

'Shooting' the Credit

Story and photos
by Michael Schultz

"What sets a canoeing expedition apart is that it purifies you more rapidly and inescapably than any other travel. Travel a thousand miles by train and you are a brute, pedal five hundred on a bicycle and you remain basically bourgeois; paddle a hundred in a canoe and you are already a child of nature."

—Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Early spring gets everyone thinking more about the great outdoors. For canoeing and kayak enthusiasts in Halton Hills, we have our own paddling paradise right in our backyard- the Credit River. With headwaters in the area around Orangeville, the Credit flows over the Niagara Escarpment all the way to Lake Ontario.

Historically, the term "Credit" originated when indigenous peoples would trade with European settlers at the mouth of the Credit...and it was common to trade on 'credit'.

For a short window of time each year, like climbing Mount Everest, the river provides an excellent day or half day of river travel. 'Short' because winter's runoff gradually diminishes by late May making the river level less navigable. The best time to 'shoot the Credit' is in April and May. Hard core paddlers may want to make their expedition closer to the actual melt of winter snow. Rest assured that it will be faster, colder and more dangerous.

To have a safe and successful outing the following advice is worth heeding: Anything north of Inglewood is difficult and should be avoided because the river is narrower, complicated by streamers (those trees and branches that have fallen in the river— a real hazard) and liable to have property restrictions. However, this article will focus on the area between Inglewood to Norval.

I have paddled this route many times and enjoyed it every time with friends and family. The river is also an excellent way to introduce young paddlers to the canoe navigation challenges of a river system. There is fast-flowing water but it is very manageable with nothing too technical. However, you always have to watch for new obstructions brought on by the ravages of winter storms, ice and erosion.

The first measure of preparation is logistics.

You'll need two vehicles most likely or someone to drop you off and pick you up. If you deadhead a car to your final destination, let's say the park in Glen Williams, you can then proceed in a second vehicle to the starting point upstream with your canoe and gear and then do the shuttle upon completion. There are potential parking areas north in Inglewood (community centre), Boston Mills (across from the cemetery), Cheltenham (by the park) Terra Cotta (by the bridge to the east of town), Glen Williams (in the park), or Norval (behind the old Hollywood Tavern).

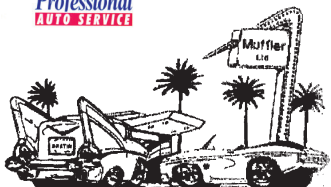
This is not *Deliverance* but you will need to coordinate your transportation logistics. Some light portaging to your entry point should be expected.



Adam Dallimore prepares to paddle along the Credit River

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