

## Loon to the Severn By Canoe

I was nine years old when my parents purchased their Crown Land lot on the north-east side of Loon. As a typical young boy I liked to explore the lands and waterways around the lakes. Sometimes I'd row my little red "punt" that my father built and often times I enjoyed just following the granite ridges that run parallel to the lakes.

My friend Mike whose parents had also purchased a Crown Land lot in 1959 had one of the first canoes on the lakes and also a topographical map of the area. As I assume most LTLCA folks know, the water flows from Loon into Turtle and then into a marsh land that the map of "Loon Lake Wetlands Conservation Preserve" designates as "Loon-Turtle Creek". At the end of the open water marsh land there is a large beaver dam that restricts the water flow into the lower Loon-Turtle Creek. The south end of the beaver dam is anchored to a ridge of rock. During our boyhood explorations on the south side of the beaver dam we found the remains of a small cabin and a "road" that crossed over Loon-Turtle Creek and led south toward N. Muldrew Lake Road. Loon-Turtle Creek passed under N. Muldrew Lake Road at that point and flowed into Muldrew Lake.

We checked the topographical map and it appeared that we could canoe all the way to the Severn River.

In the Summer of 1964 we set out with food, sleeping bags and our two dogs to find our way to the Severn River via canoe. We'd spend the night under the stars and canoe back the next day.

We set out from the east end of Loon. The first "portage" from Turtle into the open water marsh land is easy and probably one that many of you have made over the years. It's very peaceful in the marshland with several types of birds.

Loon-Turtle Creek downstream of the beaver dam has minimal water flow and is very rocky and not navigable. Our portage followed the very overgrown "road" from the beaver dam about 1 km to Muldrew Lake. Fortunately, that was to be our longest portage.

Once we reloaded the canoe and began paddling again in the open water of North Muldrew Lake we relaxed and got away from the bugs that had harassed us during the portage.

From North Muldrew Lake we continued on into Middle Muldrew Lake and through to South Muldrew Lake. At the south-west corner of South Muldrew Lake we followed the South Channel on into Morrison Lake. (At the time, the South Channel was labelled Morrison Creek (north) and very narrow compared to what you can now see on Google Earth.) Paddling through the South Channel was fairly smooth with only occasional shallow depths and fallen trees to navigate.

Water flows from the south end of Morrison Lake into Morrison Creek and meets the Severn River at a point about 11 km west of Hwy 11. Paddling Morrison Creek was quite challenging with a few short portages necessary and fallen trees and underbrush to deal with. But our biggest challenge was trying to prevent the dogs from leaving the canoe whenever we got close enough to the bank of the creek for them to jump out!

Naturally we were delighted to finally reach the Severn. At that time there was a small marina and variety store and we had enough money to buy some cold pop and snacks. We paddled back up Morrison Creek a short distance and found a place to make a campsite, start a fire, heat up our cans of beans, feed the dogs and spend the night. Next morning, we took the same route in reverse back to our cottages on Loon. The total distance we had travelled was about 50 km.

I did the trip again with five of my friends in the late '60's only this time we started in Georgian Bay and only took the route one way to Loon.

I've had many great adventures in and around the lakes over the past 60 plus years and am very pleased to see my grandchildren creating their own memories on the lakes.

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1956 Topographical map and Loon to Severn Canoe Route

