

WOODLAND CARIBOU SOLO # 2 - 2010

Please note: I'm not one to plan an "easy" trip or a journey along well traveled paddle routes. I planned a trip that could be completed in about two weeks. The following trip seemed to meet that expectation. I rate it as intermediate or advanced. Key information:

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Start and Finish | Wallace Lake (Manitoba) | Total Distance | 166 KM or 103.1 Miles |
| Lakes | 23 Named, many No-Names | *** Portage Distance | 39.6 KM or 24.6 Miles |
| Streams/Creeks/Rivers | Seven | Fishing | Lots of Walleye |
| Portages | 44 | Number of People | None |

Route: (West access) Wallace – Siderock – Crystal – Broken Arrow – Haggart – Carroll – Terry – Wanda – Dunstan – South Simeon – Simeon – Crazy – Pickerel – Beaver – My – Mary's – Artery – Craven – Carroll – Obukowin – Kidney – First – Siderock – Wallace

*** Conversion: Portage distances are measured in meters. One hundred meters is slightly longer than a football field (100 yards). One thousand meters is about 6/10 of a mile: I double portage: heavy backpack, small duffle, Pelican and fishing rod on the first trip.... a return walk.... and then the food pack and canoe. Therefore, every portage is equal to three times the map distance as stated in meters.

Example #1: A 500 meter portage = 15 football fields or slightly less than one mile

Example #2: A 2400 meter portage = 72 football fields or slightly less than 4.4 miles

8-12-2010 Another solo trip. Lots to think about....

Parents in assisted living, selling the childhood home, a class reunion and three weeks away from my own family. I decided on a West entry which would start in Manitoba. I arrived at Pine Falls for a good night's sleep with access to Blue Water Aviation where I could get an Ontario fishing license (licenses should be on-line in 2011). The drive from Pine Falls to Wallace Lake took nearly two hours on a gravel road for most of the way. There seemed to be something out of sync during that first day, perhaps due to the last couple of hours of civilization. The only FM station that I could find kept broadcasting the weather. Rain was expected by early afternoon and it would rain all night. The five day forecast called for rain for four of the first five days. This should have been helpful.... but that information mentally prepares the paddler for rain rather than relying on external cues like one does throughout the remainder of the trip. It didn't rain that first day. I was out of sync!

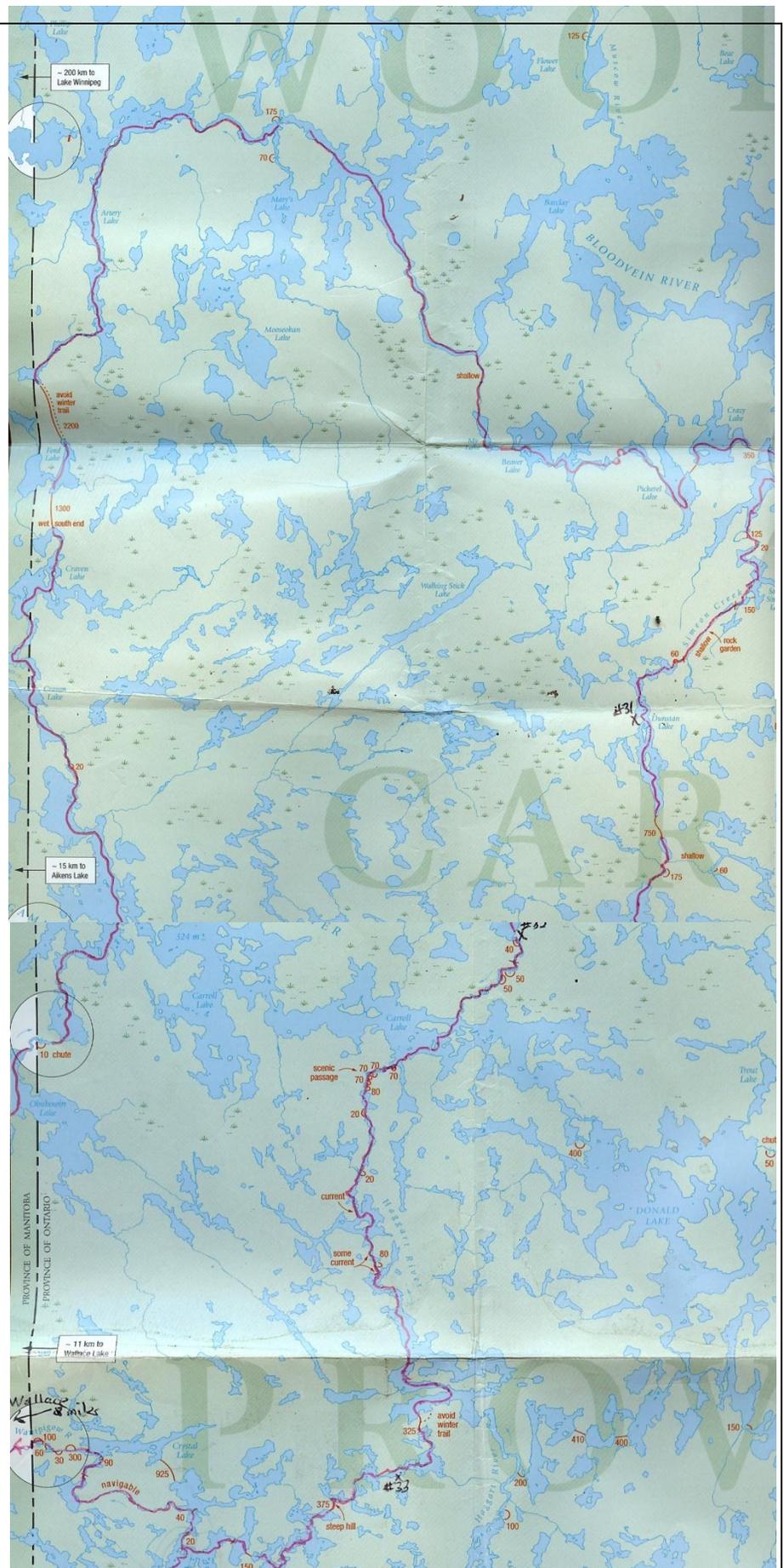


I had paddled some of this route the year before while on a five week solo. I knew what to expect, especially early on. I was familiar with the lakes and portages. It's about ¾ mile across Wallace Lake. The Wanipigow River was running high.... much higher than the previous year. It was a lot of work paddling upstream in the current. With an eye to the sky, I paddled upstream and across Siderock Lake and portaged seven times on the upper Wanipigow to arrive at Crystal Lake in 5 ½ hours. I was soaking wet from the humidity and light drizzle. I stayed at Crystal so that I could set up my tarp and tent before the "storm" hit me. Well... it's late in the evening. The sky is blue, clouds are high and I'm betting on no moisture tonight (so much for that FM station). I had time after camp set-up to paddle around the entire lake. I caught six northern pike and ended up keeping a couple for dinner. I climbed on the rocks, hiked up the next day's portage trail and enjoyed.... thoroughly being back in the wilderness.... alone. This trip will take between 12 – 16 days. I've learned that I can cover a lot of miles if I have to. I want to explore and take my time on this trip. Let's see if that happens. Loons, eagles, otter and beaver have already graced my route. It's so good to be back.

8-13 Crystal Lake to the Haggart River.... one of the most difficult stretches to navigate through without getting "lost". This stretch worried me the year before but somehow (maps and compass) I made it from point to point. When one paddles in the opposite direction, it seems as if nothing is familiar or the same. Could it be short term memory loss? There were a few (very few) places that I could recall but for the majority of time on the water, it seemed like the first time. I could not even remember walking over long portages.... nothing reminded me of having walked over the same terrain only one year earlier. It was a beautiful day although quite humid. Caught five small pike... plenty of fish to eat. Outstanding scenery. Rock outcroppings and majestic one hundred foot high rock bluffs along the route. No hurry. It was obvious that rain was due to fall at some point. The ominous clouds stayed high and I was able to stay on the planned route. The paddle up into Broken Arrow Lake via the small interconnecting stream took two hours. Lots of maneuvering around the 90 and 180 degree turns as well as paddling against the current. There is a 900 meter portage around this passage. My philosophy is to remain paddling if possible. I thoroughly enjoy the feeling of a paddle in my hands and time spent on the water. There has been a lot of rain in this region prior to this trip. Portages are wet and rocks can be slippery. I will have to be careful when portaging.... don't want to sprain an ankle or take a bad fall.

I selected a camp on a meandering section of the Haggart River, perhaps the only stretch traveling west. I had plenty of time to complete camp chores including securing the tent and tarp for the imminent storm.

Thunder and lightning off in the distance. I gathered dry firewood and stored it under the tarp so a warm fire would be possible in the morning. I finished dinner just as the rain arrived. I slept very well again.

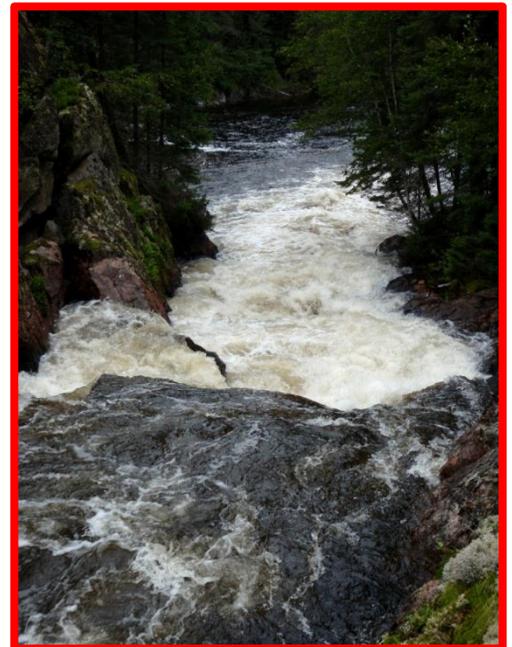




8-14 Morning. Windy! Overcast! Very difficult to determine if this is a “moving day” or a “layover day”. There are eight portages on the lower end of the Haggart River, all located at spectacular rapids for this area of the wilderness. I hope to reach Carroll Lake where the Haggart ends. Stay or travel? I waited, wrote, read and eventually packed and “hit the trail” late in the morning. There are many islands, bays and open water. With the compass and map right in front of me, I slowly made my way downstream towards Carroll and the “portages”. These are not traditional portages that one expects to move across in this wilderness. The Haggart River is running high, higher than the year before. There are times that the

river is a mile wide. The eight portages occur when the channel constricts to 20 – 30 feet and drops 20 – 60 feet. Sensational sounds and volume of flow. It seems as if the portages were established at low water. Access is minimal at both ends. Intimidating! Five of the eight portages require the paddler to pull up to a steep rock wall within 10 – 20 feet of the initial downstream “V” of the rapid. There is NO room for error. Once the canoe hits the wall, the paddler must instantly jump out of the canoe (most times into the water) to keep the boat from being yanked into the rapid. It is a challenge to hold onto the boat while pulling the gear bags out and onto dry land. The canoe then must be hauled up on the rocks and secured. It is difficult and nerve-racking. The portages are usually up and over steep rocks or small bluffs. They are short but the rocks and moss make for slippery conditions. The put-in at the conclusion of each portage is at the end of the rapid. Not easy access. And with high water, the canoe when loaded actually must be navigated through the standing waves at the end of the rapid. There seems no way around this action. To further complicate this process, the canoe must be loaded on land and the paddler must stand in the current and slowly enter the canoe into the channel. Then.... the paddler must hop into the boat and maneuver through the turbulence to quieter water. There are two rapids on this stretch that I believe a canoe heading up the Haggart could not reach the portage site due to the fast moving standing waves near the portage. I was fortunate to be traveling south to north. I didn’t survive this experience without trepidation, anxiety and extreme concern. At one rapid, I got the canoe a few feet too close to the downstream current and had to jump out to grab the shoreline as the bow of the canoe was being pulled downstream. A panic moment! My foot landed in about three feet of water nearly capsizing the canoe. In that moment, I crushed my testicle on the gunwale of the canoe (I wanted to throw up). I lurched for a paddle that had popped out of the boat.... and somehow managed to safely land on dry rock. Whew and ouch!

What a relief to finally reach Carroll Lake. It was windy but no “capping waves”. I paddled across the lake and found a secluded bay with a small camping area sheltered from the wind. I set up my tent and tarp with just enough time to prepare dinner and relax before the rain began to fall. I was dry, warm and safe. I could see the access to Simeon Creek... my route further north.... from my campsite. I slept well that evening.



8-15 Rain... a slow, steady mist followed by periods of steady rain. And it was cold. Hypothermia weather. Above freezing. About 42 degrees. Chilling. Damp. I wore all of my clothing. I contemplated packing up and traveling, but when I looked out on the water at the white capped waves and the possibility of continued rain throughout the day, I remembered my number one mantra for solo trips: "Make good decisions. Make good decisions!" In my tent and under my tarp I was dry.... chilled.... but dry. I was in no hurry. I want to enjoy paddling, especially the long journey north on Simeon Creek. I want to take my time to enjoy the scenery and each paddle stroke as I propel my canoe through this special wilderness. Morning turned to afternoon. Still the rain. My sleeping pad turns into a chair. I sat in that chair reading and writing and thinking. I crawled into the sleeping bag while in that sitting position. I listened to the rain and the wind as it steadily pelted my tarp and tent. There was no other sound. The question with no answer: "When will it stop? Will it stop?" Time and moment seem to dissolve into more time and more moments. I'm OK with that. Part of the enjoyment of a solo trip is the time spent with yourself..... thinking, letting your mind go where it wants to go, reflecting and then analyzing. Most of the time is spent in the moment but today I was able to live a considerable amount of time in my past. Character building. Realizing what's really important. A rainy day spent in a tent on Carroll Lake.



Afternoon has turned into evening. Still the rain. Still the wind. A "good" decision day. But tomorrow I want to move.

8-16 Finally got a fire. It's been a couple of days. A fire is a sign of "all is well", its warming and mesmerizing. It picks up my spirit on a dreary day. But it doesn't last long.... just long enough for a hot drink and a hot meal.

I'm back in my tent early in the evening. Quite the day. Very windy.... from the NW. I crossed a challenging piece of Carroll Lake and then entered Simeon Creek. It's narrow and meanders constantly. The current was stronger than I remember and of course this time I'm heading upstream. But it was cold and windy. I enjoyed the strenuous workout. It kept me warm. The portages were easy to find and not difficult. A couple of small rapids with no portage routes created some good problem solving.... usually lining the boat or walking right up the rapid. My goal was Wanda Lake. I had plenty of time to think about the wind and the capping waves that I knew were going to be huge at the lower end of Wanda. I was hoping for a break in the weather.... But that didn't happen.... In fact, the wind picked up in the afternoon. My strategy on Wanda was to hug the West shoreline. The middle of the lake was dreadful. I hugged. I bounced and I made progress. Wanda is two miles long. My thought was that the best camping areas would be at the northwest end of the lake. About half way up the lake, the waves subsided somewhat and I found the canoe in shallow weed beds. Walleye territory? I quickly put the rod together and fished the final half mile to the end of the lake. Four nice walleye and two pike. Found a camping area that no one had ever used before.



Erected the tent and tarp, filleted the fish and started a fire. The rain started as I finished dinner. All in all a wonderful day. Lots of time on the water. Good mileage. I'm warm, tired and I've eaten as much as I care to eat. I will fall asleep with thoughts of warm weather and perhaps a chance to once again see the sun.

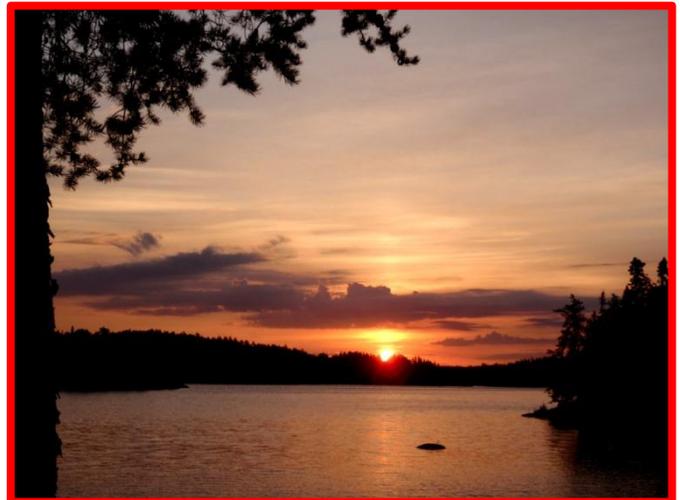


8-17 I remember reading in my WFR – Wilderness First Responder book that if a fish hook with a barb enters the flesh, it is best to extract it by breaking off the hook and pushing the sharp end through the skin (an exit hole). The sharp end is then “grabbed” with pliers and pulled out of the body. I never

thought that I'd practice this technique on myself. I was paddling on South Simeon. The walleye were biting in the choppy water. As I pulled the third fish of the day into the canoe, the fish flopped and the treble hook imbedded itself in my lower leg. I got the fish on the stringer but had to leave the hook in my leg until I could locate a campsite and get off the choppy water. Lots of blood.

Today was the best day of the trip of the trip ... so far. I left Wanda and entered Simeon Creek....

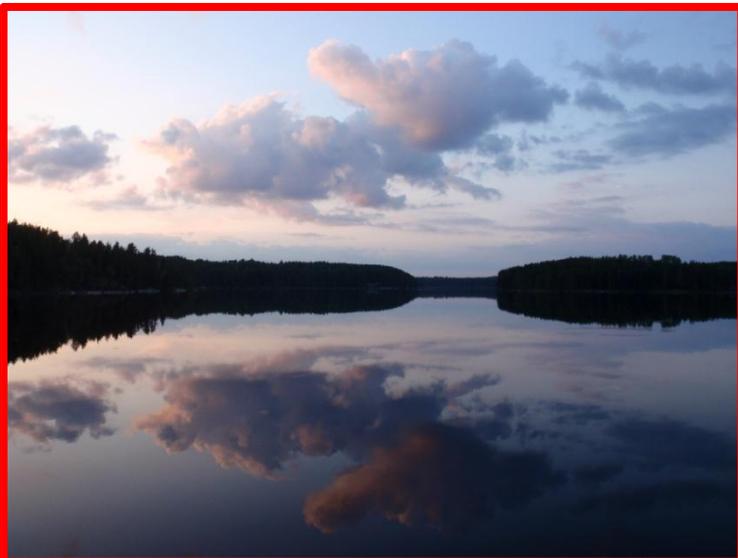
paddling in strong current upstream. The creek never gets very wide and meanders often. There is a 750 meter portage into Dunstan Lake. A beautiful walk in the woods. Red, purple, orange, black and grey mushrooms line the trail. Red berries are everywhere. Lots of Indian pipe. It didn't seem like work. Dunstan is about five miles long. It's narrow. There seems to be potential campsites all over the lake. But no people. I like it that way. As I was exiting Dunstan to the northeast, the sky was filled with dark, black clouds. A forewarning? I entered the north branch of Simeon



Creek, this time with the current with me. I wish I could have taken more time for this stretch. A nice flow, a rock walled canyon. I hurried to set up a camp in case of a storm. It didn't materialize... yet. I went back out on the water to fish and caught two more walleye including my largest to date.

It's still quite chilly for August. Long sleeve shirt over a short sleeve shirt all day..... in fact, for the past four days. Part of me would enjoy the sun but the important consideration is wind velocity. The wind

hasn't been a huge factor during the first week. The view from my campsite on South Simeon is spectacular. I'm up on a bluff about 75 feet above the water looking south. There is nothing but lake, trees, marsh, rocks and wilderness. It's wonderful. Heck, I even “caught” myself today!



8-18 It was quiet this morning. How quiet? The lake was a mirror. A foggy mist rose slowly from the bays and marshes. There were no loons, no wind, no bird sounds. When the sun peeked out over the horizon, I expected the day to come alive. It didn't! It was peaceful. I wanted to stay in that moment for as long as possible. There is a feeling that overwhelms me when I sit looking over a wilderness lake. Tranquility. Escape. Satisfaction. A person just doesn't get to a place like this without all of the planning and work. But here I am. Mesmerized. Happy. Smiling out loud!

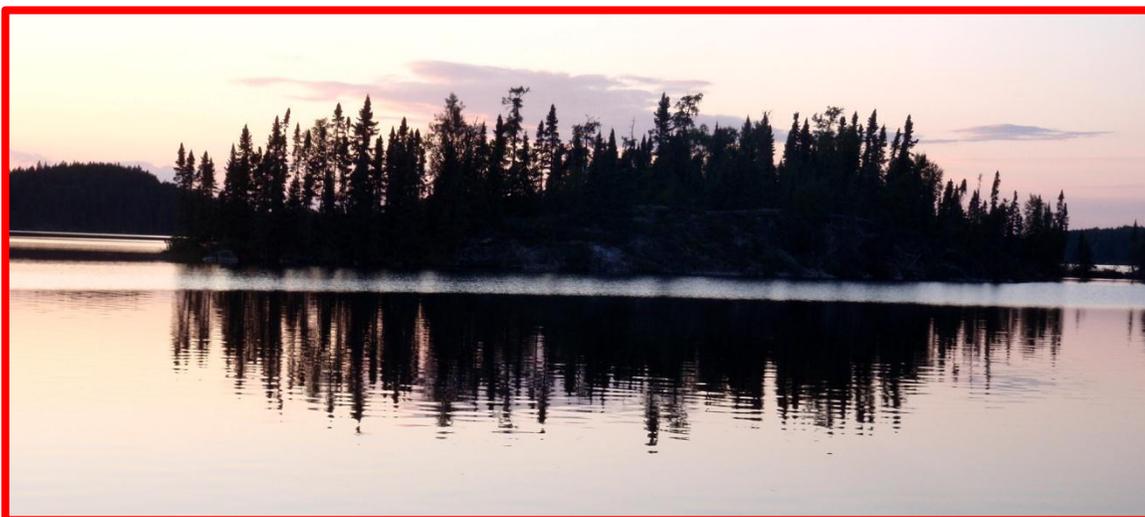


I hope to enter new lakes today. Up until this point, I have traveled in reverse a course that I completed a year earlier. I have to admit that I remember little of that journey. Almost everything looks new.... As if it's the first time that I have been here. I wasn't expecting that. But here I am loving this lake and the moment that I'm living in. quite the start of a new day.

Simeon Creek empties into Simeon Lake which is part of the Bloodvein River. The map indicated two portages but there were two additional small ones at the outlet that leaves the paddler wondering what to do. They are not possible to run and lining the canoe down is difficult. I'm not sure what paddlers do traveling in the opposite direction. The section of water, lakes and streams from Carroll Lake to Simeon Lake may be some of the best in the park. There were no other paddlers/campers. Perhaps this section is quite challenging. Streams with current running into Dunstan and out of Dunstan (depending on one's direction of travel). The scenery is awesome and the fishing (walleye) is as good as it gets.

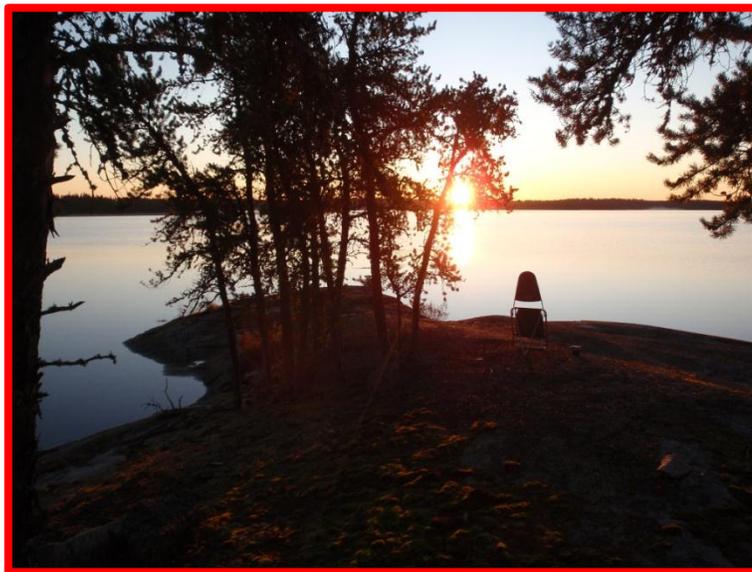
I decided (before the trip began) to bypass a large section of the Bloodvein River by portaging west out of Simeon into Crazy Lake. What a surprise. Much of the landscape looks as if it was logged and grazed. I have been told that caribou swim to the large islands in the spring to have their young (and to avoid predators). There is a large island at the south end of Crazy that looks ideal for that purpose. Shortly after exploring the periphery of that island, I came across my first moose of the trip. It was a very large bull who was standing chest deep in the weeds in a shallow bay. I was able to paddle within 50 yards of him before he retreated and sauntered away. I watched the brush shake as he moved to a position on a small rock knob where we both took one more look at each other.

By this time I had already caught and filleted my fish for dinner. I decided to make one last portage to spend



the night in Pickerel Lake. Dinner was late. I had trouble locating a campsite. The best that I could find faced west. The wind was out of the NW. I had to wait until the wind subsided. Perhaps tonight I will be able to view the Northern Lights.

8-19 Fear. What is it about fear that is so stimulating? We, as a society, seem drawn to it. We have a paradoxical relationship with fear. On the one hand, we believe that we want to live our lives in safety and with as little of the unexpected as possible. And yet.... we seem to constantly put ourselves in position to experience an intense feeling of the unknown. As I sit near a small campfire on this beautiful morning, I think about those fears that seem to appeal to those who hear about an adventure like this one. Wild animals, bears.... Did you bring a gun? There is so much that can go right but there is always the chance that this could turn around. Wild animals are way down my list of fear factors. Getting lost, capsizing in open water, drowning, big winds, lightning or an intense storm, a bad fall, getting ill or possibly something that I have never thought about. Fear makes good company. It keeps me organized. It keeps me on track to

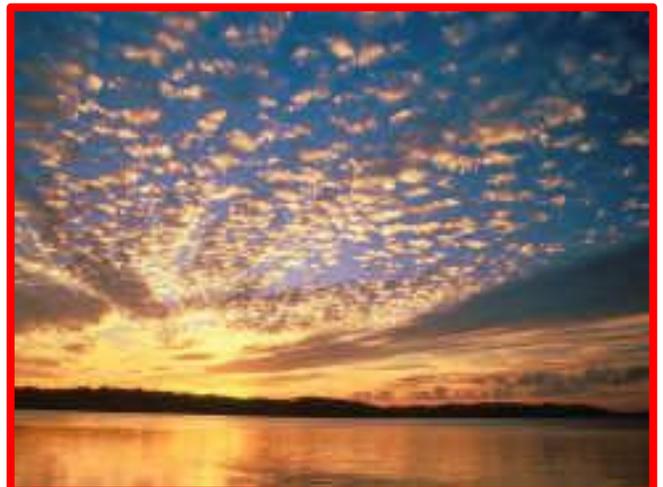


practice my trip mantra: "Make good decisions!" It is peaceful right now. That's good but I am always looking out at the lakes and walking the portages with a concern for the unexpected. There is an intense excitement in this peace and tranquility. Every day.... every moment. I will move again to more lakes and more portage routes. More unknown!

Isolation. It doesn't appear that anyone has passed over these portages in years.... many years. The trails were in terrible shape if they could be located at all. There were no slash marks on trees at either end of the connecting routes. If there was a portage trail between Beaver and My Lake, it has been obliterated by brush and downfall. I spent nearly two hours

hacking my way back and forth between the two lakes making my own route. It's wilderness bushwhacking. One only hopes to be able to locate the canoe after returning from the first load. Whew!

Beaver Lake is a large, beautiful lake with fingers of water extending in many directions. I fished the entire length and was rewarded with one 15 pound pike, which I released. My Lake is small by lake standards on this trip. The surprise was the fishing. As I paddled from the south end to the north, I caught 10 walleye and a 12 pound pike. My campsite sits perched upon a small bluff overlooking the lake. The water is smooth as glass. I can pick out the craters of the moon from the moons reflection on the lake surface. Quite a day. A short portage to start the day tomorrow and then two days of river (Bloodvein) and big lake paddling. Then the work begins. For now.... I will enjoy this unique serenity.



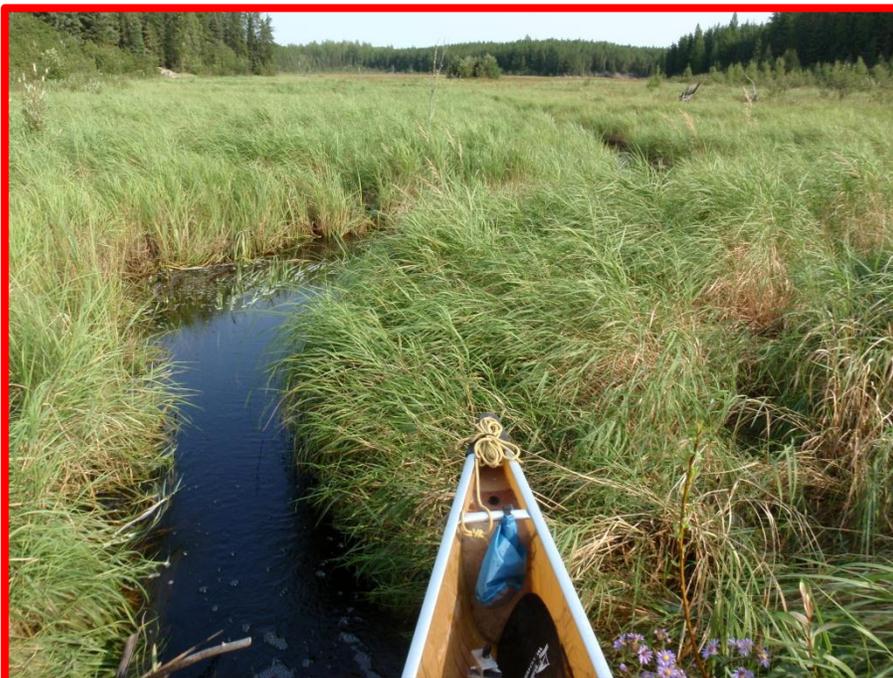
8-20 Planning. Making the dream happen.... Vision to reality. I'm good, very good with the "big picture". I can look at a map and mentally "see" the adventure unfold. I'm good with the details: routes to and from the starting or ending point, keeping the gear and food light while packing everything necessary for a successful trip, selecting out of the way routes to maximize solitude, providing leeway in the schedule to possibly account for layover days (wind, rain, storms), and for completing what I started. Sometimes though, while on the trip, the short time planning doesn't turn out the way I would like it to. This morning is an example. My campsite is located on the north end of My Lake. I usually do not like camping with the wind blowing into camp. I overlooked this negative because of the view but mostly so that I would benefit from the early morning sunrise. Well... that breeze from the south is still blowing and the sun is up.... Except that it is blanketed in a low lying cloud bank.



My Lake...: one has to like the sound of that.... My Lake. Secluded and peaceful. If there is a negative, it may be that there are no loons on the lake. A lake without loons is like attending a ball game and not getting a hotdog or like reading a book to discover that a few pages are missing in one of the chapters. I enjoy the loons and seem to never tire of their "giggling girl scout" call. It is the "call" of the loon like the "hoot" of an owl or the "song" of a bird.

A surprise exit from My. I was expecting a 400 meter portage but was able to paddle the entire stretch. Of course it wasn't easy at first. The stream is three feet deep and two feet wide at the start. Lots of quick turns. Sure was glad that the current was with me and that I was paddling a solo canoe. That stretch was my favorite of the trip. I'm not a religious person, but if there is an afterlife, I hope it's like paddling out of My Lake!

Then.... I entered the Bloodvein River. I've paddled most of it through the park. It's wide but there is some current. A slight tail wind and I was moving at about 3MPH. This day turned into a marathon... far



surpassing where I thought I'd end up at the end of the day. All was well crossing the wide and long lakes until I started south on Artery Lake. Before that turn, I did spot another moose and located some excellent pictographs on a rock wall. The last four miles were directly into a SW wind.

There are three days on this trip when I thought I'd probably encounter humans. Crossing Mary's and Artery Lakes would be at the top of the list. To my surprise there were no boats, no motors, and no people. I like it that way. I found a simple but efficient campsite near the south end of Artery. About a fifteen mile day today. I'm beat.

8-21 The skies opened up last night. Lightning, thunder.... I didn't see it coming. It arrived at a poor time. Although my gear is dry (except for the rain cloth from the tent), the ground and rocks are wet and slippery. This comes on the day of two portages: 2200 and 1300 meters. I will let the morning attempt to dry this environment out a bit, but expect a difficult day moving through the woods. The first portage also involves 200 feet of elevation gain on its way to Ford Lake. That usually means a lot of "ups" and "downs". Rumor has it that the last 200 meters is very wet. Add wet to the high water levels and today could be a challenge.



The agony and the ecstasy. The agony is not being able to find the start of a portage. The ecstasy is finding it. The agony can be walking unbelievable distances through the woods while climbing rocks and



walking through knee deep muck. The ecstasy is getting to the next lake and being in the boat again. It took a little more than two hours to complete the 2200 meter Artery to Ford Lake portage. Lots of climbing... some bog walking... not real difficult. The 1300 from Ford to Craven started off like a leisure stroll through the trees and ended with the last 700 meters mostly bog and mud.... but flat. It was so wet on this particular day that I was able to load my canoe and paddle down the portage trail for the last 50 meters. Quite a tiring day. I reached northwest Carroll Lake for the evening and devoured a nice meal of walleye with dinner.

8-22 The solo journey of 2010 will be over in a couple of days but I have not had the time or the desire to think about that concept. My thoughts are focused on the paddle south through Carroll with lots of big, open water. Even more on my mind are the three portages from Obukowin Lake to Siderock. I believe that this route was last scouted in 2004? Much of the trail is/was a snowmobile trail used by a local trapper. The first two portages are about 1000-1300 meters respectively. The third portage is 2400 meters long. All of the skills that are necessary to safely and successfully navigate this trip are enhanced during these final days. It's easy to make mistakes. I must constantly keep in mind the trip mantra, "Make good decisions!" One step at a time. One moment at a time. Stay focused. Have fun!"

It's early afternoon. I made it down Carroll and into Obukowin.... barely! The southerly wind picked up force all day long. Obukowin has two distinct braches, one to the southeast and one to the southwest. Both are "big" water. I needed to get to the lower end of the southwest branch. As I looked out over a mile stretch of open lake, I could quite easily identify whitecaps and big troughs. I decided to quarter those waves, reach the far west and then proceed north to the entrance to the SW branch of the lake. I was fortunate to get across.... very lucky. And if that was not luck, my canoe landed at a cabin site with a dock and small cabin (that I didn't see until I reached shore). I needed to wait out the wind. There was no other option! I was safe for the time being. Please note: I have the utmost respect for private property and usually avoid the comforts of civilization while attempting to maximize my wilderness experience. But here I was...

beached! It was a paradox: Safety but an uncomfortable feeling none the less. I walked up to the cabin to explain my predicament only to discover that the cabin was empty. No one "home". Apparently this place is a rendezvous destination for fisherman and hunters.... A fly-in place (I wouldn't call it a resort). I unloaded my canoe and secured it to a tree. I then carried some of my gear to the deck of the cabin. And then I waited and waited. The wind was so strong that there was little possibility that anyone would arrive or that I'd be able to leave soon. So guess what? I became the guest.

The best part was the deck looking over the lake. I still plan to leave and reach a point at the north end of the lake before dark. But for now, I will be high and dry and have an opportunity to catch up on some reading and journaling. It's about three miles to the beginning of the "last portages". I will be able to get an early start in much calmer conditions.... I hope. It's strange how plans change. This is so much better than sitting on a rock.... waiting. In the four hours that I have been here, the wind has picked up velocity. (Sigh of relief!). It's so windy that I cannot even stand on the dock.

Its early evening. The wind has died enough for me to make a twenty minute "sprint" to find a campsite for the night. I sense that the wind will continue tomorrow until something big happens. I've been fortunate and more than a little lucky.



8-23 OK..... I confess. I shouldn't have crossed the lake yesterday. Sitting on the porch and looking out at the turbulence all afternoon and early evening had a settling affect on me and my conscience. I am in no



hurry. Belief in ones skills can reach a turning point. A capsiz would have resulted in an hour (or longer) swim to the north end of the lake. And then what? Would my gear keep floating? I would have lost some valuable stuff: fishing rod, yoke and possibly paddles and dry bags. What would have happened to the canoe? Worse case scenarios race through my mind. The "What ifs"! It's good to be able to second guess decisions. I only hope to learn from the experience.

Perseverance! I was one of those guys, when John F. Kennedy suggested that people walk 50 miles in one day, who jumped at



the chance and completed the trek. I was 15 years old. Today was a little like that. One step at a time.... and keep moving. I'm writing this entry while sitting in a canoe in a protective cove overlooking Siderock Lake. I can see where I want to camp but have been waiting for two hours for the wind to break. I left the cabin early this morning with the wind still blowing but not blowing hard enough to hold me back. I was no longer in the Woodland Caribou. I arrived at portage #1 (1000 meters). This was deemed the "easy one". It wasn't bad except when carrying the canoe in the open areas. And yes... there were wet spots and bog walking. Portage #2 (1300 meters) also went by relatively quickly with little problem. At the end of this portage, there is a 15 foot high cairn called the Stoneman.... quite impressive but perhaps no longer visible from the lake. It was portage #3 (2400 meters) that created all kinds of problems. The information that I had received prior to the trip explained the routes in the other direction (in other words, it would have been easier going from south to north than north to south). Finding the start of the portage was the first obstacle (the old plastic bucket was nowhere

to be found). When I located the trail, it seemed that this portage would be completed quickly. A new route through and over rocks is well marked for the first third of the trek. The second third of this portage follows a snowmobile trail, which moves through some open fields but can be very wet too. But there is a trail. About 2/3 into the portage, there is a stream that needs to be crossed. The information that I received states that there is a trail from the stream to Siderock Lake that is "high and dry". By the time I reached the stream crossing, I was walking in water up past my knees. A red flagged marker identified the stream (there are smaller rivulets that are really not the "stream"). It was not easy to cross. The water was too deep. I had to use the canoe. Once across, I could find no other hint as to where the rest of the trail headed. I looked for markers and an opening in the trees (it had to be wide enough to be a snowmobile trail). I left my gear and walked in both directions. The walking conditions were terrible in that marsh.... and no luck finding a trail.

My GPS indicated that I was where I was needed to be. What to do? What to do? There seemed to be three options: 1) Back track and keep looking for a trail; 2) Bushwhack through the woods using my GPS, or 3) Put the canoe in that little stream and paddle/pull the canoe down to the lake. It was only about 3/4 mile. The stream was my safest and hopefully quickest choice. Progress was slow as I pulled and yanked the boat over numerous beaver dams and tight turns... even too tight for a 15 foot canoe. At one point, I had to portage through the woods to avoid a wooded section with down trees. Then back to the stream. It was slow and a lot of work. Maybe I'm the first person to paddle down



that creek? Finally, I hit the lake. It had taken five hours for the entire portage. Now I sit waiting for the wind to subside so that I can get into a tent to get some rest. I will have to get up early to paddle down the Wanipigow River and to cross Wallace Lake before the wind holds me hostage for another day. But I will persevere!

8-24 The mind seems to return to civilization before the heart or the body. The night before, I had ferried my canoe across Siderock to a bay to a camping area. I set up the tent and spent a few minutes mentally practicing my exit the next morning. The wind howled incessantly. I felt a major storm was imminent. I couldn't sleep. It was the wind and thoughts of my car, the drive to Idaho, wondering if my family and friends were OK.... mind junk! I knew I had to leave early. Only three stretches of water to go. But that wind! I was up, packed and on the water by 5:15am. The sky was black. I wore my headlamp. The first bay (on Siderock) was already "choppy". I blindly paddled across to the small opening to the Wanipigow... wind in my face and current at my back. It's a long way to the main body of water on Wallace Lake. By the time I arrived, the lake was troughing.... big waves coming right at me. I kneeled, sucked it in and began the ¾ mile paddle. Progress was incremental but slowly my We-no-nah Wilderness solo boat moved across the lake to the landing. I must have (no exaggeration) paddled 10,000 or more strokes on only one side of the boat to keep it on track. Landed by 7:45am.

Celebration!

Mike Kinziger

Mike Kinziger resides in Deary, Idaho (with his wife Deanna) where he lives in a remote home in the foothills of Mica Mountain. He is recently retired from the University of Idaho (2009) where he taught for 16 years as an associate professor in recreation (Coordinator for Graduate, Undergraduate, and Outdoor Leadership). Mike also taught at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse for 16 years. In total, Mike taught for 36 years accumulating seventeen teaching and outstanding performance awards. Mike has an extensive outdoor background (whitewater canoeing, fishing, mountain biking, hunting, hiking, camping, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and backpacking, etc). Mike lists as special accomplishments: Scouting as a youth, Viet Nam Vet, Athletic Director and Coach, International Clown Camp instructor, single father who raised three daughters, motivational speaker, author of "games" book, outdoor trip leader with over 100 wilderness trips, holder of six long distance canoe records, a role model for active, healthy lifestyle and in the past year has spent seven weeks solo paddling in the Canadian wilderness with no human contact.

