

## CANAL SLIDES, ISLE LA FONTAINE, GRANT SETTLEMENT ROAD



### **DIRECTIONS**

The Canal Slides are marked on Ontario Topographic map "Cobden 31F/10" at GR 364E, 5066N. Do not attempt this trip except at low water (July/August) and you must be an experienced canoeist and have map, compass and survival training and gear.

- Take Foresters Falls road east out of the village until you come to the first intersection.
- Turn North onto the Grant Settlement Road and proceed 6.3k until you reach "McCoy Road" on your left. Immediately turn right onto the unnamed river access road and proceed to the parking lot. Access to this area is by kind permission of Wilderness Tours.
- Travel by canoe immediately upstream from the put in up the short carry-over on river right. Once upstream and away from the current, cross the river to Isle la Fontaine and proceed around the downstream edge of the island until you reach the Black Velvet Rapids of the "Middle Channel". Carry over the causeway that creates these rapids, and proceed about .3k keeping the Island on your left, until you come to a dry runout choked with bush and grasses. Disembark on the opposite side of the channel and hike upriver until you come to a lake. Keep the lake on your left as you skirt around, rejoining the slides at the top of the lake. This is where the slides begin.

### **HISTORY**

For any hardcore logging buff, this is a worthwhile trip. The Canal Slides were created when even the mighty Ottawa River was not big enough to get the logs to market quick enough, and so channels were widened to increase throughput during high water. In canal Slides, the rocks choking the shallow channel were lifted out and placed on the shoreline to make a canal and towpath which is clearly visible a hundred and fifty years later. This is one of the few lasting testaments to the days when almost everything was made of wood, thereby leaving no lasting record.

### **MCLAREN SLIDES**

On the Ottawa River in the McLaren settlement, about a mile or so north of where the present hydro dam is located and about the turn of the century was what was called the McLaren slides on the Ottawa River.

It is a little difficult to describe these slides but we understand the McLaren slides were about 50 or 60 feet wide and about 200 feet long with a steep incline on the bottom. Bunches of square timber of 25 pieces were bound together and steered toward these slides and went through the slides with a steep incline at a tremendous speed.

James McLaren, great grandfather of George Olmstead, a resident of the McLaren settlement was slide master for a number of years. Mr. McLaren was eventually drowned crossing over the rapids at Portage Du Fort.

