

## Overview

Seven day white water canoe trip down Quebec's Noire River. Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup> to Friday July 18<sup>th</sup>. Drive up on the Saturday, everybody in one vehicle, to the Black River Inn. Bill's father will meet us there and will shuttle our vehicle from the top of the river to our take out point. We will have a short paddle to our first campsite on Saturday night. Thereafter we will work our way down the river with plenty of time to play in the rapids either in canoes or on inflatable animals. Take out on the Friday back at the Black River Inn. Return to Merrickville by mid afternoon.

## Statistics

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

Rapid Class	Number	Total Length
I	26	1,852 m
II	20	2,375 m
III	4	345 m

Portage	Length	Notes
Canyon Staircase	150m	
Mountain Chutes	200m	Very steep cliff
Rapides de l'Ours	60m	

## Participants

Name	Type
Ricketts, Bill	Adult
Yates, Allan	Adult
Catton, Ben	Youth
Szalai, Adam	Youth
Szalai, Grant	Youth
Taylor, Max	Youth

## Qualifications

Name	FW Skill	WW Course	ORCA	Swimmer	First Aid	Boat Rescue	River Rescue
Ricketts, Bill	Stern - Adv	WW I		Yes	Standard		Yes
Yates, Allan	Stern - Adv	WW I/II/III	MW 1	Yes	Standard	Yes	Yes
Catton, Ben	Stern - Adv	WW I/II/III	MW 2	Bronze Medallion			
Szalai, Adam	Stern - Nov	WW I/II		Yes			
Szalai, Grant	Stern - Nov	WW I/II		Yes			
Taylor, Max	Stern - Adv	WW I & 1/2		Red Cross Level 8	Standard		

## Schedule

### Saturday July 12<sup>th</sup>

Depart Merrickville from the community centre at 8:30am. Upper Dwyerhill Road to highway 417. West to Country Road 4 (Storyland Road). Turn right and follow to County Road 653. Turn right and over the Ottawa River. Road turns into #301, follow as it turns into #148 to Fort Coulonge. Purchase a fishing license here. Continue to Chemin de la Riviere-Noire and turn right. Follow to the Black River Inn.

Arrive Black River Inn at approximately 11:30am, travel distance approximately 200 km.

Pickup Bill's father at the Black River Inn.

Depart Black River Inn approximately 12:00pm. Eat brown bag lunch from home.

Travel to Lac Forant put in point, km 121, arrive at approximately 2:00pm (2 hour drive).

Bill's father to take truck back to Black River Inn take out.

Canoe to top of *The Wall* rapid, km 114 for first night's camp (7 km travel).

### Sunday July 13<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to top of *Mountain Chutes* rapids, km 94 (20 km travel).

150m portage at *Canyon Staircase* rapids.

### Monday July 14<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to just before *Hunt Club* rapids, km 75 (19 km travel).

200m portage from hell (80' cliff) at *Mountain Chutes* rapids.

60m portage at *Rapides de l'Ours* rapids.

### Tuesday July 15<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to km 64 (11 km travel).

Jump rock (jump platform? swing rope?) at km 64.

### Wednesday July 16<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to 50:50 rapids, km 51 (13 km travel).

Play in rapids.

### Thursday July 17<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to km 37 (14 km travel)

### Friday July 18<sup>th</sup>

Canoe to Black River Inn, km 27 (10 km travel).

Arrive Black River Inn approximately 11:00am.

Depart Black River Inn approximately 12:00pm.

Arrive Merrickville approximately 3:00pm.

Distribute kit for cleaning and drying.

Call parents upon arrival in Merrickville or drop kids off at their homes.

## The Black River Inn

John Perron

Box 116

Waltham, Quebec, J0X 3H0

stay@blackriveroutfitter.com

(819) 771-5108 (voice mail)

(613) 482-9302

### Financial Budget

Item	Budget	Actual
Transportation – 2 x 400km @ 25 cents/km	\$200	\$266
Food - (\$10/pp/day)	\$420	\$318
Fishing license	\$45	\$51
Parking at The Black River Inn @ \$5/day (?)	\$35	\$63
White gas for stoves		\$6
Meal upon return		\$38
Miscellaneous		\$14
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>\$756</b>
<b>Total per person (4)</b>	<b>\$175</b>	<b>\$189</b>
Venturer fundraising per person	\$125	\$139
<b>Total fee per person</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$50</b>

### Safety Precautions

- A properly fitting personal floatation device will be worn when on the water.
- A helmet will be worn when near rapids.
- Personal floatation devices and helmets will be securely fastened when worn.
- A paddle, for support, will always be carried when scouting rapids.
- No participants have mortal allergies.
- All rapids will be scouted before running.
- Strongest paddlers will run rapid first and act as a safety boat for the remaining canoes.
- Option to portage any rapid always available for any person not comfortable running a given rapid.
- Safety equipment (pin kit and first aid kit) carried on two separate canoes.
- All equipment to be tethered to canoes.
- A safety boat will always be used when swimming or running rapids.
- Venturers will be sleeping in a tent separate from the leaders.
- All drinking water will be purified using bleach, at the ratio of six drops per gallon.
- All swimming to be supervised by an adult.
- No food in personal rucksacks.
- All canoes to be equipped with for/aft float bags, bow/stern grab loops, bailers, and throw ropes.
- Food barrels to be hung or stored well away from camp.
- Emergency exit points from the trip identified and noted on maps.
- River Rescue training taken by Allan and Bill.

### Fishing

A fishing license is required for all people, regardless of age, in Quebec. We will be purchasing a license for one of the adults and this will allow all youth to fish under the auspices of this license.

### Hospital

The nearest hospital is the Pembroke Hospital located at:  
 705 Mackay Street  
 Pembroke, Ontario  
 (613) 732-2811

**Maps**

Examination of a variety of topographical maps has shown that the maps in the book Rivers of the Upper Ottawa Valley by Hap Wilson are the most complete and accurate. Copies of the relevant maps are at the end of this document. The maps have been customized with our planned campsites and emergency exit points. Three plastic laminated copies of these maps will be brought on the trip; one in each canoe. These maps will be carried in waterproof map cases.

**Equipment**

Common camping equipment will be stored in a 60 litre barrel. Food will be stored across four 30 litre barrels. Two dry sacks will be used to store the tents and other soft goods. Tent poles will be fastened to the outside of a rucksack. Though the portages are few and short, light weight equipment (such as backpacking stoves) will be used where possible. Two inflatable animals and an inflatable boat are planned to be towed behind the canoes for playing in the rapids. All meat will be frozen to ensure maximum longevity. Spare paddles will be bungeed to the thwarts.

**Vehicle**

Manufacturer: GMC  
Model: Yukon XL Denali  
Colour: Pewter  
License plate: AKFA 929

**Personal Kit List**

- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad (optional)
- Torch
- Headlamp (optional)
- Change of clothes (several)
- Change of footwear
- Trousers
- Long sleeved shirt
- Swim suit
- Towel
- Sweater or sweat shirt
- Rain jacket
- Rain pants (optional)
- Pyjamas
- Pillow (optional)
- Wash kit: tooth brush, tooth paste, soap, shampoo, chapstick, etc.
- Mess kit: plate, bowl, cup, knife, fork, spoon in mesh bag
- Water bottles
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Hat / Baseball cap
- Kleenex
- Toilet paper
- Whistle
- Bicycle gloves (optional)
- Sunglasses w/strap (optional)
- Water shoes (optional)
- Pocket knife (optional)
- Sheath knife (optional)
- Camera (optional)
- Multi-tool (optional)
- Compass (optional)
- Fishing rod & tackle (optional)
- GPS (optional)

All personal kit must be packed in a rucksack or canoe pack. Everything must be completely waterproof using either dry sack(s) or garbage bag(s). The pack WILL go in the river.

Quick dry materials such as polypropylene and polyester fleece are recommended. A rain suit can double as an extra layer in cold weather. Canoes WILL dump. Wet feet are a given. Sandals are not recommended. Glasses should be secured with a strap.

No electronic games.

**Menu****Saturday**

Lunch  
Brown bag from home  
Dinner  
Hamburgers

**Sunday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Sandwiches ham and cheese  
Dinner  
Sausages on a bun

**Monday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Granola bars and peanut butter  
sandwiches  
Dinner  
Spaghetti & meat sauce

**Tuesday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches  
Dinner  
Beef stew

**Wednesday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches  
Dinner  
Chili and nacho (tortilla) chips

**Thursday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Peanut and jelly sandwiches  
Dinner  
White cheddar macaroni and cheese

**Menu (continued)****Friday**

Breakfast  
Cereal, milk  
Lunch  
Peanut and jelly sandwiches

**Snacks**

Cookies (chocolate chunk, white macadamia nut)  
Peanut M&Ms  
Marshmallows  
Two bite brownies  
Gummi bears  
Granola bars  
Cake

**Drinks**

Fresh milk (first morning)  
Tetrapak milk (remaining mornings)  
Koolaid singles  
Juice crystals

**Grocery List**

Bread, 7 loaves  
Peanut butter, crunchy, 1 large jar (have)  
Jam, 2 jars (have)  
Granola bars, sweet & spicy, 1 large box  
Granola bars, chocolate covered, 1 large box  
Hamburgers, 12  
Hamburger buns, 12  
Ketchup, single packets, 12 (have)  
Mustard, single packets, 12 (have)  
Relish, single packets, 12 (have)  
Spaghetti, 1 package  
Spaghetti sauce, 1 bottle  
Ground beef, 2 lbs  
Crackers, soda, 1 box  
Soup, instant, beef noodle, 4 packages  
Macaroni & cheese, white cheddar, President's Choice, 3 boxes  
Chili, 6 cans  
Tortilla chips, 2 large bags  
Cereal, Frosted Flakes, 1 large box  
Cereal, Corn Pops, 1 large box  
Cookies, chocolate chunk, 1 bags  
Cookies, white macadamia nut, 1 bags  
Peanut M&Ms, 1.6 kg  
Marshmallows, 1 large bag  
Kool aid singles, cherry/fruit punch, 3 boxes  
Juice crystals, lemonade, 1 large container  
Gummi bears, 1 bag  
Two bite brownies, 2 containers  
Milk, 1 litre  
Milk, UHT tetrapak, 5 litres  
Sausages, cheese, 12  
Sausage buns, 12  
Bagels, 12  
Cream cheese, 8oz  
Beef jerky, 2 packages  
English muffins, 2 packages

## Recipes

### Tortilla Pizza

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 7 min.

Equipment Required: frying pan or campfire

Ingredients: Tortillas  
Farmer Sausage (pepperoni sticks)  
Your favourite cheese  
Pizza sauce (squirt bottle)  
(optional)  
Fresh ingredients  
aluminum foil

Cooking Instructions: Lay tortilla out (over top a square of aluminum foil) to squeeze some pizza sauce on.

Add meat and fresh ingredients as you desire. cut cheese into peices and add to tortilla.

Fold into a half-moon shape with foil and heat both sides taking care not to burn the tortilla.

Eat from foil wrap when ready.

### Smoked Salmon Bagels

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 2 min.

Equipment Required: bowl

Ingredients: 1 - 8 oz package smoked salmon drained  
1 - 8 oz package cream cheese

Cooking Instructions: Drain salmon. Soften the cream cheese by mixing in a bowl. Add the salmon and mix lightly. Toast the bagels over the fire or the flame of your cook stove. Spread with cream cheese.

**Mud Pies****Brownies**

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 20 min.

Equipment Required: Outback oven or reflector oven

Ingredients: 1/4 cup butter and 2 tbs oil  
(or 2/3 cup oil)  
1 tsp vanilla  
1/3 cup flour  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/4 cup cocoa powder  
2 eggs (or 4 tbs powdered)  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Cooking Instructions: Mix all ingredients except flour, then add flour. Stir in nuts or any other goodies with a few quick strokes. Bake 15 - 20 minutes. It will be soft in the middle and drier around the edges when done. Cool before cutting.

**Cinnamon Rolls**

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 20 min.

Equipment Required: Outback Oven or Reflector Oven

Ingredients: 1 1/2 cups tea biscuit mix  
1/2 cup water  
1/4 cup brown sugar  
margarine  
cinnamon

Cooking Instructions: We buy the tea biscuit mix at Bulk Barn or any other bulk food place.

Mix up biscuit mix with water into a firm dough. Roll or press out into a flat rectangle on a cutting board or paddle. Spread a generous layer of margarine over the surface, sprinkle with brown sugar and cinnamon. Roll up into a long cylinder, then cut into 3/4" slices.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

**Chocolate Sex GORP Dust!**

Serves: 10

Cooking Time: 15 min.

Equipment Required: Cookset pots to act as double boiler

Ingredients: Hershey's Chocolate Fondue Bar. Marshmallows.  
Leftover GORP. Shish ka bob skewers ( optional )

Cooking Instructions: Heat Chocolate over another pot of steaming water. Not to hot! On occassion remove from heat to be sure not to burn the chocolate.  
While waiting, beat your leftover GORP into bits inside the bag it is in. Once beaten place onto a bowl or plate. Skewer marshmallows with the bamboo sticks or whatever is nearby. You can cut sticks like oversized toothpicks. Dip marshmallows into chocolate and roll into Gorp.

**Common Camping Equipment**

Tent, Scout  
 Ground sheet  
 Tent pegs, 8  
 Tarp, plastic sheets, 2  
 First aid kit, 2  
 Duct tape  
 Matches, 2 boxes  
 Dish soap  
 Toilet paper  
 Tinfoil  
 Paper towel  
 Garbage bags, 5  
 Pot set  
 Pot, large  
 Frying pan, 1  
 Lantern, white gas  
 Spare mantles, 4  
 White gas, 6 litres  
 Stoves, white gas, backpacking, 2  
 Water containers, collapsible, 2  
 Tea towel, 2  
 Dish cloths, 2  
 Spoon, large, 2  
 Spatula  
 Ladle  
 Spaghetti lifter  
 Knife, sharp  
 Playing cards  
 Single cup coffee maker  
 Coffee filters, #2, 15  
 Scrubbing pad, nylon  
 Carabiners, 6  
 Slings, single, 6  
 Saw, folding  
 Hatchet  
 Hammock  
 Barrel, 60 litre, w/harness, 1  
 Barrels, 30 litre, w/harnesses, 4  
 Paracord, 100', 3  
 Bleach & eye dropper

**Common Camping Equipment**

Outback Oven  
 Tent pegs, sand, 8  
 Newspaper  
 Fishing license  
 Bungee cords, 6  
 Dry bags, 20 litre, 2  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Skin & Skin Prep  
 Road map, Quebec  
 Bungee cords, 6  
 Shovel, folding  
 Screen room  
 Inflatable animals, 2  
 Inflatable boat  
 Manual air pump for inflatable animals & boat  
 12V air pump for inflatable animals & boat  
 Patch kit, inflatable boat  
 Patch kit, inflatable animals  
 Patch kit, Thermarest  
 Solarcaine

**Paddling Equipment**

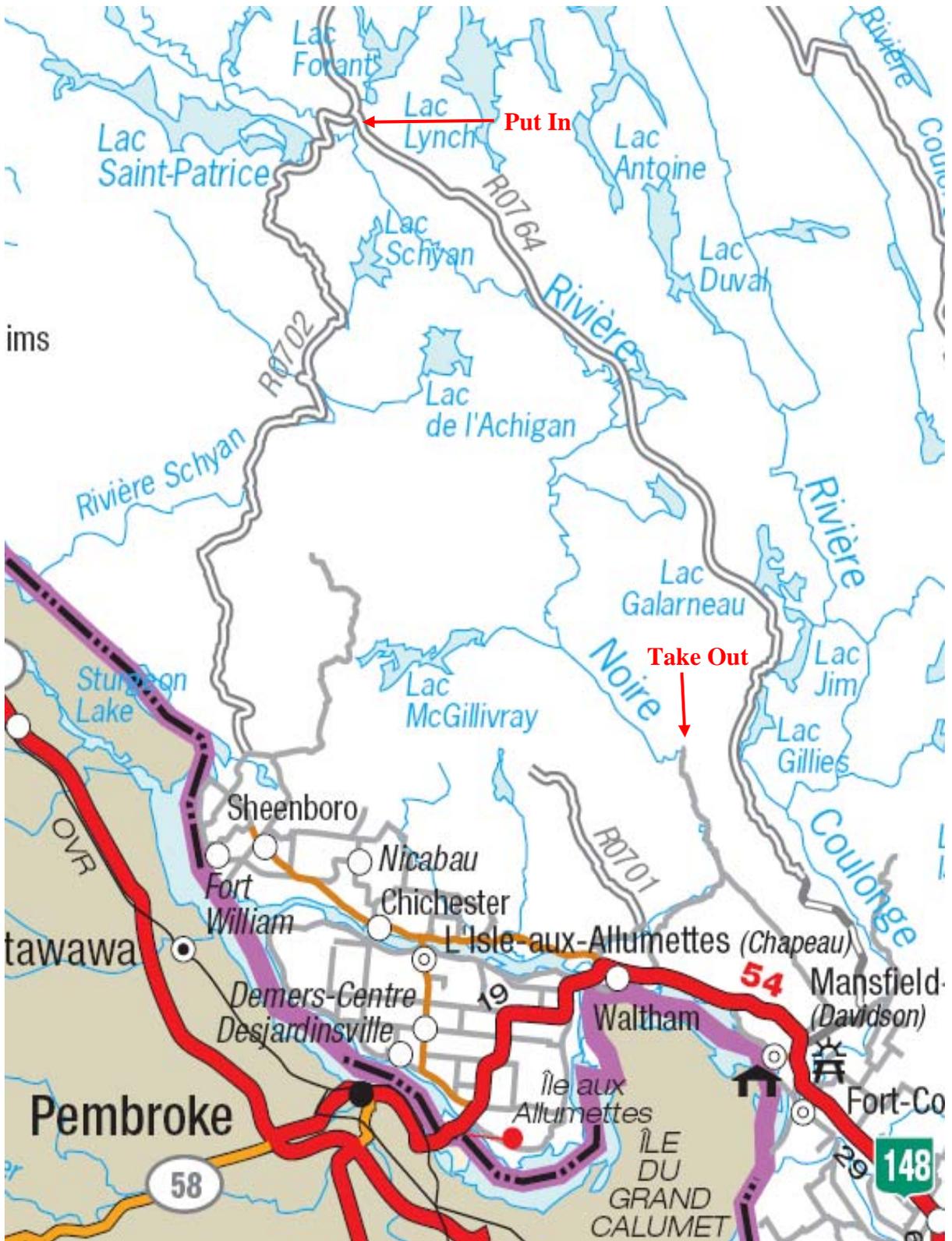
PFDs w/knives and whistles, 6  
 Quick release belts, 3  
 Cow tails, 3  
 Canoes w/thigh straps & knee pads, 3  
 Float bags, 6  
 Repair kit, float bag  
 Yoke pads, 4  
 Bailers, 3  
 Throw ropes, 3  
 Maps, river, waterproof, 3 sets  
 Map, topographical  
 Paddles, 9 (includes 1 spare per canoe)  
 Painters, 3  
 Epoxy putty  
 Map cases, waterproof, 3

**Allan's Extra Kit**

White water pre-training notes  
River rescue notes  
Sheath knife  
Multi-tool  
Thermometer  
CDs  
Trip plan  
Watch  
Camera (fully charged)  
Camera spare battery (fully charged)  
Mobile telephone (fully charged)  
Mobile telephone car charger  
Book  
Physical fitness forms  
Tent (poles, pegs, ground sheet)  
Headlamp  
Pelican camera case, w/lanyard & carabiner  
First aid kit  
Truck garbage container w/bags  
Briefcase  
Weather forecast  
Shaver (fully charged)  
Contact lens solution  
Thermarest chair  
Notebook & pencil  
Compass

**Pin Kit**

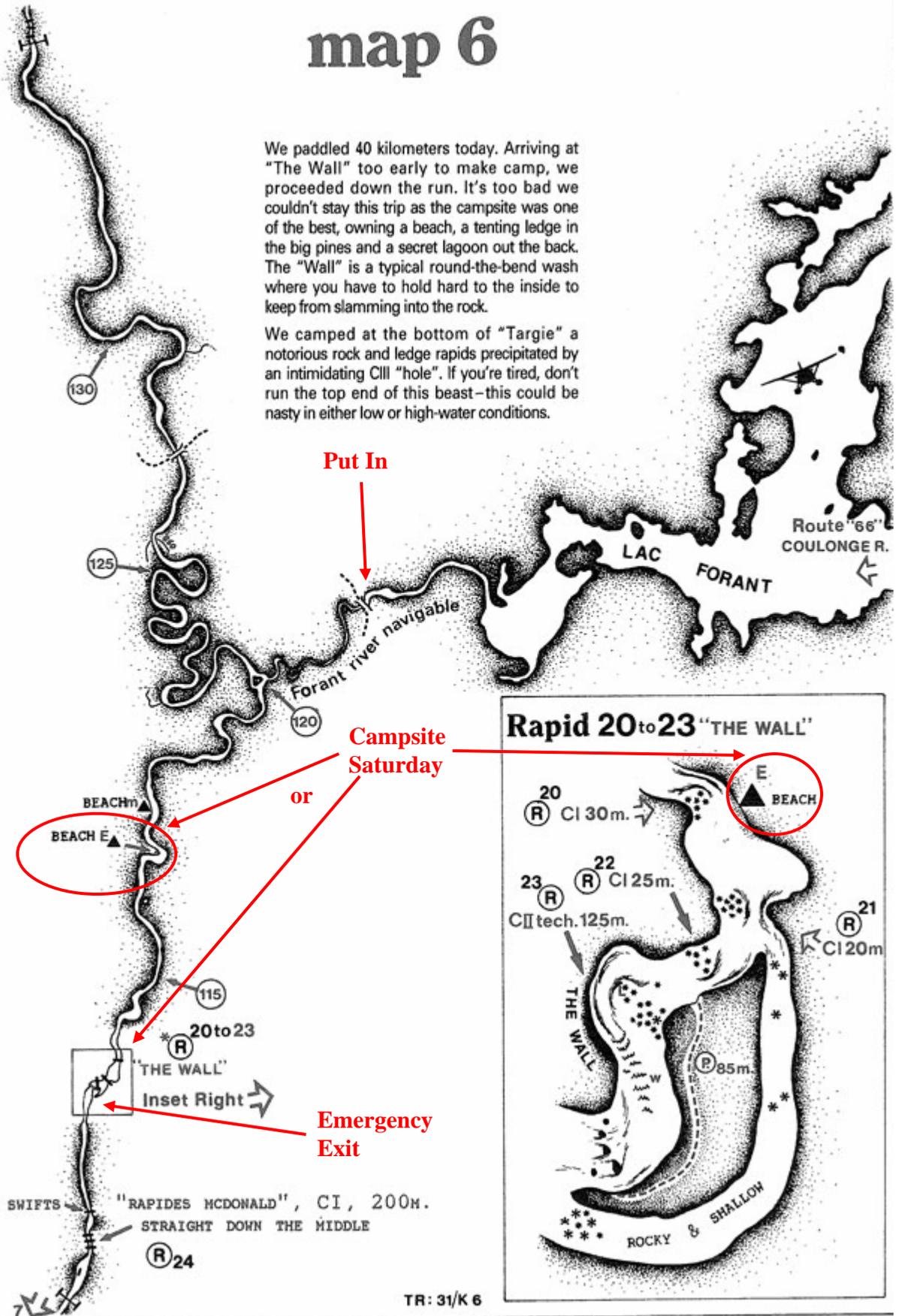
Saw, pruning, 2  
Line Across Bag  
Rope, static, 150'  
Webbing, tubular, 30', 2  
Carabiners, D, 9  
Carabiner, pear, 1  
Pulleys, 2  
Prusik loop, 7mm, 2



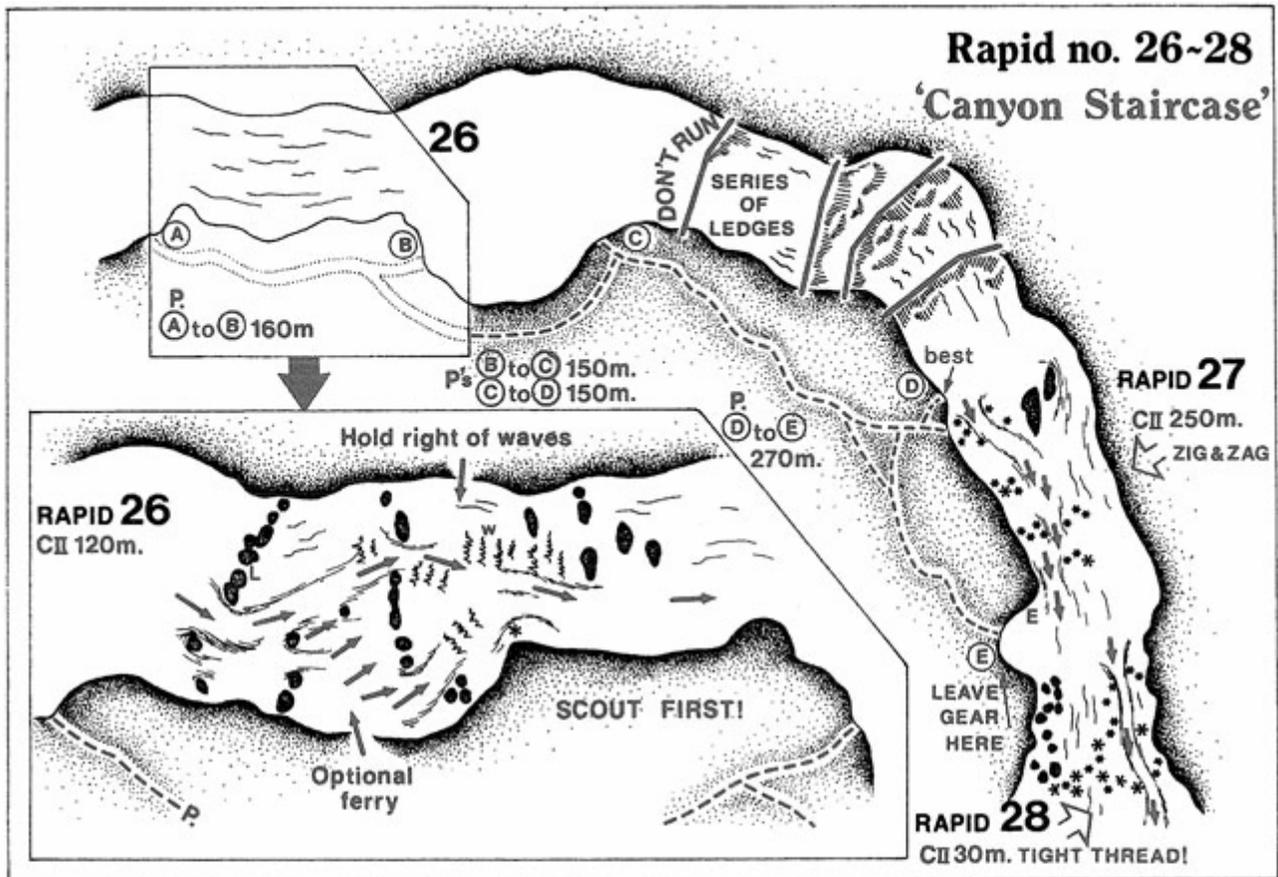
# map 6

We paddled 40 kilometers today. Arriving at "The Wall" too early to make camp, we proceeded down the run. It's too bad we couldn't stay this trip as the campsite was one of the best, owning a beach, a tenting ledge in the big pines and a secret lagoon out the back. The "Wall" is a typical round-the-bend wash where you have to hold hard to the inside to keep from slamming into the rock.

We camped at the bottom of "Targie" a notorious rock and ledge rapids precipitated by an intimidating CIII "hole". If you're tired, don't run the top end of this beast - this could be nasty in either low or high-water conditions.







**CANYON STAIRCASE**

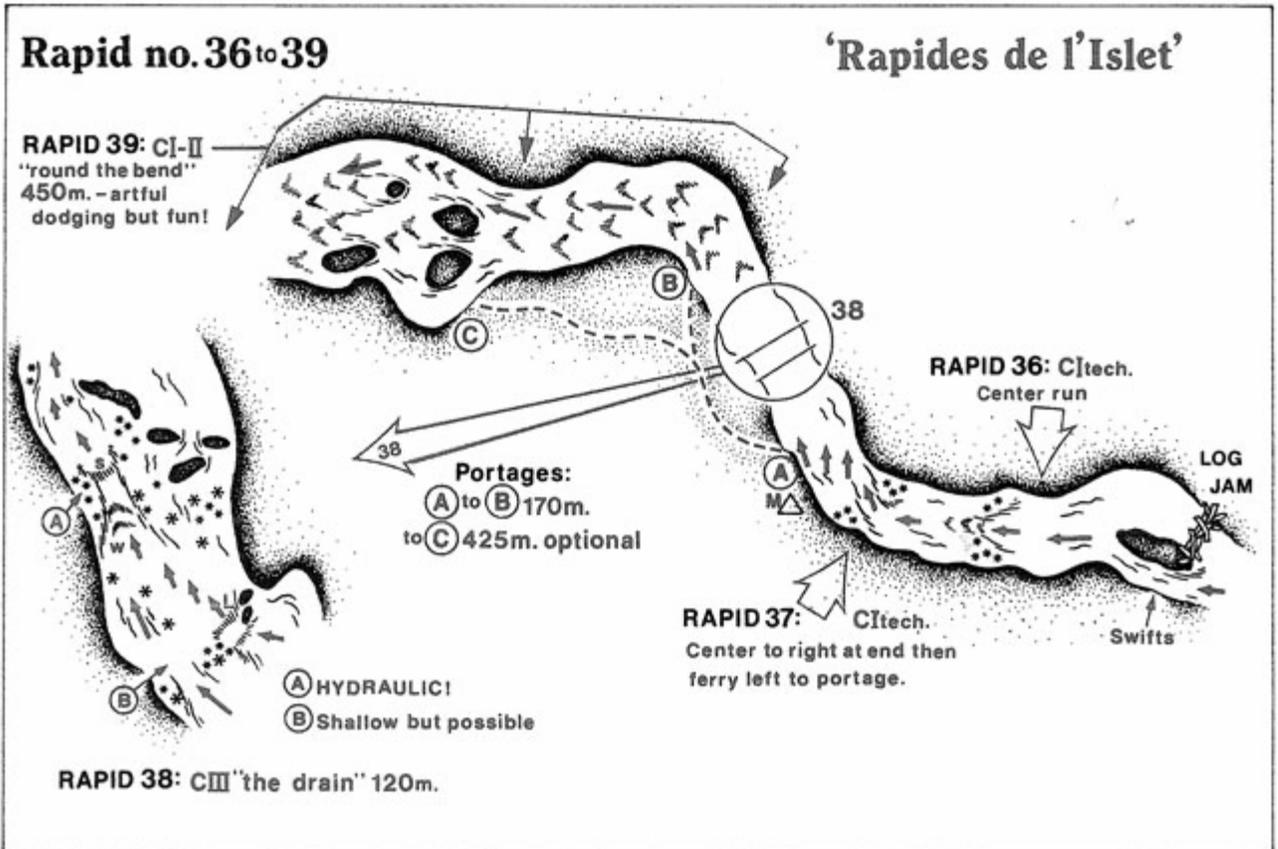
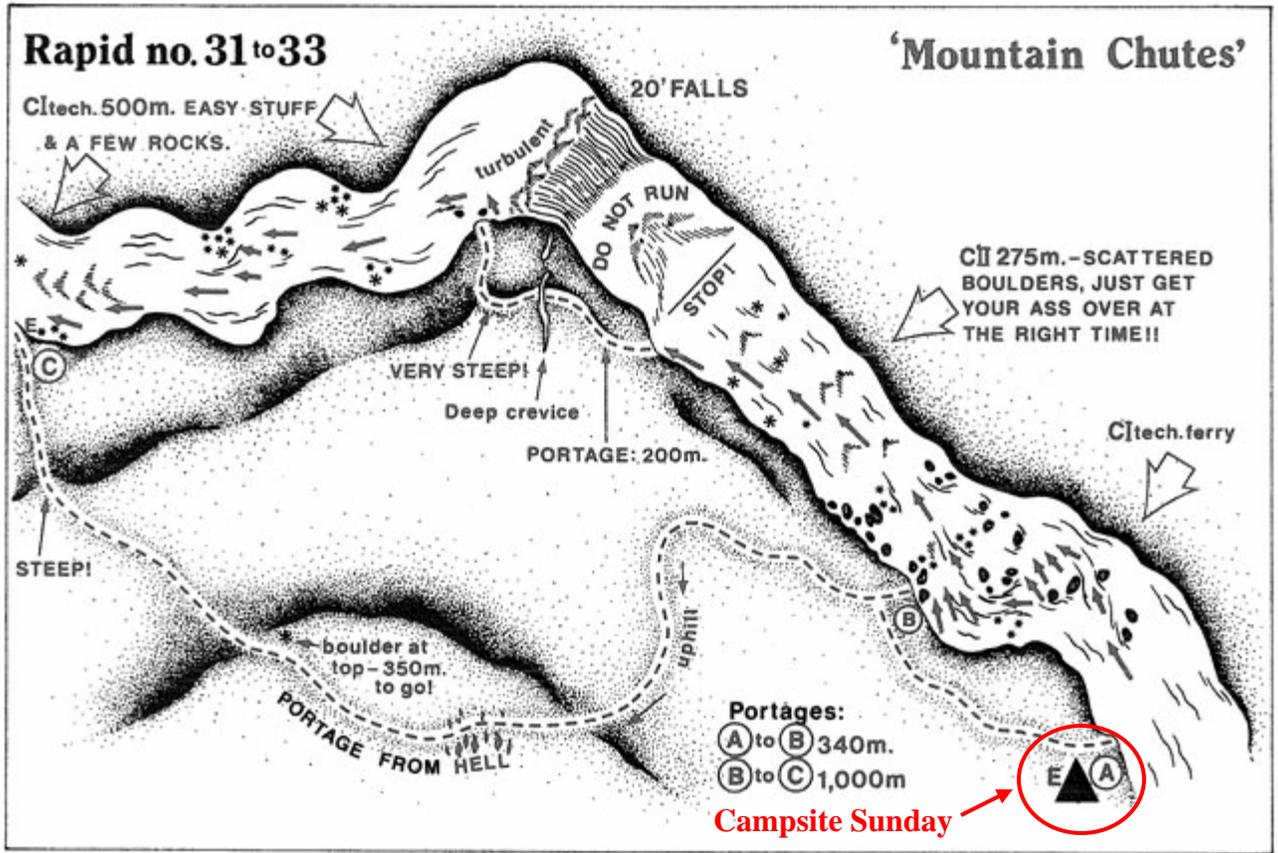
We woke up excited, knowing that the big day was beckoning us; and before the day was out, we would have only paddled about 15 kilometers with all the scouting, portaging and rapid play along this scenic stretch. The actual staircase was a series of granite steps surrounded by high, rocky walls. As long as you carry around this part then the rest can be played without too much risk. The plethora of tributary footpaths may cause havoc for first time visitors so it may be a good idea to keep a leash on everyone first trek across the portage to point "D" or "E" as shown on the inset map.

**MOUNTAIN CHUTES** (refer to Inset Map, page 70)

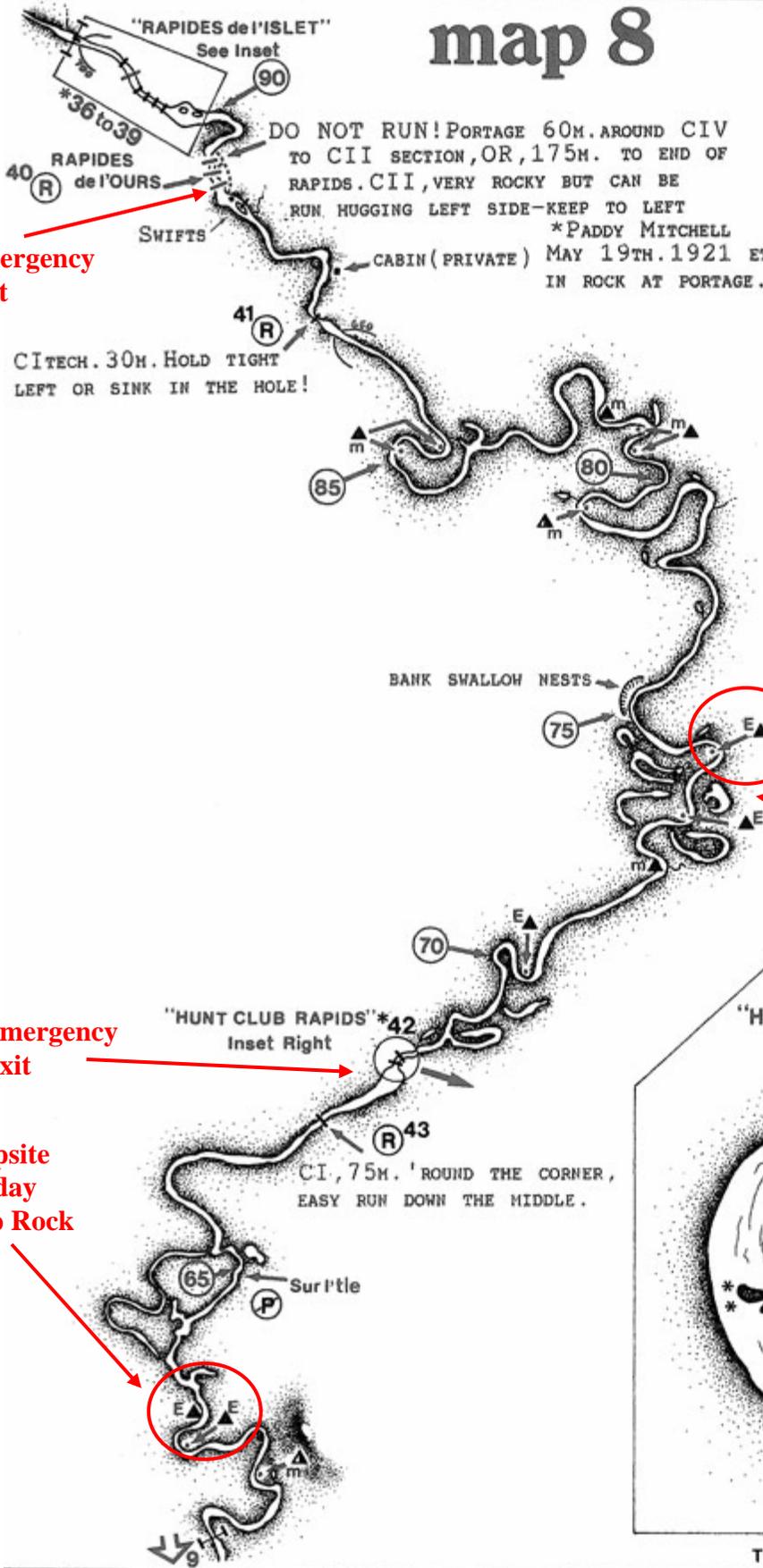
Probably one of the most entertaining runs of the Noire, it also owns the longest and most ridiculous portage trails. The well-worn portage takes a circuitous route to the summit of a hill and then down to a very steep pitch-off at the end. For the more daring, or should I say adept paddlers, this 1,000 meter portage can be whittled down to a single 200 meter carry around the sucking vortex of the chutes. You have to employ EXTREME CAUTION here, especially during high-water conditions because the entrance to the take out is directly in the down-current of the CIV at the

head of the falls. You may want to pick your way slowly along the left shore—you don't want to dump out in the middle of this run!

Below the falls you'll find a long set of fun 'n games...if you've carried your gear across the long portage then you have to watch closely for the landing—you could easily scoot right by without even seeing your packs on the rocks and it's a hard paddle back up the current.



# map 8



**"Rapides d l'Islet":**  
Another multifarious rapid that begins and ends by skirting small, mid-channel islands. You'll definitely want to scout the center CIII - if you're going to get sucked into the "drain" you might as well be expecting it!

**"Rapides d l'Ours":**  
This is a menacing CIV that should be avoided. It's only a 60 meter carry to a bouldery CII finish—a fast, turbulent run that could also screw you up good if you haven't got your act together!

**"Hunt Club Rapids":**  
Pretty straight forward play with just enough rocks to keep you from falling asleep. Sur l'tle, an old portage encampment, can be passed right through now as the river wash has broken a meander wall, allowing easy passage. Topographic maps are confusing as it is shown to have a portage here.

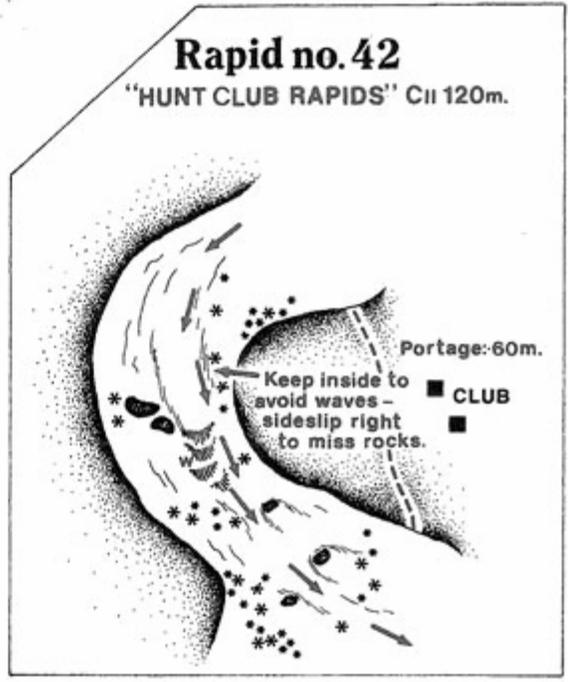
**Emergency Exit**

**Campsite Monday**

**Emergency Exit**

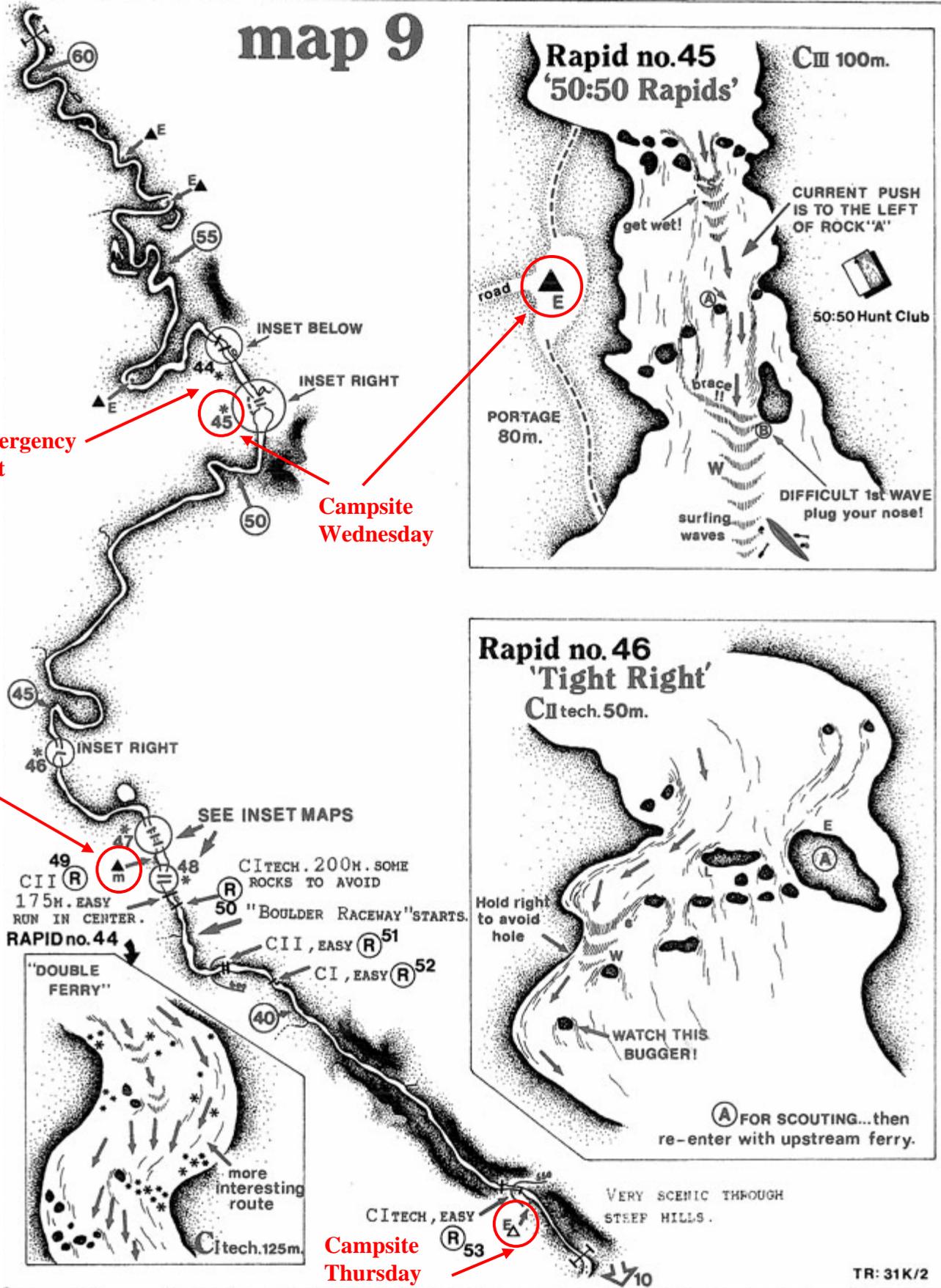
**Emergency Exit**

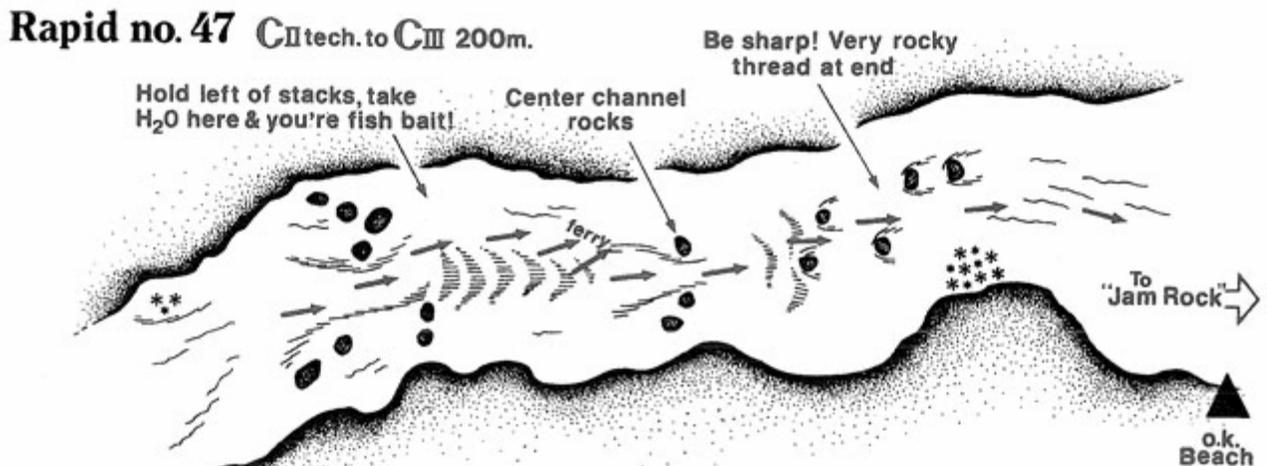
**Campsite Tuesday  
Jump Rock**



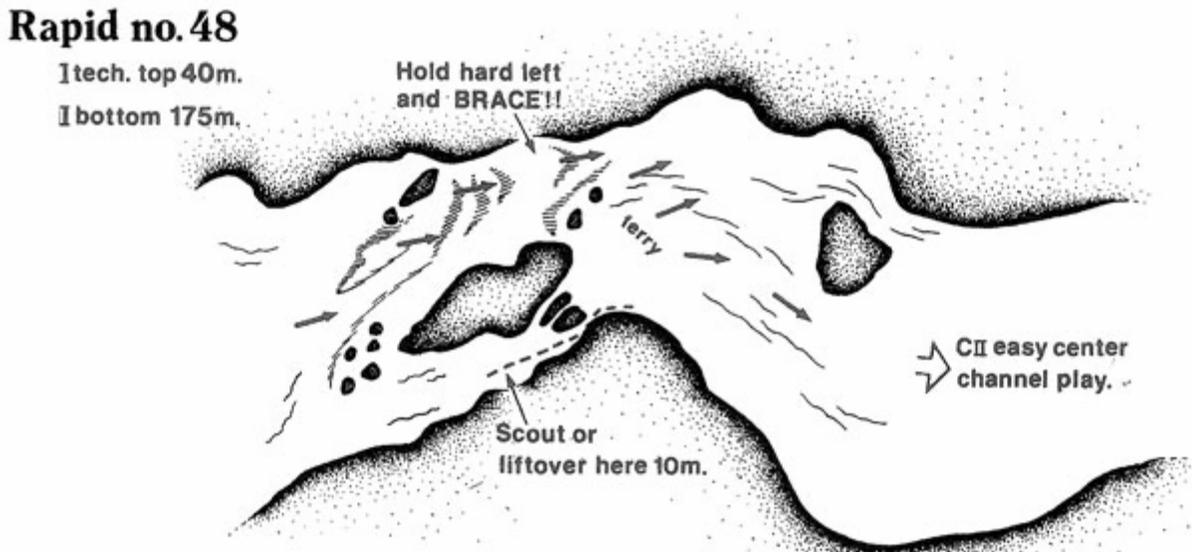
TR: 31K/6, 31K/7, 31K/2

# map 9





**'Manitou Rapids'**

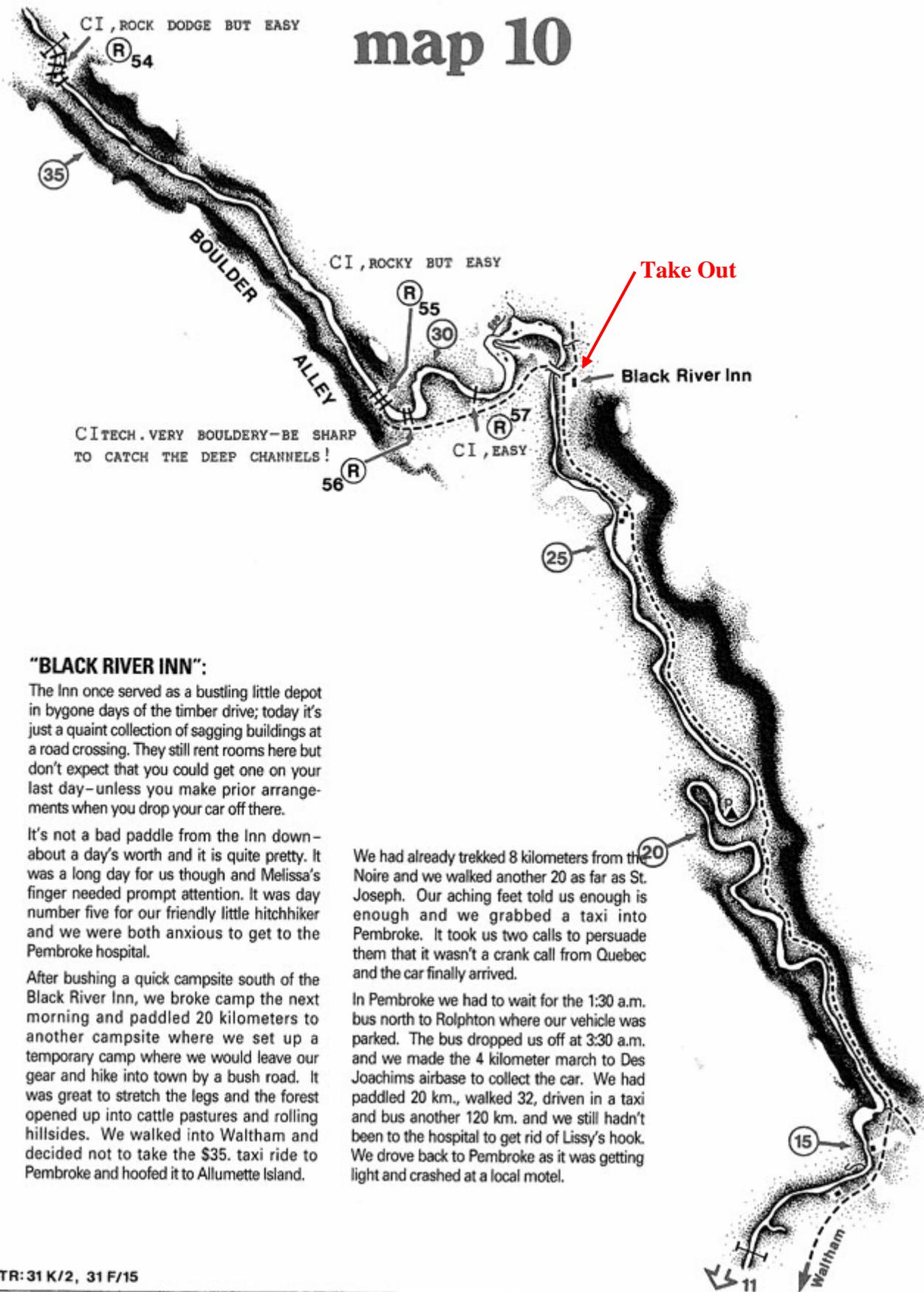


**'Jam Rock'**

Melissa's finger had been housed in its cocoon for three days now; we were afraid to look at it for fear that it had become infected, or worse...gangrenous. Another exciting day lay ahead of us; the current was strong and by the end of the afternoon we will have dropped another 125 vertical feet in elevation. "Double Ferry" is more of a play-rapids...a teaser that baits you for the nefarious 50:50 rapids. There is an excellent campsite here and you may decide to spend an extra day

loafing. You'll want to carry your gear across and scout before running. This one is a lot similar to Wavy Rapids on the Missinaibi River—a straight forward, deep-channelled sluice with a roller-coaster ending...great to surf in from below on an upstream ferry. The rapid is called 50:50 after the hunt club perched across the chutes; also because you have a 50:50 chance of making it down right-side up. You'll also half-fill your canoe on the second set of stacks at the bottom.

At mileage "45" you could actually feel the drop of the river as you hurl through "Manitou" and "Jam Rock" rapids—both excellent runs, successfully played if you manage to escape the heavy rollers at the top. From here the fun begins...the "Boulder Raceway" to the Black River Inn, a 14 kilometer stretch of continuous C<sup>I</sup>'s, dappled with bouldery rapids that'll turn your upper lip into a permanent grin.



**"BLACK RIVER INN":**

The Inn once served as a bustling little depot in bygone days of the timber drive; today it's just a quaint collection of sagging buildings at a road crossing. They still rent rooms here but don't expect that you could get one on your last day—unless you make prior arrangements when you drop your car off there.

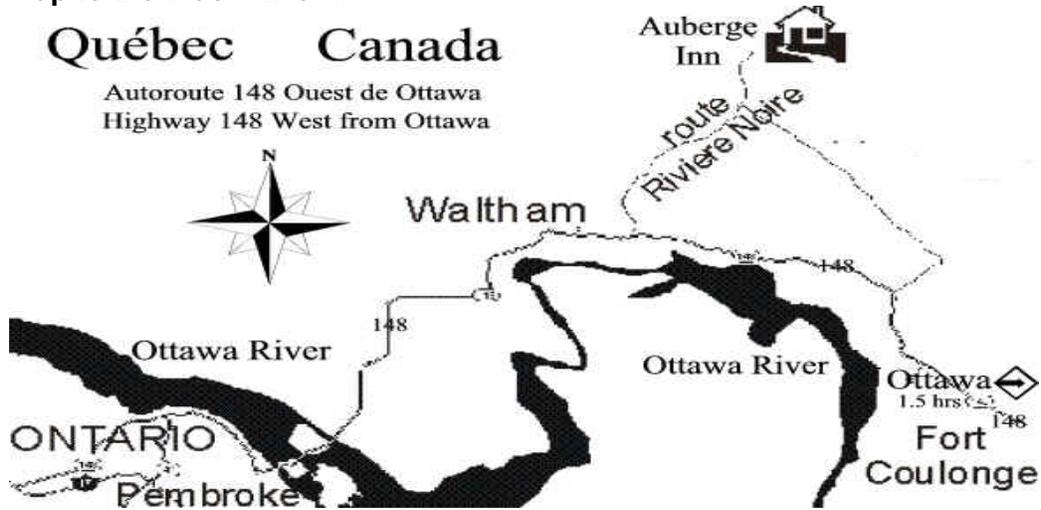
It's not a bad paddle from the Inn down—about a day's worth and it is quite pretty. It was a long day for us though and Melissa's finger needed prompt attention. It was day number five for our friendly little hitchhiker and we were both anxious to get to the Pembroke hospital.

After bushing a quick campsite south of the Black River Inn, we broke camp the next morning and paddled 20 kilometers to another campsite where we set up a temporary camp where we would leave our gear and hike into town by a bush road. It was great to stretch the legs and the forest opened up into cattle pastures and rolling hillsides. We walked into Waltham and decided not to take the \$35. taxi ride to Pembroke and hoofed it to Allumette Island.

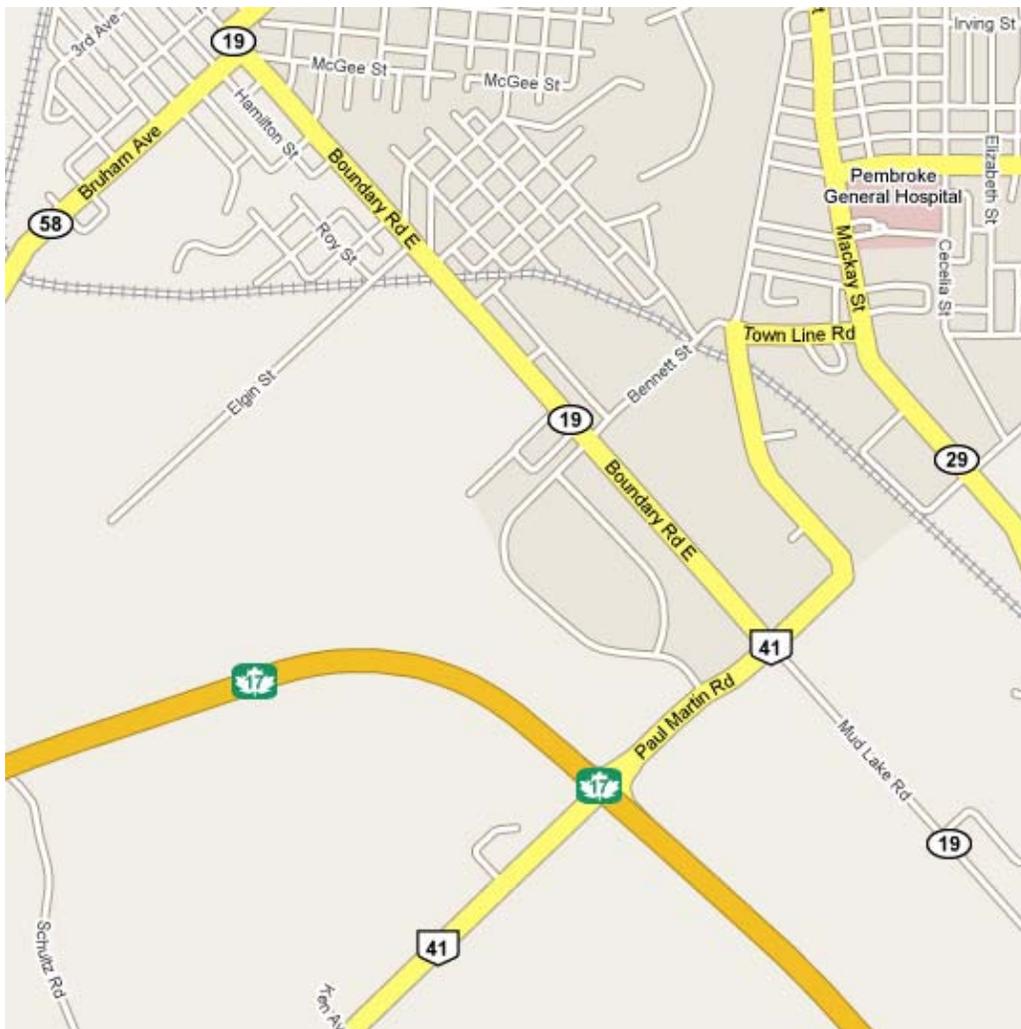
We had already trekked 8 kilometers from the Noire and we walked another 20 as far as St. Joseph. Our aching feet told us enough is enough and we grabbed a taxi into Pembroke. It took us two calls to persuade them that it wasn't a crank call from Quebec and the car finally arrived.

In Pembroke we had to wait for the 1:30 a.m. bus north to Rolphton where our vehicle was parked. The bus dropped us off at 3:30 a.m. and we made the 4 kilometer march to Des Joachims airbase to collect the car. We had paddled 20 km., walked 32, driven in a taxi and bus another 120 km. and we still hadn't been to the hospital to get rid of Lissy's hook. We drove back to Pembroke as it was getting light and crashed at a local motel.

Map to the Black River Inn



Map to the Pembroke Hospital



## Report

After some last minute packing on Friday night we set off right on schedule on Saturday morning at 8:30am. A little detour to pick up Ben's lunch (and one for Allan courtesy of Carolin!), then exactly a three hour drive to the Black River Inn (with another detour to Tim Horton's for Bill's coffee, and a stop in Fort Coulonge for a \$50 fishing license). We picked up Bill's father and took the road up to the Lac Forant dam, our put-in location. The road was a gut wrenching three hour 100km drive on a washboard. It was so bad, we increased the mileage allowance for this portion of the trip to account for the wear and tear to the truck. We made one more stop at an official looking building part way up the road, and found that since part of the river is in a ZEC (like a conservation area), we needed another \$50 fishing license to fish in that part. Honest, we will just fish once outside the ZEC!

We arrived at Lac Forant at 3:30pm and had all the canoes loaded and ready to go at 4:30pm. The lads also inflated our dolphin and whale toys, and our dinghy. Every since Spike, our white water instructor from a year ago, told us of running rapids on inflatable couches and ladybugs, the lads have been wanting to give this a try. We were certainly a sight setting off! Bill's father then had the nasty job of taking the truck and trailer back to the Black River Inn for us. The kids certainly looked smart in the new PFDs and helmets. These paddling PFDs are specifically designed to be strong for aiding certain rescue situations, something Bill and I learnt was vital on our rescue course. You can also get a cool paddling tan! We figured the kids would be out mowing the lawn in their PFDs to perfect their tan lines :)

Unlike the adults and kids we met on the trip, we all lived in our helmets and PFDs when near moving water. We may let the kids do a lot of crazy things, but we ensure they are safe at all times. We also equipped them with rescue knives in the event they got tangled in a canoe flip. They were given strict instructions that these knives were for emergency use only. It is interesting the different safety perspective between flat water and white water canoeing. At a recent flat water boat rescue course, a couple of participants were told to remove their knives as they were considered too dangerous. While in moving water however, it is highly recommended to have a knife. We also keep saws and other rescue equipment close at hand in the canoes. At one point during the trip they all had on black shirts, so they looked to be in uniform! Maybe quick dry black shirts should be the new Venturer uniform.

We paddled off to our first campsite. We made it in two hours, finding that we were paddling 5-7 km/hr with the high flow rate of the river. There were a couple of guys on the main campsite, so we camped on an island sandbar. The special sand tent pegs we brought worked great, but we had to wade across a moat to find trees (it's a man thing). A little bit of playing in the CI rapid with the inflatable's, then a supper of hamburgers. Lettuce and tomatoes would have been nice. The burgers, from Costco, were so thick that it took a while to cook them. We had the frying pan, a pot lid, and a pot all going at once using our two stoves and the fire. A second frying pan and spatula would have been nice. Light rain started after supper, but the lads did some fishing from the dinghy and canoe anyway (they thought we were outside the ZEC :)). No bites, except from the flies.

Overnight we had a torrential downpour with 2" of rain (one of my water bottles had been left out). Bill was worried the river would rise and our tents were going to float away. I was fine and dry, and slept (snored?) through most of the ruckus, but the rain went right through Bill's tent and the Venturer's tent was wet as well. We're not sure if their tent leaked, or if it was just condensation (they didn't open any vents). In any event, everybody was up by 6:30am and we were on the water by 8:30am. Breakfast was cereal with the last of our fresh milk, tetra pak milk after that. The kids told us they were busy killing flies in the tent the night before and couldn't figure out why they kept finding them....then they noticed the door was still open! The kids thought camping on a sandbar would be fun, but they now have second thoughts. Sand got into everything. The dinghy was found to drag a lot behind the canoe the previous day, so we tried lashing the inflatable's amidships on the canoes today.

The second day started off with our first large rapid, The Wall. When starting down the rapid, the canoe is aimed for a large rock. It turned out to be easier than it appeared, and it was a good confidence booster for us. Though we all brushed up against the rock on the way by. The lads ran the rapids a few more times using the inflatables, quickly coming to the conclusion that the dolphin is a lot more stable than the whale. We found the dinghy to be extremely stable; no skill at all was required to survive the rapids. On one run, Ben was thrown out, but managed to grab onto a safety rope and flip himself back in. Sweet move. The dolphin got pinned on a rock at one point, and Bill & I were getting all excited to practice our new rescue skills, when it broke free and we sent one of the twins swimming to retrieve it. We had our first portage, around a staircase waterfall, and had lunch overlooking the rapid.

At the end of Rapides de l'Islet, the lads found a nice jumping rock. After checking water depth (a depth finder would be nice), all the kids did a number of jumps. We camped that night just upstream from the Portage from Hell. It was a nice day and we arrived early, so we spent time drying out tents and gear. The dinghy had a rock puncture in it's floor so I spent some time repairing that. This night Bill had a tarp over his tent to protect it from rain, but he then found that his screen doesn't stop sand flies, and he spent the night being eaten. Poor guy :(

We setup a hammock (with a fly and screen) each night, and the lads took turns in that; always well liked for a comfy sleep. We also setup our screened dining fly. This is a new addition to our Scout group equipment. We won this in a recent photo contest. It works quite nicely. For those that don't know, I have a fetish for Burton clothes at the moment, it's a midlife crisis / relive my childhood thing; pretty harmless. But I kept getting, throughout the week, "What, another Burton shirt?". I must have taken at least seven with me :)

We used bleach for water purification. At some point our extra bottle of bleach was cracked in the equipment barrel, bleaching everything within sight. Luckily the only real casualties were the j-cloths (they disintegrated) and some white spots on the sheath of my hatchet. We took a few too many bottles of gas. Some type of barrel organisers would have been nice as it was a pain to dig to the bottom of the barrels for the little things. A thermarest patch kit should be added to our repair kit as should replacement seat bolts.

The flies were fairly ferocious, but not unbearable. We had: mosquitoes, black flies, sand flies, biting house flies (stable flies), deer flies, and horse flies. The horse flies at the 50:50 rapids were so easy to kill, you ended up with a pile of them at your feet. The ants had a feast. DEET took care of most of the others. In one eddy, Bill & I had biting spiders jump from the rock into the canoe. You can bet we paddled quick!

The next morning was a five minute paddle to the start of The Portage from Hell. We were a little worried about the take out as the maps showed it to be close to the top of a waterfall, but it turned out to be quite easy. Technically, the official Portage from Hell is a 1.6km jaunt around all the rapids, but we ran everything but the waterfall and thus just had to portage 160m. Bill carried two of the canoes and the kids carried the third. The hard/fun part of the portage is a 50' drop down a steep cliff. Here our climbing knowledge came in useful, as we had the lads setup an anchor and belay the canoes down. Piece of cake.

On the third night, Bill was taking no chances. He planned to setup his tent inside our screened dining shelter. Then he would have protection from both rain and flies! But the weather was looking so nice, we all wanted to sleep in the dining shelter. So for the rest of the trip there was always four of us in the dining shelter, one in the hammock, and one in a tent. We could have camped on the beach, but everybody had enough of sand and there were nice cleared spots back in the bush with a fireplace.

The fishing was terrible. Though we had talked to people ahead of time who said the fishing was good, the people we met on the river all said the fishing was bad! Ben borrowed Bill's favorite lure, and the only things he could catch were underwater logs and trees on shore! Twice he had to go diving to retrieve the lure. He didn't dare come back without it!

We came upon a nice little CI surfing wave at one point. Surfing is where you get the canoe in the rapid and the current is pushing you downstream, but a wave is pushing you upstream, so you can remain stationary on the front of a wave. It's a cool feeling, fun to do and takes some skill. The lads decided to get in some practice. All went well until Max and Grant were caught broadside upstream of the wave. They were stuck there for ages and water kept pouring over the gunwales so the rest of us sat in an eddy with our fingers crossed hoping they would tip! I know it's not nice to wish disaster on other people, but they looked so funny trapped by such a little wave, and trying to figure out how to get out :) All this time I am videoing, hoping to catch the flip, and I start getting a low battery warning from my camera. I'm thinking please flip quickly before my battery runs out! Max pushed at a rock and his hand came out of the water absolutely covered in black fly larvae (a black sludge). He thought he was covered in leaches! Much to our dismay they succeeded in freeing themselves and made their way to shore, still upright, to empty the water from their canoe.

The Drain was the scariest rapid. When we first scouted it, we weren't sure that we would run it. There was a large hydraulic (hole) at the end that looked like it would suck a canoe in and spit out splinters. It's a big difference running rapids with an instructor beside you saying exactly what to do. After a few tests we figured out it wasn't dangerous, and a couple of the lads decided to run it in the dinghy. We set up appropriate downstream safety (people with throw bags), and set them off. The dinghy came through easily. The lads did a few more dinghy runs, then Bill decided that he and I would run a canoe through first. We came through fine, shipping far less water than expected. However, the landing spot is in full current and as we grabbed the throw bags, the canoe was pinned against some rocks just below the surface. As we struggled to get it ashore, my paddle was knocked overboard, and that was the last we saw of it (we carried one spare paddle per canoe). Interestingly, we found a paddle up against a tree at the next portage so we went back to full quota! The lads ran their canoes through fine. We now only sent the throw bag to the sternsman, and the canoes pivoted nicely into the bank.

Grant is credited with the best save of the trip. He and Max were going over the top of the hole when their canoe started tipping. Grant leaned way over to the opposite side and did a massive draw saving them. They then proceeded to run the canoe right into the videographer (me!). This was voted the second best video of the trip. I decided I wanted to have some fun in the dinghy, so Bill and I ran it through. We hit the hole and it's following wave dead on, and the dinghy exploded! One of the front seams split right open, depositing both of us in the water. This was the best video of the trip. That rapid is now known as the "Dinghy Popper". When they were emptying the destroyed raft, they needed to slash the bottom. "I need a knife" they asked, you have one! "But we're not allowed to use it". I guess at least they listened. It was also here that we understood why longer throw bags and larger diameter rope is better. We had 1/4" 50', but 3/8" 70' would have given us the reach we really needed and been easier for the kids to hold.

Our last portage was only 60m, but the take-out was in full current just before a CIV rapid. We edged ourselves carefully along the bank holding onto the bushes. The portage was up an earth slope and down the other side. So we just hauled the canoes up fully loaded and sent them sliding down the hill. No harm to the canoes and saved a lot of work unloading/loading.

Our next campsite was supposed to have an official jump rock. After our "unofficial" jump rock, the kids were looking forward to this. As soon as they saw it, "That's disappointing". There was a diving board lashed up in the trees too, but that was broken. Had we stayed, Bill and I would have had a go at rebuilding it. A swing rope was present, but we got a "That's disappointing too". There's no pleasing some mother's children :) The lads did some jumping though. Ben tried to show off with a front flip, but went a little too far around and did a face plant. Ouch! Bill & I were actually a little worried. Knocked the wind out of him and embedded his teeth in his lips, as well as flushing out his sinuses with water. Unfortunately my camera was having a few problems at that point, moisture I think, and we didn't get this on video. The campsite, though rated as excellent in the guide book, wasn't very good either. As it was still only 11:30am, we had a quick snack (Bill got desperate and grabbed a rescue knife to get into the two bite brownies!) and continued on to the following night's campsite at the 50:50 rapids. We were traveling way faster than planned.

As we weren't going anywhere the next day, we let the kids sleep in until when ever they wanted. Previously we had been getting them up about 7:30am as Bill and I and typically been up for a while and were raring to go. You are no doubt aware of the dirty looks you can get from a teenager early in the morning. They are priceless :) Then you mention something fun you let them do the day/night before and you get a nice smile :)

Spending two nights at the 50:50 rapids worked out really well. The kids had lots of time to play with the floaties in the rapids, as well as practicing solo work in the canoes, and surfing the canoes. It also gave us time to practice rescue techniques. We had them take turns swimming the rapids and having a throw bag chucked to them for a rescue. The quickly learned how strong the current is, especially when Bill was the victim. They "killed" him as they couldn't hold on to the rope with the force of the water on his body. We did both regular bag throws and open coil throws (when the first throw misses and you have to re-coil and throw). Then we setup a rope across the river. This was one of the techniques Bill & I learned on our rescue course, and used the equipment we brought for unpinning canoes. The lads tried swimming the rope across the river, then canoeing it, but in each case the drag was so great that the person was stopped in their tracks. We eventually managed an open coil throw across the river. Our next step would have been to use a paracord pilot line. Initially the rope was directly across the river and the kids crossed hand over hand. We tried to use it to lower a lad and dolphin into the big surf waves, but they couldn't hold on. Then we moved the rope to a diagonal, and the kids went across holding onto a sling (attached with a carabiner). The force of the current whips you from one side of the river to the other. It's pretty fun. We also set up a tensioned slack line for a bit in the campsite for tight rope walking.

A group of paramedics from Toronto showed up and camped for the night. They were watching while I ferried Ben and a twin across the river to try out our diagonal line. I was sterning though I had been in the bow the entire trip, and Ben normally sterned but was now in the bow. He asks "What to I do up here? Do I just paddle?" :) With all that change, and a twin in the middle, as soon as we started our ferry we managed to flip in quite small waves; quite embarrassing. And add to the picture that there were three hands on the gunwale as the canoe went over. Lucky there is no photographic evidence! The paramedics then made comments to Bill that our skills were questionable. Then they ran the rapid in their three canoes. First canoe flipped, second canoe flipped, and yes the third canoe flipped! It was hilarious. Put them in their place :) Bill nearly died with laughter. Later on they asked Bill how he did, and he had to tell them that he had just been soloing down fine! The kids ran up to us shortly after they arrived: "They are smoking joints on the beach!". Later the fellows asked how old our kids were as they didn't want to set a bad example - a little too late. We told the kids if they every tried that we would kick their butt.

At one point, Ben and Adam came back to shore bragging to Bill that they had never flipped. They had been out doing some rescue work of other canoes. Never wave a red flag like that in front of a bull! Bill rocked that canoe so much they were nearly doing spins before they finally went into the drink! And yes, they grabbed the gunwales! Grabbing the gunwales when the canoe starts to tip is a natural reaction, but it is a sure way to lose your balance. It is always better to paddle; you always gain more stability. So we were unmerciful and showed no compassion whenever anyone grabbed a gunwale.

I tried going down the rapid on the dolphin. I got part way down before I fell off, but then I smashed my ankle on a rock and twisted my knee so that was enough of that for me. Our only other injuries were a few cuts and blisters, and the twins swelling up like pumpkins from their bug bites. There was a sunburn competition going on between the lads, we couldn't really tell the winner. Luckily Bill had brought some soothing gel, but Cheryl said what we really needed was Solarcaine. We'll add that to the list for next time.

Supper was white cheddar Kraft Dinner. Bill, with the best of intentions, purchased the name brand Kraft Dinner figuring that would be preferred. The kids were appalled! They insisted that only President's Choice should have been bought. Since they didn't specify that on the menu, tough! They made do, and added bits of cream cheese in an attempt to make it more to their liking. Later that night one of the paramedics asked what we had for dinner. We replied with white cheddar KD. What does he say? "Did you have the President's Choice type, it's the best!" Bill & I could have screamed! We just couldn't win.

The next day was supposed to be a short run to the next campsite, and then an even shorter run to the take out the following day. Given that we were running the river so quickly, we would have been at the campsite well before lunch, and there were no rapids in which to play. So the consensus was to push through to the take-out and go home Thursday evening, even though it would result in a late night of cleaning equipment.

The last 15-20km were a variety of CI and CII rapids, just enough to keep us on our toes. Bill and I grounded ourselves out on a rock at one point. It was securely wedged under us right in the centre of the canoe. No amount of jolting would move us. The other lads, now knowing where the rock was located (as we were covering it!) happily canoed by on each side of us making comments about what all the problems were :) Luckily there was another rock right beside Bill. He stepped out of the canoe, so the canoe came free and nearly went down river with just me leaving Bill stranded and swimming! He managed to jump back in the canoe just in time.

Unfortunately, Max & Grant broke our perfect record of no flipping in a loaded canoe, when they dumped in a nasty cross wave on a CII. Adam and Ben missed grabbing the canoe before the next set of rapids, so it swam through a second set with Max on it's tail. Bill and I found Grant and the paddles. We collected the paddles, but weren't about to give Grant a ride through the rapids (having him sitting on top of our gear would have given us a high likelihood of flipping), so we sent him off to swim the second set :) We then picked up all the pieces. The only casualties were a lost water bottle that wasn't tied down, and a paddle bent 90 degrees. We are thinking of creating a bent paddle award and having a winner every canoe trip :)

We arrived at the Black River Inn at 2:30pm. It had been a four hour paddle from the 50:50 rapids (we only left at 10:30am as the kids didn't want to get up). We then found that our canoe trailer had self destructed coming back down the washboard road! The Inn owner mentioned that he has seen many a trailer, including the first one he built, trashed by that road. So it took longer than planned to pack the equipment as we had some fun and games getting the canoes lashed securely to the remains of the trailer. It was about 4:30pm when we departed and then a three hour drive back to Merrickville.

We decided to try something different with cleaning the equipment. In the past we have sent it home with the kids, but there had been problems with it not being cleaned properly and not being brought back. So we decided to have it all cleaned in the community centre kitchen and then stored immediately in the tractor trailer (our new storage location for all the camping equipment). The lads whined at first, but when they saw they weren't getting out of the work, the buckled down and got it done. They agreed to this plan in the morning, so we had no sympathy. We were going to have the kids cook us supper (my stomach can't last all night on just snacks anymore), but I was talking with Cheryl at soccer and she suggested we should just hit the Goose, and that is what we did. Bill and I went to celebrate our success and left the kids washing :) We did all the running around before the trip, so it made sense for the kids to do most of the work at the end. We packaged everything up and loaded it into the tractor trailer, and were finished by 11:00pm. We asked the lads what they thought, and they said it was better staying up late and getting all the work done rather than dragging it out during the day on Friday.

The kids seem to have a variety of favorite sayings. With Max, it is 'That's insomnia'. He was eventually banned from saying that on pain of something. Ben's tag line: 'Is it actually?'. The funniest line of the trip was when we were camped at the 50:50 rapids with the Camp Kandalore group. The counselors decided to play a joke on their kids, saying that since another group had showed up they had to move camp. So they started packing up. Eventually the counselors let the cat out of the bag and we all had a good laugh. Then one of their kids comes over. He had pestered us a few times already. He was a little strange, they were all aged 12-13, and it didn't help that he had ran into a clothes line the night before and had a rope burn across his face. He was bragging about how he was the only one who knew that it was a joke all along. As he walked away, Ben calls out "So why did you take down your tent?". We almost died with laughter. He didn't come back again :) Anytime one of the lads whined about something, "Sucks to be you!". They don't get any molly coddling at this age.

At the portages, we quickly came to the conclusion that everybody must be limited to a single piece of equipment. If it doesn't attach securely to a rucksack, it doesn't come. We also looked at the equipment and decided that in the future if it doesn't fit in a barrel, it doesn't come. I.e. No lantern next time. Keeping equipment dry was always a challenge. While we only had one flip of a loaded canoe, the canoes always shipped water running the rapids, and thus the gear was typically sitting in water all day. There were a lot 'Yeah!'s and 'Argh!'s at the campsite each day as the kids opened their packs. The dry sacks work, but they do need to be folded carefully. The garbage bags worked, but because they were ripped open each night, we had to burn dozens of garbage bags a day; thus not a recommended solution. A small heavy duty dry-sac per canoe would be useful to hold sun screen, bug spray, baseball caps, etc. After hunting through six barrels for lunch on the second day, we learnt to keep all the lunch material and snacks at the top of a specific barrel.

The meals went well. The lads were quite glad the Bill & I put our foot down and added some variety to the peanut butter & jam lunch sandwiches. We added beef jerky, cream cheese, bagels, and pop-tarts. These were all well liked. We intended to have salmon with the cream cheese & bagels, but it never happened. They became tired of the pre-made snacks (the second container of two bite brownies was never touched). They really appreciated the home made cookies (mud pies - quick cook oats, cocoa powder, sugar, coconut, shortening, milk) and coffee cake. They asked for more home made snacks next time. We brought along an Outback Oven to try out (it sits on a single burner stove). We need a bit more practice, but it turned out a reasonable coffee cake and the pizza was OK. Somebody (they are lucky I can't remember who, but I think it was a twin) nicknamed me the woman of the trip since I made cookies and had Bill carry my canoe :) A grill for cooking hamburgers on the fire would have been nice. Salsa was requested for snacking with the Tostitos (from our chili night). Crunchy Peanut Butter would have been preferred over smooth. Pizzas on bagels and pita bread went down well for a lunch, but a couple more toppings would have been nice. English muffins would have been a nice addition, and less crushable than bread. One supper was sausages with cheese in them. The kids had never seen that before, and were pretty wary of them at first. But the prospect of starvation (big crisis for a teenager) brought them to their senses, and they found they quite liked them! A few were left over, and were cut up and added to the spaghetti sauce the following night.

We didn't see a lot of wildlife. Lots of moose tracks, an owl, and plenty of other birds: Kingfisher, bank Swallow nests, and a bunch more birds of which only Bill knows their names. Bill holds an environmental science degree and is a fountain of information on the outdoors.

The lad's moving water canoeing skills are definitely improving. We ran every runnable rapid on the river with loaded canoes, and only had one flip. The other groups we ran into were having many more flips (when they even dared run the rapids), and even other Venturer groups we know have flipped on the Noire, even when it was running at lower water levels. It's like anything in life, the more we get out and practice the better we will become. We're thinking of doing some practice on the Rideau at the Andrewsville Bridge and maybe a 2-3 day trip on the Madawaska this fall.

Total cost of the trip came to \$189/Venturer. The remaining Venturer funds covered the difference between the \$50 charged and the final amount. We have to boast a little, the Camp Kandalore kids paid \$1,000 for their week on the river; and they didn't have anywhere near the fun or learning our lads did. Our cost breakdown:

Transportation (gas)	\$266
Food	\$318
Parking	\$63
White gas for stoves	\$6
Meal (Allan & Bill)	\$38
Fishing License	\$51
Miscellaneous	\$14

The Camp Kandalore counsellors gave us a list of rivers that they believed were appropriate for us:

Temagami (Lake Temagami to River Valley)  
 Petawawa (Brent to McManus)  
 Magnetawan  
 Lake Nippissing to Georgian Bay