



## Canoeing and Kayaking, The Environment, and Associated Values

Canada is one of the few countries that retains wild spaces of significant size. Ontario has a very large network of waterways ideally suited to recreational non-mechanized travel. While some of these waterways are protected within provincial parks, many important and popular wilderness tripping destinations are located on unregulated Crown land.

To help ensure that paddlers continue to enjoy a high quality experience, the Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association has defined the

features paddlers value in the range of travel environments currently found in Ontario.

Coal miners once took canaries with them

underground to warn of noxious fumes. Like the canaries in a coal mine, paddlers can provide important insights into the health of our natural spaces because of their

**Our intent is to make the needs of paddlers' widely known and to work with planning authorities to ensure these needs are met.**

contact with and dependence upon the natural environment.

### Why Paddlers Value their Craft

Hundreds of thousands of North Americans choose to paddle canoes and kayaks every year. Whether at a camp, the cottage, a weekend exploration, or longer voyage, canoe and kayaks are crafts that evokes the spirit of earlier times while providing a quiet, gentle means of experiencing the natural environment. Paddlers are found wherever there is water: in conservation areas, cottage country, and in the harbours of Great Lakes cities, though the vast majority of paddlers seek Ontario's pristine wild spaces, quiet lakes, free flowing rivers, un-littered campsites, and forested portages.

Paddlers value:

- quiet efficiency of the canoe or kayak — it is simple and elegant, sleek and self-propelled
- versatility of the canoe or kayak — as at home on calm lakes as in turbulent rivers, transporting a single

person or conveying impressive amount of freight, being waded, lined, poled, portaged, or paddled

- accessibility of this form of recreation — used by people of all means, ages, and abilities
- ability of canoes and kayaks to facilitate an appreciation of nature, exercise the bodies, calm minds, and recharge the spirit
- unhurried pace of non - mechanised travel — a value often overlooked in our commercialized world
- deep interaction with the natural world — encounters with sun, rain, wind, and wildlife
- challenge of a portage trail winding through a verdant forest
- longing for the peace and solitude of a rocky campsite by water's edge

### Paddling Environments

Category	Definition	Examples
<b>Wilderness</b>	Remote, uninhabited, undeveloped areas of Ontario that have no structures, no roads and infrequent human visitation. Wildlife habitat is undisturbed, industrial resource extraction is absent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large sections of Lake Superior shoreline and far northern Ontario lakes and rivers such as the Wakwayokastic and Ekwan.</li> </ul>
<b>Primitive</b>	Remote, uninhabited, undeveloped areas of Ontario that retain a wilderness-like feel and appearance. These areas may contain isolated outpost cabins, which are periodically occupied. They may have unimproved logging roads providing the public limited road access. Human visitation is moderate and seasonal. Wildlife habitat is largely undisturbed, industrial resource extraction is regulated and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario's wilderness and natural heritage class parks such as: Algonquin, Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater and Quetico.</li> <li>• Crown land areas such as: Temagami, Chapleau, Algoma, and many of the rivers flowing into Lake Superior.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural</b>	Non-remote areas with evidence of significant human activity. Sparse habitation in permanent dwellings may be present as well as improved road access. Human visitation is regular and significant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conservation areas</li> <li>• rural locales such as: Saugeen River, Humber River</li> </ul>
<b>Urban</b>	Populated areas with intense residential development and human activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harbours of Great Lake cities</li> <li>• Toronto's Grenadier Pond</li> </ul>

## What Paddlers Value — by Category and Feature

NOTE: The use of the word ‘may’ in the descriptions below indicates an existing situation. It is not meant to express acceptance or future permission.

Feature	Paddling Environment			
	Wilderness	Primitive	Natural	Urban
<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clean water, free of pollutants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clean water, free of pollutants associated with habitation and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may expect lesser water quality owing to activities associated with habitation and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may expect poor water quality owing to intense human and industrial activity</li> </ul>
<b>Shoreline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no evidence of human activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• isolated evidence of human activity</li> <li>• all recreational lakes and rivers to be afforded viewscape protection from resource extractive activities (min. 200 m)</li> <li>• roads must not be closer than 500 m of shore</li> <li>• permitted structures must be subject to setbacks to protect shoreline aesthetics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may show evidence of human activity. Buildings and roads may appear near or along shore.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significant evidence of human activity</li> <li>• buildings and roads</li> </ul>
<b>Landings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural and unimproved</li> <li>• no signage</li> <li>• no facilities</li> <li>• no boat or equipment caches</li> <li>• no docks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural and unimproved</li> <li>• no facilities</li> <li>• no docks</li> <li>• boat and/or equipment caches, if permitted, must be located well away from portage landings and organized in an aesthetically sensitive manner.</li> <li>• numbers of boats must be restricted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be improved</li> <li>• docks with boat and equipment caches may be present</li> <li>• restrictions on location and numbers may be in effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be improved</li> <li>• variety of facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Campsites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few in number</li> <li>• usually small and naturally occurring</li> <li>• no facilities</li> <li>• no noise</li> <li>• odour or waste absent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vary in size</li> <li>• human constructions prohibited, with the possible exception of waste receptacles as warranted</li> <li>• year-round storage of boats and/or gear prohibited</li> <li>• litter and excessive noise prohibitions apply</li> <li>• recreational authorities may erect signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• selected and heavily managed in areas with special designation</li> <li>• human constructions may be present</li> <li>• noise and litter may exist</li> <li>• evidence of human activity may be close at hand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not usually present due to intense development and habitation</li> </ul>
<b>Forest Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large tracts of undisturbed, continuously connected forest, providing excellent wildlife habitat and the opportunity for natural processes to occur without human intervention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large tracts of continuously connected forest, providing good to excellent wildlife habitat</li> <li>• disturbance occurs due to resource extraction</li> <li>• settlement is not permitted</li> <li>• public road access is restricted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forested areas may not be large or extensive</li> <li>• roads may be present, settlement may be permitted</li> <li>• active management in designated areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extensive forest absent due to habitation and development</li> </ul>
<b>Portages / Trails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unimproved trails for walking only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unimproved trails for walking only</li> <li>• identifying signage may be permitted</li> <li>• if logging roads intersect portages, they must do so at right angles and maintain the portage/trail’s natural grade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved trails may be permitted</li> <li>• signage may be present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portages not normally present</li> </ul>