



HORIZONS UNLIMITED

CHURCHILL RIVER CANOE OUTFITTERS

Newsletter – Spring, 2003

Churchill River Canoe Outfitters
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Ric is now spending his winters in Edmonton. You can still reach him by all the above methods, as the mail, telephone and e-mail are forwarded to him in Edmonton. However, between October 15 and April 25, if you want to stop in and visit him, you'll find him at

6821-111th Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5B 0B1
Phone/Fax: 780-471-1273

Churchill River Canoe Outfitters' Commitment

Our commitment to you is to provide a top quality program. We are committed to preserving the Northern Saskatchewan wilderness as an intact eco-system. We are committed to travelling through the wilderness in an ecologically sound manner. We are committed to providing a program where individuals are valued and learning is encouraged. We are committed to helping individuals better understand the environment they are travelling through. This is our commitment to you as our patron.



Greetings from the Churchill River

Every summer has its stories. Last summer I tried to write "the story of the day", recording interesting or funny events every evening before I went to bed. There were very few days that were "normal". Many of you may be recorded in my computer!

There was the day that a very loud Volvo stopped at my office. They were planning a canoe trip from Points North to the Arctic Ocean, and intended to leave the car in Points North for whomever wanted it. Before they left, they spent several hours under the car tying various parts together. I wonder who owns the car now?

One day in late June, the planes couldn't fly because of weather. Missinipe was overfull. I had 15 people sleeping in my home. This represented three different groups, one starting a 10-day trip, one in the middle of a 3-week trip and one ending a

5-day trip. The conversation around the living room was very interesting.

I was driven from my computer one day by very loud music coming from outside. I got up to look and saw a car very slowly driving by with its driver's door open. Beside the open car door was someone portaging a canoe, obviously listening to the music.

Then there was the solo canoeist who stayed in the tent while a bear checked out the campsite. After checking for porridge and not finding any to its liking, the bear left.

My staff were involved in a two-day event freeing a canoe wrapped at the bottom of Donaldson Channel.

There are lots of new stories waiting to happen in and around Missinipe. This summer, come and make your own "story of the day". I look forward to seeing you!

A Tribute to Naomi Heffler



top of her class as an Engineer. While she was in University she was on the U of C swim team. Naomi coached competitive swimming. Did you know she was an excellent pianist? Neither did I! She also taught piano. Naomi loved backcountry skiing. When she died she was one of the best, skiing with the best. In everything she did, she excelled.



Naomi Heffler died this January in that tragic avalanche in British Columbia. She spent parts of 5 summers working for Churchill River Canoe Outfitters. During those summers she became one of the most skilled canoeists we've ever had working for us. Those who took white-water courses from her will attest to that. She will be remembered for her ever-present smile, her attention to detail, and her love of life. Those who were privileged to have her as their guide or instructor will miss her.

I will always remember Naomi coming into my office saying: "Ric, it's so nice outside. Can we take the afternoon off to go paddling?" Then a few days later: "Ric, it's raining out anyway, can we take the afternoon off to go paddling?" Every day was a good day to go paddling for her.

We knew her best as a canoeist and guide. There were many other rather surprising aspects to her life. Last spring she graduated from University of Calgary near the

One of her favourite things to do in the Missinipe area was to surf the top wave at Corner Rapids. She was one of the few who could get onto that wave. From now on, that wave will be known as Naomi's Wave. On Saturday, May 17, a group of us will meet at Corner Rapids. We will have a ceremony dedicating that wave to the memory of Naomi. We'll then get into our canoes and surf Naomi's Wave in her memory. You are welcome to join us!

We at Churchill River Canoe Outfitters are planning to start a "Naomi Fund". This fund will go towards young people wishing to become Instructors in Whitewater Canoeing. There are several places across western Canada where youth may be able to use this fund. Naomi instructed for Rocky Mountain Paddling Centre. That is certainly an option. And of course this fund could also be used to take one of our own instructor level courses. If you would like to contribute to this fund, contact Churchill River Canoe Outfitters.

What do we do?

Horizons Unlimited and Churchill River Canoe Outfitters has such a variety of programs it is sometimes even difficult for our staff to keep track. We'll list these different things below. If you want more information check out our website www.churchillrivercanoe.com or call us on our toll free number 1-877-511-2726. Here's what we do:

- Cabin Rentals
- Motor Boat Rentals
- Fishing Guides
- Guided Canoe Trips
- Certified Canoeing Courses
- Canoe Guide Service
- Canoe and Canoeing/Camping Equipment Rentals
- Kayak Rentals
- Day Hikes
- Shuttle Service
- Topographic Maps and Route Information
- Manufacturer of Camping Equipment
- We Sell Canoes, Canoe Barrels and other camping equipment..

We are the information centre for canoeing in northern Saskatchewan.

Canoe Route Information

Churchill River Canoe Outfitters has been in business for nearly 40 years now. You can imagine that over all these years we have collected very detailed information on dozens of different rivers throughout Northern Saskatchewan. For a modest fee, we will make this knowledge available to you.

Along with these descriptions, we keep in stock topographic maps of nearly every river you can paddle in northern Saskatchewan. When you've got your route planned, give us a call, we'd be happy to send you the maps and the route information.

Barker Lake Region

The area between Sluice Falls and Devil Lake is arguably the most heavily camped region of Northern Saskatchewan. This small area boasts more than a thousand camper nights each month. This would be great, except for the fact that it is a totally unserviced area. There are no toilet facilities and no firewood supply and no designated tent spots. The four main campsites in the region are literally being loved to death. The campers are quite respectful of the land, and there is rarely any garbage left behind. It is now very rare that someone cuts down a green tree. But with up to 100 people camping at these 4 sites on a busy night in the summer, you can imagine what treasures are left behind in the moss. One is afraid to step off the trails! This contributes to the serious concern that pollutants are slowly leaching back into the river.

Many consider this area as the most beautiful part of the Churchill River. Over a 5-kilometre stretch, the river drops 12 metres and flows through more than 30 islands. The whitewater canoeing and kayaking are some of the best in the world. The fishing is incredible and the camping is



beautiful. It's only a short paddle and one portage away from the road. That's why this area is so popular.

Leon Charles of Grandmother Bay and Churchill River Canoe Outfitters have approached the people at Saskatchewan Environment Resource Management with a proposal to do something about this issue. We have asked that SERM supply a composting toilet in each of these 4 campsites (2 on Barker Island, Hank's Hotel and Corner Rapids). We have also asked that SERM supply firewood and garbage cans. In exchange, those camping in these 4 campsites would pay a fee to camp there. These sites would be visited at least 4 times a week to collect fees, bring in firewood, maintain the composting toilets and carry out any garbage. SERM together with Lac La Ronge Provincial Park are now considering this proposal.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Churchill River Canoe Outfitters.

It's Finally Out!

In our Newsletter last spring, we announced Laurel Archer's new book: *Northern Saskatchewan Canoe Trips: A Guide to Fifteen Wilderness Rivers*. Then Laurel's publisher got caught in a major North American publisher restructuring. Now finally it is being published and should be out by late March. It's a must for every canoeist.

The book will be available from Churchill River Canoe Outfitters through our web site.



Logging Update

Over the years I have been trying to keep you informed as to what is happening with logging in Saskatchewan's Canoe Country. So far the news is still good. Most of the area we paddle our canoes is still outside the region that is being logged. For the most part, logging is not yet happening within the Shield.

There are likely a number of reasons why logging has not extended this far north. The soft wood duties imposed by the US are likely one reason. However, much of the forest cut in the shield is too small for 2x4s, so it would be used for pulp and paper. The US duties do not apply to paper.

A second reason: in spite of the very large handouts the Saskatchewan Government has given to the logging industry, it is not economically feasible to log much of the Precambrian Shield.

A third reason: The North Central Land Use Plan is still working on its recommendations to the government for how this region should be used.

This Land Use Plan is a key for us trying to protect the Churchill River region from the devastating effect that clear cut logging would have. The Land Use Plan has come up with a Master Issue List. This 25-page report identifies the major issues the Land Use Plan has to deal with. If you would like a copy of this list, contact me. I can e-mail it to you.

Monty Horton, based in La Ronge, is the new SERM person in charge of writing the Land Use Plan. His e-mail address is mhorton@serm.gov.sk.ca



Above: Whitewater instruction course.

Below: Eating well is an important part of all our trips.



Mosquito Cup

Don't forget about our annual Mosquito Cup, August 1 to 4. Together with the Grandmother Bay Reserve, we are again putting on the Mosquito Cup event. It's a canoe event designed for the whole family. If you're a seasoned veteran or you've never paddled a canoe - you'll fit right in.

The Mosquito Cup weekend is a fun, competitive event. There are contests in whitewater, canoe tug-of-wars and mosquito collecting. It will be great to see you here that weekend.

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