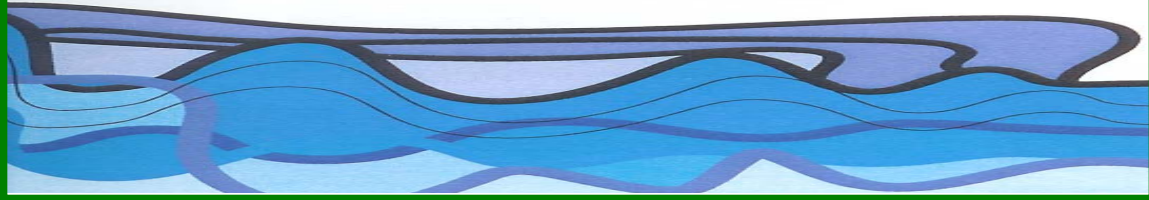
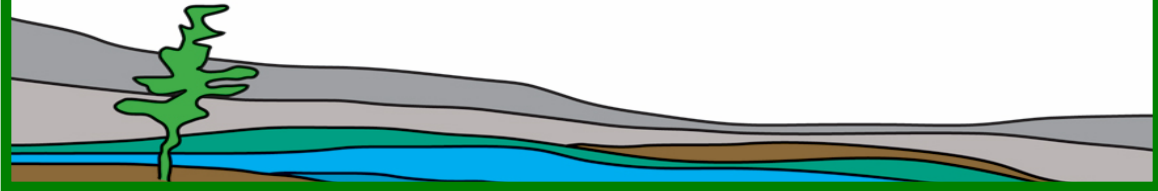


**The Rivière Denys 2005 Expedition;  
A Canadian Geographical Heritage Journey**



**Field Notes**

# The Rivière Denys 2005 Expedition; A Canadian Geographical Heritage Journey



## *General Day-by-Day 'UTM NAD27 Zone 18' Coordinates*

**July 2005**

**Northern Quebec, bush plane put-in camp: 6026044 Northing by 446724 Easting**

**Start Day 2:** 6026044 N. by 446724 E.

**Start Day 3:** 6030462 N. by 438074 E.

**Start Day 4:** 6035213 N. by 425802 E.

**Start Day 5:** 6042812 N. by 418135 E.

**Start Day 6:** 6044853 N. by 418008 E.

**Start Day 7:** 6053498 N. by 416697 E.

**Start Day 8:** 6057882 N. by 414148 E.

**Start Day 9:** 6058215 N. by 414350 E.

**Start Day 10:** 6077477 N. by 390654 E.

**Start Day 11:** 6086647 N. by 384324 E.

**Start Day 12:** 6092530 N. by 371116 E.

**Start Day 13:** 6100760 N. by 360651 E.

**Start Day 14:** 6104504 N. by 359827 E.

**Start Day 15:** 6116286 N. by 347219 E.

**Start Day 16:** 6129375 N. by 335669 E.

Year: 2005

**Riviere Denys Expedition Itinerary**

Number of Trippers: Four

Length in Days: Sixteen

Month of Year: July

Canadian National Topographic System Names-Numbers of Maps Used:

*Scale 1:250,000*

*Lac Kinglet, Quebec - 33J*

*Riviere Denys, Quebec - 33K*

*Poste de la Baleine, Quebec - 33N*

*Scale 1:50,000*

*Lac Daureillant, Quebec - 33J / 6*

*Lac Goffreteau, Quebec - 33J / 5*

*Lac Barrois, Quebec - 33K / 8*

*Lac Silvy, Quebec - 33K / 9*

*No Title, Quebec - 33K / 10*

*Lac Denys, Quebec - 33K / 15 East*

*Lac Denys, Quebec - 33K / 15 West*

*Lac Amyot, Quebec - 33K / 14 East*

*Lacs Adam, Quebec - 33N / 3 East*

*Lacs Adam, Quebec - 33N / 3 West*

*Lac Benoit, Quebec - 33N / 4 East*

*Kuujuarapik, Quebec - 33N / 5*

## **Description of Route:**

### **12 July 2005: *Lac Kawachagamachits, 6026044 Northing by 446724 Easting***

The float plane flew us from La Grande to Lac Kawachagamachits in the late afternoon / early evening and we made camp on the south shore at a makeshift bushy site.

### **13 July 2005: *Lac Kawachagamachits to Lac Niawetawigachi via Lac Achewamanika, Start Day 2: 6026044 Northing by 446724 Easting - from there a 10+ km day***

We departed from our campsite on Lac Kawachagamachits paddling north-west for about 3 km, then we made two short portages which connect Lac Kawachagamachits with Lac Achewamanika. The first portage left the NW bay of Kawachagamachits and went for 150 yards into a 1 km East-West Lake. The second portage left the 1 km East-West Lake and went for 150 yards into Lac Achewamanika. We then paddled about 4 km NW along Lac Achewamanika and on into a small lake to its west, from the NW side of this lake we portaged about 330 yards into Lac Niawetawigachi to the north. This portage connects to a bay below a big island on Lac Niawetawigachi. We then paddled about 2 km to camp on the N shore of the lake at a great campsite on a bluff. It was a long day on the water. We had a very late evening borscht dinner and were able to finally get to bed at 01:30.

### **14 July: *Lac Niawetawigachi towards the height of land of the Great Whale watershed, Start Day 3: 6030462 N. by 438074 E. - from there a 10+ km day / 20+ km total***

From our campsite we paddled on about 6 km through a narrow passage to the western portion of Lac Niawetawigachi, there is an abandoned trapper cabin on the north side of this lake, we had a floating lunch nearby. We then had two liftovers starting at the NW end of the lake, the first brought us to a small pond, the second brought us to a lake demarcated on the map as "Lake 222+/-". We then paddled NW for 4 km and camped on a point of land on the south shore near the at the NW end of the lake, a rather buggy site.

### **15 July: *Lake 222 +/- to Island Lake, to C-Shape Lake, and then to Lac Kahipikamow, Start Day 4: 6035213 N. by 425802 E. - from there a 16+ km day / 36+ km total***

We portaged about 110 yards from the NW end of Lake 222+/- into "Island Lake". We then went to the west end of Island Lake and tried to find a portage yet did not find one, we thus had lunch and then bushed our way north from the east side of the creek for about 400 yards, which took us to the c-shaped Lake 212+/- . We paddled to the west end of the north bay of the lake and then portaged north for about 280 yards, which took us to what Low called Lake Kahipikamow, we called it "Mushroom Shaped Lake". Once on the lake, we paddled northwest for about 7 km, then north for 2 km to travel around a long point, then east for 2 km to get to the mushroom stem part of the lake. From here we paddled due north for about two km and camped on the easternmost of large islands located at the very north of the lake, it was about 22:00 hours by the time we made camp.

**16 July: *Lac Kahipikamow, to Skinny Lake, and then to Lake 220+/-***

**Start Day 5:** 6042812 N. by 418135 E. - from there a 3+ km day / 39+ km total

The portage from Lac Kahipikamow is marked on a straight line from the easternmost point of the large hill south of the islands through the north shore of the lake. After the short portage we arrived at a long east-west skinny lake, this lake has a north bay at its west end, we lined our boats up a rapid here, and portaged our loads alongside the rapids about 200 yards, arriving at a small n-s lake that was only a few hundred yards long. From the north end of this lake we portaged about a kilometer into Lake 220 +/- . The portage was not clear, required much scouting, and we had to bush our way across. The terrain was covered in thickets and sketchy rock gardens, which made the walk difficult. After we had our loads across we paddled to the north shore of Lake 220+/- and camped.

**17 July: *Lake 220+/-; Carrot Lake; Headwaters Lake; Lac Kahipitanicow; Lac Silvy,***

**Start Day 6:** 6044853 N. by 418008 E. - from there a 20+ km day / 59+ km total

From our campsite we paddled west by north-west to a north bay at the west end of Lake 220 +/- and portaged about 200 yards to a carrot shaped lake. There is a short portage of about 50 yards from the west end of Carrot Lake to a lake that Low refers to as the headwaters of the South Branch of the Great Whale River, a.k.a. Riviere Denys. From this lake there is a portage to the west of about 10 yards that connects Headwaters Lake with Lac Kahipitanicow. Lac Kahipitanicow is “a large body of water covered with small rocky islands and nearly divided by a long point running out from the east side”. From the north shore of the north body of this lake there is a portage just before the lake narrows. The portage goes north by north-west for about 550 yards into Lac Silvy. In accordance with Low’s notes, Lac Silvy is divided into three bodies separated by two east-west ridges. After paddling into the central body of Lac Silvy the route goes NW past the 2<sup>nd</sup> east-west ridge. We paddled to the top of this NW bay and made camp.

**18 July: *Lac Silvy, to Misshapen Lake, to Small Lake, and then on to Lac Marest,***

**Start Day 7:** 6053498 N. by 416697 E. - from there a 6+ km day / 65+ km total

From our campsite we portaged about 130 yards into a ‘misshapen’ lake to the west with three small islands. From the north shore of the north arm of Misshapen Lake we portaged about 500 yards, just east of north, to a small lake. The next portage leaves the bay at the west end of the north shore of this small lake and goes through a valley for about 900 yards to Lac Marest. This portage took us seven hours to complete; navigating boulder fields, inclines, and brambles was quite difficult. After the portage we paddled to an island north of the portage that is located at the eastern end of Lac Marest and camped.

**19 July: *Lac Silvy, to Misshapen Lake, to Small Lake, and then on to Lac Marest,***  
**Start Day 8:** *6057882 N. by 414148 E. - from there a 0 km day / 65+ km total*

Woke up and the wind was gusting up the lake, we paddled around the lee of the island and into the maelstrom; the wind was quite powerful, gusting at up to 50 km/h according to our anemometer, paddling into it was futile, we thus maneuvered over to a nearby north shore beach to wait out the breeze, we waited all day and then just stayed the night.

**20 July: *Lac Marest, to Lac Kapimisachuan, and then on to Lake Kachinwaschikan***  
**Start Day 9:** *6058215 N. by 414350 E. - from there a 36 km day / 101+ km total*

When we woke up the wind had changed directions and was now blowing in the direction that we wanted to travel. Accordingly, we set up a sail using a tent fly and lashed the two boats together. Our peak speed using this means of transport was about 9.8 km per hour. We zoomed north-west along Lac Marest, stopping for a break about 15 km along at a narrows called Pointe Misiminawatim on the 250s, there are two Cree camps in this vicinity. We visited the westernmost of the two campsites which is located on a hilltop; it commands a beautiful view of the area. From there we sailed on north by north-west to Lac Kapimisachuan, there is about 300 yards of fast water that marks the entrance to the lake. We sailed west on this lake to a rapids that forms the boundary between Lake Kapimisachuan and Lake Kachinwaschikan, there is a 220 yard portage here yet we decided to run the rapids after scouting them, the run was clear and relatively basic. From the rapids we paddled west for 6 km & then made camp at the NW end of the lake.

**21 July: *Lake Kachinwaschikan, to Middle Lake, to Lac Kaministikuch, to Lac Denys,***  
**Start Day 10:** *6077477 N. by 390654 E. - from there a 16+ km day / 117+ km total*

From the deep north bay at the west end of Lac Kachinwaschikan there is a 330 yard portage north that bypasses a nearby rapids to the West. This portage has been referred to as an "Ontario style portage", and once found is an easy walker. This portage took us to a middle east-west lake in between Lake Kachinwaschikan and Lac Kaministikuch. Across this lake there is another portage on the north side that goes to Lac Kaministikuch. From our loading area we paddled east to a point that we had to hairpin and sat out a headwind from the West. We had a hot lunch and used the satellite phone to call CBC. After lunch we paddled NW to Lac Denys. The current is quite notable in this area; the Riviere Denys headwaters drop about 18m between Lac Marest & Lac Denys. Eventually we reached a fine campsite where Low once camped, located along southern Lac Denys. We paddled on though to get some clicks in and found a nice beach camp further north.

**22 July: Lac Denys, through the Riviere Denys narrows, to Rapides Pastapischinikin,**  
**Start Day 11:** 6086647 N. by 384324 E. - from there an 16+ km day / 133+ km total

Moving on from the beach camp site, we paddled east until the waters narrow towards the NW. Then meander through a narrows in a WNW direction. Low identifies the first marked rapids on the 1:50s as a portage of 330 yards past an 8 foot falls, we did not find a clear portage and bushed a route along the north side of the river. The next marked rapids 3 km downstream was run by Low, scout this before deciding to run or portage. Further downstream 1.5 km a 88 yard portage bypasses an 8 foot falls, this crosses a small spit on the western shore. Further downstream one comes to what is called Rapides Pastapischinikin on the 250s. This is bypassed by two portages on the eastern bank. The first portage is about 300 yards and leaves the north end of a deep bay above the rapids and puts into a deep back-eddy bay downstream after cutting across a large point that causes the first set of rapids here. The second portage is reached by paddling half a km across the island bay between the rapids. The portage is river right and we camped near here at a scenic campsite located next to the lower chutes of Rapides Pastapischinikin.

**23 July: Rapides Pastapischinikin, along the Riviere Denys to the Riviere Denys Gorge**  
**Start Day 12:** 6092530 N. by 371116 E. - from there an 18+ km day / 151+ km total

Paddle along the Riviere Denys for the day. About 4 km downstream from Rapides Pastapischinikin there is a rapids that is bypassed by a 330 yard portage river left. There were Hydro Quebec markers along the portage. An osprey flew overhead. The weather was mostly sunny, yet windy, as it was for most of the trip. Towards the latter part of the afternoon we entered the Riviere Denys Gorge. Low tripped this way back in the day. The landscape is surreal here. After a few liftovers to circumvent tumbling waters, and some paddling, we climbed a river left ridge and made camp, my favorite site of the trip.

**24 July: Riviere Denys Gorge,**  
**Start Day 13:** 6100760 N. by 360651 E. - from there an 4+ km day / 155+ km total

We began the day with a one kilometer portage. Most of the portage was on ridge tops, with a modicum of bushwhacking in the valleys. The next portage around the bend, river right, was not much of a portage, and river left did not seem to be an option. After taking one load across, we decided to float and line the boats down the rapids below a falls. Then we went to the next portage, located river left, carried a load across and then camped; cooking by the river and tenting up above on a steep bluff above the rapids.

**25 July: Riviere Denys Gorge, and then on to the Great Whale River,**

**Start Day 14:** 6104504 N. by 359827 E. - from there an 19+ km day / 174+ km total

Woke up and, after getting all our gear across the portage, ran a set of rapids. We then scouted a portion of the gorge that occurred after a right angle bend in the river. We paddled on and then portaged river left around the last falls in the gorge, situated next to a 200+ foot rock precipice river right. The portage was reasonably straightforward and went for several hundred yards, initially up a steep bluff, then across a ridge, and then down to the river again along a creek drainage. We had thus made it through the gorge. We paddled on, about 14 km, to arrive at the confluence of the Riviere Denys and the Great Whale River. Paddling a further 3 km brought us near the GWR's Amitapanuch Gorge. We paddled carefully along the west shore & made camp in the general vicinity.

**26 July: Around the Amitapanuch Gorge to Chute Qurlutuq,**

**Start Day 15:** 6116286 N. by 347219 E. - from there an 20+ km day / 194+ km total

We began the day with a portage, which begins just north of the small island in the creek mouth upstream river left from the headwaters of Amitapanuch Gorge. The trail walks 900 yards north, up over the hilltop, and back down to the mountain creek. Paddle west up the creek maybe a kilometer to a lone jackpine overlooking a marshy meadow, this is the start of the Mountaintop Portage. Mountaintop Portage is 2 ½ kilometer altogether. The trail is hard to follow all the way through and is at times physically grueling. To finish the portage here is an extended stretch of rock garden along the edge of the river that has to be negotiated. This area is especially difficult to navigate if it happens to be raining. By mid-afternoon we had finished with portaging for the day and were on our way again. We paddled on downriver for about 17 km through a series of riffles, etc. Eventually we arrived at the last portage of the trip, which goes around Chute Qurlutuq. The portage, river left, is marked by a canoe rack at the top of the bank. Near the portage and a muddy landing, we made camp on a rock outcrop near the headwaters of the falls.

**27 July: Chute Qurlutuq, to Hudson Bay**

**Start Day 16:** 6129375 N. by 335669 E. - from there an 11+ km day / 205+ km total

The portage around Chute Qurlutuq is a half-mile up, over the hill and then back down to the water. From the Chute it should be a quick run to the Bay, if there is not a headwind.