



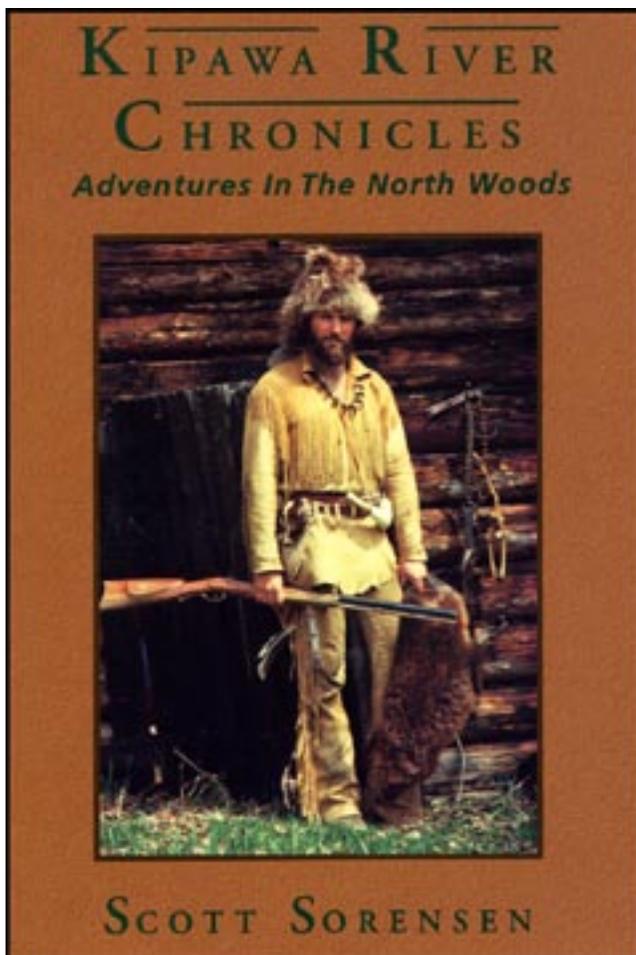
**A Brief History
of Modern Commercial and Recreational Navigation
on the Laniel-to Lake-Temiscaming Section of the Kipawa River
in Northwest Quebec**

March 2005

Background:

This document is presented as a brief summary of the recent history of the recreational and commercial navigation history of the lower section of the Kipawa River from the village of Laniel on Lake Kipawa to the mouth of the river on Lake Temiscaming.

The 2003 Edition of “Whitewater Paddling”, a publication of the internationally renowned Canoe & Kayak Magazine, recently listed the Kipawa River among North America’s top whitewater rivers.



This section of the Kipawa River is approximately 16 km long, with numerous rapids and a two-stage (30 m) waterfall.

The river was used by the logging industry for log drives from 1855 until the 1960s (Sorensen, 1999).

In 1910 a flood control dam was constructed at the mouth of the river where the Village of Laniel is now located.

Modern Commercial and Recreational Navigation (1968 – Present)

To understand the modern history of commercial and recreational white water use of the Kipawa River, you need to see it in the context of the development of this activity in North America.

In the mid-1960s, white water paddling for recreation was in its infancy. Intrepid paddlers were running first-descents of rivers all over North America, and the commercial white water rafting industry was establishing and growing on rivers in the western United States and on the Youghioghny River in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

It was at this time, when white water paddling was in its early development stages as a commercial and recreational activity, that the Kipawa River was first run by recreational paddlers.

Recreational Navigation

In 1968, and for several years afterward, Claude Frank, his son Jim (of Beaver Pennsylvania), Tom Forbes and others ran the Kipawa River from Laniel to the park on Hwy 101. Their trips were made in a 12' inflatable raft, and included runs of the open sluiceways at the Laniel Dam (email C. and J. Frank, 2003).



In 1971, Jose Mediavilla and Joseph Jacob, paddlers from Rouyn, Quebec, began running the Laniel section of the Kipawa in an open canoe. There was no take-out road at that time so running down to the mouth of the river meant a 7 km walk back out to the main road.

Jose continued to run the Kipawa through the early '70s, and by 1976 was using the river for his white water paddling certification courses, sanctioned by the provincial white water organization, Federation Quebecois Canot/Kayak d'Eau Vive.

Some of the paddlers with Jose in the early years included Andre Tessier, Piere Guillemette, Normand Duhaine, Marc Ruel, and Bernard Beland.

Jose Mediavilla, a paddler from Rouyn, Quebec, first ran the Kipawa in 1971.

In 1985, Jose introduced the river to a couple of northern Ontario paddlers and the Kipawa River Rally was born.

Kipawa River Rally

The Kipawa River Rally is the second oldest recreational river festival in eastern North America. The Gauley festival in West Virginia is one year older.



Since 1986, the rally has attracted paddlers to the Kipawa River from all over eastern Canada and the northeastern United States.

At the 19th annual rally in June of 2004, an estimated 320 people paddled the Kipawa River in canoes, kayaks and rafts, and virtually all of them ran the open sluiceway of the Laniel Dam.

Commercial Navigation

The Kipawa River was first looked at by the white water industry in 1987. Development of commercial use followed almost immediately.

Esprit Rafting of Davidson Quebec, is one of two white water rafting companies currently offering commercial trips on this section of the Kipawa River.

Madawaska Kanu Center of Barry's Bay Ontario included the Kipawa River in the itinerary for their one-week tour of eastern Canada rivers for commercial clients. Their commercial paddling trips include running the open sluiceway of the Laniel Dam.

Jim Coffey of Esprit Rafting (Davidson Quebec) has been running the Kipawa River since 1988 and offers commercial rafting trips in conjunction with the Kipawa River Rally. Esprit's rafting trips include running the open sluiceway of the Laniel Dam.

Summary and Conclusion:

As a not-for-profit organization representing the commercial and recreational white water community, we believe we have clearly demonstrated our history of navigation of the Kipawa River from Laniel to Lake Temiscaming, including the sluiceways at the Laniel Dam.

It is difficult to calculate, looking back, exactly how many individual people have navigated the Kipawa River, but certainly it is in the thousands. An estimate of the number of times the river has been navigated over the period we have documented, would be in the tens of thousands. The number of times the sluiceways of the Laniel Dam have been navigated would also be in the tens of thousands. Some individuals have navigated the sluiceways over 100 times.

During the period, going back to 1968, as a community of people, we have demonstrated and exercised our ability to navigate the Kipawa River on a continuous basis, including the sluiceways of the Laniel Dam.

The following paddler's description of the Laniel to Lake Temiscaming section of the Kipawa River was first written in 1986 to provide new paddlers coming to the river with a guide describing the navigability of each section. It is provided here to document our navigation history.



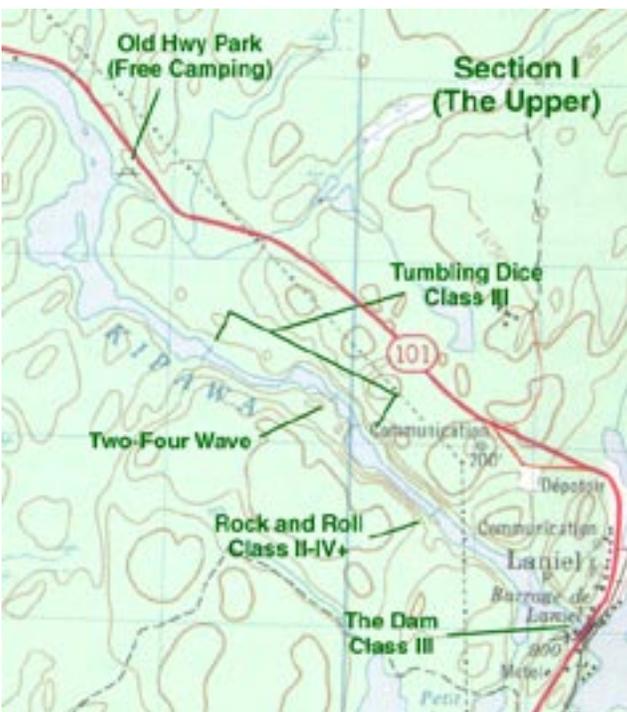
Paddler's Description

The river is runnable at all levels. At the lower end the river does not get above a Class III, with the exception of Pete's Dragon, the middle three drops in Hollywood rapid (a tight technical Class IV) at the mouth of the river. There are 16 named rapids. For ease of reference we talk about the river in three sections: Section I – The Upper (Dam to Highway Park), Section II – The Middle (Highway Park to Island Rapid), Section III – Island Rapid to Lake Temiscaming.

The Dam (Class III all levels):

The flood control dam under the highway bridge in Laniel is very runnable at any level above 120 cms. It has been run at levels below 100 cms but, depending on whether the water is going through one or both gates, the drop may be two steep and not recommended, your choice. Above 250 cms a hole starts to form reacting off the pillar between the two flood gates, but its fairly easy to work around on either side.

Rock and Roll (Class III-IV+ level dependent)



Named by a river guide from Wilderness Tours on a low-water run in the mid-'80s, Rock and Roll is routinely walked by boaters who don't like its steep rocky character. The typical run is to enter right of centre, just to the left of a couple of very small holes reacting to a rock shelf near the surface. Move right then straighten out to run a narrow deep water channel that passes to the right of all the big holes out in the middle. Move left, back out to the centre of the drop as soon as you pass the big hole. Alternative run at levels from very low up to 140 or 150 cms, is to start from just left of centre and work left down a slide drop so that you work to the far left of the rapid about half way through it, then run the bottom half hugging the left shoreline through a steep, abrupt hole. This is an easy run at low water when you can actually eddy out half way through. It gets progressively tougher the more water there is.

Tumbling Dice (Class III all levels):

Around the bend past Rock and Roll the river narrows a bit signalling the start of a long easy rapid called Tumbling Dice. The second drop in the rapid has a very sweet surfing wave called the Two-Four Wave. Always there above 120 cms but best experienced at levels between 140 and 220. Tumbling Dice continues around the corner and then down the river some more in a series of easy waves that end with the beginning of a stretch of flat water that runs past a bend in Hwy 101. There is an abandoned Hwy picnic park here that is no longer maintained. Its a perfect spot for camping, very private, lots of parking, no camping fees, no one bothers you.



Buttonhook (Class III-IV+ level dependent)

At low water, Buttonhook is where you get your first real look at the Kipawa's rocky river bed. Put some water in the river, and Buttonhook is where you get your first taste of the Kipawa's strength and dynamic character. At high water, people who aren't comfortable in big pushy stuff, call this rapid a Class V. At low water, pick your way down. At levels above 80 run the classic line, start left of centre, move almost immediately to the centre, move right towards the bottom of the upper section to get to the big eddy on the corner. Run the bottom section starting right, then working left at lower water, and staying right at higher water.

Huey, Duey and Louie (Class III all levels)

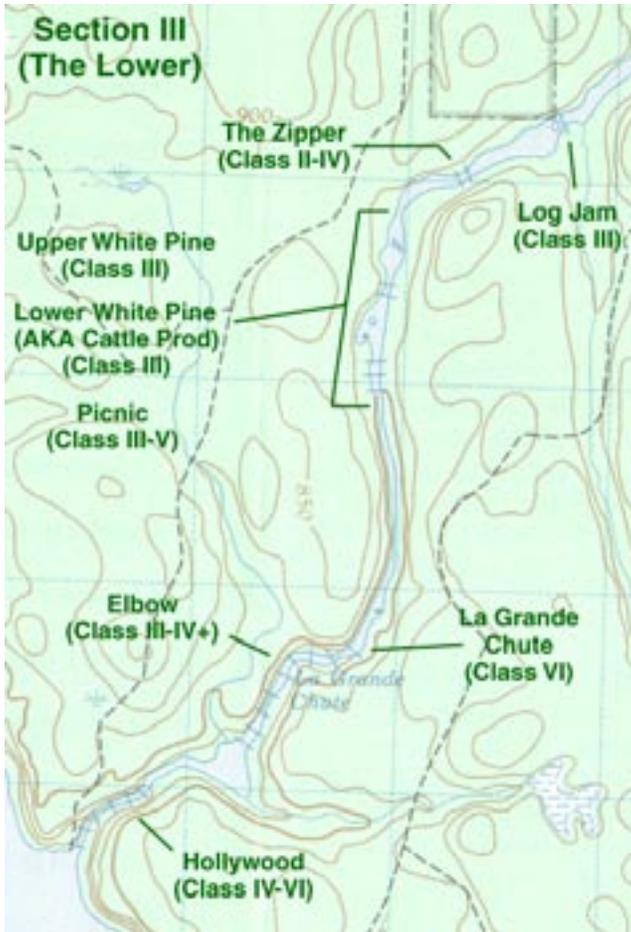
Three little drops, sometimes called Sex, Lies and Videotape. Easy run. There is a small play wave on the left in the second drop.

Broken Bridge (Class III all levels)

If you happen to be on the Kipawa at a level somewhere between 120 and 130 cms, bring your favorite Beach Boys album...because this is surf city. There is a glassy 3-boat wave that just won't quit. Enter from either side. A river-left entry requires pulling your boat up along side the log foundations of the old bridge. The wave is surfable between 80 cms and probably 220. It gets difficult to get on at the higher levels, but there are two waves below it that come into play then. Whatever the level, chances are you will have fun.

Island Rapid (Class III all levels)

Below Broken bridge the river splits around an island. River left is easier. River right is runnable at all levels but gets a little rocky at low water and requires a bit of care in running. The river flattens out for bit after Island Rapid.



Log Jam (Class III all levels):

This is the start of the steepest part of the Kipawa. Do not offer yourself or your boat to the upstream side of Log Jam Island. We've seen the log jam at low water. Take our word for it...It's undercut. Run with the main flow on the left side of Log Jam Island. Pick a line just right of centre and stay on it. Easy run.

Zipper (Class III-IV level dependent):

We can't remember how zipper got its name. But we know it as the home of the biggest wave on the river. The run is always the same. Run with the main flow around on the left side of the river. Down around the corner, there is a shelf that forms a hole on the right side of the river and a wave on the left. The wave is sometimes rolling back on itself but is always runnable. At levels above 175 cms, this wave gets big. At levels above 220 cms, it gets huge. At levels above 315 cms, it reaches galactic proportions. This wave pushes you to the left, which is no fun. The left hand shore is rocky. If the wave looks pushy, hit it moving right and you'll be fine.

Upper White Pine (Class III all levels):

This is a series of corners and waves that is home of a small but very popular surfing spot. Lower White Pine (Class III all levels):

Also know as Cattle Prod, this is a short steep drop that is actually a five-foot ledge at low water. Good fun with diagonal waves and lots of quick action. Run left down the chute.

Picnic (Class III-VI level dependent):

Picnic, named after the picnic table up the rocky shore on the right is a river-wide hole that is an easy run but can be a problem above 100 cms. At 357 cms there was a large tree recirculating in it, which presented an opportunity to a walk the right-hand shore. At low water, pick a line and go. At medium to high water run from centre pushing right to hit right in the corner where the reactionary wave coming off the shore, joins with the edge of the big hole. Or run far left, careful for the ledge hole below.

Le Grande Chute:

This two-drop, 30 m waterfall has been considered an unrunable Class VI meatgrinder since paddlers first started running the river in the early 1970s. Three short Class IV-V entry drops above the main falls were run at low water as early as 1986. But the falls remained the only unrunable section of the Kipawa. Then in 2000, three intrepid paddlers, Mike McCubbin, Brent Cooper and Ben Aylsworth achieved the first descent. Since then, the falls has been run by a couple of other groups of paddlers. **WARNING:** Although this waterfall has now been run, it remains an extremely challenging drop, with significant dangers, and should only be attempted by the experts, at very low water, with all possible safety measures in place. The walk is on the right. At low water there is a tall shelf rock at the bottom of the waterfall that is nice for diving from into the deep flat pool below. **WARNING:** Before diving, wade in and swim down to look for logs and debris submerged in the pool. Lots of stuff ends up collecting below the falls. Its fun to swim under water from this pool directly into the funnel of water pumping off the bottom of the falls.

Elbow (Class III-IV+):

Put-in below the Grande Chute and you are in Elbow Rapid. On a 130 cms run of Elbow in 1985 a Quebec paddler broke a two-foot section off the front of his glass boat in the big hole down around the corner. We never saw the boat again.

At low water, just pick your way down. At medium to high water, start right and work immediately to the centre, and then to the left as you hit the corner. The objective is to miss the big hole on the right side of the river, where all the water is going, and make the big eddy on the left side of the river where all your buddies are. The bottom section of Elbow is a fun, straight forward run through waves and small holes.

Hollywood (Class IV-VI level dependent):

This rapid was named as a tribute to the movie makers who made the property here their summer home years ago. Hollywood would look good on any river, anywhere. Its a tough run, and an even tougher swim. At low water the rapid is runnable top to bottom. The middle section, Pete's Dragon is named after Pete Karwacki, the first kayaker to run it. It is essentially three drops with not much breathing space between. Run the first drop through a small chute on the right, through a small but steep hole that can mess with your line a bit (the tail of the Dragon). Most boaters skirt around the edge of this thing rather than punch it. Then you are immediately in the second drop. Run up onto the big rock pillow on the right then let your boat turn a bit and slip sideways to the left. You end up dropping down and bracing onto a curling reactionary which sets you up to run the rocky slide in the last half of the second drop (the belly of the Dragon). Try and make your move so that you end up in the eddy river right. Then you will have a chance to look back over your shoulder to sight your run over the 10-12 foot fall behind you (the mouth of the Dragon). The fall is not a problem. Less of a plunge the further right you go, but we've run it everywhere. This has been run up to, I think, about 75 cms. You decide.

At higher water Pete's Dragon is not, yet, runnable. There is a rocky sneak down the right shore that essentially keeps you out of the rapid and is not much wetter than the portage. At all levels you can run from the top to take out above Pete's Dragon but



keep in mind that you will need to get your boat to a small eddy in solid Class III+ water above a very serious drop. If you are not comfortable with that, best to do the carry. Veteran Kipawa paddlers who have been running this drop for 20 years, still pause for a second above the top of Hollywood every time they run it, to focus and remind themselves of the seriousness of missing the eddy. Take the short walk around Pete's Dragon, then back in your boat for the bottom half of Hollywood. Ferry out to the centre and then to the left side of the river. This is a fairly easy run in big swirling, churning water with lots of "where the heck did that come from" waves

in it. The objective is a left-of-center run coming out the center or left at the bottom, when most of the water is trying to talk you into going right. The consequences of a right-side run is a rude awakening in Davey Jones Locker, a rather large, very dynamic hole. Hollywood is pushy and surprises a lot of paddlers, and there is usually an audience with cameras to capture the moment if you mess up. NOTE: The bottom of Hollywood is very rocky and extremely un-friendly to swimmers and boaters with their helmet-side down.