



Canoe Trip # 24

Waterhen River - Beaver River

Length of Trip and Time Required to Complete Trip: From the starting point northeast of Golden Ridge to the highway bridge north of Dorintosh, 37 kilometres (23 miles) requires one to two days. From the starting point northeast of Golden Ridge to the west side of Waterhen Lake, 54 kilometres (34 miles) requires two days. From the starting point northeast of Golden Ridge to the junction of the Waterhen and Beaver Rivers, 112 kilometres (70 miles) requires three to four days.

Number of Portages: None

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:

To avoid about 16 to 18 kilometres (10 miles) of intermittent rapids and fast water below the bridge north of Goodsoil, access to the Waterhen River should be gained from the farms bordering the river northeast of the community of Golden Ridge.

Note: A longer trip, for canoeists desirous of running challenging but passable rapids, may be made starting from the highway bridge north of Goodsoil or even from Pierce Lake (see Canoe Trip No. 23). This stretch of rapids is recommended for experienced canoeists, prepare for some wading and a certain amount of damage to the canoe.

Maps:

73-K Waterhen River. 73-J Green Lake is also required for canoeists making the optional trip to the junction of the Waterhen and Beaver Rivers.

About the Trip:

Canoeists starting from the area northeast of Golden Ridge and ending at either the highway bridge north of Dorintosh or road access or resorts on the west side of Waterhen Lake encounter no rapids during the trip. Scenery varies from the cut banks of the swift river to placid marsh vistas teeming with waterfowl and muskrats further down stream. Fishing is good for pike and walleye throughout the trip.

The lower Waterhen River (from the outlet at the northeast end of Waterhen Lake to its junction with the Beaver River) contains stretches of rapids and fast water. Most, if not all, can be run safely. If in any doubt, stop and look the rapids over from shore. If they appear risky at existing water levels, wade down through the shallows near shore, guiding the canoe slowly by hand or with a strong rope. The lower Waterhen is a delight to the experienced canoeist. There is wild game, fishing, beautiful and varied scenery and a wide choice of attractive natural campsites.

The Canoe Trip:

From the starting point the river gradually widens and slows down. Water birds and aquatic life are abundant throughout the trip. Attractive natural campsites are easy to find until one reaches the power line crossing eight to ten kilometres (5½ miles) west of the Highway 4 bridge north of Dorintosh. There is, of course, a Government of Saskatchewan campground at this bridge. Beyond this point one soon passes a second older bridge and then shorelines become so low and marshy that easily accessible dry campsites are hard to find until one reaches Waterhen Lake. Cattle are permitted to range through much of the park and this should be kept in mind when selecting an overnight campsite.

East of the bridge north of Dorintosh, the river widens into a maze of channels. Pick channels with the most volume and velocity of flow and be alert of major swings to the north and northwest which lead to the narrow entrance to Waterhen Lake.

Waterhen Lake is shallow and can be very rough on windy days. Such conditions might force canoeists to camp as best they could in the willows awaiting a drop in the wind.

An interesting side trip can be made to the small lake lying about one and a half kilometres (1 mile) south of the eastern portion of Waterhen Lake. This small lake has several islands, at least two of which would provide nice overnight camping sites.

Those planning to travel the lower Waterhen River may have difficulty finding its start at the northeast end of Waterhen Lake. The main outlet of the lake lies east of the island in the northeast portion of Waterhen Lake. This island is high and poplar-covered and easily mistaken for part of the shore when viewed from a distance.

The lower Waterhen River alternates between slow deep stretches and fast parts with rapids. There are four to five trappers' cabins along the upper part of the river and innumerable choices of beautiful camping spots. Parts of the river cut through high sandy banks which offer interesting views of exposed strata.

The rapids become more strenuous as one progresses farther east. Most, if not all, of these can be run if considerable skill and judgement are used. However, if the canoeist is unsure and water levels are low, some of these should probably be waded. Rapids continue to within 400 metres (437 yards) of the Highway 155 bridge linking Green Lake with Ile-a-la-Crosse. This bridge is the end of the canoe trip. It should be noted that it is quite possible to extend this trip by poling and wading up through the rapids of the Beaver River. The current of the

Beaver and Green Rivers is not too strong to paddle against all the way to the community of Green Lake, a distance of approximately 48 kilometres (30 miles).

Trip No. 24 Addition:

An alternate starting point and partial route can be taken. Canoeists would start at Third Mustus Lake and travel to Second and First Mustus Lakes, down Rusty Creek to Rusty Lake, continue down Rusty Creek to the Waterhen River and then to the Highway bridge north of Dorintosh.

Length of Trip and Time Required to Complete Trip:

From the starting point on Third Mustus Lake to the Highway bridge north of Dorintosh, 22 kilometres (14 miles) requires 1 day.

Access to Starting Point:

The unmarked trail into Third Mustus Lake is 25 kilometres (16 miles) west of the Highway 4 and 224 junction.

Maps:

73K Waterhen River.

About the Trip:

This route features no rapids. Scenery varies from open lakes to small creeks and the slow moving river. Many species of animal and bird life can be found throughout. Fishing is good for pike and walleye in the Mustus Lakes and pike can be caught in Rusty Lake and the Waterhen River. This route is ideal for the beginning canoeist or as a family trip.

The Canoe Trip:

The first part of the trip consists of traversing open lakes. The Mustus Lakes though are not overly large and wind should not prove much of a problem. The Government of Saskatchewan operates a day use area on the south shore of the Second Mustus Lake and a camping site on the east shore of First Mustus. Rusty Creek is slow flowing and offers abundant opportunity to view muskrats, beaver, and many species of birds. Rusty Lake is a scenic and quiet lake and offers at least one shore which is wind free. The Government of Saskatchewan operates a small day use area on the north shore. The last part of this route consists of a short run down Rusty Creek where it joins the Waterhen River approximately 8 kilometres (5 miles) west of the bridge north of Dorintosh.

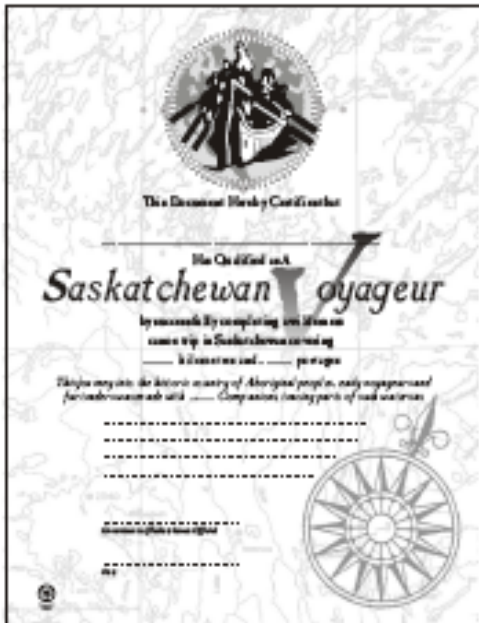
WRITTEN BY: Original script by Peter Gregg, reviewed in 1989 by Historic Trails Canoe Club.

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

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