

Timber Lake Canoe Trip, La Verendrye Park, Quebec, 1962

A 108-mile trip that can be made in one week. Several variations of the route are possible. Much of the country is wild and seldom traveled. Most of the trip is on lakes and deadwaters, with some downstream quickwater and two short upstream sections. About 20 portages, having a total length of 5 miles, with good trails on most of the portages. This route is passable in any season, but is somewhat easier in high water. Travel permit is required, and may be obtained at park entrance.

Lac Larouche to Ward Lake, 34 miles. Start can be made at Lac Larouche campsite on Route 58 in La Verendrye Park. For details of this section, see Coulonge River description. Alternate starting points are at east end of Lac au Barrage, which is reached by a good road from Route 58; at south end of Ward Lake, which is reached by a private logging road from Route 58 (permit obtained at end of road); and at various other points touched by this Ward Lake road. Because of this new road, this section has become dirtier, and is not recommended.

Ward Lake to Labrador Lake, 14 miles. Paddle 5 miles up Victoria Brook to Lac Larive. First 3 miles are winding and slack water, easy going. Then brook becomes gradually shallower. Last 1/3 mile is shallow gravel rapids. Canoes may be dragged and poled up, or portaged left, to the lake. Paddle 6 miles across Lac Larive. There is a poor campsite on the largest island in the lake, and on the shore southeast of this island. From the west end of the lake, portage 1/4 mile to a pond, cross this pond, and portage 1/3 mile to Hudson Lake. Paddle 1 mile to the outlet of Hudson Lake and portage 1/2 mile down the right side of this outlet. The route then goes down this outlet, a shallow muddy brook, difficult in low water, for 1/2 mile. Then portage right 1/2 mile to Labrador Lake. No campsites in this section.

Labrador Lake to Petit Lac des Baies, 20 miles. Paddle 2 miles up Labrador Lake and portage 200 yards to the next small lake. The level here has been raised by beavers, so that one may paddle through to the next two small lakes with only short carries around dams, instead of using the two short portage trails indicated on maps. At the end of a small bay, portage 1/4 mile to Butterfly Lake, cross the lake, and portage 1/4 mile over height of land to Timber Lake. Trails here are in poor shape, obscure in places, and some bad muskeg. Paddle 3 miles up Timber Lake, fair campsite at northern tip of lake. From this campsite there is a 150-yard portage to a small pond, then a 1 mile portage to a lake with no name. A side trail goes off left to a small pond, but the brook here is not canoeable; keep on the main trail. Cross the lake and paddle west downstream 1 mile, then turn north up Riv. de l'Original (Moose River). The valley here is broad and marshy, the river shallow and muddy, difficult in low water, and no place to camp. Two miles upstream reach Lac a la Croix, paddle 5 miles up this lake to Petit Lac des Baies.

Petit Lac des Baies to Grand Lake Victoria, 16 miles. From the northeast corner of Petit Lac des Baies, drag canoes 50 yards upstream to a small bay, paddle to the north corner of this bay, and portage north 1/3 mile over height of land to a small pond, cross this pond, portage 150 yards to a narrow bay, and paddle 4 miles to Perch Lake. Cross Perch

Lake and watch for the outlet in the northeast corner. Two small falls here can be lifted over, or portage left 100 yards around both. Paddle 1 mile and lift over another small falls into Lac Chartier. Good campsites here on islands. Then paddle 3 miles down Riv. de la Baie to Grand Lake Victoria. This river is mostly slow water, but there are rapids at the beginning and end which can be run with care or lined down.

Grand Lake Victoria to Jackson's Landing, 24 miles. Paddle 2 miles down a bay into the main part of the lake, then up the lake to Jackson's Landing at the northern tip. This is a private landing, and permission is required to park cars. Grand Lake Victoria can be reached by sportsmen in motorboats, making it less attractive for canoeing, particularly at the northern end. There is some logging activity on the lake. The once-famous stands of pine on this lake have all been cut. A logging road goes up the west shore. Grand Lac Indian settlement and abandoned Hudson Bay Post can be seen near the point where the Ottawa River enters. An alternate route is up the Ottawa River to Dozois Dam. It is about the same distance, but is upstream with some strong rapids.

S. Coffin
Aug. 22, 1962

Note: This copy was made by scanning the original with OCR and then making a few necessary corrections. I have done practically no editing. I expect many changes have taken place in the area, probably for the worse from the canoeing point of view, and I doubt this route would hold much attraction for canoeists today. Take it for what it's worth then, a historic record or whatever.

The Coulonge River trip description referred to, which I got from someone else, is now lost, but it is probably a well known route that has been published somewhere.

Stewart Coffin, April 2008

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