

CanoeSki Spring News April 7, 2007

On Good Friday afternoon I jumped on my bike and took a spin over to the river to see how things were looking down in the valley. In Saskatoon, the river valley is awash with the sounds of geese and gulls congregating on ice-edged sandbars. The water is moving vigorously and looks inviting, but I'm still riding with mitts and toque! I came away with the feeling that we're not quite on the cusp of canoeing yet.

I also wanted to get a feel for the river in early spring to remind me of its many different faces. The vision of a summer playground has been pre-occupying my senses as I worked on a story of a river trip last August. This story was actually a collaborative effort: I provided the narrative; the rest of the writers related their personal impressions of the trip. The trip involved a group of teenagers from military families and was truly remarkable. Our California style weather last summer provided the ideal atmosphere for a dream trip of swimming, sandbar beaches and evening bonfires. For the guide's view, the teenagers' view and the leaders' view of the trip, read [15 Wing Cruises the South Saskatchewan River](http://www.canoeski.com/about.htm#15wing). <http://www.canoeski.com/about.htm#15wing>

The South Saskatchewan figured prominently in CanoeSki's 2006 schedule with 2 new tours in the Southern Waterways line-up. Centennial River Run, in step with Saskatoon's Centennial, ran in early summer and in late fall. The city/river connection is rife with history, so we're repeating the program this season with a new title, [Saskatoon's River History](http://www.canoeski.com/swater.htm#anchorCentennialRR1), once again with an historian on board. <http://www.canoeski.com/swater.htm#anchorCentennialRR1>

Moving downstream from Saskatoon toward Batoche, the river will be the venue for the [David Thompson Voyageur Trek](http://www.canoeski.com/swater.htm#dthompsonanchor), another all new, fur trade themed tour. Thompson is the famous Canadian explorer and mapmaker we'll focus on, travelling a portion of river he paddled, visiting the fur trade fort sites where he worked and generally getting reconnected to our Canadian roots. A bicentennial of international stature provides the impetus for this foray into fur trade history. The [David Thompson Bicentennial](http://www.davidthompson200.ca/) begins in 2007 and runs for 3 years, so we should be able to get more mileage out of this one than Saskatoon's celebration! <http://www.canoeski.com/swater.htm#dthompsonanchor>
<http://www.davidthompson200.ca/>

Still on the river theme, the Whitewater Park concept unveiled last winter with a splash by a presentation from a Colorado engineering consultant is slowly gaining momentum. Saskatoon City Council has recently (Mar. '06) allocated funding for a public consultation process on the proposal to turn the ancient weir into a whitewater playground. Scroll through the updated news items with related links in [What's New](http://www.canoeski.com/new.htm) to find out more. <http://www.canoeski.com/new.htm>

Moving on to the land, the North Central Land Use Plan, underwritten primarily with an industrial development agenda in mind has been drafted and redrafted by the government, but the final version is still under wraps. Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society has spearheaded an alternate land use plan underwritten by forest ecology experts, soon to be presented to the public. The contrast between the 2 plans should give the government cause to re-think its industrial bias toward land use planning. Of overriding concern to canoeists is the mighty *Missinipi* or Churchill River as we know it, in limbo, with no guarantee against desecration by industrial interests at this time. More info and links to the issues are in [What's New](http://www.canoeski.com/new.htm). <http://www.canoeski.com/new.htm>

The Churchill River will also appear as a Saskatchewan icon in a multi-media event hosted by CPAWS at the Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon on May 9. The [Journey to the Yukon's Three Rivers](http://www.cpaaws.ca/), featuring rivers in the Yukon's Peel River watershed, is on a cross-Canada tour. To get in touch with "one of the most amazing places on earth", get your tickets at the Broadway or at CPAWS office 955-6197.

Back to the land again - on a brighter note - Saskatoon and Saskatchewan are hosting for the first time, the Canadian Orienteering Championships in July. This is a mammoth undertaking, considering that the Saskatchewan Orienteering Association only became official last summer. There are multi tasks to be performed including billeting. If you're interested in getting involved, as a volunteer or participant, follow the link to the SOA site. A good starting point in orienteering and the world of map & compass is to enroll in the CanoeSki Wilderness Navigation Course, running again at the end of May.
<http://www.canoeski.com/instruct.htm#mapcomp>

Shortly After the Navigation Course, Paddling Courses begin, followed by a full line-up of weekend and multi-day canoe tour packages, including the ever popular women's canoe program featuring music and massage. The Globe & Mail is featuring the CanoeSki Women & Waves tour in their April 11 Travel section, so G & M subscribers can watch out for that.
<http://www.canoeski.com/instruct.htm>
<http://www.canoeski.com/womanschallenge.htm>

That's about it for things current. With the abundant precip over winter there should be lots of currents to catch later this spring and well into summer. Happy Easter and Happy Paddling!

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