

## AMORY ADVENTURE AWARD THIRD PLACE WINNER

# Algonquin Adventure

### – *There's No Place Like Home*

by the 1st Port Perry Venturers, Port Perry, Ontario

**I**n a journey that would take them 1300 km by car, 400 km by train, 120 km by freighter canoe and 100 km by boat, the 1st Port Perry Venturers experienced a once-in-a-lifetime tour that would remind them that, through Scouting, there really is no place like home.

Travelling to the immense northern reaches of their home province of Ontario, they had the opportunity to see a true picture of the size and beauty of the area. They enjoyed the chance to interact with local people – and to sample the Cree culture and traditions.

On an early August evening in 2003, the Venturers left the Scugog region for Martin River Provincial Park; their first campground. Spirits were high as they travelled along – af-

#### A Cree teepee



ter weeks of preparation and organization, they were ready to see the wild country that had beckoned for so long. They were keen to photograph a huge moose, standing calmly in a nearby shallow lake...as if to welcome them.

#### All aboard the Polar Bear Express

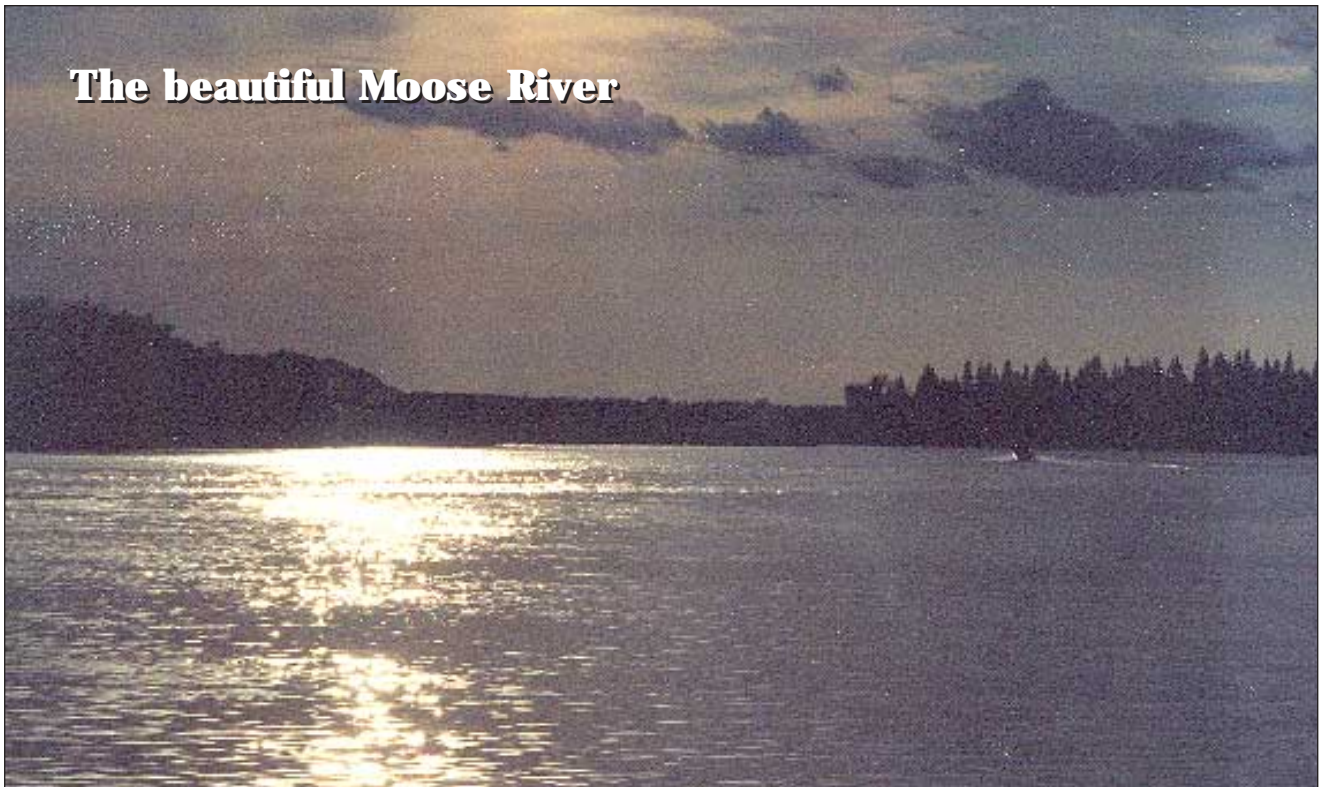
From Cochrane, the group caught the Polar Bear Express, one of Canada's few remaining scenic and cultural rail trips. They travelled approximately 300 km through the beautiful peacefulness of northern Ontario – revelling in the rugged countryside and enjoying the camaraderie on the train. This is historic country, where the fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company first made their mark.

#### An environmentally friendly lodge

If a Scouting group is going to stay in a lodge, what better place than one designed to be completely environmentally friendly! The Venturers were amazed when they got to the retreat at the southern tip of Algonquin Park – they had never expected anything like this.

Designed as a minimum-impact wilderness experience, the Eco-Lodge had no electricity or telephone, "prim-

#### The beautiful Moose River



Photos courtesy the 1st Port Perry Venturers



itive" hot showers and indoor plumbing, featuring composting toilets and halogen low consumption lighting. This is also one of the most pristine and beautiful single trail systems in Ontario. It is also home to a resident wolf pack! The Venturers took full advantage of all the activities they could find – hiking, paddling, and soaking in the spectacular summer scenery.

#### Fossil Island tour

The Fossil Island tour would take them 40 minutes up the Moose River. This attraction revealed the many fossils in the rocks on the islands, and gave them a chance to sample local culture. They ate native Bannock bread, drank berry tea, and participated in community service – by helping to raise a stranded dock. It took the whole team, working together, to lift the dock (which had been caught on shore by high tide) back into its place on the water. Crows, ravens, yellow legs and ospreys were among the wildlife sights they enjoyed.

#### The Polar Princess

On board the Polar Princess, the Venturers sailed downriver on a leisurely tour of James Bay. From there they took a bus tour to Moose Factory Island, where they were able to visit many local northern stores and the Cree cultural centre. The

Venturers would have liked to experience more of this culture, and would look into a possible future overnight stay at a Cree camp where they could experience the food, lodging and daily life of the people.

#### Science North

The final stop was Sudbury, where the Venturers enjoyed Science North – one of northern Ontario's most interesting science attractions. They experienced hands-on demonstrations, visited the IMAX theatre, and tried their hands at building dams in the sand (good for future Beaver leaders!).

#### Journey home

This trip was a challenge to coordinate, plan and execute. Travelling to the northern reaches of Ontario gave them a window on northern life they had never seen. As one of the group put it: "...through this Scouting adventure, we came to understand that we didn't have to travel around the world to appreciate who we are, where we are, what we have and what we do. There truly is no place like home". X

– the 1st Port Perry Venturer participants were: Don Bark, Rob Bark, Elgen Ward, Cody Rundle, Mike Van Camp, Jordi Stainton, Andrew Sweet, Jamie Corneal. Advisor: Wil Corneal.

## The Polar Bear Express

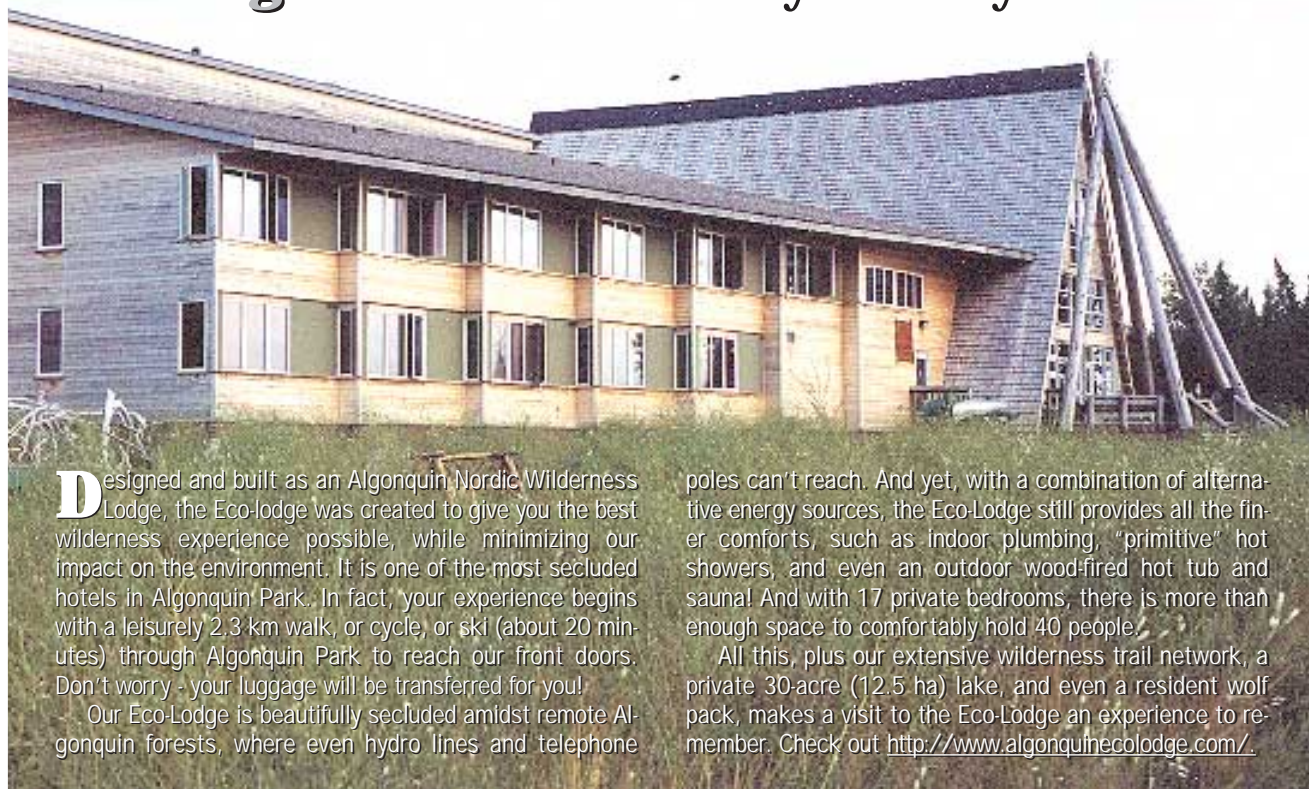
There are only a few great rail excursions left in the world and this is certainly one of them... the Polar Bear Express departs Cochrane for an incredible 300 km journey to the Arctic Tidewater at Moosonee.

Travel along the "old highways" of the fur trade; historic rivers such as the Abitibi and the Moose. Your trip on the Polar Bear Express will take you to a sparsely populated land of forests, tranquil lakes and muskeg.

As you tour Moosonee, you will begin to understand the realities of this frontier community. Take a freighter canoe across the Moose River to Moose Factory, founded more than 300 years ago by the Hudson's Bay Company. For more information, surf to <http://www.polarbearexpress.ca/>.



## Eco-Lodge: An Environmentally Friendly Hotel



Designed and built as an Algonquin Nordic Wilderness Lodge, the Eco-lodge was created to give you the best wilderness experience possible, while minimizing our impact on the environment. It is one of the most secluded hotels in Algonquin Park. In fact, your experience begins with a leisurely 2.3 km walk, or cycle, or ski (about 20 minutes) through Algonquin Park to reach our front doors. Don't worry - your luggage will be transferred for you!

Our Eco-Lodge is beautifully secluded amidst remote Algonquin forests, where even hydro lines and telephone

poles can't reach. And yet, with a combination of alternative energy sources, the Eco-Lodge still provides all the finer comforts, such as indoor plumbing, "primitive" hot showers, and even an outdoor wood-fired hot tub and sauna! And with 17 private bedrooms, there is more than enough space to comfortably hold 40 people.

All this, plus our extensive wilderness trail network, a private 30-acre (12.5 ha) lake, and even a resident wolf pack, makes a visit to the Eco-Lodge an experience to remember. Check out <http://www.algonquin ecolodge.com/>.