

## Trip Report

# Smye Lake to Flindt Landing

Report by Dave McTeague, with partner Hank Ostwald

Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> to Monday Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Length: 42 Km or 26 miles;

Portages 11 total: Smye to Wilkie: 131, 191 or line, 71, 131 meters

Wilkie to Flindt Landing: 180, 66, 643, 36, 147, 22, 47 meters

This is a shorter route which we did to better document the **Smye Lake entry point**, and the Smye Creek/ponds to Wilkie Lake. This was our short canoe trip prior to attending FOW's Wabakimi Rendezvous gathering.

Many others have documented the Flindt/Heathcote/Heafur part of this Flindt River route. (Note there are at least three Smye discussion threads in the BWCA.com Wabakimi forum) Don't forget, Wilkie Lake is just inside of Wabakimi Provincial Park and you need park permits.

On Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> I left Winnipeg and drove to Savant Lake. (following two trips with my spouse—to Churchill & the beluga whales; and then a seven day paddle on the Brightsand River south of Allanwater Bridge). Booked into the Four Winds Motor Hotel, and met John Kehayas and his son Caige. Accommodations are very basic. John had taken ownership of this hotel just a few weeks before along with the store across the street. They kindly provided us with meals in their restaurant. Hopefully John and Caige will provide future shuttles; as there doesn't seem to be any other locals interested; least not yet. [Rusty Meyers](#) reportedly will offer a shuttle that's combined with a flight, so conceivably one could fly in and paddle out.

On Monday, Hank arrived on the train, having left his car in Armstrong. The rustic train stop is just a block away from the hotel. We chilled and enjoyed John's evening fireworks display in honor of his son's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

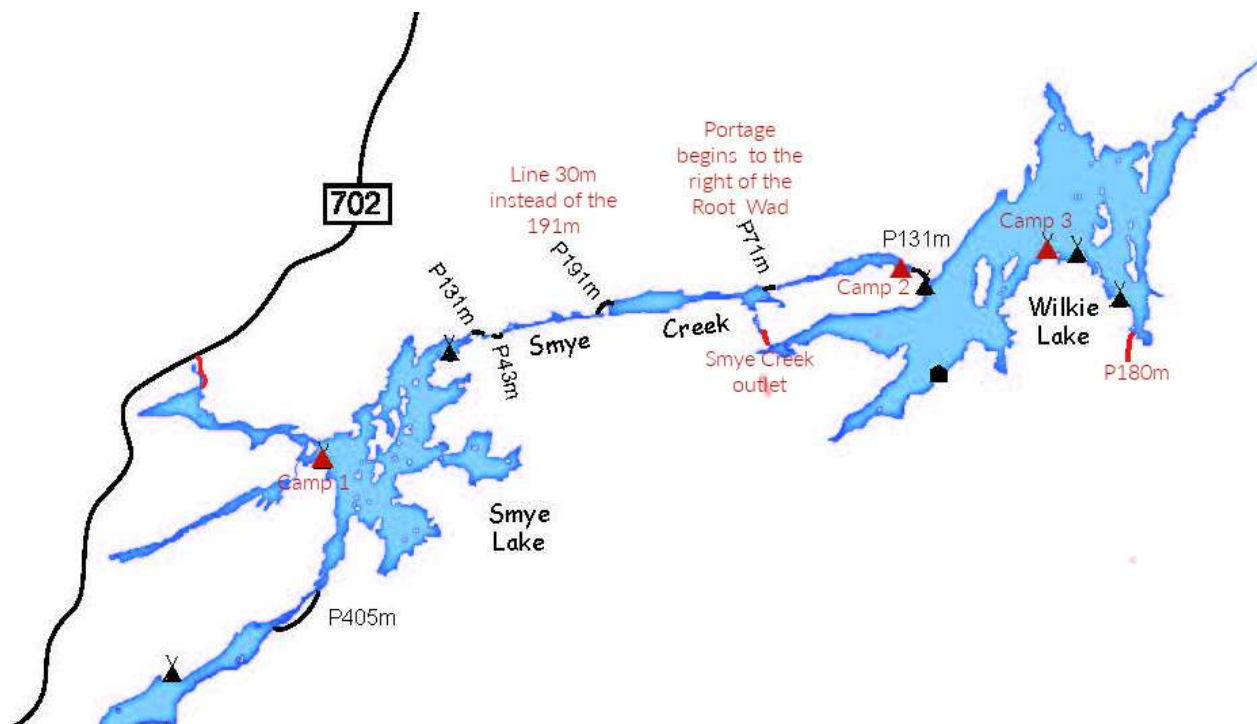
Tuesday Aug 30th, we loaded up the canoe, packs and gear for the van shuttle up to Smye Lake on the 702 gravel road, leaving my car parked in front of the hotel. Finding the short gravel access to Smye Lake was challenging, as we drove by too fast and had to back track. It was indeed marked by ribbons, and the gps coordinates provided by a friendly BWCA.com poster were spot on. My InReach said:



Lat: 50.380277 Lon: -90.369534

The access road is getting overgrown down to the clearing. Any high-clearance vehicle could drive down and park/camp. Take the portage/ATV trail to the left and keep going; don't put in at the first place that's near the pond. Follow this far enough to get around the beaver dam. See the attached GPX file for this portage. I wouldn't recommend plowing through the marsh like [Kevin Outdoor's](#).

We launched and made it the short distance to campsite # 1 on the point next to a channel. There are some broken camp chairs and curious remnant bags of something. A lovely spot though that looks out on the whole lake.



Campsite # 2

Two easy portages and then we reached the mapped 191m portage. We did look for the portage and Hank walked partly around the ridge and placed a few ribbons. It's possible the actual portage is a further north of the creek, and certainly overgrown.

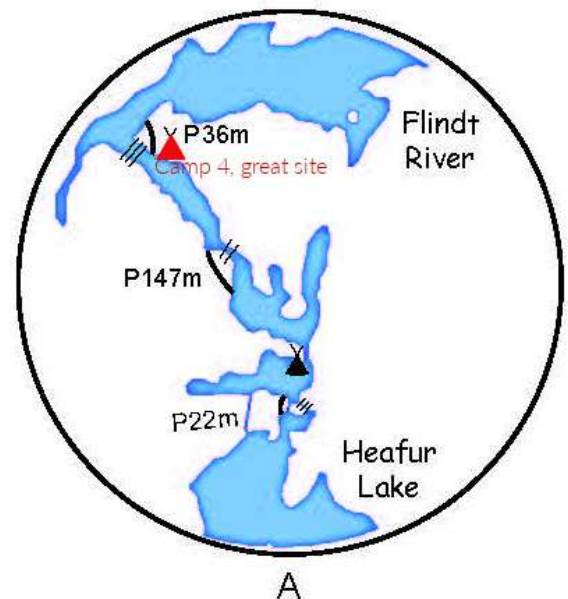
Like most previous paddlers we lined our fully loaded canoe about 30 meters through this tight rocky passage, sometimes up to my

hips in the stream and otherwise balancing on the rocks and boulders. Thanks to the previous paddlers who removed the most of the log obstructions. Extreme care needs to be taken. This might be more difficult with higher water levels.

Wed. August 31<sup>st</sup>, we portaged into Wilkie Lake and paddled around to the SE bay to see the rocky Smye Creek outlet. We saw one motorboat fishing and paddled by the Rusty Myers fly-in outpost, the only one on this lake. Then past the camps on the north of the peninsula and around to the bottom bay. At last we found the portage, but no good campsites, so we paddled back to nice one we passed by.

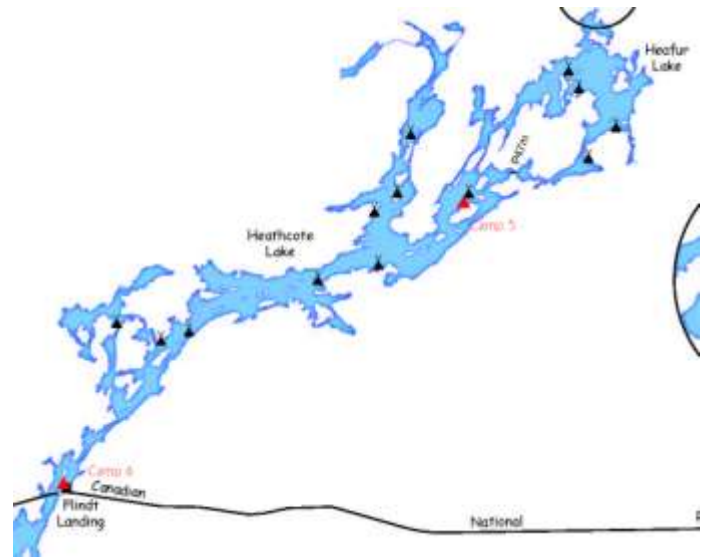


Campsite # 3



A beautiful day of paddling followed on the Flindt River with a 180, 66, 643, 36m portages to a nice camp below a drop. Some fishing produced a modest catch of pickerel and a pike for our one fish dinner.

The next day we paddled the east arm of Heafur Lake and over a short 47m portage to a nice enough island camp for an even sunset. The small island site on the FOW map right above is in error.



Last night we spent on grass at Flindt Landing island...place was all closed up tight. I had emailed them earlier in hopes we could stay in a cabin. No one's around...so we set up tents. One very pesky chipmunk made his presence felt.

Monday Morning, Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>. We climbed the stairs to the landing, and waited for our train. A few hours late was our info. Our exit was almost a disaster, as the west bound Via Train rushed by....only to stop further on, sit there for 10 minutes...before finally backing up. The engineer's comments were, "sorry bout that..." and the train attendant said, it was good thing I was waving my arms (frantically).... Yes, we had tickets. Fortunately, they didn't charge us for the canoe.

Twenty minutes later, we're back to Savant Lake and our car. No one's around so we loaded up and made the four hour drive to Thunder Bay.

This is not your epic cross Wabakimi trip; but nice weather, great scenery, relaxed paddling and great company made it a worthwhile trip.