Conservation

The **WCA** appreciates and understands the value of wild and natural places and endeavors to promote their preservation by being involved in environmental issues relevant to wilderness canoeing.



Possible Amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act

The Canadian Federal Government is considering revising the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The concern that many canoeists have is that some waterways might have their status changed and would no longer be protected from development.
View the following links for details:

Revision of the Navigable Waters Protection ActPDF

Sample Letter to Your MP Re Revision of the Navigable Waters Protest ActPDF



The Disappearing Canoeing Country

*"**Scenario 1:** After spending several days paddling, portaging and working hard to get way back into what you thought was a remote area, around the bend comes a motor boat with tourists gawking at you, as if you were from outer space. "How did you get in here?" they ask.*

Scenario 2: After a hard day of running whitewater, portaging, and lining, you are relaxing at a great campsite with the lake glass calm, taking it all in and remarking on the skill levels it took to get here under your own power. Suddenly you hear the drone, and then the motor boat zooms right by your campsite, uncomfortably close. The wake crashes in on the shoreline, and you have to run down to pull up the canoe that was quietly resting on the beach. The fishermen in the boat barely look at you.

Scenario 3: Way back in what you thought was wilderness, you find boat caches at a portage around some rapids no motor boat could ever run. The motor boats with the fly-in fishermen don't have to run it, and it is no longer a barrier to motorized navigation, because they now have boats at either end. They just portage the motors and gas. There will be motor boats and people along your entire route, who don't know and don't care how self-propelled travel works.

Scenario 4: It is late in the day and a thunderstorm is coming as your group searches for a campsite. You spy a potential campsite and paddle quickly towards it as the skies darken and the wind picks up. When you land, you are dismayed to find mounds of garbage strewn about the place. You find fish remains all over the site, from a party of slob anglers who used this site for their fish cleaning and shore lunch. The fire pit is massive enough to smelt iron, and you note the lack of firewood around the site. To make matters worse, a few feet from the edge of the only flat tent sites is an open latrine emanating the stink of human waste.

Scenario 5: After several days of paddling and portaging into an area that the topo maps showed as uninhabited, you are exhilarated by the wildness of beautiful Shield country, complete with lots of bare rock, lichens, jack pine, and black spruce. As you round the bend there it is—the "remote" tourism lodge with its fleet of motor boats pulled up on the shore. The lodge's outhouses are perched on the shallowest of soils, and you wonder when the water will be permanently contaminated with coliform bacteria. You wonder if drinking water directly from the lake is still OK, like it always used to be.

Scenario 6: You are paddling and portaging back into your favorite wilderness lake on the civic holiday long weekend. This takes several portages and you are looking forward to great fishing. When you get there you are shocked to find an army of car campers at a new road access point, several camps already set up, and boom boxes echoing electronic noise through the once quiet wilderness. A logging road has just been punched through to access some timber, and nothing was done to protect the remote wilderness qualities of this lake. It's over."

With these images starts an article submitted to the WCA's magazine Nastawgan a few years ago. I am sure you can relate to these scenarios, and you wonder what can be done. Does no one see the problem? Well, the WCA and its Environmental Committee have worked over the years to make a

difference and achieve some direct results. But in essence, the article is just as valid today as then.
Click here for the full text of the article THE DEATH OF WILDERNESS CANOEING PDF by Glen Hooper

Protecting the canoe routes means you are in contention with the many interests that vie to access of the land. When trying to describe, or even achieve, change, concepts must be clear and not tainted by the muddle of every-day language.
For instance, the word "wilderness" will create confusion. It has different meanings to different people. The purist wants no human presence at all in a wilderness. On on the other hand, some happy outdoorsman will insist he has to use his ATV to travel right to the shore of "his" wilderness lake. Our concept is neither of those, and thus the word "wilderness" is not very helpful, and different words should be used in our quest for preservation.
Glen Hooper has developed the concepts and terminology that will serve this purpose. Click here to read the article: DEVELOPING THE LANGUAGE FOR CANOE ROUTE PROTECTION PDF



Hydro Dam Proposed for the Dumoine River

The following notice has been circulated by Becky Mason.

I know that many of you, like me, have travelled down or have admired the beautiful and exciting Dumoine River in Quebec. It is a very important watershed and it sounds like the Dumoine is slated to be dammed unless there is enough public pressure against the project. I'm told it is the last undammed wild river in southern Quebec, the largest area of unfragmented southern boreal forest in Quebec and an important economy generating eco-tourist destination. For only those reasons alone it is important to preserve. If you are able please add your voice against this ill-advised and misguided damming project. The links below have all the information about the Dumoine and the project and there is an informed letter you can easily add your comments to and then email from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness site. Sending from the CPAWS site takes 2 - 3 minutes from start to finish.

Thanks for the support and as my Dad always said, "Every letter makes a difference."

Becky Mason

For further information visit the following site:
www.cpaws.org/dumoine/