



Canoe Trip #22

Pelican Narrows - Wunehikun Bay, Mirond Lake - Waskwei Lake - Attitti Lake - Kakanagimak Lake - Wildnest Lake - Granite Lake - Sturgeon-Weir River - Mile 190, Highway 106

Length of Trip: Approximately 120 kilometres

Time Required to Complete Trip: Five to six days

Number of Portages: 15

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:

Canoes may be launched at the dock at Pelican Narrows or from the Government of Saskatchewan campsite on Highway 135 at the bridge over the narrows between Pelican and Mirond Lake. Pelican Narrows can be reached via Highway 135 approximately 50 kilometres north of its junction with Highway 106 which links Smeaton with Creighton, Saskatchewan.

Arrangements for the safe parking of vehicles can be made in all probability with any of the fishing camp operators at Pelican Narrows or at the campsite. Pelican Narrows has a Saskatchewan Government office, R.C.M.P. detachment, and radio and telephone communications with other centres. There are also character air services available and several small general stores.

Maps:

- 63-M Pelican Narrows
- 63-L Amisk Lake
- 63-M Pelican Narrows, Edition 3
- 63-L Amisk Lake, Edition 4

About the Trip:

This is not an especially difficult trip to make and can, therefore, be recommended for canoeists of intermediate skills and experience. It is, however, a trip which is too long and demanding for the novice canoeist. The only exposure to big lake travel is a brief one on the north end of Mirond Lake. If there are strong winds, canoe travel will be dangerous or impossible at this exposed portion of the canoe route. There are no situations which require the running of dangerous rapids and the route has been travelled often enough so that the portages are in generally good condition.

The variety of wilderness scenery on this trip is considerable, including a 5 metre waterfall, narrow, weedlined

channels, a short portion of a big open lake and much river and small lake travel.

Fishing for walleye and northern pike is good throughout the trip, especially below falls and rapids.

Good natural campsites are found at frequent intervals throughout most of the trip.

Portage descriptions are given from both ends, so that person wishing to make this canoe trip in reverse direction could do so and locate the starts of the portages with equal ease.

This trip ends at the bridge crossing the Sturgeon-weir River at Mile 190 of Highway 106 at Maligne Lake, approximately 50 kilometres west of Flin Flon, Manitoba. There is a Saskatchewan Government campground at Maligne Lake. Persons wishing to extend this canoe trip down the lower Sturgeon-weir River to Denare Beach should consult Canoe Trip No. 14 for detailed descriptions of the route.

The Canoe Trip:

Starting from Pelican Narrows, paddle generally east through Opawikusehikan Narrows under the highway bridge to the north end of Mirond Lake. Watch for rocks in the fast water below the bridge.

After passing through the narrows at the northeast end of Mirond Lake and paddling east across Wunehikun Bay, enter the narrow and hard-to-find, in-flowing stream on the east central shore of

Wunehikun Bay leading to Meggisi Rapids. (See map for location). Watch for rocks at these narrows at low water periods. After passing through the narrows the stream promptly opens out into a small lake. Travel south down the east side of this small lake and enter the meandering, reed-lined channel, against a slight current which leads to the small lake west of Meggisi Rapids. At low water periods watch for rocks in this channel. It may be necessary to haul up over rocks at times of extreme low water.

Portage No. 1 - Around Meggisi Rapids:

Approximately 550 metres long and in good condition. From the northeast shore of the small lake west of Meggisi Rapids this portage starts approximately 90 metres north of the in-flowing rapids.

From above Meggisi Rapids this portage starts at a grassy break in the willows on the northeast shore 90 metres above the start of the rapids on the north side of the river.

After about one kilometre of quiet paddling, more rapids occur.

Portage No. 2:

Connecting quiet water above Meggisi Rapids with the northwest end of Waskwei Lake. Approximately 180 metres long and in good condition.

From the downstream side this portage starts 30 metres from the base of the rapids on the north side at a break in the willows and alders. If water levels are low, make the full portage. If water levels are high, portage only 65 to 70 metres to the shores of a small pool, paddle on and then haul or lift over the ledge on the north side.

From the upstream side (outlet at extreme northwest end of Waskwei Lake) this portage starts 20 metres above the ledge on the northwest shore at a break in the willows and alders.

At the narrows separating the northwest part of Waskwei Lake from the main body of the lake there is a small island. The main flow is on the west side. Haul of line up either side, making the choice on the basis of prevailing water levels.

Paddle to the east end of Waskwei Lake and into a meandering, reed-bordered stream against a slight current. Travel on to the base of a beautiful little falls. Outfitters have built a dock below the falls at the start of the portage.

Portage No. 3:

Connecting the stream flowing into the east end of Waskwei Lake with the outlet of Attitti Lake.

Approximately 230 metres long and in good condition but steep at first.

From below the falls (west end of the portage), this portage starts at a dock on the northeast side.

From above the falls (east end of portage), this portage starts at a dock on the north side immediately above a 5 metres high waterfalls. Keep canoes as far from the lip of the falls as possible to avoid danger. Canoeists must paddle up through one fast riffle a few hundred metres above the falls and then out onto the quiet waters of Attitti Lake.

There is an outfitter's camp on the east side of Attitti Lake at the central Narrows.

Paddle across Attitti Lake into its east arm extending towards Kakinagimak Lake.

A careful look at the east end of the east arm of Attitti Lake as shown on the map shows several portages. To the east there are two portages separating the canoeist from the narrow, southwest arm of Kakinagimak Lake. To the south there is one long portage separating the canoeist from the extreme southwest bay of Kakinagimak Lake. The preferred route is to make the two portages which are well used trails rather than make the single 715 metre portage to the south.

Portage No. 4:

Connecting the east arm of Attitti Lake to the small, nameless lake to the east. Approximately 320 metres long and in good condition.

From the east arm of Attitti Lake this portage starts at a grassy bank on central portion of the northeast shore. (See Map 63-M for exact location).

From the southwest shore of the "small nameless lake to the east", this portage starts at a rocky outcrop. Signs of use by outfitters are evident.

Paddle across this small lake in a northeast direction to its outlet at a beaver dam.

Portage No. 5:

Connecting the small nameless lake with the long narrow southwest arm of Kakinagimak Lake.

Approximately 45 metres long and in good condition.

From the east side of this small nameless lake this portage starts on the north side of the outlet about 10 metres from the beaver dam.

From the southwest end of the long narrow southwest arm of Kakinagimak Lake, the portage starts at an obvious break in the shore vegetation.

After completing portage No. 5, paddle north northeast up the narrow arm leading to the main part of Kakinagimak Lake. Push through the reed and cattail-lined narrows and paddle across the next wide spot into more narrows and then out onto the main part of Kakinagimak Lake. Now paddle south for about 3 kilometres along the east shore into the narrow entrance leading to the southeast bay (Gifford Bay) of Kakinagimak Lake. There is an outfitter's camp located at the entrance to the narrows.

Portage No. 6:

Connecting the southeast bay (Gifford Bay) of Kakinagimak Lake to the long, narrow lake lying to the south (Dougherty Lake). Approximately 550 metres long and in generally good condition but wet at the lower end.

From the southeast shore of the main part of the southeast bay of Kakinagimak Lake this portage starts at a break in the alders and birch (See Map 63-M for exact location of this portage). This portage runs parallel to and slightly west of a winter road which is too wet to use in summer.

From the north end of Dougherty Lake this portage starts at the southwest side of the inflowing stream. The start is vague and wet, but some poles have been laid in the muskeg.

Paddle to the southeast end of the long narrow lake (Dougherty Lake).

Portage No. 7:

Connecting the south end of Dougherty Lake with the small beaver pond west of the northwest end of Wildnest Lake. Approximately 250 metres long and in fair condition.

From the south of the southeast bay of Dougherty Lake this portage starts about 45 metres south of the outlet.

From the small beaver pond this trail starts at an inconspicuous break in the alders and birch on the north shore west of the dam.

Portage No. 8:

Connecting the beaver pond with the northwest bay (Manson Bay) of Wildnest Lake. Approximately 115 metres long and in good condition.

From the south shore of the beaver pond this portage starts as an inconspicuous break in the alders and willows.

From the northwest bay of Wildnest Lake (Manson Bay) this portage starts at a grassy break on the shore. (See Map 63-M for exact location).

Paddle in a generally southwest direction down the west shore of Wildnest Lake. A fire tower is visible to the west.

Leave Wildnest Lake from the southwest corner (See Map 63-L) at series of falls leading to Trent Lake and the Wildnest River. Enter a small bay partially blocked by an old beaver dam. Lower canoes down a channel between the big rock outcrop and the south side of the dam to the quiet water below and the start of the next portage.

Portage No. 9:

Connecting Wildnest Lake with the small lake to the southwest. Approximately 110 metres long and in good condition.

From the outlet at the southwest end of Wildnest Lake this portage starts at an obvious break in the birches on the south shore below the short channel just mentioned.

From the lower end this portage starts on the southeast side of the small lake 20 metres west of the base of the in-flowing waters.

After about one and one half kilometres of paddling there are rocky narrows through which canoes can be run or lowered depending upon prevailing water levels. These narrows are at the north end of Trent Lake. There are two outlets to Trent Lake, both involving portages around rapids. Either route is all right and both will be described under portage No. 10 and alternate portage No. 10A.

Portage No. 10:

Connecting Trent Lake with the Wildnest River below the rapids. Approximately 80 metres long and in good condition.

From the outlet on the south part of Trent Lake this portage starts 13 metres north of the small beaver dam on the west side of the smaller or more easterly of the two bays both extending from the southwest side of Trent Lake.

From the weed-filled headwaters of the Wildnest River this portage starts on the northwest side just below the obstructing rocks.

Paddle on through shallow water and weeds to the outlet of the next small pond at its southwest end.

Clearly audible rapids are heard flowing into the west shore of this pond. They come from the extreme southwest arm of Trent Lake and the alternate portage (10A) parallels these rapids.

Portage No. 10A:

Connecting the southwest bay of Trent Lake with a pond near the headwaters of the Wildnest River. Approximately 110 metres long and in good condition.

From the east shore of the southwest bay of Trent Lake this portage starts 12 metres south of an outlet stream.

From the small pond near the headwaters of the Wildnest River this portage starts at the base of inflowing rapids on the west shore of the pond.

Continue on down the Wildnest River. After a kilometre or so there are one or two beaver dams to haul over and a rocky channel from which the rocks have been cleared somewhat to permit lining down. Later

the river makes a sharp swing to the north and then to the west again.
The next two portages - numbers 11 and 12 - by-pass the rapids in the northern loop of the Wildnest River.

Portage No. 11:

Connecting the Wildnest River with the east end of a small lake north of Ripley Lake. Approximately 175 metres long and in good condition.
From a grassy area on the west bank of the river 275 to 300 metres before, or south of, a small lake (part of the Wildnest River System) this portage starts by a big white spruce and tamarack. If you reach the south shores of the small lake, you have missed the start of portage No. 11 to the west.
From the southeast end of the small lake north of Ripley Lake this portage starts as a break in the birches 15 metres southwest of a small stream.
Paddle to the west end of the lake north of Ripley Lake.

Portage No. 12:

Connecting the small lake north of Ripley Lake with the Wildnest River (north end of Granite Lake). Approximately 500 metres long and in fair condition. It may be wet and is steep at lower end.
From the northwest end of the small lake north of Ripley Lake this portage starts at a wide green break in a balsam poplar and spruce stand back of a thin fringe of shore weeds.
From the east shore of the north part Granite Lake (Wildnest River), this portage starts on the east shore of a cove opposite an island.
Paddle on to the outlet of Granite Lake at the southwest end and along the Wildnest River which opens out into a small lake. Leave this lake by its outlet at the northwest end and portage around the rapids.

Portage No. 13:

Connecting the outlet stream from the small lake on the southern border of Birch Portage Indian Reserve with quiet waters below first rapids to the north. Approximately 90 metres long and in good condition.
From the upstream or southeastern side this portage starts on the west side just above the remains of an old wooden dam.
From the downstream or northwestern side this portage starts 15 metres south of the base of the rapids from a small cove on the west side of the river.
In a few hundred metres the next rapids and portage occurs.

Portage No. 14:

Connecting waters of the lower Wildnest River with the larger lake within Birch Portage Indian Reserve (part of the Sturgeon-weir River). Approximately 75 metres long and in good condition.
From the upstream or south side this portage starts on the southeast side at a break in the balsam poplars 15 metres above the start of the rapids.
From the downstream, north or lake side, this portage starts on the southeast side 10 metres from the base of the small rapids.
There is a channel cleared through the rocks of the above rapids which might be usable for lining canoes up or down under favourable water level conditions.
Paddle west and then northwest along the south shore of the lake staying south of the big island. Land on the east side of the northward pointing peninsula which separates the lake within the reserve from Birch Rapids.

Portage No. 15 - Birch Portage:

Connecting the southwest shore of the lake within Birch Portage Indian Reserve (east side of northward pointing peninsula) with the Sturgeon-weir River below Birch Rapids. Approximately 330 metres long and in good condition.
From the southwest shores of the lake within Birch Portage Reserve, Birch Portage starts from the east side of the northward pointing peninsula at a grassy slope. The portage trail is at the side of a pole skid.
Note: Birch Rapids cannot be seen from the start of Birch Portage on the east side of the peninsula.
From below Birch Rapids on the Sturgeon-weir River Birch Portage starts on the east side of the river 140 metres below the base of the rapids at a well used landing.
After paddling down the northern part of Maligne Lake the canoeist comes to the bridge (Highway 106) across the central narrows. Canoeists can land at the base of this bridge or run under the bridge through small rapids and land at the Saskatchewan Government campground on the west shore of Maligne Lake below the bridge. This is the end point of this trip. For those wishing to continue the canoe trip down the Sturgeon-weir and across Amisk Lake to Denare Beach, detailed information is given in Canoe Trip No. 14.

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

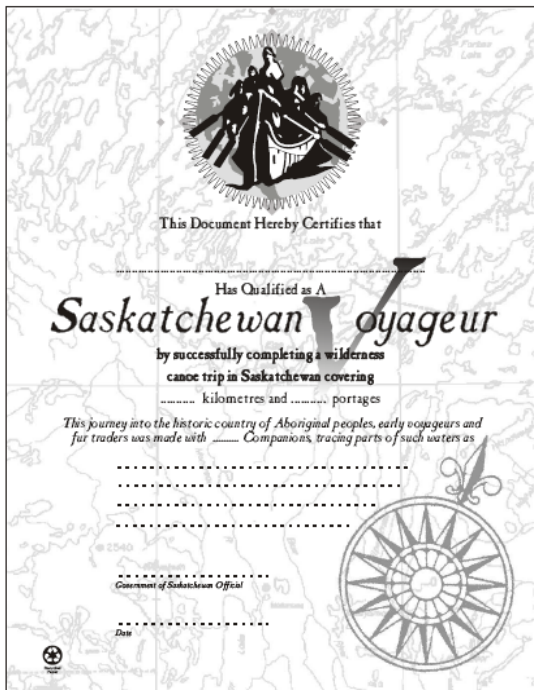
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS:

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.



**Ministry of
Tourism, Parks,
Culture and Sport**

For further information contact:

Toll Free: 1-800-205-7070

Fax: (306) 787-7000

Email: info.TPCS@gov.sk.ca

**SASKATCHEWAN
PARKS**