



Fall 2006

The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

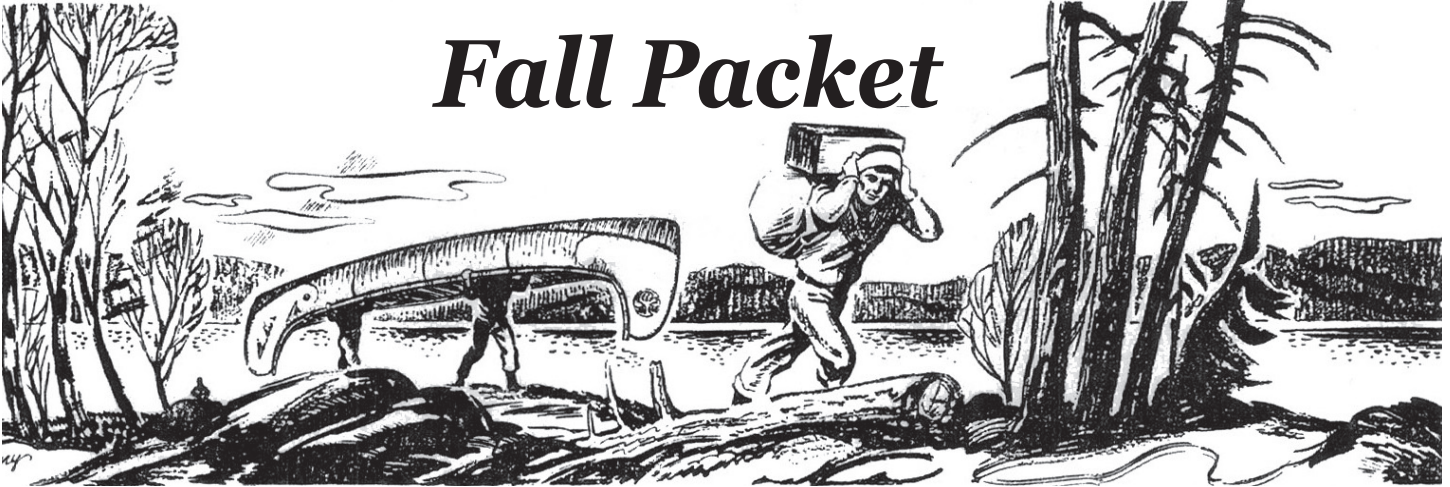
Outfit 126



The RUPERT: A River Diverted, A Garden Gone

IN OLDEN TIMES: Geoffrey and Sean Peake chart a course down the Middle Track of the Rupert River in June 1982 about 90 miles from James Bay. This is the area where the mighty Rupert will be largely diverted north into the Eastmain River system to supply another mess of megawatts to American air conditioners and Canadian heating elements. The final approval was confirmed by the Quebec Crees who once vowed to never surrender their traditional waterway known, in one noted film, as Job's Garden. See Pages 3

Fall Packet



Tim Farr is a dedicated subscriber from Ottawa who has recently added the complete back list of Che-Mun back issues to his library.

I very much enjoyed your story on Killarney, because I introduced my own kids to canoeing in a similar way. When my son was very young, I used to put him in a baby-seat positioned under the yoke and then drape a tarp or blanket over it to keep him out of the sun. We'd go up to a place called Crotch Lake in the Lanark Highlands to spend the week-end together and give my wife a bit of a break. People used to think I was nuts, but in fact, all that fresh air and gentle rocking in the canoe would put him to sleep like the proverbial baby he was, and we'd have a great time.

He could amuse himself for hours staring at the sights and playing with little pebbles or toys he'd brought from home, and he was no problem at night -- in fact, he'd fall asleep as soon as you put him in the tent. Later, probably around five or six, he graduated to short trips to Algonquin and La Verendrye and again, you couldn't have asked for a better canoeing companion. The only concessions I made were to keep the daily distances short enough that he didn't get too bored in the bow, and choose flatwater routes which wouldn't put him in harm's way.

I still canoe with both of my kids, although it's a lot tougher for them to find the time to get away now, what with jobs and school and new partners, etc. Last year, my son and I went back to Crotch Lake and it was very sobering to realize how much time had gone by, but also very satisfying. I had the pleasure of kicking back and watching the roles reversed, with Marshall tending the fire and doing most of the cooking. But just as you wrote in your article about Tom "it never changes but it's never the same." Those were and still are wonderful days and I know those shared memories mean as much to him as they do to me. He's thinking about starting his own family, and I was really tickled to overhear him telling his partner that I would be expected to play the same role with their own kids. So, speaking as a father and

touch wood, future grandfather, I say take them canoeing -- it just makes an already great experience that much better. Thanks again for another super issue.

We had some reaction to the 'Barrenland Bob' story from Outfit 125 and everyone knew the real name behind the pseudonym. Andrew Hall of Westport, Ontario wrote.

Janet and I arranged a Thelon River trip through "Bob" this summer. For a quarter-century we have always planned and arranged our extended canoe trips for ourselves, on the basis that "if you want the job done right, do it yourself". This year, we tried something different, and went through Bob, mostly because of the expense of returning our own canoe from Baker Lake. We did not experience anything like the total disaster described by Kully Mindemann, but we did find that the whole trip was fraught with problems.

We arrived in Yellowknife and checked in with Bob's part-time "expediter", who was pleasant, but unknowledgeable. We had already arranged to fly in to the jumping-off point with Air Tindi, and so made our own arrangements to have the excess baggage checked, and assured ourselves that it would get on the flight. On arrival at the jumping-off point, another local expeditor delivered us to a house in the village, rented by Bob for the use of clients. We had arranged that the pick-up and flight in to the Thelon would take place the morning following, and in fact it was at Bob's insistence that we had arranged to arrive at the village the day prior to fly-in. However, when pressed, the expeditor admitted that Bob's plane was out of service, and the pick-up might be late in the day.

On the scheduled pick-up day we waited around for most of the day, unable to contact Bob, until late in the day three of a group of six flew in from the river on an aircraft chartered at Bob's expense, and joined us in the temporary accommodation. They were hopping mad!

They told us that their guided group had put in on the Clarke river and intended to canoe

the Thelon from Warden's Grove to the Water Resources cabin above Thelon Bluffs, but had been delayed at the jumping-off point for several days (same problem - aircraft o.o.s). After finally being flown in by third-party charter paid by Bob, they got no further than Hornby Point. Apparently Bob had told them that since they couldn't make their planned destination because of lost time, Hornby Point was the alternative pick-up point. They waited there for several days for Bob's plane. Finally, Bob chartered another operator's aircraft to fly them out, after the group had called RCMP in Fort Smith for assistance.

We were somewhat concerned by this point. Bob's phone at the base camp is not answered as routinely as one might expect, and his expeditor had not been able to give us any further updated information. However our new acquaintances managed to contact Bob to point out that they had missed their prepaid flights home, and to discuss reimbursement. I don't think they got very far, and that call ended in mutual recriminations, but we did speak to Bob ourselves and let him know that we wanted to be on our way to the river.

We were picked up a day later, by the same third-party chartered aircraft which was delivering the remaining three members of the aforementioned group of six, and flew into Bob's base camp. His plane was still out of service, and we spent yet another night at the base camp before the plane was operable, eventually flying to the put-in at close to midnight the next day. On the way we picked up Bob's guide, who was still stranded at Hornby Point, along with our rental canoe.

Then we hit a new problem. We had intended to start our trip on the Clarke River, and paddle to the Thelon junction and thence to Beverly Lake. The water was low in the Clarke, and a fly-over suggested that we would be walking much of the river, a view confirmed by Bob's guide. Instead, we got dropped on the Radford River which flows into the Hanbury below Helen Falls. We can hardly blame Bob for the low water levels, but we do believe he could have warned us when we booked the trip that

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Editor's Notebook

The imminent damming or diversion of the Rupert River has been a staple of *Che-Mun* pages these past 22 years when we began to publish. In fact, the Rupert was chosen to be dammed first in 1971 but delayed due to opposition. You must remember when Quebec premier Robert Bourassa announced the James Bay Hydro scheme back then - he never even mentioned it to the Crees living there. *Incroyable!*

Well, a lot of water's gone through the turbines since then and equally as much social change. And now it appears the Rupert will finally be fatally disfigured as explained in these pages. And, surprisingly, with the approval of the Crees who vowed for so many years to stop it. Of course the Crees who actually will be affected by the diversion want no part of it.

And that's the crux of it. We all want everything unless we have to deal with it.

Even with a less militant view than back 22 years ago, it is still hard to believe we are plunging into these massive megaprojects when so many other options seem available. I guess I would not mind servicing a need for power if we didn't waste so much. Or give massive power deals to the rows of electricity-hungry aluminum smelters that line the St. Lawrence valley for no other reason than the province promised to furnish them with cheap power.

The Broadback River, featured in a full trip report beginning on Page 6, along with the Nottaway was one of two other rivers to meet the Rupert's fate three decades ago. It still flows free - and plenty fast as you can see. But it's no safer from now than then. The long are of power hungry population will reach wherever it can to quench its thirst for power. Power indeed corrupts, or as we paraphrased from a famous Jack Nicholson movie many Outfits ago about Quebec's attitude to damming northern rivers.

"Forget it Jacques, it's Hydrotown."

Michael Peake.



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Canoesworthy

The northern Quebec Cree face a future without their beloved Rupert River as Hydro-Quebec's massive Eastmain 1-A diversion was given the go-ahead by a joint Cree-Quebec standing committee in a report made public at the end of November.

The Rupert River, which stretches 420 miles from Mistassini Lake westward to Rupert's Bay at the southern part of James Bay, is seen as the lifeblood of the Cree nation.

It will be diverted to the Eastmain Reservoir and then north to the La Grande hydro complex.

The project is expected to start in the new year when Hydro begins construction on four dams and two powerhouses, flooding approximately 400 square kilometres. Some Cree believe the river will never be the same.

"It was a unanimous recommendation from the five members of the review committee," said Daniel Berrouard, a biologist and one of the Quebec representatives on the committee.

The report was given to Madeleine Paulin, Quebec's deputy minister of sustainable development, environment and parks on Oct. 31 by the Comité d'Examen, which is made up of two Cree representatives and three from the government. Shortly thereafter, the province approved it.

Some mitigation measures by Hydro included environmental monitoring to remedial measures like the ones done in the development of spawning grounds, seeding the banks and the relocation of beaver dams, the report says.

The green light means Quebec's north will see another giant hydroelectric project in the coming years. Hydro-Quebec has the largest hydroelectric complex in the world with nine generating stations.

The Cree went to court to halt the La Grande Project in the 1970s and, after much success before the courts, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed in 1975 between Hydro, Quebec, Canada, the Cree and Inuit. The new project will see almost 900 megawatts added to that total.

The committee looked at the environmental, social and economic impacts the diversion would have on the Cree and their traditional hunting and trapping way of life. They also held consultations on the project along with the Federal Review Board, in Montreal and the Cree communities.

Their report cited a reduction in the Rupert River's flow by as much as 71 per cent. It also talked about the economic benefits the project will bring to the Cree.

The report also said that the committee sees the more than \$4 billion in investments the project requires as representing a significant economic generator to stimulate regions experiencing slowdowns in other natural resource development sectors.

A few days after the approval, a vote was held in the towns most affected by the changes brought by the Rupert diversion produced an 80% rejection of the project. The communities of Nemaska, Waskaganish and Chisasibi officially stated their positions project by overwhelmingly voting "NO" to the Project with 78.6% in Nemaska, 73% in Waskaganish and 91.5% in Chisasibi. The chiefs in those three villages, which bear the brunt of the effects, hope to offer an alternative to the scheme. They claim that the EM1-A Rupert River Diversion was never a part of the 2002 Paix des Braves Agreement, signed between Quebec and the Cree.

Chief Rupert of Chisasibi said, "We are most pleased that the two communities of Waskaganish and Nemaska have voted against the diversion of the Rupert River. Our community made it clear before and have done it again yesterday, we do not need another river to be diverted to the La Grande system."

The agreement brought jobs and \$70 million a year to the 12,000 Cree of James Bay, but also created a divide in each of the nine communities.

The certificate of authorization issued by the Québec government specifies that Hydro-Québec will work with COMEX to set up a new hearing with the Cree population. This hearing should take place following the construction phase, but prior to start-up. The new hearing will serve to provide the Cree's point-of-view on the efficiency of the mitigation measures that will have been put in place and on the means that could be considered to prevent residual impacts from the project.

◆ CANOESWORTHY continues on Page 11



Terra Nostra

The Stories Behind Canada's Maps

By Jeffrey S. Murray

190 pp McGill-Queens Press, 2006 \$29.95

ISBN: 0-660-19496-1

Reviewed by Michael Peake

This beautiful book has been produced to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of the *National Atlas of Canada*.

The title, *Terra Nostra*, is Latin for 'Our

Land' and the book's author is senior archivist at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) which houses the country's 1.7 million maps. But perhaps the title should have been *Carta Nostra* (Our Maps) for while an impressive array of a profusely illustrated carta are reproduced there is one huge and gaping hole in this collection. There is neither a word of, nor a map by, the greatest of all of Canada's land geographers and the man known as Mr. Astronomer - David Thompson. How does this possibly occur?

Well, Thompson's maps are not resident in the LAC collections and are therefore not even mentioned. This is ridiculous, and while understandable, surely a *mention* of one of the world's greatest cartographer's would have been nice since he produced the first great map of Canada as part of his 55,000 miles of travel by canoe, foot and horse. It is kind of like doing a book about the greatest movies of all time and leaving out *Gone With the Wind*.

Thompson's maps and journals are in the Onatrio Archives and if you would like to have a look at the original copy of the Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada by David Thompson, 1814 it can be found here (http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/centennial/43_map_nwt.htm).

Shockingly, that one above link is one more than is found in Murray's book which is strange since he says in his Preface, "At Library and Archives Canada we are committed to making

our unique and engaging treasures available to as broad a public as possible". I guess the Internet isn't broad enough for there isn't a URL to be found in these slick and colourful pages.

Having gotten that off my chest (Whew!) there is much to admire in this effort. Historical maps are but a small part of his scope which extends to 1950 (not sure why) and features everything from Shell Canada road maps to government farm propaganda. Murray also

helpfully covers a wide variety of printing techniques and just how maps were handled by the government.

He also has some thought-provoking things to say about maps in general. Such as there very existence changes the nature of an endeavour.

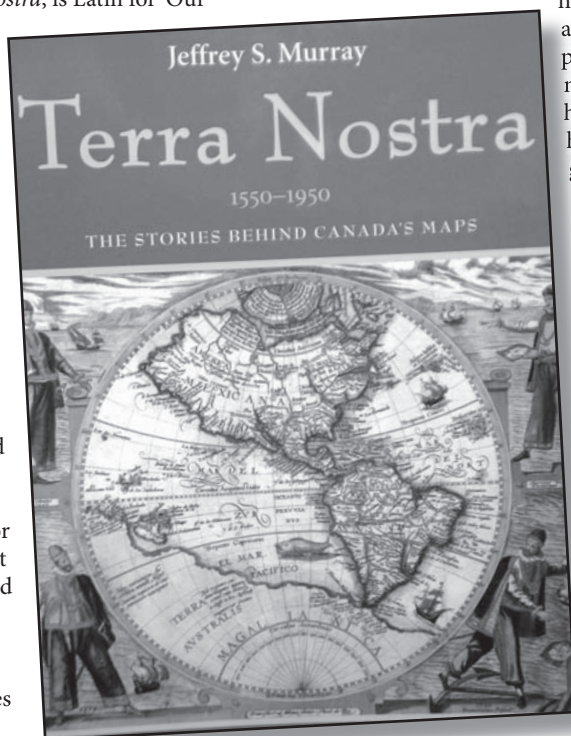
This is a full and scholarly effort. But as also mentioned in the article beside this one, it is really hard to look at good maps in any other format than their

original size some-

thing this handsome 9 by 12 inch book cannot accommodate.

Still, the stunning artwork in some of these older maps really is breath taking. Murray also makes good use of LAC photos as well in chapters covering the use of map in wars and exploration in the Klondike. And despite the superb accuracy of our modern maps they cannot hold an artistic candle to the works of yore.

Of particular interest to this canoeist and topo map user - and most like to readers of *Che-Mun* - was the chapter on Edourd Deville topographical camera which measured various points from different angles to reduce the amount of climbing needed and producing very accurate maps. The section is accompanied by some harrowing surveying tales and photos of the camera in its field tests. Cameras eventually took to the air and skies but it all started on terra firma.



Topo Terror

It was an idea too scary to be true - and too crazy to not be. The word was out that Canada would cease publication of paper topographic maps in the spring of 2007.

The plan was to eliminate the printing of thousands of maps in favour of making them available by download through the internet.

Map librarian Heather McAdam was among the many who cried out against the plan to provide the maps only over the internet for Canadians to download and print themselves.

McAdam, who works at Carleton University, said that won't help the third of Canadian households that don't have internet access. She is a part of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives - they fought the decision through their superb web site at www.mapsforcanadians.ca

McAdam noted that many Canadians prefer paper maps to digital ones because they can be spread out to show a much wider area at once.

"When you want to plan something or you want to look at something, you have to see the beginning and the end," she said.

"How do you look at that on a screen?"

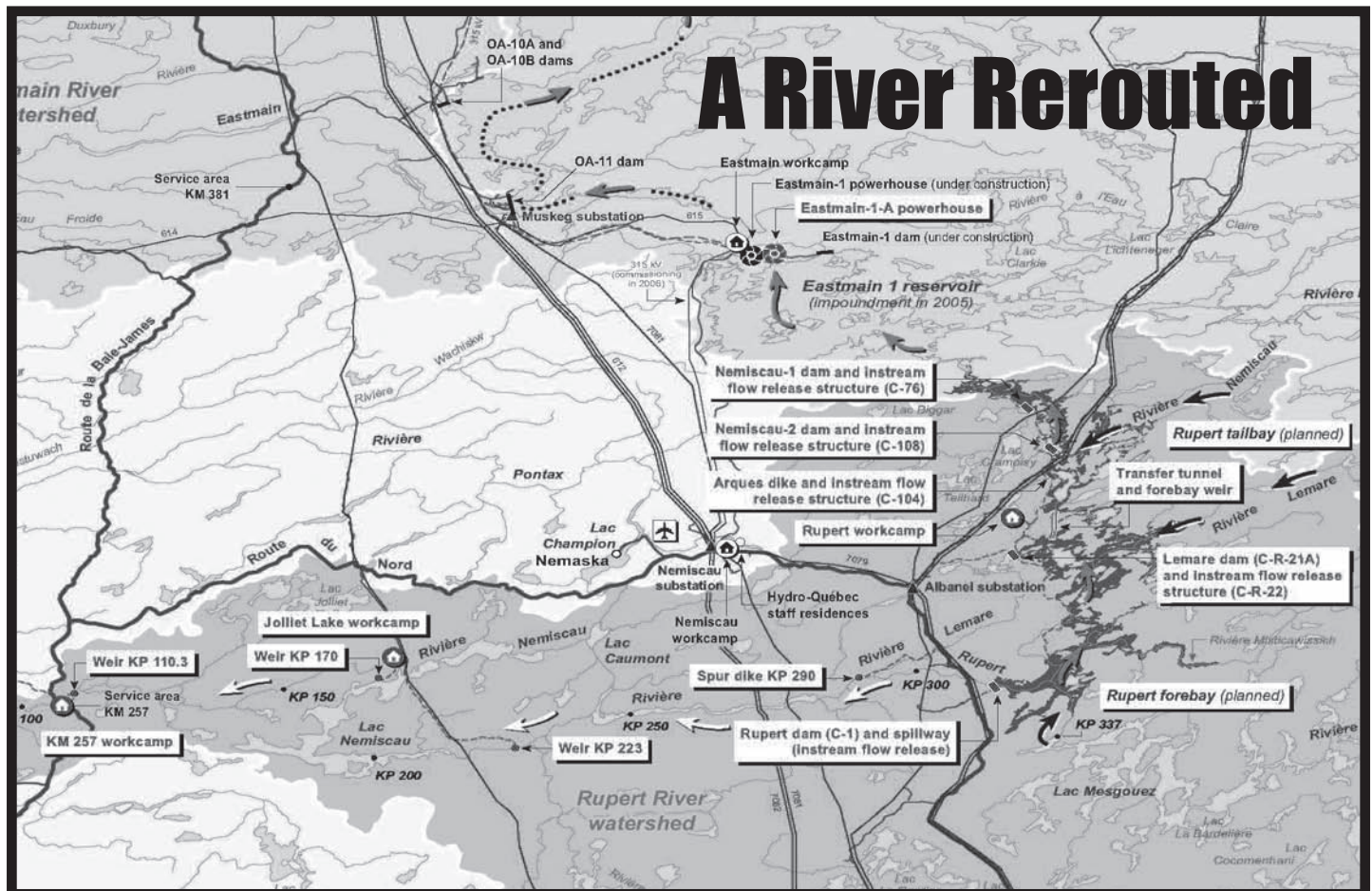
She said paper maps are vital to many people, including researchers, emergency services personnel and outdoor enthusiasts.

"What about if you're a hiker and you're out in the bush?" she asked. A compass and a GPS are not what you need. You need a map."

The idea was approved by the previous Liberal government and scheduled to be carried out until those who actually use maps found out about it. To the credit of the new Conservative government, they responded to the outcry from a wide range of people and quickly killed the plan.

Digital maps are part of the present and future but you never re-create the ease of use and practicality of a large handheld paper map. It requires no Internet connection or power. It is completely portable and accessible at all times. You can immediately check any area of any map you have in your possession. It is completely portable; very light with no worry of breakage - only easily-managed waterproofing is a worry. It is what has worked for mankind for thousands of years - and will work for many more.

On a deeper level, many people's brains, especially in our brains' remote hippocampus area, relate to distance and spatial interpretation in a unique way and a hand held paper map accomplishes a sense of what the terrain is better than its perfect digital twin. And you don't need a map to arrive at that destination!



They sure make great maps. Hydro-Québec offers Web visitors this elaborate map of their plans to divert most of the Rupert River northward into the Eastmain and La Grande complex. A series of dykes, dams and weirs will halt the work of the last

Ice Age in a daunting feat of engineering. You will note the much larger number of roads now criss-crossing the area. The scenic Oatmeal Falls is located on the left hand side of the map at KM 257. It will now be more famous as a service area.

Times change, ideas come in and out of fashion. That is the nature of the modern life and our modern world. But we were told, often with a wagging finger in our faces, that the time-honoured traditions and customs of the land override such modern notions.

Former Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees, Matthew Coon-Come was a young dynamic speaker 15 years ago. He was the modern face of an ancient society and he knew how to speak to modern media in a forceful and passionate style.

In an address to the New York Bar Association in 1992, he made the case to cancel a proposed power contract with Hydro-Quebec. They did. Times have indeed changed. The Crees now support the Rupert River diversion. Here are some of Coon-Come's comments from that 1992 address.

State owned Hydro-Quebec would destroy James Bay just as surely as the Soviets destroyed the Aral Sea. We have had

enough. If James Bay II goes ahead, all of the major rivers in eastern James Bay will have been destroyed through diversions and through the installation of hydro-electric generators. James Bay Phase II would destroy the Boutin River, the Little Whale River, the Coates River, the Great Whale River, the Nottaway River, the Broadback River and the Rupert River.

"We, the people of the land, will not sit by and see our immediate natural environment destroyed by a project which is not needed.

"James Bay Phase II should be rejected not only because it is too destructive of the environment and Cree way of life, but also because these projects are poor investments and are not needed. Hydro-Quebec has subsidized in aluminum smelters which cause 9% of the total greenhouse gas emissions of Canada and has ignored the traditional strength, pulp and paper, which creates more than twice as much employment in Quebec.

"The present review process in New York state has bought to light, not only the fact

that by importing the power you are inflicting environmental damage on James Bay and on the Cree people, but also the fact that your interests would be better served by cancelling the contract

"By opposing the contract with Quebec you will be helping us to save the rivers and our way of life. We would not be opposed to export sales based on surpluses created by energy conservation but this is not what is happening. Whether or not the review process in Canada recommends that the project would go ahead, Cree consent is needed to build. We will not consent! We will use every means available to have our right to stop this project recognized. If it is not, we will delay obstruct and, God willing, stop the project. During and after the review process, we will continue to battle in the courts and before the public. By cancelling the Quebec contract you will send a strong message to Hydro-Quebec and to the world that these types of destructive projects are not acceptable."



see separate





rate spread



There were many burnt areas all around us, in different stages of re-growth. Some were so fresh that just stopping there or passing through the portage made us dirty with soot; some were older already fully overgrown with ever-present blueberries. We camped in one such beautiful campsite just over the second powerline from North crossing the river. In the morning there were spiderwebs all over the old dead trees, glistening with the drops of dew in the sunshine.

The next waterfall on our route was Carcajou Chute. We first investigated the dense forest on the right side of the river, but found an old portage on the left side. It was covered over a time by fresh deadfall. This was the spot where Stan – the most organized guy of all the participants – lost his nice 1.5 L Nalgene bottle. The bow of his canoe seemed to be very heavy as I portaged it down the slope; however, he claimed he didn't find anything under the front flotation bag. Now he was completely at our mercy with regard to the drinking water, unless he wanted to drink directly from the river.

We survived our first thunderstorm – which included a nice hailstorm, too – just above the Lac Labeau. We were lucky that we had a tarp already nicely set. Mostly it rested on our heads. Sand was everywhere. The hailstorm doused our fire and we ate Harvest Foodworks' Curry Tandoori half cooked and we gave it a better, more appropriate name: Sandoori. However, we were rewarded for not giving up our good mood with a beautiful double rainbow seen all across the sky.

The wind was mostly from the west, against us; however, it wasn't always like that. Despite of the ever-changing weather it was a very enjoyable trip. It was only early on the Lower section that we decided to rest one day due to the bad weather.

A few days after the Carcajou Chute, after an almost accidental check, we discovered Stan's 1.5L Nalgene bottle hiding under the flotation bag in the bow of his canoe. He was so happy. There are situations where a small thing can be source of much happiness ...and a good laugh, and this was one of them.

There were several rivers joining Broadback from the south and almost none from the north – there it is drained by Rupert. The first big tributary was Assinica (and it was Assinica/Broadback trip marked on the FQCK maps). Another one was Quènonisca – we had the option of either paddling a few km up its delta and then back to Broadback by another arm, or just going directly through the narrow channel. Of course we went straight ahead. However, we were a bit surprised at how really narrow and shallow our channel had become – fortunately for us, it wasn't too long.

Soon after Rivière Quènonisca we met a group of three fishermen who invited us to stay with them for the night in their cabin. It was a very ugly evening; it was pouring rain. We readily accepted their invitation, although we still decided to sleep in our tents. It was my turn to take care of dinner, and I was delighted to cook under a roof in the warm comfort of the cabin, on propane stove. In the morning we were feasting on fresh scrambled eggs and fish, courtesy of our host.

Two days later we reached Lac Evans - the biggest lake on the river. We were well aware that we could get there windbound for a day or two. Fortunately, the windiest day was just behind us and while the waves were still considerable, we were able to do some progress. In Crow Bay, a bay on the lake, we met 3 fishermen from U.S. who rented a cabin on the lake for a few days (the fishermen on Quènonisca and

here were the only people we met on the river). One of them, to our surprise, knew about us from the original announcement on a Y canoe club website. Surely the Internet is making us all live in one small global village!

In the bend of Crow Bay, just before Lac Evans' main body, we had the lunch. From here, we were well aware that we had to cross about 6 km of the lake's width (length being about 50 km). The waves were big, and the wind had space to grow in strength, but we were helped by the island in the middle, which offered us a bit of respite. On the west side of this body of water awaited us Longue Pointe, a really long and narrow peninsula. The option here was either to



Dara Finney and Fabien Coulombe flying over the second wave in Kakusaschechun Rapid.

photo: Fabien Coulombe

paddle around about 30 km probably in windy conditions and in big waves, or to cross it on land in the narrowest point. The FQCK map indicated the portage. My email pen pal, now traveling in Asia, portaged it. I quote from her email:

"One [portage] is across Long Pointe on Lake Evans. We started following yellow flagging tape but about a km in, we lost it and zig zagged our way across the peninsula. It was a full, full, full day, but I think I would still do this option as opposed to paddling around it because the waves on lake Evans are HUGE!!! We spend the next day on the tiny beach at the end of "our" portage because of the big waves! Oh yeah..."

The party of the aforementioned young gentleman was unable to find it. My expectation, or rather wish, was to get it over with and fast. My plan was to get to shore, locate the portage (we have the GPS, so it should be quite easy) and carry it over in 1.5 pass (i.e. some people going once, stronger ones twice). Then we could set up the campsite on the other side, and maybe even enjoy one rest day, because our schedule would allow it. How naïve I was!

When we reached the eastern shores of the peninsula, most people



seemed to be very tired. All they could talk about was dinner and where the best sandy spot was to set up camp. I acquiesced to the majority's wishes and while they were setting up the tents, I decided to find the start of the portage so that we could have a faster start the next day. I'm still smiling when I think about it. There was no sign of the portage (and by "sign" I don't mean the yellow printed paper attached to a tree trunk with a picture of a man carrying a short canoe). There was nothing that even remotely resembled a portage. There was only dense forest with plenty of deadfall. The only positive thing was that just left of the creek at the very end of a small bay I discovered a small spot where we could get our canoes ashore.

I have done several orienteering runs in the past 2-3 years. Thanks to that experience I believed we could cross the peninsula; otherwise I would have quickly become too scared to continue on as we pushed into the bush.

I was mostly afraid of the middle part, marked on the map with the "marsh sign". We started fairly early in the morning, Stan still talking about how much easier it would be to paddle around. Maybe he was right. Maybe he wasn't. But we did it. We portaged across that beast, through the deadfall and through the marsh. Now we can brag about it. The first 400 m was very hard. The forest was dense; deadfall was everywhere. While I was pushing forward with the compass and GPS, Stan was blazing the trail with his axe, and Lynette was attaching yellow & pink marking tape to mark our trail.

The middle, marshy section was actually the easiest. The forest suddenly opened up and we were in deep muskeg, sinking deep with every step, however, due to the lack of deadfall, moving was relatively easy. The far end of the portage was again challenging, and as I mentioned in the introduction, the other shore was about 200 m further than the GPS and map suggested. We finished on the rocky shore battered by huge waves. It was quite a windy, wavy day. I'm sure my email friend, now biking through Vietnam (see <http://www.outtatown.ca/>), would be delighted to hear our stories. We passed that portage once more that same day, leaving on the other side only two canoes. We returned for them the next day, leaving half of the crew resting on the other side, preparing lunch. The only casualty of the portage was my shirt. It got torn so much that I was forced to part with it on the James Bay Road bridge.

Between Lac Evans and Lac Giffard (another big lake) there is the most beautiful waterfall on the upper section: Burn Hip Falls. The forest is freshly burnt around it, and the portage trail led us over the hill on the left side. We discovered there was not only fresh bear scat, but also

a stack of empty cans left by the previous party. It always makes me sad to see this. I don't understand why some people who come to such a remote & beautiful river could leave behind so much garbage... We camped on the big rocky island just below the waterfall. What an amazing and magical place! There was a big thunderstorm during the night, but the thunder was hushed by the sound of the falls.

After 13 days of paddling (and some of these days were 12 hours long) we reached James Bay Road bridge exactly on schedule. I was very nervous. There were so many points which had to click together: there was our party coming from Ottawa bringing with them our dinner and other supplies; there were Cree coming from Waskaganish with the car for the party who would go home from here.

Would they be able to bring our cars safely from the put-in at Lac Troilus? One of the two cars seemed to be short on gas, and the distance from the put-in to closest gas station in Nemaska wasn't short. Were there any last minute problems with the incoming party? Did anyone get sick? Did they have any technical problems on the way? As it turned out, all was OK. There was one last minute cancellation due to health problems, but Fabien (the only person who had paddled the Broadback before) was able to find a replacement quickly. There was one technical problem on the way north, but Carole and Philippe were able to find help and fix their brakes. And they



Tupatukasi Falls - the view from the end of the portage.

Photo: Fabien Coulombe

even brought a new shirt for me! We all had a yummy dinner together at the James Bay Road bridge rest area with good wine and there was a challenging lower section welcoming us ahead.

In the rainy morning four guys (Stan, Pat, Dave & Mike) parted for their way home and our new nine member party continued our trip to the James Bay. The youngest participant, 16 year old Hugo, was the only solo paddler; and he really proved his skills. From this point onwards we had three of our five canoes outfitted with spraycovers; these proved to be a great piece of equipment, adding to the safety of the trip. After a gray day of paddling in windy conditions, we camped on a muddy beach on the left shore. The talk around the campfire was focused on the pee-bottle and its use.

The next morning we woke up to a very windy day. The wind came from the west and our campsite was completely open to it; there was no shelter at all. We decided not to continue and wait for the weather to improve. We waited a whole day, rebuilding and repositioning both our tarp and fire, playing games (Dara being the main gamemaker), and resting in the tents. This was our only rest day on the whole trip. I wish

I could have given one rest day to the Upper Broadback crew! I originally scheduled the trip to be 13 days on the upper section and 9 days on the lower section. I estimated the rate of progress on the lower section to be quite a bit slower, due to bigger, more challenging rapids, requiring more scouting and discussion. In hindsight, I would reschedule our trip to 14 + 8 days instead.

On the third day the weather improved and we continued on our journey. We reached the Kakasaschechun Rapids, which is basically a huge ledge across the whole river. Are you familiar with the feeling of a dry throat and a hard-pumping heart? Well, that's how we felt when scouting this rapid. Only Fabien and his son Hugo didn't show any signs of fear. "Just follow the mushrooms on the water and you'll get to the only spot where we can cut through, then catch the eddy on the left" were Fabien's instructions and we watched him & Melanie execute the first run, followed shortly after by Hugo in the solo boat. Still, the rest of the crew wasn't convinced yet. It wasn't that easy to find out the exact point in the ledge from the canoe, despite the "mushrooms" ('boily' water) showing the way. Fabien then paddled stern in each of the 3 remaining tandem canoes. This was the moment where we gained full confidence in Fabien's river-reading and leadership capabilities. From this moment on, whenever in doubt, we closely followed Fabien's instructions.

There were many places on the river shores where we were able to collect blueberries by the handfuls. There are many promoters of the helmets with holes in them due to safety reasons. However, this time I saw clear advantages to the full helmets (helmets without the holes). We were able to fill helmets with blueberries in a matter of minutes. We were eating blueberries with breakfast, lunch, and dinner, both raw, mixed into cereals, or cooked into jam.

On the afternoon of August 14 we reached Rooster Falls. Despite its name and existing well developed portage, this is really a class 5-6 rapid and we were able to get around it by lining, a small lift-over, and paddling the lower section. "Rooster" is the big wave on the left side of the river, where the main current hits a huge boulder. There is a big campsite on the right of the river on the Canadian shield flat rock. This place is so beautiful that we decided to spend a night here despite a fairly early end of a paddling day.

However, the most beautiful, magical, and mesmerizing spot on the whole Broadback River is Tupatukasi Waterfall. Here, the river narrows

and has a 34 metre drop. It looks like a small Niagara Falls, except it's quite unknown and rarely visited. There is a campsite and a 493 m portage on river right. There is also another portage on river left, however, if you want to camp here (and you should) the right side is the way to go. As usual, we had here two thunderstorms here interspersed with hot and sunny weather, all of this within two hours.

The weather was merciful to us probably when we needed it most: on the last day, August 20, we paddled our last rapid. Then we were on Rupert Bay, a smaller (but not small) bay off the main body of James Bay. There is one drainage creek crossing the peninsula on the right side. Paddlers use it during bad weather, but our weather was excellent. At the end of the peninsula there is a Cree Fishing camp and there we met local fishermen from Waskaganish. All seemed to be going fine and our progress was faster than expected. However, soon

after we hit the shallows and for several hours we were forced to walk Rupert Bay. Surprisingly, it was Hugo, the solo paddler who was able to use it to his advantage and became the winner of our race to reach the Waskaganish dock first.

We were welcome by Raymond Blackned, Waskaganish First Nation tourism officer, who was waiting for us at the dock. He was the one with whom we had arranged our car shuttles. After we fetched our cars and changed from our river outfits into civilized clothes, he took us to the outpost where we were treated with traditional seasonal Cree food for the time of year – smoked white fish and bannock.

The weather changed again, and we were driving out of Waskaganish in heavy rain and a thunderstorm.

On our last night of the trip we camped at a rest stop at the bridge over Rupert River, at Oatmeal Falls. We admired this beautiful place with the knowledge that it was probably the last time we would have the opportunity to see it at full water level. Soon, maybe already next year, Rupert is going to be dammed and there will only be a small trickle of the original flow falling through the rocks here.

The trip down the Broadback River was extraordinary. I think each of us will remember it forever in our heart. However, it's time to think about the next trip.

Lester Kovac is a computer software developer, living in Ottawa. After lots of hiking and spelunking in Czechoslovakia (currently Slovakia) he immigrated to Canada and discovered the beauty of wilderness canoeing.



There were a large number of burn areas - which made for good camping spots and great blueberries.

Photo: Pat O'Shea



Fall Packet *continued*

after June the levels in the Clarke can be "iffy".

The final straw was that when we approached Beverly Lake, we tried to contact the boatman in Baker Lake by sat phone to get our boat pick-up advanced (we were ahead of schedule since we had not spent the planned time on the Clarke), and found that Bob had given us a wrong number. Our sat phone battery was low. We were able to call a family member, who was able to find the correct number and make the necessary arrangements.

Lessons learned or reinforced by this experience:

Be wary of one-man, or one-aircraft, operations. That's not to say that they are all problematic, but be cautious in putting down cash in advance, and to trusting your whole trip to the competence of one individual.

As far as possible, always make your own trip arrangements. Don't rely on a third party. Always expect delays and snafus when traveling north of 60.

Always allow at least one or two days flex time in your itinerary, in addition to the usual weather allowance.

Always carry a sat phone and an extra battery. But remember that north of about latitude 65 degrees, sat phones may not be reliable. Be self-reliant. Don't accept any information without checking it out independently (see above re water levels and phone number).

Before booking, we had ascertained that Bob's business is covered by the NWT deposit refund programme, but we never followed through to obtain written details of the program, and the circumstances in which the Territory will pay out. "So to the above lessons, we can now add - "get everything in writing"!

And finally - a short update from Kully Minderman on the Barrenland Bob affair.

Nothing yet from Tourism. I'm starting to feel cynical or at least less optimistic about restitution. Hap Wilson feels that 'Bob's' main business of fly-in wildlife photographers to Whitefish Lake includes some big names of the coffee table glossy hardcover variety, so Tourism is reluctant to put him out of business.

Besides Andrew and Janet Hall's email, I heard from another party who promised to forward details of their "miserable experience" in '04 with the "notorious" BB. One other person inquired about the real identity of Barrenland Bob since he's planning to do the Coppermine next summer. I obliged, of course. I hope to hear from more readers, and am thinking about forwarding emails to Tourism.

CANOESWORTHY *continued*

The Nunavik Inuit signed a deal with Canada on December that confirms their rights to about 500,000 hectares in the northernmost regions of Quebec and Labrador. The agreement covers some of the islands and waters along the shores of James, Hudson and Ungava bays and Hudson Strait, as well as part of northern Labrador and offshore areas adjacent to Labrador and Quebec.

The 10,000 Inuit in Nunavik — the region in northern Quebec where the Inuit are negotiating self-government with Quebec and Ottawa — hunt seals and whales, and gather clams and eggs in the islands.

But the deal would also give them cash and a share of resource rights, if developments go ahead.

Under the deal:

- Nunavik Inuit own 80 per cent of all the islands off northern Quebec and part of Labrador.
- Ottawa gives Makivik \$95 million over 10 years, with \$55 million of that funding a trust that can make payments to individual Inuit.
- The Inuit and Ottawa jointly manage wildlife, land management and development impact issues.
- The Inuit receive a share in any resource royalties the government collects from developments in the area.

The agreement took 13 years to negotiate, partly because it involved so many parties. It does not address self-government because there are no permanent residents on the islands, the federal government said in a release.

When the Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker Amundsen left Kugluktuk on Sept. 28, its crew expected plenty of run-ins with sea ice. Instead they found clear waters as far north as 72 degrees.

"There was no ice," said Gary Stern, the chief scientist on board the icebreaker, which serves as a floating laboratory for ArcticNet, a group of more than 250 scientists who share a common interest in climate change and the Arctic.

They could find no better example than the waters surrounding them.

Ice conditions were so mild, the icebreaker easily navigated through Fury and Hecla Strait into Foxe Basin and made an unscheduled call at Igloolik. Stern said that is "unprecedented at this time of year."

There, researchers heard that hunters were unable to travel to Baffin Island to hunt caribou, and were contemplating a charter flight. Some 5,500 nautical miles later, the ship paid a visit to Iqaluit this past weekend, where guests from Nunavut boarded the vessel for a lecture, lunch and tour.

"This could be the Arctic of tomorrow, in the summer," Martin Fortier, the executive director of ArcticNet, told the crowd, gesturing towards an overhead map of a globe with nothing but blue water surrounding the North Pole.

The Quebec government's approval the Rupert hydro-electric project doesn't bode well for residents of nearby Sanikiluaq on the nearby Belcher Islands warn the project could scare away marine life, and end traditional hunting and gathering still practiced. The Quebec-Cree review committee's 400-page report makes only passing reference to Inuit concerns.

The process reminds many of another huge hydro project, to dam Great Whale River, which was proposed over a decade ago and later shelved. At the time, Hydro-Quebec refused to consider offshore areas, such as the Belcher Islands and Hudson Bay, in their environment assessments.

There are worries the altered water flows could mean the next generation of children in Sanikiluaq won't have the opportunity to eat scallops, mussels, sea cucumber, sea urchins, starfish and seaweed, as he did.

Some sealife may be affected by rising water levels, he said, while others may not survive the increase in fresh water. More fresh water could also make surrounding sea ice brittle, posing a threat to hunters, as well as polar bears, he said. That's because when salt water freezes, it can bend without breaking. But when fresh water freezes, it snaps. There may also be more ice, because the increase of fresh water flowing into the Hudson Bay means the water freezes more quickly.

The review committee's report does predict the project will flood traditional Cree traplines and release mercury into the environment. But despite this, the report also predicts wildlife will adapt, fish will thrive, people will adjust their diets, and the project will demonstrate the "age-old Cree capacity" to take on risks and change.

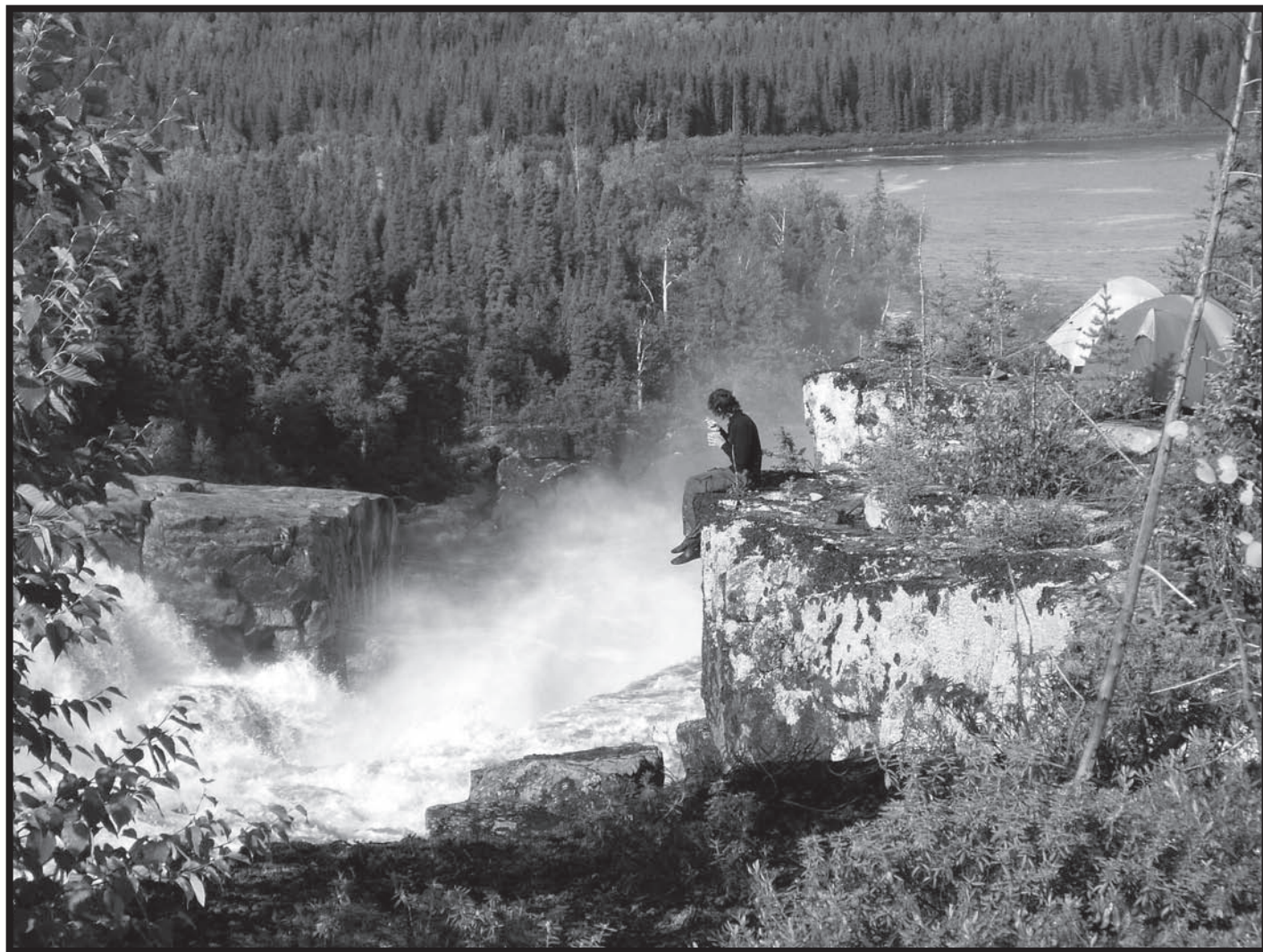


photo: Fabien Coulombe

Hugo Lalancette, 16, appreciates the rainbow at the brink of Tupatukasi Falls; the campsite here is unforgettable. He was part of an August 2005 trip down the Broadback River (see Page Six), the most southerly main river on the east side of James Bay. Along with its sister rivers, the Nottaway and Rupert, the Broadback was originally scheduled to be the first massive James Bay hydro project; merging the three main rivers into one large electric outflow. It never happened and they went to the less-contentious La Grande project 35 years ago. Now they are diverting the Rupert into the La Grande so perhaps the pressure is off the Broadback - for a while.

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