



Lanark County Canoe & Kayak Journeys

Compiled by Cliff Bennett for the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists
For *Lanark County Canoe & Kayak Journeys*, June 2010, republished June 2020

NOTES: Since this guide was first produced ten years ago, many things about our landscape have changed. For example on Route #1 Beckwith Township; Glen Isle on the Mississippi mentions there are several picnic spots towards Carleton Place. All of the land in this section is now privately owned and picnics are not allowed unless by permission of the owners. You will have to eat lunch from your vessel or back at your vehicle.

Several other journeys listed in the guide suggest lunch spots on deserted islands. Watch for and respect private posting signs on all private property.

Please follow up-to-date paddling safety practices at all times. **Many routes should be avoided during spring floods.**

Beckwith Township

#1 Glen Isle on the Mississippi River

How To Get There: From Ottawa take Hwy. 7 to Appleton Side Rd. (County Rd. 17 just east of Carleton Place). North to Cram Road. Trailer park at corner.

The Launch Site: Left to end of Cram Rd.

The Paddle: Historic Glen Isle is across the river. Paddle in either direction. Look for Lavalee Creek on south side, leading to Trans Canada Trail.

Watch For: Rapids; many shore and water birds.

Seasonal Information: Not advisable in spring floods.

Carleton Place

#2 Mississippi River and Lake from Carleton Place

How To Get There: In Carleton Place on Highway 7, go downtown to High Street, up High St. to Joseph St.; turn towards river.

The Launch Site: Centennial Park at the river.

The Paddle: Follow up river to lake and around shorelines. Downriver to bridge and public dock for downtown shopping and food.

Watch For: Carleton Place Canoe Club across from park. Oldest racing canoe club in Canada. Wildlife in bays and wetland shores. Two creeks to explore on north side of lake. Bass spawning beds on south shore. Lake is choppy when windy.

Seasonal Information: Good all open seasons.

Drummond & North Elmsley

#3 Fergusons Falls on the Mississippi River

How to Get There: From Ottawa take Hwy. 7 past Carleton Place to County Rd. 15 and turn right towards Lanark. Travel through Fergusons Falls at the Mississippi River until you meet the river again. From Perth, take County Rd. 511 to County Rd. 15 and turn east onto Drummond Conc 8A and onto Prestonvale Rd. to County R. 15 and east to Fergusons Falls.

The Launch Site: At parking lot beside Fergusons Falls Community Hall. Carry canoe to river behind.

The Paddle: Upriver only. Be cautious of rapids near launch site. Strong currents during spring flood.

Watch For: Excellent wetlands for water birds, herons and passerines. Watch for river otter.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up. Strong currents during spring flood.

#4 Mississippi River at County Rd. 15

How to Get There: From Ottawa, take Hwy. 7 past Carleton Place to County Rd. 15 and turn right towards Lanark. Travel through Fergusons Falls at the Mississippi River until you meet the bridge again. From Perth take County Rd. 511 to County Rd. 15 and turn east to Mississippi River.

The Launch Site: Southwest corner of bridge across from campground.

The Paddle: Upstream, under County Rd. 511 bridge to rapids.

Watch For: Excellent wetland at bend in river where you can find exit of Fall River. Also look for entrance to Clyde River near rapids. Abundant wildlife.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up. This section of the Mississippi River is hauntingly beautiful. The mostly unoccupied shores are lined with lush wetland vegetation and mature soft maple trees. Aquatic life abounds, including turtles on fallen logs, many duck families, great blue herons around every bend and at least three families of loons warning canoeists not to get too close.

Lanark Highlands

#5 Joe's Lake

How to Get There: North of Hopetown on County Rd. 511 to French Line at Brightside. Go westerly on French Line and Lavant Darling Rd. to Joe's Lake, 15 km. Turn right on Flower Station Rd. just before the bridge. The Launch Site: Small park across from derelict ball diamond and huge gravel bank.

The Paddle: Bear left, follow shore and you eventually reach a wetland channel leading into the Clyde River. Follow channel about 500 m to dam and picnic site.

Watch For: Bluebirds as you approach lake and bitterns in reeded wetland. Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up

#6 Stump Lake and Mississippi River Downstream

How to get there: From Perth, take Hwy 511 to Balderson, left on County Rd. 7 through Fallbrook to County Rd. 12, left on County Rd 12 through McDonald's Corners to Elphin and north on County Rd 36 two km, to Stump Lake.

The Launch Site: Small park and dock. Picnic table and privy.

The Paddle: Follow lakeshore clockwise and into the river. Take left shore upriver to rocky area and rapids. Good spot to lunch and explore. Rugged, be careful. Return on north side and into branch of river to end and waterfall (McLaren Depot Snye). Return to launch site or explore Stump Lake to High Falls Dam and back.

Watch for: Many bays and streams to explore. Also watch for submerged stumps.

Seasonal information: Great for autumn colours. Good until freeze-up.

#7 White Lake West End

How to Get There: North on Highway 511 almost to end of Lanark County. Watch for boat launch sign at White Lake Road. Go 1.4 km to a 3-way split. Take the left fork onto Walabec Road. 0.9 km and turn right onto Walabec Side Road. The boat launch is 0.2 km. on this road. Distance: From Hopetown 26 km.

Launch Site: Gravel beach. Park car at edge of lot to accommodate people with motorboat trailers.

The Paddle: West end White Lake is like northern lakes with rocky shores, beautiful island scenes, wetland coves and bays. Makes for interesting and peaceful meander along shores and around islands.

Watch For: Unusual creek opening on north shore leading to falling brook. Interesting rock formations and wild flowers. Scan the skies for the bald eagle which nests in the region.

Seasonal Information: Most beautiful fall colours. Good until freeze-up.

#8 Dalhousie Lake and Mississippi River downstream

This canoe trip is a pleasant glide down a portion of the Mississippi River as it flows out of Dalhousie Lake, along mostly marshy shores, habitat for several species of birds and ducks, muskrat and turtles.

Travel to McDonald's Corners, west of Lanark Village. Then go north on County Road 8 to the bridge, about one km.

Park in the park and boat launch on the lake side of the bridge. Paddle under the bridge and go downstream as far as Sheridan's Rapids. Be careful not to go through the rapids unless you are a confident white-water canoeist.

You will find several places in this area (with permission of property owners) to stop and have lunch before canoeing back upriver to your vehicles.

Watch for a side trip north into McCullough's Mud Lake. The depth of water in this mud lake will determine how far in you can go. It's well worth while exploring. Wetland birds along shores. Beaver, muskrat, and otter.

Upon returning, you might like a cup of tea at the nearby restaurant.

#9 Park Lake

How to Get There: From Perth, take County Rd. 511 north through Hopetown 2 km to County Rd. 16. From Ottawa, take Hwy 417, to exit for Hwy. 49 through Almonte. Pick up County Rd. 16 to Hopetown at County Rd. 511 and north to County Rd. 16 again. Pass through Poland about 1/4 km, turn south on Umpherson Mills Rd. Take left fork at Umpherson's sawmill. Turn right at first side road onto smaller but well-maintained road at property number 2571 for snowmobile clubs but does not appear on road maps. (Change since publication: The property number 2571 has been removed from this corner).

The Launch Site: Have patience! You eventually come to a launch site on right side of road.

The Paddle: Circumnavigate the lake. Keep track of directions for you can get lost in multitude of bays and passages. Back at launch site, go downstream under culvert (if beavers haven't plugged it) to small lake with picnic island to left.

Watch For: Most beautiful lake in the region.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

#10 Clyde River at Clyde Forks

How to Get There: From Perth, take County Rd. 511 past Hopetown to French Line at Brightside. North on County Rd. 511 to French Line. Follow French Line and Lavant Darling Ro. to Joe's Lake. Take right on Flower Station Rd. and follow on to low dam beside road.

The Launch Site: Above dam. This is Clyde River.

The Paddle: Upriver, under bridge and veer right into Widow Lake. Take creek at north end of lake as far as you can go.

Watch For: Beaver dams. West side of lake is roadway. This is the former K&P railroad bed. Beautiful, high bluffs abound.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

#11 Riven Lake and the Little Clyde River

This is a cute, easy paddle providing there is enough water in the river. All through the area, you will hear and see alder flycatchers plus many more bird species.

How To Get There: From Perth take County Rd. 511 past Hopetown and next left past County Rd. 16 at Lammermoor Rd. From Ottawa take Hwy. 7 past Carleton Place to County Rd. 15 to Lanark Village and County Rd. 511, then north to Lammermoor Rd.

The Launch Site: 1/2 km on Lammermoor to double culverts. This is Little Clyde River.

The Paddle: Upriver as far as you can go (subject to beaver dams). For entrance to Rivens Lake, keep right. Small lake interesting to circumnavigate. Good picnic area on rocky bluff. For downriver, go through the culvert at launch site.

Watch For: Nesting alder flycatchers and other marsh species. Portage beaver dams with caution. Downriver may be plugged at culverts.

Seasonal Information: River best in spring and early summer. It was early June when we did this trip and there was plenty of water. In dryer times, you might find the river blocked in a few places by beavers. Depending upon your confidence, you can get over these dams easily and continue. Enjoy.

#12 Clyde River at Lanark Village

How to Get There: From Perth take County Rd. 511 to Lanark. From Ottawa take Hwy. 7 past Carleton Place to County Rd. 15 and on to Lanark.

The Launch Site: In the village, just over the bridge and turn right past feed store to park.

The Paddle: Explore downriver under bridges to dam. Then upriver through Kerr Lake and under County Rd. 511 bridge to rapids. Lunch at rapids or in the village.

Watch For: In Kerr Lake, colonies of black terns. Wetland shores abundant with waterfowl.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up. Beware of duck hunters in autumn.

#13 Robertson Lake

How to Get There: From Almonte, take County Rd.16 (Wolf Grove Rd.) to County Rd. 511 at Hopetown. Turn north to County Rd. 16 and West to Robertson Lake. Take sharp turn to Lavant. From Perth take County Rd. 511 north.

The Launch Site: Public park. Parking on site. Small car fee may be levied.

The Paddle: Due to prevailing winds circumnavigate lake clockwise in morning, counter clockwise in afternoon. Return to park for lunch and swim at sandy beach. Picnic tables.

Watch For: Marsh birds along shores. Bass spawning beds at far end of lake.

Seasonal Information: Picturesque and relaxing lake. Magnificent fall colours. Good until freeze-up.

#14 Taylor Lake

How to Get There: From Almonte take County Rd.16 (Wolf Grove Road) 12km to Lanark Conc. 12. Turn north.

The Launch Site: End of road.

The Paddle: Circumnavigate lake. Watch for underwater stumps in bays. Lake was raised considerably two decades ago. Several lunch places.

Watch For: Directly across lake from boat launch a road leaving the shore. Connecting these two points was a famous floating bridge, destroyed by Hurricane Connie in 1964. Many of the logs can be seen under water. Marsh birds along north shore and east end of lake.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

Taylor Lake 1: Taylor Lake is a small lake connected to Clayton Lake. To get there, go west from Union Hall (junction of County Roads 9&16) three km to Lanark Conc. 12. Turn north to the end of this road (about 11/2 km) to the end of the road at the lake. Launch your canoe at the small boat launch and circumnavigate the lake. Watch out for stumps in the bays. This lake was raised considerably two decades ago, with the reconstruction of the dam at Clayton. On the first point to your left as you launch, you can see a path of downed, dead trees, which were felled by a tornado a few years ago. Directly in a line across the lake from the boat launch is a road leaving the shore. Connecting these two points was a famous floating bridge. It was wiped out by hurricane Connie in 1964 and many of the logs can be seen on the bottom on the lake. There are several places to stop to have lunch (with permission of property owners).

Taylor Lake 2: As for Taylor Lake 1 but paddle east towards and into Clayton Lake. Keep to the left shore and follow the bays and islands and you will eventually enter the Indian River. In fall, you will be travelling through wild rice beds. In the middle of the river, within site of the Command Bridge on Galbraith Road, you will find a small island, very ideal for a picnic lunch. Watch out for stumps under the water.

Mississippi Mills

#15 Appleton and Mississippi River downriver

How to Get There: From Ottawa Hwy. 7 to Appleton Side Rd. 3 km before Carleton Place. North to River Rd. and into Appleton village. Do not cross river.

The Launch Site: Small park below falls.

The Paddle: Explore bay and downriver towards Almonte. Land canoes under bridge beside Old town Hall, take River Walk under RR bridge to explore downtown. Not recommended during spring flood.

Watch For: Old mill ruins, small hydro generating station, wetland shores. Herons abound. No lunch landing spots.

Seasonal Information: Be cautious of fast currents in spring flood. Warning: waterfalls: do not approach town bridge during spring flood.

#16 Clayton Lake

How to Get There: From Almonte, take County Rd.16 (Wolf Grove Rd.) 12 km to County Rd. 9 (Tatlock Rd.). Turn north into Clayton Village.

The Launch Site: At dam; parking on site.

The Paddle: Circumnavigate the lake. Following northwest shore brings you into the mouth of the Indian River. Explore to bridge on Galbraith Rd. Lunch sites near bridge.

Watch For: Extensive wild rice beds, ducks and marsh birds.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up. Wild rice best in autumn.

#17 Mississippi River from Pakenham Upriver

How to Get There: North from Almonte on Hwy. 29 to Pakenham, or from Ottawa, north on Hwy. 417 to Kinburn Side Rd. and west to Pakenham and over Five Span Stone Bridge.

The Launch Site: In Pakenham, find park behind public school. Launch at swimming beach.

The Paddle: Upriver to foot of Blakeney Falls.

Watch For: Beautiful shorelines, herons and other birds. Indian Creek through tunnel under roadway, shoreline wild flowers. Lunch site at Falls.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up. WARNING: Don't get swept downstream from this launch site during spring flood.

#18 Mississippi River from Pakenham Downriver

WARNING: Stay clear of rapids under bridge by launch site

How to Get There: North from Almonte on County Rd. 29 to Pakenham, or from Ottawa, north on Hwy. 417 to Kinburn Side Rd. and west to Pakenham and over Five Span Stone Bridge.

The Launch Site: Park at foot of Five Span Stone Bridge. Launch at riverside.

The Paddle: Travel downriver as far as you wish, skirting shorelines for best effect.

Watch For: Explore Cody Creek on south shore. Red-headed woodpeckers nest in old trees. Many shoreline wild flowers. Otters are common. Lunch spots and tea rooms in village.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

#19 Mississippi River from Almonte Upriver

Warning: Not recommended during spring flood. Stay clear of bridge in Almonte during spring flood.

How to Get There: From Ottawa, take Hwy. 417, Exit 155 at County Rd. 49 to Almonte, left on Martin St. South.

The Launch Site: End of Martin St. South at river by lookout.

The Paddle: Explore town and upriver towards Appleton. Have lunch at small park in Appleton.

Watch For: Abundant wildlife along shorelines.

Seasonal Information: Strong currents and high water in spring, so don't paddle past bridge. Otherwise, good until freeze-up.

#20 Almonte and Mississippi River Downstream

How to Get There: From Ottawa take Hwy. 417 exit 155 at Hwy. 49 to Almonte. Metcalfe Park is below waterfalls on County Rd. 49, and part of downtown Almonte.

The Launch Site: Beach in park.

The Paddle: Explore foot of two waterfalls, shorelines downriver to Blakeney. Small park across road by bridge in Blakeney for picnic and exploring.

Watch For: Large stone woollen mill at Almonte (now condominiums). Shallow rapids halfway to Blakeney. In low water walk canoe.

Seasonal Information: Strong currents and high water in spring.

Perth

#21 Tay River into Tay Marsh to Beveridge Locks

How to Get There: From Ottawa take Hwy. 7 through Carleton Place to Perth. From Smiths Falls, take County Rd. 43 to Perth. Find Last Duel Park at east edge of town along Tay River.

The Launch Site: The dock at Last Duel Park. Also the Basin in Perth (parking fees apply).

The Paddle: Downriver to Tay Marshes in Drummond/ North Elmsley. Then follow Tay Canal markers to locks (about three hours each way). For an additional short trip, follow upriver from Last Duel Park to centre of town. Picnic tables at locks or lunch in town.

Watch For: Historic architecture downtown and stone walls of canal. Tay Marsh abundant in wildfowl and waterbirds. Be careful to follow green canal markers. Osprey nest near locks.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

Smiths Falls

#22 Smiths Falls Marshlands and Poonamalee Lock Station

How to Get There: Smiths Falls on Abbott St.

Launch Site: Upper Reach Park by canal. Look for open cantilever bridge. Car charge \$3 at volunteer post.

The Paddle: Extensive marshlands. Follow shoreline counterclockwise leading into canal channel with markers to Poonamalee Lock Station for lunch. **Watch For:** Teeming flora and fauna in marshlands. Osprey nest across from launch site. Martin house between boathouses. **Seasonal Information:** Best in spring until mid July and again in September/October.

Tay Valley Township

#23 The Waterway: Hogg Bay/Big Rideau/Loon Lake Loop

How to Get There: Six km south of Perth on County Road 1 to County Road 21. Twelve km to Murphys Point.

The Launch Site: At the main beach on Hogg Bay. Site fees apply.

The Paddle: Recommended direction for prevailing winds from the west: paddle the narrow channel from Hogg Bay into Big Rideau Lake and keep to the left shoreline around the point into Noble Bay. Paddle almost to the end of the bay, then portage 100 m into Loon Lake, then second portage of 100 m into Hogg Bay. Picnic at McParlan House (Hogg Bay), natural beach or point (Big Rideau) or Park Store (Loon Lake). Camping available at 14 boat-access campsites.

Watch For: Black Creek rapids, Burgess Sawmill ruins and restored homestead (Hogg Bay).

Seasonal Information: Park open from early May to Thanksgiving, camping or day-use vehicle permit required. Canoe rentals available late June —Labour Day.

#24 Long Lake

How to Get There: South from Perth on County Rd. 1 towards Rideau Ferry to County Rd. 21. Turn towards Murphy's Point Provincial Park. Turn right at Long Lake Rd. (see sign for Scout Camp) and travel 3 km.

The Launch Site: RVCA launch site on left.

The Paddle: South shore and islands more interesting. Several good lunch and swimming locations.

Watch For: Creek into wetland at east end. Interesting lichen on rock walls.

Seasonal Information: Good until freeze-up.

#25 Tay River from Glen Tay to Perth

How to Get There: Five km west of Perth on Hwy. 7 to traffic lights at Glen Tay. South over the railroad tracks to Christie Lake Rd. Left on Christie Lake Rd. and right onto Glen Tay Rd., to bridge over Tay River.

The Launch Site: Northwest corner of bridge across from stone mill. Car park north side of white house by stone wall. Launch site difficult for less able persons.

The Paddle: Either shoot immediate rapids or walk canoe down rapids. Not suitable for less able persons. Paddle downriver to small dam at golf course. Portage (watch for flying golf balls) to point of land by red arched bridge. Beach canoe here to picnic, or cross park to explore.

Watch For: Bountiful wildlife and wild flowers.

Seasonal Information: Shallow in spots during low water. Fair current when water high. Takes longer to return to launch site.

#26 Pike Lake

Pike Lake is one of those lakes that seems to have always been there as one passes nearby on County Road 10 travelling from Perth to Westport but never considers it as a canoeing lake. Travelling to Pike Lake from home (Clayton) takes about fifty minutes and is just within the parameters of journeys no more than one hour from home.

Pike Lake's most interesting face is along the south-east shore. The scenery includes several islands, an extensive wetland served by a half km. creek and an interesting and varied shoreline. The north-west shore seems to hold wall-to-wall cottages and trailers.

We found a great place to put in for a picnic lunch on the south end of a substantial peninsula but, there are other spots on the various islands (with permission of property owners). We didn't get to the southern end of the lake for, we ran out of time. You can explore that end and report to us what you found. Have a good paddle.

How to Get There: From Hwy. 7 go into Perth (Wilson Street, then onto Gore Street) to County Rd. 10., then west towards Westport about 15 km. Watch for faded boat launch sign on left, 1 km past turn-off to Stanleyville.

The Launch Site: The dam in Grant's Creek. **The Paddle:** Up creek into lake. Stay south (left), through islands and return. Good picnic sites on islands.

Watch For: Small sandy beach in a mainland bay for swimming. Extensive wetland at east end of lake. **Seasonal Information:** Good until freeze-up.

#27 Bennett Lake

How to Get There: From Perth, travel north on County Rd. 511 to Balderson, then west on County Rd. 7 to Fallbrook, then west on County Rd. 19 (Bennett Lake Rd.) 2 km to Ennis Rd. Follow on Ennis Rd. to Ennis Cottages (approx. 6 km).

The Launch Site: Boat launch site at Ennis Cottages. Launch fee \$2.50 per vessel.

The Paddle: 1) Follow the lake shore clockwise and into Fall River and Fagan Lake. Several lunch spots on islands. 2) Follow the lakeshore counter-clockwise into Fall River to dam and back. Lunch at small park at dam, with permission.

Watch For: Many small coves with various duck species and wild wetland flowers. Rare black tern nests and other marshland birds.

Seasonal Information: Beautiful fall colours. Good both ways until freeze-up.

28 Upper Tay to Christie Lake

How to get there: Take highway 7 west past Perth to Glen Tay Junction; turn south over the RR tracks to Christie Lake Road. Go West on Christie Lake Road approx. 20 km to Hanna Road. Take Hanna almost to County Rd. 36.

The Launch Site: Small gravel launch site at only place river comes close to the road. Off load canoe and park on roadside lay-by.

The Paddle: Upstream for a km, brings you under a bridge and to head of rapids. Then go downstream into Christie Lake. This whole river, almost devoid of habitation, is very beautiful, with many turns, wetland bays, wildlife. On reaching the lake, take the shoreline with least wind resistance.

Watch for: Remnants of logging era on river bottom. Small island in lake, directly out from mouth of river is great for swimming and picnic.

Seasonal information: Good until freeze-up.