



# The Ripple

Winter 2013

Solo trip to Teggeau Lake

Advocacy: Backcountry Campsite Conditions

Dana Starkell's Paddle to the Jungle

Solo Trip Safety

Tie a Tarp! Tie Down your Canoe!



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### Involvement

If you are interested in being part of Paddle Manitoba activities both on and off the water, sign up as a member today. For information on the benefits of membership and how to join see our website at [www.paddle.mb.ca](http://www.paddle.mb.ca) or contact the membership secretary, Eric Gyselman, at [membership@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:membership@paddle.mb.ca).

### Paddle Manitoba

If you are looking for other information on what is happening in the Manitoba paddling community, check out the Paddle Manitoba website at [www.paddle.mb.ca](http://www.paddle.mb.ca) or email us at [info@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:info@paddle.mb.ca).

### Paddlers' Forum

Paddlers are a great source of information for each other! Ask or answer questions of your friends on the water by visiting the forum on our website.

### Other Paddling Connections

Paddle Canada

1-888-252-6292

[www.paddlingcanada.com](http://www.paddlingcanada.com)

Manitoba Whitewater Club

[www.manitobawhitewaterclub.ca](http://www.manitobawhitewaterclub.ca)

Manitoba Paddling Association

[www.mpa.mb.ca](http://www.mpa.mb.ca)

The Ripple is published online quarterly. Each issue is available exclusively to members for approximately one month after it is published, after which time it will be posted on the Paddle Manitoba website for viewing by all.

Submissions for the Ripple are always welcome, including stories, trip reports, photographs, paddling tips, recipes: anything that might be of interest to other paddlers. Send your contributions to [communication@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:communication@paddle.mb.ca).

Submissions are best sent electronically, with text sent as the body of an e-mail or in a Word attachment. Pictures do not have to be related to an article but they should have a caption. Pictures submitted for the newsletter may be used for other Paddle Manitoba purposes as well, such as the next Ripple, the website, or other promotional material.

Submission deadline for the next Ripple is April 15, 2013.

# President's Message

## Farewell and onward!

**B**rrrr, it's cold outside! I hope all of you are keeping warm. Even though it's only January and summer is a few cold months away, it is a good time to start planning the paddling season. Spring brings many changes, and to Paddle Manitoba as well. As of January, I am stepping down as President of Paddle Manitoba in order to pursue opportunities in Ontario.

It has been a pleasure working with Paddle Manitoba and with all our corporate members, the paddling community, and those who volunteered their time with us. Above all, it has been a great pleasure working with all the board members as they have dedicated their time and energy to keeping Paddle Manitoba vibrant.

Over the last year, we have faced a few challenges; we had canoes stolen from La Barriere Park and we had to alter our instruction program due to location changes. However, Paddle Manitoba has seen positive changes as well.

First of all, our website got an amazing makeover by Steve McCullough, and I think everyone will agree that he's done a great job giving it a fresh new look!

Second, our newsletter, The Ripple, also had a facelift with the generous help of Yvonne Kyle and Steve McCullough. I hope you have enjoyed the new layout and the articles written by people in the local paddling community.

Thirdly, we branched out more into the paddling community by participating in public events such as

National Canoe Day and The Don Starkell Flotilla. Both were great events and a big thank you goes out to all those who came out to these events.

Paddle Manitoba continues to struggle to remain relevant and active. As a small group, we count on our members to contribute so that we can continue to promote wilderness and recreational paddling in Manitoba. As such, I am putting a call out to our members for volunteers who are able and willing to help out us over the next year.

Our members make the group and without members, Paddle Manitoba would not be able to run! If you have ideas of how Paddle Manitoba can improve and have ideas of what you would like to see happen this year, please contact us or come out to our events this year and show your support.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President of Paddle Manitoba. I wish all the best to our new and returning board members and to all our members. Good luck in the up-coming months. I hope that everybody has an excellent paddling season in 2013.

Happy Paddling!  
Kim Palmquist

# Editor's Message

## Winter wonderland

I am kind of ambivalent about winter. I like to skate and snowshoe but only make the effort once or twice a year. I can't ski, although I often think I would like to take it up. I always do at least one camp in the winter, encouraging the Scouts I usually take with me to sleep in a shelter outside while I stay warm in the cabin. Walking my 'wooly' winter dogs leaves me quite invigorated, but I do get annoyed with having to put on the extra layers to do so. And while I much prefer winter cold to summer heat, I still manage to use frigid temperatures as a good excuse to curl up inside with a Bailey's-laced hot chocolate and a good book.

What I am completely convinced of though is that winter is stunningly beautiful. A bright blue sky and the sun sparkling on new-fallen snow is a scene that rivals in every way the best summer storms and the most gorgeous of sunsets across the lake. Even a wicked whipping wind swirling snow and creating dangerous wind-chills and treacherous driving is a fantastic thing to see. What a gift nature is!

Winter is definitely good for giving us time to plan for summer. Paddlers will be looking out on the snow and seeing the water that it will become – there may be some sporty rivers to travel in the spring. Back county permits probably won't be needed this May as Christine Mazur tells us they were last year. If you're staying inside anyways, why

not take a few minutes to review the knots you'll need to put up your tarp when the rain comes down on your summer campsite. 'What Knot' shows you how. Certainly winter is a time to dream. Maybe you won't make it to the Amazon like Dana Starkell, but where will your paddle take you?

So go outside and play this winter. If nothing else, it will keep you in shape for summer.

Yvonne Kyle  
Editor



Gandalf (on the left) and Shapiro. Though senior citizens in dog years, they still like to get out for a romp if someone will bundle up and take them. We used to go dog-mushing but neither they nor I were ever very good at it and we have abandoned the pursuit.

# Solo to Teggau Lake

by Warren Paulson

Teggau Lake has been on my to-do list since I was a kid and first started canoe tripping. When I was about 14, I picked up every MNR canoe trip guide I could for the Kenora and Rainy River Districts, and pored over them, looking for highlights. Old mine sites, pictographs, and memorable lakes were all mapped for future trips. Teggau, located south-west of Vermillion Bay, was renowned for its three hundred foot cliffs. Over the years, I paddled most lakes between Dryden, Kenora and Nestor Falls, but somehow never got around to Teggau. Last fall I decided it was time. This was to be a solo trip, a ritual I try to enact annually.

I started at Vermillion Bay Lodge, just south of the town. I'd made arrangements with the owner to park my car there for the week for a modest fee. Gordon was quiet and helpful, though a little quizzical of my adventure. We chatted for a while, but I was anxious to get going. It was mid-morning, and there was a substantial body of open water to cross. It was flat now, and I wanted to take advantage of that.

Eagle Lake is a fisherman's paradise. There is no

shortage of boats travelling up and down, looking for a better fishing spot. It also has some large open stretches. I had to skirt along the edge of Vermillion Bay, then down the West Arm. It stayed calm all day, though being early September, I stayed close to the shore and made as few crossings as possible.

While paddling, I scoured the shoreline for campsites. I would be doubling back on this trip, so wanted to find something close to the end-point for my last night. There weren't many.

I made it most of the way down the West Arm on the first day, and found a large campsite on the south shore. The next day I would be heading to Teggau Lake, one short portage south. The plan was to get up

at 6:00 each day and paddle in the mornings before the wind came up. So I was on the water, paddling through fog before all but the staunchest fishermen were out of bed.

Portages in this part of the world are easy to find: just look for the boat cache. Moreover, thanks to snowmobilers, camp owners and the Friends of Rushing River Park, portages in this region are always in remarkably good shape. On most trips, if







This is the south end of the portage, at Teggau Lake. A recent forest fire ends at the boundary to the lake. (That is my happy face.)

I'm unsure, I can look at a map and say: "this would be a good place to put a portage," and I'll find one there, thoroughly brushed and marked with a pile of boats.

At the south end of the portage, I put in to a long narrow bay, bordered by high hills, that leads into Teggau Lake proper. It is here that one must exercise a bit of caution. The towering cliffs of Teggau Lake are on the right-hand side as you enter the lake. They stretch for perhaps a kilometre. On the left-side of the entrance is a smaller cliff. If it were windy, the waves would happily bounce back and forth, piling up canoe-eating haystacks, and leaving the hapless paddler with few places to get to shore. Luckily, there was no wind upon my arrival.

I was able to paddle the length of the cliff, craning my neck as I went. As one would expect, there are pictographs at the northernmost part of the cliffs. When not looking up at the cliffs, one is tempted to look down into the water. Teggau Lake is rumoured to be 600 feet deep. There is apparently a bush plane at the bottom of it that crashed years ago. No one even

bothered to plumb the depths to look for it. Like many lakes in the area, it is crystal clear. Paddling alone over such depths is a little creepy.

The lake looks like a big round crater, but the shoreline does jut out a bit just south of the cliffs. Here I found a rustic campsite. Figuring it might be the only one on the lake, I camped. I spent the next day exploring the cliffs. At the north end of the cliffs there is a pile of rubble that can be easily climbed to get to the top.

Moving on, I headed to my second destination, Point Lake. Point Lake runs east to west, and lies just north of Dryberry Lake. You can actually paddle to it from Dryberry without portaging. The map showed that it would have some

good cliffs as well.

I headed out, and paddled around the point, following the west shore. Not a hundred metres from my rustic little campsite, I found a large flat campsite, the remains of a hunting camp. My camp was prettier, I reasoned, as I paddled past. Very close to the southern exit of the lake, I found what looked like another campsite. I got out to explore and found



The cliffs from a distance. It's hard to do them justice.



My canoe, tied to shore while I climb to the top.

a trail, about a kilometre long, heading west to Teggau Creek. Something for a future trip, perhaps. There is also a very pretty outpost camp right at the southernmost tip of the lake.

The next several kilometres were the prettiest of the trip. The hills in the unnamed lake south of Teggau are smaller, but they are not dwarfed by the large open water that is Teggau. I had a little trouble finding the portage, but when I did, it proved to be well-travelled and clear. The next portage, into Point Lake starts on a beach and follows a creek-bed with high cliffs on one side. It is worth the paddle just for this walk. As I had hoped, Point Lake has some great hills.

I would make my camp on a small island a little ways down the lake. This would be the furthest point on my trip. If it weren't for the fact that my car was back in Vermillion Bay, I could have paddled the length of Dryberry Lake and

thumbed a ride to my Dad's place in Sioux Narrows.

The paddle back was a little less eventful, having just covered that ground. Next time I will plan a loop. Still, I was able to have a second look at the great hills and clear water along the way.

I arrived back at Vermillion Bay Lodge on the assigned day. I had been blessed with fine weather the whole trip. In fact most days were around 30 degrees, perfect for afternoon hammocking with a good book and a wee dram.

If you haven't paddled to Teggau Lake, you should. The cliffs are magnificent, and the water is clear. You will see a few people and a few cabins, but for the most part you will be alone in the wilderness.



Looking for the portage into Point Lake. It's actually behind the canoe, just left of the rock outcrop on the far shore.



# Solo Trip Safety

by Warren Paulson

A couple of weeks after I returned home from my own fall solo trip, I was invited by a friend to take a short paddle to nearby Batchewaung Lake, an entry point into Quetico Park. It was to be a working paddle. It turns out that a solo paddler trying to cross the lake the day before had swamped his canoe and nearly died of hypothermia. After several hours in the water, he had drifted to shore where he was found by some other paddlers, and flown out. Doug and I were heading back to recover the man's canoe and as much gear as we could find.

This was eerily like my own recent trip: an experienced solo paddler in his greying years paddling in the fall. That same week, a couple in

*It was at this point that I began to ask myself if things would have turned out differently for me.*

their fifties – experienced paddlers – drowned near Ely Minnesota under very similar circumstances. It made me think of the things he and I did differently that resulted in me paddling out, while he was flown out.

Batchewaung Lake is not large. It is about three kilometres north to south, and five kilometres east to west. There are a few islands. The paddler was heading straight across the lake to the portage into

Nym Lake where he would finish his trip. He was saving very little time by not following the shoreline.

Three kilometres doesn't sound like much, but for a solo paddler, that is 30 minutes of exposure to changing weather. It is also a very long swim. When he left the south shore, it was sunny and calm. The water was about 12 degrees. When he tipped, somewhere in the middle of the lake, he was a long way from shore. The wind was stronger, and it was getting dark. There wasn't much for him to do but float to shore.

We quickly found his canoe, based on the description we'd been given. But we spent a good hour paddling the shoreline trying to find his gear. It was at this point that I began to ask myself if things would have turned out differently for me. I think they would have.

There are a few things I do religiously when I paddle solo:

1. I tie down my gear. Guidebooks will tell you that this helps your canoe float if you swamp it, so you can more easily bail it out and get going. I've never tested this, but what it does do is ensure you don't lose your gear if you tip. In all my canoes I install two small ropes along the sides that can easily be used for tying down the gear. Even clipping a pack strap around a thwart will keep it in your canoe if you tip. When paddling tandem, I tie-down my packs before any crossing, or in bad weather. But when paddling



solo, I do it every time I hit the water. We found this paddler's canoe pack with his boat, and some other shrapnel along the shore, but we never did find his day pack, which included his ID and car keys.

2. I don't do crossings. Okay, sometimes I do. But, if they can be avoided, I avoid them. When I must do a crossing, I do so deliberately. Can I island-hop? Which way will the wind blow me if I swamp? This chap could have paddled along the shore. It would have been more scenic, much safer, and in this case, not much further.

3. I employ multiple layers of waterproofing for my gear. When we found the canoe pack, most of the stuff in it had been rendered useless from the hours of immersion. His first aid kit (which could have come in handy) was loosely wrapped inside a plastic grocery bag. Good for rain, maybe, but not for hours of bobbing in the waves. His sleeping bag was sopping wet, and would have been useless for recovering from hypothermia. Anything that shouldn't get wet I put in a dry bag. This is further put in a pack that is either waterproof itself, or lined with a waterproof liner. Stuff that REALLY shouldn't get wet, like my emergency radio, are often inside waterproof boxes inside drybags. It might sound like overkill, but it wouldn't if you'd seen this guy's pack.

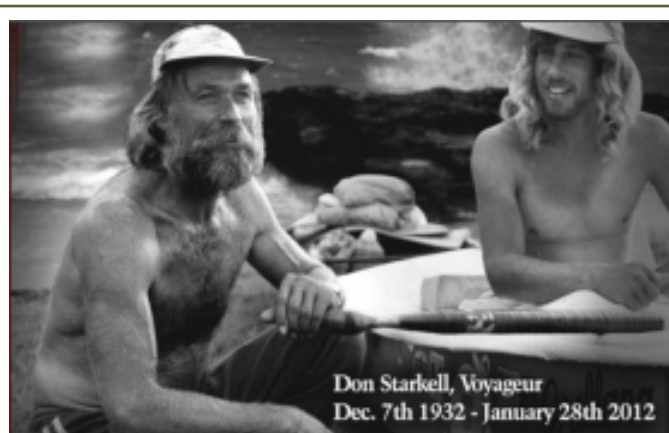
4. I try to carry communications equipment. I know, the Voyageurs didn't, but they didn't have a choice, and they paddled in groups. Telling people when you plan on finishing your trip is not enough. If you get injured on Day One, it could be a while before they miss you. In my case, I carry an amateur radio that also serves as a marine radio and weather radio. (Note that you won't have much luck with marine radio, except on larger lakes like Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods or Lake Winnipeg). Spot devices are good for emergencies. If you are using a cell phone for emergencies, check the coverage beforehand.

5. I give myself lots of time. When I map-out a solo trip, I plan on paddling about half as far as I know I can. This gives me plenty of time to hunker down if it

gets windy, without worrying that I might not make it out in time. A lot of mishaps happen on the last day of a trip. Our paddler was rushing to get out on schedule, and may have been paddling longer and later than normal.

If he had followed any of these five rules, his trip would have ended far differently. It was sheer luck that he survived; the odds of another group of paddlers passing that point at that time of year are frighteningly slim.

Solo canoe tripping is a great experience when you're ready for it. But don't make your first solo trip your last.



The First Don Starkell Flotilla, celebrating the life and adventures of the late great Manitoba paddler, took place in the summer of 2012 (see the Fall 2012 Ripple for details.) A follow up event – 2013 Paddle to the Park - is tentatively planned for Sunday, July 21st.

Organizers hope to have as many as 100 watercraft paddle down the Red River, where the Starkell's journey to the Amazon began, to raise awareness of recreational canoeing.

Funds raised as part of the event will be used in part to erect a statue commemorating Don Starkell and representing Canadians' spirit of adventure and fortitude. Watch the Paddle Manitoba website ([paddle.mb.ca](http://paddle.mb.ca)) for details as the plans unfold.

In December, Chris Randall, Paddle Manitoba Vice President, wrote to Manitoba Parks to raise concerns over the cleanliness of some of the back country canoe routes. Chris's letter is reprinted here. The reply he received from the Parks Branch follows.

As users of the back country, it is incumbent upon paddlers to take care of the natural places we so love. Clean up not just your own messes, but as much as you are able, clean up others' messes as well, striving always to leave each site you visit a little better when you go from it than it was when you arrived. If there is a call for volunteers to come out en masse to improve the appearance and healthiness of our great waterways, raise your hand and get involved. It will take a combined effort, hopefully with the leadership of the government, to make a difference.

Mr B Bentham  
Director  
Parks & Natural Areas Branch  
Box 22 200 Saul teaux Crescent  
Winnipeg  
MB R3J 3W3

December 12, 2012

Dear Mr Bentham

Paddle Manitoba is a not-for-profit organisation that develops and promotes safe paddle sports in Manitoba. We are an advocate for the interest of paddlers, protecting their right to safe and enjoyable access of our natural environment.

I am writing to express our disappointment at the condition of many of the back country campsites and lake shorelines within the provincial parks. Each year we organize camping trips within the parks and our members have commented on the levels of garbage, poor sanitation and general abuse of the designated sites.

Although we appreciate that many sites see very heavy levels of use, it now appears that in many areas litter has become part of the landscape, beverage cans and bottles are found amongst the bush, firepits contain burnt and discarded trash and fishing tackle can be found along the shoreline. Used toilet paper and other sanitary items are commonly found tucked amongst the vegetation or hidden under logs. Where a pit toilet is provided it is often so disgusting that, unsurprisingly, many people are reluctant to use it, opting to dig a cat hole



instead or leave waste and paper on the ground nearby. At many sites we have seen makeshift furniture nailed to trees and some sites have now been stripped of all fallen wood, with many trees missing their lower branches which have been crudely removed for firewood.

The methods currently used to deter park users from leaving garbage and misusing backcountry sites are evidently ineffective. The leaflets and information provided on your website are being overlooked or ignored. Enforcement of existing regulations appears to be non-existent and while we understand the difficulties associated with providing resources to patrol backcountry sites we do not feel that the status quo is sustainable.

We strongly feel that Manitoba Conservation needs to take action in partnership with user groups and trade organisations to improve how it educates backcountry users on environmental issues. This should be combined with better enforcement of existing legislation and the introduction of new regulations such as the prohibition of cans and bottles in backcountry lakes which would make enforcement both simpler and cheaper.

If Manitoba wishes to claim the title of "the parks province" it should not allow the current situation to continue. A more pro-active approach to managing backcountry users must be adopted or the situation is likely to deteriorate further as the number of potential users grows. Garbage left at sites encourages others to leave more and has also been shown to lead to other offences. One effect of poor campsite condition has already been to push many of members to seek more pleasant camping outside the parks or even outside the province.

We look forward to receiving your proposals to tackle this problem and would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the province and other user groups to raise the profile of low impact camping with park users. Perhaps one way to make a start would be for Parks Branch to co-ordinate participation in the 2013 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup (<http://www.shorelinecleanup.ca/>) in some of the parks.

Sincerely,  
Chris Randall  
Vice-President  
Paddle Manitoba



January 14, 2013

Mr. Chris Randall  
Vice-President  
Paddle Manitoba

Dear Mr. Randall:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Paddle Manitoba regarding the conditions of backcountry campsites within Manitoba provincial parks.

Backcountry areas within provincial parks are desired locations for many, and the increased use of these areas has resulted in some negative effects. Staff travel these areas to provide maintenance as well as for enforcement purposes. Unfortunately, we have few staff which we can assign to this and our capacity for this work is quite limited.

As we have recognized this problem over the past few years, we have undertaken some projects that will help us to address the challenge in the long term. We have developed a categorization system for canoe routes in provincial parks that will assist in determining the appropriate level of development for campsites on different routes. Over the coming years you can expect to see improved facilities along some of the more popular routes. The backcountry campsite inventory, referenced in *TomorrowNow*, is another initiative that, in time, will help us manage use along the very popular routes like the Bird River.

We have also been able to undertake some improvements to canoe routes with partnering organizations. This past summer our staff worked together with the Wilderness Committee to assist in clean-up and maintenance of the Bird River canoe route, with the hopes to continue this effort in the coming year. It proved to be a very successful venture for all parties. Building on our recent experience with other partners, I welcome your suggestions to assist in educating users or implementing programs such as the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. I will ask my staff to contact Paddle Manitoba to more fully explore these opportunities.

Thank you for your comments and I look forward to working together to help make Manitoba's provincial parks a desired destination for all.

Yours truly,

Barry Bentham  
Director of Parks and Natural Areas

cc: Sue Atkin; Ashleigh Hall; Mitch Walker; Ken Schykulski

**Manitoba**  
spirited energy



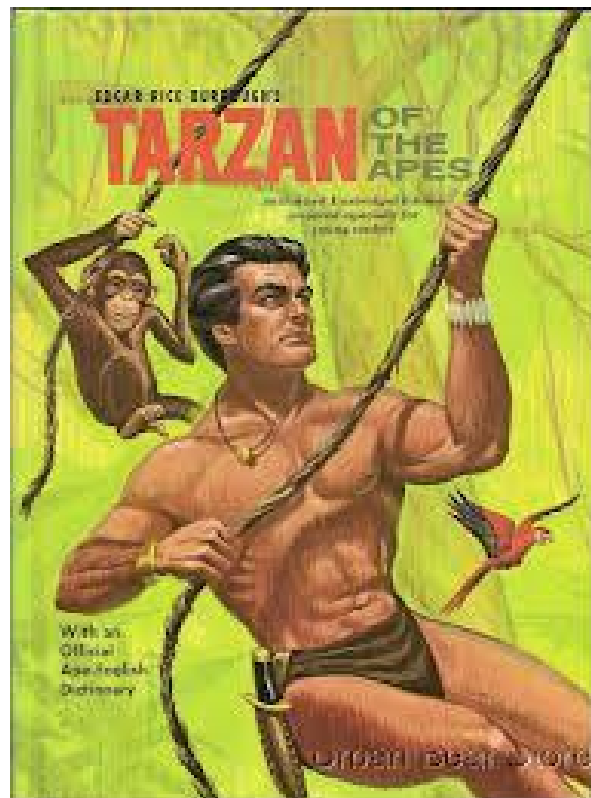
# Paddle to the Jungle

by Dana Starkell

Winnipeg. 1970. I was nine years old and had just been given my first allowance; a whole dollar from my dad. What to do? I headed down to Ebbling Pharmacy at the corner of Watt and Kimberly in East Kildonan. (Amazingly, the store is still there today.) My first thought was an Oh Henry! chocolate bar. I think I could have gotten ten of them at the time. I walked along the candy aisles considering different options. Then I started to wonder, "what else could I get that would last?" A chocolate bar would be gone today with nothing left to show for my allowance. There was always a good selection of novelties at the back of the store so I headed over to see what I could find. I wandered around for a few minutes until something caught my eye - a small green book with the title "Tarzan". Tarzan was my favorite TV show at the time and here was the entire story! When I looked inside and found that it included a significant dictionary of words used to talk with the apes, I was convinced

that it was perfect. I bought the book, took it home, and started reading. It was the first book that really captured my imagination and I reread it many times, even read while on the playground at school.

After reading Tarzan, all kinds of ideas for adventures began floating around in my head. My number one idea was to walk to the jungle and live like Tarzan. I had learned a bit of geography from collecting stamps and knew that there was jungle connected to Canada if you went far enough south. I had lots of energy for walking so it seemed like a good idea. I remember telling my dad about my plans and he never once questioned the possibility. Instead, he brought out the globe and asked me a few questions: How long did I think it would take to walk there? What would I do for food? How would I get across the rivers? I answered: "Two weeks. Raid gardens. I would simply swim across the rivers." While my answers didn't add up, my dad gave me the sense that it was something I could do if I really





agreed to allow me to bring an acoustic guitar along so I could maintain my practice. My brother brought along his electronic books to study as well. When we left Winnipeg on June 1st, 1980, my dad joked "All aboard for the Amazon Hotel." I really had no idea of the magnitude of what he must have known we were up against to travel 12,000 miles to the mouth of the Amazon River. I had never even seen the ocean, but we would eventually face 6,000 miles of coastline.

The other day, I met a gentleman who had recently received a ceremonial

wanted to try. For that reason, the idea of walking to the jungle stayed in my mind.

A year or so later, my dad asked me what I would think about taking a canoe trip to the jungle? We would head south and eventually paddle to where there was no winter. We'd see parrots, monkeys, and crocodiles. Would that be something I would like to do? My dad had never told me about a planned event without it happening so I knew it required serious thought. In a moment, I believed that this would happen and I told him that I wanted to do it. I imagined swinging on tropical vines, giant snakes and monkeys everywhere. "When", I asked. "Ten years from now when you and your brother are out of school." It seemed a hundred years away, but I could wait.

By the end of grade six I had told many of my friends about my upcoming adventure. I don't think too many of them believed me and that made the trip seem all the more special. My gym teacher did mention to my class my plans to canoe to the Amazon with my brother and dad and then the trip took on a new sense of reality for me and my friends at school.

Ten years went by. Never once did I doubt we would make this journey. By that time I was involved with a rock band and had become a decent guitarist. My dad

blow-gun from Brazil. He told me about an event he had read in Paddle to the Amazon about the refrigerator repairman we had met in Cucui. I remember that day like it happened yesterday. At the time my dad and I had been denied entry to Brazil. At the border we pleaded our case to the repairman and he somehow convinced the soldiers to let us continue our journey. We met our helpful friend again a month later when we arrived in his home town of Manaus. Before we left him he gave us a gift of Manioca cereal with another present at the bottom that turned out to be a painting he had made. Thank you Laszlo.

My son David was born in 2010 and my dad loved him as any grandfather would. By the time





Davey was nearly two, he would reach out his arms and my dad would give him a giant hug and a kiss on the head. My dad knew that he didn't have many days left in this world and told me not to worry, that the canoe is moving forward. Something we'd tell each other to keep our spirits up when we were trapped on shore by the ocean breakers. We'd drag our canoe two feet down the beach and take satisfaction in the fact that we were a little nearer to our goal.

My dad passed away a year ago, on Jan 28, 2012. Davey is nearly three now and I often wonder where his imagination will take him and what I'll do to help him get there.



## Paddle Manitoba

Manitoba has just published a consultation document about how they plan to manage the Provincial Parks.

Paddle Manitoba needs to be part of this consultation if we want to see our paddling opportunities protected. It would be only too easy for paddlers to be overlooked in favour of groups with more economic power in the park system. We need your help in writing a Paddle Manitoba response to the consultation.

If you think you have some time to help develop a reply over the next couple of months, please contact Chris Randall at [president@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:president@paddle.mb.ca) for more information on how we can make sure that paddlers' voices are heard.

You can read the parks strategy consultation document online:  
[www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parksstrategy/pdf/parks\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/parksstrategy/pdf/parks_strategy.pdf)

# The Winnipeg River

by Dusty Molinski

Unrecognizable to those who came before us because of the drastic change caused by its harnessing for hydroelectric power, the Winnipeg River is truly today a river of legend. Historical books, journals and maps tell of magnificent falls, challenging rapids, rocky outcrops and shores of pine and spruce. It is hard to imagine the places today, where there is nothing more than ripples on the surface of the water, were at one time these splendid falls in photos and journals, as their names still suggest. Perhaps one day the river will be returned to its former wild and free glory, but until then we can only look back in photos in awe and wonder.



Manitoba Archives. Winnipeg River Collection. N20173.  
Winnipeg River rapids near Lake Winnipeg. C1930.

Back Paddle is a new series looking back at images of people, places and equipment related to paddling in Manitoba from the year 2000 and earlier. If you have images you are interested in sharing of paddling in days past, please send them, along with a brief background, to [dustymolinski@gmail.com](mailto:dustymolinski@gmail.com).

# Permit to Paddle

by Christine Mazur

When Manitoba Conservation restricted the backcountry in the dry summer of 2011, there were many disappointed paddlers in Manitoba, not the least of whom were those registered for Nature Manitoba's Mantario Summer Program. Volunteers guide groups into the cabin on Mantario Lake, in the heart of the Whiteshell wilderness zone.

When Conservation made the call to restrict backcountry travel this past May, I was ready for disappointment again. That is why I was pinching myself on the 2012 May Long weekend as I paddled through the Whiteshell to the Mantario Cabin with three good friends - and a 'backcountry travel permit' secure in a Ziploc bag, ready to show anyone who might stop us.

My friends and I had booked the Cabin weeks before the May Long and were really looking forward to our little escape from civilization. We were crushed when the travel ban was announced mere days before our departure.

Curious, I read and re-read the Conservation media release for May 14, 2012, and my eye caught the phrase:

Backcountry travel is allowed by permit only.  
(Fire Update Report, May 14, 2012)

Permit, eh?

Aha, but:

1. Lodges - access permitted to main lodge. Travel permits will be required to use out camps.

Does the Mantario Cabin qualify as a lodge, I wondered?

And furthermore:

2. Outfitters - Travel permits may be issued at the discretion of the local Natural Resources Officer.

And the catch-all:

3. Any travel permits required will be at the discretion of the local Natural Resource Officer.

I phoned and spoke to someone at the main office in the city. No, I was told, absolutely no one may go into the backcountry without a permit. Who could get a permit? No one. Except maybe for fishing lodges taking guests out.

Well, I thought, we are paying guests of Nature Manitoba's Mantario Cabin. The not-for-profit organization loses sorely-needed revenues every time such travel restrictions prevent users from accessing the facility. Granted, it's not wise to be out in tinder dry forest but the nature of our travel was such that we were NOT planning to drive spark-





C. Mazur's Tremblay on the long island across from Mantario Island.

causing ATVs or other motorized vehicles through dry grasses, nor were we planning to light campfires in the woods.

Not willing to give up, I phoned the Conservation office closest to the Whiteshell and left a message asking how one could get a backcountry permit, explaining that our destination would be the not-for-profit Mantario Cabin.

We had almost given up when a few days later the Conservation office contacted a Nature Manitoba representative offering to grant us a permit to access the cabin. All I had to do was call and give our travel plan including put-in, destination and route. Then sign and return a faxed form and keep a copy on me during the whole trip in case we were stopped.

Rain loomed large as we put in at Big Whiteshell Lake. Barely half way across, the heavens opened and the wind blasted us. Sterning, I fought against my overpowering paddling partner who had the size and strength of three voyageurs. We pulled to shore to wait out the rain, but realized this was wishful thinking. So we continued towards the cabin. At the end of each portage we hid under tented canoes to rest and drink hot tea from thermoses. The dark cloud mass was firmly parked above us all day and we wondered if we would ever see the

sun again. It didn't help that my cedar-strip and canvass Tremblay absorbed water like a sponge. I felt a tiny pang of guilt when my voyageur-like friend carried my little red tank on every portage but he insisted he didn't mind.

An immediate sauna session was the only way to dry off and warm up upon arrival, all of us soaked and shivering in jackets, toques and mitts.

The next two days were gloriously sunny, albeit incredibly windy, but due to our permit's restrictions, we couldn't go exploring on land or beyond the shores of Mantario Lake. Not a problem, really, since we had busy agendas of resting, fishing, and exploring the islands and shores within the lake.

On way out from the cabin, we saw how thirsty the forest was. After absorbing all that rain so quickly, the portages were barely damp. When we arrived home we learned that the travel ban had been lifted that very day:

Good general rainfall in eastern Manitoba has made it possible to remove the travel and fire restrictions in provincial parks and crown land.

(Fire Update Report May 21, 2012)

Perfect timing!



Approaching the Mantario Island sauna

# Tying a Tarp

by Eric Gyselman

I decided to change the format for this installment of What Knot. Rather than concentrate on a single knot, I will discuss the knots I use to accomplish a common canoeing task, setting up a tarp.

The tarp has become a critical bit of kit for most canoeists. Even if heading out for a couple of hours, a tarp is a good piece of emergency gear to have in the bottom of the pack 'just in case'. Stuff happens! It need not be high tech or expensive. A blue econo version will do just fine to start. The main point is it will keep you and the weather separated.

I suppose we all dream of spending a lazy couple of hours setting up camp on a perfect warm sunny afternoon. If this were true, setting up a tarp would be a relaxing affair. However, life is rarely so obliging. Often as not, the tarp is going up because the wind and rain have started and, yes, we should have come off the water 20 minutes ago. It is important, during these particularly trying times, to know how to quickly and efficiently get the tarp rigged and you and your gear under it. This is not the time to try to remember knots. Practice in the good weather so rigging becomes automatic in the bad.

I suspect three lifetimes would be needed to figure out all the ways to rig a tarp. Here, I'm going to look at the classic ridgeline/stake-the corners-out method. It is a good starting point. The knots for this setup will serve you well for others. Most important, these are the knots I use. I like them. But lots of others work just as well. The key is to experiment. I

will start a thread on the Paddle Manitoba Forum so you can leave comments, suggestions, and ideas. We can all learn from the experience of others.

Setting up a classic ridgeline tarp is divided into 3 basic steps: 1) tying the ridgeline, 2) suspending the tarp from the ridgeline, and 3) tying the corners and edges to some convenient (or not so convenient) stake, tree, or rock. Each of these steps uses a specific knot because the needs are different.

## The Ridgeline

The ridgeline is a cord tied between 2 trees. The tarp is hung from this line. Personally, I prefer hanging the tarp from a ridgeline rather than tying the tarp edges directly to the trees. I think this reduces strain on the tarp and allows for adjustment of the tension as conditions change.

I use two different knots for the ridgeline: a 'Siberian hitch' to tie the initial end to a tree and a 'ridgeline hitch' to pull the line tight and secure it. Note that 'ridgeline hitch' is my name. It is referred to commonly but I have not found any specific name. If you know the name, please let me know. I came across these hitches in videos by Ray Mears, the British survival instructor. I tried them and they work well for me. Both are simple and effective. In fact, they are variations on the same knot. They self tighten as strain is put on them but they both have a slip loop for easy untying.

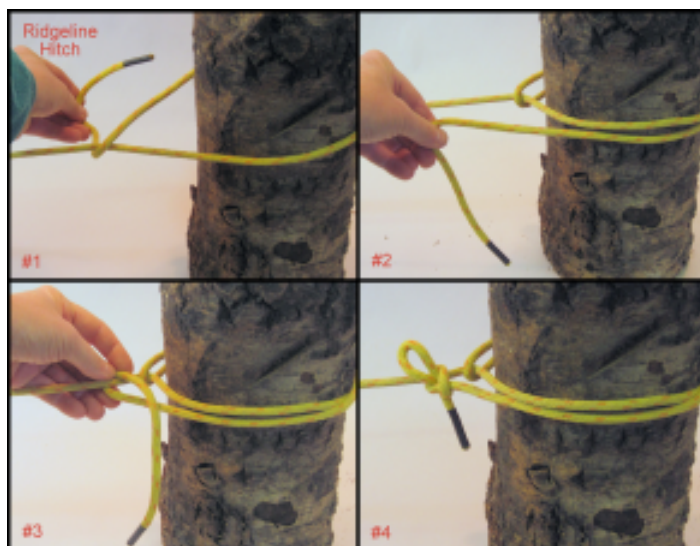
The Siberian hitch is a single figure-of-eight knot

with a slip loop on the end. Take the working end of the ridgeline cord around the tree (#1). Wrap it over top of the standing end (#2). Forming a loop in the working end, pass it under the cord where it passes over top of the working end (#3). Pull the hitch tight (#4). Because the working end can slip, the loop around the tree will tighten with pulling as will the knot itself. To release, simply pull the end of the working end. Ray Mears shows a quick way of tying the Siberian hitch at minute 7 of this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tZ6hqym5TU>.

The ridgeline hitch is just a variation on the Siberian hitch. With the standing end tied to the first tree, wrap the working end around the second tree, pull tight and then pass it over top of the standing end (#1). Wrap the working end back around the tree again and pull tight (#2). This arrangement forms a primitive block-and-tackle, increasing mechanical advantage. It is easy to get the ridgeline tight with this method. Lock the knot with another Siberian hitch (#3 & #4). Again, the knot will only pull tighter with strain but is easily untied by pulling on the working end.

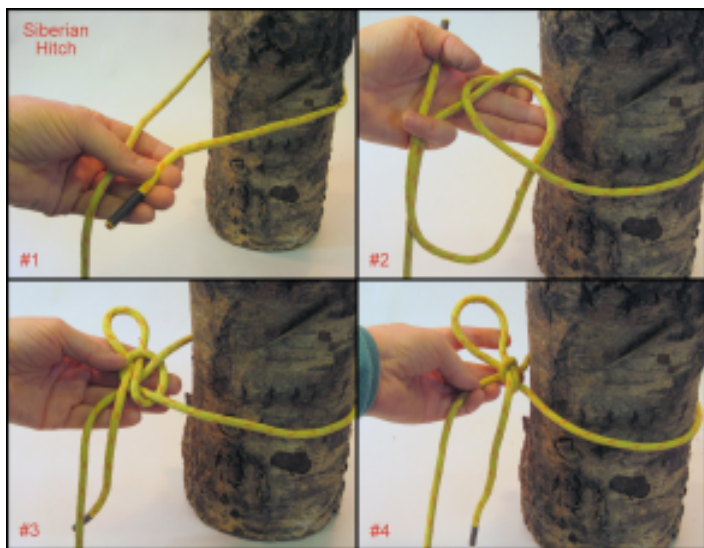
## Hanging the Tarp

The tarp could be simply draped over the ridgeline but I prefer to suspend it below the ridgeline to prevent chafing in blustery winds. To secure each end of the tarp, I use a short piece of cord tied to the ridgeline with a Prusik knot.

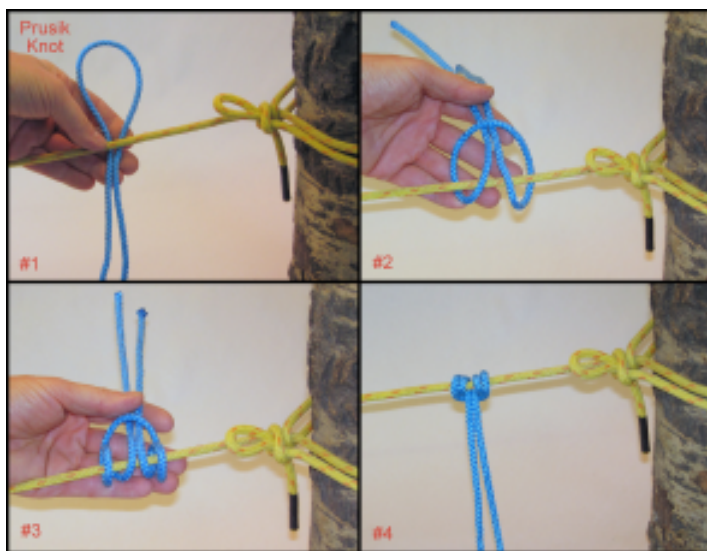


The Prusik knot comes to us from Dr. Karl Prusik who apparently devised it for mending strings of musical instruments during the First World War. Later he promoted it for self rescue in mountaineering. Canoeists quickly learned it is very useful for many applications including hanging a tarp. Its main advantage is it is self tightening. Without strain, it can be slid along the ridgeline until the tarp is taught. When released and strain is applied, it will self-lock. However, as soon as the strain is released, the Prusik knot will unlock allowing the knot to be slid on the ridgeline adjusting the tension on the tarp - simple and effective. Specific cord for tying Prusik knots, not surprisingly called 'Prusik Cord', is available but any woven cord can be used. It should be smaller in diameter than the ridgeline.

Tying the Prusik knot is a two-step procedure. First the Prusik knot itself is tied by taking the short piece of cord and forming a loop (#1). Pass the two ends of the cord around the ridgeline and through the loop (#2). Repeat this step so the cord passes around the ridgeline two complete turns on each side (#3). Pull the knot tight on the ridgeline making sure none of the loops cross over each other in the knot (#4). If the Prusik tends to slip on the ridgeline with the cord and rope you are using, add a third loop on each side to the Prusik by passing the working ends through the loop for a third time. The second step is to tie the ends of the cord to the chosen attachment points on the tarp with a square







or bow knot. Once complete, this arrangement will let you tension the tarp by sliding the Prusik knot along the ridgeline. As soon as the Prusik is put under strain, it will lock. To adjust the tarp, simply take the strain off the Prusik knot. As soon as it relaxes, it can be slid along the ridgeline.

## Setting out the corners and edges

The final step in pitching the tarp is to set out the corners and edges. I use the 'tautline slip hitch' for doing this, a knot that came to me from the good folks at Hilleberg tents. I should start with a bit of a warning about this knot. It works well on most braided cord but can slip if the plastic used has a very slippery surface. The tautline slip hitch has similar characteristic to the Prusik knot. When not under tension, it can slide easily along the cord it is tied around. As soon as strain is applied, it will lock. It thus allows for the cords to be easily adjusted.

To tie a taut-line slip hitch, pass the working end around the tree, stake, or rock used to anchor the corner of the tarp (#1). Pass the working end under and over the standing end (#2). Pass the working end around the standing end one more time (#3). Slowly pull the standing end until two loops are formed around the working end (#4). Form a loop in the working end (#5) and pass it between the working end and standing end to form a slipping half-hitch and pull tight (#6). When complete, it will slide up and down the working end, enabling



adjustment of tension on the corner of the tarp. As soon as the knot is released and strain applied, it will lock. To untie the knot, pull the working end.

Here are a few final thoughts on tarps:

- Leave the cords for the corners and edges tied to the grommets when packing the tarp away. Simply wrap them up around your hand and tie them off with a slip knot. This makes the whole rig quicker to set up especially in poor weather.
- Keep ridgeline, Prusik cords and corner/edge cords in a stuff sack with the tarp and throw in a few extra cords in case you lose one or the most convenient tree is a bit farther away than your cord is long. Keep everything together.
- Practice until the knots you decide to use are second nature.
- Finally, if someone shows you a new knot for the same task, give it a try and see if it works better than one you are currently using.

# Tie Down Your Canoe

by Warren Paulson  
photos by Lucas Paulson

Previously published in the Souris River Canoes newsletter CanoeHead.

**M**y teenage son has a summer job paddling through Quetico Park conducting field research. Naturally, he and his colleagues are experienced paddlers, logging far more paddling hours than I'm able to anymore. So I had to chuckle a bit when he told me of an epic trip that involved them searching for and ultimately losing a canoe that had blown away in a fierce windstorm. (The canoe was ultimately recovered after their trip.)

The loss of one canoe was not devastating for them. Their group was large enough that it simply meant three to a canoe for the rest of the trip, and some explaining when they got home. But it could have been downright annoying if they were a smaller party and it was their only canoe. More importantly, it didn't need to happen.

They weren't being careless. They knew a storm was coming, and had their canoes stored safely upside down deep in the bush. (Canoes are far more likely to be picked-up by the wind if they are upright.) But, it was quite a storm. Had their canoes been tied-down, however, things would have turned out differently.

If you paddle the busier areas of Quetico Park, you will eventually come across canoe shrapnel at

the bottom of a set of rapids. You can imagine the scenario. Stop at the portage, pull your canoe up, carry your gear down the trail... what's that banging noise?

So, how do you prevent it? You tie-down your canoe whenever you are not in it. This, however, is only going to happen if you make it easy. So here's how:

1. Buy yourself fifty feet of floating rope, or 15 metres for you younger folk. (Unless you want to find yourself uncoiling your rope from a propeller some day, floating rope is essential.)
2. Cut it in half. Tie it to the ends of your canoe as shown below.
3. Make a hard-and-fast rule that this rope is not to be used for any other purpose.
4. To access the rope, just grab the hitch and pull, and you'll have the rope coiled neatly in your hand. It's available for tying, towing, or lining your canoe. From that point on, you can smile whenever you find canoe shrapnel at the bottom of a portage, or hear stories about canoes flying in the wind.



1. If your canoe has eyelets at the ends, tie the rope there. Otherwise, tie it to the handle. If you don't know how to tie a bowline, ask someone to teach you. It is a rare knot that can be untied easily no matter how much tension it's had.



2. Coil the rope.



3. Lay the coil of rope under the handle. If you've tied the end to the handle, keep that knot to one side.



4. Reach through the coil and grab the end.



5. Pull it through.



Congratulations. You've just made a cow hitch. It will stay there at the ready, through portages over windy lakes.



To access it, just grab the blob of rope and pull.



You have the whole coil of rope in your hand ready to go.



## Wanted: Board Members

Paddle Manitoba could use your energy and insight! Join the board and help us plan our course and trip offerings, nurture our partnerships with other paddling and outdoors activity partners, and help us strengthen and grow.

We are specifically in need of a Secretary who would be responsible for some record-keeping and for taking care of board-membership communication, but we also welcome energetic hands and creative minds to join us as non-titled board members as well.

Please contact the board President, Chris Randall, at [president@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:president@paddle.mb.ca) for more information.

## Wanted: Kayak Instructors

Are you a Paddle-Canada-certified kayak instructor? Do you know someone who is?

Paddle Manitoba is hoping to expand its kayak instruction and kayak trip offerings, but we need more instructors to come out of the woodwork and help make that happen.

Our instructors have a lot of autonomy about what courses and trips they can offer and how they go about offering them. Please contact our Treasurer, Sharon Touchette, at [treasurer@paddle.mb.ca](mailto:treasurer@paddle.mb.ca) if you are interested in getting more details about offering courses for Paddle Manitoba

# Paddle Manitoba Corporate Members



If you are in need of paddling supplies or are looking for an outfitter or camp to enhance your paddling experiences, please visit the Paddle Manitoba corporate members identified below. Paddle Manitoba Members are entitled to a 10% discount on the purchase of goods and services from our corporate members (You must show your Paddle Manitoba Membership card. Some restrictions apply.)



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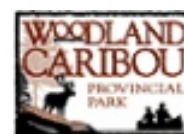
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