talks about the current "delusion" that we can "take a course and become competent." And a proliferation of workshops and courses, in place of "a program of practical canoeing experience" as called for in the aims of the WCA, can be seen in our trip listings. In 1979 we listed one "workshop"; in 1984 we listed two "workshops" and one "clinic"; in 1989 we listed three "workshops," two "courses" and two "whitewater weekends" whose descriptions make clear that they were in fact workshops. In 10 years, while the number of WCA spring canoe trips has slightly more than doubled, the number of workshops and courses has increased seven-fold! More subtly, what began as "workshops," where members shared skills, have evolved into much more structured "courses." And courses, it seems, have become an accepted part of the WCA trip program.



Photo by Dave Buckley



This acceptance of courses is a major, and for me upsetting, change in philosophy for the WCA. Consider the following prophetic warning given by John Cross in his platform statement when running for the Board of Directors in 1981. (John was elected to the Board and became chairman on this platform.) "[Learn[ing]-by-chatting takes place inevitably on trips [and] at meetings, but workshops should be considered carefully to prevent their evolving into courses. To test . . . whether a workshop/learning weekend is becoming too structured, we might apply the following test: if the instructor/co-ordinator dropped dead, would the others be able to carry on the trip? If the answer is no, then they were too dependent on the co-ordinator, and the trip should not have been done within the WCA." (Emphasis mine.)

There is further evidence of a declining wilderness focus in the WCA trip program. In the same 10-year period that both the size of the club and the number of spring canoe trips, especially day-trips and courses, have increased so dramatically, the number of backpacking trips and winter camping trips listed has decreased.

Other signs of the deterioration of the WCA exist, but suffice it to describe but one more. Hugh Stewart points out another modern "wilderness contradiction" that goes hand in hand with the desire for courses: "People want more detailed guidebooks." And now we have the WCA considering publishing just such a river guide. A decade ago we chose *not* to publish a similar guidebook for philosophical reasons.

If we are to stem the decline of the WCA and restore it to its former vibrant self, we must return to the aims and objectives under which the club is incorporated. We must not accept deviation from these aims as merely a case of "the club . . . evolving, maturing, and growing" as Sandy Harris suggests. I agree with John Winters that "the burden is upon the membership to fit the WCA mould rather than for the WCA to contort itself to fit the members." However, as this brief review of the WCA's performance over the last decade indicates, the WCA has already severely contorted itself. The problem now is how to return the WCA to its defined shape. This will not be an easy task, but I believe that it is still possible.

First we must accept that the current approach of the WCA, that of trying to be all things to all people, is wrong. Then we must elect directors who are more than "nice guys" and social conveners, who know and subscribe to the aims and objectives of the WCA, and who are willing to *direct* the club in accordance with these aims, not just to "go with the flow" or "do what we've always done."



As the outings program probably does more than any other aspect of the club to determine the tenor of the WCA, the Outings Committee must take a more directive role than it has in the recent past. Rather than merely listing any trips offered, or giving people whatever they want, the committee must be willing to shape a trip program that is in keeping with and reflective of the aims of the association. (Does the WCA really need six trips to the "wilds" of the Credit River, as we had this year?)

Further, the Outings Committee must be willing to see that stated limits are adhered to; a trip with a dozen odd canoes is certainly not a "wilderness" trip. Finally, the committee, along with the Board of Directors, must decide whether courses are appropriate to the WCA outings program; to me they are not. And this decision must be made on a philosophical basis, not on the basis of whether our not offering courses will "hurt the feelings" of members who like to give or take them. John Cross's "test" should be helpful here.

Finally, the Directors must ensure that our public image, as presented primarily at the Sportsmen's Show (see the articles by Sandy Harris and John Winters), is one that emphasizes *wilderness* rather than whitewater excitement. A good beginning here would be to rid our Sportsmen's Show booth of: 1) all photographs of people running rapids while wearing helmets or numbers, or using canoes filled with flotation bags, and of large groups playing in rapids; and 2) the prominent listing of courses and day-trips on patently non-wilderness rivers. A further quote from John Cross's election platform may be in order here: "Publicity (at the Sportsmen's Show, for example) should aim at presenting a way of life (ours) to let like souls know it is there, without urging anyone to join. In fact, the membership can be allowed to fall provided that those who remain continue the interests and spirit of the club; we do not need a very large membership to continue to enjoy ourselves."

If these and other efforts to return the WCA to its basic aims and objectives cause our growth to slow or even reverse, so be it. What we must do, before it is too late, is restore the WCA to the quality *wilderness* association it once was.

## SPANISH RIVER POWER DEVELOPMENT

In the last few months, INCO has reviewed an old Acres study which proposed new dams on the Spanish River north of Agnew Lake. INCO has decided *not* to pursue further development at this time, but may consider development in the future.

Acres is a Niagara Falls consulting firm with expertise in large-scale hydro-electric development. In the late 1970s, Acres prepared a major study for INCO that offered several options for hydro-electric development on the Spanish River, including two potential dam sites.

INCO's Joe Harris, who developed the Spanish River Water Management Plan last summer under the direction of the Ministry of Natural Resources, said that the Acres study was shelved in the late 1970s primarily because INCO did not have funds available for the project, and secondarily because the development was not economic at the time. For the last year, INCO has been earning record high profits. Ontario Hydro electricity prices are expected to rise. Harris did not know that INCO was reconsidering the Acres study. He said that building a dam would be "too political."

Art Roy, of the Ministry of the Environment's Sudbury office, said he had attended a meeting with INCO and Acres representatives, at which INCO stated that they were thinking of looking at the Acres study again.

Claude Kerr, Superintendent of INCO Utilities, said that Ray Cousineau, head of Power for INCO Utilities, was involved in the reevaluation of the Acres study. Cousineau stated that INCO has no plans for development on the Spanish in the near future, but has not precluded all future development. Cousineau said: "We're a mining company, not a power company," but stated that the Acres study was reconsidered in light of incentives by Ontario Hydro for non-utility generation.

Pat Moran, of Ontario Hydro's Non-Utility Generation Customer Energy Services, was familiar with the Acres study, but stated that he was not aware of any recent talks with INCO about the Spanish River.

Brian Johnston, of Ontario Hydro's Sudbury office, stated that a surplus energy buy-back plan exists. In the Ministry of Energy's *Small Hydro '86 Proceedings*, 1985 purchase rates were stated to be 110-150% of short-term avoided costs.

The Ministry of Natural Resources planners responsible for the Spanish River Area Special Plan, Warren Evershed and Dan Brunett, said that an INCO dam would not be approved simply because surplus buy-back might make the project economical. Evershed and Brunett did not know that INCO was reevaluating the Acres study. However, they believed that INCO would not be permitted to raise a dam unless a poor economic climate and a limited availability of electricity were hurting INCO.

The Spanish River Special Area Plan is currently being approved. It will not prevent INCO from further developing hydro-electricity on the river. However, within the area covered by the plan, it will prevent any other party from initiating new hydro-electric developments and selling power to Ontario Hydro or private corporations.

The Spanish River was a Provincial Park candidate, but was dropped because of its industrial potential. The Spanish River Special Area Plan will not prevent INCO hydro-electric development, but it has helped delay further industrial development. The Acres study has been put to bed once again.

Richard Culpeper





## *Labrador Exposures*

*Towering rocks,  
imploding surf,  
swirling hopes,  
homeless flotsam  
on the Labrador coast.*

*With a gnawing fear,  
I dread to ask:  
What if there is no refuge . . .  
no place to land . . .  
no escape  
from night on the open sea?*

*Earlier,  
a glorious,  
spectacular landscape,  
and now,  
a menacing  
dream unfolding.*

*A metamorphic vision  
encloses our being,  
while a dimming light  
and creeping haze  
shroud  
the impending  
curtain of darkness.*





*Balanced,  
on the edge of time,  
between  
the fading day,  
and the coming night.*

*Perched,  
on the edge of space,  
between  
the abyss below,  
and the shore beyond.*

*Wondering:  
Why do I choose to come?  
When can I return?*

These words and pictures attempt to recollect my emotional state of being and to recreate our visual setting during the early evening of the 25th of July, 1987, as we anxiously searched for a place to land our canoes and to camp on the exposed northern coast of Labrador. At the time, we were passing Reichel Head, just south of Ramah Bay. Soon after, we did find and manage to land in a small, semi-sheltered cove, shown in the last picture, amid the ice debris, with the mountains all around. It was a welcome refuge in a wild and rugged setting, and I was most thankful that no misfortune had overtaken us.

George J Luste



# BLACK RIVER

## A SPRING FLOAT FROM VANKOUGHNET TO ABOVE COOPER'S FALLS

13-14 May 1989

Article: Karyn Mikoliew  
Photos: Hans Grim

Looking for a pleasant spring or fall weekend trip with family or friends that is not too far from Toronto, but still is relatively undisturbed?

The Black River from Vankoughnet to Cooper's Falls (topo map 31 D/14 Gravenhurst) is one such trip and its serenity certainly took this canoeist by surprise. It is a meandering river, one that curves back onto itself many times with clay banks, ox bows, and lowland red maple swamps. Wildlife viewing opportunities abound for white-tailed deer, great blue herons, and numerous songbirds. As we had no bona fide bird watcher with us, we probably missed out on identifying a score of birds that were returning to Ontario this fine May weekend. Cottage development along the river is limited by the presence of the Langford Game Reserve along the east bank south of Vankoughnet to Anson Creek.

For the botany fanatics, the banks were a mass of spring wildflowers: trilliums, yellow trout lilies, hepaticas, spring beauties, and violets. The treed vegetation varied from white pine, spruce, and balsam, where bits of Canadian Shield rock pop up, to silver and red maple, elm, white ash, and basswood on the richer clay sites.

The best location for a put-in is approximately 1.25 km south from the community of Vankoughnet, just south of the bridge. If you have some whitewater experience, start at the bridge; otherwise start below the second set of rapids. There are a few options for a take-out. One can go all the way to Cooper's Falls, or do as we did, exit at the bridge approximately 4.5 km to the east. The car shuttle takes about 1.5 - 2 hours as the township roads are windy and bumpy. Another option is to return to Highway 11 for clear driving. This requires roughly the same amount of time.



The river route is approximately 35 km long and shows a lot of twists and turns along the way. It can be easily covered in two days if one has an early start on the first day. We were blessed with high water level, being mid-May, and we were able to coast down a lot of the river. Major lining or channel paddling may be required if the river is attempted in summer or fall, depending upon water levels.

We were also fortunate because the summer bugs had not quite woken to full force, the trees were just about to burst forth their leaves, and the weather was warm for tent camping. (Please note that I was introducing five relatively novice canoeists to the finer details of river canoeing and did not want to lose them on their first river trip.)



Campsites are a bit rare on the river due to the clay bank situation. The best site is at the first set of rapids south of the Anson Creek entrance. Here one can camp on the granite rock outcrop or the sand beach below. At this site we joined another WCA group canoeing for the weekend. (Our thanks to Hans and Cathy Grim for letting us intrude.) These two sites, however, are located on the portage (east side), so the potential for visitors is high. There is said to be a suitable campsite 1.5 km north of the Langford/Digby Geo. Tp. line (White Pine site) not far from the upcoming rapids. But beware, this campsite appears to be accessible by vehicle. The Grims have seen hunters' trucks parked there before.

The trip's portages are relatively simple, and easily identifiable. The first one exists about 1.5 km from the put-in on the east side, where the hydro line crosses the river. Be careful here, because the portage starts very close to the beginning of the rapid. A hunt camp is located on the portage, nestled in among the white pines. It was lunch stop for us under its porch, as it was raining.

As we proceeded down the river the weather cleared for a pleasant evening. Since the river bends and turns it is sometimes a challenge to determine where you are, but generally the rapids are located where marked and, depending upon your whitewater skills, most are runnable. The first day one paddles a meandering river, the second day one deals with a few class 1 rapids or swifts. Care should be taken at each rapid if you are unfamiliar with the river.

The set of rapids above the hydro line, two kilometres north of the approaching bridge, is runnable if one takes the route on river right. The portage at the bridge site above Montgomery Creek starts on the east side. On the portage, stick to the bald rock ridge by the water so you do not stray off the portage trail and onto the dirt road. The chute below the bridge rapid is runnable at high water, but a short portage exists on the west side for the inexperienced.



Ragged Rapid is the last portage before the take-out, unless you are going to Cooper's Falls and then you have Big Eddy Rapid to contend with. Ragged Rapid portage is on the west side and is a bit strenuous, as there is a steep descent at the end, opening to a sand beach washout. Take some time here to find a path to the cliff edge to view a series of falls, which are pretty spectacular for this region. It is an excellent lunch stop for the second day. We, however, latched our canoes together and drifted down-river to munch lunch bug free.

Along the final stretch of river there is a heron rookery, so keep an eye open for it on river left. Also be aware of the odd sweeper that may exist: remnants of the winter ice work. All too soon (as usual for weekend trips) we arrived at the take-out, refreshed from the outing, and at peace with the sights and sounds of nature.





# TRUE NORTH

Author: Elliott Merrick  
 Publisher: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933  
 Reviewed by: Bill King

This is hardly the conventional review of a new book. As you can see it was published over 50 years ago and, unless the rumored reprinting takes place, you'd be very lucky to find a copy. (The paperback reprint has just been published by University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London. Ed.) Nonetheless, in my opinion, it's well worth the search; this is one of the great classics of outdoor literature.

Elliott Merrick graduated from Yale in the mid-or-latter 1920s and initially followed the conventional route, "possessed of a good job and excellent prospects." However, it was never without misgivings. He describes eloquently the internal struggle which raged in so many young people of his time (and, I suspect, of ours), the questioning of goals, values, and priorities, and the reluctance to be gradually worn thin by a life of pretense and hypocrisy. Finally he could stand it no longer. He describes the breaking point thus:

"One muggy night, just before a thunderstorm, I sat up in bed and hammered my fist on the wall and screamed in my mind, 'I'm getting out.' And I got out."

"Getting out" involved moving to the tiny settlement of Northwest River at the inland end of Hamilton Inlet in southern Labrador. There he worked as a school teacher, wood hauler, boat's crew, etc., and met and married Kay, a nurse at the mission hospital.

*True North* takes up the narrative of their lives in September of 1930 when they are about to fulfill a long-held wish to accompany the "Height of Landers" on the long journey inland to their winter trapping grounds.

The people of Northwest River, mostly Scots-Eskimos, were indeed a hardy breed, combining the settled community living of their white ancestors with the travel techniques and ability to live off the land of the native. For anyone who has travelled by snowshoe or done any winter camping it is hard not to share Merrick's awe at the seemingly superhuman capabilities of these unassuming men. Their code did not permit any admission of cold, hunger, or fatigue despite the fact that 35-40-mile days were common; dinner, if no game was encountered, was often no more than bannock and tea and home for the night was either a tent or a trapper's "till" (log shelter). Their womenfolk usually stayed in Northwest River and rarely travelled inland.

It is not hard to understand that Elliott and Kay had a few misgivings! Would they be able to keep up? Would the life of a trapper prove too much for them? Foremost of all, would they be holding back their mentor, John Michelin, who had agreed to take them along, perhaps at the expense of his livelihood?

Despite, or perhaps in part because of, many hardships, the Merricks had a memorable experience, becoming lean and hard in the process. Though never the equal of the Labrador men, their own accomplishments at times astounded them and they achieved the kind of "real" life for which Elliott left his home and career.

The book describes, in the format of an expanded and discontinuous journal, their 350-mile (560-km) upstream journey by canoe on the Grand River to reach John Michelin's hunting ground, their daily lives as they tended the traplines, and the equally long return journey by snowshoe and toboggan. They made side trips from their home till to Unknown (Ossokmanuan) Lake and to see majestic Grand Falls, Kay believing herself to be the first woman ever to have done so. But it is in the details of everyday life that Merrick waxes most lyrical, clear evidence of how fulfilling they found it. The book is rich in philosophic asides and richer still in the stories and the personalities of the Labrador men. It is fascinating to run across the occasional familiar name such as Bert Blake who, a generation before as a boy of 16, accompanied Mina Hubbard across "Unknown Labrador." Merrick's skill in bringing these people to life on the page is one of the great assets of the book.

I've saved the best news for the last! George Luste, in his own inimitable fashion, has tracked down Elliott Merrick, who must have achieved quite a venerable age by now, and persuaded him to attend the Labrador Symposium in January. I, for one, am quite eager to meet him, anxious to hear the continuation of the story.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Author: Gino F. Ferri  
 Publisher: G.F. Ferri, 204 pp., \$39.95 hardback  
 Reviewed by: Michael Kerwin

With more and more people involved in outdoor adventuring and travel into remote wilderness areas, there is an increasing need for not only outdoor training in such basics as paddling, orienteering and first aid, for example, but also an understanding and mastery of essential survival skills—the "what to do in the event of a worst-case scenario" where a victim may have little more than his or her own ingenuity to rely on.

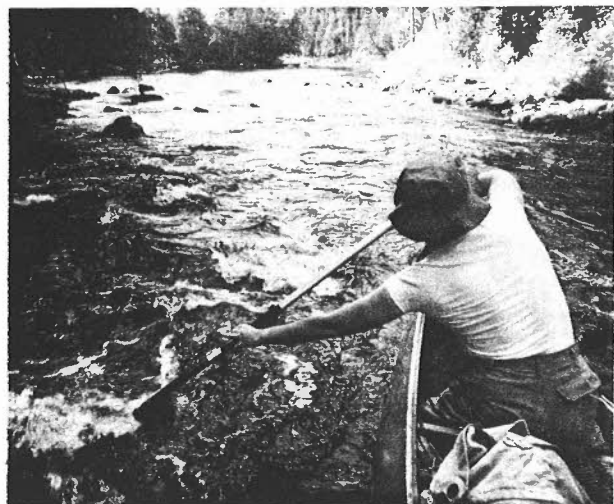
*The Psychology of Wilderness Survival*, a revised and enlarged edition of the manual used in courses taught by Survival in the Bush, Inc., covers such topics as: understanding and teaching wilderness survival; search and rescue; direction finding; signals; shelters; fire starting; edible plants; animals, snares and deadfalls; first aid. An appendix includes hypothetical scenarios, case studies and statistical analyses of victims and, of potential use to any outdoor educator, an outline of Project S.T.O.P., a program designed to teach children what to do should they become lost in the bush.

Despite its title, the book is not primarily concerned with the psychological aspects of survival. Rather, it focuses on wilderness skills, many of which have been developed, adapted, or refined by Ferri and his instructors and students over many years of actual field testing both at the Lakehead University Search and Rescue program and at Humber College. With the exception of shelter construction and fire starting techniques, however, many of these skills are, at best, "psychological props" rather than essential survival techniques.

The main strength of *The Psychology of Wilderness Survival* is its realistic approach to staying alive. All too frequently, the harsh aspects of survival are glossed over or ignored completely in other books. Ferri, an acknowledged expert in bush survival, reminds us that surviving in the wilderness is often unpleasant and that a victim, if faced with a life-threatening situation, must be prepared to do anything to stay alive.

Unfortunately, *The Psychology of Wilderness Survival*, like many privately published books, is marred by poor editing and production. This is a shame since it contains information which, if mastered, could save a life. The book is available from: Dave Arama, 106 Dequincey Blvd., North York, Ontario M3H 1Y9; telephone 416-398-4794 (24 hrs).

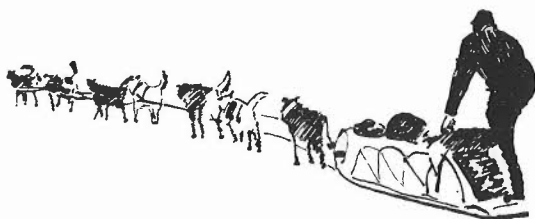
Another useful handbook on survival is the *Complete Book of Outdoor Survival*, written by J. Wayne Fears and published by Outdoor Life Books, New York, 1986; 484 pp. (Ed.)



# NEW BOOK CATALOGS

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# A TRIP TO ACADEMIA

Jim Greenacre

Friday, 20 October 1989, saw me once again heading north for Sudbury but this was not a canoe trip; this time I was bound for an academic experience at Laurentian University. The Institute of Northern Ontario Research and Development were hosting a conference, *TEMAGAMI: Academic Perspectives*. The conference opened promptly at 1:30 p.m. with about 130 persons in attendance.

## SESSION I: Defining the Issues

Representatives from logging, tourism, northern Ontario communities, and environmental groups were each allowed ten minutes to present their case. The two ladies who spoke for the Indians both made emotional presentations of how their forefathers had lived there for over 6,000 years in harmony with nature, and that present and future generations, given the opportunity, would continue to do so. One lady, tears running down her cheeks, described how, when she returned to her home after spending a number of years working in Toronto, discovered nothing but a vast clear-cut wasteland left by the loggers where once she had helped her father on his trapline.

Brian Back, of the Temagami Wilderness Society, spoke of the society's efforts to legally stop the road building into the Temagami forest, thereby saving the trees from the lumberman's chain saw. The society, as many of you know, lost all legal battles with the Province and in the end mounted a road block to stop construction of the road. At that point in time a total of 124 persons had been arrested over a period of five weeks. The blockade was still being manned. Brian also exploded the myth that the MNR (Ministry of Natural Resources) will replant the forest once the loggers had clear-cut the region. The documented history of the MNR from 1980-1988 shows that they only replant about 25% of the areas logged, and of the seedlings planted 2/3 died. There will, of course, be some natural regeneration, but the species most likely to regenerate on their own—birch, poplar, aspen—are of no use to the local mills which need pine and spruce.

Roger Fryer, owner of the sawmill in Temagami, presented the lumbermen's case. A mature forest is a valuable natural resource, but only if it is cut down and converted into 2x4s. Unless his sawmill gets access to the timber in the Temagami region, some 70-75 workers will be out of jobs. Mr. Fryer weakened his case by verbally attacking the integrity of Brian Back and all environmentalists. "Why don't environmentalists do something positive," he extolled, "like planting trees?" This statement made me wonder, "How many trees has Mr. Fryer and his work force planted?"

Hap Wilson, wilderness guide and outfitter, author of the guidebook *Temagami Canoe Routes*, and owner of Smoothwater Outfitters, spoke on behalf of outdoor tourism and the need to preserve the whole forest, not just a cosmetic fringe surrounding the lakes and on either side of the rivers. Mr. Wilson devoted most of his ten minutes to an outstanding visual presentation of Temagami using 35 mm color slides, all of very high photographic quality. Multiple Use of Crown Land, the MNR's new policy, is a bureaucratic dream, said Mr. Wilson. How can you ever hope to accommodate in one limited area such diverse activities as logging, mining, fishing, hunting, trapping, outdoor wilderness recreation, and the Winnebago crowd?

The final speaker in this session was Judy Skidmore representing Northcare, and organization of all the towns and Regional Municipalities across Northern Ontario. The people of the North should be left alone to manage their own affairs; they have provided values to the Province by resource extraction for many, many decades and the area is already well protected. Logging in the Temagami region commenced some 130 years ago. Canada provides the world with pulp and lumber, said Ms. Skidmore. She stated: "Just leave us Northerners alone to enjoy a lifestyle that goes back generations to the hardy pioneer stock that suffered hardship and deprivation to open up the North." No mention of the people who were there for centuries before Europeans arrived, namely our native Canadians.



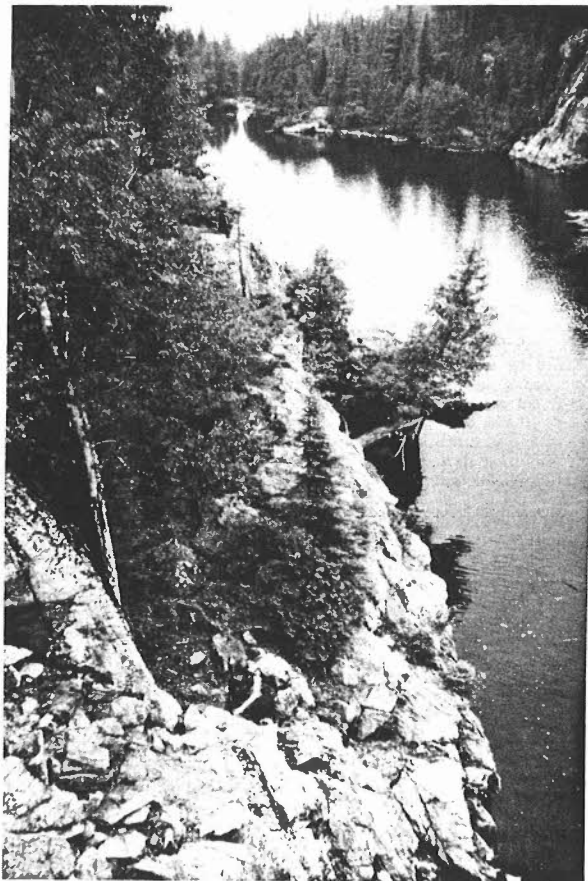
## SESSION II: Historical Context.

1. Dr. Bruce Hodgins (Trent): "The Temagami Experience."  
Dr. Hodgins (his family operates Wanapitei Wilderness Centre on Lake Temagami) had a prepared text based on his recently published book, but he was so well conversant with his subject, he hardly glanced at his notes. He spoke on: the Aboriginal Rights in Northern Ontario; Resources and Extraction; Recreational Tourism. A long time ago the Ontario Government created the "Temagami Forest Reserve" as a region to be managed in the interests of sustained-yield forestry. The foresters have never lived up to their mandate. Dr. Hodgins spoke with a passionate, deep inner feeling for his subject and was, in my opinion, the best speaker at the conference.

2. Dr. Gerald Killan (Western): "The Development of a Wilderness Park System in Ontario 1967-1989: Lady Evelyn — Smoothwater in Context."

When the Lady Evelyn — Smoothwater Park was first proposed in 1967 the boundaries included the area which the environmentalists are now trying to save from logging. However, a strong forest industries lobby put extreme pressure on the MNR and the park boundary gradually shrunk to what it is today. The main reason that the park is as big as it is, is that the lumber industry had already extracted all that it wanted and had no further use for the area. The Liskeard lumber road which winds right through the centre of the park is still being used to haul out logs.

3. The evening speaker after supper was Dr. Roman Brozowski, Chairman of the Temagami Advisory Council, a board created by the Provincial Government to advise the Premier and his cabinet on matters relating to the Temagami region. Dr. Brozowski lectured the audience on how the Council was structured and what it had so far accomplished. It was dry, boring stuff and, thankfully, short.



Saturday, promptly at 9:00 a.m., the Conference continued.

## SESSION III: Native Land Claims.

1. Dr. Robert Surtees (Nipissing): "Indian Land Claims — A Historical Context."

This was a history lesson on how the British Government, starting in 1763 with a "Royal Proclamation," treated our native Canadians. In 1850 the "Robinson Treaty" was negotiated with the bands located along the north shores of Lake Huron and Superior and large tracts of land in Northern Ontario were transferred to the Crown.

2. Dr. Kent McNeil (Osgoode Hall): "Unravelling the Judicial Straitjackets that Bind Aboriginal Land Rights in Ontario."

Despite its awesome title Dr. McNeil's paper was very interesting and enlightening, at least to me, on the legal process. According to Dr. McNeil the Teme-Augama Anishnabias got a raw deal from the Ontario Courts. The Court ruled that the Crown can unilaterally claim land from our native Canadians any time it wants to, treaty or no treaty. The Crown even used U.S.A. law cases to support its case against the Native Land Claim.

3. Dr. Tony Hall (Laurentian): "The Teme-Augama Anishnabias Land Claim."

Dr. Hall dealt specifically with the Temagami Band's claim to a large chunk of northern Ontario located north of the town of North Bay. He also felt that the Teme-Augama had been badly treated by the Ontario Provincial Courts. He even went so far as to state that the Court's rulings smacked of racism: Christian white man law superior to primitive native law.

#### SESSION IV: Temagami and its Environment

1. Ms. Diana Gordon (McMaster): "Prehistoric Occupation at Lake Temagami."  
Ms. Gordon is an archaeologist and has done several "digs" in the Temagami region, 1983-1985, and has uncovered artifacts that date back 6,000 years. This substantiates the Indians' claim to having occupied the land for several centuries. Many of the campsites used by today's canoe trippers are the same prime sites used long, long ago by the Indians.
2. Dr. Roger Pitblado (Laurentian): "Remote Sensing: Possibilities and Limitations in Aid of Temagami Planning."  
Dr. Pitblado's presentation was highly technical. He gave details of how today's land planners use satellites, radarstats, and thematic mapping to help them make decisions.
3. Dr. Frank Mallory (Laurentian): "The Proposed Temagami Wilderness Reserve: Some Preliminary Concerns and Misconceptions."  
Careful logging enhances wildlife according to Dr. Mallory. He didn't clarify what "careful logging" was and "wildlife" meant only large ungulates (moose, deer, elk, woodland caribou). Other wildlife (wolves, foxes, birds, squirrels, raptors) that also live in mature forest were not part of his study. He ended his presentation stating, "Critical habitat must first be researched regarding the needs of wildlife before logging starts."

#### SESSION V: The Forest and its Management.

1. Dr. Peter Quinby: "Ecological Features of Old-Growth Pine Forest in Temagami."  
Two years ago the Temagami Wilderness Society commissioned Dr. Quinby to go into the Temagami forest to confirm what aerial photographs were showing: that there were some pockets of very large trees. What he located were some of the largest old-growth pine stands remaining in Ontario. Several of those tall pines are over 250 years old. He spent some time in the forest doing preliminary ecological research on the pine forest. He also returned to the study area the following winter to gather more data. Dr. Quinby concluded by stating that very little is known about the whole ecosystem of old-growth pine forests and much more long-term research needs to be done.
2. Professor Robert Day (Lakehead): "Initial Information on the Temagami White and Red Pine Forest Ecology and Silviculture Study."  
The MNR hired Prof. Day, a forester, to conduct this study for them. (My thoughts: considering how long the MNR, and the Dept. of Lands and Forests before them, have been handing out permits to cut the forests down, they would already have all the ecological fact necessary to manage our forests in a sensible, ecological, sustainable way.) The professor had made a ground and aerial survey of Temagami and peppered his talk with color slides and lots and lots of charts and graphs. He had a lot to say and raced through his presentation. Charts and graphs were flashed on and off the screen so fast there was no chance to figure out what they depicted. One thing that he did get across was that much of the Temagami forest, if it was clear-cut, would be totally unsuitable for replanting because of the very shallow soil cover over the bedrock of the Canadian Shield. (Prof. Day made available to the audience copies of his 48-page preliminary report to the MNR.)
3. Professor Crandell Benson (Lakehead): "Theoretically, the Management of Multiple Resources is Simple."  
But only in theory: in actual practice Resource Management is anything but simple. MNR need to reverse past and present policies if the forest is to be managed as a renewable resource.



#### SESSION VI: Economic Options.

1. Dr. Roman Brozowski (Nipissing): "The Importance of Tourism in the Temagami Area."  
The Temagami region of Ontario is one of the most rugged areas in the Province and contains several of the highest points, many over 2,000 feet (600 m), and has great tourist potential, said Dr. Brozowski. Canoeists spent \$2.5 million in the area during his research period, with the potential for substantial growth. Hunters contributed \$3.5 million. Hunting is static and can only be increased if the supply of game increases; the number of game depends on the available habitat. Anglers spent \$1.07 million which can only be increased at the expense of existing fish stocks. Overfish, and anglers will decline unless fish stocks are maintained by artificially seeding the lakes with hatchery-raised fry. Cottagers in the region spent \$1.325 million with limited potential for growth. Winter, as well as summer outdoor wilderness recreation is Temagami's best sustainable resource. (Comment: provided the loggers don't get there first.)
2. Dr. Robert Cameron (Laurentian): "The Mineral Potential of Temagami."  
Mineral explorations done from the air and charting magnetic fields show promising signs. There could be another 'Sudbury' or 'Hemlo' down there, but so far no one knows for sure.
13. Dr. Tuan Ton-That and Dr. Ed Willauer (Laurentian): "The Economics of Forestry in the Temagami Area."  
A tedious, dry lesson on economics; all facts and figures and comparisons. A limited number of well-paying lumbering jobs (comment: which will only last for a few more years if present forestry practices continue) versus many lower-paying, and sometimes seasonal, jobs in tourism. Tourism is a sustainable resource. Once again a speaker gave no thought to the native population of Temagami.

And so ended my sojourn in the world of Academia



Photos by Ioni Harting

UPDATE - OCTOBER 1989

Seventeen rivers, or sections of rivers, have now been nominated to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System since its inception in January 1984. The latest additions to the System are the Thelon and Kazan Rivers in the Northwest Territories, which were nominated in June 1989. Nine of the seventeen rivers have been designated, meaning that management plans for the rivers have been submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board. Some information on these rivers is shown on the chart below and their location is shown on the map.

#### DESIGNATED RIVERS

River	Province (Park)	Designation Date	Length
French	Ontario (French River P.P.)	Feb. 1986	110 km
Alsek	Yukon (Kluane N.P. Reserve)	Feb. 1986	90 km
Clearwater	Saskatchewan (Clearwater R. P.P.)	June 1986	187 km
South Nahanni	NWT (Nahanni N.P. Reserve)	Jan. 1987	300 km
Bloodvein	Manitoba (Atikaki P.P.)	June 1987	200 km
Mattawa	Ontario (Mattawa River P.P. and Samuel de Champlain P.P.)	Jan. 1988	33 km
Athabasca	Alberta (Jasper N.P.)	Jan. 1989	168 km
North Saskatchewan	Alberta (Banff N.P.)	Jan. 1989	49 km
Kicking Horse	British Columbia (Yoho N.P.)	Jan. 1989	67 km
Total			1,204 km

#### NOMINATED RIVERS

River	Province (Park)	Nomination Date	Length
St. Croix	New Brunswick	June 1984	185 km
Missinaibi	Ontario (Missinaibi P.P.)	June 1985	426 km
Bloodvein	Ontario (Woodland Caribou P.P.)	June 1986	106 km
Boundary Waters	Ontario (LaVerendrye P.P.)	June 1987	250 km
Seal	Manitoba (Prop. Seal R. P.P.)	June 1987	260 km
Jacques Cartier	Quebec (Jacques-Cartier P.P.)	June 1987	128 km
The Thirty Mile (Yukon River)	Yukon	Jan. 1988	48 km
Thelon	Northwest Territories	June 1989	615 km
Kazan	Northwest Territories	June 1989	545 km
Total			2,563 km

Notes: The Bloodvein River was nominated in two parts by separate governments (Manitoba and Ontario). N.P. denotes national park, P.P. provincial park.

#### RIVERS IN THE SYSTEM



\* Nominated rivers

#### Canadian Heritage Rivers Board

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Board comprises representatives of all participating governments. To date, eight provinces, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories are represented. The Chairmanship rotates among members annually. In 1989-90 the Chairman is Mr. Barry Diamond, Director of Parks and Recreation, Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests. The Board has met twelve times since 1984 and its next meeting is scheduled for January, 1990 in Ottawa, at which further nominations and designations are expected.

### CREDIT RIVER NAVIGABLE, COURT RULES

The canoeists have won a river, according to a recent Supreme Court of Ontario ruling.

The decision has settled the lengthy argument on the public right to paddle the Credit River through private land. The Court ruled that the Credit River is navigable to canoes and other water craft. In a case between Canoe Ontario and land owner Julian Reed, the Court said that "the Reeds have no right to construct or maintain fences on the river which deny public access to the part of the river which runs through their property".

The strongly researched ruling allowed the Reeds the right to control the movement of their cattle crossing the river provided that any structures used would not deny "public passage along the part of the river."

The five-year controversy surrounds a stretch of the Credit River which runs through the farm of Julian and Laurie Reed near Norval, Ontario, east of Georgetown on Highway 7. Canoeists claimed right of passage down the river. An additional complication was the dam across the river owned and operated for electricity by the Reeds. The Reeds claimed that there was no right of passage in the river and no right to enter their land to portage around the dam.

In a second part of the judgement, the Court ruled that the land was in private ownership before portage trails were established and the Court could find no reason to allow portaging across the Reed farm. Alternative public portage routes exist to allow paddlers to continue along the Credit River. Canoe Ontario board members expressed satisfaction with the situation which clarifies the rights of canoeists to travel this section of river.

The portage ruling does not apply to cases under the Public Lands Act where portage trails were established and used on crown land prior to being privately owned. "The general right of portage on most canoe routes is not harmed by this ruling," said George Drought of Canoe Ontario.

Canoeists have been successful in the major purpose for which this litigation was launched and that is that, not only has this section of the river been declared navigable, but the Court has defined navigability in the most favorable terms for canoeists. The Court has stated:

"If the waterway serves, or (sic) capable of serving, a legitimate public interest in that it is, or can be, regularly and profitably used by the public for some socially beneficial activity, then, assuming the waterway runs from one point of public access to another point of public access, it must be regarded as navigable and as within the public domain."

That is the definition that goes beyond the definition in previous Court rulings and is a definition strongly in support of canoeing interests in the province.

(This press release was received from Canoe Ontario and gives a more optimistic interpretation of the ruling than the one presented on page 7 of the Autumn 1989 issue of *Nastawgan*. Ed.)



YOUR TURN!

**CANOETOONS**  
PAUL MASON



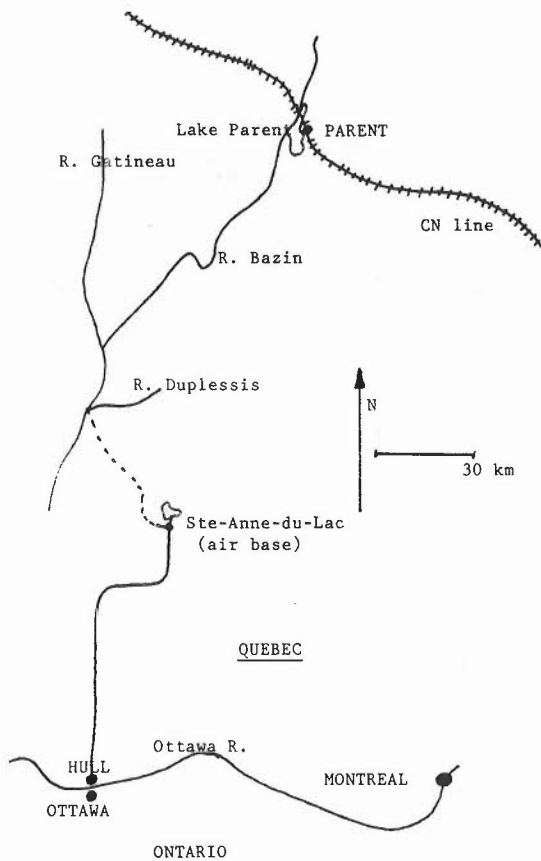
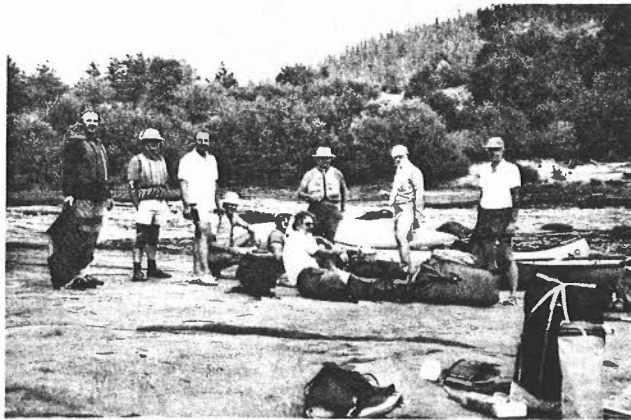
## BAZIN/GATINEAU RIVERS

Graham McCallum

Not me, but some people say that marriage is one year of fire and forty years of ashes. The Bazin is the opposite, one kilometre of paddling to forty kilometres of rapids, or so it seems. There were ten of us who landed on Lake Parent, near the CN line in the middle of Quebec, as the sun started to go down on 8 August 1989. A Beaver floatplane carried four paddlers, gear, and two canoes strapped to the pontoons. A single-engine Otter took the balance with three canoes outside.

It had rained on the way up but it did not rain again until the last afternoon on the river when it tried to catch up with a deluge. With clear, sunny skies, lots of Jacuzzis, it was a very enjoyable, comfortable week. The river was lower than usual for August which made for a lot of last-minute weaving in a search for a clear passage with the most water.

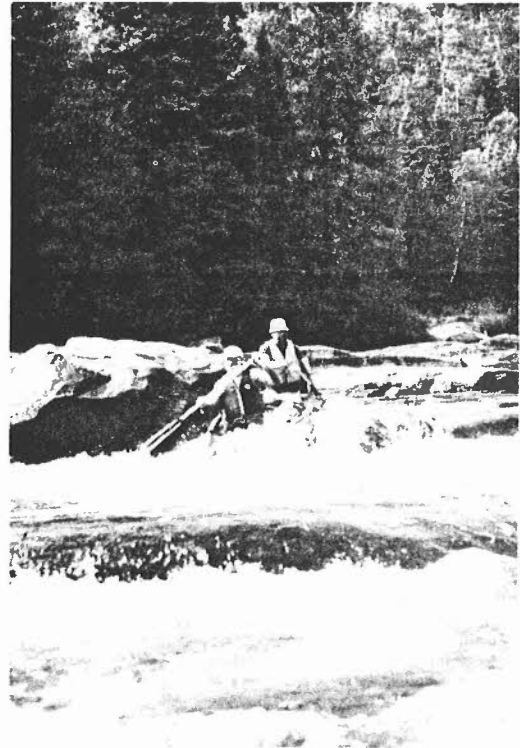
The canoes were ideal for this type of river and we felt that at last we had found perfection. A group of Quebecers from a canoe club that we met on the Coulonge last summer swore by ABS Blue Holes. We rented the same canoes for this trip and what a difference! Being high in the bow and stern allowed the canoe to drop over good-sized ledges with minimum intake, since no covers were used. In addition, being dead flat on the bottom eliminated the wobble when the canoe was hung up on a rock. The only slight comment of a negative nature was that the ABS material seemed softer than other makes, causing some slight grabbing. It could be that, being well used, they were rougher on the bottom. We are going to look into a wax for next summer. Some of this problem was reduced when the packs were not jammed under the thwart, allowing the bottom more play. We are probably asking too much.



Looking upriver after some runs it seemed unlikely that a canoe could find a way down at all, considering the water level. The rocks in the upper part of the river are of a harder material and therefore less eroded, making them grabbier than those of the lower half, which, like the Spanish River, are glacier deposits.

The wildlife was minimal; moose-hunting lookouts were common. Campsites are marked on the canoe route map and, because the river is so little used, are sometimes hard to find. We saw no other canoeists on the river and although it was clear that it was a logging area we still felt that we were in the wilderness.

Quebec has done it again with another jewel of a friendly river.



LENGTH: 125 km  
 TIME: six days on the river  
 CANOES: Kabecsport, Hull, Quebec; 819-771-2320  
 FLIGHT: Air Melancon Inc.; Ste-Anne-du-Lac, Quebec; 819-586-2220  
 MAPS: Federation Quebecoise du Canot-Camping Inc.  
 45454 Av. Pierre-de-Coubertin  
 CP1000, Succursale M  
 Montreal, Quebec, H1V 3R2  
 PUT-IN: Bottom of Parent Airport on Lake Parent, north of CN bridge.  
 TAKE-OUT: Riviere Duplessis junction with Riviere Gatineau. Air Melancon drove our cars here from Ste-Anne-du-Lac, the floatplane base.



Photos by Don Johnson and Jack Doherty



13-14 January MINNESING SKI TRAIL

John Winters, 705-382-2057; book before 6 January.

An overnight ski camping trip on the Minnesing Ski Trail in Algonquin Park. The trail is groomed and this trip provides a good opportunity for intermediate cross-country skiers to get some camping experience. Limit six skiers.

14 January SCUGOG RIVER AREA

Lee Benson, 416-767-4596; book before 6 January.

A day's skiing on the lowlands surrounding the Scugog River, just south of Lindsay. Suitable for intermediate skiers; limit six.

20-21 January FRONTENAC PROVINCIAL PARK

Sandy Richardson, 416-429-3944

Stewart McIlwraith, 416-740-9108; book before 15 January.

The annual ski camping weekend at Frontenac. Using backpacks or small toboggans we shall attempt to explore part of the park. Once again, if there is no snow at Frontenac, we will alter the trip venue to an area with worse weather and more snow. Limit six people.

27-28 January KOSHLONG LAKE AREA

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 20 January.

A weekend of back-country skiing, off-trail, a chance to practise snowrienteering. A canvas prospector tent, with stove, will be available for the night's camp. Limit six people.

10-11 February ALGONQUIN PARK EXPLORATION

Herb Pohl, 416-637-7632; book before 27 January.

The organizer would like to use the weekend to investigate the lay of the land around Pinetree Lake near the East Gate of the park. Participants are expected to build or bring their own shelter and be prepared for a weekend of bushwhacking. Limit five people.

17-18 February KOSHLONG LAKE AREA

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 10 February.

Didn't we get lost here before? The Koshlong Hilton welcomes back-country skiers for two days of trail breaking in some fine woodlands around Koshlong Lake. Overnight stay in the luxury of a heated prospector tent. Limit six people.



Photo by Isabel Boardman

10-11 March ALGONQUIN PARK SKI TOUR

Tony Bird, 416-466-0172; book before 6 March.

March usually offers the best conditions for off-trail skiing. We will start at Cache Lake and ski south, generally following lakes and portage trails to a Saturday night campsite. The precise route will depend on snow and weather conditions. Participants should be able to ski two full days with a backpack. Limit four skiers.



Photo by Isabel Boardman

17-18 February ALGONQUIN PARK SKI TOURING

Karl Schimek, 705-487-0172; book before 10 February.

This will be an overnight trip on the Highland Hiking Trail. Depending on snow conditions we may extend the loop, or use the time to explore the area. Suitable for intermediate skiers in good physical condition. Limit six skiers.

25 February HOCKLEY VALLEY SNOWSHOEING

Ron Jasiuk, 519-942-2972; book before 18 February.

A natural history tour of the Hockley Valley with someone who knows this area well. There may be a chill in the air but lots of hill climbing will keep us warm. Limit eight people.

# THE TORONTO SPORTSMEN'S SHOW

EXHIBITION PLACE  
TORONTO

16 - 25 MARCH 1990

*Come on down and see us!*

A CANADIAN NATIONAL



SPORTSMEN'S SHOW

A non-profit Corporation dedicated to Canada's outdoor heritage



First snow at the pond

Photo by Marcia Farquhar

#### 17 March LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 10 March.

At this time of year the Credit runs fast and cold, if it runs at all. The day's run will begin at Streetsville and the take-out will be selected according to the weather conditions. Limit six boats with paddlers equipped for cold weather.

#### 18 March ELORA GORGE

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 17 March.

Water levels at this time of year may be high, and the water will certainly be cold. A trip suitable for experienced cold-weather canoeists. Limit six boats.

#### 24 March LOWER CREDIT RIVER

Ken Coburn, 416-767-5845; book before 17 March.

Cold fast water, continuous grade I and II rapids make this an exciting trip for intermediate paddlers. Limit six boats.

#### 25 March LOWER CREDIT & HUMBER RIVERS

Duncan Taylor, 416-368-9748; book before 11 March.

A trip suitable for intermediate paddlers who are prepared for the cold water. Fast-moving water for this traditional season opener through the wilds of Mississauga and Etobicoke. Limit, what's a limit? If you are prepared for cold weather and water you are welcome.

#### 25 March UPPER CREDIT RIVER

Mike Graham-Smith, 416-877-7829, book before 18 March.

The Upper Credit with its many swifts, gentle rapids, and canoe-grabbing rocks is a pleasant early spring run. Suitable for novice paddlers with some moving water experience. Limit six boats.

#### 25 March ELORA GORGE

Doug Ashton, 519-654-0336; book before 22 March.

The water in the Gorge is still cold and can be very high. A number of technical rapids can provide a good workout for the experienced paddler. Limit six boats.

#### 31 March-1 April MOIRA RIVER

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 24 March.

Saturday's run will start at Lost Channel and go to Latta. On Sunday we will run from the weir at Chisom to Latta, twice, in order to maximize our whitewater experience. Here's hoping for plenty of big waves. Limit six boats with experienced crews.

#### 1 April ERAMOSA RIVER

Jeff Lane, 519-837-3815; book before 25 March.

A leisurely trip down this scenic river begins at Rockwood and continues into Guelph. Suitable for beginners. Limit eight boats.

#### 8 April GRAND RIVER

Dave Sharp, 519-621-5599; book before 1 April.

We will start at Cambridge and, depending on the water level, take out in either Paris or Brantford. This is a flatwater trip suitable for novice paddlers. Limit six canoes.

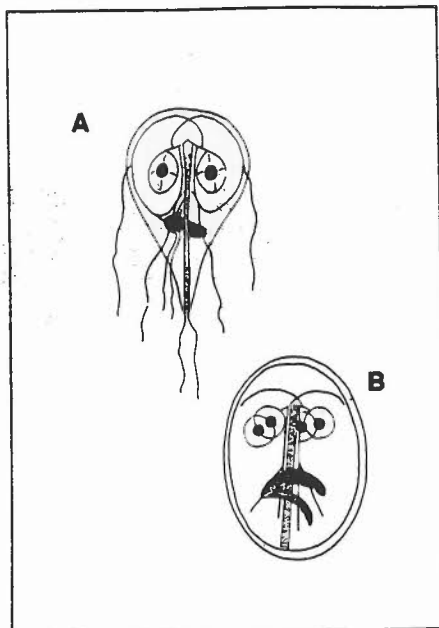
#### 13-15 April SALMON, MOIRA & LOWER BLACK RIVERS

Dale Miner, 416-730-8187; book before 6 April.

Friday will be spent on the Salmon, a good warm-up for Saturday's trip on the Moira. The Moira should offer big waves and extended whitewater. Sunday will be spent paddling down the Lower Black from Queensborough to Highway 7. Suitable for intermediate paddlers prepared to develop their skills in progressively more difficult water. Limit eight boats.

### ERRATUM

On page 12 of the previous issue of *Nastawgan* the sketches referred to in the text of the Giardiasis article were inadvertently left out during paste-up. Sorry about that; here they are:



### THE CIRCLE GAME

Greg Went

Another hard day in. Bone tired. Trying to eat dinner and just sit close to the fire. Close because air temp is high 40s and it's misting wet. Evidently just sitting is not allowed up here. Going to be forced to play the circle game. Rules ain't too tough. Really only one. Players must constantly be on the move. No sitting.

Most often the direction of play starts off clockwise. To be more exact, play is clockwise up to the point where all players are moving in a clockwise direction around the campfire. Then play will be counterclockwise. Everyone in the circle game searching for a smoke-free area around the fire.

Theoretically campfires should have three quadrants free of smoke and one quadrant in which smoke is blowing. Canoeists aren't picky. Willing to give the fire any quadrant it wants to blow smoke in. Damn thing won't make up its mind. Blows in one direction trade-wind-steady until the circle finally shifts to get out of the way. Fire then counters with a 180.

Occasionally a player tries to sit down to eat. This always is the signal for solid billows of smoke until the player is completely hidden from view. The player counters by lowering his body close to the ground to eat from a prone position. Maybe it's just a fluke breeze. Maybe just endure it for a little while and the wind will shift back to the direction it has been blowing in all day. After all, the wind was 15 km/h beam-on all day.

Smoke counters. Never could understand how smoke could stay that low to the ground for that long. Seconds go by. Then more seconds. The player finally emerges hacking. And standing. Rejoins the circle, paying homage to the god of fire.

Next day. Night again. A little bit deeper into the wilderness and into the ration bag. Eating dinner and drinking tea. Standing. Slowly moving. Clockwise this time. Play has started again.

# PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

**DISCOUNTS ON TRIPPING SUPPLIES** WCA members who present a membership card will receive a 10 percent discount on many non-sale times at:

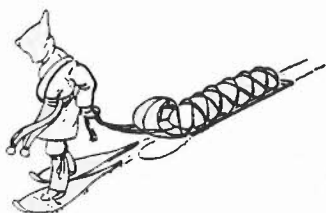
ABC Sports, 552 Yonge Street, Toronto,  
Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ontario,  
Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ontario,  
Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str. (Hwy 70), Hepworth, Ontario.

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

**ALGONQUIN SKIING** Doreen Vella organizes a cross-country skiing weekend from a housekeeping cottage outside Algonquin Park. There is a possibility of lots of snow; skiing along Highway 60. 19-21 January (Friday after 4 p.m.); \$16 per night; communal breakfast and supper extra; limit six participants. Call Doreen in Toronto at 416-463-9973 (after 7 p.m.) before 1 January.

**ALGONQUIN NORDIC** Join Joan Etheridge for another weekend of cross-country skiing from a comfortable lodge beside Algonquin Park. Eat six home-cooked meals, soothe aching muscles in a hot tub. 9-11 February; \$118 per person. Call Joan in Oakville at 416-825-4061 before 12 January; space is limited.

**WINTER WORKSHOP** A workshop on traditional winter travel by toboggan and snowshoe will be held Friday evening 12 January to Sunday afternoon 14 January at the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre, Dorset, Ontario. The workshop leader will be Craig Macdonald, Recreation Specialist, Frost Centre. This workshop is sponsored by the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (Northern Region) and costs \$225 per person (includes all meals, accommodation, the use of specialized camping equipment, displays, handouts, and expert instruction). An optional field test and written exam for certification will be available at the end of the course for an additional fee of \$25, payable to Mr. Macdonald. An overnight trip is planned to provide training in equipment handling and safe operation of wood-heated tents and emergency shelters. The first 15 paid-up registrants received will be accepted. For information contact Ms. Jan Heinonen, Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario, P.O. Box 517, South River, Ontario POA 1X0; telephone 705-386-2311 (w) or 705-386-0580 (h).



**CANADIAN WILDERNESS TRIPS** Unique dogsledding and cross-country ski adventures await you in the Algonquin Highlands. The program is all inclusive: return transportation from Toronto, all meals, guides, and even a wood-stoked sauna. For a free brochure contact Canadian Wilderness Trips, 171 College Street, Toronto, M5T 1P7; telephone 416-977-3703.

**EQUIPMENT WANTED** I'm looking for a 15-16 ft. solo canoe, compromise flatwater and whitewater with good carrying capacity; also a small tent for one to two people. Please call Bob Dion in Toronto at 416-481-1347, evenings or weekends.

The desktop typesetting for this issue of *Nastawgan* was done by

**COMPUFLOW**

where it is



The approximate location of some of the places mentioned in this issue are shown by page numbers:

Fraser River	1	Black River	12
Wabakimi	5	Temagami	14
Spanish River	9	Credit River	16
No. Labrador coast	10	Bazin/Gatineau rivers	17

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## WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION membership application

I enclose a cheque for \$15 --- student under 18  
\$25 --- adult  
\$35 --- family

for membership in the Wilderness Canoe Association.

I understand that this entitles me/us to receive *Nastawgan*, to vote at meetings of the Association, and gives me/us the opportunity to participate in W.C.A. outings and activities.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the following: ☐ new membership application  
☐ renewal

**Notes:** -This membership will expire January 31

-Please send completed form and cheque (payable to the Wilderness Canoe Association) to the membership committee chairman.