



# Canoe Trip #13

## ***Mile 146 Hanson Lake Road (Highway 106) - Deschambault Lake - Pelican Narrows - Mirond Lake - Sturgeon-Weir River - Mile 190 Hanson Lake Road (Highway 106) - Maligne Lake***

**Length of Trip:** Approximately 150 kilometres (93 miles)

**Time Required to Complete Trip:** Five or six days

**Number of Portages:** Four or five depending upon route taken

### **Warning:**

Water levels and canoeing conditions on many Saskatchewan rivers and lakes vary from time to time, causing changes in the appearance of the various landmarks described in this booklet, as well as the presence of hazards not described herein. It is the canoeist's responsibility to proceed with caution and alertness, using discretion and good judgment at all times. The information in this booklet is intended to be of general assistance only and the Government of Saskatchewan assumes no responsibility for its use. Canoeists are reminded that they travel at their own risk at all times.

### **Access to Starting Point:**

This trip can be started from the northeastern shore of Ballantyne Bay on Deschambault Lake. The Hanson Lake Road (Highway 106) at Mile 146 passes close to the lake and access may be made to the lake from fishing camps in the area. Cars could, no doubt, be left in the care of these camp operators during the canoe trip.

### **Maps:**

- 63-L Amisk Lake
- 63-M Pelican Narrows

### **About the Trip:**

This is a trip over exposed waters except for the Sturgeon-weir portion. Because of the few portages and the big lakes to be crossed, the use of larger canoes should be seriously considered.

The trip takes the traveller through spectacularly beautiful rocky, pre-Cambrian lake country with superb natural camping spots and excellent fishing opportunities for northern pike, walleye and lake trout.

The picturesque settlements of Deschambault and Pelican Narrows are visited. At these stops food and general supplies are obtainable and radio communications are possible.

Because the current of the Sturgeon-weir River is not strong, it would be possible to reverse the normal direction of this trip. In this event cars could likely be safely parked with an outfitter at Maligne Lake.

### **The Canoe Trip:**

From the starting point on the northeastern shores of Ballantyne Bay adjacent to Mile 146 of the Hanson Lake Road, the canoeist travels northwestward through a chain of small islands which offer some protection from the sweep of the wind on Ballantyne Bay.

The Deschambault settlement is located on the northward extending peninsula at the central narrows of the lake approximately three kilometres (2 miles) west of the south end of Tower Island. The store at Deschambault carries a variety of food and general supplies, gasoline, etc.

From the east end of Deschambault Lake to the South Arm of Pelican lake there are two slightly different possible routes of travel. If travelling light, the long single portage (most northerly on the map) is probably easier. If heavily loaded in a large canoe, the two shorter portages are a more expedient alternative.

### **Portage No. 1: (single portage route)**

Connecting the east shore of Deschambault Lake with the west shore of South Arm, Pelican Lake.

Approximately 820 metres (898 yards) long and in good condition.

From the Deschambault side this portage starts at the northeast end of the small baylet, showing as a small break in the cattails, and also marked by big poplar trees.

From the South Arm this portage starts about 70 to 90 metres (77 - 98 yards) northwest of the in-flowing waters in the most westerly baylet.

**Portage No. 1A: (first portage of double portage route)**

Connecting the east shore of Deschambault Lake with a small pond. Approximately 220 metres (241 yards) long and in good condition.

From the southeast shore of a small baylet on the east side of Deschambault Lake, this portage starts at the southeast end.

From the small pond approach, this portage starts at the southwestern end of a small cattail-bordered pond.

Watch for submerged rocks in the narrow channel to the small baylet from which this portage starts on the Deschambault side.

**Portage No. 1B: (second portage of double portage route)**

Connecting a small pond with the South Arm of Pelican Lake. Approximately 55 metres (60 yards) long and in good condition.

From the small pond approach the portage starts at the outlet of the pond at its northwest end. There is a narrow channel through the rocks near the west shore at the start of the stream outlet. Continue down the outlet as far as possible to a conspicuous pole ramp on the east side where the portage starts.

From the South Arm approach, this portage starts slightly to the east of the in-flowing stream at the south end of the most westerly baylet.

After reaching South Arm, travel northward past Sandy Narrows and then northeast to Pelican Narrows.

This northern community has road connections south. There is also a Government of Saskatchewan office, radio, telephone, and charter air services, accommodation, general supply and food stores.

After passing the community of Pelican Narrows, travel southeastward to the outlet of the lake approximately 3 kilometres (2 miles) southeast of the settlement. Canoeists may easily pass under the highway bridge and on to the northwest portion of Mironde Lake. In the generally southeast portion of Mironde Lake the outlet of Corneille Lake is found. For several hundred metres (~330 yards) above Corneille Portage, stay to the right or southwest shore to avoid shallows; however, swing across to the left or north side to land in a cove above the start of the rapids.

**Portage No. 2 - Corneille Portage:**

Connecting the southeast part of Mironde Lake with the northwest part of Corneille Lake. Approximately 165 metres (180 yards) long and in good condition.

From Mironde Lake this portage starts on the north side of the outlet in a cove about 90 metres (98 yards) above the actual start of the rapids. The start of the trail is unmistakable because of pole skids extending to the water's edge.

From the northwest end of Corneille Lake this portage starts on the north shore in a cove about 140 metres (153 yards) from the base of the rapids.

Approximately 180 metres (197 yards) below this portage there is some fast water which should cause no problem for the average canoeist. The best course is probably just to the right of the main chute as the far right is to be avoided because of dangerous rocks. For the extremely cautious or for those coming up against the current there is an old portage trail around this fast water on the north side.

**Portage No. 3 - Dog Portage:**

Connecting Corneille Lake with the Sturgeon-weir River. Approximately 50 metres (55 yards) long and in good condition.

From the northeast end of Corneille Lake this portage starts approximately 50 metres (55 yards) to the right of the rapids on the southeast shore. There is a small islet 50 to 60 metres (55 - 66 yards) directly off shore from the start of the portage. The rapids are actually a small falls and not easily seen until the canoeist is quite close.

From the Sturgeon-weir side this portage starts in a cove approximately 20 metres (22 yards) south of the base of the rapids.

Some fast water will be encountered in the upper Sturgeon-weir and rapids are indicated on map sheet 63-L. These should present no problem to the alert canoeist.

**Portage No. 4 - Birch Portage:**

Around Birch Rapids. Approximately 330 metres (361 yards) long and in good condition.

Approaching from the upstream or north side, this portage is not immediately above the rapids; it starts, however, on the east side of the rocky peninsula lying east of the rapids, on the bare rock shore of a cove. The trail angles up over an open slope before entering the trees.

Approaching from the south or downstream side this portage starts on the east side of the river at a wide spot below the base of the rapids.

After traversing the northern portion of Maligne Lake the highway bridge across the lake at the narrows comes into view. There is a nearby Government of Saskatchewan campground and one tourist camp operator along the highway at this point. Maligne Lake is the end point of this trip. Canoe trip no. 14 gives information on continuing this trip down the Sturgeon-weir, across Amisk Lake to Denare Beach.

WRITTEN BY: Original script by Peter Gregg, reviewed in 1989 by Historic Trails Canoe Club.

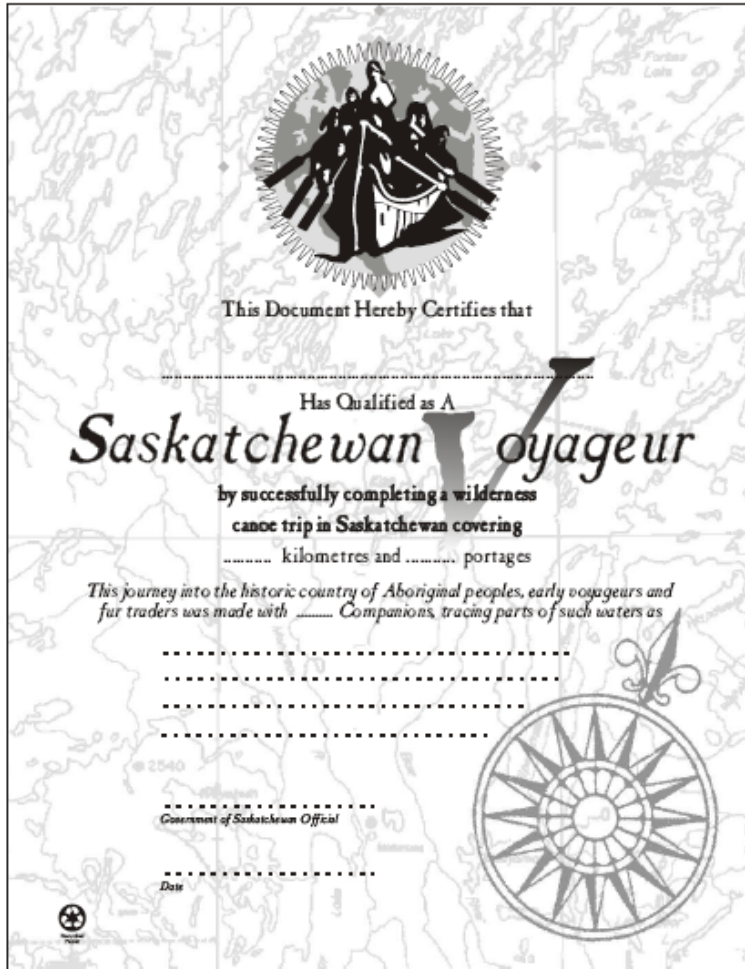
**ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS:**

To minimize your impact on the environment while canoeing along Saskatchewan waterways, please keep in mind these safe and sensible practices:

Make every canoe trip a clean trip! Follow the pack in - pack out rule. When breaking camp, erase all evidence that you were there. Leave your campsite cleaner than you found it.

Consider the wildlife and their habitat: While portaging or camping, stay on the trails to prevent any disturbance to the wildlife and natural vegetation.

Fire Prevention: Forest fires along canoe routes are an ever present danger. It is vital that all campfires are kept small and are thoroughly extinguished with water after use. Never leave a fire until you are sure it is 'dead'.



Be sure to obtain an official Saskatchewan Voyageur Certificate upon completion of your canoe trip. Before you start out, check in at one of the registration points and then again immediately after your journey is over. You will then become an official Saskatchewan Voyageur receiving a certificate as a memento of your canoe experience in Saskatchewan.

**Registration Points:**

Ministry offices in La Ronge, Prince Albert, Green Lake, Beauval, Ile-a-la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Weyakwin, Stony Rapids, Pinehouse, Southend, Wollaston Lake, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Creighton, Cumberland House, Saskatoon, Pierceland, Loon Lake; Meadow Lake Provincial Park, Narrow Hills Provincial Park and the Visitor Information Centre at La Ronge.



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