



Spotlight

July 2010

Eaton Students Test the Water

By: SWAT Team

On Thursday June 17th, five students from Grades 10 and 11 took the plunge into a full wilderness experience. The students made the 10 hour trek to Missinipe where our canoe adventure would begin. Since this was the first ever SWAT (Spartan Wilderness Adventure Team) trip, the students had no idea what to expect.

Prior to the trip the students had received instruction to prepare them for the trip. The students learned how to use a compass and map, how to plan meals for four days in the wilderness, fire making, and of course, canoe basics. They learned how to do t-rescues first (canoe over canoe rescues), which is what needs to be done to upright a canoe after it tips. The students also learned to paddle a canoe in a straight line which is not as easy as it looks.

When we finally arrived in Missinipe, there was a hush among the group. Was it nerves? Anticipation? Excitement? Surely a mixture. All of these feelings were soon relieved as we loaded the boats and hit the water for the first time on our trip. We were met with good weather and calm waters as we zigzagged our way to our first campsite of the trip at Paul Island. We had a late arrival at camp and had dinner at sunset. The students were up to the responsibility from the get-go for setting up their own camp, tents and meals included. We ended our first night with a campfire and retreated to our tents.

By Day Two the students were really getting into the camping experience. They cooked a breakfast fit for royalty and then headed back on the lake for a paddle to the second camp site which was not easy. But the students prevailed amongst the wind and waves showing their teamwork and skills on the water. The second spot was a five star campsite at Utie Island equipped with fallen trees that would be chopped into firewood, a rock circle for a fire-pit, and prime fishing. The students efficiently set-up camp and enjoyed fishing right off the rock edge by the lake. We caught a total of 60 fish over the four days, 20 of which we kept and ate.

On Day Three we woke up with news of an imminent thunder storm. Although it was sunny at the time we decided to stay put and enjoy the area we were in for another day. We kept busy on our campsite fishing and canoeing around the area to hone our skills. We were met with only two brief storms in the afternoon that blew over in a couple of hours.

On Day Four we packed up early in the morning and started our paddle for Missinipe. We had a clear, hot day, and the lake was glass so we were speedy on the way home and cut the time it took to travel out to the lake in half. The students that attended had so much fun and consistently showed such positive attitudes towards the new experience. It is hard to imagine a better group of students to pilot this new program.

For these students, they are invited to take the second part of SWAT which has even bigger challenges. Not only will they be paddling the lakes but learning to portage (move over land) too. Next year SWAT looks forward to welcoming the new Grade 10 class to their first trip.

A big thank you goes out to all of the supporters!



Left to Right: Mr. Brett Becker, Miss Karen Luptak, Michelle Stienke, Randi Somerville, Jordan Silva, Mr. Cam Aitken, Brandi Guidinger, Ashton Nunweiler **Photographer:** Mr. Craig Vanthuyne

