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Mystery Lake Musings

By Don Baumgartner

It's a mystery why 4 people and 1 dog would want to be dropped off on a lake, in the middle of the wilderness. A lake that has no portage out of it, and no camp sites marked on it. We found out why it's called Mystery Lake the hard way. It's not the journey as they say, it's the adventure!



SW Wabakimi Entry Points

1. Vista Road Entry:

Flindt River through Heathcote, Heafer, Wilkie, and Tew lakes- Wabakimi-Lower Wabakimi-McWade-Granite-Brennan-Jeep-Change-Dagger-Eagle-Beaver-Snake-Windfall-Allanwater-Stump-Gault-Flindt-Flet- then retraced our route back though Heafer, Heathcote to Vista

I was studying my Wabakimi maps to figure out our next trip, there was a lake that kept jumping out at me and you guessed it, it was Mystery Lake. On the maps and Paddle Planner that I used, it looked like a place that not many people have been to, because there isn't a marked portage to leave the lake and no marked camp sites, (imagine that). But you can see where there is a creek that leaves Mystery on the east end that leads to a small pond about a ¼ mile away. Piece of cake, right? Then on the east end of the pond it looks like it would be a bushwhack for about a ¼ mile to get to the Nemo River system. No big deal, right? So, it's settled Mystery Lake it is.

There were 4 of us on this trip, Mike and Tara in one canoe, Jean, myself and my husky, Nikita in another canoe. At approximately 3 p.m. that afternoon (insert date), we loaded the Otter float plane from [Mattice Lake Outfitters](#), and we were off. It was about a ½ hour flight and from the air I could see the lake. We touched down on the lake, loaded our gear into the canoes and then watched our ride disappear off into the distance.

Now to find a suitable spot for a camp for 2 nights. We found a spot on a small peninsula and after a little cutting we had 2 tents set up and a place to call home. I could tell that Tara was a bit concerned about how we were going to leave the lake, because she brought it up several times. In order to ease her mind, we decided to check it out in the morning.

We packed ourselves a lunch, a saw, some pruning shears and

[Road. 18 Days- August 15th to September 1st, 2022](#)

[Enjoy Melissa Gray's comprehensive trip report posted on the BWCA.com and shared to our FOW Trip Report Forum.](#)

[2. Smye Lake Entry. Smye Lake to Flindt Landing. Report by Dave McTeague, with partner Hank Ostwald. Tuesday, August 30th to Monday Sept. 5th. Length: 42 Km or 26 miles; 11 portages.](#)

[This is a shorter route which we did to better document the Smye Lake entry point, and the Smye Creek/ponds to Wilkie Lake. This was our short canoe trip prior to attending FOW's Wabakimi Rendezvous gathering.](#)

Wabakimi Planning Map Update Project.

We've contracted with [GoTrekking Maps](#) in La Ronge, Saskatchewan to help us update our planning map. [This is a big project and we're requesting donations to underwrite this effort.](#)

FOW at Outdoors Shows

We're planning to be at the [Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show Feb. 24-26, 2023.](#) We're looking for local volunteers to help staff our booth and attend a FOW meet-up.

[Canoecopia, March 10-13, in Madison, Wisconsin.](#) We'll be there along with our FOW Annual Meeting & Sat. night

then set off to find a way to the Nemo River. When we got to the creek, surprise, it was dry. We landed the canoes on a beach and started to explore our way to the pond. The valley that the creek was supposed to be in was thick with Alders and the ridges had many downed and bigger trees. But we did find the pond right where the map shows, and what a beauty it was. It was a floating bog that had many Pitcher plants around it (photo below).

We started to work our way back to the lake, cutting a path to get the canoes through for the next day. Of course, the women just pointed out what needed to be cut and cleared. After we had lunch and spent a few hours cutting we were back at the canoes. By that time, the wind had picked up and the white horses were in our face. At this point we were wind bound and decided it was time for a break. At 3:30 p.m. we decided to see if we could paddle out to get around the corner and try to make it to the lee side of an island. Our canoe made it to the island, but Mike and Tara were not behind us. We waited for a short time and then went back to the beach to find them. The wind had spun them around but didn't flip them. That's when Tara came up with the best comment of the trip. "Whose dumb ass idea was it to come over here today"? Everyone got a good laugh from that. We heard that a few more times during the rest of the trip. At 6:00 p.m. we tried paddling out again and this time both canoes made it and we were back in camp with tired arms. Once back at camp Mother Nature said here you

dinner gathering. Volunteers are needed to help staff our booth.

Midwest Mountaineering Outdoor Expo, April 28-30 in Minneapolis,

Minn. Volunteers are needed to help staff this booth too.

Email us (or Text with your name) to Info@wabakimi.org

Wabadowgang Noopming Forest Planning Update:

(Paddlers! Have you seen woodland caribou or signs, in SE Wabakimi P.P., Tamarack Lake, Lookout River & Boiling Sands Rive;, Crown land routes- Collins, Fawn, Doe, Tunnel Lake, Rushbay, Vale Creek, D'Alton, Caribou and Little Caribou, Linklater, Raymond River, Big Lake, Big River, Pawshowconks etc. We have do citizen monitoring! We need photographs, video and anecdotal evidence of caribou in these areas. Please let us know! Send to info@wabakimi.org)

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) has issued their near final plan for this forest.

This is after Board members Vern Fish and Maurice Poulin attended two MNRF Issues Resolutions meeting in Thunder Bay on Dec. 5 & 6.; along with Bruce Hyer, and representatives of the forest industry, Whitesands and other First Nations, trappers, and recreational interests. ([Our request](#)).

We achieved some modest goals, but overall are disappointed in the plan that pays little heed to the long-term habitat requirements of

go, the wind stopped and the lake was like glass, she also gave us a beautiful sunset.

The next morning, we packed up all of the gear and were off to find the Nemo River. We portaged all of the gear to the pond. Once there, we paddled to the east side, and discovered the brush wasn't nearly as thick as the other end, so it took about an hour to bushwhack to the river. Finally, we were ready to start the rest of our journey. The spirits were high, and now we have another great story to tell people.

After all, whose dumb ass idea was this anyway? It was mine, but it was still a great trip, great weather, great comradery and another one for the books. It's just another reminder why we need to protect our remaining wild places. Our souls are replenished for another year.

(Starting date 8/29/2022. 11 nights. Route traveled- Mystery Lake to Nemo river system, north to Osprey and Snake, then west thru Windfall Lake, north across Brennan Lake and falls to Granite Lake, north to McWade and over to Elf Lake & fly-out. Maps: FOW, Paddle Planner & Wabakimimaps.com)

woodland caribou. [See our full report on our Conservation Page.](#)

[Trip Reports Forum.](#) [Looking for trip reports?](#)

Our list is growing. Use the search function to find a report for the lakes or area you're interested in. Log-In to our system to subscribe for notices of new reports.

[Please Journal your 2023 Trip and take some photos.](#)

Let us know if you'd like to be one of our Trip Planning advisors?

[Annual Members Meeting, March 12, 2023, Madison, WI.](#) We'll also have a dinner gathering Sat. night, March 11th. Let us know if you'd like to help staff our Canoeecopia or Toronto information tables.

Websites

Explained. www.wabakimi.org is our [Informational Website](#); [Canoeing and trip planning resources, current/past newsletters, Annual Meeting information](#), and lots of [basic Wabakimi info](#).

friendsofwabakimi.wildapricot.org is our [Interactive Website](#) with multiple features, houses our contacts/members database; handles our new and renewed members, logs payments, donation records; individual or group emails; Trip Forum, Map Store, events registration; and more.



Thanks to our Business/Sponsor members

We're pleased to welcome Cooke Custom Sewing (CCS, Dan Cooke and crew) and The Creative Company (Deena Kruger, Kevin Belmore et. al) as our newest FOW Business members! CCS is in Lino Lakes, Minnesota. The Creative Company is an art gallery and collective in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

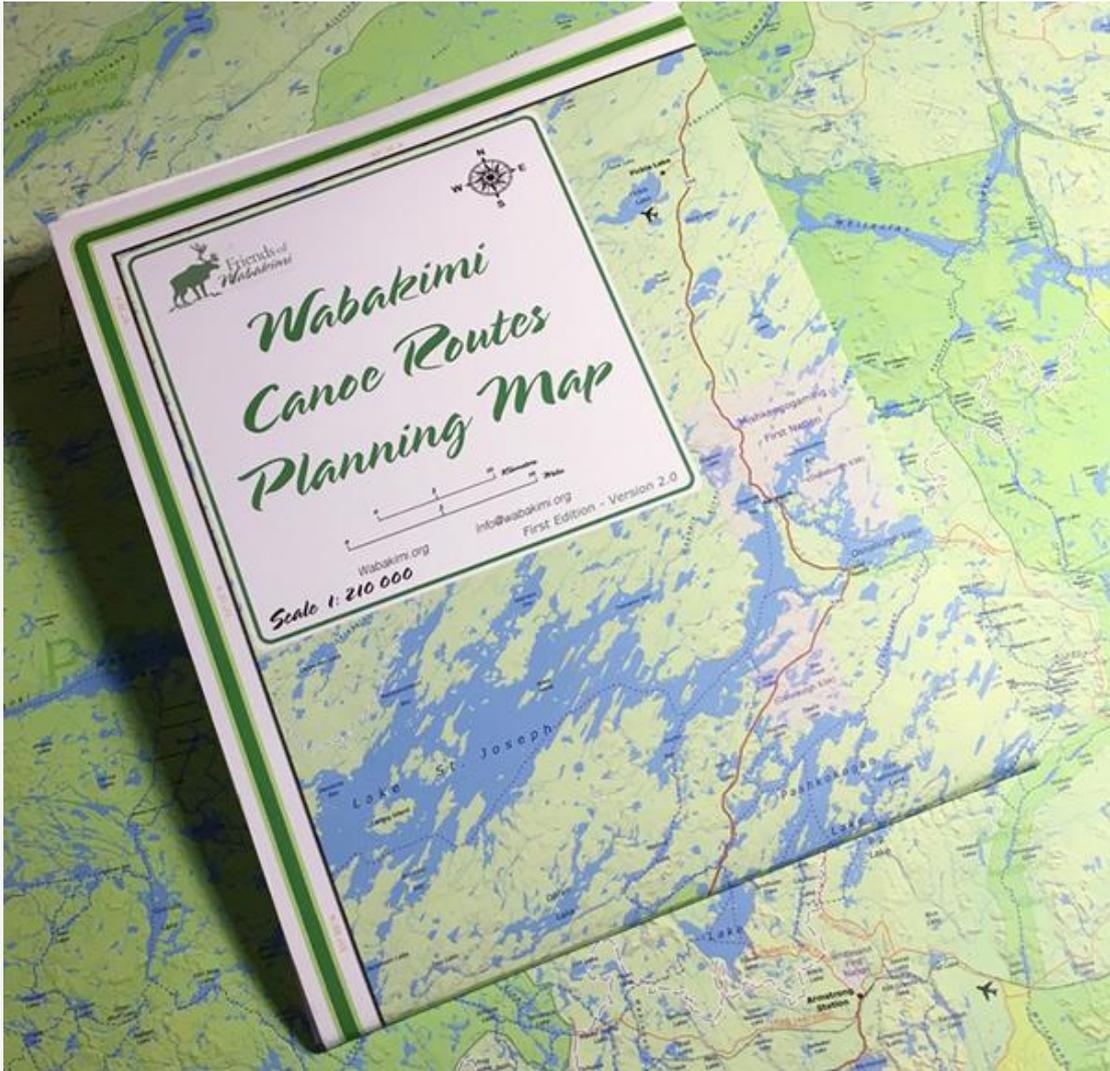


[Creative Kitz](#) [Original Artwork](#) [Prints](#) [Gift Shop](#) [Events + B2B](#) [About](#) [Contact](#)





Join or Renew your FOW Membership Today!



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