

26 July: put-in below falls after Lac Nemiscau

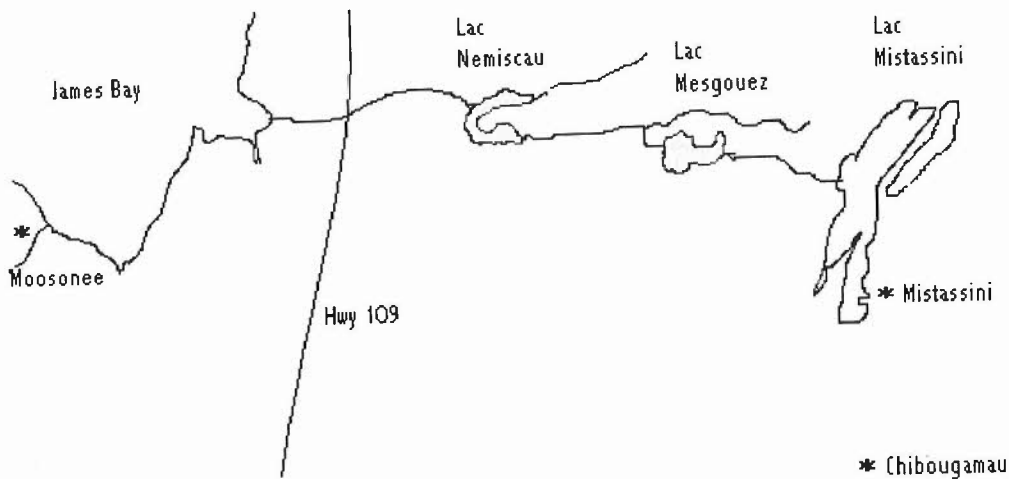
ADVENTURES ON THE RUPERT RIVER

Brett Hodnett

In the previous couple of years, my canoeing partner, Alex, and myself had been disappointed with the low water levels we had been encountering on our river trips. So, for our 1999 trip we vowed to find a river with a lot of water. We certainly found it! The Rupert River begins north of Chibougamau in northern Quebec, flowing out of Mistassini Lake through hundreds of kilometres of wilderness into James Bay. It has such a strong current that it's high on Hydro Quebec's "hope-to-destroy" list. We planned to drive to the south end of Mistassini Lake and

paddle the 80 or 90 km up the west shore to the start of the Rupert River. We would then paddle along the Rupert River for either 600 km to Hwy 109, or 100 km further to Waskaganish on James Bay.

We wouldn't be passing anywhere that we could restock, so we brought enough food for 30 days, although we didn't think we would be away that long. For trips of this length we don't even bother to pack light since it seems like a ridiculous amount to carry either way.

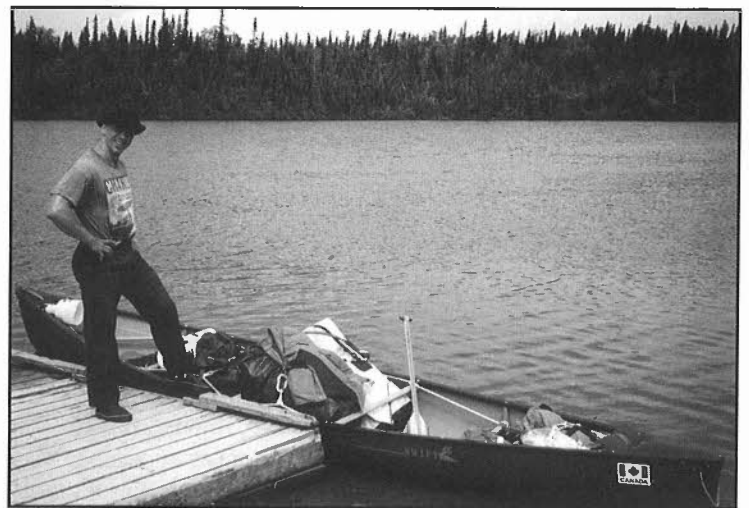


I know when I read about a trip, I like to hear some of the details about gear and whatnot, so I'll give a brief overview of what we did. We brought three Sealline 115 L soft waterproof packs (the kind with the roll-down top), and two regular hiking-type packs. Once we loaded these up they weighed 55, 70, 70, 85, and 100 lbs respectively. Our tent is the most unlikely of wilderness tents, but we like it. It's a dome tent that is big enough that we can sleep in it with all our packs, and tall enough that you can stand in it. Alex bought it at Canadian Tire in the early 1980s. Our canoe is a royalex Swift Yukon that is 17 1/2 feet long and whitewater friendly. A fantastic boat. Our food is mostly pasta for dinner, bannock for lunch, and Just Right cereal ground in a blender and protein drinks for breakfast. We also have some extra meals of rice for those days when we're hungry, and lots of nuts and raisins. The only thing we drink is fruit-flavored carbohydrate powder that we mix with our water, increasing our caloric intake further. So with all of this assembled we were ready to go.

Saturday, 10 July 1999 We arrived at Mistassini Lake at about 1 p.m. where the guy from the *R serve Faunique*, who spoke very little English, did his best to ruin our plans for a canoe trip. We would have had to drive all over northern Quebec, taking up probably the first week of the trip with red tape, if we wanted to satisfy him. So we decided against satisfying him. Instead of starting at the southern tip of Mistassini Lake, we would start from the east side of the lake, at the Cree community of Mistassini. This still required that we wait until Monday before starting out, but it seemed like the best alternative.

Leaving from this community had the disadvantage that we would have to cross the width of the lake. Mistassini Lake is extremely large. By a rough estimation its area is five times Lake Simcoe's, or twice Lake Champlain's. So we weren't particularly thrilled with the idea of paddling across it. For the next couple of days we hung around in a campground just outside of Chibougamau, already happy that we had brought a little chess board along.

12 July The band council office at Mistassini Reserve opened at 8 a.m., so we were there at 8 a.m. sharp. The fellow we had to see didn't arrive until 8:45, but when he did show up he was extremely helpful, and not nearly as concerned about red tape as the previous guy. He sold us a permit for each night we were to be in Mistassini Cree territory, and said that we could park our car at the police station if we wanted. The only thing he seemed to have in common with the Quebec representative was his incredulity at the fact that we had never paddled the Rupert River before, and we were going to do it without a guide. This perplexed us at first, but as we got further into the trip we realized that their surprise was justified. I think that it is unusual for the river to be travelled without at least one person in the party having done it before, and for good reasons. This is because even in what looks like calm water, the current is sometimes unbelievably powerful and can force you into falls or rapids before you can even see them. This almost cost us our lives several times. We also found that without knowledge of places to camp, we sometimes spent hours looking, and the best site we could find was a flat rock, a bit bigger than the tent, 15 metres into the peat hummocks.

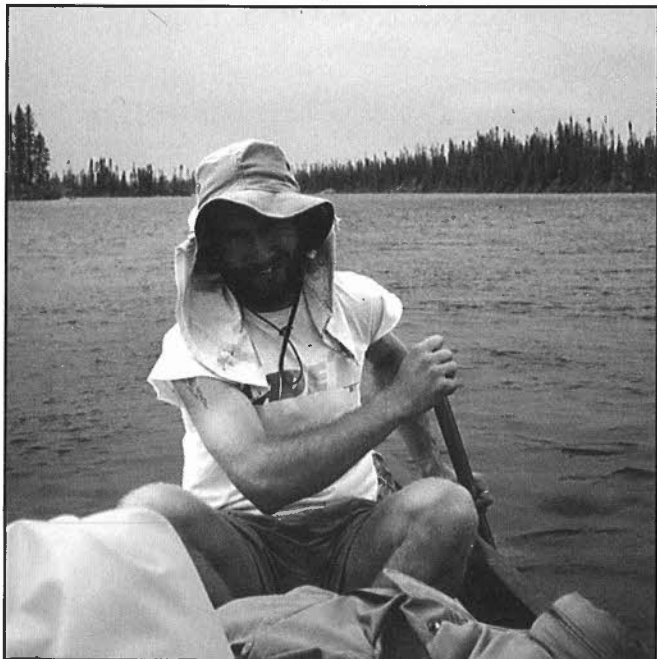


12 July: put-in at Mistassini



14 July

By 10:30 a.m. we were finally on the lake and ready to go. The Reserve is at the bottom of a 30-km-long bay. We started up the bay on a perfect day, sunny with a few clouds and a slight breeze at our back. We had reached the mouth of the bay by mid-afternoon, and since it didn't seem likely that the weather would get much better for us, we decided to get the lake crossing over with. To make the crossing as short as possible, we first paddled to a large island a little more than a kilometre from shore. It was an easy crossing to the island and all seemed well. All we had to do now was paddle the width of the lake, from the island to the far shore, about eight kilometres. This may not seem all that far, but it is a very long way to cross water in a heavily loaded open canoe.



14 July

The shore on the far side of the lake was just a thin line on the horizon. We knew that if everything went smoothly it would take about 45 minutes to make the crossing. We also knew that anything could happen in that time. So we stopped on shore, put on our wetsuits and lifejackets, and fastened our gear in tight. Everything was going fine and until we were nearly half-way across the lake we were still cheerfully chatting away and making good time. Then suddenly the wind picked up and the waves drastically increased in size.

The lake was enormous. We had seen no one since leaving the Reserve, and if we were to capsize there was no possibility of getting to shore in these waves. My first thought was to turn around and head back, but at this point both shores were just lines on the horizon and there was no way to tell which shore was closer. We decided to push on. The waves were getting larger and larger. I tried to keep the front of the canoe into them but the water was "soupy" with waves coming from everywhere. With the shores so far away it was impossible to tell if we were making any forward progress at all. We spent a long time paddling hard, hoping we were moving in the right direction, but mostly just trying to keep afloat. The wind picked up even more, and with the waves coming from all directions we began taking in too much water to ignore. I decided to bail when I could. It was ridiculous trying to bail and keep the canoe under control at the same time, but it just had to be done. Gradually the shore seemed to be getting closer. The waves became smaller until finally we were out of danger. It had taken us three long hours to cross the lake, petrified most of the time.

Once along shore, we only had to paddle a couple of kilometres before finding somewhere to put a tent. We didn't know at the time that we were very lucky to have found a respite from the peat bogs so quickly. After getting camp set up I remembered my shoulder. Three weeks



14 July

before this trip I had separated it while playing hockey, and was wearing a sling right up to the time we got into the canoe. My shoulder was still bothering me when we started out, but after the lake crossing it never bothered me again. It was amazing really. I thought of Paddle to the Amazon where Don Starkell's asthma fixed itself after many hard days of paddling. I've decided that the message I'm going to take from this is that I should have lots more intense canoeing experiences in the future.

13 July We slept in a little, and it turned out to be a nice sunny day with a slight breeze at our backs. We paddled up the shore and into a gigantic bay that was a maze of islands, making our way through them to a point that on the topo map looked like a shortcut. It seemed as though we could save over 25 km of paddling by taking a short portage into the Rupert River. The short portage turned out to be a section of small, shallow rapids. This, I suppose, was our first indication that the water levels were particularly high. We paddled for a while looking for a site, but everywhere were just peat bogs. Eventually we came across an esker with three boarded-up cabins on it, and decided we weren't going to do any better than that today. So we pitched our tent, happy that we finally were on the river with Mistassini Lake behind us.

14 July The first few hundred kilometres of the Rupert can't accurately be described as a river at all. The whole area isn't really land with lakes and rivers, it's more like an enormous lake with thousands of islands in it. The water follows many different routes on its way to James Bay, and so it is somewhat arbitrary to pick one route and call it the river. This was especially true today.

We had to do some particularly difficult navigation through a maze of islands on a big lake-like section of the river before getting to a section that looked like a river. In the sections where a lot of the water comes together, the current was very strong. A few places that aren't marked as rapids on the topo map looked pretty damn rapid to me. Of the four rapids that are marked on the map we could

run only two. The other two follow each other closely and fortunately have a single portage of about 750 m around them both. We paddled beyond these and managed to find a site on a rock outcropping before it got too late. The black flies had been quite thick all day and were no better here, but now they didn't need to feel so lonely, being accompanied by so many deer flies.

15 July The weather wasn't quite as co-operative today. There was a strong headwind against us, and rain almost all day. The first rapid on the map actually turned out to be a huge waterfall. We portaged around it, through a recently burnt-over area, leaving our lifejackets in the charred trees to mark our path. In many areas along the river, sections would be completely burnt, with the ground black and the trees just charred sticks. Alex had brand-new yellow gortex pants that quickly became irreversibly black.

We managed to run a couple of rapids, but most of them were too big. The power of the river is really amazing. We'd never paddled anything like it. The majority of



15 July

the rapids don't appear to have portages around them, but a large number of them can't be run in a canoe. Our last carry of the day did follow an overgrown portage. This was quite a relief because at the end of the portage was a small clearing that had obviously been used as a site at some time in the past. It was the first reasonable place to put up a tent we had seen all day and we didn't hesitate setting up camp.

16 July The morning was overcast and hazy, and as the day progressed it got steadily worse. There are quite a few rapids and in the majority of them we could find a route

there trying, rather than sitting in the tent. We paddled until quite late because there just weren't any sites. We ended up in the bog on a flat rock just big enough to fit the tent on.

17 July Well, sleeping on a rock in a bog isn't as much fun as it sounds. To top it off, it was incredibly windy all night. Unable to use stakes, we were lucky we had all of our packs in the tent with us. We slept maybe three hours and woke up unbelievably stiff. The weather quickly cleared, however, and before long it was sunny and hot.



*17 July:
taking it easy through the tiny rapids*

to paddle through. Unlike smaller rivers, the Rupert offers a lot of choice as to which part of the rapids you want to run. It is like having half a dozen rapids, all flowing side by side making up the one river. As a result there is often a section that can be run, even though most of the river is way beyond the realm of possibility for an open canoe. Often enough, however, there is no route through the rapids, making a portage necessary.

The portages were the least of our problems today though. As often as the river was "river-like" it was "lake-like," and it was also raining hard with strong winds. Wherever there was open water, the waves were terrible. I think it was actually one of those days that they say may keep you shore-bound and put you behind schedule. But without any big crossings to do we would rather be out

There were five or six rapids today and we managed to run them all. Not carrying our gear through the bush was a welcome change. We found a great site in the mid-afternoon so we decided to stop early. This site was like a tiny little paradise in the peat bog, a small sandy beach about five metres long. The fact that the pile of sand the tent was set up on was a giant anthill didn't deter us for a second. This was the best site we'd had yet. We could finally bathe and put out our things to dry.

We plan our trips in six-day cycles, and this was our sixth day. By organizing our food in bags with six days worth in each, we ensure that everything is easy to find. More importantly, if before the end of a six-day cycle we realize we are low on food, then we can just suffer a bit, and wait for our next fully stocked six-day cycle of food.



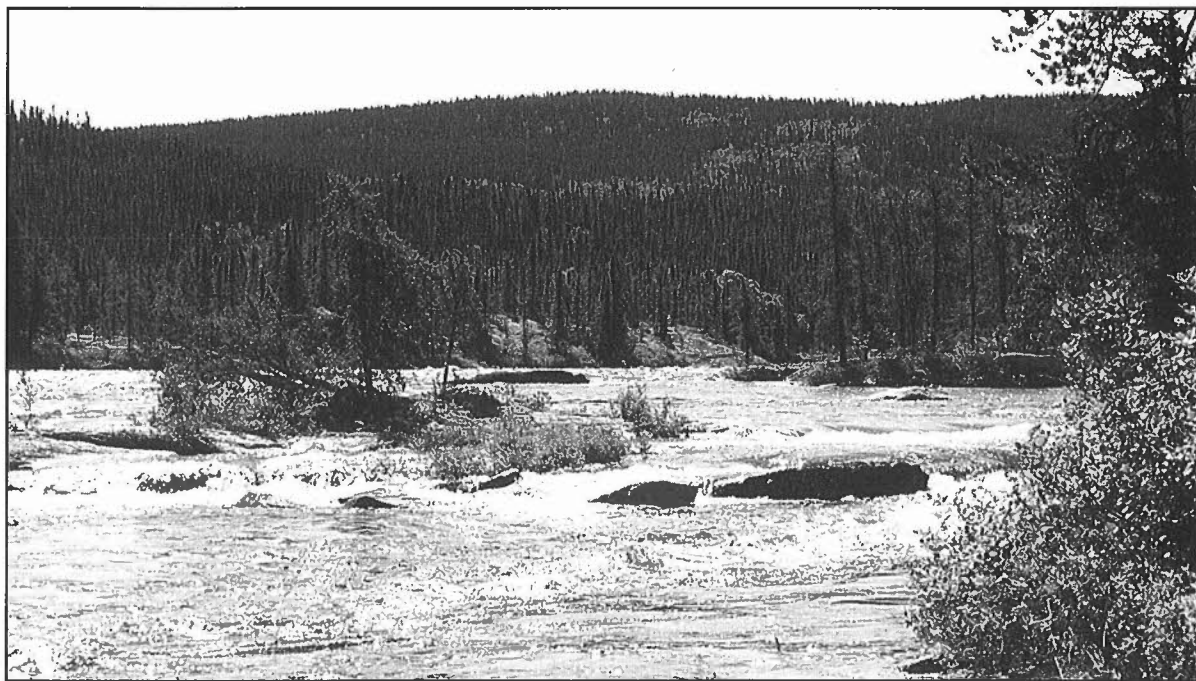
18 July

This is much better than running out of food on the 20th day of a 24-day trip. Today was a perfect day to get all of our food for the sixth to 12th days of our trip organized.

18 July This was the first day that had absolutely no rain at all (until 11:30 p.m. when it started again). We paddled about 15 km to the first rapid, which involved an easy portage over the rocks, and a thrilling run through the last half of it. We then paddled through Lake Bardeliere, one of the larger lakes of our trip, which was eerily calm. Happy to make good time on the big water, we ran two more sets of rapids and ended up on a little island about eight kilometres from the last rapid. It was a funny site. The island is only about 10 metres in diameter and covered with thick bush, except for a small clearing in the center. Although there was no wind, there were no bugs at all. I don't know how we found the site in the first place, but with the paucity of sites on the river we were looking everywhere.

19 July We spent most of the day lake paddling against wind and wave. It was really very cold all day, even after it cleared up later in the afternoon. We managed to paddle to a site on an island well into another of the large lakes on our trip, Mesgouez Lake. This site was on a beach with a little wooden table and even a plastic chair. There were also two tents just down the lake a little ways. This was the first sign of people we had seen.

20 July My journal for today begins as follows: "I can't imagine where to start. Holy shit!" It was a beautiful sunny day and we were on the water early. We paddled to the first set of rapids, and scouted the start of them as best we could from shore. They looked like something we could do, so we paddled back and lined the canoe up with the flat dark water that flowed along the left side of the river into some minor white turbulence at the bottom. What we didn't realize at the time was that at Mesgouez Lake, all of the various channels of water that make up the Rupert



20 July



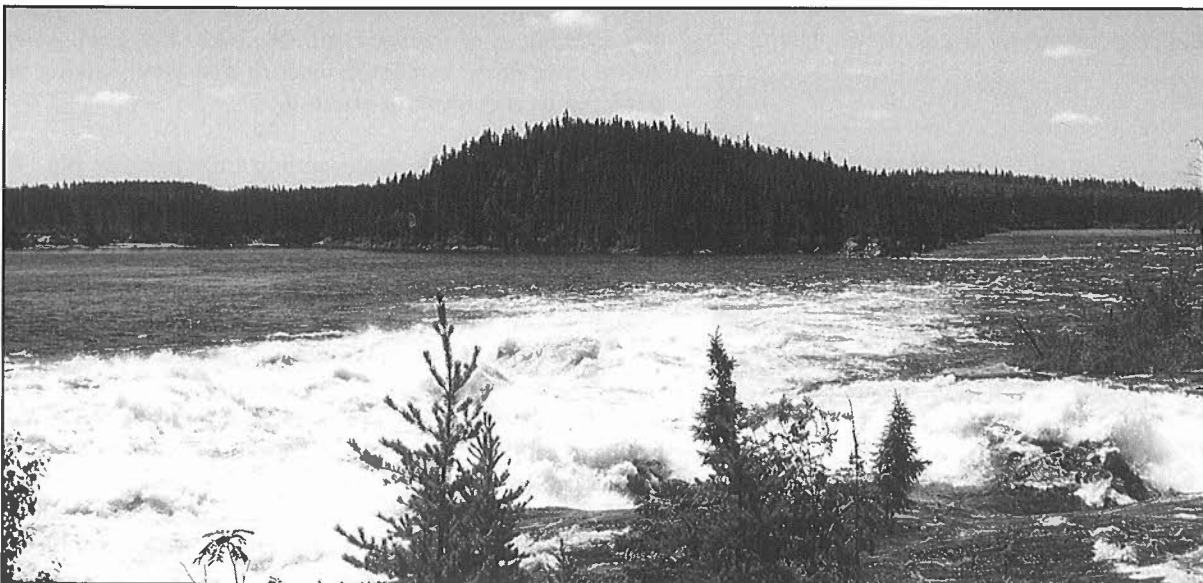
22 July:
boulderfield portage

come together. The Rupert leaves the lake as one river, an order of magnitude larger than what we had been paddling in before the lake. It was not at all obvious that the river now had so much more power.

We were already in the "flat" dark water that led to the rapids before we realized how much trouble we were in. The dark water that we were coasting down was actually huge swells that rose up beside the canoe, dwarfing it between peaks. We didn't want to imagine what it would be like when it got rough. We floated through these swells until we reached a point where we had to decide between an obvious V to the right, or an obstacle course through the boulders on the left. As what seemed like a random decision, I chose left. We managed to manoeuvre our way through and reached shore, taking on surprisingly little water. From the safety of the shore

we could see that if we had chosen the V on the right, we would have been forced over a huge drop into rocks and curling water. I think it is very unlikely we would have survived it.

We portaged the rest of the rapid and decided that we would have to be extremely careful from now on. However, we didn't even get through the morning before the next close call. Only a few kilometres down the river we had to choose between running a rapid on the south end of an island, or paddling a kilometre or so further to run the rapid at the far end of the island. Since we came to the south end first, we ran it. This was a very lucky choice. If we had run the rapid at the north end of the island, we would have been carried unknowingly into the deceptively calm-looking water above a huge falls that was just around the corner. This time the choice that



23 July

saved us was 100 % luck. This falls wasn't even on our map. We managed to paddle to shore and found a portage trail that would require a Cree guide and a chainsaw to follow. To our surprise there were three guys in little kayak playboats at the beginning of it. Apparently the *route du nord*, a 400-km gravel highway that we would be crossing the next day, was close by. Even in their little playboats the guys could only run the smaller rapids at the side of the river.

We continued on to the next rapids where we stopped on a small island next to the right shore to scout. We were a little paranoid about the size of the rapids now, so we decided not to run them. Instead we paddled down the tiny bit of overflow from the river that went around the right side of the island. I couldn't believe we misjudged this. The river was so shallow that we almost had to get out of the canoe a few times, and we could see the calm water at the bottom of the rapids. The problem was that even though the river remained the same width, most of the water converged into the main channel that we were following. We went over a couple of surprisingly big waves and then dropped into a huge hole. The curling wave at the bottom of the hole stood the canoe almost on end. We broke through, however, and paddled hard in a futile attempt to keep the water-filled canoe going in a straight line through the remainder of the rapids. We did somehow manage to keep upright and get to shore. After bailing the canoe and shaking our heads a lot, we paddled to our fourth rapid of the day. This one we ran as though the canoe was floating on sulfuric acid. We paddled for quite a while longer looking for a site, and eventually found one at the top of a seven-metre sand embankment. We ate and quickly went to sleep, mentally exhausted.

21 July We weren't in the highest of spirits today. It rained all morning and we portaged the only two rapids we passed. The second ones we might have been able to run but I just wasn't in the mood. We reached the *route du nord* where there is a rest stop with boardwalks that overlook the massive series of rapids and falls that the Rupert River had become when we were there. There



23 July



23 July

were two couples in campers stopping for the night who gave us ham sandwiches and cold beer. The rapids go for as far as the eye can see, and after a fair bit of looking around, we found a trail that leads to the bottom of them. This would be our first portage for tomorrow.

22 July The portage from the rest stop was quite long, but it was fairly novel for us to have a good trail to follow. Unfortunately we could only paddle about 100 metres from the end of it before we had to get out again. This portage wasn't so nice. It was a long, treed boulder field. Alex is the one who carries the canoe, while I carry most of the rest of our stuff. There is very little that Alex hates more than hopping from boulder to boulder with a 90-lbs canoe over his head. We reached the end, however, just to paddle a short stretch of rapids before having to get out and walk again. We then put in at the bottom of the rapids to run the last stretch, and promptly swamped the canoe. The worst part about this was that my hat floated away, never to be seen again. We bailed the canoe and found a place to camp. It was windy and sunny so we managed to dry everything out quite well. We had only gone about seven kilometres, but since most of that was walking we tried not to feel too bad about it.

23 July The rapids were getting unbelievably big. We passed three sets today, only able to run a short side channel at the end of one of them, and even that was questionable. It was a nice day though, and we were able to eat a lot of blueberries along the portage trail. After searching for a site for a long time we finally found one on a beach, too late to take advantage of the sun.

24 July We woke up to our third sunny day in a row. It was the start of another of our six-day cycles and we bathed in the river and re-organized our packs. The weather quickly became cloudy, however, with rain off and on. The river changed as well. We had no rapids at all, and the shores were sandy for most of the day before

becoming swampy for the last 10 or 15 km. We ended the day where the river thins and the rapids begin again. It looked as though this place had been used as a site before, and in the mud I found an old hat. What a lucky break. What the river taketh away, the river giveth.

25 July After portaging the rapids beside our site, we paddled five or six kilometres to the next set of rapids. There were two broken aluminum boats on shore, making the portage trail easy to find. We took the trail, but part-way along it forked. The map showed two sets of

paddled what was left of the rapids, stopping to pick up the pack at the hydro towers.

It wasn't much past these rapids that we reached Nemiscau Lake. I don't know what Nemiscau means in Cree, but it should mean "swamp." The shores are all swamp and there are numerous islands of swamp all through the lake. Keeping track of exactly where you are is nearly impossible, since very few of the islands are on the map and the solid shores of the lake are too far from the open water to see. We paddled a long way through the lake and eventually came to an island with a rocky outcropping where we made camp.



25 July: Lac Nemiscau looking east

rapids as the river made a tight curve to the right. I figured that maybe the trail to the right would pass both rapids. So I took a pack and set off to the right. While I did that, Alex brought the rest of our stuff to the fork in the trail. The trail I followed was pretty bad at first, leading through a swampy area for five or six hundred metres. After trudging through this, I followed the trail further, until it ended at hydro towers.

This is one disadvantage of canoeing anywhere in the area of Quebec that flows into James Bay. Periodically the landscape is blighted with huge hydro towers. I had already walked quite a way, so I followed the hydro towers down to the river and left my pack by the river's edge. When I came back, sweating and muddy, I found Alex feasting on blueberries and relaxing. My choice of trails wasn't the best one. We continued along the other trail and soon came to the river. We

26 July It was a very hot sunny day and we paddled to the end of Nemiscau Lake on calm waters. As the water from the lake becomes a river again, there is a large set of rapids that splits around an island. We paddled along the west shore of the large bay that leads to the river, to the "point of no return" above the rapids. Walking along shore we found that these rapids are an enormous series of ledges that go on around the corner as far as we could see. It would have been a ridiculous portage, so we decided to check the east shore, which looked better. We paddled up the shore of the bay for at least 500 m and then started across. It wasn't until we were nearly halfway across that we realized there was a strong current, and we were moving towards the rapids at an ever accelerating pace.



27 July: life on a rock

In the middle of a large bay it is difficult to tell if you are moving because there are no reference points. If the shore is a few hundred metres away, you can't see your motion relative to it unless you are moving quite fast. We had no choice but to turn back. We pointed the canoe towards the open lake and paddled hard, trying to ferry back to the west shore. As the current pushed us, both the top of the rapids and the west shore were approaching quickly. I tried to optimize the angle of the canoe but it was difficult to know which would happen first, would we hit shore or go into the rapids? We luckily slammed into shore at the very "point of no return" where we had stopped to scout originally. This time we paddled up the shore a kilometre or so, right out of the bay altogether, before attempting to cross to the east side. We paddled with a wary eye on shore, even though it seemed ridiculous that there would be a current in the middle of this huge lake. We reached the other side where there is a portage around a series of rapids, and then a short paddle to a beautiful falls. This leads into a series of class 3 rapids, which we ran. This is not an easy lake to get out of.

Along the stretch of river below the lake we saw our second golden eagle of the trip. These are really magnificent birds to see in the wild. We paddled along the river for a while longer, as usual unable to find a site. It was getting dark when we could see another set of rapids coming up, so we settled on the best site we had seen. It was on a high rock embankment, the highest one around as a matter of fact, that had been burnt bare by a fire. There were unlimited blueberries, a full moon, as well as a nice view of the next rapids. As we were eating, there

were two nighthawks diving around our camp like jet fighters. Aesthetically a really nice site. Although the night was clear, we watched almost non-stop lightning from two clouds way off in the distance. So it was with some trepidation that we climbed into the tent and went to sleep.

Several hours later we were awoken by loud bursts of thunder and powerful winds. There were gusts from all directions, blowing the tent down against our bodies, first one way and then the other. The wind was so bad that Al suggested that we get our rain gear on in case the tent was ripped apart. As we did this, the lightning got closer and more frequent, and the thunder got louder. We made the perhaps obvious decision to go down to the canoe instead of being on the highest point around sitting on a rock. We leaned the canoe on an embankment in the brush and sat under it until the storm had passed. Returning to the tent we still managed to get a reasonable, if not dry, nights sleep.

27 July When we did finally get up it was a hot sunny day without a cloud in the sky. We lined, paddled, and portaged the rapids we could see from our site, and then paddled a short distance to the next set of rapids. The only way around these was through a burnt forest. The burnt trees were quite small and still standing, like giant black blades of grass. There was only less than a metre between trees, and I found it exhausting pushing between trees in a zigzag pattern. I can't imagine how Alex got through with the canoe.

With the portage done we could get a good look at the rapids. They just kept getting bigger. At one point



27 July: huge rapids

the river is being forced into a channel under such pressure that you could stand at the side of the river only a few metres from a three-metre-high wall of water rushing past at an incredible speed. It was like water coming out of a hose.

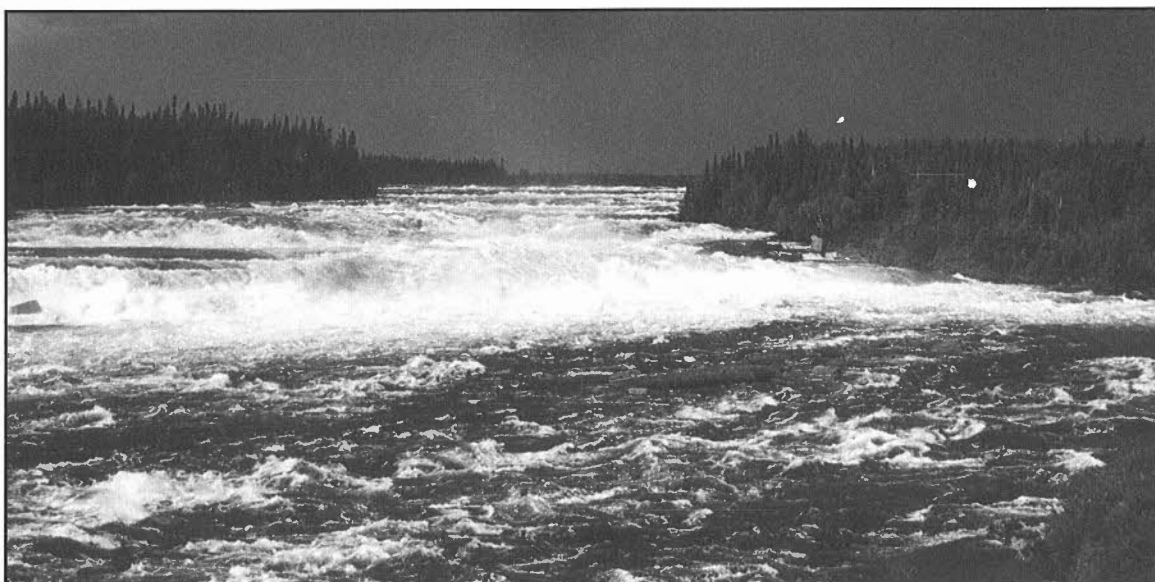
We paddled through some fairly fast water to just before another set of rapids where we were forced to take a site high on a rock again. We hoped it wouldn't be a repeat performance of the night before, but there just wasn't enough time to deal with the next rapids before dark.

28 July Well, we got through the night without incident, and were on the water just before it started to rain. It wasn't far to our take-out point and we were confident we would get there today. There were a couple of small sets of rapids, which we ran, but mostly it was just moving water. By early afternoon, with mixed emotions, we had reached Hwy 109 where we had decided to take out. Although we had enough food along to go the 100 km further to Waskaganish, we decided against it for two rea-

sons. First of all there were an increasing number of rapids marked on our topo map between the highway and James Bay. At this point on the river, any rapids marked on the map translated into long portages with no trails. That's fine in moderation, but it looked like we might be walking half the distance to James Bay. We didn't really have the time or inclination for that. The second reason was that there are no roads out of Waskaganish and we had made no arrangements to get out. This would have ended up being either expensive, or a time-consuming paddle down James Bay to Moosonee. So, as we pulled out of the river we were excited to have made it, but disappointed since it seemed that we had cut our trip short.

This did not mean that the adventure was over however, at least not for me. The next morning I still had to hitchhike up Hwy 109 and then along the gravel highway *route du nord* that we had paddled by a week before. After 400 km or so it ends at Hwy 167 where I would have to get a ride north to Mistassini. Then I would have to drive the same route in reverse. Fortunately, people are more sympathetic to hitchhikers on those remote roads than they are down south. After getting to the start of the *route du nord*, I had to wait for an hour before the first car passed. Even though they were going the opposite direction, they stopped. We chatted for a while and they said that a relative of theirs would be going the other way in the afternoon, so I would get a ride eventually. Fortunately I didn't have to wait that long. However, I did wait two and a half hours before a car was finally going the direction I wanted to go. He picked me up, even though he didn't speak a word of English, and we travelled in silence for the next five hours. By the next day I was back to pick Alex up, and we set off for the long drive home.

(A solo trip on the Rupert River is described by Dave Berthelet in the Summer 1983 issue of *Nastawgan*.)



28 July: view downriver from Hwy 109 bridge



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Nastawgan, to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas of interest to wilderness travellers, organizes an extensive program of trips for members, runs a few basic workshops, and is involved in environmental issues relevant to wilderness canoeing.

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Spring 2002	27 January

WCA MEMBERSHIP LISTS are available to any members who wish one for personal, non-commercial use. The list can be ordered by sending a five-dollar bill (no cheque, please!) to Cash Belden at the WCA postal address (see WCA Contacts on the back page).

MULTIPLE YEAR WCA MEMBERSHIPS are now possible, albeit with no discount. This will help alleviate much of the (volunteer) administrative work, save your time and postage, and also hedge against future fee increases. Contact Cash Belden for more information.

SOLO PADDLERS If you enjoy solitude and solo paddling, contact like-minded people at: Going Solo, c/o Robert Perkins, 18 Hawthorn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA.

WINTER POOL SESSIONS The city of Toronto has recently revised its pool rental fee schedule. Private users face dramatically increased rates. However, community swim clubs will be granted reduced fees. I have persuaded Parks and Recreation that the WCA should be granted the same status as swim clubs. If they stand by this, we could be able to get a pool rental for the extremely attractive rate of \$55.00/hour plus tax. If there are enough interested people, I will arrange a booking for us. The pool is in Scarborough, and we normally rent it for 1.5 hours late

Sunday afternoon or early evening. It's a great opportunity to stay in shape and learn to roll a kayak or canoe. I have a few extra boats available from my personal fleet that people are welcome to use. Costs will depend on size of the group, but \$80-\$100 would likely cover the whole season. If you want to participate, please call me as soon as possible. Bill Ness 416-321-3005.



THE CLEARWATER RIVER

Graham McCallum

The business of selecting a whitewater river for the annual summer canoe trip, from the hundreds available, deserves a lot of thought and research if the trip is to be a success. In our case, we have cut this process to the bone. One of our group saw the photo of Whitemud Falls on the Clearwater River in the calendar of Canada's Heritage Rivers and suggested this as a possibility. That was all there was to it.

Flying over the river at 5 a.m. in June 2000, from Fort McMurray, in Alberta, to the put-in at Contact Rapids, there were some misgivings about this minimalist approach to selecting a river. Down below were meanders stretching to the horizon with a sprinkling of ox-bow lakes but very little discernable action. This looked like a slog. To keep the cost down we had also elected to skip the jet boat take-out and paddle the last 90 km of flatwater to Fort McMurray. As the prevailing winds in this region are from the west and we would be paddling due west, this could also add to the grind. We therefore tacked on two days to allow for this possible headwind.

The good news was that the dreaded westerly didn't appear. The river current carried us along in perfect conditions, delivering us to the take-out two days ahead of schedule. The not so good news was that there wasn't much excitement on the Clearwater itself, with only a couple of sets of runnable rapids. There was one portage around Whitemud Falls and another at Pine Rapids. Pine Rapids could probably be run but the map and guide we had were not clear enough and there was no easy way to look the rapids over.

The two highlights of the trip were camping at Whitemud Falls at a spectacular campsite overlooking the S-shaped canyon, and hiking on the Methye Portage. This 19-kilometre historical portage over the height of land links Hudson Bay via the Churchill River to the Arctic via the Mackenzie River. The Clearwater River serves as part of the link. It was a great feeling to walk along this deeply rutted trail to Rendezvous Lake, where the North and South fur brigades met to exchange goods and to swim in the lake where all this camaraderie took place, now silent.

Some trips, in hindsight, can be improved. If we went again, we would, first, spend another \$100 each and fly further up the river to Warner Rapids. This would add more whitewater to perk up the paddling. And second, we would use the jet boat for \$115 each to avoid the 90-km paddle to Fort McMurray from Cascade Rapids. Part of this stretch is through polluted water.

The two extra days were spent touring the huge tar sands project in Fort McMurray and the Tyrell Dinosaur Museum in the Badlands, near Drumheller. Altogether, despite the limited planning, this trip was a another winner.



Lake Rendezvous

IF YOU GO

OUTFITTER: Points North Adventures;
www.pointsnorthadventures.com

PUT-IN: Contact Rapids; flight \$325 for two paddlers plus canoe plus gear

TAKE-OUT: Fort McMurray

DISTANCE: 164 km, 6 days

CANOES: \$40 per day

WRITTEN GUIDE: Canoe Trip #40 from Points North Adventures

(Another article on the Clearwater River, by Dave and Beth Buckley, was published in the Summer 1991 issue of *Nastawgan*.)



Methye Portage

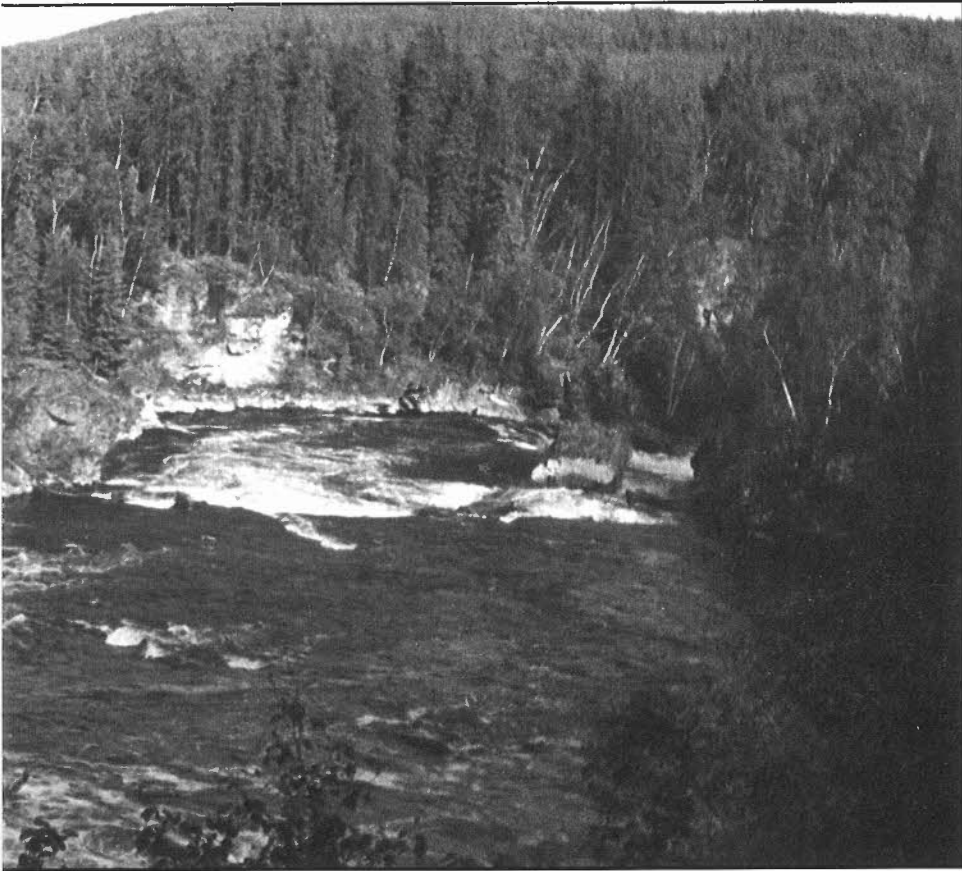


view from portage

CLEARWATER RIVER

WHITEMUD FALLS

view from campsite



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear WCA,

As the winner of the draw for the WCA journals I would first like to thank Mr. Roger Nelis who generously donated his approximately 20 years collection. As well, I would like to thank the Executive who made the journals available through the draw to any interested member. A process, that I feel, is commendable. As a new member, having received only two issues thus far, this is a somewhat unexpected bonus. Again, thank you all.

Sincerely,

Roy Parsons

FALL PARTY

The WCA Fall (Wine and Cheese) Party is a great time to meet all your paddling friends and to make new ones. If you are new to the club, or not so new, and even if you are not a member, this party is for you. You can find out what the WCA is all about, who its members are, and where the best paddling routes are located.

Date: 23 November 2001

Location: Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club (TSCC), 1391 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Toronto (free parking for 150 cars)

Cost: \$10.00

Program: 7:00 Registration and Welcome

7:45 First presentation, by Kevin Callan

8:30 Meet old buddies and make new friends

9:00 Second presentation

9:45 Coffee and clean-up

For more information contact Anne Lessio at 416-293-4116 or alessio@istar.ca

WCA WEBSITE

The recreated WCA website is now available. A password is not required.

<http://wildernesscanoe.ca>

Note: do not include www. before the address until further notice.

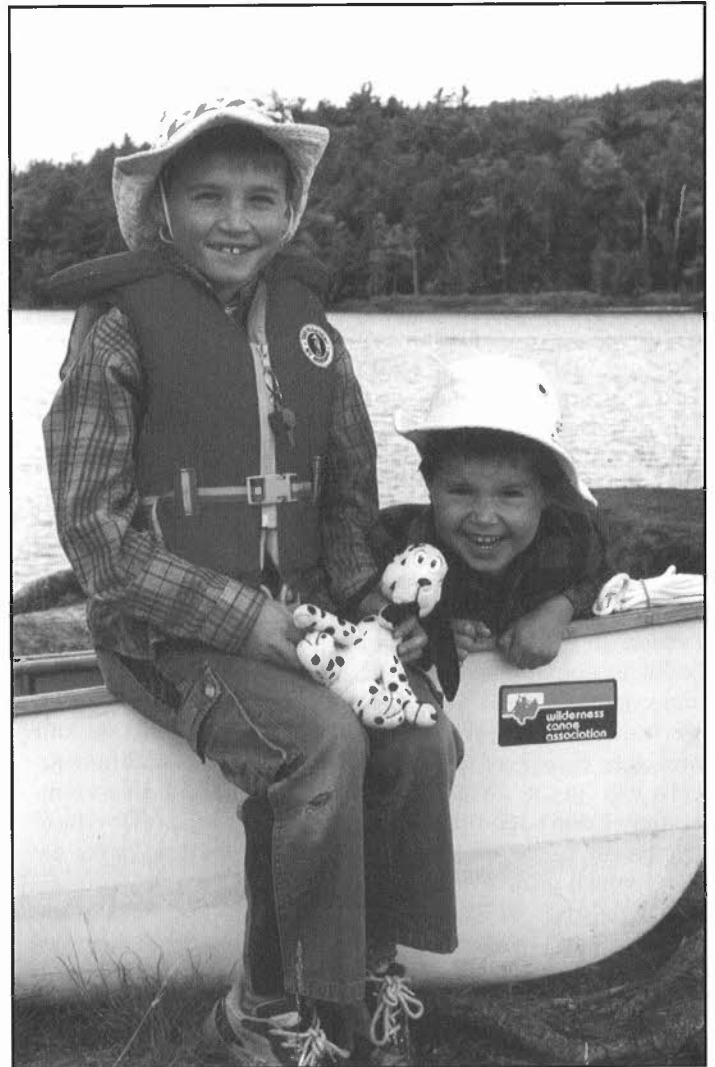
PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED FOR THE WCA WEBSITE PHOTO GALLERY

With the design of our new website, one page was kept in reserve, the WCA Photo Gallery. We are requesting that members assist in the development of the Photo Gallery by submitting quality photographs, as many as they like and of any size and format, depicting canoeing and canoeing locations. The theme of the Photo Gallery will be "Favorite Locations of WCA Members." Each photograph must include the name of the photographer, a brief description or a descriptive title indicating the location and region, and the approximate date the photo was taken. We welcome all submissions but your photographs will be edited for technical quality, content, variety, theme, orientation, and space limitations. This is your chance to have your precious pictures admired by the whole world!

Submit your photographic prints or slides to Toni Harting, 7 Walmer Road, Apt. 902, Toronto, M5R 2W8. (The originals will be returned.) Or, if your photographs have already been digitized by scanning, e-mail the files to aharting@netcom.ca

HAVE KIDS, WILL PADDLE

Four-and-a-half-year-old Robbie is an experienced wilderness tripper who just adventured on the Spanish River this past summer. Recently, in school, he was working on an assignment which involved some illustration. When told that it was time to “draw,” he answered: “That’s what my Mommy and Daddy do in the rapids!” He went on to add: “When they’re kneeling in the canoe.” Little did we know that he was actually paying attention to our paddling technique!



At three-and-a-half, Tyler had been wilderness canoe camping for more than half his life. He hadn’t known any other form of vacation besides canoeing. That summer we went on a family trip out west to paddle the Bowron Lakes loop and also to see the National Parks in the Rockies. Nearing the end of our canoe trip, we told Tyler that we would be “car camping” in Banff and Jasper parks. He looked at us with a puzzled expression and asked: “But how will we get the car across the lake?” A true wilderness tripper!

Submitted in October 2000 by Lisa Ashton.

DEVELOPING THE LANGUAGE FOR CANOE ROUTE PROTECTION

Environmentalism Depending on who you are, the word, concepts, and practices could mean anything from composting kitchen waste in your back yard, to hurling molotov cocktails at world trade meetings. I think the media and politicians have abused the word so much, that now it is essentially meaningless.

Wilderness may be turning into one of those words too. The word is used these days to refer to anything from tiny woodlots in the heart of urban metropolises, to vast un-roaded landscapes such as the arctic tundra (Barrenlands). It certainly is now used as a major marketing term in the tourism industry and various parks programs, to sell a wide variety of services and experiences, many of which have nothing to do with true Awilderness," at least in the way I think of the term. I like the term and I think we can pack a wallop of meaning into it, but we need to define it better than we do.

Many of us are concerned with what we perceive as the ever shrinking Awilderness" on the planet, especially with respect to wilderness canoe routes here in Canada. In the Summer 2001 issue of *Nastawgan*, an essay was published where I presented what I see as a crisis in the amount of loss and accelerating rate of loss of wilderness canoe routes in Canada. In the present essay I am going to focus on our own paddling community and propose some ideas for objective and consistent ways to define and discuss just exactly what we want for canoe route protection, so that we can get our messages consistent, and so that the politicians and bureaucrats will "get it." Without a common set of objective terminology, I don't see that it is possible to develop that critical wilderness canoe route policy outside of the few parks we have, which grow ever more crowded.

Right from the outset, it is important to lose most of the emotional and subjective terminology and baggage that goes with the word "wilderness." Nothing makes the eyes of a politician or land use planning bureaucrat glaze over faster than long emotional letters or speeches about how beautiful everything is, and can you just leave it alone as mother nature intended, etc. Don't get me wrong, passion is important. However, in any land use issue, reaching solutions to conflict gets down to answering the questions of:

- 1) How does the position being presented relate to existing or proposed government policy?
- 2) How can I draw it on a map, and what are the actual values being protected? (And what criteria did you use to define those values?)

This is the hard, cold reality. If you don't have any objective words for government policy writers about what values are being protected, using what criteria, and you don't have lines on a map, then no matter how elegant the argument is, it will not likely go very far, because it is not addressing the way decisions are made in this country. One other thing: Don't rely on park creation. Wilderness has this annoying habitat of being full of valuable minerals and vast forests. The people of Canada and people running the new world econ-

omy (most of whom are not like us wilderness paddlers), will not tolerate the locking up of these resources. However, you may also want to do an inventory of what your gear is made of, how you travel to and from the put-in, take-out, and what this essay is printed on, to assess how massive park creation may affect your lifestyle too.

The lucky thing for us wilderness paddlers is that we don't necessarily have to re-invent most of the wheel. We can borrow heavily from two different types of models which already exist.

The first type of models are the so-called "remote" tourism, or "resource-based" tourism policies that already exist in most provinces and territories. For example, in northern Ontario, where I live, fishing lodge owners of both fly-in and drive-to lodges and outpost camps have been amazingly effective in getting what they want on Crown Land. There are hundreds of lodges and outpost camps, many of which have exclusive use of entire lakes, and to which a permanent road will never be built, so that remoteness is maintained. The road-based access question is at the heart of the issue.

The policy document In Ontario, which is used in the land use planning process, defines access and the type of lodge and waterway, as: "remote," "semi-remote," or "road-based access / drive-to." These lodge owners define the very nature of their businesses with these commonly understood terminologies, and the communication is effective. The remote or semi-remote businesses live or die based on the client's perception of remoteness, or "wilderness." The exclusive use of one outpost camp to one water body also ensures outstanding fishing, which is one of the business criteria necessary to success. Fisheries management, logging roads planning and management, and even mining interests also feed into the process, and what emerges is an objective system of communication and planning for a remote or semi-remote tourism experience for a specific type of clientele. We paddlers should take a lesson from this model.

The second type of model we can borrow from in our communications efforts is the way government parks planning systems define, quantify, or qualitatively describe user experiences. From these desired outcomes they develop experiential management objectives and eventually policy for parcels of land, which range in size from tiny parkettes to landscapes a million or more hectares in size.

Parks planners define access types (e.g. "road-based," "fly-in," "hike-in," "paddle-in," etc.). Parks are also zoned internally for various levels and types of development, human traffic, and even the class of experiences desired, though it may all look the same to the untrained eye. In Algonquin Park for example, you can paddle from a wilderness zone to a natural environment zone and not see any difference in the forest or the water appearance. However, there may very well be significant differences in "encounter rates," or "motorized" traffic, drinking water, trail maintenance, fish and wildlife management, and forest management. Park planners will define pieces of geography where "back-country" experiences are the objective, versus "front-country" experiences

with amenities or services, and higher human and motorized traffic levels.

There is one other aspect to developing a lexicon and subsequent land use policies, of which there are no models to borrow from, and which we need to start using objective language for. The language comes from the ecological science and social science of roads. Roads and access management are at the heart of all land use planning, for wilderness canoeists and for everyone else who uses the land. Ecologists are using terms like "road density," "roaded," "unroaded," "roadless," and "functionally roadless," to predict large-scale ecological effects on the land, water, and wildlife. For example, you can predict with high confidence the presence, absence, or health of populations of certain area-sensitive species by a simple measure of road density. Some species disappear as road densities reach a threshold level.

Functionally roadless is one of the most important concepts. What it means is that a road has been built, usually for some resource extraction activity, but that there is no public access; or, after the resource has been harvested (e.g. mature timber), the road is closed and motorized access is prohibited or made impassable through bridge removal, grading, or other decommissioning methods.

In the realm of social science and land use planning, the presence or absence of roads, and the type of roads, has a huge effect on the way the land is used, and how people's expectations form and evolve for land and waters. The phrase "if you build it, they will come" is an understatement. In fact, roads breed roads. Wherever a road is built, it sets up a chain of events, changing the entire social and economic dynamic of an area. Eventually the change is so intense that the road is extended, or it becomes a major artery which spawns sub-arteries, etc.

Especially in vast unroaded remote areas like the Arctic Barrenlands, as soon as those fly-in mines get a permanent all-weather road to them, then mining activity will explode across the mainland Arctic. Mines that were not economically viable will overnight become viable, because their largest costs—transportation and power—will have been massively reduced. The damming and diversion of rivers for hydro will also explode in the area, because road-based transportation will vastly reduce construction, maintenance, and transmission line costs. The roads trigger massive feedback loops of one industry sustaining another. Human expectations for land use change overnight, and change forever.

I thought that the easiest way to approach this communications effort is to define and differentiate two distinct canoe route values, with their own sets of criteria. Think of this perhaps as the first and most critical branch in a descriptive key: back-country / wilderness, and front-country.

1. BACK-COUNTRY/WILDERNESS CANOE ROUTES:

- Roadless or functionally roadless, and remote.
- Very low human encounter rate.
- Routes provide many days of travel.
- No or minimal motorized traffic.
- Clean drinking water and campsites.
- Healthy, self-sustaining fish and wildlife populations of all native species.

- Mining and forest management on the landscape are compatible, when done soundly with the highest of standards and while sustaining the above criteria.

2. FRONT-COUNTRY CANOE ROUTES:

- Often road accessible—no controls.
- Moderate to high encounter rates—no solitude.
- Routes provide few days of travel.
- Motorized traffic is common.
- May be "multiple use" or used by several tourism lodges/outpost camps.
- Natural aesthetics and natural ecosystem function may not be the primary land and water management focus.
- Drinking water often requires treatment; campsites quality (cleanliness, degradation) is variable.
- Area-sensitive species may no longer occur, or be a vestige of the natural state (e.g. Barrenground caribou herds, salmon migrations).

The above is a very simple preliminary list, and no doubt can be expanded with sub-categories. It is important to recognize that the front-country routes are also a "value." The criteria for front-country may sound negative from the back-country/wilderness perspective, but look again: the terminology is objective. Many people who canoe, but who are not die-hard back-country types, want a weekend front-country experience, not far from a road. Wilderness canoeists have been accused of being a selfish, elitist crowd that wants exclusive use. I don't believe this characterization for one minute, but it is a common perception with many resource planners. Therefore, we wilderness back-country types need to be careful to acknowledge the values of other users, and perhaps form some alliances, while still working towards protecting more routes as true back-country/wilderness.

I believe it is possible and politically feasible to greatly expand the network of protected wilderness canoe routes in this country on Crown land, outside of the parks system. Canada has an obligation to do this, not only to its own future generations, but also to the people of the world who likewise value wilderness canoeing in a northern land. Canada alone has the vast network of clear, clean interconnected lakes and waterways on spectacular Shield and Arctic landscapes. The wilderness canoeists of the world are depending on us. We need to communicate more effectively and use the language of the land use planning game, and make our voices heard.

Glen Hooper
Thunder Bay, Ontario
ghooper@tbaytel.net



REVIEWS

FORGOTTEN PLACES IN THE NORTH, by S.R. Gage, published by Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ontario, 2001, ISBN 0-88962-744-4, softcover, 166 pages, CDN\$18.00, US\$15.00. (Ordering information is presented on page 23 in the Products and Services section.)

Although this book does not directly talk about wilderness canoeing, there is all kinds of information in it that can be of interest to the adventurous and inquisitive canoe tripper going up into the far north of Canada. *Forgotten Places in the North* examines three physical reminders of the rich history of the land and its people, heritage structures that have withstood the ravages of time and unforgiving climate. These are York Factory (the key staging area for the Hudson's Bay Company), the Mid-Canada Line (an electronic Cold War bastion that stretched the length of Canada's 55th parallel), and Herschel Island (off the north coast of the Yukon, that became the winter home to hundreds of Yankee whalers in the 1890s). Especially the first two provide paddling explorers—provided they are able to get to the sites in the first place—with much thought-provoking information on some endeavours that played a key role in Canada's past. The book contains 16 black-and-white photographs and three maps that help explain the importance of the subjects very well. It is evident from the long list of references that the author has done an impressive amount of research, presenting numerous interesting details in this highly educational publication.

HERON DANCE, published by Heron Dance Ltd., 52 Seymour Street, Middlebury, VT 05753-1115, USA, softcover, 60B80 pages. (Ordering information is presented on page 23 in the Products and Services section.)

Among the numerous glossy, add-choked commercial publications concerned with the outdoors, *Heron Dance* is a true breath of fresh air, a most attractive, monochromatic, unpretentious, non-profit quarterly journal concerned with wild nature. It presents articles, essays, poems, journal notes, excerpts, interviews, and more that explore the connection between wilderness and inner life. Most of the contributions are unusually well written and the many illustrations, black-and-white renditions of excellent watercolors, are a delight. What makes this journal even more special are the simple square format, the beautiful design and font selection, the attractive matte paper, and—bless them!—the complete absence of advertising. *Heron Dance* deserves a permanent place on the bookshelf, to be cherished and re-read often, never to be given away. For a nature publication of this high literary quality, it has an impressive number of dedicated subscribers, more than 11,000 in the USA alone. If you appreciate the beauty of nature also as expressed in the written word, this is a must-have!

Both reviews by Toni Harting

CONSERVATION

MNR recommendations for the newly created **KAWARTHA HIGHLANDS** were recently published in draft form, and I am delighted.

For starters, the work group assembled by the MNR has put protection at the top of the priority list. Boundary adjustments were made: some areas were deleted from the park (vicinity of cottages) and other areas were added, including the bottom end of the Coon Lake Loop. Canoeing is supported but motorboats are banned except on the cottage lakes. Camping is supported and the need to manage this activity is acknowledged. All Terrain Vehicles etc. are restricted to mere transportation but not allowed for recreational purposes. Personal Water Craft (e.g. Seadoo's) are out.

But hunting will be allowed and you may be disappointed. I know, it's a potentially divisive issue and I will continue to push the safety aspect whenever I have a chance. And yes—it is recommended to be an operating park!

Let's make sure that the draft is accepted and will be implemented. You can take a look at the whole document at <http://www.ontarioslivinglegacy.com/khreport.htm> but it takes a while to download. Contact the Bancroft MNR office if you want to comment. And consider becoming a Stakeholder of the area!

Erhard Kraus

FOOD FOR PADDLERS

I received a letter from Judith Wolfe, parts of which follow:

“Thank you for the recent article you did for *Nastawgan* Autumn 2000 on Butti-Bites #3. I had never heard of the Wilderness Canoe Association until my husband and I bumped into the information booth at the recent Outdoor Adventure Show in Toronto. I bought a back copy of the journal (and have sent in a membership) and now have two trays of your recipe for homemade vegetable chili drying on the back of my woodstove. It provided a delicious supper last night as a trial run. I would also be interested in knowing if you have ever eaten Pilot biscuits which many expedition books talk about. I found a source for them in a small US food catalogue I sent for but don't know what they are like and whether they are what the old timers called Hard Tack.”

Thanks for your letter, Judith. I have referred your questions about sources of ingredients on to Pat Buttigieg who was the author of that Food for Paddlers column. I also did some research on your question of Hard Tack vs Pilot biscuits.

According to the Bent Cookie company (makers of Hardtack crackers), the Pilot cracker is a bit softer than Hardtack but they are the same size. Both crackers have a long shelf life and were developed as a replacement for bread. Pilot crackers were used on long sea voyages. I found mention of them in a history of Captain Cook and the Nootka in 1778. Hardtack crackers were a main staple of the middle and late 19th century soldiers, but most commonly associated with Civil War soldiers. An Internet search came up with several different recipes for Hardtack. Try the one below for your next canoe trip:

But the chief “told them to go out there again...and try to understand what those people wanted and what they were after.” They did so and Cook's crew gave them pilot biscuits.

From: www.hallman.org/indian/cook.html

ARMY HARDTACK (CRACKER) a.k.a. Teeth Dullers, Sheet Iron, Flour Tile, Hard Bread

Ingredients:

4 cups flour (preferably whole wheat)
4 teaspoons salt
water (about 2 cups)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Mix flour and salt together in a bowl. Add just enough water (less than two cups) to make the mixture stick together. This will produce a dough that will not stick to hands, rolling pin, or pan. The dough will have to be mixed by hand. Roll the dough out and shape it into a rough rectangle. Cut into the dough into squares about 3 x 3 inches and ½ inch thick. Makes about 10 pieces.

After cutting, press into each square a pattern of four rows of four holes using a nail—a Philips screwdriver makes an interesting pattern. (Note: just 'press' into the dough, don't punch through it. The appearance is similar to a modern saltine cracker.) Turn each square over and repeat.

Place on an ungreased cookie sheet in the oven and bake for 30 minutes. Turn each piece over and bake for another 30 minutes. The crackers should be slightly brown on both sides.

When fresh, the crackers are rather easily broken, but as they dry and harden they assume the consistency of fired brick.

From: www.price.gv2.net/Reenact/Recipes/hardtack.htm

If you would like to share your favorite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ont. L6W 1B5; youngj david@home.com

WCA TRIPS

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT
PRESENTED IN THE WINTER ISSUE?
Contact the Outings Committee before 4 Nov.!**

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Ann Dixie, 416-512-0292, Ann_Dixie@CAMH.net; Peter Devries, 905-477-6424; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, g.curwen@utoronto.ca

Remember that WCA trips may have an element of danger and that the ultimate responsibility for your safety is your own.

+++++

All Season

HAVE PADDLE WILL TRAVEL

Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Steve Bernet, 519-837-6774; Harrison Jolly, 905-689-1733. ----- We spend most weekends till freeze-up paddling wherever there is good whitewater in Southern Ontario or Quebec, with the odd side trip to the Appalachians. If you would like to join us, please call to find out where we're going. Suitable for good intermediate or advanced paddlers.

All Season

FROST CENTRE CANOE ROUTES

Ray Laughlin, 705-754-9479. ----- There is some superb lake paddling in the routes out of the Frost Centre near Dorset. As I live in Haliburton and have a flexible work schedule, I visit the area frequently, especially during the week. If you would like to paddle with me, give me a call. Outings are suitable for novices.

August-October

MINDEN WILDWATER PRESERVE DAY PADDLES

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005. ----- I frequently go up to the Gull on Saturday or Sunday through the summer to early fall. If you would like to join me, give me a call. The Gull River at Minden has a man-made whitewater course that can challenge the most proficient canoeist. However, even intermediate paddlers can have fun practising their skills at the bottom of the course. Boats should have full flotation to reduce the chance of damage and facilitate recovery. The Preserve requires that paddlers have helmets. If you have recently bought a whitewater canoe or kayak and want to learn to roll, this is an excellent opportunity. I'm happy to do some impromptu instruction.

6-8 October

KILLARNEY PARK

Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, g.curwen@danieltborger.com — We will meet at George Lake Campground and set up our tents there. On Saturday, we will paddle on a day trip into Killarney or OSA Lake to experience the magnificent scenery in fall colors. On Sunday, we will hike to The Crack for one of the most spectacular views in the whole of the park over Killarney and OSA Lake, where we paddled the day before, and out to Georgian Bay. If you can portage, you can handle the scramble up the rocks to The Crack!

6-8 October

OTTAWA RIVER

John and Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 30 September. ----- We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. This trip will be run if the weather is fairly mild. A decision as to whether or not to go will be made on the preceding Wednesday. You will want to wear a dry suit, of course. Limit six boats.

6-8 October

THOUSAND ISLANDS

Frank and Jay Knaapen, 613-687-6037 ----- We will be canoe touring the 1000 Islands to enjoy the fall colors. Wet/dry suits in case of bad weather is advisable, as is some kind of flotation.

21 October

ELORA GORGE

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 14 October. ----- A pleasant late-season paddle. Suitable for canoeists of any level from novice up who just want to get some fresh air and easy whitewater before the snow flies. As the water will be chilly, you will want a wetsuit or drysuit.

4 November

LONG LAKE AREA LOOP

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 28 October. ----- There is a group of small lakes in the rugged Kawartha countryside north of Peterborough and just west of Apsley that make a wonderful fall paddle. Multiple routes are possible depending on the weather and participants' interests. There are a number of portages, but they are well marked and not particularly difficult. As the lakes are small, and the portaging easy, it can be a good outing for the family. Since this is a marginal time of year for paddling, the outing will be subject to co-operation from the weatherman.

THE MESSAGE

With the coming of fall and the start of another school year, I bought a new Jansport backpack for my third-grade son. It's for his school books and lunches.

Am now looking at a card included with the backpack. The card explains the various features of the pack and also has warranty information on it. As I am reading, I am stopped in my tracks by a quote on the card. A quote that Jansport had trademarked. It reads, "Get Out While You Can."

Spend some time pondering the quote. "Is it a message from above? Is something going to happen? Is it the apocalypse?" Lots of possible meanings.

Does it mean, get out into the wilderness while your commitments still give you the time to do so? All too soon you have to settle into the long haul that is necessary to get children raised. To get a home paid for. To save for college expenses. To set aside some funds for retirement. For many years these commitments will hamper your efforts to load up the car and take off for a canoe trip deep into the Canadian wilderness.

Does it mean, get out while you and the buddies still live nearby and see each other often? Time and distance dampen the fires of close friendship. You are only one job

transfer away from losing these tight bonds.

Does it mean, get out while there is still wilderness yet to see? World population crossed the six billion mark in October 1999. That is an awful lot of people needing resources for food, clothing, and shelter. Will there still be enough desire among the public to leave some places alone as wilderness?

Does it mean, get out into the wilderness while you can still do it physically? Eventually the passage of years gets us all. The day is coming. Although I hope and pray it is still many years away. When I won't be able to do wilderness canoeing. A dreadful day when I finally acknowledge that there is no river waiting for me with the arrival of each new spring. That day will be a sad one for me. One in which many tears will fall. Giving up wilderness canoeing will be one of the hardest things that I will have to do in my life. Ever.

All I know is that I am going to make determined efforts to get a wilderness canoe trip in every year. While I can. It's best to not ignore prophetic warnings.

Greg Went

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This PRODUCTS AND SERVICES section is available, free of charge and on a first-come, first-served basis, to members as well as non-members for their announcements regarding items for sale, special products, discounts, services, courses, etc. Contact the editor if more information is required.

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

- Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ont.
- Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ont.
- Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str., Hepworth, Ont.
- Smoothwater Outfitters, Temagami (Hwy. 11), Ont.

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

NEW CANOEING VIDEO Classic solo canoeing with Becky Mason; approx. 40 minutes; \$39.95 + tax + shipping. Tel. 819-827-4159; fax 819-827-8563; redcanoe@istar.ca; www.wilds.mb.ca/redcanoe

FORGOTTEN PLACES IN THE NORTH A new book by S.R. (Sandy) Gage, looks at three remote sites where heritage buildings have withstood the tests of time and severe weather: York Factory, Herschel Island, and Site 415 of the Mid-Canada Line. At your local bookstores, or contact Mosaic Press; 905-825-2130; mosaicpress@on.aibn.com

FOLDING KAYAK FOR SALE Folbot's Greenland 2 model tandem folding kayak, with tough hypalon skin over aluminum tubular frame, packed into two bags which fit in car trunk or as regular baggage on plane. Assembly and dismantling take 20B30 minutes by one person. Very stable, paddles faster than canoe, excellent tracking. Comes with rudder, spray skirts, and paddles.

Picture and specs at www.folbot.com. About seven years old but not used a lot; in good condition. Asking \$1500. Test paddle can be arranged. Call Alan at 905-660-1899.

PAKBOATS NEWSLETTER Subscribe to free e-mail Pakboats Newsletter, published once or twice a month with all kinds of information on folding canoes and kayaks. Contact join-pakboats@lyris.dundee.net

PADDLING ONTARIO ALLIANCE is a dedicated group of more than 20 adventure tourism operators who have joined forces to promote Ontario as the world's finest canoeing and kayaking destination. Respected names such as Algonquin Outfitters, Canoetours, Smoothwater, Wabakimi, and others offer everything a paddler looking for a unique adventure could want: flatwater, whitewater, river tripping, sea kayaking, eco lodges, history, self-guided trips, and more. The Alliance members provide first-class access to destinations in the whole province, offering safe wilderness experiences that excite and enlighten. More information in: www.paddlingontario.com

HERON DANCE A quarterly wilderness journal. Watercolor art, interviews, excerpts from the best of nature writing, essays. Our October issue will feature an interview of WCA member Herb Pohl. Introductory annual subscription CDN\$30, renewals \$40. Send to: Heron Dance, 52 Seymour St., Middlebury, VT, 05753, USA, or call 1-888-304-3766.

INTERWILD IMAGES Books, music CDs, videos, posters, original paintings, national and provincial maps, compasses, GPS receivers, and more. Good prices, good products, and a 10% discount for WCA members. To order, contact: tel. 905-584-2109 or fax 905-584-4722 or www.interwild.com.

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Wilderness Canoe Association

membership application

I enclose a cheque for CDN \$25 (single) or CDN \$35 (family) for membership in the *Wilderness Canoe Association* (for non-residents US \$25 or US \$35). I understand that this gives me/us the opportunity to participate in WCA trips and activities, and entitles me/us to receive *Nastawgan* and to vote at meetings of the Association. I also understand that WCA trips may have an element of danger and that the ultimate responsibility for the member's safety is his/her own.

PRINT CLEARLY! Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov. _____

* This membership is valid for one year. Postal Code: _____ e-mail: _____

New member Member # if renewal: _____

Single Family

Phone Number(s): _____ (h)
 _____ (w)
 _____ Ext. _____

* Send completed form and cheque, payable to the WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION, to the WCA postal address, c/o Membership.