

## **4m Circle Canoe Routes, Portages, Rapids & Campsite Information**

### **SAFETY:**

Where there are no obvious portages, rapids should be always scouted before running or lining canoes. Canoeists should always have government-approved life jackets, spare paddles, and strong lengths of rope. In rough, windy, or cold weather, canoeists should stay close to the shore. Medical aid will usually be far away, so take a good first aid kit. Always give a responsible person the date and place of your departure, a description of your route and the date and location of your exit. Allow for bad weather and advise your contact of any change in your plans prior to leaving. It would be wise to take at least 2 extra days food per week in case of delay. The Ontario Provincial Police detachment nearest to you should be contacted if you are overdue. In the event of trouble stay on the water system, and practice standard survival techniques which should be known by all members of your party.

### **WEATHER:**

This area can experience extreme and rapid changes in weather conditions. Long hours of daylight and low humidity can usually be expected. The average daily temperature from May to September is about 19 C and rainfall is about 7.2 cm per month.

### **WATER LEVELS:**

Due to the variable topography the river and lakes of this route, and those that flow into it, are subject to

seasonal water level fluctuations. Treacherous white water can be found in unexpected places during the spring melt. The same areas may become rocky shallows in late summer. A wet or dry year may also affect the water levels. Plan your trip accordingly.

### **DRINKING WATER:**

No lake or stream is necessarily safe, so always boil your water before using. Some people are adversely affected by a change of drinking water and that can spoil a trip. During periods of heavy rain, water may become turbid, increasing the number of suspended organic particles. This will actually have no effect on the water quality but will require filtering or settling in the pail before using in cooking or drinking.

### **WILDLIFE:**

A variety of wild animals inhabit the area along the route including species such as moose, black bear, wolf, lynx, otter, and birds like duck loon, eagle and much more. Remember, you are the visitor, and these are wild animals and should be respected as such.

### **CANOE ROUTE MAINTENANCE:**

Budget allocations for canoe route maintenance are becoming very difficult to secure. As a result, a none) maintenance cannot be guaranteed. For this reason we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in keeping this route litter free and functional. Please carry out all non-burnable garbage, help cut fallen trees from portage trails,

and inform us of poor conditions such as signage, heavy blowdown areas, and garbage accumulations.

**PLANNING YOUR TRIP:**

Portions of this route are located in unpopulated country and therefore may be far and hard to get to. You are on your own. You must pack all of the provisions, including a good first aid kit, to accommodate you for the entire trip. Bring all essentials, but keep in mind the overall weight, as there are several portages along the route. All of your equipment and provisions need to be carried, at times long distances.

To provide some assistance in planning a trip for the inexperienced canoeist, information is available at libraries, bookstores, and some outfitting stores.

**INQUIRIES:** Further inquiries may be made to:

**MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Gogama Area Office  
P.O. Box 129, Low Ave  
Gogama, Ontario  
POM 1W0  
(705) 894-2000

**ROUTE DESCRIPTION:**

The following information is provided to serve as a reference only. All rapids and white water should be inspected in detail prior to any attempts to chute or run such waters. Remember, all decisions made by you regarding fast water, paddling, uncertain waters,

and routes. are your sole responsibility. Help is not always immediately available.

### **WEST BRANCH ACCESS:**

Dividing Lake is the starting point for the 4M Circle canoe route, off of Highway 144, 2 kilometres north of Highway 560, a gravel road on the west side leads to both an access point and the Dividing Lake Ontario Ranger Camp. The access point is a Pivotal point in the 4M canoe route. Vehicles may be left there.

At the end of the Mesomikenda, the route may be completed in either of 2 ways. By continuing northeast, the route is completed at the Wizard Lake access point. By travelling south the route is completed at its starting point on Dividing Lake.

### **WEST BRANCH:**

#### **DIVIDED LAKE - MESPMIKENDA LAKE**

The first part of the west branch consists of a series of lakes varying in size. The lakes are interconnected via 9 portages and a series of channels of variable depth and current strength.

**DIVIDING LAKE:** Located on Dividing Lake is an Ontario Ranger Camp. During the summer months the camp is occupied by the Rangers. One of their jobs is the maintenance and upkeep of the 4M canoe route. Dividing Lake a small lake with 2 islands. On the southeast shore is an abandoned fire lookout tower. Approximately three kilometres north of the

access point is the west bay which enters the Mollie River. The Mollie River varies in depth and is marshy with a shoreline of alder.

**PORTAGE #1:** - Length-43 metres. P2 begins on the Mollie River and ends at the south end of 3 Duck Lakes. The portage is fairly flat. There are many fallen logs that line the sides of the portage path. However, they present little obstacle while portaging, making this portage easily traversable.

**PORTAGE #2:**

- Length - 43 metres.

P2 begins on the Mollie River and ends at the south end of 3 Duck Lakes. The entrance is located to the left of rapids. The portage is fairly flat. There are many fallen logs that line the sides of the portage path. However, they present little obstacle while portaging, making this portage easily traversable.

**3 DUCK LAKES:**

These lakes are the centre of mineral and mining activity in the Gogama District. In fact" the most northerly of the lakes; has an ore crushing mill in its western arm. Before entering the largest part of the lakes, there are rapids which must be lined. On the last section of the lake in the northeast corner, there is an access road suitable for beach launching in 3 different areas. There is a grassy campsite and the northeast shore, with a sandy entrance, which is large enough to accommodate approximately 10, 6-person tents. At the end of the lake there is an

unmaintained public road where the canoes must be carried over a distance of approximately 10 metres.

### **WEE DUCK LAKE:**

Wee Duck Lake is a very tiny lake, which must be crossed to the far north shore in order to arrive at P3.

### **PORTAGE #3:**

- Length - 326 metres

The start of the portage is marked by a collapsed prospectors bunkhouse. There is room at the beginning for 2, 6-person tents and has a small fire pit. The portage terrain is rough and hilly and could be very swampy depending on seasonal weather conditions. After approximately 100 metres, there is a fork and the portage path continues to the left

At the end of the portage there is a campsite with a fire pit that is suitable to accommodate 4, 6-person tents. The campsite lies on a large rock, which slopes gradually into the water. P3 exits onto Bagsverd Lake.

### **BAGSVERD LAKE:**

At the first narrow of Bagsverd Lake there is a beaver dam, which the canoes must be lifted over. There are 2 campsites on this lake, the first being on the island in the lake's centre. This campsite has room for 3, 6-person tents and also provides 2 fine pits.

The second campsite is on the north shore, at the beginning of Bagsverd Creek. There is room here for 2, 6 person tents and 1, 3-person tent. There are 2 fire pits, and the area is dominated by cedar trees. This area has very good canoe access.

Bagsverd Creek is very winding and passes under the bridge of an un-maintained public road, which is accessible from both highways 560 and 144. The depth varies in the creek and there are 2 beaver dams, which must be cowed.

**PORTAGE #4:**

- Length - 35 metres

Located on the right hand side of the creek, this portage by-pasts a set of rapids. The terrain is very rocky and uneven.

**PORTAGE #5:**

- Length - 54 metres

Also located on the right hand side of Bagaverd Creek, P5 by-passes a set of small waterfalls. This portage is rugged and rocky. When wet, the rocks are very slippery and thus treacherous, especially at the shore. Immediately after P5 there is a campsite on the east band side. It has a fire pit, room for 2, 6-person tents and an ideal swimming area.

**SCHIST LAKE:**

Schist Lake is a medium sized lake featuring many picturesque islands, which are ideal for picnicking. There are 2 private cottages located on this lake.

Also on this lake can be found 3 campsites. The first is on the south shore and is large enough for 2, 6 person and 1, 3-person tents. The second campsite can also be found on a point of land on the south shore. It has a rock entrance, fire pit, room for 1, 3-person and 2, 6 person tents, moss ground cover, and a good swimming area. The third campsite is located on the north shore. It has room for 3, 6 person tents, a fire pit, and a nice swimming area.

#### PORTAGE #6:

- Length - 90 metres

This portage begins at the end of a narrow on Schou Lake. The ground is rocky and hilly with protruding roots and a steep descent. This portage by-passes a small waterfall on the left.

P6 exits onto a creek at the bottom of Schou Lake. It also crosses the Watershed divide. Continuing north from Schou Lake to Minisinakwa Lake, all water flows to the Arctic Ocean. South of this point the water eventually flows to the Atlantic Ocean.

#### **SCHOU LAKE:**

Schou Lake is a medium size lake with a sandy bottom. At the north end, the lake branches off in the south east direction. There are 2 campsites located on the north shore of this section of the lake. The third campsite a located in the north east corner on a large piece of bedrock, which slopes down to the water. The site is large and will hold 5, 6-person tents.



## **PORTAGE #7:**

- Length - 127 metres

P7 is located in the north end of Schou Lake. The portage is narrow and hilly with a wet, marshy section over the last 40 metres. The exit is onto the Somme River, which is very shallow and mucky.

## **WOLF LAKE:**

Wolf Lake is long and winding with many little Web. The first campsite is located on the south shore at the mouth of the lake. This site provides soft mossy ground cover for 3, 6-person tents. The second campsite in Wolf Lake is located on the east shore. It is large and sheltered from the wind, providing room for 3, 6-person tents. A third campsite is located on the northwest shore and has room for 2, 6-person tents.

The Somme River flows out of the north end of Wolf Lake. The Somme River is wide and fairly flat at the beginning, however, there are 3 sets of rapids on the river.

The first set of rapids is approximately 20 metres in length and is easy to moderate in difficulty. The rapids may have to be lined when the water level is low. There is a short piece of calm water between the first and second set of rapids. The second set is located to the right of a large bay. These rapids are approximately 20 metres in length and have a moderate difficulty level. The third set of rapids is approximately 50 metres long and has an easy to moderate difficulty level.

After the 3 set of rapids the Somme River continues to the mouth of the Somme Lake.

### **SOMME LAKE:**

Somme Lake is a flat and wide mid-sized lake, and strong winds may cause rougher waters. A campsite is located on the north shore an acre" from the lake's entrance. This campsite is flat, very shady and surrounded by many fallen logs. There is room for 4, 6-person tents, and there is a fire pit.

### **PORTAGE #8:**

- Length - 40 metres

When approaching P8 a road with 4 culverts comes into view. It is important to paddle through the 2 culverts on the left. Past the culverts, small waterfalls are found on the right. After passing through the culverts, the portage lies immediately on the left. This portage is a short but very rocky with many jagged boulders.

### **NEVILLE LAKE:**

This lake is long and narrow. After P8 there is a short channel to the right, and a small section of fast water must be crossed.

A campsite is located on the island, midway down the lake. This campsite is grassy and large, providing room for 3, 6-person tents. The beachfront is stony and provides good access for canoeing and swimming.

On the east shore of Neville Lake there is a channel, with a small set of rapids that leads to P9.

### **PORTAGE #9:**

- Length - 152 metres

P9 is on the bank to the left, and the entrance is adjacent to many unattended boats. Beyond the rocky entrance, the portage is hilly and steep. Rapids are on the right. At the end of this portage there is a fish sanctuary on Mesomikenda Lake.

### **MESOMIKENDA LAKE:**

The route enters Mesomikenda's west arm. The water level of the lake is artificially regulated by a hydro dam. Many trees were killed by the rising water levels when the dam was first built. This is the reason for the large number of dead heads along the lakeshore.

Shortly after P9 there is a campsite on the west shore. It is very small and exposed to strong winds. This campsite is recommended as an alternate, if the second campsite on Mesomikenda Lake is occupied.

The second campsite is located on an island where the west branch joins the main body of the Mesomikenda Lake. The campsite is very beautiful, with sloping bedrock starting at the campsite and continuing down to the shore. There are also large, flat boulders, exposed in the water approximately 30 metres from the shore. The campsite is large and well sheltered with room for 1, 3-person and 3, 6-person tents. This campsite is ideal for swimming.

From the west branch of Meesomikenda Lake, there is the option to complete the route by travelling south to Dividing Lake, or by continuing to the north east and completing the route at Wizard Lake.

### **MESOMIKENDA LAKE - DIVIDING LAKE:**

Continuing down the southeast arm of the Mesomikenda Lake the waterway is wide and the shore is lined with white birch, red pine, and white pine.

Approximately 12 kilometres from the campsite, located on the island, there is a public access point on the east shore. There is a boat launch and docks located there.

Beyond this point the lake begins to narrow. The route passes by Klondyke Lodge, recognizable by its small cottages and docked motor boats. Immediately past the camp there is a small bridge.

### **PORTAGE #10:**

- length - 15 metres

This portage is located on the east shore and bypasses 2 large beaver dams.

### **PORTAGE #11: - Length - 708 metres**

This portage is located at the southern tip of the Mesomikenda Lake on the west shore. Both ends of this portage are steep and the terrain is rugged.

P11 exits on a small bay on the northeast corner of Dividing Lake. Continuing west, a small stream exists on the main body of Dividing Lake. At this point the route continues to the south, passing Dividing Lake Ontario Ranger Camp, finishing at the access point where it began.

## **MESOMIKENDA LAKE - WIZARD LAKE:**

### **PORTAGE #12:**

- Length - 49 metres

P12 must be taken in order to get over the hydro dam. It is located to the left of the log boom.

The beginning of the portage has a five metre section of small, loose rocks. It then continues over a very steep, smooth rock face. There is an abundance of blueberries and a good swimming area at the end of the portage.

### **PORTAGE #13:**

- Length - 149 metres.

A little further down the stream, on the right hand side, is P13. This portage is very rocky, and the footing treacherous. Approximately 70 metres along the portage there is room for 2, 6-person tents. This portage by-passes rapids on the left.

## **NIAKANH LAKE:**

Makami lake is long and narrow with a sandy bottom and large boulders scattered throughout.

The campsite is on a peninsula on the south shore. It is large and provides room for 4, 6-person tents. Past the campsite there are 3 sets of small rapids. Following this, the route passes under a set of railway tracks.

There is an abandoned building on the south shore at the end of Makami Lake. From this point, it is possible to continue north on Makami River and complete the route at Poplar Point. By turning south, one enters Wizard Lake.

### **WIZARD LAKE:**

Wizard Lake is a long, narrow lake with rail road tracks following its length along the west shore.

Approximately 2/3rds of the way down, the railroad tracks cross the lake. P17 is located here, on the west shore.

### **PORTAGE #17:**

- Length - 26 metres

This portage crosses frequently used railroad tracks. It is simple to cross but one must be aware of related hazards.

The Wizard Lake access point is approximately 1 kilometre south of P17. It is accessible from Highway 144. The access point is easily recognized from the water by a large sandy beach.

By turning north at the end of Makami Lake, one enters the Makami River, and the route is completed at Poplar Point in Gogama.

## **AMI LAKE - POPLAR POINT**

### **PORTAGE #14:**

- Length - 118 metres

P14 is located on the right hand shore. The terrain is very flat and even. Depending on the water Level, one has the option of lining the canoes over the rocks or portaging.

Following P14, one follows the curve in the river to the right. The curve leads directly to P15. To the left is a set of rapids ideal for swimming but impossible to canoe.

### **PORTAGE #15:**

- Length - 229 metres

The entrance to P15 is on a rocky shore. The terrain a very rugged.

The Makami River is very curvy and the water level varies in depth throughout. The canoes must be walked, on several occasions, through very shallow water. 1

### **PORTAGE #16:**

- Length - 20 metres

At the north end of Makami Lake there is a private cottage. This is located where P16 is indicated on the map. Also located here is a short set of fast moving

rapids. No portage is signed on the shore, as it is possible to canoe down the rapids. One may choose to portage around these rapids, depending on water levels and Canoeing ability.

After a bend in the river, past P16, there is a campsite on a steep sandy bank on the left-hand shore. It's a dry upland site providing room for 2, 6-person tents and 1, 3-person tents.

From this campsite there is a 100 metre trail, which leads out to the Gogama Unit road. Following south down this road 300 metres is Bald Rock Walk.

Bald Rock Walk is a hiking trail created in 1994 by the Dividing Lake Ontario Rangers. The terrain is fairly steep, and its length is 2 kilometres. From the top, there is a scenic view of the Gogama area.

After the campsite at the bottom of the trail to Bald Rock Walk, the Makami

passes under Highway 144, and ends at Makami Lake. On the north shore of the lake is Poplar Point where the route may be completed.

## **EAST BRANCH**

### **EAST BRANCH ACCESS:**

The east side of the 4M Canoe Route begins at the Dividing Lake access point. Vehicles may be left there and the route can be completed as a loop.

Approximately 3 kilometres south on Highway 144 is



the Watershed Restaurant, fuel, public phones, and basic supplies are available there.

Canoes should be put in the water on the north side of the culverts on the Dividing Lake access road. This is the Mollie River, which varies in depth and has the occasional large, submerged boulder. After the culverts, the route passes under Highway 144. Immediately after the highway is a spawning bed, which was made by Ontario Rangers in partnership with E.B. Eddy Forest Products in the summer of 1993. Special care should be taken when lining these rapids, so as not to disturb the fish habitat.

There is a small set of rapids on the river. They are easy to chute during high water levels. However, the canoe may have to be lined in shallow water.

### **MOLLIE LAKE:**

Soon after the rapids is Mollie Lake: a medium size lake with a fairly straight shoreline, approximately 3 kilometres in length. On the southeast shore there is a campsite with room for 3, 6-person tents. Further along is another campsite, this one is bigger and more open providing room for 2, 6-person and 2, 3-person tents.

### **PORTAGE #18:**

- Length - 100 metres

On the left is a logjam. Caution should be taken to stay on the right hand shore where the portage can be found. The ground is uneven, and at times marshy. The portage exits onto the Mollie Lake,

which then gets narrow. After a stretch of smooth water, the shore becomes rocky, and the water is fast moving and rough. Care should be taken at this point, depending on the water level, the canoes may have to be lined.

### **PORTAGE #19:**

- Length - 40 metres

The portage is located soon after a sharp bend to the left in the river, and crosses an unmaintained public road at a bridge, which is in poor condition.

The rapids underneath the bridge are impossible to line, and the water is very fast. This makes it vital to stay to the right, where the portage begins. After the portage is the Mollie River, which is narrow, winding and flat

### **PORTAGE #20**

- Length - 1998 metres

This is a very long portage with variable topography. It avoids a series of dangerous rapids. The use of this portage dates back to the days before the railroad ran through Gogama. The former trading post of the Hudson Bay Company at the Mattagami Indian Reserve used this portage to get supplies from the C.P.R. line in Biscotasing.

There are campsites at both ends of the portage. The one at the south end of the portage is large enough to accommodate 3, 6-person tents. Unfortunately, this site is buggy due to its close proximity to an alder thicket. The campsite at the north end of the

portage is located on bedrock, and will hold 2, 6-person tents and 1, 3-person.

Following a narrow opening, the portage begins as wide as a road, and the ground cover consists mostly of blueberry, moss and lichen. After approximately 600 metres, the portage crosses a hydro line, where the path narrows, and becomes hilly and rugged. It is a sharp descent exiting onto the Minisinakwa Lake.

### **MINISINAKWA LAKE:**

Minisinakwa Lake is very large with a rocky shore line and several islands scattered along its length. There are several cottages on the lake.

Approximately 10 kilometres up the Minisinakwa Lake is a campsite on the eastern shore. It is a mid-size site with room for 2, 6-person, and 1, 3-person tents. A sandy beach makes this campsite ideal for swimming. This is the last campsite before Poplar Point.

Poplar Point situated 1 kilometre from Gogama is one of the ending points to the east branch of the 4M. The other option is to continue north along the west shore of the Minisinakwa, meeting up with the west branch, completing the route as a loop and finishing at Dividing Lake.