



# *The Rideau Challenge Journey 2004*

One of the most memorable experiences of my time as a scout was the First Class Journey. The scout handbook "Tenderfoot to Queen's Scout" (circa 1968) told us to .....

*"Go on foot, bicycle, horseback or boat propelled by personal effort, preferably with another scout, for a 24-hour journey outside a city, town or built-up area. On foot the journey shall comprise at least 14 miles, with the distance increased accordingly where other means of travel is chosen. In the course of the journey, the scout must cook his own meals, one of which must include meat, over a wood fire in the open; find his own campsite and camp for the night. He must carry out the instructions of his Scoutmaster as to the things to be observed en route. He must hand in, on his return, a log of the journey, including a sketch map of his route."*

Scouting today has a progressive system that gives scouts the ability to build their skills. Voyageur Region is known for its wonderful programs, extensive camping, and canoeing. But there is very little opportunity to learn and practice backpacking and hiking, and seldom is there an opportunity to capture the spirit of the old First Class Journey.

In 1990 Rod Wilson, Alex Seaborn and a team of Scouters from the first Manotick Scout Troop introduced the Rideau Challenge Journey as a program to assist Scouts gain experience in travelling under their own steam at a level appropriate to their age and ability. Since that time the Rideau Challenge Journey has been an annual event hosted by Venturers to the benefit of their younger colleagues. The Rideau Challenge Journey is an overlay of three different hike programs, Bronze for a first experience, Silver level for experience travelling with backpacked personal gear, and Gold Level, to experience a completely self contained back packing adventure. The Rideau Challenge Journey is designed to provide age appropriate hiking experience, and has proven over the past 10 years to be a memorable experience for all.

**Location and Logistics:** The hike takes place a Weekend in May (Concludes by noon on Sunday) on a 25-30 kilometre stretch of the Rideau Trail, Marlborough Forest area near Burritts Rapids, Roger Steven's Road and Dwyer Hill Road. Exact routes are decided based the number of participants and on spring flooding access to the trail. Great effort is taken to keep the patrols hiking in separated groups. This is done so each patrol has a chance to be alone in the woods, hike by their wits, and capture the spirit of the "First Class Journey". A common campsite is used on Saturday night for Bronze, and Silver Hikers. Wherever possible Gold hikers will be alone at some remote site. (Monitored by Venturers or adults). These are wilderness camping conditions with no water, no prepared campsites and no latrines.

Leaders are responsible for their youth. They are responsible for camping, transporting food, tents and kitchens for Silver level hikers. For Bronze hikers, leaders take care of all the above plus personal camping gear. Gold hikers are completely self-contained Patrols.

Venturers design the hike strategy and routes, man checkpoints, and perform search and rescue on ATV's and dirt bicycles. They also act as traffic police to ensure orderly flow, and provide on-the-trail advice to hikers.

You are invited to consider the Rideau Challenge Journey for your spring program. Advanced registration is mandatory and closes April 26<sup>th</sup> There are a limited number of hikes available.

For further information contact Scouter Rod Wilson at [scouter\\_rod@hotmail.com](mailto:scouter_rod@hotmail.com).

## **OPERATIONAL DETAILS, Information for Leaders**

### **Route & Maps**

Each hike group / patrol will be assigned a specific route based on the information you provide. Read through this entire package prior to filling in the paperwork. The route information will be provided to your team prior to the hike. It will include start location and time, route, check points and campsite. Topographic Maps 31 B/13 and 31 G/4 will be used. You may also reference the Rideau Trail Guidebook. As one of the challenges is to write a log / journal, excerpts from the Guide Book will not be provided to the hikers. GPS are permitted and encouraged, some trail instruction can be provided.

### **Uniform**

Some of the potential routes are along public roadways and on private property (used with permission) Participants must be able to identify themselves as Scouts. A necker is probably sufficient, or dress as required by your particular group. Appropriate deportment is demanded. (See rules section for additional direction)

### **Organizing your hike patrols**

This is a **Challenge Hike** with three possible levels of difficulty depending upon the skill level of the scouts. All skill levels are encouraged to participate. Levels roughly to current requirements for the Voyageur and Pathfinder Badge, the Advanced Tripping and Exploring Challenge Badges and to the Spring/Fall Camper Award. Troop Scouters are expected to maximize opportunities for and to and keep track of planning, hiking, leadership, camping, outdoors skills etc. undertaken by each scout towards these requirements.

## **Bronze Level 1**

### **Description**

Hike starts Saturday AM-ends Saturday PM. Some groups may select this as a day hike with no overnight camp required, but can certainly be accommodated if they wish to camp out Saturday night.

### **Details**

- Suitable first hike experience-about 9 km in 1 day
- Leaders **must** hike with Scouts
- Hikers are required to bring day packs with water, lunch, trail snacks, foul weather gear, blister kit, fresh socks, first aid/emergency kit and whistle required. Remember to be prepared for sun/rain/snow (we've had it all), weather changes, mud, wet clothes and feet and insects and blisters
- Level one hikers are not to carry full kit. Sleeping bags, bedding, pots pans, food, tents etc. Are to be driven (or carried by the leaders) to the designated overnight camp, only if you will be camping. Most Bronze hikes are run as a Saturday day hike. .
- Leaders are to drop group and personal camping gear off at the common overnight site indicated in the route description.
- Leaders should plan for lots of rest breaks for nature observation, map reading instruction etc.
- A log / journal is a nice record of a first hike; remember to allow time for writing breaks.

## Silver Level 2

### Description

Hike starts Saturday AM, finishes Sunday early afternoon (unless you get lost!)

In the past the Silver level hike has proven to be most difficult. Scouts at this level invariably bring too much kit and cannot complete the hike, or become disenchanted, grumpy and unhappy. This becomes a turn off for future hikes. Your responsibility as a leader is to ensure your Scouts can manage. All packs must be weighed and should be no more than 20% of the Scouts body weight. Scouters found guilty of dispatching under weight Scouts or over weight packs will be subject to public ridicule.

### Details

- Scouts hike in patrols (minimum 3, maximum 5) without leaders
- Friday night camp is optional, but will allow an early start Saturday morning. Leaders are to camp with Silver Hikers both Friday and Saturday nights.
- Distance is about 16km over two days - **YOUTH WILL STAY TOGETHER AT ALL TIMES**
- Scouts must carry only personal camping gear (sleeping bag, spare clothes, mess gear etc.) in addition to daypack items (Saturday trail lunch) listed for Bronze level hikers
- Leaders are to transport group camping gear, food (including second day lunch and water) to common Saturday camp site
- Wise leaders will monitor patrol progress (non intrusive) - ie meet them as they pass through certain check points-can use car for this. Remember you may be required to evacuate a fatigued or fallen hiker.

## Gold Level 3 (THE CHALLENGE JOURNEY)

### Description

This is the most difficult of the 3 routes. Over 20km will be covered in two days. Over night Camps will be in secluded location, and not part of the group camp. Scouts on at this level will be challenged to carry all their own kit, cover the distance in the allotted time and keep a log of the journey. As far as possible this will emulate the First Class Journey described in the preamble here. A Venturer Hike Master will also camp at the site and will start the group each morning. Hike finishes Sunday afternoon by 3PM.

### Details

- Youth hike in single tent groups (eg 2-3 youth) without leaders. A maximum team equipment weight of 25% of team weight is sought. Think ultra light, sleek, fast, sure footed.
  - Must be completely self-contained and carry all gear and food for weekend with no adult assistance
  - The organizers will attempt to have Gold hikers camp 'far' away from others Friday and Saturday
  - Experience says travel light, share the load, be prepared for weather changes, and watch for trail signs and follow trail instructions.
  - **Youth must stay together at all times**
  - Extra water will be available at some checkpoints and at the remote Gold Saturday night campsite.
  - Previous hike experience is necessary - ie no first year scouts who just want to give it a whirl
  - In order to fully meet the challenge participants should complete a Journey Log. The log / journal will contain: Name of group, Patrol or team name, Names and phone numbers. And descriptions of what was seen and experienced.
  - An award winning log book would also include...
    - a) a hand drawn overall map of the route
    - b) Sketches of interesting sites
    - c) a complete list of equipment being carried
    - d) a complete menu
    - e) Solutions to challenges along the way. (Orienteering, navigating around obstacles)
- Log Books will be returned to the Scouters at the next Scouters Club Meeting.

## Other Important Details

### **Roles and responsibilities:**

The Venturers plan the hike routes, operated the check points, do a trail sweep at the end of the day, provide First Aid if required, and do Search and Rescue for lost Scouts.

The Scouters (you), organize your patrols, administer permission / health forms, equip your hikers (food / equipment) and plan the camping aspects of the event. For Bronze hikers planning to camp over Saturday night, Scouters transport all camping equipment and operate a standing camp. For Silver hikers, Scouters transport kitchen, food, and tents. Hikers carry all their personal kit in a back pack. Gold level hikers have minimal support from their Scouters; these patrols hike fully self-contained. Transportation to starting points, transport home and supervision of hikers at the common Saturday night camp site will be the responsibility of all Scouters.

You may prefer to augment the Venturers with your own spotters in cars or on foot for Silver and Gold hikers. Bronze hikers will have their Leader(s) hiking with them. If one of your patrols goes missing, finding them will be a team responsibility. Venturers, with their Advisors will lead search and rescue and by use of the checkpoint system will be able to bracket approximately where patrols went astray. Some Venturers will have mountain bikes to assist with a trail sweep. We have a couple of ATV's at our disposal for emergency evacuation. It is important to reinforce the importance of signing the log sheets. Some check points may be unmanned and hikers will have to initial documents inside a grey coloured folder.

Please make every effort to expose the Scouts to lightweight camping and hiking experience. Avoid bringing in the transport trucks and trailers with all the usual trappings of a standing camp. There is very limited parking. Gold level hikers are to be self-contained. It would be great if Gold hikers planned and purchased their own food. The cost might be a little higher, but the experience invaluable.

These are wilderness camping conditions. Scouters must plan to bring all water required for the hike. (Venturers will have water at check-points to top up, but not enough to fully supply hikers) Spring run-off water is unsafe. Hikers must understand that available ground water must be considered contaminated. (Beaver Fever). Water filter pumps may be used to purify available water. All campsites are bivouac wilderness sites. i.e. Find a spot in the bush that looks flat (or flat enough) and pitch your tent. In addition, there are no latrines installed. Groups must be prepared to either prepare one, or train youth on digging and using cat holes. (distance, tools and depth) Hike hygiene is more difficult than standing camp hygiene, and Scouters must provide special awareness & training.

Troop Scouters are expected to review and check hike rules and itinerary, hike safety requirements, gear requirements, orienteering skills, what to do if lost etc. and weigh the packs with the youth prior to the hike.

### **Plan the hike in advance**

Each group should plan their hike with the assistance of Scouters. Discuss menu planning, gear requirements, load sharing and safety practises. This is not a standing camp and weight and pack requirements are an important consideration both for those who have to carry it (youth and possibly leaders) and for training younger scouts about hike preparations. The Scout Fieldbook is a useful reference both for hike gear and safety procedures. It is a tricky balance to carry what you need, and need what you carry... nothing missing, nothing extra. Wherever possible try to use equipment suitable for a hiking adventure. Single burner stoves, freeze-dried/dehydrated or single pot meals, lighter tents and a suitable pack are recommended. Past experience suggests that wet feet are likely. Past hikers have used hiking boots, rubber boots, running shoes etc. with varying success. Blisters can be expected and suitable first aid/blister packs should be carried. Several pairs of spare socks, dry shoes for wearing in camp or on the second day and even the old milk bag trick can do wonders for a dispirited youth who has stepped off the wrong side of beaver dam or misjudged too many puddles. Foul weather gear, a hat, sun and insect stuff, a warm sweater, mittens and lots of water are a must. Compasses and whistles are a must. At least 2 compasses per group are recommended (youth often drop them).

Camp beds, cots, chairs, radios, CD players and CD's, Video Games, cellular phones, large tarps, heavy canned food, excess cooking gear, 3 burner Coleman stoves, large air mattresses, only get heavier and are awkward to carry on long hikes. Oddly, they have all been seen on the Rideau Challenge Journey in past years.

If hiking is new to you or your youth or if you wish to obtain additional information about trail conditions or what to expect, please contact either Rod Wilson. In addition, if your Troop has not been on a hike before or needs a tune up, we can arrange to have one of our experienced Venturers come to your Troop meeting and do a show and tell. There is lots of collective experience we recognize it's not old hat to everyone. We want to make this an enjoyable learning experience for all.

## Registration Process

Scouter's send an e-mail to [scouter\\_rod@hotmail.com](mailto:scouter_rod@hotmail.com) (or telephone 825-8337) with the following information:

1. The hike being done (Bronze / Silver / Gold)
2. The number of youth in the patrol.
3. Youth names and parents phone numbers

You will get confirmation and hike details approximately 10 days prior to the hike. This will tell you when / where to start, camp site locations and route details. It will also detail the end points and check out procedures.

Hike Master: Rod Wilson 825-8337, [scouter\\_rod@hotmail.com](mailto:scouter_rod@hotmail.com).

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++ *This Section is a handout for Scouts*

## Rideau Challenge Journey- HIKE RULES

The Law of the hike is the Scout Law. Say it, understand it, and obey it.

EVERY HIKER WILL CARRY A WHISTLE AND KNOW THE RULES FOR USING IT  
(THREE BLOWS MEAN YOU NEED HELP)

MEMBERS OF A HIKING GROUP WILL STAY TOGETHER AT ALL TIMES (THIS MEANS YOU TRAVEL AS FAST AS THE SLOWEST HIKER) Encourage not criticise, you will work as a team.

EVERY GROUP WILL SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT AT EACH CHECKPOINT PASSED

EVERY HIKER WILL FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIKEMASTERS AT CHECKPOINTS

HIKING GROUPS WILL FOLLOW THEIR ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS. REMEMBER TO WATCH FOR THE RIDEAU TRAIL MARKERS (RED OR BLUE TRIANGLES) THAT MARK THE CORRECT ROUTE - BUT BE SURE OF YOUR DIRECTION - LOOK FOR LANDMARKS (ROADS, STREAMS ETC) - USE YOUR MAP & COMPASS

HIKING GROUPS WILL FOLLOW NORMAL SAFETY PROCEDURES WHEN CROSSING HIGHWAYS OR OTHER ROADS-WALK SINGLE FILE, FACING TRAFFIC, LOOK BOTH WAYS WHEN CROSSING THE ROAD.

EVERY HIKER AS A MEMBER OF SCOUTS IS EXPECTED TO ACT IN AN ORDERLY AND SAFE MANNER AT ALL TIMES, TO RESPECT AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND TO LEAVE NO TRACE OF YOUR PASSING (IE NO GARBAGE LEFT ON TRAIL!)

DO NOT THROW ROCKS AT CARS OR TRAINS. (Seems odd to say, but this too has happened in the past)

OPEN FIRES ARE PERMITTED ONLY AT THE DISCRETION OF THE HIKE MASTER. CHECK BEFORE YOU LIGHT

You must have a pocket First Aid Kit. Be clean. Wash your hands as often as possible. Use only purified water. Hygienic KYBO & latrine practices must be followed.

The Rideau Trail Club demands that we practice Zero Impact, Zero Trace camping. Take nothing but pictures; leave nothing but footprints.

## Instructions to Hikers

Welcome to the Rideau Challenge Journey, we hope you have a terrific hike and we hope you are able to make strides towards your personal goals. This hike will help you towards several Scout awards including the Spring Year 'round camper, Explorers Badge, and adventurer Challenge award.

You have been given a map that details your route, you must follow it exactly. You must sign in at all check points. Some of them may be unmanned. Look for a grey plastic envelope with a sign in sheet. Sign your group name and time in/out. You should also have your own topographic, Rideau Trail guide, compass and if you have one GPS. Here are some reminders that will help you organize and keep safe on the trail

- Remember the rules for safe drinking water. Spring run off is not safe to drink. The water at the campsites are NOT safe for drinking at this time of year. You must make arrangements to carry your daily water and arrange for your leaders to supply enough water for cooking, cleaning and washing. 1 litre of water weighs 1 kilogram.
- There is Poison Ivy on the trail but it may be too short to identify. Keep all your personal and group gear together in open or grassy areas. Keep your boot / shoe laces up and wash your hands often.
- Your departure times will be spaced out (staggered) this is to allow you to hike as a patrol without interference from other groups. Activities may be planned to hold you at checkpoints to keep you apart from other groups. You must follow the instructions of the check point hike masters.
- You are to hike as a patrol. Depending on your level, you may not have a leader hiking with you. You may have a Hike Master as a guide to keep you on the right trail, and to point out interesting things.
- Stay on the trail. Do not try and make your own short cuts. Follow the Orange triangular blazes. Note that two of the routes use blue markers. Consult your hike route detail sheets and be familiar with your route before you hit the trail. Major changes in direction are marked with two blazes. If you lose the trail return to the last blaze and try and pick up the trail. If you get lost stay put STOP, SIT Down. Blow your whistle to call for help. The hike masters will be looking for you if you do not arrive at the next checkpoint. But this may take several hours. DO NOT PANIC. If it gets dark, or the weather is bad take / make shelter.
- Use your map and the Rideau Trail Guide notes. Maps not only keep you on the trail but also include a wealth of information. If you consult your maps you will get more out of the experience. If you are hiking at the gold level you will be required to complete a log / journal that includes a sketch map of your hike.
- Keep your feet dry. Bring rubber boots as an option to pull on for the real wet part of the trail. But do not plan to hike all day in these boots. Change back to your regular hiking boots for the dryer parts. Do not walk in the water if you can help it. However, there are a lot of wet spots on the trail and you will find it hard to completely avoid it. Your feet are tender after the long winter and you may be prone to blisters. Check for hot spots on your feet. If you think you are getting a blister, rest, dry your feet and apply mole skin. Advise the hike master at the next check point. They can administer First Aid if required.
- Some parts of your route will follow or pass over roads. Remember the rules for hiking on roads. Walk in single file, facing the traffic (left hand side). Read page 350 in the Scout Fieldbook. Remember where you are and don't fool around on the road. The cars go fast on Dwyer Hill Road. Be alert, beware of traffic.
- You represent your family, patrol, troop and Scouts everywhere. There will be other hikers and non-scout people on the trail. Remember your Scout Promise and DO a Good Turn. Treat all you meet with respect and courtesy. We are all visitors here, let's leave a good impression.