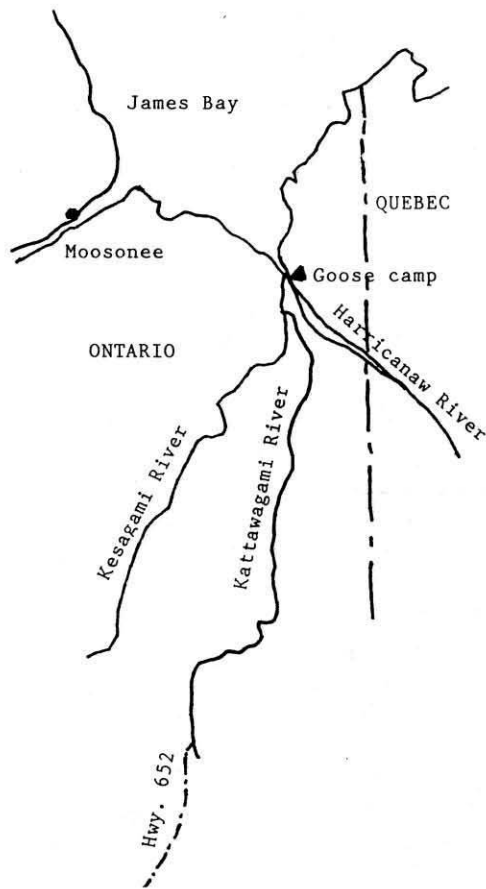


# KATTAWAGAMI RIVER

Article: Paul Hamilton

Photos: Pat and Bryan Buttigieg

It all began with a chance meeting on a beach at the mouth of the White River. With easy confidence the man we met there described a very memorable canoe trip he had taken a few years earlier: few portages (yeah right!), good runnable whitewater, excellent scenery, and little travelled. I vowed then to investigate doing a trip on this river, the Kattawagami, located northeast of Cochrane and flowing north into James Bay. (On the Official Ontario Road Map 1994-1995 it is called the Lawagamau River, but everybody in the area calls it the Kattawagami.) The following July (1993) found Pat and Bryan Buttigieg, Diane, and myself shuttling north from Cochrane to the put-in at the Highway 652 bridge over the Kattawagami.



*Day 1.* It was a nice sunny day to stretch our muscles as we started to get into trip mode. We paddled approximately 25 kilometres, including several rapids. The scenery was rather dreary with stunted black spruce and a large burnt-over area.

*Day 2.* On the water by 8:30 a.m., anxious to get to Bayly Lake. We travelled through several small rapids but the river ran out of current near the lake. Once we got to the lake, which was rather shallow and reedy, a strong headwind came up and we struggled to reach a narrow beach on the north shore where we camped.

*Day 3.* Bayly Lake to the Eddy Hop. A beautiful, partly sunny, hot day, good to run down several swifts and rapids to Pineapple Rapids where we camped. The scenery was improving, more Shield rock and less tangled brush. I hoped that, as the terrain got rockier, we would be able to find better campsites. It poured rain all night and the site being on a slight incline we awoke to a flash flood coming through the tent. My reaction to this event is not fit for publication.

*Day 4.* Eddy Hop to Little Spruce Rapids. Rain! Our compensation for the weather was a series of very nice rapids up to the Triple Tongue where we lifted over the ledges. We had lots of small whitewater from here down to Little Spruce. We pitched our tents in the wild roses beside the rapid. The wildflowers were quite profuse: roses, potentilla, and bear-berry.

*Day 5.* We started the day running down Little Spruce in the rain, then lined with some difficulty the Big Spruce side channel. Next we cheated the Snout Falls by lining a side channel on river right. Very slippery rocks made lining a hazardous endeavor. We ran through a series of exciting R2's, scouting from the boats and an occasional boulder as we went. Our group was glad to reach Adrienne Falls which according to Bryan's extensive research had to be approached with caution. On river left we found a side channel behind an island very close to the brink of the falls. Diane spotted a cairn of logs indicating the portage which was in

