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November 2020

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WEBINAR Invite

“The Greenmantle: A Wabakimi Gem.”

You're invited to our first Webinar by Zoom, presented by FOW President Vern Fish on Sunday, November 29th, 7:00 p.m. CST (8:00 p.m. EST).

[Zoom link!](#) [More Zoom info on our website.](#)

This wild little river may lack girth and length but it is long on adventure and isolation. Hidden in the far northwest corner of Wabakimi Provincial Park, the Greenmantle River provides access to a huge swath of protected wilderness. Vern Fish, along with Ray Tallent, Dan Otto and Hank Ostwald explored the Greenmantle and Shabuskwia Rivers to their takeout on the Albany River, June 18-28, 2019.

President's Report -- Vern Fish

The Covid has sealed the US/Canadian border and cancelled some of the large paddling expos on both sides of the border. A few Canadian paddlers ventured into Wabakimi in 2020 but not many. It appears that this situation will not change in the near future.

Online Solutions

Our mission is to “*advocate for the protection and preservation of the diverse natural, cultural and historical resources of the Wabakimi Area.*” In the current environment we cannot do this face to face at traditional paddling expos. [We can tell our story online.](#)



- **Wabakimi Webinars** - To help paddlers stay in touch with Wabakimi we are organizing a series of Wabakimi Webinars on Zoom. These presentations will last about 45 minutes with 15-30 minutes for questions and interaction on a Sunday evening. We anticipate a series of 3 to 5 presentations between now and next spring. These webinars will be announced by email and on our website. You do not have to be a member to participate.

The first webinar, The ***Greenmantle River, a Wabakimi Gem***, has been scheduled for November 29 at 7:00 PM (CST). Future topics will range from trip reports to park updates. Potential future topics include: Armstrong Forest Canoe Routes (Vale Creek, Raymond River, Big River & More); Plan Your Wabakimi Trip Q & A; Park Management Plan issues; and the Wabakimi Canoe Routes Guide.

- **Annual Meeting** - The Board of Directors have begun the process of planning for a virtual annual meeting in March of 2021. More details will be announced as we get closer to the date.

Armstrong Forest

We're advocating for the canoe routes on this Crown Land forest that borders the southeast side of Wabakimi Provincial Park as the ten year Forest Management Plan (FMP) is being updated. Two board members, Vern Fish and Shawn Bell serve on the Local Citizens Committee that provides input to the MNRFP planning process. We're preparing more comments for the two year Contingency Plan which will guide the forest management process until the full FMP is approved. This process and the impact on the Raymond River and Big River canoe routes may be a Wabakimi Webinar topic. The comments the FOW submits to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRFP) are posted in the [Conservation Section of our website.](#)

Park Management

The Wabakimi Park Management Plan is also being updated. We have asked the Park Superintendent to host a Wabakimi Webinar to present the first phase of this process and to gather comments from paddlers. If this comes together you will a front row seat to the process and will be able to play a role in planning. We look forward to working with park staff on this plan.

Board Members

Because of our Bylaws change, there are three openings on our Board of Directors. If you would like to consider serving and need more information, please email vernfish@aol.com or the Board Chair, Dave McTeague at davemcteague@comcast.net.

2020 Trip Report, Little Caribou to Whitewater to Bukemiga (Road to Road!)

Thanks to Derek Lucchese, Thunder Bay, and his troop of 8 paddlers and two children for participating in the FOW 2020 trip program. They did an eighteen day circuit beginning August 2nd. He utilized the services of Clem Quenville for their shuttles and car storage.

In return for providing us with detailed responses to [Phil's Form](#), FOW provided Derek with our [big Planning map](#) and [FOW route map](#) pages covering most all of his route. Derek also utilized topo maps 1:50 000 series: 52-1/3, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 14. [Full report on our FOW Trip Forum page.](#)

Route summary: Little Caribou Lake (put in) – Caribou Lake – Caribou River – Smoothrock Lake (Caribou Bay) – Smoothrock Lake (Outlet Bay) – Berg River – Whitewater Lake – McKinley Lake – Smoothrock Lake (Lonebreast Bay) – Smoothrock Lake – Lookout River - Spring Lake – Onamakawash Lake – Shawanabis Lake – Boulder Lake – Kenakskaniss Lake – Kopka River – Wigwasan Lake -- Bukemiga Lake (takeout)



They did 33 Portages; 9661 m total, and camped at 16 sites. He provided [portage information](#) useful for future paddlers and reconnaissance expeditions:

--Outlet Bay of Smoothrock to Berg River portage, heavily grown in but clear

--Portage from Ogoki River to Whitewater Lake, several large trees fallen/obstructions

--Portage from Whitewater Lake south into the small lake north of McKinley, very hard to find, then actual portage through burn, very grown in and thick at times, plus a few large trees down

--Portage heading south into McKinley L, not as

shown on "Smoothrock Lake to Whitewater Lake via McKinley Lake" Friends of Wabakimi map.

Circle D should have a portage south on the east side, River left, approx 20m long into a very

small pond/lake; then portage on river right, west side, approx. 120 m into north end of McKinley Lake.

--All the portages between Shawanabis Lake south through into Kanakskaniss Lake each have large trees down needing chain sawing

--"Pinball" portage heading east out of Kanakskaniss Lake on to the Kopka River has several large trees down



On this trip they saw moose, bear & cubs, osprey, eagles, mink; and visited the Wendell Beckworth cabins on Whitewater Lake relaying, "it's in pretty rough shape, only two of the buildings having any integrity. The campsite is well maintained, however."

He reports seeing only one other canoeing couple and a few motorboats on Smoothrock and Whitewater Lakes.

Derek owns and operates [Both Hands Wood-Fired Pizzeria & Bakery in Thunder Bay.](#)



Canoeing.com now has a [Wabakimi Trip Log section](#) and [FOW maps for sale](#). The [Paddleplanner.com](#) Wabakimi section is under development and should be ready by the new year. Phil Cotton envisioned developing corporate support for FOW. We hope to expand this program to help *promote the Wabakimi Area as a world-class canoeing destination.*

Vista Road -Flindt River-Flindt Lake-Sassenach Lake

15 July to 20 July 2019.

By Dan Hanson, FOW member

Photos by Jessie & Dan

[Full Report with Pictures posted in FOW Trip Forum](#)



Barry and Regan after we all missed the 643m portage.

I drove from St Louis Missouri to Kansas City where I met with Terry, Darla, Mike, Jessie, Barry and Regan at 7am on Saturday 13 July 2019 and then began north. After changing a

flat on a narrow under construction section of I-35 & tracking down a replacement trailer spare tire in Ames Iowa, we continued north to pick up Sherry at MSP. Had a nice dinner at Rustic Inn Café on L. Superior before continuing on to The Cliff Dweller in Tofte for the evening.

Sunday we picked up 4 Northstar Northwind 17 canoes from [Sawtooth Outfitters](#) in Tofte, cleared Canada customs and continued to the Four Winds in Savant Lake. No one was home at the Four Winds or the store across the street and there was a for sale sign in the motel window, but after talking with a very helpful highway employee that was staying there for the summer, we learned the hotel has been for sale since 1970's and the owners were fishing. They returned soon enough and got us fed and settled in.

Now on Monday we originally planned to take the train from Savant lake to Flindt Landing, but after checking the Viarail app Sunday evening and Monday morning we decided to change our shuttle. The app showed an 8 hr delay on Sunday evening and 9 hours on Monday morning, so the 8am Savant Lake stop was looking like it was going to be mid afternoon at best.

Our extraction flight was scheduled with [Rusty Meyer's](#), so Ennis at the 4 Winds suggested we stop at Rusty Meyer's, pick up a driver, put in at Vista Road and have the driver take the van back to Rusty's so that's what we did after Ennis made a phone call for us. A day of paddling was much better than a day waiting for a train.

We paddled and fished for only 5 days and got flown out on Saturday 20 July. The return drive was pretty much the same as the way up in reverse. I prefer to paddle more days than I drive, but hadn't been to this park and jumped on the invite. Glad I did and look forward to returning.

Before leaving home and guessing our route I had quilted some 1:50000 topos together and attempted to add campsites and portage data from Ontario's Park map. I didn't have any of the FOW maps until Terry distributed 2 pages from one of the volumes on Saturday or Sunday morning. I only knew we planned to put in at Flindt Landing. With Terry's maps, I was able to add some added info to my maps before we paddled, but would have preferred to have had some better maps ahead of time. Since then I've typed the FOW data on to my quilted topos, reprinted and appended to this trip report so that the reader can see where we went. ([see full trip report – scroll down to open the pdf file](#))

Get Involved with Wabakimi!



Expedition Committee (NEW!): Friends of Wabakimi (FOW) has developed a Strategic Plan which has, as one of its goals, to support volunteer reconnaissance expeditions to confirm and document the canoe routes previously cleared by the Wabakimi Project and improve their condition if needed. Some expeditions may also include projects specific to park needs.

Phil Cotton ran a well-oiled machine with the Wabakimi Project and FOW would like to develop a similar or at least, like-minded model to the extent possible. To this end, FOW is forming an

Expedition Committee that would discuss a model for these expeditions. This would include discussing various aspects of planning for such trips: funding, insurance, equipment needed, communication, trip route recommendations, etc.

While the border remains closed for the foreseeable future, the board is interested in moving forward with planning efforts for when the border opens. The winter months present a good time to dream and plan and make some recommendations for how these expeditions can happen.

You can help. If you have either been a Wabakimi Project trip participant or leader, are currently an FOW member or are simply interested in helping get these expeditions underway, we'd like your thoughts!

Your time is valuable so we'll keep your time short. The Expedition Committee will meet by Zoom approximately once a month for about 1 hour to discuss and outline recommendations for the establishment of the expedition phase of FOW.

Please consider joining in on this effort. Contact committee chair, Mary Jean Blaisdell, at mjblais@indytel.com. (also friendsofwabakimi@gmail.com)

Conservation Committee: The Armstrong Forest management plan process is our current focus. Vern Fish has attended several meetings of the Armstrong Local Citizens Committee and [FOW has submitted comments regarding the canoe routes and portages](#) identified in FOW Volume 5 map routes. Another round of comments is now open for the two-year interim plan; after which follows the ten year management plan. So our involvement is critical as the long-term direction forest management is being set for this important area. To join our Conservation Committee, drop us a note at friendsofwabakimi@gmail.com. FOW members can log into their [membership profile](#) and indicate their interest as well.

Board of Directors. We have **three openings on our board** due to the [bylaws change](#) passed at the last annual meeting. [Our current 12 member board](#) meets monthly by Zoom. We're a virtual organization as our board members are from Ontario, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and Oregon (John Holmes participates from New Zealand six months out of the year). Our board has staggered three year terms. New members can be appointed and then elected at the Annual meeting in March of each year. Board members also volunteer to help with various tasks. We need more Canadian board members!



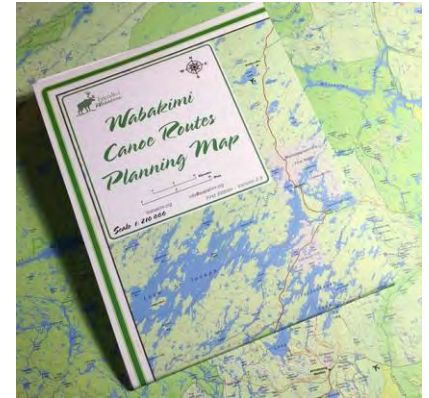
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NEW! We now have a FOLDED version of our Wabakimi Canoe Routes PLANNING MAP, 36" by 35" on 24# paper! [Order online.](#)

\$34 CND or FOW Members: \$28 CND** (price includes shipping)

(or \$25 U.S. or FOW members \$21 U.S.)

(ORDER by mail to Friends of Wabakimi, 1060 Riverdale Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7J 1N2 Canada)



[Ontario Nature Blog: Ten things you should know about Canada's new protected areas targets.](#)

On September 28th, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada's commitment to protect 25 percent of our lands and waters by 2025, and 30 percent by 2030. But what do these targets mean?

Longnose Sucker



*2017 Wabakimi Project trip, last week of May, we paddled the Collins River swift exiting from Rushbay Lake. In the swift were fish with a distinctive red stripe. Turns out these are the **spawning colours** of the longnose sucker ([aka *Catostomus catostomus*](#)), both female and male. This species lives in cooler streams and lakes with clean gravel and has a wide distribution across North America. [They spawn April to June.](#) Reportedly some local Elders smoke the fish and boil the heads. They may be harvested in many ways, [including dipnetting.](#)*

Wabakimi.org

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