



Sandhill Cranes

Berens River

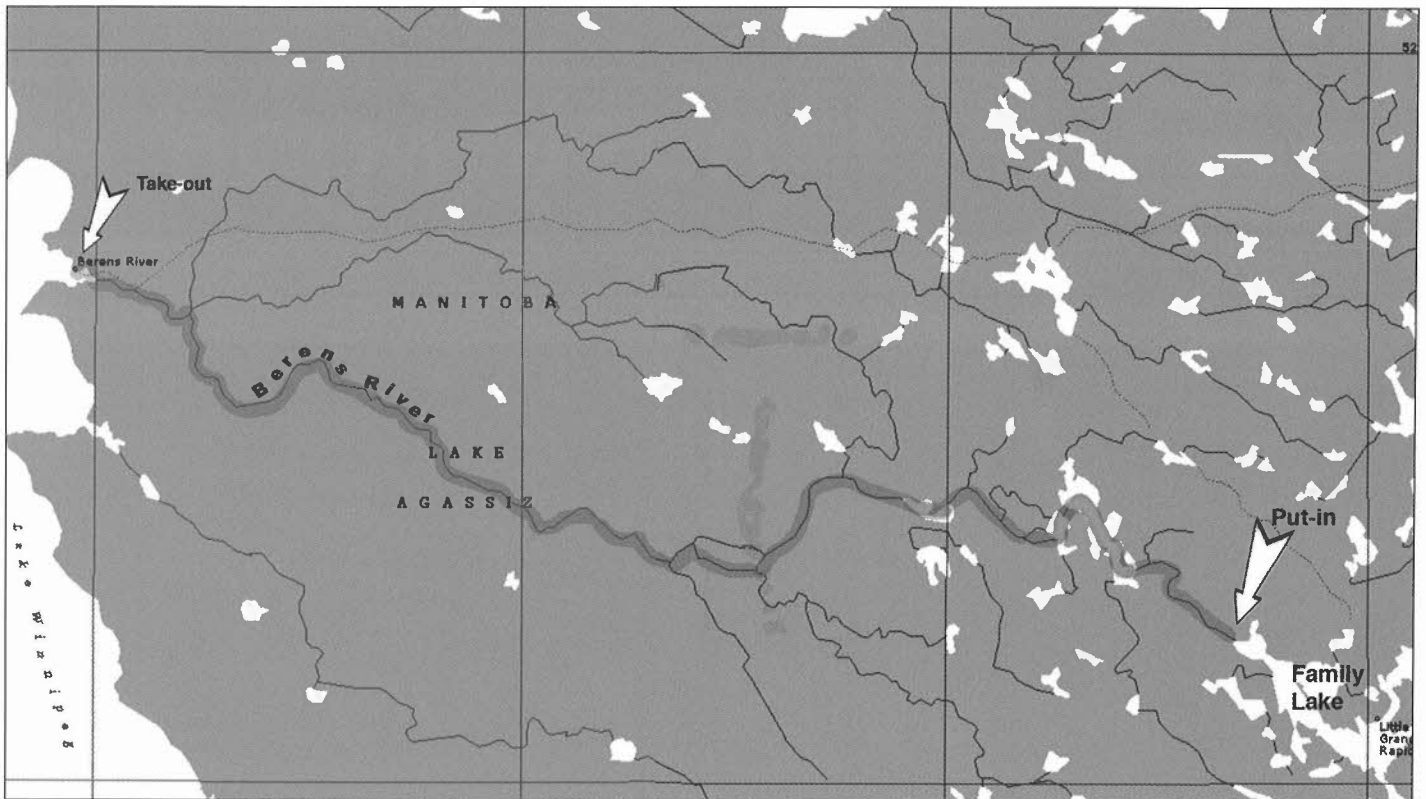
by Beth Bellaire, Photos by Beth and Bruce Bellaire

August 21 – September 1, 2006 - 160 km

As we all know, one of the best ways to deal with the February blues is to start planning the next year's canoe trip. The winter of 2005 was no exception, other than that we had a few more constraints upon our travels than usual. Dave and Barb Young and Bruce and I have been paddling buddies for many years now. Dave and Barb both have jobs that allow them more freedom in choosing holiday time, so it's Bruce and I who tend to set the terms for travel. This past summer, we not only had the limitation of just two weeks in a row; we also had to fit that two weeks into the summer before Labour Day's return to reality but after the World Club Crew Championship Dragon Boat Festival (since both Bruce and I were paddling for

a Grandmaster's team – a euphemism for over 50 and crazy enough to still think we can compete!) That meant a later than usual August trip of only two weeks duration.

What better solution than to complete the third river in our trilogy of the Bloodvein, the Pigeon, and the Berens. According to Hap Wilson, these three rivers are all in the region known as the country of the caribou or "Atikaki." The Government of Manitoba also designates them all as wilderness parks, so we knew we would be guaranteed a truly isolated adventure. In his guide book, *Wilderness Rivers of Manitoba*, he rates all three of these river trips as two weeks or less in duration, with water levels remaining high enough to be navigable throughout the summer season. The only drawback to the Berens was that he noted it as having fewer rapids, yet still enough, we hoped, to



Berens River route

keep the adventurous spirit satisfied. Having already thoroughly enjoyed the scenery of the Bloodvein, in 1999 and the Pigeon in 2001, we were eager for a return engagement to this most beautiful of river landscapes.

Getting There: August 18 - 20

So it was that Friday, August 18th, found Bruce and me in Dave and Barb's basement in Brampton, doing the traditional pre-trip-sort-out-the-gear event, accompanied by a beer or two. After last minute packing of final food stuff (one shouldn't decant wine into plastic until the last possible moment), we were early to bed, anxious for a quick start to the two-day drive ahead.

It seems we have this tripping down to a science by times. The drive out to Matheson Island with overnight stops in Terrace Bay, at the Red Dog Inn, and in Gimli, at the Viking, was smooth sailing. It is a lot of driving to make this distance from Brampton to Gimli in two days, but with four drivers, entertaining books-on-tape, and the beautiful scenery of Superior, the time passed pleasantly enough. Since it was my year for prepar-

ing the food for the river trip, Barb was on for the driving fare. Knowing that it will be the last tomato for a while makes it taste that much sweeter, so lunches were savoured by all.

The only excitement of the drive was the close call we had with the tornadoes that reached Winnipeg from the west just about the same time as we reached it from the east. Seeing very scary skies ahead, we turned off our story to hear that we were in the midst of a tornado watch! I envisioned a variation on Dorothy's spin in the Wizard of Oz: just imagine the uplift provided by two canoes tied to the roof of a Sienna. Luckily, I was driving this leg, so I treated the rest to a ring-road tour of Winnipeg, thereby making sure that we missed potential devastation from the trailing winds of the storm. Some people thought it was a wrong turn, but I'd like to remember it differently.

The Fly-in: August 21

For our previous two trips to this region, we had booked flights with Wamair, having been very pleased with their service; so again, we had arranged with them for

a departure time of 9 a.m. on Monday, August 21. This meant an early morning drive through deer country to Matheson Island, but with three passengers watching the woods, those deer were so spooked that only one dared to show its tail, although we saw at least two cars that had obviously had unfortunate closer encounters. Our morning driver seemed very eager to reach our destination, driving at what some might think of as break-neck speed along those gravel roads. A couple of us did mention that we had plenty of time, but it was only after the driver realized that the van clock was still on Ontario time that belief and relief slower speeds set in.

As expected, as soon as we slowed to a stop at the ferry dock, the ferry set out from the opposite shore to pick us up. What a great service this is! The ferry ride is so short: there is not even enough time to get out of the car before getting back in.

Then it was a few hundred meters to the loading dock. A spit of rain did not dampen our spirits, but the lack of action soon began to. There was no sign of any pilot: in fact, there wasn't even a plane.

But this was where we'd taken off before, so we waited a little longer, getting a little wetter and more worried as the minutes ticked by.

Now it was getting close to our 9 o'clock rendezvous, and still no Wamair. Then, with a little verbal sleuthing, it became apparent that perhaps the question, "You know where to come for the plane?" should have been answered with, "Is it the same place as five years ago?" instead of a simple, "Yup." While the women waited with the gear, the men took a drive to the main airport and found our plane and pilot there, wondering where we were. So hurry up! Toss the gear back in the car and race to the plane, only to realize that more waiting was in order. The winds left over from the tornadoes of yesterday were still creating unsafe conditions, at least for a float plane carrying two canoes on its pontoons (variation #2 of Dorothy's flight).

Given a potential delay of several hours, we whiled away our time exploring the small community that calls this island home, seeing more deer, as well as our first magpies and pelicans of the trip. At one point, we were invited in out of the rain by a young family who were in the midst of major renovations, creating a magnificent home, complete with greenhouses for organic produce, a rooftop patio that overlooked the lake, and geo-thermal heating. Their hospitality to us was crowned with the gift of a map from 1987 that featured the historic Bloodvein River. Lots of reading there to help us pass even more hours.

Finally, at 7 p.m., we were given the go-ahead. With a quick loading, we were off and by 7:30 p.m., we were circling low in the waning light to land just below Night Owl Rapids on a small island at the 160km mark on our maps. Our minor disappointment of missing the first portage was quickly alleviated by an excellent sighting of a young eagle, just waiting at this spot to greet us.

The Trip: August 22 – 30

Ahead of us lay 160 kilometers that we needed to cover in nine days if we were to keep to our schedule. We planned to break that down into fairly equal portions, with some give and take for a few days in the middle of the trip that

looked, from the maps at least, to present more challenging terrain than the beginning or end might. Of course, experienced paddlers know that wind and weather can make mush of even the best thought-out plan, so we always build in a little wriggle room.

On this trip, such back-up thought proved mostly unnecessary. At Big Moose Falls, near some great pictographs, a place where we felt the presence of the ancient ones, we gave our untraditional offering of whiskey to the river gods. This seemed to appease them, for after that, the winds were mostly at our backs, and we had no major mishaps other than a couple of skinned elbows, a thorn in a nose, and a camera that met a rock much too quickly.

Distances traveled each day varied from a low of 11 to a high of 20, with most days averaging an easy 17 km. Although the Berens was still navigable as promised, the water levels were very low. The impact of this was felt most when maneuvering rapids. Often what was designated a Class II with volume presented to us as a ledge. We ended up substituting liftovers or lining in place of fun runs for several such rapids. Although disappointing, at times these low levels did offer a silver lining. At rapids called Death Wish, just before the 60km mark, we came to a branching of the river around a central island. We first explored the channel on river right and

found it had completely dried up and exposed some engraving in a rock face: AMKAY 1897.

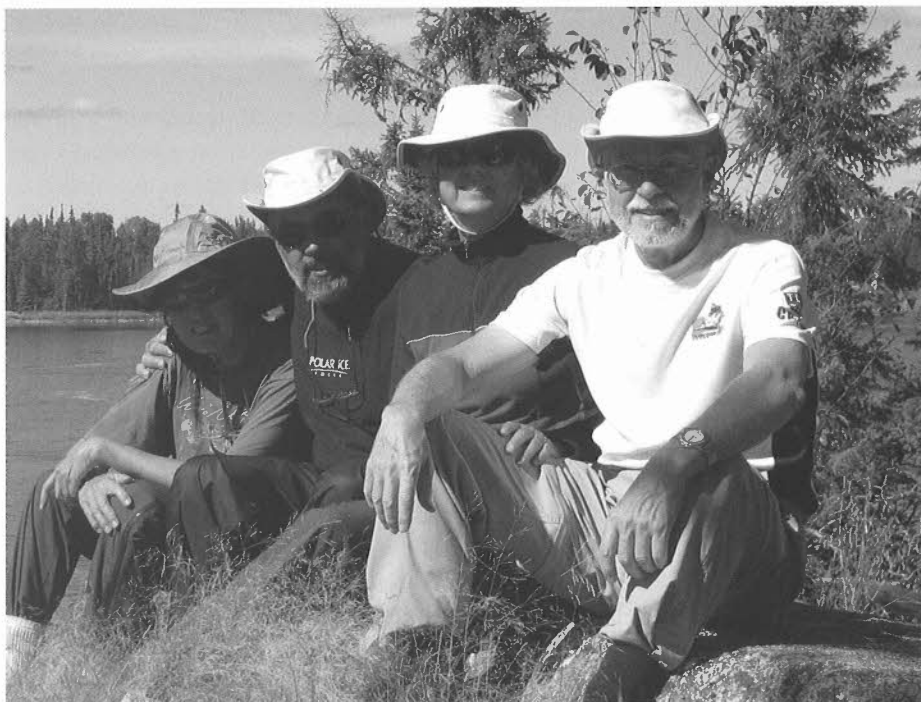
We paddled off, wondering who this person was, and what adventures had befallen him, and feeling privileged to have seen his careful handiwork. As well, we finally realized that rather than supporting a variant breed of beavers who constructed giant homes, the Berens was just so low that beaver homes were much more exposed than usual.

Everyday went like clockwork. Most days, we were up between 6 and 6:30 a.m. Depending upon the temperature and the mood, our breakfasts were usually quick granola or slower porridge, both served with dried fruits (blueberries were hands-down favourite, cherries second, and raisins a disappointing last). On days when we were drying out or just taking it easy, Dave would treat us to his famous pancake feast. Then, we'd be very slow getting going. Even though the pancakes themselves were light as air, we somehow all became much heavier and slower to motion, and we'd remind ourselves: "We were on holidays after all!"

Lunches consisted of the peanut-butter-and-jam-on-bagels staple with the occasional slice of cheese or pepperoni for variety. Carrots provided a welcome taste of fresh produce, at least for the first week or so. Towards the end of the trip, tuna on a wrap was added, and days with pancake breakfasts also offered left-



Pictograph of moose at Big Moose Falls



Barb & Dave and Beth & Bruce at Upper Conjuring Falls

overs with Nutella for a real mid-day treat.

Generally, we were off the water by a very civilized 4 p.m., allowing plenty of time for before-dinner drinks, an appetizer, and a hand or two of bridge. And even though we did have rain at a few of the sites, it was usually polite enough to wait until we had set up the tents and prepared our evening meal before sending us for cover. Again, the dry summer offered us a second silver lining: very few bugs! At only one site were we bothered at all by black flies and the mosquitoes were quite manageable throughout, making for very pleasant campfires and stargazing on several occasions.

This trip also rewarded us with a plethora of wildlife sightings. In reviewing my canoe trip log book, I see noted one day: lots of eagles, loons, lesser scaups, mallards, sandhill cranes, lots of beaver lodges, turkey vultures, and the very next day: turtles, great blue heron, lesser yellow-legged sandpipers, bald eagles, Canada geese, lots of ducks, and a moose with two calves! In fact, eagle sightings were so common, they stopped surprising us, although we never gave up trying to capture the perfect shot.

Campsites along the river were, for the most part, excellent. Often we were

able to pitch our tents on flat rock, and occasionally, on flat earth! Many nights, we ended up on islands with rapids flowing by on both sides and wonderful big-sky vistas. Even the poorer sites were comfortable for our two tents as well as our dining mesh (I already mentioned that we were *on holiday* and so make no excuses for our decadence!)

Each day did offer at least a couple of rapids and a portage or two. Many of the portages were just leftovers or short carries of less than 50 meters. We missed the longest portage – it was at Night Owl Rapids. The longest one we did was at Canyon Rapids, just past the 90km mark.

One carry over an island had a roller track that was evidently used by motorboats, but it worked just fine for canoes. Again, the trails were obviously not used often but were still clear enough and quite easy to navigate.

As previously mentioned, we were a little disappointed in the number of runnable rapids. Although we are sensible trippers in the wilderness, we still enjoy a challenge, so it was disheartening to arrive at what we thought might be a fun ride through waves only to find another ledge that seemed much easier to lift over than dive down. There were a

few good rides, though, in the middle part of the trip between the 100km and the 60km marks. Finally, a few CIIs and CIIIs that were easier, not harder, in lower levels!

This is a beautiful, isolate river. After waving goodbye to William in the plane, we saw no other people until we reached our last site on the river at Sturgeon Rapids. There were a few signs of human life along the way: the remnants of a bridge, a cabin or two, and a couple of hunting camps, one that even had a picnic table. As mentioned, there were also some signs of usage by motorboats: a discarded gas can and the ramp for portaging larger boats upstream, and closer to the end, a large freighter canoe waiting for its owners at the top of a portage. Other than these few reminders, the river was in pristine shape. Campsites had no unwanted leftovers, and portages were free of refuse.

At our last campsite on the river, we did have visitors. First came Morton and Herman, two river stewards on their regular route, making sure the campsites closer to the reservation at the mouth of the river were clean. As they informed us, they were also in the process of posting signs marking the start and end of portages and clearing the trails as well; they were working their way up the river and over time hoped to post its full length.

Next, came Dennis Alix with his wife, his two nephews, and his seven-year old daughter, Laura. The family was out for an evening fish, and boy could they fish! When Bruce and I paddled out to see how they were doing, Laura showed us just the few they'd kept! We had a great chat, and to top it off, Dennis gave us four pickerel for our own fishfry. Later, when they were leaving, they presented us with another full platter of fish already battered and fried to perfection. What a wonderful way to celebrate our last night on the Berens.

Leaving the Berens: August 30 – 31

After a morning swim and a breakfast of leftovers from the fabulous fish fry of the night before, we finally had nothing else to do but break camp for the last time. We were on the water by 9 a.m., with

blue skies and a little breeze at our backs. An hour's paddle brought us to the English Rapids – the last of the trip. From there, it was flat-water paddling, but that wind continued to build, seemingly to hurry us on our way out the door. By lunch break, at an island near the outskirts of the community of Berens River, the winds were so strong that they were causing whitecaps, which chased us all the way to the government dock. In fact, the last stretch was a little unnerving, so we all breathed a sigh of relief when we reach the shore.

It was still early in the day, before 2 p.m., and Wamair was not booked to arrive until the next morning, so we decided to explore a bit before pitching the tents. We first watched a helicopter maneuvering an antenna, marveling that such work continued under these conditions. We had been told that a nearby RCMP headquarters could offer a patch of grass, so Barb, Bruce, and I set out to get our bearings while Dave waited with the gear. By now, the winds were very strong, stinging our faces with the dirt from the road: not a very pleasant walk. We saw the RCMP building and noted a back yard that looked flat enough for our tents, but we continued on to visit the Alix General Store, run by our fisherman of the day before, and to see the mission house and hotel just a little farther up the road.

Although the hotel at first appeared deserted, we finally found our way inside and met the proprietor, Helen, who had relocated seven years ago from Nova Scotia and said she loved her new life here. She mentioned that she thought there was the possibility of us getting a ride out by boat, but when we called her contact, we found that even the boats were grounded because of the winds.

Rendezvousing back with Dave, we enjoyed a Coke and discussed our options. We decided to set up camp at the RCMP yard, even though there was no one there of whom to ask permission. We should have procrastinated a little longer, for just after we'd tied the tents down, we had a visit from Richard and Lorraine, managers of the Northern Store, who offered us the use of their recently vacated staff house. Within the

hour, we had packed up and relocated into our very own house. What a treat: showers, beds, and a kitchen table and chairs! Let the wind blow; we were happy campers once again!

Well, that house became our home for longer than expected. The wind continued through the following day, giving us plenty of time to finish our books, catch up on notes, explore the rest of the community, and play many hands of bridge. But finally, the wind subsided, and we were able to fly out early on the morning of August 31st. Within the hour, the canoes were battened down on top of the van, the gear was stashed, and we were

on the road back to reality. Soon the planning for next year would begin, but for now, we were happy to savour our memories of our beautiful Berens adventure.

The following is a day-by-day summary of our travels on the Berens:

August 21 – the fly-in from Matheson Island

Weather – rain and wind throughout day, clearing by the early evening; 20°C high

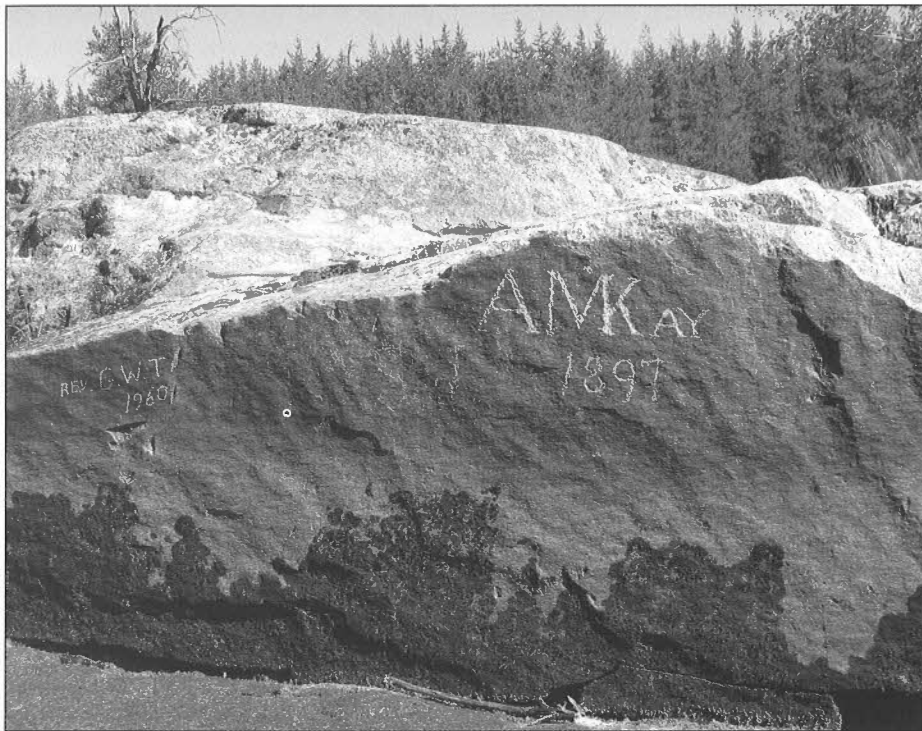
Number of Rapids – 0

Number of Portages – 0

Distance travelled – 0 km (by canoe)



What a catch at Sturgeon Falls



Etching of AMKay 1897

Days Events – Not much traveling! We were booked to fly at 9 a.m., but the winds were too forceful, so flights were delayed. We explored the little village on the island and met a lovely family: Chris, Angie, and Lucas Robinson. Chris gave us a 1987 map of the Bloodvein as well as a tour of their home: cathedral ceilings, loft bedrooms, roof-top decks, and sunroom for organic gardening. Chris said they were planning to switch to geothermal heating. They were also considering opening their house as a bed and breakfast. We wished them good luck and continued on our way. We spent the day going for more short walks, playing cards, reading, and eating. Dave and Barb saw a deer, but all I saw were some bones. We also spotted a magpie in the trees and a few pelicans on the lake. At 7 p.m., William, the pilot, said, “Let’s go!” So we quickly loaded the plane and were off. Having lost the whole day, we asked if he could put us down below Night Owl Rapids, which he graciously did. Our first site, on a small island, was quite lovely, complete with a great kitchen rock shelf; there was even a young bald eagle at the site to welcome us and it stayed long enough for us to get a great shot. We had sweet and sour

chicken on rice and a campfire, noting how scarce the bugs seemed to be, yet not speaking too loudly lest we wake them up. After a day of rain, we had a clear night with great star watching. We went to sleep to the near sound of beaver tails slapping. During the night, I woke to the distant sound of wolves, but that was the only time I heard them on the trip.

August 22

Weather – sun and cloud; started to threaten rain by 4 p.m., and rain started by 6:30 p.m.

Number of Rapids/Falls – two

Number of Portages – One liftover at Whiteman Falls; one 30m on rollers at Crane Falls

Distance Travelled – 18km

Days Events – We were up at 6 a.m. for a breakfast of porridge and on the water by 9:30 a.m. We decided to lift over Whiteman Falls – the first major rapid – since it looked quite challenging even though it was rated a CII with volume. To us, it looked much more like a dangerous ledge. This was our first experience of the effect of the low water levels. We soon realized that the ratings on our maps were for much higher levels,

and that in many cases, the rapids were more, not less difficult. The next rapid we came to was Crane Falls where we took advantage of a log roll made to move motor boats but which served just as well for our canoes. A pretty spot, we stopped here for a lunch break.

The following stretch of river was very picturesque with lots of lichen-covered rocks. There was also much evidence of a large beaver population: many lodges peppered the shoreline. At first we thought that the beaver population was large in size as well as number, until we clued in to the fact that the water levels had exposed a lot more of the lodges than was usual, thereby creating an illusion of giants. We looked for the sites marked on our maps at the 135km point, but we couldn’t find them, so we settled on an island again with good flat rock for the tents. It was only 3:30 p.m., so there was lots of time for a pre-dinner swim and beer. There was a good tarp spot, which proved handy for the rain that started by dinnertime. We enjoyed our beef stirfry and brownies in comfort.

Wildlife Viewed – lots of eagles, loons, lesser scaups, sandhill cranes, lots of beaver lodges; turkey vultures.

August 23

Weather – still raining in the morning; clearing by noon, with sun and cloud for rest of day

Number of Rapids/Falls – two

Number of Portages – easy few meters at Flour Falls

Distance Travelled – 16km

Days Events – Because of rain, we stayed in our tents for a while. By 7 a.m., it had mostly stopped, so we enjoyed a morning swim. Unfortunately, Dave and Barb had a lake inside their tent (their spot was not as flat as it first had seemed), so we decided to wait a little longer for things to dry out. As a treat, Dave made us pancakes and we enjoyed a second coffee. We finally hit the water at a decadent 12:30 p.m. The first rapid was Manitou Rapids. Both boats took on a little water from wave action but had no real issues. Again, the river provided some lovely scenery just as we finished the lake area, with marshlands full of ducks. We were so engrossed in bird

watching, we forgot to look for the pictographs that were supposed to be near here. Flour Falls was easily portaged: the low water levels made for shorter distances than indicated by our maps – a happy effect enjoyed throughout the trip. We arrived at our planned site at 118 km, by 5 p.m., a lovely open spot on top of a bluff facing east overlooking a large bay.

After a dinner of soup and grilled cheese, Bruce went for a solo paddle up a side channel; he came back and hurried us along to see his find – a cow moose with two calves! What a treat! After dark, we had peppermint tea and chocolates around the fire. A perfect end to a good day.

Wildlife Viewed – turtles, great blue heron, lesser yellow-legged sandpipers, bald eagles, Canada geese, lots of ducks, and a moose and two calves.

August 24

Weather – sun and cloud; windier than first two days; air felt cool at times

Number of Rapids/Falls – three

Number of Portages – 125m at Big Moose Falls

Distance Travelled – 18km

Days Events – I was up at 6:30 a.m. and hearing no one else yet, I went for a swim. Was I surprised to see that same cow moose and her young ones coming out of the bush and beginning to wade across the river right in front of the campsite. I woke the others, and we all got to see her wade out and quickly herd her brood into the safety of the woods. We broke camp and were on the water by 9:15 a.m. This time, we watched carefully and found the pictographs on river right, just above Big Moose Falls. We made our offering of Canadian whiskey to the river spirit here, asking for a safe and happy passage. This was a spiritual space, a place where I felt my father's spirit close by. Just below the falls are the rapids of the same name. We ran these easily with spray skirts. The offering seemed to work, for the wind was at our back as we crossed Long Lake. We stopped for lunch on an island halfway down the lake, and then passed a nice cabin on river left. We had an easy slide over through the far left channel at Long

Lake Falls. We stopped for the day at an unmarked CI rapid round the right channel of an island near the 100km mark. Just as Bruce and I pulled in, we startled a beaver who, in turn, startled us by running right at our canoe! With camp set up by 4 p.m., there was time for a swim and a wash in a large outflow eddy before a dinner of spaghetti and wine. Another fine campfire, and we were in bed by 10 p.m.

Wildlife Viewed – Moose and calves; sandhill cranes, reddish-coloured cormorant (just below Long Lake Falls); beaver, ducks, and eagles as always.

August 25

Weather – overcast, but warm at sunrise, then rain off and on for most of the day; at 5:30 p.m., the sun peeked out

Number of Rapids/Falls – nine

Number of Portages – Longest one so far at Canyon Rapids; plus two short portages of under 30m each, plus a liftover centre river; a final portage to the site at day's end

Distance Travelled – 16km

Days Events – As usual, we were up by 6:30 a.m. It was a warm morning that called for a granola start. Again, according to our pattern, we were on the water by 9:15 a.m. The first rapid of the day, rated a CII-CIII, was handled easily with spray skirts, as was the next rapid, Wolf Rapids. However, they didn't seem to

match the ratings: as before, some CIIIs looked more like CIVs. After this second set, we paddled for a few kilometers, looking for the next falls – Crooked Falls. This falls had three channels coming into it. By accident, we ended up in the far left channel where we did a short, steep up-and-down portage on a point on river right around a steep drop. After this, we ran Kamaskawak Rapids that seemed to be too easy, but we were getting used to these contradictions. Another stretch of flat water and we were at Childs Falls. Again, there was a choice of three channels, and this time we took the far left, on purpose. There was a short, albeit steep, 15m portage over an isthmus, where we stopped for a well-earned lunch.

Now came one of the most challenging maneuvers of the trip. On our maps, there was a rock indicated in the centre of a current marked "heavy wash." By our reading, the rock split the channel into two unrunnable drops! We scrambled up the canyon walls, Dave and Barb on one side, and Bruce and me on the other. On a lichen-covered slope, my feet slipped out from under me, and I landed on my elbow, which is still sore two months later. Finding no way around by land, we determined the only way through was through the centre – over that middle rock. Dave and Barb went first: they spooked us by threatening to



Portaging at Kakewawun Rapids



The beauty of dawn at Beaver Dam Falls

go down backwards, but at the last second, they changed their mind and pulled out on the rock. With the rain, the exposed rock was very slippery, and the rock underwater in current was just as treacherous, but they made it into the large rock eddy below the drop without any more breath-holding scares. Having watched their descent, ours was less exciting but still engrossing. We were happy for another flat stretch to calm our nerves and stretch our arm muscles before we came to Canyon Rapids where we got an opportunity to stretch our legs on the longest portage yet of the trip, yet it was only 265m and quite flat. From here, it was a short paddle through an easy CI to the top of Beaver Dam Falls – a fantastic site, even by the high standards of this beautiful river. Again, we had flat rocks and even some dirt for pegs. Another island site, we faced south into a widening of the river. There was a great spot for a group shot, and Barb worked diligently at getting us set up just so, when suddenly, her feet shot out from under her, a victim of the slippery footing as a result of the day-long rain. She suffered a bruised elbow and hip, but her camera suffered much worse. From that point on, the recording of the trip was left to our digital. (Luckily, we were able to download her images upon our return, so we didn't lose all the wonderful shots she'd taken to that point.) To cap it

off, just after dinner the rain started again, so it was into the tents for an early night of soothing bruised bumps.

Wildlife Viewed – Not a lot today: one eagle, the usual ducks and geese and sandpipers

August 26

Weather – sun breaking through in morning; good breeze for drying that evolved into a westerly headwind for most of the day, but that also brought out the bright sun

Number of Rapids/Falls – eight

Number of Portages – four linings, one carryover, and a 70m portage

Distance Travelled – 16km

Days Events – Morning ran according to our pattern. This day was a day of lining and short portages with a few runs interspersed to provide variety. First up was Split Chute where we were able to line through a middle channel that was almost dry. Left-or-Else, a CII-CIII, was actually easier than its rating and easily run. Soon after were three linings in a row: Island Hill Falls which we lined down the right side, then Opikwash Rapids, and finally Smooth Rock Falls, where we found a middle channel with a significant dog leg that challenged but didn't defeat us. After this, there was a bit of a paddle to a lunch stop at the Berens River Moose/Bear Camp complete with sleeping frames and a picnic table. Soon

after this break, we took our best picture of a full-grown bald eagle in a tree, and then came across a moose eating on the edge of the river. It was 12:30 p.m., and still he was up and about! White Beaver Falls was a 70m portage on river right – another good trail. We ran Pine Island Rapids as suggested on the left sweep around the island, and paddled on through the remnants of a bridge. Next up was Sharp Rock Falls: a short carry over rocks to a risky put-in at the end of the falls. After a full day of getting around stuff, we were ready to stop at Wapeekum and Wapanoneeki Rapids, just under 70km from the end. The camp site here was another beautiful spot with good swimming, and a great trail across the top of a bluff to see both of these pretty rapids. Another great night for a campfire and stargazing, and still not many bugs.

Wildlife Viewed – moose; golden eagle, bald eagle, and usual ducks and geese; heard the Sandhill Cranes, and saw another cormorant in the morning at the rapids at the site.

August 27

Weather – sunny and hot, with a little wind

Number of Rapids/Falls – seven

Number of Portages – two pullovers on rocks; one lining; one portage over big flat rocks

Distance Travelled – 11km

Days Events – We awoke to a beautiful sunrise full of mist and peace. It was a slow morning – a pancake morning. We watched a cormorant fishing for its breakfast, then packed up and were away by 10:20 a.m. or so. The double rapids at this site proved to be quite easy. After this, we found it difficult to keep track of which rapid was which for a bit: the maps seemed to have missed one or else we just were struggling with the small print! First, we ran a small CI above the Metik Rapids where we pulled over rocks on the left. Some flatwater paddling brought us to the top of Old Fort Falls where we lined the top and ran out the bottom drop. We dragged over rocks again at Death Wish, well-named as this was where Barb tried to skewer herself with a thorn.

Next came another large island. We checked out the right channel, but found it had dried up completely. Here we found an etching by AMKAY 1897 and Rev. G.W.T. 1960 on rocks exposed by the low water levels. The left channel was an easy CI and then a short portage over big, flat sloping rocks.

It was flat water from here, past another hunt camp on the right, to the site on an open hill. This was the first time that we were bothered by bugs: black flies greeted us as we set up camp. However, it was good swimming and with our netted tarp, we were soon comfortable with our before-dinner drinks in hand and all set up before 5:30 p.m. The site offered other bonuses to make up for the bugs. It overlooked a large muddy area to the right where we ventured for an evening paddle to see several wading birds and enjoy a spectacular sunset.

Wildlife Viewed – another big moose and calf on river left; a flock of sandhill cranes flying high; regular sightings of bald eagles, ducks, and geese; an osprey at the site and a whippoorwill calling just at dusk, and plenty of beavers.

August 28

Weather – morning was cool and overcast, but turned into a pleasant day with breeze

Number of Rapids/Falls – three

Number of Portages – two

Distance Travelled – 20km

Days Events – We awoke to the calls of a whippoorwill and a pileated woodpecker. Because the sky was threatening rain, Barb suggested we break camp before breakfast. Many mosquitoes hurried us along in our work. This was a day of flatwater paddling. We started the day at 9:10 a.m. and were finished by 2:30 p.m., and even though the westerlies made us bend to the paddle a bit, we still covered more kliks than any previous day. There were fewer wildlife sightings than we were accustomed to – no moose or cranes. Assam Rapids was an easy centre, some of the only excitement of the day. We stopped to take a picture of Pyramid Rock, then did an easy portage

past the top of Moose Falls and ran out the bottom. It was a tricky put-in – quite steep and a little slippery, making for a difficult loading area, but eight hands made light work. Shortly after lunch, we reached the portage around Upper Conjuring Falls. This was another easy portage to our site on river left, high up overlooking the falls – another wonderful view. We were now at the 40km mark, winding down. The late afternoon was lovely: a cool breeze, sunny sky, and peaceful. Another whippoorwill sang us to bed, and we saw a big V of geese pass just after dusk.

August 29

Weather – beautiful day of sun and breeze

Number of Rapids/Falls – nine

Number of Portages – ??

Distance Travelled – 20km

Days Events – I started the day with a refreshing swim in morning mist. Breakfast was the final-few bagels, fried up to freshen them, but I opted for granola. The day promised lots of falls and rapids to get past. One rapid was a fun left channel next to a rock face, then a scoot by a hole through a CII Tech with actual maneuvering required, some of the first of the trip. More signs of civilization dotted the shores: a ferry, several trappers' cabins, a cottage, and then at our site at Sturgeon Falls, a road

from Berens River that brought two river stewards, Morton and Herman, who were one their route to make sure the sites were clean. Morton was a very articulate man, who told us about his trip to New Zealand to learn from the Maori how they teach their children the traditional ways. We also saw a helicopter carrying a large bucket. Morton said it was fighting a forest fire just a little north of us. Later, a family out for an evening fish arrived: Dennis Alix was the owner of Alix General Store at the Berens River settlement. He and his wife had brought their seven-year-old daughter, Laura, and two nephews out to see if the fish were biting – and were they! They caught so many, they were just tossing them back in. They generously shared with us, an unusual but delectable dessert after our dinner of spaghetti.

This was our last night on the river proper. The next day would see us arrive in Berens River, a Saulteau community of 2,700 plus another 1,400 off reserve. According to Morton, there were two hotels, a general store, a Northern Store, and a few other businesses, but civilisation could wait another day. This last night, we wanted to savour our wilderness experience a little longer.

Wildlife Viewed – eagles, cormorants, lots of red squirrels at the site.



Lesser Yellow-legged Sandpipers

Bloodvein River

Text and photos by Allan Jacobs
Copyright: Allan E Jacobs (May 2007)



Pictographs at complex on Artery Lake

Red Lake, up the Chukuni River, through Olive Lake and down the Sabourin and Bloodvein Rivers to Bloodvein village on Lake Winnipeg.

Overview

Highly recommended. The pictographs on Artery Lake are worth the trip in themselves.

The 80 or so rapids offer excellent whitewater (at the tripping level). Everything serious can be portaged; indeed, expect 50 to 70 portages (none really long or difficult) depending on water levels and your ww skills.

The Bloodvein passes through Woodland Caribou and Atikaki parks and so is well protected and reasonably isolated.

People and dates

Enid Weiner (Toronto), Stephen Catlin

(Mississauga), Bill Hosford (Ann Arbor, Michigan) and Allan Jacobs (Toronto), all Wilderness Canoe Association members. We started on the Chukuni River on 1 July 2001 and arrived at Bloodvein village on 19 July.

Logistics (up and back)

Bill drove to Red Lake with his canoe, visiting friends on the way; the others flew from Toronto to Winnipeg and then to Red Lake (by Bearskin Air). On the return journey, we took the ferry (free) from Bloodvein village to Matheson Island on the west side of Lake Winnipeg. Bill drove back from there; the others were driven to Winnipeg and flew back to Toronto.

Logistics (there)

We had all our own food and gear, save one canoe and pfd. Goldseekers

Outfitters drove us to town from Red Lake airport, let us stay at their place, rented us a quality boat (17' Royalite Nova Craft), arranged permits, drove us and our gear to our start point on the Chukuni River, drove to Matheson Island with Bill's car on a trailer, drove the three of us from Matheson Island to Winnipeg airport and returned the rental canoe to Red Lake, all on time, cheerfully, responsibly and at a reasonable price.

We dealt with Albert and Kelly Rogalinski, rumoured to have moved out west recently; in any case, Goldseekers is now run by Keith and Debbie Fretz.

Thanks

Alex Kleider (trip report and other information); Jon Berger (many good tips); Ontario and Manitoba Ministry/Department staff (maps and other information); Susan and Fred Penner (hospitality at

Sabourin Lake Lodge); WCA members Tony Harting, Herb Pohl, Bill Ness, Rob Butler and George Luste (assistance in search for partners); Albert, Kelly and Nolan of Goldseekers (with regards to Reese); the Bennet family (hospitality even when absent); and the people native to the land.

Background

The Bloodvein is a Canadian Heritage River. A pool-and-drop river, it was an important communications route for both the native people and the fur traders. It is claimed to have the largest conglomeration of pictographs in Canada. The area is so special that First Nations communities and the Manitoba and Ontario governments intend to nominate Woodland Caribou and Atikaki parks as World Heritage Sites.

Primary sources of information are the park brochures, the CHRS web site, the Wilson-Aykroyd book (almost indispensable) and Réal Bérard's write-ups.

The Bloodvein is far from the only game in town; the area is laced with rivers and paths joining them. In 2003, the Warners paddled for 60 days entirely within Woodland Caribou. More on the Manitoba side, groups wander through the watersheds of the Bloodvein, Gammon, Leyond, Dogskin, Pigeon, Berens, Sasaginnigak, etc. If in the area again, I'd likely choose a more imaginative route than the one we paddled.

We would have appreciated better the pictographs, already stunning, had we purchased *Reading Rock Art*, Grace Rajnovich, Natural Heritage Press.

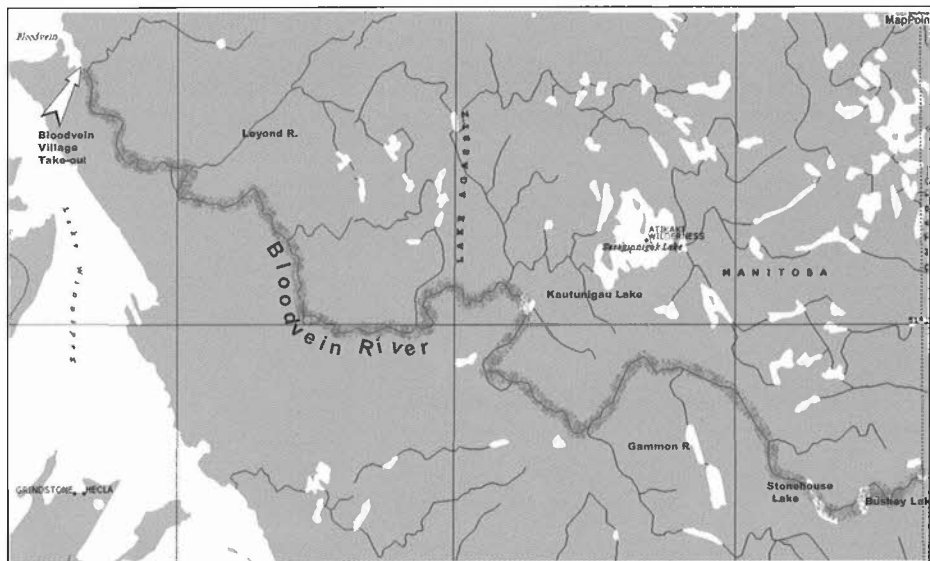
Bloodvein routes

Some parties start from Red Lake, others fly in to Artery and other lakes; most finish at Bloodvein village.

Bloodvein routes split naturally into upper (two options) and lower parts.

Upper part (Red Lake to the junction of the Sabourin and Bloodvein Rivers):

Southern option (upper part): From Red Lake, through Knox, Murdock and Larus Lakes to the Bloodvein and on to the Sabourin junction; some parties get a ride to Pipestone Bay and start there. This route is shorter than the northern one and has an excellent pictograph site; it requires about 1.5 km more portaging



Bloodvein Route map two

and includes the Knox Lake portage of ill repute. The main source for information on this route is the Wilson-Aykroyd book.

Northern option (upper part): From Red Lake, up the Chukuni, through Valhalla Lake, over the height of land, through Olive Lake and down the Sabourin to the Bloodvein. We paddled the 107 km from the Chukuni put-in to Sabourin junction in 7 days, portaging 23 times (longest 700 m, total about 6.5 km) and wading once; Alex Kleider's group dragged through some rapids that we portaged. You may see motorboats on lakes between Red Lake and the height of land, and will almost certainly do so on Sabourin.

Sources:

1. The brochure, Woodland Caribou Provincial Park covers the stretch from Valhalla Lake to the Manitoba border; it gives locations and lengths of portages (and lots of other good stuff) for the Bloodvein and indeed the entire park.

2. In 1995, the MNR office in Red Lake provided a map giving portage locations and lengths for the eastern approach to the park (Red Lake to Valhalla Lake). The map may be no longer available (thank those who voted for Harris) and so I quote the portage information below.

3. A recent CCR report covers the trip up the Chukuni and down to Artery Lake: <http://www.myccr.com/canoedb/re->

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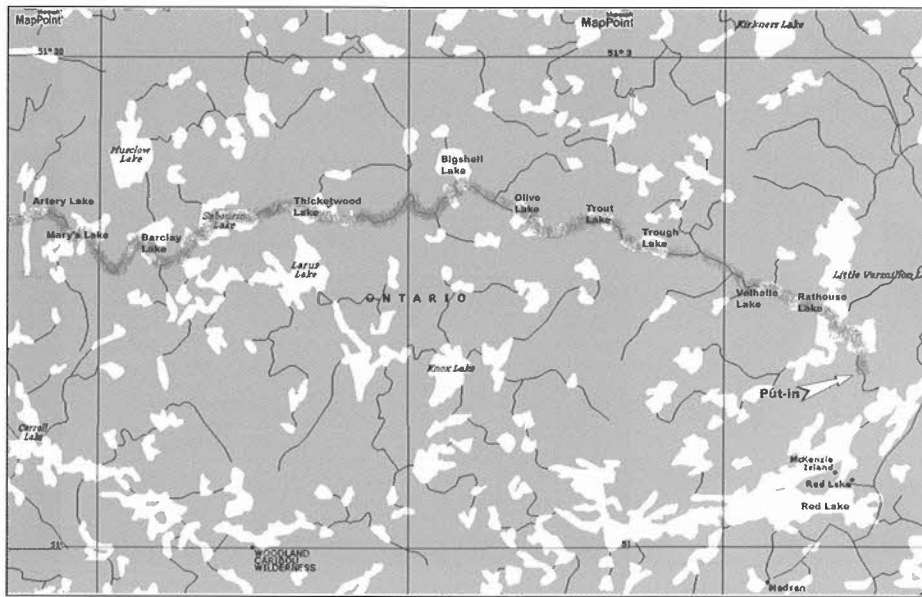
Lower part (Sabourin junction to Bloodvein village). We paddled the 232 km in 11 days. Wilson-Aykroyd gives 80 rapids and falls for this stretch, with 30 to 50 portages (total length from 2.4 km to 5.4 km). You may see motorboats from Sabourin Lake to WA11 and also below WA87, and you may encounter large youth groups toward the end.

Sources:

1. Wilderness Rivers of Manitoba, Hap Wilson and Stephanie Aykroyd, Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association, 1998 (WA below). It gives background information, campsite locations and sizes, pictograph locations and detailed descriptions of the rapids (including sketches; the editorial staff played 52 pickup with them?); the few differences (at WA41 & WA71) I found can be chalked up to different water levels. The book was worth the price just for the description of the Island Chutes (WA61).

2. Sasaginnigak Canoe Country and Kautunigan Route (SASA and KAUT below), both by Réal Bérard, give lots of good stuff (rapids, portages, points of interest, etc) for the stretch below Artery Lake, except for the 19 km (with rapids WA28 to WA33) above the Gammon.

3. BLOODVEIN RIVER Charted, Province of Manitoba Conservation Comment (1973), gives locations and ratings of rapids for the Gammon and



Bloodvein Route map one

the Bloodvein from Wallace Lake (road access) to BvV. It is not needed if you have SASA, KAUT, WA, etc.

4. The MRCA newsletter of Autumn 1990 (v3, #4, p5) has a short article on the Bloodvein below the Leyond.

5. A recent CCR report covers the stretch from Artery Lake to Bloodvein village: <http://www.myccr.com/routeDetails.php?routeid=544>

6. Out There (<http://www.out-there.com>) once had lots of Bloodvein material; maybe the links have been fixed by the time you read this.

Gear

Jon Berger advised against bringing spray covers and we're glad we listened to him (should have passed the message on to Bill). In our opinion, they are dead weight. Having them might have induced us to run a few more rapids than we did, but they are too much hassle given so many rapids unrunnable even with covers. But Alex's group had some spray covers and used them.

Giardia warning: We pumped water (we had 2 pumps). I don't know how Alex's group handled theirs, but 3 of their 10 people got Giardia.

We used stoves almost exclusively for cooking; occasionally we used fires to burn up and trash. We've found that 1/10 litre of fuel per person per day is

adequate, provided we don't bake much.

Enid's folding saw, which she had the foresight to keep easily accessible, was very useful.

We had bear bangers and bear spray.

A GPS would have come in handy several times.

General comments

Your group needs some highly experienced people. Please forgive the preaching, but paddlers have died on this river, for example one at WA81. Don't trust any report, including this one. Scout it! I can't say that it hasn't happened, and I can imagine that it could happen, but I haven't heard of anyone drowning on a portage trail.

Sources warn against trying to paddle across Lake Winnipeg, in any conditions. And there's no need to try; the ferry is free and reliable.

We travelled at a moderate pace (average age about 60), taking 18 days for the 339 km; we lost about one full day to the wind. One of Bill's legs was bad and we were very slow on the portages. Best not expect to average 30 km per day on this one unless you are fit, travel light and like to push.

We didn't fish; other parties did a lot.

Most campsites are on the small side. Large groups can consult WA for locations and sizes.

We saw about eight moose, no cari-

bou, many otters and beavers, zillions of bald eagles, etc.

Water levels

Different levels can make for very different conditions; some rapids get harder, others easier.

The Olive-Bigshell creek could be a drag in low water; it was bad for us in early July and might have been impassable later in the season. Fred Penner told us of a solo paddler who had had a very rough time on the creek; they had to put him up for a week until he was well enough.

Our level seems to have been higher than Alex's in 1994 (almost to the day seven years earlier), and lower than that of SASA and WA (1995).

Travel and fire bans

Both Manitoba and Ontario occasionally issue travel bans; best check with your outfitter and the relevant Ministry/Department just before leaving. Manitoba bans fires (any kind) throughout the canoeing season; Ontario often issues fire bans.

Recommendations: Plan to cook on stoves exclusively; prepare a backup trip.

Maps

We had two sets of 8.5 in. by 14 in. copies of my personal set of eleven 1:50k topos; the map numbers in order of use are 52N 4 & 5, 52M 8, 7, 6, 5 & 12; 62P 9, 8, 10 & 15.

I'm confident of my distances (obtained by wheeling out copies and so about 1% small); they are consistently about 10% smaller than those in WA (as I found also for the Seal).

Those based near Toronto can copy topos (both 1:50k and 1:250k) on the 4th floor of the Toronto Reference Library on Yonge Street north of Bloor; you have to ask for the 1:50ks though, and you need a library card (available at the desk on the ground floor).

We had also annotated 1:250k originals purchased from Tom Terry (Voyageurs North, Sioux Lookout, 807 737 1809).

Abbreviations, etc.

P, Ped: portage, portaged.

R, L: right and left as viewed in our di-

rection of travel; they are the same as river right and river left only west of the height of land.

BvV: Bloodvein village.

WA: Wilson-Aykroyd book; WA8 means rapid number 8 in WA.

AK: Alex Kleider's report or group; they started from Red Lake town on 28 June 1994 and finished at Bloodvein village on 18 July.

SASA; KAUT: Sasaginnigak Canoe Country; Kautunigan Route.

N,S,E&W: directions.

MRCA: Manitoba Recreational Canoeing Association, now Paddle Manitoba.

Elevations (mostly of lakes) are in metres, e.g. Little Vermilion Lake (367).

Where possible, I identify unnamed places by their elevations, e.g. lake 382.

Portage lengths are in metres.

Comments on the report

My report on the northern route (upper part), written right after the trip, is the only one known to me, save that at CCR.

My report on the lower part, written much later, is meant to be read in conjunction with WA, which should be your primary source of information on this part, especially on rapids.

A longer version of this report (available from allan.jacobs@sympatico.ca) provides more detailed information (UTMs for rapids and campsites, stuff from AK, SASA, KAUT and the MNR, distances at map junctures, etc); please report errors to the same address.

Day-by-day report

Day 0: 30 June 2001. Kelly met Enid, Stephen and me at Red Lake airport and drove us to Goldseekers. We walked to town, met Bill, ate, shopped (T-shirts, etc), returned to Goldseekers, bought stove fuel and turned in.

Day 1: Albert drove us the 30 km to our starting point on the W side of the Chukuni River, about three km upstream from Red Lake (the lake not the town, elevation 355 m) and 339 km from BvV. The shuttle saved us 25 km of paddling, in maybe a stiff wind. We unloaded, Ped 250 L to the put-in, paddled 1 km, Ped 400 L around the dam, paddled again,

then waded through the swift at the end of Little Vermilion Lake (367). We paddled past a nice site at a point on the L, reentered the river at a less than obvious opening, entered Rathouse Lake (369) and passed through the narrows into the W part; I took us left too early. We camped on a point at the W end of Rathouse.

321 km to BvV.

Day 2: We entered the river at the tip of the peninsula. Several 100 m before the bend to the north, AK waded but we had no problem. The river winds big-time around here; it's hard to tell where you are without a GPS and it's easy to overestimate progress. Since Jon B's group took a wrong turn, and we toed and froed some. After lunch at a small campsite on the L, we passed a stream coming in on the L; about one km later, we Ped 350 R around a rapid not marked on the topo. There followed a P 200 R, then a P 700 L with a campsite at the start; both rapids are marked on the topo. We entered a large marshy area and turned L at each of three junctions. We went up a creek, pulled over two beaver dams and passed through a pond and lake 382. We Ped 400 R around a falls (the takeout, very damp, is well R of the creek), then entered the small lake before Valhalla Lake and camped at its W end.

308 km to BvV.

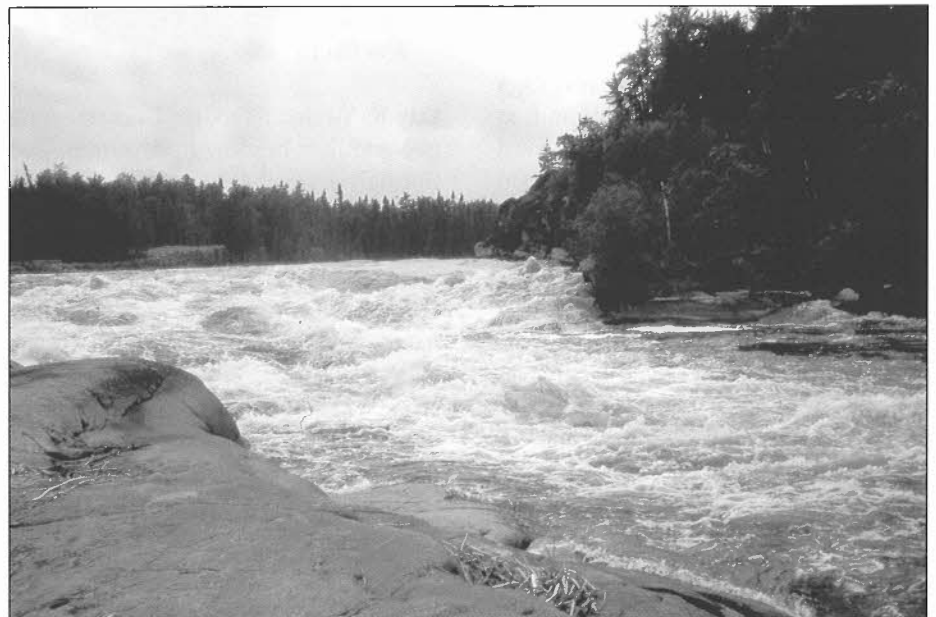
Day 3: We finished the lake, entered the creek and Ped 150 R to a pond. We got through the narrows with no problem and entered Valhalla Lake (393); there are cabins on both the S and N shores. We pushed through the narrows to lake 394, passed a huge blow-down on the L, pushed and paddled up a shallow winding creek and Ped 140 L to Trough Lake (395). We were windbound for several hours at the end of the P, not a great campsite but a possible; I napped some. We headed out again when the wind dropped, but pulled in at an island when we saw a storm coming.

297 km to BvV.

Day 4: We finished Trough Lake, Ped 150 R to a small lake, Ped 570 over the height of land to a pond and then Ped 570 R to the E part of Olive Lake (392). We passed OK through the constrictions into the middle part and then the W part of Olive Lake. After sitting windbound for several hours on the S side of the island, we paddled to the point at the W end of Olive and camped.

286 km to BvV.

Day 5: A slog day (8 km advanced) through what the MNR write-up aptly calls the "jungle". We paddled down a winding creek to lake 391 and Ped 700 R at its end. After the creek on the right, we Ped 200 R, Ped 120 R, Ped 190 R,



One of many rapids



Rapids below Stonehouse Falls

Ped 80 L, almost right away Ped 80 R, Ped 380 R and finally Ped 220 L; we wrestled the boats through a few places. Maybe I got all the Ps, maybe in order too. We entered Bigshell Lake (345) and camped on the first island.

278 km to BvV.

Day 6: We exited Bigshell Lake, squeezing between the rocks (no rapid, park map says P 50 L). There followed lake 344, a P 130 L, a small lake, maybe a rapid (my notes are bad here), a P 120 L, a pond, a P 120 L, 1st lake 335, a winding creek, 2nd lake 335, a rocky passage, 3rd lake 335, a minor rapid (run R), a marshy lake (went L of island) and, at long last, a river. Our joy was short-lived though, for we entered Thicketwood Lake (334) to a stiff headwind. After passing a First Nations site at the SE end of the island, we battled the wind to the SW tip of the big island in middle and camped. We were too beat to portage over to Larus Lake and look for the pictograph site at the W end of Murdock.

253 km to BvV.

Day 7: We finished Thicketwood Lake, Ped 240 R across the neck, went down the river and lunched just before Sabourin Lake (329), behind some bushes to get shelter from the wind. We

battled the wind along the R shore; the people at the lodge saw us struggling (we couldn't have gone much farther) and kindly waved us in. Susan and Fred Penner treated us royally. They gave Bill a replacement hat; I bought a pfd to replace one lost somehow on the Chukuni. The AK party (of two) stayed at the lodge on their night 9; AK speaks highly of it ("palatial"). We thought the main building magnificent. The wind dropped a bit after several hours and we got going again; after a search, we found a narrow beach site.

238 km to BvV.

Day 8: We left Sabourin Lake, meeting two paddlers heading upstream, passed through a small lake and entered the Bloodvein River (328); there's a flag at the junction (232 km to BvV). The rapids from here on are well documented in WA. We lunched at a nice site at the narrows before the U-turn in Barclay Lake (328), passed a moose on the stretch heading north, entered Mary's Lake (328, not named on the topo) and camped on the S side of an island.

213 km to BvV.

Day 9: Rapids WA8 through 11.

On the N exit (WA8) from Mary's Lake, we Ped short R, worked through

rocks and then ran the R side of the slot.

There followed a spectacular pictograph complex, stunning in its beauty, where we sat in the boats very quietly for some time; all else on the trip was anticlimactic.

We entered the main part of Artery Lake (322) and went up the bay to see a smaller pictograph site; a stiff wind stopped us from going up the big bay to see another.

At the end of Artery, we scouted WA10 from the L island; the ledges looked dicey so we Ped over the marine railway. We entered lake 322 (with fly-in fish camp) and crossed into Manitoba. We scouted WA11 from the L shore, then ran it far L (one boat grounded) to avoid a bad ledge on the R. We crossed to the R side and camped beside the rapid (huge site with a CHRS plaque), washed and swam.

199 km to BvV.

Day 10: Rapids WA12 through 20.

A day with many rapids, some run, some Ped, too many to detail. Some names: Jumping Rocks (Split Rock in SASA; legend has it that the native people jumped across the river here), Moosebone Rapids, Nutcracker Falls, Bushey Lake (313), Bruiseasy Falls. Comment on WA16 (bad rapid between Jumping Rocks and Bushey Lake): We lined down the narrow channel on the L, sawing off branches as we went (here Enid's saw saved the bacon); farther down, Bill built a marine railway from logs to get the boats down the gully on the L. We passed R of the exit channel from Stonehouse Lake (311) and camped on the L shore in a bay.

179 km to BvV.

Day 11: Rapids WA21 through 26.

We didn't find the pictograph site on the R shore of the bay.

At Stonehouse Falls (WA21; AK gives also Asuneewakkayhigun (sp?) Falls), we Ped early L. Four tough pros travelling fast and light passed us here; they were paddling to Kautunigan Lake, up the Sasaginnigak and down the Pigeon. One, a river guide from Saskatchewan, recognized Bill from Cliff Jacobson's book and addressed him by name ("You're Bill Hosford")!

We Ped WA22 (Thirty-Foot Falls in SASA, Keeshata Falls in AK) and WA23 together. Tip: The portage trail goes inland; take the trail by the water only to camp or play in the lower rapid.

At X-Rock Rapids (WA26, Triangle Falls in SASA), we ran the upper part (easy) to the L side of the island, near the upper tip. Thinking from WA that there would be no campsite for quite a while, we camped early, at a huge site on the top of the island.

168 km to BvV.

Day 12: Rapids WA27 through 32.

We could have continued, for we found a good campsite at the start of WA27. Tip: After WA28, hug the L shore to avoid the bay on the R. At Gooseneck Rapids (WA29, Neke-sepe Rapids), we Ped L of the big stuff, then ran the 1st CII OK, grounded on the far R at the 2nd, and thumped the gunwales with our paddles after the 3rd. We scouted WA30 on the L and lined the ledge; one boat ran far L through the rocks, the other lined L. We might have run WA31, but Ped L, up and down a steep muddy bank. We Ped R all of WA32 (the first part of the P is very awkward) and camped in a clearing in the middle of the portage (OK site but a long walk to get water).

147 km to BvV.

Day 13: Rapids WA32 through 44.

We finished the portage, passing a wrecked canoe and a campsite at the end, passed the Gammon mouth and Red Rock Cafe, then visited the Bennet cabin and signed the book (what generous, trusting people, to leave their place open to strangers!).

There are too many rapids to describe them all here.

Route note: We took the R (north) channel at the island past the cabin and had 3 fun runs (WA36A); I understand that the L channel requires a short P.

Route note: We took the R (north) channel at the big island. I believe that we Ped WA39 & WA40; we saw nothing at WA41.

After the small island at the Y where the channels join, we hurried L for WA42, which we Ped L. We ran WA43,

Ped WA44 and camped at the end of the portage trail.

117 km to BvV.

Day 14: Rapids WA45 through 50.

We Ped the first part of Okeegee Falls (WA46) short; the long path going right (to campsite?) is blocked. After the put-in (steep), we ran the CII at the end; one boat got too far L and so couldn't power L when it had to (almost swamped). We passed a huge group camped in a bay on



Pictographs

the L side of Kautunigan Lake, then the Sasaginnigak junction. We Ped Chap Falls (WA48) on the R. Sekak Rapids (WA50) looked runnable, but the hour was late and we saw a campsite near the end, so we Ped R and camped.

89 km to BvV.

Day 15: Rapids WA51 through 64.

Again we did far too many rapids to describe them all. Some names:

Meekinako Rapids (WA51), Omachee-tayshemowin Rapids, Kakwachwanak Rapids.

At the Island Chutes (WA61), we started the P early. This is where WA saved us 500 m of portaging. Tip: Don't go far up the rocky hill; instead, break left early, bushwhack to find the trail, pass by the water, pass a campsite and put in at a bay above a rocky gap. The CII rapid at the bottom of the sketch for WA61 is W62.

After scouts, we ran WA62 to WA64. Camp was at a point on the R, just above WA65.

67 km to BvV.

Day 16: Rapids WA65 through 77.

We went R at the island, toward WA69. After a scout, we ran the CII ledge at WA70 on the far L, then dug in to miss the wall on the R. We lined the rock garden at the top of Manitou Rapids (WA71), then ran moderate waves at the bottom.

More names: Kashaweposenatak Rapids (WA72), Kakasannapeekak Rapids (WA73), Kineewi Rapids (WA74) and Wayweekokanskak Falls (WA76).

After the two long straight stretches (we saw nothing at WA77), we camped on the R side of a point, just after a swift, by WA78.

42 km to BvV.

Day 17: Rapids WA78 through 85.

It was raining in the morning but we wanted to be sure to make the ferry and so headed out. After WA78 and Ankuasi Falls (WA79), we chose the L (south) channel (with shorter P). The channel was dry, no problem since we weren't running Namay Falls (WA80), but the rocks on the P were very slippery. Part of the St Cloud group was camped on the other side and we spoke briefly with them.

Route note: We goofed and went L around the big "island". This route is shorter than the R channel and looks easier, but went dry after 1.5 km; there looked to be another P not far away, so we turned back and went R.



Campsite at Rathouse Lake

We ran both parts of Kiskoosebesis Rapids (WA81). On 1 August 1994, a paddler not wearing his pfd drowned in the upper (easier) part; there's a cairn downstream on the L [MRCA Newsletter, Autumn 1994, v7, #4, pp12-13]. The Leyond comes in about 1/2 km after WA81.

We ran WA82, then turned L at the island, taking the south channel toward WA83; we Ped the top part R into the 2nd bay and ran the bottom part L of the ledge. On the way, we passed a large, youthful St Cloud Minnesota group ("Les Voyageurs", sic). There's nothing like 3 white-haired, white-bearded DOM flashing by to shame such into action.

At Kaokonapeekeekewonk Rapids (WA84), we ran the R (north) channel around the island, through a nasty turn.

At Akeeko Rapids (WA85), we Ped left (seemed longer than the 135 of WA); it looked runnable from the trail but the boats were already on top. The St Cloud females (immune to bugs?) passed us on the portage; to avoid conflict, I arranged our next campsites with their boss lady. We ran a swift and camped up the hill; the flies were really bad and our bathers got chewed up.

21 km to BvV.

Day 18: Rapids WA86 through 88.

While portaging WA86, we ran into the St Cloud males; USers sure have strange (to us) customs and ceremonies

(necklaces with knots, ...). We portaged Meekisiwi Rapids (WA87, Eagle's Nest Rapids in SASA), looked at the first pictograph set but missed the second. Below the swift at Kasooskwapekechewonk Rapids (WA88, Four Battle Rapids in SASA), highly excited male and female St Cloud groups occupied sites on either side, so we camped a bit downstream. Motorboats from BvV added to the din.

7 km to BvV.

Day 19: 19 July 2001.

We saw nothing at Kakeenemee-niapekak Rapids (WA89).

Route note: We should have gone left of Kitchi Island.

In BvV, we bought ice cream, chocolate bars, etc at the convenience store; it opens at 9 am (northern time) on weekdays, later on holidays. The ferry was on time. On the trip across Lake Winnipeg (218) we had to get shelter from the blazing sun. The pelicans put on quite the show with their diving; I read somewhere that many die from broken necks (I am not surprised). We got to Matheson Island just after noon and found Nolan (of Goldseekers) waiting for us; we were able to change our flights and return to Toronto at a reasonable hour - thanks Nolan for getting there early!

Information and contacts

General information on the Blood-

vein, history and status: Canadian Heritage Rivers, http://www.chrs.ca/Main_e.htm

The Warners' trip:

<http://www.myccr.com/SectionForum/viewtopic.php?t=10671&highlight=warner>,

<http://www.myccr.com/SectionForums/viewforum.php?f=37>,

<http://www.rutabaga.com/canoe-copia/speaker.asp?spid=130&year=2004>,

and http://woodland-cariboupark.com/60-Days/Reporting/Logs/Logs-Title_Page.htm.

Goldseekers: <http://www.goldseekers.net>.

Sabourin Lake Lodge (great place, greater people): <http://www.sabourin-lake.com>.

Ferry (free) from Bloodvein village to Matheson Island: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/tgs/namo/ferrysched.html>; check before leaving.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Red Lake: 807 727 2253.

Woodland Caribou Provincial Park: <http://www.OntarioParks.com/english/wood.html>

Atikaki Provincial Wilderness Park: http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks/popular_parks/atikaki/index.html

Travel Manitoba: Google it.

For SASA and KAUT: http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parks/popular_parks/atikaki/info.html#05, under Reference Material.

Manitoba Department of Natural Resources: Google it.

Travel bans: I couldn't find a site or a phone number; best ask your outfitter.

Canoe outfitters in Red Lake: <http://www.ontariotowns.net/RedLake/CanoeOutfitters.cfm>

Red Lake services: <http://www.ontariotowns.net/RedLake>

Waterlevels: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/floodinfo/index.htm> l gives historical and recent flow rates for the Bloodvein just upstream from BvV. I found the Water Survey Canada site not useful.

Alternate logistics

Personal auto is a possibility.

Scheduled flights to/from Red Lake are offered by at least one operator (Bearskin).

Charter operators based in Red Lk:
http://www.aircharterguide.com/CA_Operators/Red_Lake/ON/Ontario

Charter operators based in Manitoba:
<http://www.travelmanitoba.com>, then ENGLISH, FISHING & HUNTING, AIR CHARTER SERVICES. Possibilities (not checked) include Wamair, Adventure Air,

Northway Aviation, Selkirk Air and Blue Water Aviation.

AK logistics: Two of them flew to Winnipeg, rented a boat (WaveTrack, 204 832 1862, current?), were driven to Red Lake (Koval Transport, 204 774 2828, current?), left resupply stuff at Sabourin Airways and hit the water at

the public dock in Red Lake. The other eight flew in to Barclay Lake with Selkirk; other aspects of their logistics are unclear. Six flew out (with Selkirk?) from the Bloodvein above BvV. The others took the ferry to Matheson Landing; they were picked up there by two members of the first group out and driven to Winnipeg.



Georgian Bay (near Point au Baril). Photos: E. Sinclair

CHUTE AU GRANITE

National Geographic Magazine has two great features that I like. Outstanding photographs, and the fold-out map in each issue. I'm reading the May, 1980 issue now. An old one. I saved it because it had a good article on the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland. Plus, the fold-out map covered both provinces.

Opened up the map and started looking at the geographical features. As always, I am attracted to the rivers. Noticed that there were only five marked rapids. On the entire map. For both provinces. Wilderness canoeists know through personal experience that there are a great number of rapids and waterfalls on rivers in Quebec and Newfoundland.

Also, I read somewhere that Quebec possesses one-third of the hydroelectric power potential of all Canada. This translates into a lot of moving water. A great deal of this water must drop sharp enough to warrant designation as rapids or waterfalls.

Wondered what influenced the map makers to only show five marked rapids. Probably spacing reasons. If they marked every good sized rapid there would be room for little else on the map. Of the five rapids that were marked, one was Churchill Falls, a monster with a seventy five meter drop. It's about in the middle of Labrador and is the center of an immense hydroelectric project.

Another marked rapid was Chute Au Granite. It's on the Caniaspiscau River. If you could compare it with Churchill Falls, my guess is Chute Au Granite is a pretty spectacular place. It's name definitely suggests that it is. Granitewalls with water pouring through. Probably a good place to spend a few days.

I remember one trip when we were working our way down the Harricana River in northeastern Ontario. The left channel around Seven Mile Island is one to be avoided, but in our inexperience we naturally flowed towards it. It turned out that the left channel was a series of unrunnable chutes separated by small pools. The very definition of pool and drop river. There was very little canoeing and lots of portaging around Seven Mile Island.

One night we were sitting around the campfire studying map 32L – Riviere Harricana. The upper right hand corner of the map covered a small section of the Nottaway River. That small section was loaded with lots of marked rapids.

Even a couple of waterfalls. I sat there looking at the map and was amazed at what I was seeing in contour lines, slash marks for rapids, and the wide variation in river widths. In one small section. On one map. Told myself right there and then that I would have to go and see the Nottaway River for myself.

Since that night I have been privileged to have canoed the Nottaway River. Twice.

Now that I see where Chute Au Granite is marked on a map, I wonder if I can canoe to it and have a look-see. A nice thought.

I'm having a lot more nice thoughts lately. That's always a sign this summer's trip is getting close. Very close.

Greg Went

Our Intermediate Canoe Clinic

Text and photos by John and Sharon Hackert



Instructor team prepares lesson

Our intermediate whitewater clinic was started at least 11 years ago. Al Sutton, Hans and Cathy Grim, Sharon and I have been instructors since the beginning. Leslie Dutton has also instructed in the past four years. The stated purpose of the course is to provide practice and instruction in the basic skills of whitewater paddling at an intermediate level. My criteria is that students should be comfortable paddling in moving water and in class 1 and easy class 2 and have practiced the skills of the moving water course that is offered by the WCA or equivalent.

Hans and I felt that there was a need for a course that provided an opportunity for everyone to go beyond the level of the moving water course presently offered. Over the years, the course has

evolved as we have become more experienced and as canoeists' needs evolved.

We find paddlers with a variety of goals and needs. The most common is the tripper who wants to improve his or her skills. Another is the potential playboater who has just bought a solo or tandem ABS boat and is discovering the fun navigating and playing in rapids. The playboaters are the easiest to teach because they are highly motivated and have no doubt of our credibility as instructors or the benefits of further instruction. The trippers are often skeptical that we can help them improve. Our methodology really does understand and anticipate that skepticism. The rest of this article is dedicated to the teaching of experienced trippers.

Our philosophy of river running is to

always be in control of the boat and to try to minimize surprises. We also try to keep portages to a minimum. Most accidents happen when scouting or portaging so we try to scout from the boat. While lining is better than portaging it has to be recognized as a risky activity. Rather than looking for the line of the black water as the best route and then following that line to the bottom of a rapid, we are interested in moving down a rapid in short stages from eddy to eddy. We ferry from one side of the river to the other to improve our river position and to scout from the boat.

The structure of the river is organized by our skill at ferrying and doing eddy turns rather than just following lines of black water. The backferry and the backpaddle are important tools in navigating

rapids. Backpaddling will slow the boat and allow one to regain control. Backferrying allows one to improve river position and scout from the boat. We are always asking, "Where is the next eddy – the next place of safety," and, "Can we get there?" While it is more difficult to eddy-turn a loaded boat, it is a skill that can be learned with practice. And tipping in an eddy is better than tipping in the middle of a river. Usually your gear, canoe, and the paddlers remain in the eddy.

In whitewater there are only three basic moves: 1. The ferry – moving from one side of the river to the other without going downstream, 2: The eddy turn – turning into an eddy and stopping, 3. The peel out – leaving an eddy and turning downstream into the current. The secret is to understand the water well enough to execute these moves reliably after one learns how to do them. That is what we are trying to do in our course. Most of our participants cannot do these basic moves and have never practiced them. Therefore we dedicate the second day to that practice at Palmers Rapids. By then, the participants are exhausted and are more receptive to trying to improve basic skills. Repetition of basic whitewater moves in a safe location is the ultimate key to significant skill improvement. and is always accompanied by better water-reading ability.

On the first day of our course we paddle the lower Madawaska. At that time of year the water is usually cold and high so we don't have to worry about rocks. All tandem boats must have a properly installed centre airbag. Many potential participants are very reluctant to spent \$80 on an airbag and would rather risk their \$1,500 boat besides their and other's safety. But the requirement is not negotiable. Airbags are an important piece of safety gear that minimizes the risk of being pinned against a rock by a canoe full of water. Any incidents we have had on our course have been caused by boats without airbags or improperly installed airbags. In cold water the presence of airbags really accelerates the rescue process. While I enjoy the challenge of unpinning a boat and welcome the practice, I don't want to waste a couple of hours of our clinic.

At the beginning, we review the basic



Hans and Cathy demonstrate an eddy turn

strokes and practice them on the opening 40-minute flatwater paddle. Depending on the skill level and enthusiasm of the participants some students find this really valuable and others are completely tuned out. We can tell in about 30 seconds from your flatwater paddling just how well you will perform on the river. For many students this may be the first time they have thought about the mechanics of holding the paddle and using the body to transfer power to the paddle. This can really help their flatwater paddling.

In the rapids, the students try ferries, eddy turns and peel outs in new and exciting ways. They are asked to do "S" turns and try jet ferries. As this is quite exhausting, the instructors still have time to surf their favorite waves and enjoy the river while the participants rest and recharge their batteries. Some participants start trying to surf too. Students are challenged to follow a course on each rapid that involves maneuvering, ferrying and an eddy turn. Going straight down the middle loses marks and usually ends in swimming anyway. By the end of the day everyone is exhausted but we still have time to watch a paddling video. By the second video, half are asleep. Recently we have added video recordings on the river as a teaching tool, which are fun to watch in the evening.

Why do we give the course? It really is fun and some students make signifi-

cant progress. We have improved our skills by teaching and it is an interesting challenge. While it is frustrating when a boat is continuously tipping, there is a funny side to it too, depending on your viewpoint. Also we have been introduced to a lot of really interesting and fine canoeists. At the end we hope that they will practice what they have learned until these skills become an important part of their trip toolkit.

WANTED

**WCA Treasurer
banking duties and
(if you have it)
light bookkeeping**

**Articles for Nastawgan
Text and art submissions
Text editor**

**contact Aleks@gusev.ca
or esinclair@golden.net**

Wilderness First Aid 2007

by Larry G. Durst, Photos by Aleks Gusev



War zone? Tired people sleeping on the street? No, WCA first aiders at work!

Know your ABC's, and especially if you are venturing into the wilderness.

We are not talking the alphabet however, but the priorities of first aid: airway, breathing and circulation, and then there is "D" for deadly bleeding.

Twelve WCA members participated in a wilderness first aid course on April 14/15. Aleks Gusev had arranged for an instructor through The Paddler Co-Op and also a site to accommodate the training. Both of which turned out to be excellent.

Most of us know some first aid – especially if we are a parent – but the priorities and consequences are at a completely different level when there is no calling 911 and getting an injured person to professional medical attention may be days or even weeks.

I know I speak for all participants when I say that the level of instruction was absolutely first class. Lee Chantrill works for



Lee Chantrill trying to "revive" our own Jeff Haymer

EMS in the Bancroft region both as an instructor and in the field. He knows his stuff and he can teach. The bonus was having someone who loves the outdoors, canoes and has led adventure trips including rafting in places as remote as Nepal. He walks the talk!

All of us benefited from lecture, input from one another and the dramatic practice sessions with realistic scenarios complete with gruesome makeup. None of us came away an expert: that would take many more days of training and years of experience, but we all will be more confident and better equipped to deal with any medical emergency at home or while tripping.

My thanks to Aleks and the WCA for facilitating this training with a second session scheduled for June 9/10 at Palmer's rapids. And finally a special thanks to Elsie Carr-Locke for the home made muffins and scones. Low blood sugar was not an issue.



AGM 2007: Guest speaker Robert Perkins: Mountsberg Wildlife Centre owls and hawks. Photos by E. Sinclair



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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning "the way or route"

Notices

NASTAWGAN BACK ISSUES ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!!!

The WCA is proud to announce that all 1974 – 2005 back issues of Nastawgan journals are available online.

This unparalleled wealth of information is now available at your fingertips by visiting the WCA Quarterly Journal Index page.

The project of Nastawgan digitization is staged in two phases: the first stage is complete and the second stage will be finished this summer.

The **first phase** complements and extends the WCA Journal Index. You may select from a variety of search options to display a menu of trip information on a particular river, technical information, flora and fauna, conservation, people, meetings, stories, poetry, reviews and a large miscellaneous section. You can view any issue and page of Nastawgan from the chronological online archive by selecting your search parameters of river, year, and journal quarter.

For example, say you want to research the trip information for Hood River in Nunavut:

Step 1. Go to the WCA Journal Index page (**Quarterly Journal/Journal Index**) and open the Categories drop down menu. **Select Trip Information,**

Step 2. To determine the availability of articles, scroll down the alphabetical listing to Hood River. You will find references to three different Nastawgan journals: 1986, Summer, Page 1; 1993, Summer, Page 16; 2005, Fall, Page 14,

Step 3. Go to the top of the page and click on **Link to Archive Here,**

Step 4. Select the **Browse Through the Pages** button. The **Browse Nastawgan by Date** window opens to display all publications by year, month, and date,

Step 5. Locate the 1986 year and "June" (Summer) issue, then click on the publication link (1) on the right,

Step 6. From the first page of the journal issue, select the **page** you want. A low-resolution page will be displayed, the text being recognisable but otherwise not very detailed.

Step 7. To display a higher resolution (PDF) of the page, click on the View larger image option located in the top left corner of the screen, below the WCA logo.

The **second phase**, to be completed this summer. You will be able to search for your topic directly (by keyword) from the Journal Index main menu by selecting **Nastawgan Archive here.** In the **Full Text Search by Word or Phrase/Find** box enter the search word, for example, Hood River. Note: Only a limited number of more recent issues are searchable in this manner now.

WCA acknowledges the help and support of Knowledge Ontario

Knowledge Ontario is a collaboration of libraries, cultural heritage organizations and educational institutions. Its focus is on connecting Ontarians with digital content that can support

their information and learning needs. In particular, we'd like to thank Loren Fantin, Project Manager, and Walter Lewis, Implementation Manager, for their guidance and expertise.

Enjoy! Aleks

It is with much sadness that we announce the passing of Jim Morris, a long-time member and whitewater mentor/instructor of the WCA, on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 in Orillia.

Jim will be remembered by many current members of the WCA. He taught the Whitewater beginner's course at Palmer Rapids for some 20 years. During that time he was instrumental in starting over 400 WCA members on their whitewater adventures.

A celebration of Jim's life was held on Wednesday, March 21 in Orillia.

HIS OBITUARY IS:

MORRIS, James Gordon "Jim" – at home on Tuesday, March 13th, 2007; at the age of 71. Jim Morris, of Hawkestone, beloved husband of Hilary (nee: Grundy). Loving father of Stewart and his wife Denise of Oakville. Dear brother of George of Scotland and Bobby and his wife Helen of New Zealand. Following cremation, a Celebration of Jim's Life was held at the Mundell Funeral Home, 79 West St. N., Orillia, on Wednesday, March 21st at 1 p.m. If desired, memorial donations to the charity of one's choice would be gratefully appreciated. Messages of condolence are welcome at www.mundellfuneralhome.com

[http://www.ospreyobituaries.com/sitepages/obituary.asp?](http://www.ospreyobituaries.com/sitepages/obituary.asp?old=150666&source=Orillia%20Packet%20and%20Times)

[old=150666&source=Orillia%20Packet%20and%20Times](http://www.ospreyobituaries.com/sitepages/obituary.asp?old=150666&source=Orillia%20Packet%20and%20Times)

Submitted by Hugh Valliant, Long time canoeing/instructor buddy of Jim's

Herb Pohl's book,
The Lure of Faraway Places
is available from Dundurn Press.
Their website is being renovated but call them at
416-214-5544 or fax 416-214-5556 or
<http://www.dundurn.com/contact.shtml>

Watch for a review of
The Lure of Faraway Places, coming soon.

Photo caption correction (Spring issue of Nastawgan, 2007)

The photo by David Pelly of Joseph Ikinilik that appeared in the story of Father Buliard should have read:
Joseph Ikinilik, builder of Father Buliard's cabin.
(See "Letter to the Editor")

WCA Website Survey Results

In early March, the WCA undertook a professional electronic survey to gauge the memberships thoughts and receive their insights on the current WCA website. The survey consisted of 12 questions across a range of website related issues. We had a very strong response rate of 25%; usual response rates for these types of surveys tend to be in the single digits. The results have been tabulated and reviewed by the Board and are summarized below.

Overall

The general consensus of the membership is that our website should become much more interactive and more of a real time resource. Most users of the website visited for current or upcoming activities. The most popular areas of the website, in order, are: upcoming trips, bulletins, and events.

Most members, in fact 82%, felt that the WCA website should contain a routes database, ideal for trip planning.

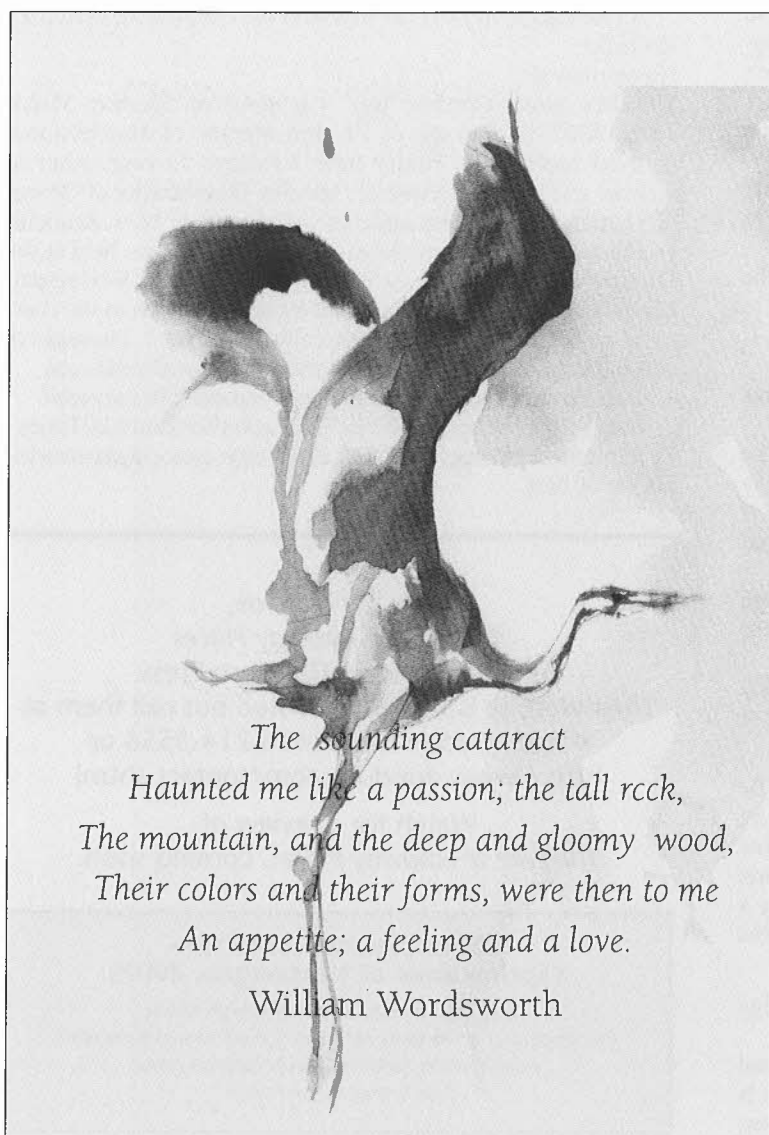
Another area that 64% of the membership would like to see is an online forum for trip planning. Over half of the respondents expressed interest in having the back issues of *Nastawgan* available online for review and trip planning (this has already happened: see the article on previous page).

Overall, the membership wanted the website to be a resource that they could use to research a trip, interact with other members if they had questions, find out what events are coming up, and finally, to join up with other paddlers on a short notice basis.

The survey also asked for additional comments and suggestions, which in many cases, were excellent ideas and are now under consideration for implementation.

On behalf of the WCA Board, we wish to thank those people that took the time to respond to the survey. Your feedback will help the WCA grow and become an even better resource to its members.

Aleks



*The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love.*

William Wordsworth

Heron Dance Press Announces

*A DEATH ON THE BARRENS,
SLEEPING ISLAND,
TRUE NORTH*

and other books of interest to
wilderness travelers are now
available directly from
our website,
www.herondance.org
and
www.amazon.ca

Also to be available shortly,
Stewart Coffin's
BLACK SPRUCE JOURNALS,
and a Heron Dance Edition of
THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES.

Rod
Heron sketch by Rod MacIver

Ecology–Conservation–Logging–Clearcutting Letters to the Editor

The biggest threat to Algonquin Park is forest fires started by camp fires and overuse of Algonquin Park by campers. Therefore Campers are likely the most negative impact on Algonquin Park? Lightening and natural forest fires also need forest management harvesting controls, if the park is to survive a major forest fire. Forest Fire is our primary concern for Algonquin Park.

A young healthy forest prevents diseases, about which non-foresters know nothing. Forest inventory technicians are the first to discover invasions by Emerald Ash Borer, Mountain Pine Beetle, Spruce Budworm, Beech scale and other threats. Logging keeps the interior park roads open to fight forest fires and maintain access to this vast area of forest that needs to be managed, also for safety search and rescue with so many interior park users. By law loggers are not allowed to leave any garbage, can you say the same for campers? The forest harvesting cycle is comprehensive: within three years leftover is recycled by local firewood operators, and the remaining small stuff regenerates the ecosystem.

The reason Algonquin Forest is comparatively young is because of regular, massive forest fires in the past. Because forest fires are no longer allowed, forest harvesting is necessary to maintain the natural ecology.

We support intelligent discussion to ensure that clear-cutting emulates forest fires, leaving pockets of mature trees for wildlife. Clear cutting is required to regenerate two species – poplar and jackpine – which is less than five percent of Algonquin Park harvesting. Otherwise selection and uniform shelterwood are the predominate methods of harvesting.

Some species, such as wolves, fox, bears, moose, deer thrive on open areas and even beavers enjoy new growth. Forestry is the local economy providing many jobs and sustaining first nations employment.

Many campers, when using the trails and portages, are not aware that logging has occurred, which supports non-intrusive management. We use Algonquin Park extensively, and there is no impact of harvesting on our camping.

Logging occurs in the late fall and winter months so activity impact on campers is a non-issue. If it was not for logging we would also not be able to access the park for winter use.

The roads accessing many of the gates are maintained by the forestry companies, without which these roads would quickly deteriorate and much of the park would become inaccessible, as many of the gates are low access and there would be no budget for road maintenance costs.

Since when is the Wilderness Canoe Association an exclusive voice to ban forest management in Ontario ??? Should we not be banning non-local people visiting Algonquin Park because of the gasoline used to travel, and gas spewing into the lakes from fishing boats?

And how about endangered turtles from road kill???

We are tired of the Wilderness Canoe Association's attitude towards forest management in Algonquin Park. Frank assists on many forest management committees in the area. What time and efforts are other WCA members contributing ??? We do care about Algonquin Park. How is WCA promoting our chance to help ??? A balanced approach to Algonquin Park Management will hopefully prevail.

Always Drown your Campfire !

jNeiLsoN

WCA Member support for Forest Management in Algonquin Park

Thank you for your open letter and your frank comments.

You and your husband (you mention him in your email) come from a forestry background and seem to have focus on the forest as a commercial resource. My background is the concern for our natural environments and the concept of parks that we have set up to preserve some of these ecosystems. I believe that the two approaches don't easily mix and we seem to disagree.

My letter - the one you are referring to - encourages the WCA membership to support the recommendations by the Ontario Parks Board - http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/Ebr/altf-document_en.pdf - recommendations that barely reduce the park's wood supply while defining specific protection for a larger portion of the park. This ought to find agreement with your own belief that protection and industrial use can coexist. So I hope that you sent in your own letter expressing such support, just like others including myself have done.

If you want to discuss specific items of conservation and logging, I don't mind getting together over a cup of coffee and sorting through your points.

Sincerely yours,
Erhard Kraus, WCA Conservation

Food for Paddlers

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

Anne Bradley, our new membership secretary, recommends the following recipe from Gretchen McHugh's "The Hungry Hiker's Book of Good Cooking". (NY, Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.)

Rice Pilaf

Ingredients

1/2 to 1 cup rice

1 clove garlic

2 tablespoons sliced home-dried mushrooms, crumbled

1 tablespoon dried sliced leeks

1 tablespoon dried parsley

1 to 2 tablespoons whole or sliced almonds or other nuts (optional)

Pinch of thyme

1 to 2 tablespoons butter or margarine

Note: Other possible additions are sunflower seeds, raisins, wild rice, celery, cheese, bacon pieces or sausage, canned shrimp or tuna packed in water, freeze-dried meats. Herbs and spices could be cloves, marjoram, thyme, saffron (a few threads, soaked in water first), curries (a combination of spices). Anne's preference is shrimp and bacon bits.

The amount of various foods to add to a basic recipe of 1/3 cup of raw rice is about 2 tablespoons and a pinch each of whatever spices you choose.

Directions

Cook garlic slowly in melted butter. Add the rice and stir to coat all grains. Add the other ingredients. Add twice as much water as rice, cover, bring to a boil and simmer 12 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and let sit for about 5 minutes to absorb the flavours.

WCA OUTINGS

JUNE - OCT. 2007

**WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT
PRESENTED IN THE FALL ISSUE?**
Contact the Outings Committee before August 15

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Outings, contact the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca; Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca

WCA outings and other activities may have an element of danger of serious personal injury. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety and well-being when participating in club events.

All Season HAVE PADDLE WILL TRAVEL

Scott Card, 905-665-7302, scottcard@sympatico.ca — I paddle whitewater nearly every weekend all year through, as long as I can find water that's liquid. Local mid-winter thaw runs are great, as are winter trips south. If you want to get out on a river any weekend, just call me to find out where I'm headed. I go wherever there's good water. Longer trips also a possibility. Trip difficulty levels vary from intermediate to advanced. Open canoe, C1, or kayak welcome.

All Season FROST CENTRE CANOE ROUTES

Ray Laughlen, 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.

June 30-July 2 OTTAWA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before June 22 — 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. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and practice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six boats.

June 30-July 8 or July 7-15 COULONGE RIVER

Cheryl Stoltz or David Atkins, 905-830-0720, canoetrippers@rogers.com — We have paddled the Dumoine and Noire and want to finish up this year with this last "jewel" of the Ottawa Valley.

Dates will be determined in late March by our baby-sitting arrangements. Give us a call as soon as possible and let us know your preference. Must have previous whitewater and wilderness tripping experience. Will be a cost for the shuttle. We look forward to our escape from the kids, work, and need to "rest" up before the Canadian Jamboree (6,000 kids in the hills of Tamaracouta celebrating 100 years of Scouting). On the water at 9, off at 3 or 4 to a good book and hammock. Will try to build in a layover day. Limited to 4 canoes

July - October MINDEN WILD WATER PRESERVE

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca — I'm frequently at the Gull River on weekends through the summer, so if you would like some paddling companionship at Minden, give me a call. I'm sure that you can persuade me that paddling is more important than staying home to paint or to mow the lawn. You need to be at least a strong intermediate to run the lower course, but the bottom can be played by novices. Happy to provide informal instruction for novices needing some moving-water practice or give you help in rolling your canoe or kayak.

July 7-8 INTRODUCTION TO TANDEM MOVING WATER

Jon McPhee, 905-640-8819, and Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca, book as soon as possible — This is a two-day workshop for flatwater tandem paddlers who want to develop basic moving-water skills. It should be of interest to trippers who want to become more comfortable negotiating the moderate moving-water they often encounter on river trips, and to canoeists who want to determine if whitewater paddling could be for them. We will focus on the basics of moving-water boat control and man oeuvres,

water reading, and safety. Both tandem and solo paddlers are welcome. The weekend will be spent at Palmer Rapids on the Madawaska River, one hour northeast of Bancroft. The location offers some of the best novice to intermediate whitewater in Southern Ontario. In order to be able to work closely with participants, registration is limited to 5 boats. Jon is an ORCA certified instructor, and participants successfully completing the course will receive an ORCA 1A certificate. There will be a fee of \$20.00 per person for this certificate course.

Prerequisites: Participants must be able to steer a canoe competently on flatwater. A Royalex canoe with supplementary floatation (air bag, air mattress, inner tube, etc.) to simplify recovery when you capsize is mandatory. If you need to rent a canoe, you should register and reserve the boat immediately as there are very limited numbers available with outfitters. Vest-type PFD's, helmets, and square-bladed, T-gripped whitewater paddles are necessary. Lastly, you must feel at home in the water to enjoy these workshops.

Recommended: While not required, a wetsuit will make floating in the river more pleasant. To manage time, we will review a whitewater instructional book or video before we meet will familiarize you with the important concepts.

July 13-15 WOLF LAKE WEEKEND TRIP - SEE CANADA'S LARGEST OLD GROWTH RED PINE FOREST

Mike McIntosh 705-523-5472, mike@friendsofchiniguchi.com book before July 9 . ----- Join us, on a weekend adventure, into the largest remaining Old Growth Red Pine Forest in Canada. The Wolf Lake area, located in the Southwest corner of Temagami, along the Chiniguchi waterway, is the largest contiguous Old Growth Red Pine forest in all of Canada – and most likely in the world. We will base camp on a high, quartzite outcropping overlooking beautiful Wolf Lake (voted as one of the top 5 scenic locations in Temagami) and day trip to Chiniguchi Lake, following traditional Nastawgan, visit the famous "Blue Lagoon" and hike in the Old Growth forest. This is an ideal trip for all who are interested in Temagami's legendary Old Growth forests, and is sponsored by the Friends of Chiniguchi. Participants are expected to be self sufficient, but there will be a communal dinner provided on the Saturday evening. Participants have the option of paddling up to Wolf Lake, starting from the pub-

lic access on Matagamasi Lake, or driving the rough logging road directly into Wolf Lake. Maximum 10 participants.

July 14-15 NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE WW COACHING WEEKEND

Scott Card 905-665-7302, ScottCard@sympatico.ca, book immediately ——— This clinic on the lower part of the Minden Wildwater Preserve on the Gull River will be of interest to ambitious and aggressive newer whitewater paddlers who already have good basic moving water skills and who want to move up to more demanding technical whitewater. We will work on river reading, boat control, strokes and any special skills participants would like to focus on. This workshop stresses learning by doing and watching, and we will practice group and self-critique extensively as a learning tool. Participants must have a properly equipped whitewater boat-meaning thigh straps and full floatation. Since the Gull's rocks can be tough on people's anatomy, a wet suit and gloves are recommended protection. A helmet is mandatory under the Preserve's rules. Maximum of 6 boats.

July 21-22 ADVANCED SOLO WW COACHING WEEKEND

Scott Card 905-665-7302, ScottCard@sympatico.ca, book immediately ——— Take your paddling skills to the next level! An advanced intermediate solo whitewater coaching weekend in late June or July under the direction of a highly qualified guest instructor. Exact date and instructor to be determined. We will be covering advanced river reading and running as well as playboating. The weekend will be on the Ottawa or the Gull River depending on water conditions. Participants must have their own boat and be comfortable

August 4-6 OTTAWA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before July 27 ——— 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. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and practice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six boats.

August 11-18 CHINIGUCHI RIVER

Richard Steinberg 905-671-5494 or 647-284-8083, Richard@ups-scs.com, book immediately — This is a beautiful area to paddle in the Sudbury region, marked with pink rock shores and fairly calm water.

August 21-28 GEORGIAN BAY – PHILIP EDWARD ISLAND/ FOX ISLANDS/KILLARNEY LAKE

Don Andersen, dhandersen@aol.com, 716-873-4476, book before July 15th — Join us in exploring the Collins Inlet, Mill Lake and the South Shore of Philip Edward Island. We will be either base camping on the Fox Islands or canoeing/portaging into Killarney Lake in Killarney Park for the last several days/nights of this trip depending on the group's wishes. We will be initially putting-in on the "Chic" river in Killarney Park. Due to the camping restrictions of Killarney Provincial Park the size of this group is limited to five canoes but more can be added if we remain on Georgian Bay at the Fox Islands. Suitable for competent novices who can manage windy conditions, waves and some short portages. Please be prepared for some hiking and photo opportunities. Families with teens welcome and encouraged, as are retired folk. Please book and commit as early as possible.

Sept. 1-3 OTTAWA RIVER

John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, jhackert@sympatico.ca, book before August 24 — 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. We recommend that you join us on our spring trips to develop and practice your skills before attempting this river. Fully outfitted whitewater boats are required. Limit six boats.

September 1-3 BAYFIELD AND BYNG INLETS

Richard Steinberg 905-671-5494 or 647-284-8083, Richard@ups-scs.com, book immediately — A relaxing long weekend of enjoying the late summer sun in the beautiful Georgian Bay area. This is a flatwater trip, but participants should keep in mind that Georgian Bay can be quite rough even at this time of year.

Sept 14-16 THE GREAT BON ECHO TURKEY TRIP

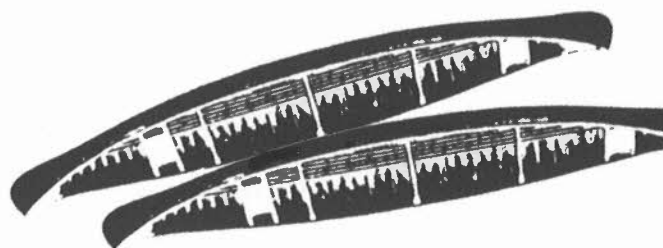
Gary James 416-512-6690 or gary.james@sympatico.ca or Anne Lessio 905-686-1730 or anne2006@sympatico.ca, book as soon as possible — Please join us for our third Thanksgiving Turkey trip. As always, we will prepare and enjoy a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings. This year we are car camping at Bon Echo Park in the group campsite area. Canoeing and swimming are available as we are right on the lake. All hands welcome to help prepare the meal and the firepit on Saturday. We can prepare turkey for a maximum of 14 people. There will be fees for the food and campsite (approximately \$35/person consisting of \$20 meal + \$15 camping)

September 21 to Sunday, September 23 FALL MEETING AT MKC

Mark your calendars and join us for our annual WCA Fall Meeting! Come paddle, meet old friends and make new ones and get the latest on the best canoe routes while enjoying the beautiful Madawaska Kanu Centre. Members, non-members, and children are all welcome. We've got a great speaker and the event is shaping up to be a fantastic time. Read the details and find a registration form on the back cover. Contact Aleks Gusev.

October 14 BURNT RIVER

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005 or bness@look.ca, book by October 1 — An opportunity to work off the calories from the Thanksgiving dinner. An easy flatwater river trip from Kinmount to above the village of Burnt River. The Burnt always has enough water to be paddled. Pretty scenery and a few short portages make this a good late season outing. A great day out for families or anyone wanting to enjoy the fall woods from a boat.



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WCA Fall Meeting 2007 – Madawaska Kanu Centre

Mark your calendars and join us for our annual WCA Fall Meeting! Come paddle, meet old friends and make new ones and get the latest on the best canoe routes while enjoying the beautiful Madawaska Kanu Centre. Members, non-members, and children are all welcome. We've got a great speaker and the event is shaping up to be a fantastic time. Here are the details available at the time of printing:

- When:** Friday evening, September 21 to Sunday, September 23
Where: MKC Resort in the heart of the Madawaska Highlands
Directions: From Bancroft, follow Hwy 62 north. Just past the small community of Purdy, turn left onto Centreview Road and follow the MKC signs. After 3.8 km, turn right, follow for 7 km, cross the Madawaska River and turn right on River Road. From Barry's Bay, turn south on Dunn St. off Hwy 60 and follow the MKC signs. Travel past the hospital for 14 km. Just before the Madawaska River, turn left on to River Rd.
- Program:** Friday 8 p.m. Hang around the fire at the screened Pavillion or rest in the two-story Swiss-style Chalet – home to games, music and a library of books and paddling videos. If you just finished shooting that elusive film in the far north, bring it on Saturday. After a hearty 8 a.m. breakfast, enjoy abundant daytime paddling opportunities, both moving and flat water. The Middle Mad is an excellent stretch class II-III white water (depending on the water level), just across the road from MKC. In addition, Palmer Rapids and the Lower Mad are a short distance away.
Saturday 6 p.m. Gather at the Chalet for dinner
Saturday 8 p.m. Evening presentations (indoors) by Jim Coffey of ESPRIT, one of North America's premium Swiftwater Rescue experts.
Sunday: Enjoy more paddling or hiking after breakfast — sign up on site
- Facilities:** Camping at MKC's wooded campground with comfort station and outhouses. Two-night camping included in price. Lodge rooms and dormitory lodging are available upon request (extra charge). Check in at the Office upon arrival. Dinner will be provided on Saturday night with a vegetarian option. Gather at the meeting hall on Saturday night for the presentation. Hiking and mountain bike trails are located on the property.
- Meals:** Paddlers need great food! Many believe that MKC is the Madawaska's best kept culinary secret! A hearty buffet breakfast awaits you every morning. You can eat on the deck as the sun's rays warm you or come in and take a fire-side chair. The Dinner Bell rings at 6 p.m. for a wonderful evening feast. All meals are home made with fresh ingredients, highlighted with herbs from MKC's own garden
- Registration:** Please complete the form below and mail it with your cheque by September 4. Early bird draw if registered by August 15th.
- Cost:** \$64 per person (members) \$70 (non-members), includes: two nights camping, parking, two breakfasts, dinner and presentation on Saturday (select vegetarian option). Children 5 and under are free (if not eating dinner).

Registration for 2007 WCA Fall Meeting

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

WCA member [] YES [] NO

I/We request vegetarian meal(s): [] Number of vegetarian meals requested: _____

Please make cheque for \$65 (members) per person (non-members \$70) by September 4, payable to:
Wilderness Canoe Association

Please mail directly to: Aleksandar Gusev
8 Valiant Rd, Etobicoke, Ontario M8X 1P4

For more info contact: Aleks Gusev at 416 236 7079 or email: aleks@gusev.ca