

CANOEING THE GREAT TEMAGAMI RIVER

The Temagami River is an important resource for the Temagami District in several ways. It drains a lot of land and provides habitat for many wild life species but it also provides wonderful leisure and adventure outings for people.

I have been canoeing the Temagami River since childhood in the 1970's. There has been much growth on the Temagami Lake since then but the River is still a place of solitude and adventure. The many childrens' summer camps on the lake use the river as a training ground for white water canoeing with their campers. Unfortunately, last summer there was not enough water in the river to float a canoe let alone practice on the rapids. My father has been boating on the river since the 1950's and never saw the water so low. Hopefully this summer the river will have more water to please the outdoor enthusiasts, sustain the wildlife and keep the environment green and free from the dangers of forest fires. The level of water in the river always depends on the amount of snow and rain we receive each year.

The Temagami River has everything from little swifts to joyously slide a canoe through to breath taking falls that exhibit the raw power of nature. It can look calm and serene and yet it should never be underestimated for the power of this water flow can quickly turn a pleasurable paddle into a nightmare. One only has to see the pioneering logging cross at the bottom of Island Falls to sober one's thoughts of the awesome power of water. The cross commemorates the lives lost during the logging drives which took place here until the 1950's.

To enjoy a leisurely canoe trip down the Temagami River beginning at the Lake Temagami hub, one should allow five days which would bring you to the bridge at River Valley. There are many excellent camp sites to enjoy along the way. Depending on the water flow, one can expect four portages on the upper part of the river to Red Cedar Lake. From Red Cedar Lake to River Valley, there may be up to seven portages in a normal year. The portages are worth the views that come with it. The scenery truly rivals any of Canada's great rivers and it is in our back yard!

To manage the beautiful portages painlessly, we recommend a deep dish yoke. They are scooped out to fit along your shoulders and neck and will make carrying your canoe effortless.

For canoeing on a river, we recommend an ottertail or an eight inch paddle. For those gifted at maneuvering through rapids and taking a chance, an ottertail paddle compliments the talent required. An eight inch paddle allows you to take more water when ferrying across or back paddling above a rapid to find your next line. Never panic when in a rapid. Aim for the next eddy or calm spot and always wear a certified PFD (personal floatation device). Never wedge your paddle between the current and your canoe or you'll end up swimming!

If you don't have five days to spend on the river, take a day trip. Grab your canoe, paddle, pfd, water and a picnic lunch. Tell someone where you're headed and when you'll be back. And don't forget your camera – the pictures and memories you bring home will stay with you a lifetime!

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