



Allagash Wilderness Waterway, North Maine Woods, Maine

An adventure with Boy Scout Troop 60, my Dad, and brothers Jim and Chris

July Sixteenth through Twenty-Second, Two-Thousand

By Dan Wolfgang



December Twenty-Fifth, Two-Thousand and One



I made this book just for you.

I originally intended to put this story and the accompanying photos on the Internet and just leave it at that. But in early September (2001) I had an idea: why not make something grander? The content was certainly worth it. So, I decided to create a book. Shortly thereafter I decided that this would be a fantastic Christmas gift for you, not only because it was an adventure we enjoyed together, but also because this is a one-of-a-kind hand-made gift.

I've spent more than a year writing and rewriting this story. For two months I've also been scanning and retouching photos, composing each page, creating color proofs and reviewing the materials. Twenty more hours were consumed with printing and binding.

I know my efforts were worthwhile because the personal value of the book is sure to appreciate as the years go by!

To the left you'll see the "Limited Edition" numbering. As I said, I made this book just for you.

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The Beginning: Preparation

Every year Boy Scout Troop 60 (Oakdale, Connecticut) goes on some sort of summer adventure. This year we experienced canoeing a stretch of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway is located in the far northwest corner of Maine — typically referred to as “North Maine Woods.” Right on the border of Canada, in fact. The Allagash is also one of the few rivers in the world that flows from south to north.

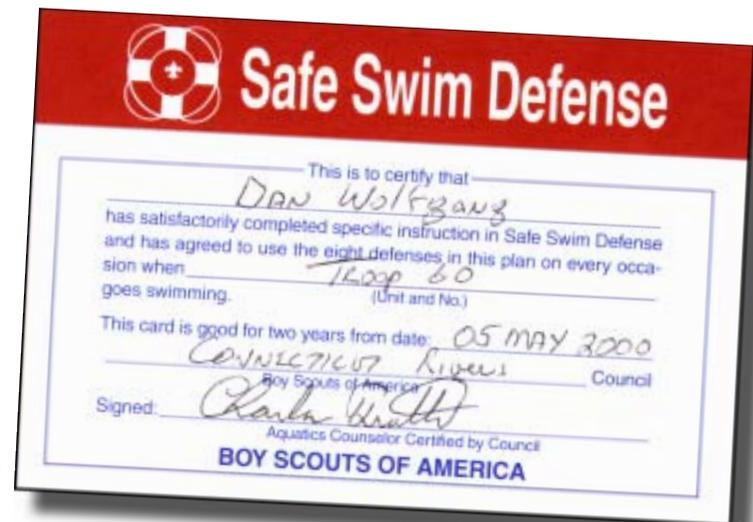


We spent months prior to the trip **preparing**. Planning and assorted prep-work began in February. My Dad and I were chiefly responsible for the canoeing training. I also provided some



instruction on packing techniques, gear accessibility and equipment recommendations. The other leaders worked on scheduling, route planning, meal planning and preparation, and a great miscellany of other items that had to be completed. A trip like this requires a lot of work to ensure that it goes well and everyone has fun.

All the Scouts earned the Canoeing merit badge; adult leaders also completed the requirements. Several leaders also completed the American Red Cross requirements for adult CPR certification and BSA's Safe Swim Defense.



The trip would be more fun for everyone if we were confident in what we were doing and prepared for the unexpected.



A total of 24 people went on the trip. We had two teams of 12, each with six Scouts and six leaders. There are so many leaders because they enjoy these trips as much as the Scouts do. "Team 2" had the younger Scouts and was covering 54 miles; "Team 1" was the older Scouts and was covering 66 miles. Team 1 started further upriver in order to run Chase Rapids.

I was Team 1's principal leader. Our other leaders were Charlie and his son Eric, my Dad and my brothers, Jim and Chris. Our Scouts were Bryan, Garrett, Nick, John, Matt and Dominic.



Most of the equipment was packed ahead of time.





Arriving far
too early in
the morning.



Sunday, July Sixteenth

Ugh. What an early morning. I had to get up at about 5:00 am; we were meeting at 5:30. I was happy to find the rest of the crew equally unhappy to be up so early, yet excited and ready for the trip. This would be a long drive: Connecticut to Massachusetts to New Hampshire to Maine.

All 24 of us piled into four trucks, and we were on our way by about 5:45 am. I was in the Expedition with Bryan, Garrett, Matt and Nick, and Team 2 leaders Griff and Bill.

We made a stop at L.L. Bean for about 20 minutes to get fishing licenses. It was still early, 9:40 am, but we were all tired of riding. Of course we all wandered around for a bit, too. We needed to stretch our legs.



A view over Bill's shoulder, through the windshield.





"Are we lost? I don't remember seeing this on the map." Actually, we didn't get lost at all.

I bought some carabiners. I used them to easily connect/disconnect my drybags to the canoe. My idea was to tie a piece of rope to a seat and thwart, then clip the carabiner to the rope and drybag. To take the drybag out just unclip the carabiner. This way, you don't need to keep retying knots.

Matt thought this was a good idea, too. So he bought an "L.L. Bean"-stamped carabiner for \$4.99 — one of the

lightweight ones meant for your keys or something equivalent, not a real mountaineering carabiner. He was "taken by the man!" It was easy for me to convince him to return it for a real climbing-grade carabiner for the exorbitant cost of... \$4.99.

We eventually picked up my brother Jim. He attends the University of Maine at Presque Isle and met us in Ashland. Then we were back on our way.

Arrival at the Allagash Outfitters — the outfitter/canoe rental place we used — came after nearly 12 hours of driving. Our campsite was right on the shore of the St. John River, which shares a shore with Canada.

We got our tents set up, began separating some of the Team 1 and Team 2 supplies, and were introduced to the enemy: the Black Flies. They are horrible monsters that





came after all of us and drove us to the brink of extinction. Many donned battle gear (mosquito netting) and camouflage (bug repellent), and we still barely survived. I nearly lost my leg in a battle with a platoon of Black Flies.

For those who don't know, a Black Fly is nasty. According to Jim (and we can all testify), a Black Fly

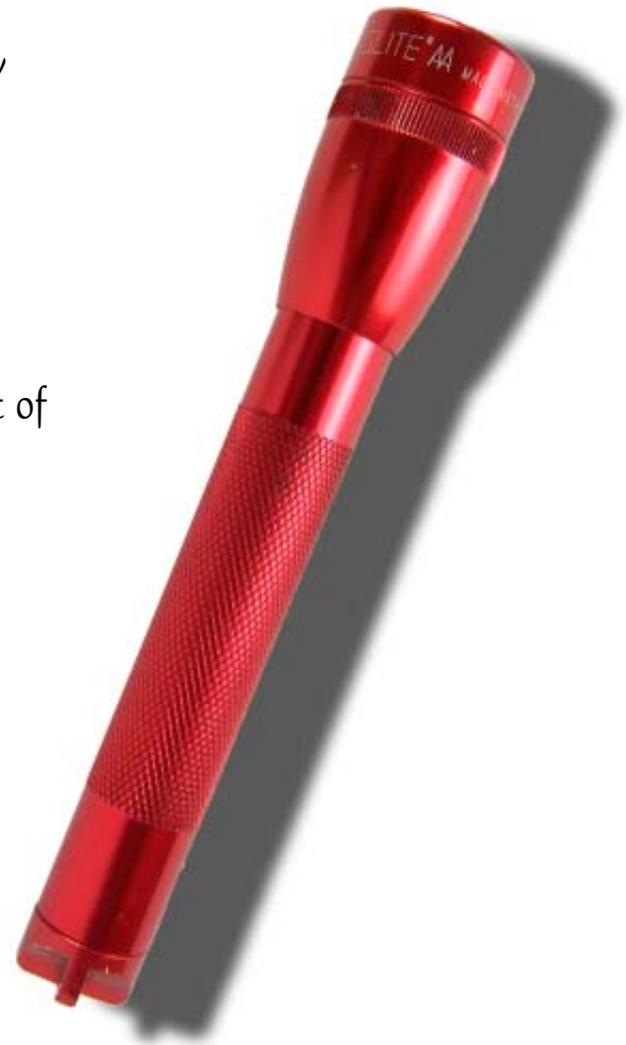
tears off a piece of your skin, vomits its acidic stomach contents, then sucks all the blood out of you that it can.

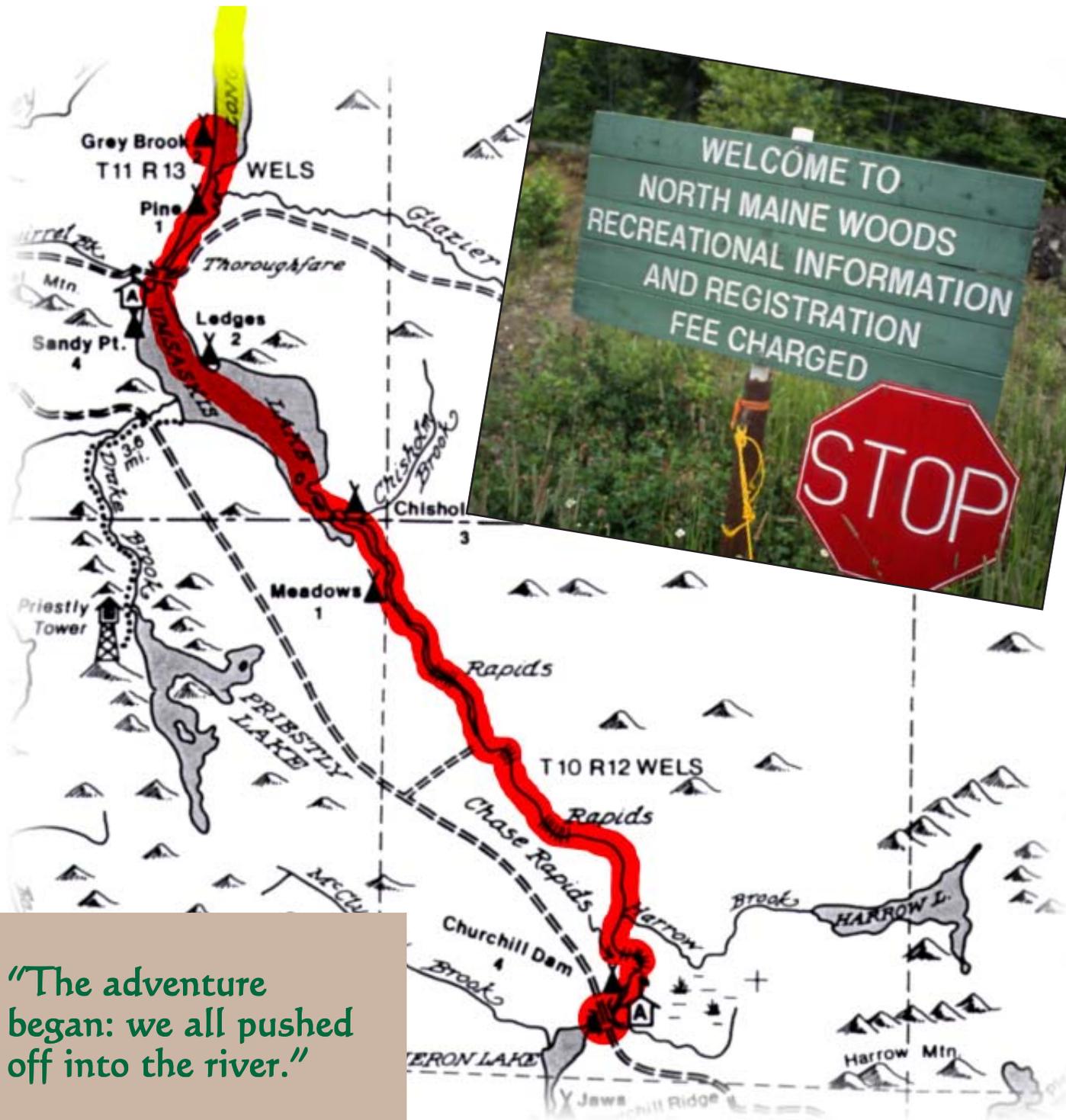
Ouch.

Another canoeing group came and set up camp in the field with us. Jeremy, a river guide, was leading them. He pointed us to some good fishing spots along our route, noted some things to see, and tried to give us a better idea of what to expect.

We were all in bed relatively early in the evening.

Tomorrow was going to be a hectic morning with a lot of work to do.





“The adventure began: we all pushed off into the river.”

Monday, July Seventeenth

This was another early morning. At 5:30 am we were up, getting ready to leave. After a quick breakfast we broke camp and got our gear ready. Everybody piled into two Allagash Outfitter vans and we began the long four-hour ride ahead of us. We left at about 8:00.

We were up early, packing, excited to leave Allagash Outfitters and get started on our trip.



We made a few stops to stretch our legs. At the very first stop, Jim noticed a moose in the woods and called us over

to see it. I got there in time to see the moose, but when I got my camera up to my eye, he had turned around and started to leave. Ah well. After driving a while longer, we saw another moose on the side of the road.

The weather was pretty nice: warm, cloudy sky, not at all humid.

We eventually stopped above Chase Rapids, on Umsaskus Lake. This is where Team 2 began their trip. We unloaded their canoes and gear, packed everything into the canoes, and they left. We weren't going to have any contact with them until Thursday night or sometime Friday. *Sniff, sniff, sob.*



Before we set out on the river our water jugs had to be filled.



Team 2 packing up their gear at Umsaskus Lake.



Most of the Team 1 gear was left here, to pick up after completing the rapids. Taking our gear with us would make the canoes heavier, making them harder to control. It would also have meant possibly having soaked gear, or worse, lost gear. Team 1 got back in the vans and continued driving.

We arrived at Churchill Dam (our start point) around noon and decided to eat lunch before heading out. After eating our bagels, cheese, salami, hard crackers, cookies and oranges it was nearly 1:00 in the afternoon. I don't like bagels, but I ate one.



A Ranger walked over and informed us that normally they turn the water off at 12:00 noon, but left it running for us. So, we had to go down Chase Rapids now.

We divided up in our canoes: Bryan and Garrett, Matt and Dominic, John and Nick, Charlie and Eric, Jim and Chris, and my Dad and I. We stuck to these pairings for the whole trip.

The adventure began: we all pushed off into the river.

Jim and Chris typically took “point” through the rapids — they went first to try to scope the easiest route for the rest of us to follow. My Dad and I were “clean-up,” the last through, ensuring that everyone got through the water safely. Both Jim and Chris and my Dad and I continued these positions through most of the week.

For the Scouts, this was the first time they would experience whitewater and rapids, albeit only Class I. All of the adults had at least a little whitewater canoeing experience.

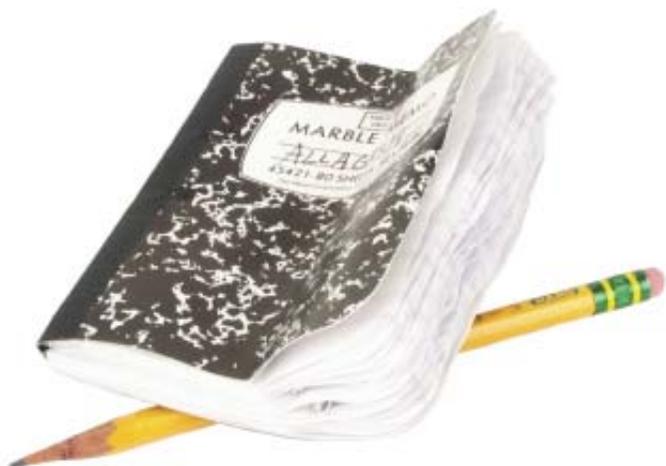
The Scouts loved this nine-mile stretch. My Dad and I, on the other hand, had the heaviest canoe of the Team and frequently scraped bottom. There just wasn’t enough water for us to run the rapids. I had to get out of the canoe to pull us through the shallow water several times.



Eventually, we flipped the canoe. My Dad said that up until this point, he had never flipped a canoe unless he wanted to. I think that holds true for me, too, but I'm not sure. But how embarrassing was this? We were the two most experienced in Troop 60, and we were the first to flip! Must be bad karma or something. The only ones who saw us flip were Charlie and Eric, and they flipped just a few seconds later. Ha!

There were a few casualties: I lost a roll of unexposed film and the journal got soaked. Yes, that means

everything from this point on is basically from memory. (After I got home I tapped several pages of notes into the computer, which were later used to construct this story.) Charlie's camera got soaked, too. After drying for a few weeks, though, it works fine.



We came to Umsaskus Lake at around 4:30, where Team 2 began and where we left most of our equipment. After a short break, we loaded our stuff and were on our way again. It rained on and off, but nothing too heavy. The clouds did get darker and more ominous, though.

Our itinerary put us 14¹/₂ miles down the river from Churchill Dam at Grey Brook and Pine campsites. However, we thought we'd be starting out much earlier in the day. It was getting late, so we decided that once we got to Sandy Point campsite we'd call it quits for the day. Sandy Point is about 12 miles from Churchill Dam.

Matt and Dominic were having a lot of trouble getting their canoe going in the right direction. So, in order to catch up to the group and get to the campsite, my Dad went with Dominic and I went with Matt. After paddling for a bit we saw Jim and Chris waving us over toward a little cove.



Jim and Chris found a moose! Charlie and Eric pulled in to have a look at it just before we did. Of course, I pulled out my camera and began shooting. After a few minutes, Matt and I paddled around him to a little island, opposite the other canoes. (With the sun to our backs, this move offered significantly better lighting to photograph by.)

Charlie and Eric, and Dominic and my Dad watch the young bull moose.





It was terribly mucky and I began sinking in as soon as I got out of the canoe. But I set up my tripod and blasted through a few rolls of film anyway. We were within about 25 feet of the moose! He just stood there in the water,

apparently finding some food and getting a drink. Eventually we moved along to the campsite, just down river.

What a great end to the first day!

After getting to camp, I scraped some leeches off my legs. I'm sure they latched onto me in the muck while I was photographing the moose. I don't recommend letting them on you.

They're gross.

A family of Canadian Geese quacked around the water, opposite our campsite.



For dinner we had Scout Rice with Beans and Dried Beef,
a recipe my Dad dug up. We were too tired to bother with
desert. It started raining harder.

Today's distance: 12 miles. Total distance: 12 miles.

Itinerary: 14¹/₂ miles.



Tuesday, July Eighteenth

Eric woke us at 5:30. I don't like this pattern we're getting into of waking up early every day! It's still raining occasionally. For breakfast we had granola cereal with dried fruit. I went down to the water a few times with my binoculars to peer at some moose. Three were upriver in the spot where Jim and Chris found one yesterday.

Eric said he heard a weird noise last night, so he got out of his tent and headed down to the water. Mere feet in front of him was a moose walking down the river, mooing. We were further intrigued when he said it sounded like a cross between a cow and a bear. We were packed and on the water by about 8:30.

It started raining heavier. And then the thunder and lightning started. And it got colder. We pulled off the river to wait out the lightning. It's pretty unsafe to be sitting out on the open river with lightning shooting down all over the place. It could have shot down on one of us if we tried to paddle through this storm.

There was a group of girls ahead of us. We pulled to the left shore of Long Lake when it started lightning; they went to the right. We went to the left because Sam's campsite was right there; nothing was on the right. Eventually they came over to our side, where our groups set up tarps to try to stay dry. We had lunch and hot chocolate to try to warm up and

raise morale, but this rain was ruining our trip! After the lightning stopped, we got back on the water. We had a lot of miles to cover, but weren't making much progress.

At around 3:30 we hit Long Lake Dam, where we had to make a short portage. It began thundering and lightning again, so we sat there waiting it out.

We progressed 8¹/₂ miles from the Sandy Point campsite. Two campsites were about 3/4-mile ahead: Cunliffe Island and Sweeney Brook. The next campsite (Back Channel) was nearly ten miles away. With all this lightning, we didn't want to be out on the water. Considering all the rain that came today, how little ground we covered and the time of day, there was no way we could make it ten miles to Back Channel. And since we didn't know if Cunliffe Island or Sweeney Brook were occupied, I decided we should stay here, at Long Lake Dam, for the night. We set up camp, tried to get dry, and hoped tomorrow would be a better day.

I didn't take a single photo today.

According to our itinerary we should have been at Round Pond Rips campsite. We were about 11 miles away from that. The fact that we were significantly behind schedule was obvious, to say the least. Everybody was quite concerned about how little distance we had covered over the past two days. We needed to be back at camp on Friday, ready to leave for Connecticut on Saturday. What if the bad weather continues?

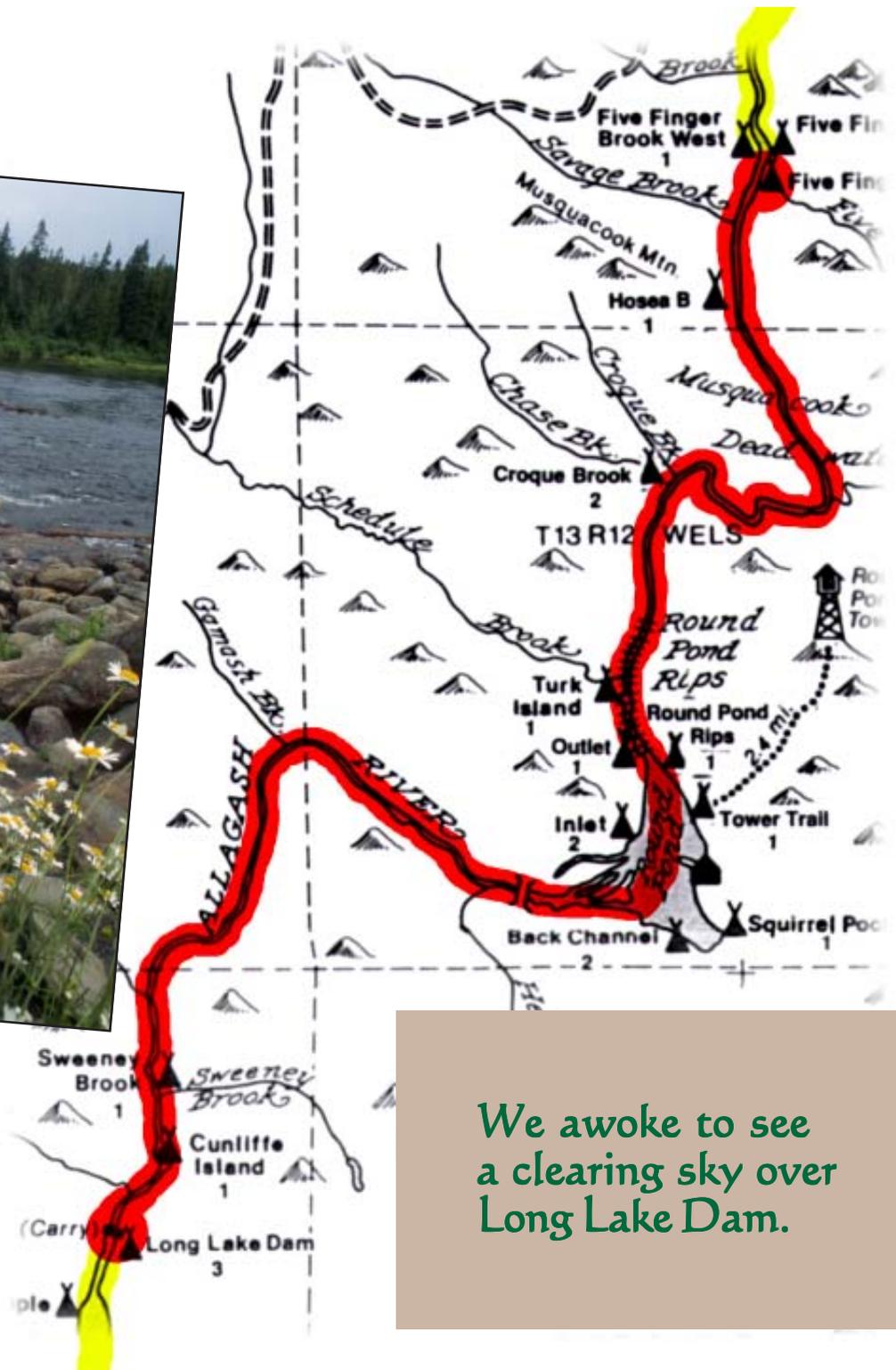
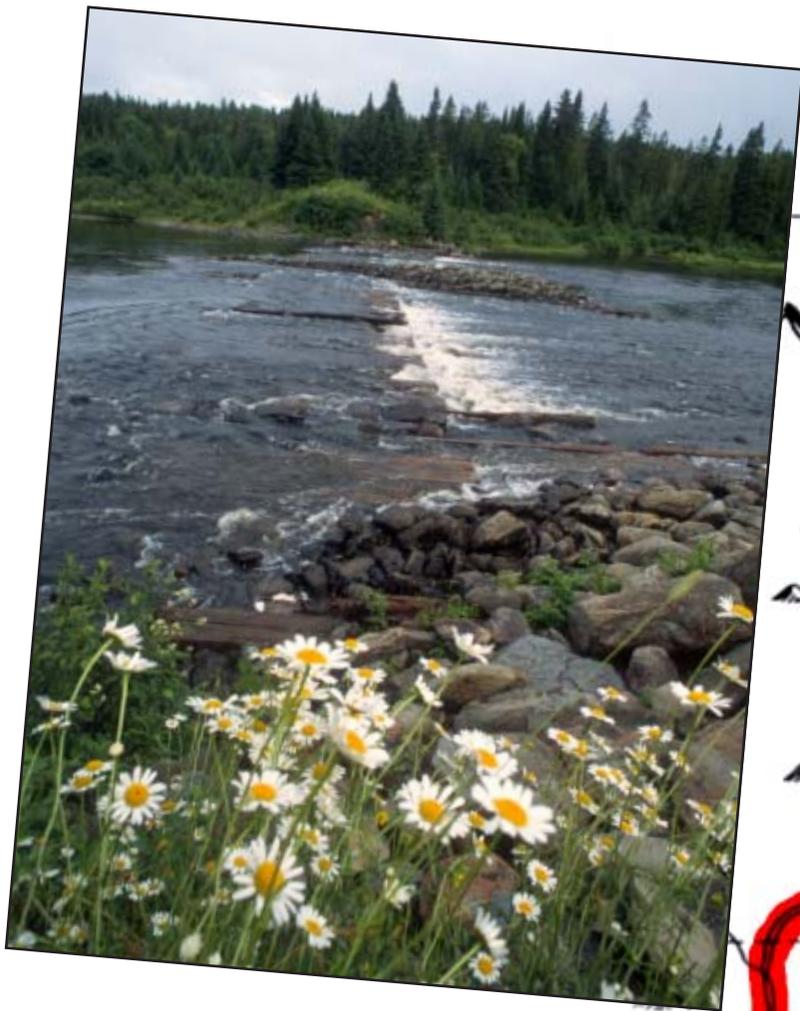
What a miserable day. It rained all day. It sucked. We all hated canoeing. We all hated water. We all wanted to go home. Around dinner (chicken with rice) my Dad said something inspiring:

“In a couple months when we look back on this trip, we’re not going to remember the rain. We’ll only remember what a great time we had.”

Guess what? It’s one year later, and I still clearly remember how horrid that day was! But what he said put things into better perspective for us all. And in the end, the good parts definitely outweigh the bad.

Little did we know, the best of the trip was yet to come.

Today’s distance: 8¹/₂ miles. Total distance: 20¹/₂ miles. Itinerary: 31¹/₂ miles.



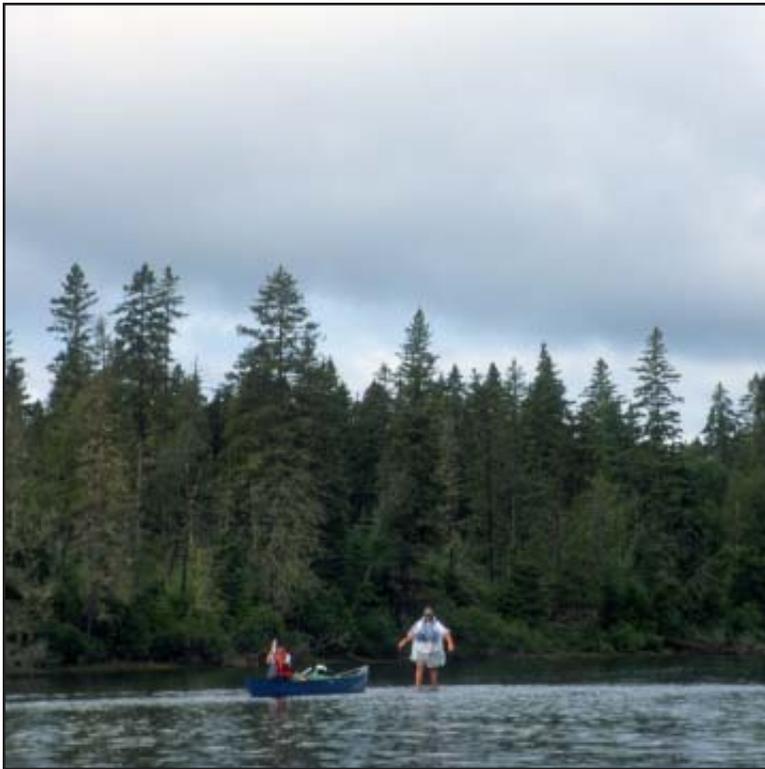
We awoke to see a clearing sky over Long Lake Dam.

Wednesday, July Nineteenth

It's not raining! Well, not hard, anyway, just a little drizzle. We had granola cereal for breakfast — much quicker than the planned pancakes — in hopes of getting away earlier and making up some miles. I spotted a Bald Eagle soaring above the dam.

Incidentally, Eric again woke us at 5:30 am and we were on the river at about 8:00. My Dad and I were the last ones to leave camp.





Matt and Dominic worked hard, but continued to have problems.



As the morning passed, the clouds left and the sun shined brightly. It was turning into a great day. I took some photos. I was really starting to enjoy this trip.

We entered Round Pond and my Dad and I decided to take “point” and lead everyone through Round Pond to Round Pond Rips campsite, where we would have our lunch break. Remember, we’re the two in the group with the most canoeing experience. As my Dad and I passed everyone, I couldn’t help but laugh. The Scouts were paddling so hard and so fast to try to keep us from passing them. We zipped right past them with efficient, powerful strokes. We glided across Round Pond in no

Jon and Nick,
Charlie and Eric,
Garrett and Bryan,
and my brothers Jim
and Chris struggle
to keep up with my
Dad and I as we
enter Round Pond.
The little dot in the
back is Matt and
Dominic.



time, periodically looking back to see the dots that were our teammates.

While paddling through Round Pond we looked for the Round Pond Tower trail entrance, but couldn't find it. The Round Pond Tower is a fire lookout you can climb; supposedly it has a spectacular view into Canada and, sometimes, over to New Hampshire and even Vermont. Today became very clear — maybe a day you could see to Vermont. There's another tower, Priestly Tower, back on Umsaskus Lake.



The Scouts had some fun after lunch, before we got back on the water.



My Dad and I pulled into Round Pond Rips campsite. We set up a clothesline and hung out our wet clothes, used the bathroom, had a drink and, fifteen minutes later, greeted the first arrivals of our team. We had a relaxing lunch consisting of peanut butter and jelly on bagels, Fig Newtons and Milk Lunch crackers. After lunch some of the Scouts went down to the water to goof off.

A quick look at the map verified that we had covered 11 miles this morning! That meant we were still behind (our itinerary had us covering 12 miles today), but there was a positive vibe among everyone and the goal seemed within reach. The nice weather did a lot to make this an enjoyable trip.

Round Pond Rips came right after the campsite, and provided some excitement in the form of Class I rapids.

Matt and Dominic were the first to enter Round Pond Rips.



A lot happened along the Musquacook Dead Water region of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway:

I took more photos. I saw Jim and Eric fishing. Everybody had some fun.

The Scouts were ahead of us a little. We watched a Bald Eagle swoop down — nearly smacking them in the head — without any of them realizing it.

A short while later, the Scouts came across a female moose in the water. Everybody pulled out their cameras. Most had waterproof one-time-use cameras. The moose

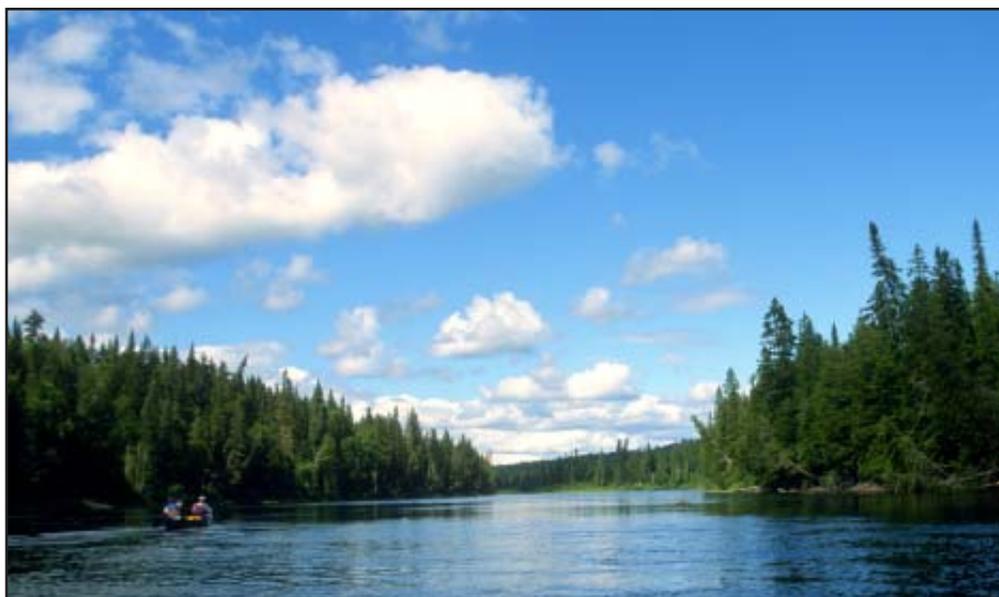
Chris watches with envy as Jim shows his trophy fish.



looked like a dot in their viewfinders, so they tried to move close to get a better shot. By the time I could get there with my camera and telephoto lens, the moose was running away; she disappeared into the woods in no time. I didn't fire a single shot.

We saw another Bald Eagle flying overhead. We all tried to get some photos, but the eagle was pretty high.

The afternoon passed quickly.



Along the Musquacook Dead Water region.



A view of Five Finger Brook.

We eventually arrived at Five Finger Brook South campsite, where we decided to set up camp. There was a note on the picnic table thanking the Park Rangers for all the work they do.

A bunch of us went upriver a little bit to Five Finger Brook to have some fun. And what fun it was! Just look at the pictures!

We had Sunset on the Plains for dinner, another recipe my Dad dug up. After Monday's late start and Tuesday's amazing rainfall, Wednesday was undoubtedly the best day so far. We worked hard to cover a lot of miles, trying to get back on



schedule. Today's paddling left us only 3¹/₂ miles south of today's itinerary destination — Dead Water North campsite. Back on track!

Today's distance: 19¹/₂ miles.

Total distance: 39 miles.

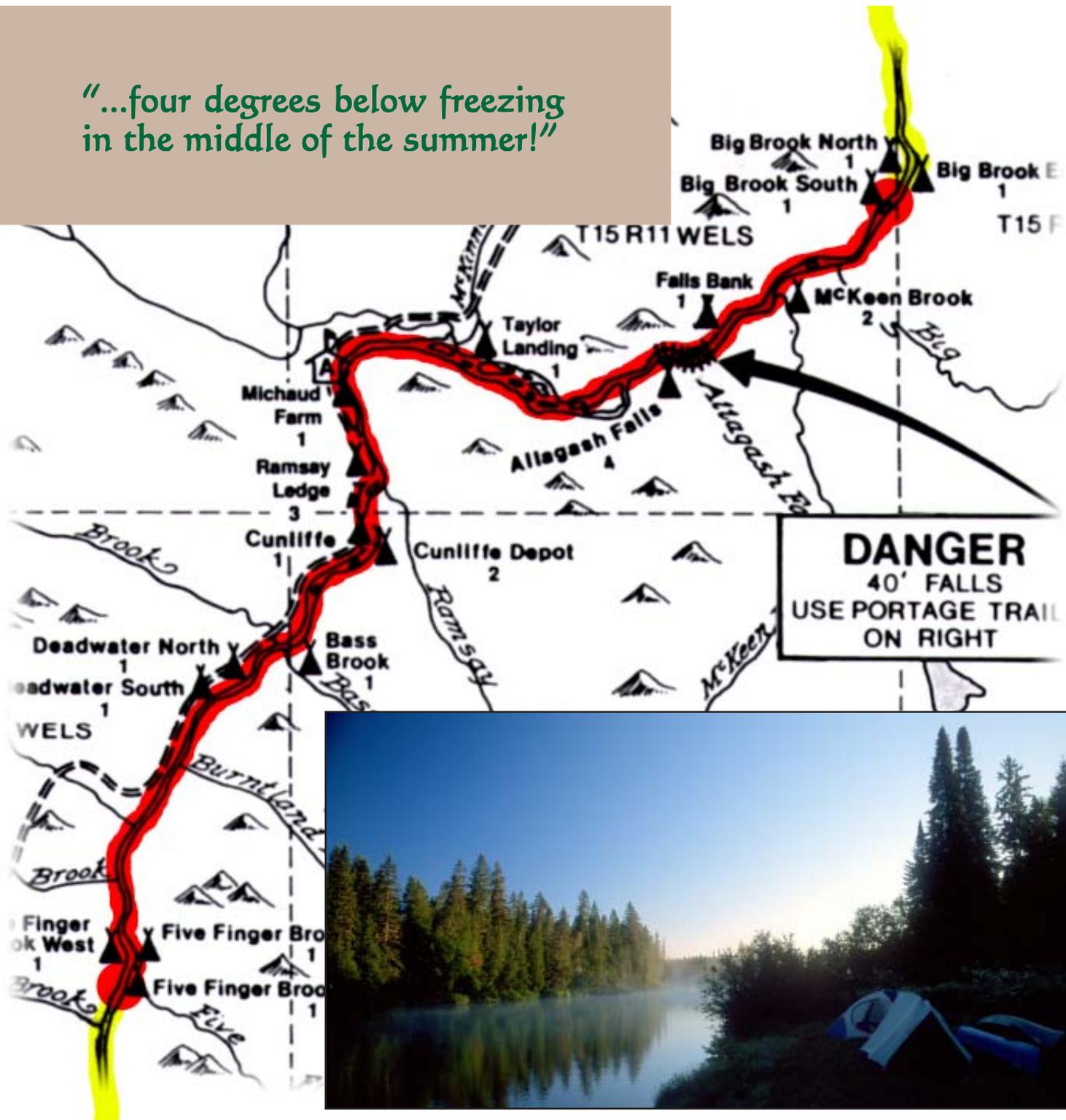
Itinerary: 42¹/₂ miles.



Bryan and Nick watch as Chris and Garrett go down Five Finger Brook.



“...four degrees below freezing
in the middle of the summer!”



Thursday, July Twentieth

I woke up at around 4:00 am shivering from the cold.

I slept on top of my sleeping bag last night, and at this particular time I felt that was an idiotic decision. How cold was it? Well, I had to run up to the bathroom so I took a look at my thermometer on the way out: 28 degrees Fahrenheit! Can you believe it — four degrees below freezing in the middle of the summer! We had frost on our tents and a fog was over the water.

For those not “in the know,” BSA has an award for sleeping in below-freezing weather (32 degrees Fahrenheit) called the Polar Bear Award. In the winter months in Connecticut this isn’t a hard award to receive. (I’ve lost count of how many I have, but it’s gotta be close to



two dozen of them.) But this is mid-July and we earned this award. How exciting is that? To sweeten things even further, we later found out that Team 2 didn't get below 35 degrees! According to Griff and Don, they were on higher ground and didn't have any frost on their tents, either.

Months prior, at the weekly Troop meetings, I kept telling everybody that it could get below freezing and that we had to pack appropriately. That is, bringing a hat and gloves was a wise idea, to say nothing of warm pants and coats. Some people laughed at that notion. Ha!

Anyway, I jumped back into my sleeping bag quickly to get warmed up again. 5:30 came too soon and I had to crawl out of bed to get moving for the day. It was still only 32 degrees. I ran over to the backpacking stoves to get them fired up with water to make hot chocolate. We had oatmeal for breakfast, which I'm not so fond of. But ya know, it's just like the bagels: when you're this hungry it doesn't matter what it is because you'll eat it.

Before we left I afforded the time to get some photos of the area. I hoped to capture the fog and some of the great colors that were all around. I'm quite happy with the results; in fact, these might be the best photos from the trip.





It was nearly 8:30 and, as always, my Dad and I were the last to leave camp. Our team was still behind schedule, but only by about 3¹/₂ miles. We could make that up pretty easily.

A Ranger came up the river to our camp just as we were ready to push off. My Dad and I talked with him for a few minutes. We mentioned the note we saw on the picnic table from a previous group thanking all the Park Rangers for keeping everything in such nice condition.



He asked how our trip was going, so we gave a quick summary and noted that we couldn't find the landing for the fire tower trail on Round Pond. He showed us his map and explained where the landing was.





Interestingly, his map was different from ours: his was printed in black (ours was in blue) and had a lot more information on it and many more campsites marked. We mentioned the map differences and

the Ranger was very surprised that we had one of the “old blue maps.” He was under the impression that the Ranger Stations stopped handing out these maps some time ago. Oh well, the river didn’t move, so our blue maps weren’t too bad to navigate by.

Incidentally, the old blue maps are copyright 1987. The new black maps are copyright 1996.

It started to warm up pretty quickly thanks to the bright sun and almost no clouds. I was happy to see that today promised to be another nice day. It’s much easier to enjoy the trip on a nice day

than on a miserable day like Tuesday. Everybody is happier and you don't notice how monotonous a canoe stroke actually is. And of course, photography is more fun on a day like this.

We saw yet another Bald Eagle in a treetop. I pulled out my camera and noticed the sun was almost right behind him. My Dad and I tried to maneuver into a better position to photograph the eagle, but by that time he flew off. We chased him upriver a fair distance. Just as I pulled my camera out again, he flew off again. We gave up.



While paddling, my Dad and I talked a little about the 50-Miler Afoot/Afloat award. To get this you need to cover 50-plus miles (obviously), but you also need to do a small service project. We decided we'd better ask at the Ranger Station at Michaud Farm what we could do. After all, tomorrow was the last day on the water.

It was nearly 11:30 when we got to Michaud Farm. A Park Ranger met us at the shore. I gave her our camping permit

and all that jazz —this is where you sign-out of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Right on shore was proof that Troop 60's Team 2 had been through here earlier. The Ranger told us they went through about three hours ago. We wandered around for a few minutes and decided that this was a good spot to break for



Team 2 left us with an indicator that they already came through Michaud Farm.

lunch. Again we had bagels. Deviled ham, cheese, Spam, peanut butter, Milk Lunch crackers, Fig Newtons and raisins filled the picnic table and our bellies.

After lunch my Dad worked at getting a service project for us. At first the Park Rangers didn't think they had anything available for us to do, but after some pleading they came up with something: cut down and strip four trees for a new ridge post assembly in one of the campsites. My Dad secretly handed me a bag full of "Allagash Wilderness Waterway Junior Ranger" patches. At the end of the trip, we handed these out to the Scouts.

Jeremy had mentioned that Michaud Farm had old logging equipment and buildings from the late 1800s that were



interesting to see. My Dad asked one of the Rangers about this; she said Michaud Farm is where much of the old logging equipment *was*, but there wasn't anything around now. She did point out that just down the river a little ways were some of the old buildings from back then.



We went down river and spotted the shacks on shore, pulled in and climbed up the embankment to see them. Looking at these buildings, they were obviously lived in more recently than the mid- to late-1800s. We found a

number of beer cans, a shirt on a coat hanger and a 1994 newspaper, along with a good bit of other garbage. I'm not even sure these buildings were built in the 1800s. Regardless, it was an interesting little stop.

We reached Allagash Falls a little while later. This is where the 1/4-mile portage and 40-foot waterfall is located. There were a number of spots to get a good view of the waterfall so we all wandered around to see them. Since "a picture is worth a thousand words," look at the photos. Unfortunately, this was the harsh-lighting time of day (about 2:30), and since slide film only has about two stops of latitude, I wasn't able to capture any of these images as well as I would have liked. Coming back later in the day was obviously not an option.



Once I finally finished photographing the falls I made my way back to the boat landing only to find a single canoe and my Dad waiting for me. Everybody else had moved on already.



Common Goldeneye's, like this one, were all along the river.

We found Charlie and Eric pulled in at a campsite, which turned out to be Team 2's. This was the first interaction we had with Team 2 since Monday morning. The rest of Team 1 had forged on to our campsite. We sat there and talked with the Team 2 leaders: Griff, Don, Joe, Andy, Bill and Dennis. Their trip down the river was going well, too. They managed to stay ahead of the bad weather on Monday and Tuesday. We tried to hide just how bitter we were about that. On the upside, they only saw two moose and we saw six; they only saw two Bald Eagles and we saw six or seven. They told us that Sunrise Spuds (a recipe my Dad dug up) weren't well received in their team. We were having the spuds tomorrow morning — maybe we'd like them better.

Eventually we pushed off and headed down to our camp, Big Brook North, not far from here. After my Dad and I pulled into our camp, I noticed everybody had a different attitude. The trip was nearly over, we were on-schedule

(twelve miles to cover tomorrow) and priorities changed for us. Most of the Scouts were working on our service project and preparing dinner wasn't so important. We all had a little extra energy and felt like doing more than necessary. Tonight was the first night we had a campfire.

Ah yes, the campfire. This was a rough time. Prior to this trip, Sherree and I discussed marriage and thought we might give it a shot. But we didn't tell anybody yet. I was worried that, back at home, Sherree and my Mom would get together. Under pressure from



Chris, Garrett and Bryan fell a tree to build a new rain fly ridge post assembly for campers.

The steps leading into our campsite were rebuilt by Team 1's leaders.



Bryan, Matt and Garrett pull the bark off of this ridge post to-be.

my Mom, Sherree would let her know of our plans. Should I talk to my Dad about this while we were out here? Sherre and I thought we should tell our parents together. If I didn't tell my Dad and Sherree told my Mom, that wouldn't be best. And neither would my Dad knowing and not my Mom. This had run through my head all week and I couldn't decide how to handle it; Sherree was thinking the same thing.

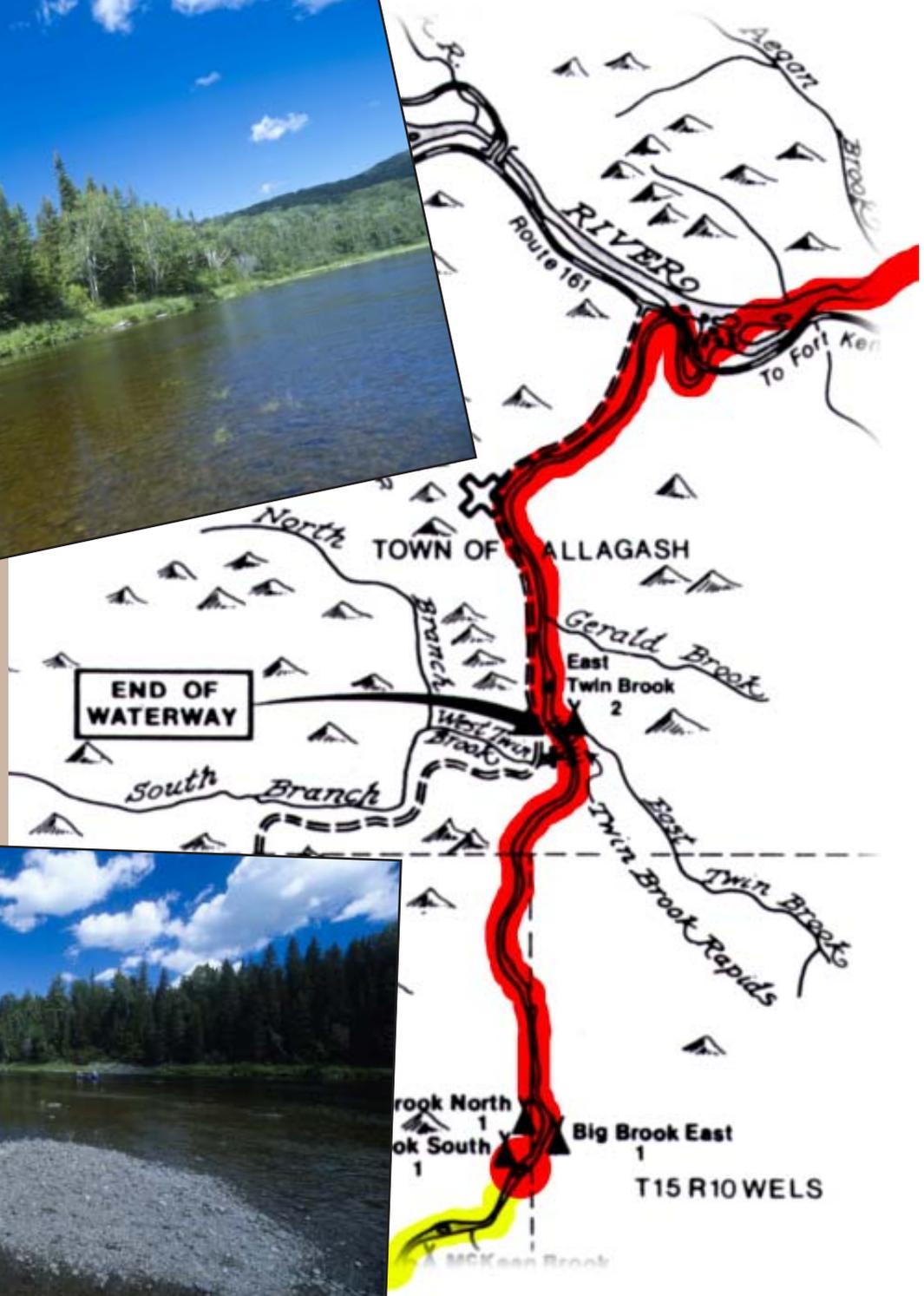
My Dad and I sat watching the fire for a while that night. What to do, what to do? I didn't say anything, and neither did Sherree, until nearly a month later.

Today's distance: 15 miles. Total distance: 54 miles.
Itinerary: 51 miles.





Our last day
on the water.



Friday, July Twenty-First

Ah, the last day. Again, Eric came waking us at 5:30 am; I didn't get up until 6:30. Hey, it's the last day and there are only 12 miles to cover — I can be lazy. It was already looking like a beautiful day.

We had Wednesday's breakfast today: pancakes, Spam and Sunrise Spuds. We had both the Troop stoves fired





up and my Dad and I both pulled out our stoves (for a total of four) to cook breakfast. It quickly became apparent my stove wasn't working right; it wouldn't stay lit. I finally gave up and decided I'd look at it after we were back home. Note for future trips: no one likes Sunrise Spuds.

We packed up and got moving late in the morning: nearly 10:00. We paddled down the river and about 11:30 came to

the end of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. At least, that's what the sign told us. We stopped for a while to do some fishing and exploring. Eventually we decided to have lunch (bagels again) and cleaned up all the leftovers from the week.









We saw Red Mergansers every day along the river. They were very skittish — this was the first time I could get close enough to photograph them.

As usual, my Dad and I were playing Clean-Up. We went very slowly since we knew we were nearly back to camp. And once we hit camp, what was there to do? Nothing. It was about 1:30 in the afternoon when I spotted a boat launch area and sign for Kelly's Diner and Pepsi.

I asked my Dad, "want to get a soda?"

"Sure."

We stopped at the boat launch and I ran up to get two cans of Pepsi. Going into the diner was almost eerie — it was something right out of a Stephen King novel. Everybody immediately spotted me as somebody canoeing the river — I had my life jacket, hat and



sunglasses on, and binoculars and camera around my neck (and let me tell you, that's a sight unto itself). We had some brief conversation about different Scout Troops who had gone through the Allagash Wilderness

Waterway recently. One of the customers said the bridge (our pull-off landmark) was down river about a mile.

So I went back with our sodas. We pushed off and put the paddles in the canoe. And that's pretty much it. We just rode the current all the way to camp. Ok, so we did have to paddle a little just to stay aimed in the right direction and avoid a few rocks, but we didn't put any real effort into it. My Dad leaned into his chair and

pulled out his fishing pole for a while. I put my feet on the gunnels of the canoe and leaned into my chair, with my camera in my lap.

Eventually we passed under the bridge and spotted camp.

We also spied Charlie and Eric coming in from the St. John





River, which runs through Canada. We decided that was a good idea and detoured over there, too. Canada and the St. John River has great fishing, as evidenced by my Dad's Catch-of-the-Day (shown here at life-size — or thereabout).

We got back to the Allagash River and resumed our terribly exhausting Drifting Activities. At around 4:30, we finally made it into camp. So yes, it took us three hours to cover about one mile. We later learned that everybody was worried

something was wrong because we were taking so long to get there — they could see us much of the time while we drifted.

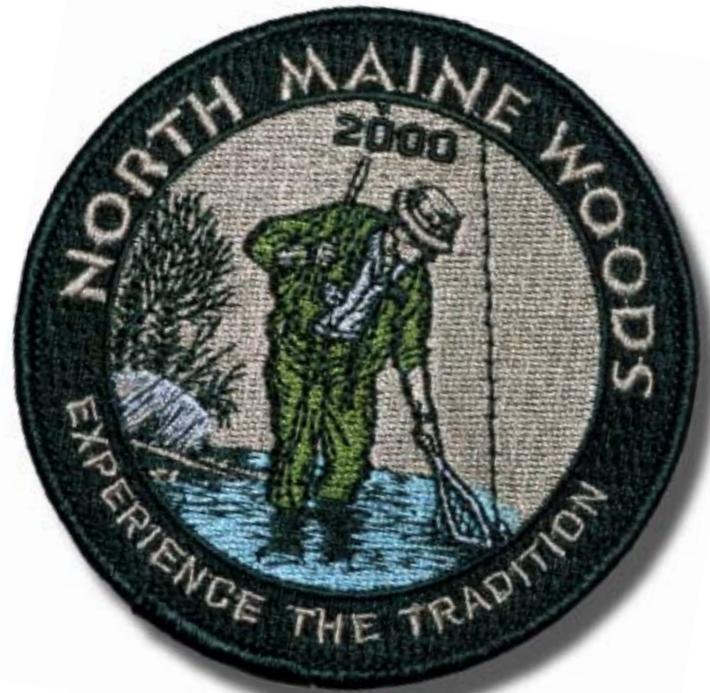


Back at camp, we all talked about the trip. Matt and Dominic pointed out that they went through *every* set of rapids backwards. My Dad and I bragged about how many moose and Bald Eagles we saw.

The Black Flies attacked us here again — most of us had forgotten about them because we didn't see them all week long. For dinner we had macaroni and cheese and ham.

Today's distance: 12 miles. Total distance: 66 miles.





On the long drive home, Nick shows off a new use for his shoes.



Saturday, July Twenty-Second

We got up early, packed, and went to a little restaurant for breakfast. Before leaving for the restaurant I took some group photos to remember the trip (on the next page). For breakfast I had an omelet with lots of stuff in it. Attached to the restaurant was a little store where we all bought souvenirs of some sort; I got a T-shirt, as did most everybody else. We handed out the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Junior Ranger patches, loaded ourselves into the trucks, and headed home.

Nothing much happened on the way home. We were all tired and out of energy and ready to rest.

Casualties: 0.

It was a great adventure.



Early Saturday morning—before the fog burned off—all of Troop 60 (above) and Team 1 (below) pose for the camera.



Most of the meals we ate were very simple and familiar to everyone. Oatmeal, crackers, raisins and hot chocolate are typical of any camping trip. We did have some food that was a bit more original, though.

Traveling Grasshopper Pie

At home, bag together:

- 4 small packages of instant pistachio pudding
- 2 ²/₃ cups of instant dry milk
- 2 teaspoons of mint flavoring

Smash and bag separately: 48 chocolate-filled chocolate sandwich cookies

In camp: add 7 cups of cold water to the pudding bag, seal and knead to mix thoroughly. Chill a few minutes to thicken if possible.

Into each bowl put a layer of cookie crumbs, pudding and more crumbs.

Sunset on the Plains

At home, bag separately:

- 8 packets of Ramen Noodles
- 2 cups of dried tomato slices
- 4 teaspoons of mixed dried spices (chili powder, oregano, cumin, etc.)
- 2 to 4 cups of grated or slivered parmesan cheese

In camp: cook noodles in 1 gallon of water until almost tender. Drain most of the water off; add flavor packets and stir. Spread tomato slices on top. Sprinkle with spices. Cover and cook gently for about 2 minutes, then add cheese. Cover and heat just until cheese melts.

Sunrise Spuds

At home, bag together:

- 6 cups of instant potato flakes
- 12 tablespoons of instant dry milk
- 12 teaspoons of Butter Buds

In a separate bag, pack crumbled, cooked bacon bits (or use chunks of salami from the lunch supply).

In camp: put all the ingredients in a large pot and pour in 6 cups of boiling water. Stir and enjoy!

Apple-Peach Crunch

At home, bag together:

- 6 cups of mixed dried apple and peach slices
- 1 ¹/₂ teaspoons of ground cinnamon
- 6 teaspoons of brown sugar

Blend and pack in a 1-gallon ziplock bag:

- ³/₄ cup of whole wheat flour
- ³/₄ cup of brown sugar
- 1 ¹/₂ teaspoons of ground cinnamon
- ³/₄ teaspoon of ground cloves
- 3 tablespoons of margarine
- 1 ¹/₂ cups of chopped walnuts

In camp: cook fruits in water to cover until they begin to soften. Add 3 to 6 tablespoons water to topping mix in bag, seal and knead to blend. Sprinkle on hot fruit and cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

Aftermath. Postscript. Whatever.

We all got our Polar Bear and 50-Miler Afoot/Afloat award patches. The Troop committee had “AWW 7/00” (short for Allagash Wilderness Waterway, July 2000) stitched onto all of the Polar Bear awards. “AWW” was stitched onto all of the 50-Miler patches. A few years ago some of the Scouts and adults completed 50 miles on the Appalachian Trail. They got 50-miler patches with both “AWW” and “AT” stitched on them. Both patches will hold great memories for everyone and be a one-of-a-kind reminder of the trip.



As noted in the Adirondack Mountains Trip, I wanted a 20mm lens. I got one some time back, and used it extensively on this trip. I’m glad I did, too — it’s a great lens with an interesting and exciting perspective.





I primarily used this lens and my 80-200mm f2.8 (on the tripod) for the whole trip.

I exposed 17 rolls of film: eight rolls of Fuji Velvia, seven rolls of Fuji's (relatively) new Provia 100F, and two rolls of Fuji Sensia II 100. This was my first experience with Provia 100F, and I'm quite thrilled with the results.



Colors are nearly as saturated as Velvia. That is, they are a tad more realistic, not to mention that Provia 100F yields good skin tones, unlike Velvia. Grain is almost undetectable. Provia 100F has become my 100-speed film of choice (bumping Sensia II 100 from the spot). I shot most of the film on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.



A lot of people helped me realize this book. Of course my wife, Sherree, tops that list, as does my Mom. Other notables: Shelly Bloom, Joe Bottiglieri, Sue Fagan, Steve Ford, Bob Inderbitzen and Joe Shea.

