



nastawgan

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riviere chamouchouane

Have you canoed the James Bay rivers? Did you find Quebec's Dumoine River had more sheer beauty and enjoyable rapids? Then you are ready for the Riviere Chamouchouane (pronounced shamo-schwayne) in the Lac Saint-Jean area of Quebec.

A group of eight of us canoed this interesting river in early August 1983.

AUGUST 1

Since this was our seventh summer of canoe-tripping together, our organization consisted of only one meeting in June, and the occasional phone call back and forth. It still came as a mild surprise, however, to see seven paddlers with packs and paraphenalia standing in the driveway at 7:00 a.m. prepared to drive 2000 kilometres to northern Quebec.

I had rented four ABS Mohawk canoes from Rockwood Outfitters the previous Saturday and had them on my trailer ready to go. We drove all that day in a car with the trailer and a pickup truck with the gear. By 8:30 pm we were in La Tuque where we took three \$10 rooms in the St. Roch Hotel.

The trip was a revelation to all of us, as no one had been in the hinterland of Quebec before. We were used to seeing junk lying around houses and yards in northern Ontario, but Quebecers are extremely house-proud, and immaculately neat around their homes, farms and gardens. Almost everything we saw in Quebec looked more prosperous than Ontario.

AUGUST 2

We arrived at the gate to the Chibougamau Wildlife Reserve at 11:30 a.m. and paid the park fee of \$5 per day per canoe. Luckily for us we had a teacher of French in the group to act as interpreter. Another revelation for us was the overwhelming number of unilingual French speaking Quebecers we met. Outside of restaurants a working knowledge of French is imperative.

We put in at the bridge where route 167 crosses the river, having left the car at the main gate and the truck at the bridge. (This provided our only sour note on the trip. The truck was broken into while we were on the trip, and some extra equipment was stolen.)

We paddled a short distance and camped on a sandy beach, fished, swam and organized the canoes for the next day, as rapids would begin immediately.

AUGUST 3

A magnificent day, bright, sunny and filled with rapids ranging from grade I to IV. The day included the Four Mile Rapids which was a "picker" through a long rock garden. There was good current and always several choices with no need to backpaddle except to pace the open canoes in the waves in places. The Four Mile Rapids provided the only upset of the trip, resulting from a communication problem caused, no doubt, by a year's lay-off.

Today we met a group of 14 and 15 year old boys in six canoes from a summer camp. These kids belonged to the "gung-ho, faster is better" school of canoeing. As a result we were involved in several rescues over the next few days. One of their canoes had nearly as much duct