

GOING UPRIVER Field Newsletter 1988

GOING UPRIVER is a project of [QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment](http://www.qlf.org), 39 South Main Street, Ipswich, MA 01938 USA. For more information, call (617) 356-0038

DID YOU KNOW:

- That the Great Lakes contain 95% of North America's fresh water, and 20% of all the fresh water in the world?
- That the basin is home to 36 million people: 1/7 of the U.S. population and 1/3 of Canada's?
- That it takes over 200 years for Lake Superior (largest lake in the world) to recharge?

GOING UPRIVER is halfway home! The summer tour is going swimmingly and we have arrived in Cleveland, OH for a two-week stay. For those of you still ahead of us, and interested friends, we've enclosed a brochure and a list of local contacts to help you get to our August programs.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights of the summer so far have focused on the voyageurs and the St. Lawrence River. We've immersed ourselves in early tales and songs, and really gotten a feeling for the life of the early explorers through our own exploits. A trip through the Micmac god Glooscap's famous Reversing Falls on the St. John River set our goal (met so far!) of a boat trip "upriver" at every stop. We dunked ourselves in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at Kouchibouguac National Park, and turned our backs on salt water to head for Quebec. There we visited a fish ladder with bus service (to help spawning salmon around the dam); canoed the wild rapids of the Jacques Cartier River (for a real taste of the voyageur's life!) and presented a week of all-French programs, ably led by Alain.

Teresa arranged our next boat trip, in a 26' North canoe down Ottawa's Rideau Canal with a real voyageur. On Canada Day, we cheered him and his companions on as the costumed crews raced down the Canal for the national Voyageur Cup. The Voyageur's National Campfire was a great place for songs and stories of New France, and a great honor for us Americans as Lynn led the singing of "O Canada" to open the awards ceremonies.

South on the border, St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a great place to sing about Great Lakes freighters. "Look, there's one now!" Our first taste (literally!) of the Great Lakes was a swim in the "sweetwater sea" of Georgian Bay at Bruce Peninsula National Park, where limestone cliffs plunge three hundred feet into turquoise water and the bay floor is strewn with the bones of lost ships. Both Fathom Five National Marine Park (off the Bruce) and Georgian Bay Islands

GOING UPRIVER Field Newsletter 1988

National Park (southeast around the Bay) were perfect settings for "White Squall," "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," and more shipwreck ballads. On GBI's Beausoleil Island, Alain and Teresa led their troop of "papooses" on a WATERWATCH around Papoose Bay to meet Drip the Drop on his WaterCycle and build ourselves into a food pyramid of creatures from the warm lagoon waters.

We capped our end-to-end tour of the Niagara Escarpment with two special field trips: a visit to Ste.-Marie-Among-the-Hurons, the first Jesuit mission in the New World (1639-1649), where Fr. Paul Brébeuf wrote North America's first Christmas carol (The Huron Carol); and a trip to Niagara Falls. "Imagine!" we kept saying, "just imagine being Hennepin and LaSalle, coming along and finding this in the wilderness!" Or imagine the huge falls as it was just after the Ice Age, one mammoth cataract pouring four Great Lakes into a solid white wall of water. A Victorian parlor song describes it perfectly:

*Rumbling, tumbling, tearing away,
Wallowing, bellowing, wet with spray
Like Aunt Deborah's washing day
This trip to Niagara Falls!*

BASINWIDE CONCERN

Everywhere we've been, we've met concern for these fabulous water resources and the need for their wise management. Acid rain is on the minds of all Canadians, and rain of any kind is on all of our minds in this parched summer. Lake levels are low and dropping (an inch a week, says a ship's captain on Georgian Bay), and one message we'll carry from Canada to the Mississippi Valley (and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) is this: diverting water from Lake Michigan may or may not float barges off the mudflats now, and it could sink us all later by spreading the shortage further. No one knows what the effects of a large-scale diversion could be, and our tour this summer is showing us that the Lakes are too precious and fragile a resource to experiment with.

A year ago, Great Lakes United reminded us that "there are no magical plugs we can pull on high water levels of the Great Lakes." In this time of low water, it is even more important to heed their message: "we must learn to respect the power of the Great Lakes, live within their boundaries, and learn from other areas of the country that have suffered from poor coastal zone planning." We're learning all of that, and more, along the Fifth Coast.

HERE AND NOW

Planning for the future requires an understanding of the past and a clear vision of

GOING UPRIVER Field Newsletter 1988

the present. We're finding both in Cleveland, where Paul Svedersky of the Cleveland Waterfront Coalition is introducing us to the Coalition's plans for public access to the lakefront. Restoring historic buildings is a big part of Paul's vision: "Everyone, everywhere, is developing their lakefront, and it would be easy to wind up with them all looking the same. We're looking for ways to make our waterfront unique." Our supporters the George Gund Foundation are helping realize that uniqueness of place with a development plan that includes a 600' ore boat to be moored on the waterfront as a public space.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

Our biggest events of the summer are still ahead! Next weekend is RiverFest, an outdoor festival of over 750,000 people. On August 5, we participate in the dedication ceremonies of the Mattawa River. The plan calls for Alain and Teresa to present a kids' program on shore while Lynn leads the singing of the voyageurs from their twelve-person canoe, as it shoots the rapids to the ceremony platform (culminating in "O Canada" again of course!). Then it's back on the voyageurs' trail to Mackinac Island, Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. Bay Beach Nature Center is planning a full schedule of concerts and programs! Check the dates on your calendar when we'll be in your area, and write or call the addresses below for more information.

See you in August!

LOCAL TOUR CONTACTS

*8/01-6: John Drechsler
Superintendent
Samuel de Champlain P.P.
North Bay, ONT Canada
(705) 744-2276*

*8/11: Sally Gibson
Visitor Activities Specialist
S. Ste. Marie Heritage Locks
Sault Ste. Marie, ONT Canada
(705) 942-6262*

*8/15-22: Ty Baumann
Manager
Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary
Sanctuary Road
Green Bay, WI USA
54302 (414) 497-6084*

*8/25-31: Michael Douglass
Director, Villa Louis
State Historical Society of WI
Box 65, Prairie du Chien, WI*

GOING UPRIVER Field Newsletter 1988

53821 (608) 326-2721
9/03: Jeanne Daniels
Park Naturalist
St. Croix Wild River
Route 1, Box 75
Center City, MN USA
55012 (612) 583-2125
9/6-11: Tom Oates, Dean
Univ. of WI Center-Richland
Richland Center, WI 53581
(608) 647-6186

TAPES & T-SHIRTS

YES, the second cassette is out! GOING UPRIVER features songs, poems and narrative from the summer tour, including my new song about Great Lakes water levels, "Level Best."

For those of you that don't yet have "Topophilia," it's still available on CROSSCURRENTS, along with "Winnebago Dream" and lots of Newfoundland songs from the downstream end of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence.

And there's a T-shirt too, with this handsome logo. They're 100% cotton, in sea mist green, with UPRIVER (our parent logo) in teal green and the CROSSCURRENTS wave in royal. Great for canoe trips!

Proceeds from all items go to support river conservation.

To order, send \$10.00 per item (\$8 + \$2 handling) to QLF/Atlantic Center, 39 South Main Street, Ipswich, MA 01938 USA, ATT: GOING UPRIVER. (Canadian friends: items are \$10 + \$3 handling = \$13.00 Can.)

Or save on postage: come to a concert!