



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF F.O.H.T.A.

BOX 66, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 5L2

NO:27

EDITOR: STEVE TAYLOR

SPRING, 1984



CANADA AM, TRAIL STYLE!

hiking the Gros Cap Area

On a Sunday afternoon last November 6, Tom Allinson, Donna Kidd, Ernie Pringle and I met at the Stedmans parking lot in western Sault Ste Marie. The object was to do some hiking despite overcast conditions. We drove west towards Gros Cap and parked one vehicle at kilometer 7.9 on the Voyageur Trail. A second vehicle drove us to kilometer 3.3 in the Twin Lakes area where we began our trip.

The well-blazed trail led us through predominantly birch and maple forest, with occasional conifers appearing as a contrast. A moss and lichen covered ridge offered a glimpse of Lake Superior. Near an old cabin, we were greeted by the antics of a curious pine marten. Tom's camera and telephoto lens captured the colourful onlooker in various poses. After a while, we reluctantly continued, humouring one another with tales of personal hiking experiences. We paused first at a triple dammed beaver pond and later at a mighty fallen remnant of a white pine. Tom and Ernie informed us that the tree had toppled recently.

As Tom's car appeared in sight, we vowed to plan another hike or skiing trip before too many weekends passed.

Steve Dominy

Editors note: Late in February, another group consisting of Donna, Tom and Steve plus four others did manage to combine skiing, sliding and hiking together on the icy trails around Gros Cap.

Thought for the Spring

"April prepares her green traffic light, and the world thinks GO!"
Christopher Morley

Treasurer's Note

Copies of the club financial statement are available on request by writing to the club.

Editor's Note

Articles for the next newsletter should arrive no later than September 10. Have any of the associated VTA clubs besides the Saulteaux Club been involved in activities?

Membership Secretary's Note

Notice has been given to members who haven't renewed their membership as of March 15. If dues are not received by the time the next newsletter is in press, these members will be stroked off the mailing list. Please check the date on the membership card if you are not sure if you have renewed. With today's higher postage, your dues are needed. Since the first newsletter, mailing costs have risen from five to 32 cents a copy and the membership dues are the same. Note that prompt renewals will reduce our expenses by reducing renewal notice costs. In addition, it will diminish the amount of work required.

Lastly, an active membership is essential for our growth. I urge all members to inform people who might be interested in our organization. Try to get them involved, perhaps by inviting them to a hike. Club brochures can be obtained by writing to the secretary of your section club or to the VTA by using the return address on the back of the newsletter.

Weather Forecasting Out of Doors.

Numerous experiences have taught me the value of being able to predict weather. I have spent the majority of the last 10 summers working outdoors in Ontario. In that time, I have been caught unprepared in deluges, snowed on in Cochrane in August while dressed for summer conditions, almost hit by lightning, and forced to consume beer in golf course clubhouses waiting for rain to stop. In the winter, I've been stranded on skis five kilometers from the nearest road as the snow on the trail melted. Many times, I've listened to weather forecasts designed for a large area when the local conditions have been different. My own interests in and experiences with the elements have, I think, allowed me to gain some ability to forecast future weather. Procedures involved with outdoor activities (eg. when to set up camp) can be based on these predictions.

First, here are a few comments applicable to forecasting weather in Ontario. In general, much of the local variation in weather around the province is the result of the Great Lakes. When the lakes are warm, as they are in the fall, cold air passing over them tends to pick up moisture. Thus, if one of the Great Lakes is upwind within 60 km of you and the air temperature is below normal, heavy precipitation is a good possibility. In the summer, the lakes are usually warmer than the air at night. Thunderstorms often form over them at this time. During the day, the land is warmer and thunderstorms form over land and die over water. If the air is very unstable, this rule will be invalid. For the most part though, it can be useful to know if you have mostly water or land upwind for 100 or more kilometers.

A few basic forecasting rules are based on cloud formations. Cauliflower-like clouds warn of instability which can lead to thunderstorms, especially if the clouds become dark on the bottom and begin to flatten and fan out at the top. Small puffy clouds in the afternoon sky indicate fair weather unless they develop as above. Clouds banding across the sky from northeast to southwest may indicate an advancing cold front. High cloudiness from the west or southwest suggests an advancing warm front or low pressure. Watch for these clouds to thicken. If you stand facing the wind, it is normal for the best weather to be on your left and the worst on your right. Then, check the sky for cloud direction. This procedure can give clues to future weather.

There are a few tips that can be used at home to plan a trip. Home barometers are indicators of trends in weather. Falling barometers indicate that low pressure area is advancing towards you (low pressure brings deteriorating weather). Thus, a rapidly falling barometer with a reading of less than 30 inches of mercury hints at precipitation within several hours. On the other hand, you are usually safe if the barometer is rising or steady and is over 30 inches of mercury. A radio can be used to warn of thunderstorms ahead of time in the summer. Lightning creates a unique form of static that can be picked up between stations when the storm is still over 100 km away. This only works on the AM band. If you are between stations and it sounds as if someone is jumping in a bathtub filled with potato chips, it is not a good sign. If the static is getting louder, it means that the storm is getting closer. If you can hear static while the radio is on a station, the storm is close. Also, the more frequent the static, the stronger the storm. Listen to the radio during a storm to learn how to detect this static from other types.

Conditions in the earth's atmosphere are always in a dynamic state but these dynamics usually follow patterns that are at least partly predictable. The object then, is to find out the kind of pattern the weather is in. Thus, the nature of change in the weather is usually a better indicator of future conditions than is the weather at a given moment. I have constructed a forecasting guide which is presented below. The first step in using this guide is to find out which one of the nine weather conditions best fits the weather you are experiencing. You can then go into the description for that weather condition and determine which one of several possible additional conditions are occurring. Use this as a guide for weather forecasting but remember that the best way to become proficient at it is to become experienced at making the appropriate observations. A basic understanding of the main air masses and air mass processes that affect our weather is also a help. Here then, is the guide.

GENERAL CONDITION	SUB-CONDITION	FORECAST
1) NO CLOUDS -indicates no precipitation for at least 6 hours.	-Wind calm or N to N.	-no precipitation for at least 24 hours.
	-Wind S to W and increasing	-no precipitation for at least 6 hours. Watch for condition 3 to develop.
	-Wind NE to E to SE and increasing.	-No precipitation for at least 6 hours. Watch for condition 2 or 6 to develop.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 2) HIGH THIN CLOUDS ACROSS MOST OF SKY WITH SUN OR MOON VISIBLE.
-No precipitation is likely in next 6 hours but conditions could change later. | -wind E and veering to S.
-Wind N and veering to E.
-Wind E and veering to N.
-Wind S and veering to E.
-Wind Sw, W, NW, to N and constant. | -Possible warm front moving in. watch for conditions 3, 5, or 6 to develop.
-watch for the above sub-condition or condition 4 to occur.
-Fair weather likely.
-Condition 4 likely.
-Fair weather likely but watch for condition 3. |
| 3) CLOUDS THICKENING TO NW. WIND INCREASING AND POSSIBLY VEERING.
-boaters beware of possible squalls from cold front. | -wind may switch to NW for a while but general direction is W to S or SE.
-Wind becomes gusty from the NW. | -Unsettled weather continuing.
-Fair weather most likely but watch for condition 7. |
| 4) WIND STRENGTHENING AND WITH AN EASTERLY COMPONENT (NNE TO SSE). CLOUDS THICKEN TO OBSCURE SUN OR MOON.
-Precipitation is likely in one to several hours. | -Wind E veering to SE.
-Wind SE or NE and becoming E or remaining constant.
-Wind NE and tending to turn into the N. | -Rain, fog, thundershowers possible in near future. watch for a warm front to pass followed by condition 3 or 5 to develop.
-A bad sign. Continuous precipitation and cool temperatures likely.
-Storm should pass by to the south. Condition 1 or 2 should develop. |
| 5) HUMID. PARTLY CLOUDY TO CLOUDY. LIGHT TO STRONG SW TO S TO SE WIND. | -wind strong.

-wind less than 15 KPH. | -Severe thunderstorms are possible, especially if vertical development in clouds is noted. Watch for condition 3 or 4 to materialize.
-watch for thunderstorms especially in afternoon followed by fair warm or hot weather. |
| 6) WARM WITH LIGHT SE, S OR SW WIND OR WIND CALM. MOSTLY CLEAR. | | -Fair and hot weather likely but watch for conditions 3 or 5 to develop as possible routes to change. |
| 7) NW WIND WITH PARTLY CLOUDY TO SHOWERY WEATHER.
-cool weather. | -Condition 7 followed 3 and wind now decreasing.
-wind increasing or constant in speed and direction. | -showers ending with fair weather moving from W to E into area.
-showers and possible squalls could develop or continue. |
| 8) FOG WITH LIGHT WIND | -In morning.
-In afternoon or evening. | -Fog should burn off with fair weather in a few hours.
-Difficult to predict. Watch for 3, 5, 6, or 7 to begin to develop. |
| 9) CLOUDS INCREASING. | -high clouds mostly.
-Low clouds with no vertical development and NW to N wind.
-No vertical development seen but clouds thick and weather hazy and humid with light or NE, E, SE, S, SW, or W wind.
-Puffy clouds with vertical development obvious. | -See condition 2.
-Fair and cool but watch for vertical development in clouds which could lead to showers.
-rain probable. See conditions 3 and 4.
-Showers or thundershowers possible especially if clouds develop before noon. Fair weather should follow. |

Steve Taylor