



*** Little Caribou to Miminiska, June/July 2021 Trip Report * Misehkw River Valley & Ottertooth Creek for Ontario Protected Areas * Ostrom Packs * Wabakimi Provincial Park updates * Ontario Fires Info (scroll down)**



TRIP REPORT-LITTLE CARIBOU TO MIMINISKA, JUNE/JULY 2021

Brent Sinclair and Mhairi McFarlane, of London, Ontario paddled, sawed and cleared numerous portages, and did bird Atlas Surveys June 21, 2021 to July 8 2021. [See Brent's full report and detailed notes in the FOW Trip Report Forum.](#) Mhairi took the stunning moose photo above.

Here's a few excerpts:

"Portage conditions: Apart from a couple on the Palisade, we seemed to be the first



FOW Advocates Misehkw Valley & Ottertooth for Ontario Protected Areas Expansion

The FOW board has expressed support for expanded protected areas in the Wabakimi Area; in collaboration with [Ontario Nature, Ontario's leading conservation organization.](#)

Specifically:

Misehkw River Valley -- The Misehkw River flows between the Albany River Provincial Park and Wabakimi Provincial Park in northwest Ontario. This river valley serves as a migration

people across most of the portages this year and (especially on Webster Creek through to Rockcliff) perhaps several years for some. We were carrying a folding saw and a hatchet, and cleared all the portages to the best of our abilities (only two of ~25 had no trees down) - on average, we think we removed a piece of blowdown every 50 m of portage. The three portages from Webster - Early - Rockcliff took ~10 hours of our time to clear. There had been some sort of recent microburst or maybe even tornado event around Colehouse - most of the S shore of the lake was lined with recently upended root masses of trees all blown down by a wind from the North, and the summit of the portage to Rockcliff had a huge (3+ m high and deep, 50 m long) multistem blowdown which was impassable without a chainsaw (we carved a rough detour, but it requires some canoewrangling to negotiate). We ran/lined as many portages as we could on the Misehkw, but still did a bit of work on them as required. We were running out of portage maintenance enthusiasm by the time we hit the Albany, so although we did some work on the portages around the falls, they could probably do with a little more TLC."

Wildlife: Caribou + calf swimming to island on Caribou Lake; Three caribou swimming to island on Smoothrock. Many moose - mainly cows + calves on the Palisade and Webster and bulls on the Misehkw and Albany (including one fine animal about 10 m from our first campsite on the Albany).

bridge for wildlife such as caribou and wolverines. A roadless area, it provides an important buffer between the two provincial parks. It also serves as a canoe route that connects Rockcliff Lake in Wabakimi Provincial Park to the Albany River. This wild river flows over Iron Falls, several Class I and Class II rapids and offers numerous opportunities to see moose and enjoy a wilderness experience.

Ottertooth Creek -- The Ottertooth Creek area (~6,580 ha) borders Obonga-Ottertooth Provincial Park and the Ottertooth Conservation Reserve, approximately 200 km north of Thunder Bay. There is an osprey nesting site and moose aquatic feeding areas within the site as well as active traplines. Ottertooth Creek is an FSC candidate protected area within the Black Spruce Forest, which is certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). *"Ottertooth Creek passes through some of the most remote and rugged landscapes in the Wabakimi Area, including Ottertooth Canyon and Kashishibog Falls. The area also harbors examples of the region's cultural heritage."* (Vern Fish, President, Friends of Wabakimi)

(See Vern's [Misehkw and Ottertooth trip reports on Canoeing.com](#))

There are other surrounding areas needing protection. All this requires research and outreach. [Join FOW](#) and our Conservation Committee, and help us out.

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Surprisingly few beavers (although plenty of lodges, especially on the Misehkw). Five otter sightings including several on stretch of Albany from Patte Lake to Miminiska. About half a dozen bears... two nice sightings where we were downwind and across the river on the Misehkw and we could watch the bear go about his/her business (rather than the usual view of a bear butt disappearing into the bushes). Great time of year for dragonflies and moths (we found many luna moths). Mhairi was doing [Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas](#) surveys, including deploying automated monitors overnight. We don't have the data from those yet, but some birdy highlights include: small common tern colony on Wabakimi, many boreal chickadees, many goldeneye with ducklings, trumpeter swans, black-billed cuckoo on the Albany near Miminiska, pelicans on Miminiska. Mhairi was also making regular [eBird checklists](#) and [iNaturalist](#) observations, almost doubling the number of iNat observations for the park."

Paddle4hunger: Borys begins his trip.

[Inspired by the successful Canoe4Covid young men, FOW member **Borys Skoropadsky** from Etobicoke, Ontario, has launched a **paddle4hunger fundraising effort** to support the Food Banks Canada for Covid-19 relief.](#)

[On Facebook!](#)

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Canada opens border, U.S. to follow??

Canada is allowing fully vaccinated U.S. citizens; but the U.S. has yet to reciprocate. The next U.S. determination is expected by August 21st. We're hoping!

OSTROM PACKS -- New Business/Sponsor member!

[Our new Business/Sponsor member! Ostrom packs were much used on Wabakimi Project trips.](#)

"Having known Phil Cotton both personally and professionally I would really like to be a small part of the FOW effort. Until recently I did not know Phil's work was being continued. I would be thrilled to be a part of that process. I have spent a lot



of time in Wabakimi and appreciate it."

Bill Ostrom



July 2021

Wabakimi Provincial Park (Facebook posts)

July 16th: Wabakimi's canoe rangers recently finished clearing another route that you can enjoy! They travelled the Caribou River across Smoothrock Lake to the Berg River. From there they connected with the Ogoki River into Whitewater Lake and then back to Smoothrock via Lonebreast Bay to finish at Little Caribou.

The weather has been warm and dry and water conditions are below the seasonal average and dropping in the park. Please be advised that a restricted fire zone remains in place for all of Wabakimi Provincial Park.

July 15th: Are you looking to plan a remote canoe trip into the wilds of Wabakimi? If so, check out the [recent blog by Ken Jones describing his adventures in the park!](#)

July 5th: Wabakimi's canoe rangers have completed several trips in the park to date. The Kopka River downstream of Kenaskaniss Lake to Wabinosh Bay, Tamarack-Boiling Sands River-Smoothrock-Elf Lake and the Tamarack-Gnome-Lookout River to Onamakawash Lake sections have been cleaned and cleared. Our rangers report below average water levels in the park. Interesting wildlife observations included several swimming moose, a caribou crossing between islands and one bear.

With the recent warm dry weather in the area, the forest fire danger rating in the park is now moderate to extreme depending on where you travel. Please be extremely careful with campfires or consider using portable propane or gas stoves where possible.

(July 5th email report: Re: Debris Clean effort. Park rangers have been to Surprise and Cache lake areas and made progress preparing the site in advance of flying the material out (e.g. cutting material into manageable size, moving to a centralized pick up location where the plane can access). We're expecting an update once all work is completed. They're headed to the second site further north in the park (Grayson/Burntrock area) later this month.)

June 16th: Backcountry camping is open in Wabakimi Provincial Park. A reminder before you set off on your adventure that interior camping permits are required for any camping and canoeing you do within Wabakimi. The easiest way to purchase your permits is online from the Ontario Parks website: <https://reservations.ontarioparks.com/>. Registration for online interior permits is available up to two weeks in advance of your departure. Navigate to the Backcountry Registration tab to input your information and please print your permit and be sure to carry it with you while in the park. Happy travels and enjoy your time in the boreal wilderness of Wabakimi!

Forest fires Information about the current forest fire danger, forest fire activity and fire restrictions across Ontario.

Ontario Interactive Fire Map

FOW News & Updates

The Expedition Committee [has an initial list of suggested routes.](#) (A database of Wabakimi routes is in progress.)

Many of these are in the Wabadowgang Noopming (Armstrong) forest, others are in the Caribou (west side) forest.

See our [2021 Trip Program webpage](#) along with some resources that will help in planning such trips.

[We now have a new downloadable FOW Trip Journal form for documenting your Wabakimi trip with greater ease.](#) This journal also includes other resources to help in the planning of such trips.

We hope that FOW members (and others!) will consider taking self-guided trips into these areas and provide a trip report back to FOW for the purposes of improving our maps and other resources.

Cartography Committee. Do you have info regarding routes, portages, conditions, that need to be considered for Map Volume updates? Let us know.

To reach the Cartography Committee directly,
email cartographywabakimi@gmail.com

Interested in joining a committee? [Log in and edit your member profile](#) or
send a note to info@wabakimi.org

[Thanks to our Business/Sponsor members below!](#)



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Mission Statement

Through volunteer stewardship and collaboration with other stakeholders, the Friends of Wabakimi will participate in the planning processes to advocate for protection and preservation of the diverse natural, cultural, recreational and historical resources of the Wabakimi Area.



Friends of Wabakimi

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