

# White Water Canoe Trip Noire River, Quebec

1<sup>st</sup> Merrickville Venturers

July 12-18, 2008

## Adults

Bill Ricketts

Allan Yates

## Venturers

Ben Catton

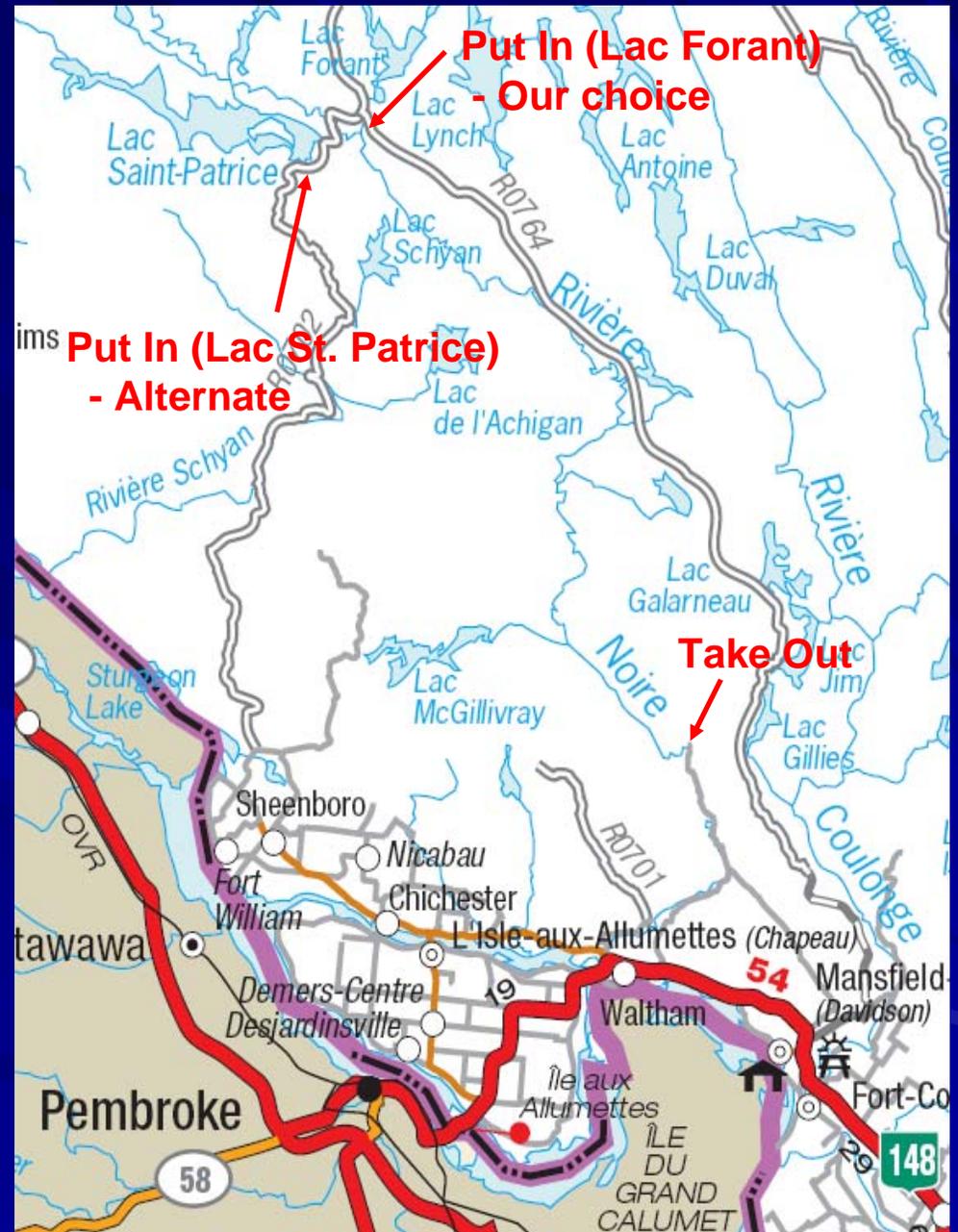
Adam Szalai

Grant Szalai

Max Taylor

# Noire River

Near Waltham, Quebec



# Noire River Statistics

- Total river length 93km
- Total portage length 410m
- Number of portages 3
- Rapids

<u>Class</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Length</u>
I	26	1,852m
II	20	2,375m
III	4	345m

- Portages

<u>Name</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Canyon Staircase	150m	
Mountain Chutes	200m	Portage from hell
Rapides de l'Ours	60m	

# Noire River

- Key put-in points
  - Lac St. Patrice 6-7 days
  - Lac Forant 5-6 days (we picked this option; but we should have used the other)
- Take outs
  - The Black River Inn is best; this is what we did.
  - One more day of river travel (20km), with no rapids, brings you to Waltham.
- Campsites
  - Range from sand bars to wooded sites.
  - Tent pegs designed for sand are very beneficial on the sandbars.
  - Most are of a good size.
  - Hap Wilson's campsites ratings are accurate.
  - Campsites become scarcer the further down the river you go; especially downstream of the 50:50 rapid.
- Access
  - We did our own shuttling. Though we only had a single vehicle, the father of one of our leaders lived nearby and did the service for us.
  - The road up to the put-in was in terrible condition. Our canoe trailer self-destructed on the drive back from the put-in.
  - Parking, for a fee, is available at the Black River Inn. No charge if you utilise their shuttle service.
  - Fly-in would have been nice (Air Swisha - [www.airswisha.com](http://www.airswisha.com)), but the cost was \$300 per person.
  - Three hour drive from Merrickville to the Black River Inn.
  - Three hour drive from the Black River Inn to the Lac Forant put-in.

# Noire River

## ■ Fishing

- In Quebec, kids can fish under an adult with a fishing license, even if they are not related.
- The top part of the river is in a ZEC (forestry management zone), and an additional fishing license is required.
- We didn't catch a thing (other than trees and rocks).

## ■ Outfitters (canoe rental and shuttle service)

- Expeditions Riviere Noire      [www.expeditionsrivierenoire.com](http://www.expeditionsrivierenoire.com)
- Black River Inn                      [www.blackriveroutfitter.com](http://www.blackriveroutfitter.com)
- Esprit Rafting                        [www.espritrafting.com](http://www.espritrafting.com)

## ■ Wilderness Feel

- Only three other parties met on the river.
- Less travelled than the Dumoine.

## ■ Biting Insects

- Mosquitoes, Black flies, Horse flies, Deer flies, Stable flies (biting house flies), Sand Flies (no-see-ums/midges), and biting spiders.

# Special Features

- Jumping rock at bottom of Rapides de l'Islet.
  - Very good place to stop for a break.
- “Official” jumping rock, diving board, and swing rope
  - Located opposite campsite at km 63.
  - Smaller than previous jumping rock, and diving board (lashed from spars) was broken.
  - Kids said it was “disappointing” compared to the previous one.
- *Toilet Bowl Rapid (CIII)*
  - Good class III.
- *The Drain Rapid (CIII)*
  - Best hydraulic of the trip; we were too scared at first to run it.
  - Adults popped the inflatable dinghy going through it.
  - Best canoe save of the trip with a massive draw.
- Portage from Hell
  - Not actually too hard, but canoes must be lowered down a steep rock covered slope. Setup an anchor, and belay with a Munter hitch.
  - We did the short version of the portage (200m versus 1km).
- *50:50 Rapid (CIII)*
  - Great to place to play.
  - Awesome surfing waves.
  - We spent two nights here.
  - Practiced rescue scenarios: Throw bags (stuffed & open coil), tensioned diagonal.

# Inflatable's

- After listening to Spike, our Paddler Co-Op instructor, brag about running rapids on inflatable ladybugs and Coleman couches, our lads wanted to do the same.
- We brought an inflatable whale, dolphin, and dinghy.
- The kids had a great time in the rapids with these.
- We looked crazy towing them down the river; and portaging them!
- Well worth the effort.
- Had to do a few puncture repairs, but we were prepared for that.
- The dolphin was easier balance on than the whale.
- The dinghy was practically untippable in the rapids, but people did get thrown out of it.
- The dinghy split open when the two adults took it through a large hydraulic. Though it was 30 years old, so it was nice to see it leave the world with a bang!

# Finances

- Total cost for the trip was \$756. Key items:

Food	\$318
Transportation (mileage allowance)	\$266
Fishing license	\$51
Parking @ Black River Inn	\$64

- No commercial shuttle used.
- No equipment rented (would have been \$700 for canoes).
- Cost per Venturer was \$189; with each Venturer paying \$50 and fundraising making up the difference.
  - Leaders didn't pay; they gave up a weeks holiday.
- Commercial tour packages (e.g. Black Feather / Paddlefoot / Sunrise) cost \$1,000 - \$1,500 per person.
  - We like to boast to the parents.

# Lessons Learned

Read our report for all the details; the highlights are:

- River travel is much faster than flat water; especially at high water levels.
  - We were reaching each night's campsite before lunch.
  - Should have done the longer version of the trip (Lac St. Patrice).
  - We finished the trip a day early, and we camped two nights at the *50:50* rapids.
- Don't use garbage bags for waterproofing packs; it generates too much trash to burn.
- Tie everything to the canoe; all the time.
  - We lost a paddle and a water bottle on our one and only flip of a loaded canoe. Found a replacement paddle at the next portage though.
- More snacks from scratch rather than pre-made.
  - Cookies and cakes can be baked at camp. We did Mud Pies (Frogs, Oats/coconut/cocoa powder) & Coffee Cake (Outback oven).
- Inexpensive tents keep out neither water nor flies.
  - One leader was soaked the first night and eaten alive the second night. He slept in our screened dining shelter after that. Actually we all did; it was fun!
- Make sure all participants are adequately trained.
  - We had one Venturer with the estimated equivalent of White Water I ½ (Opemikon White-Water I); and it wasn't enough.
  - His bow man still hasn't let him forget it.
- If it doesn't fit in a pack or barrel, then it doesn't come.
  - Loose items are a pain on portages.

# Unloading at Put-in



# Inflating Float Bags



**Inflating...**



# Lac Forant Put-in



# Starting Off





# Towing the Inflatable's



**First Night - Sandbar Campsite**

# Rain in the Evening



# Second Day Breakfast



# Good Use for Pigtails



# ***The Wall* – CII - Video**



# ***The Wall in a Dinghy***



# ***Toilet Bowl - CIII***



# ***Toilet Bowl - CIII***



# ***Toilet Bowl - Dingy/Whale Video***



# Second Day Lunch



# Rapides de l'Islet Cliff Jumping



# Cliff Jumping - Video



# Second Night Campsite



# Cooking Supper



# Screened Shelter



# Fishing





**Outback Oven**



# Repairing the Dinghy

# Hennessy Hammock





**Sheltered Leader Tent**

# Relaxing Paddling



# Portaging



# Portage from Hell



# Munter Hitch



# Portage from Hell



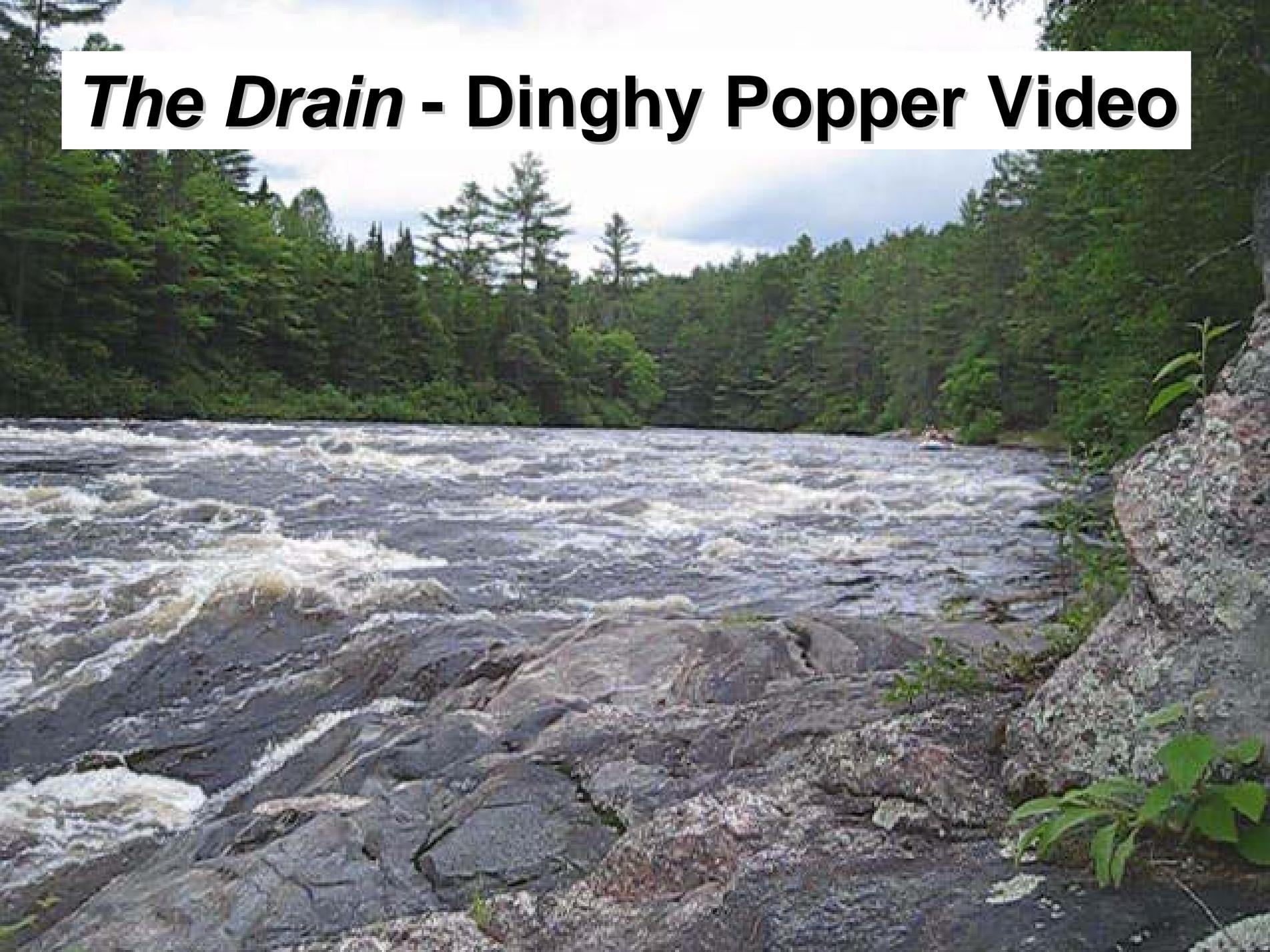
# Scouting a Rapid



# ***The Drain* - Crash Video**



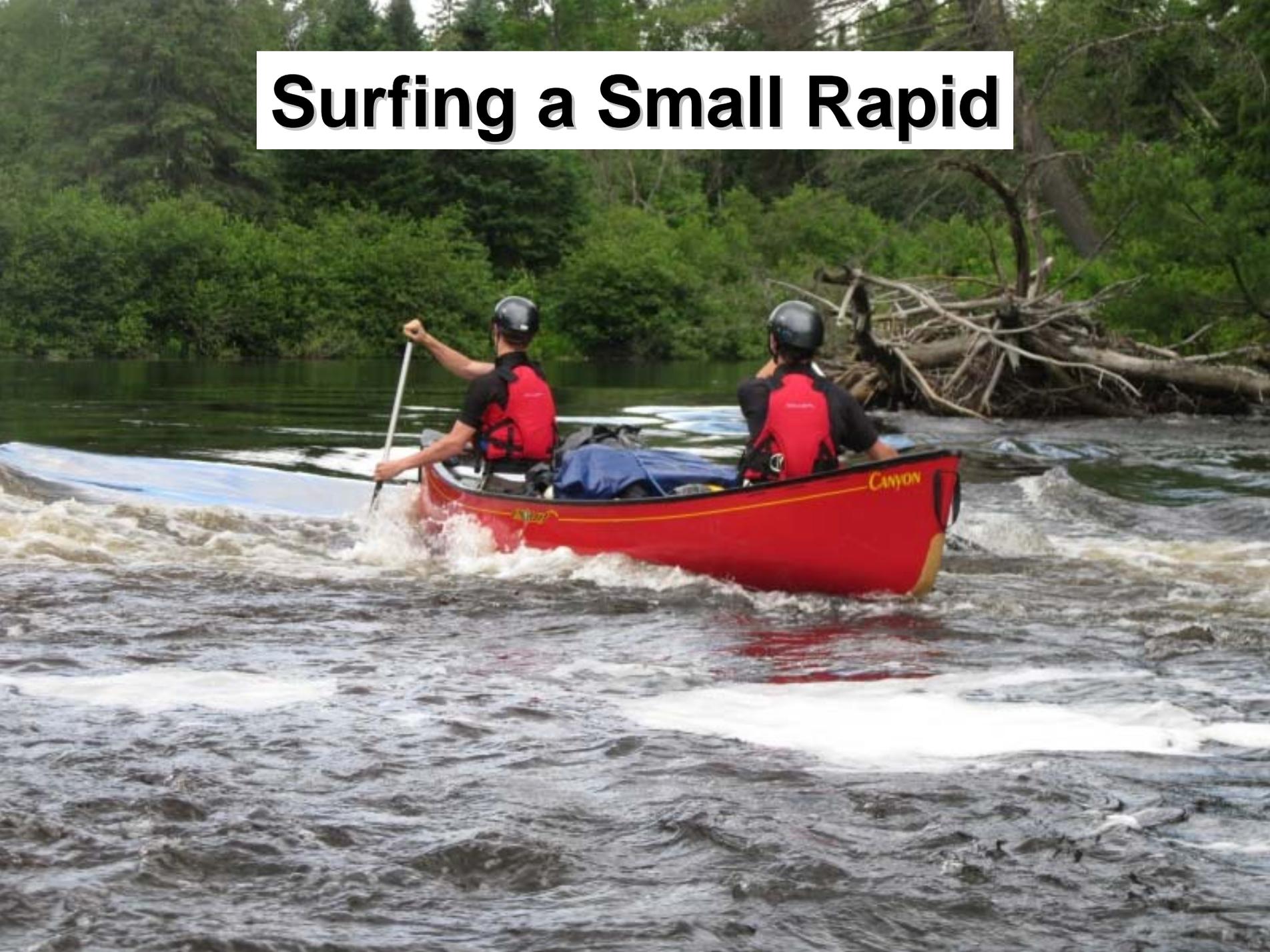
# ***The Drain* - Dinghy Popper Video**



# Smooth Portage Over a Hill



# Surfing a Small Rapid



# How Not to Surf Video



# Relaxing with the Current





# Bank Swallow Nests

# Third Night Campsite



# Thermarest Chair



# Sleeping in the Dining Shelter





# Third Night Beach

# **“Official” Jumping Rock**



# Broken Diving Board



# Another Use for the Inflatable's





**50:50 Rapid**



**Going for Another Run**



**Playing in the 50:50**



**On the Dolphin**



**Not Quite on the Dolphin**



**Not on the Dolphin**



**There's the Rider**

# **50:50 Surfing Video**



# ***50:50 Canoe/Dolphin Video***



# **50:50 Dolphin Video**





**Experimenting...**

# Fourth & Fifth Night Campsite





# **Soloing the 50:50**

# **Soloing the *50:50*, backward...**





**Tensioned Line**



**Tensioned Diagonal**

# Saturated Drink Mixing



# Pizza Pocket Lunch



# Kraft Dinner



# Chocolate Fondue



# The Only Thunderbox



# Toasting Breakfast



# Our Only Fully Loaded Flip



# Spare Paddle Not Secured



# The Last Lunch





# Comparing Sunburns

# Packing at the Take Out



# Show and Tell - To Bring

- Hap Wilson book
- DVD with all photos (30 copies)
- Trip Plan & report (30 copies)
- Presentation (non-photo slides) (30 copies)
- Sand tent pegs