



*If you're not a current member,
Please Join Us!!!!*

June 2019

In this issue:

- President's Report
- Survey Results
- Guidebook Effort
- 2019 Trip Reports requested
- Membership Form (*Please Join Us!*)
- New Planning Map & Order Form
- See our Facebook page
- Updated FOW Email Contact

President's Report

By Vern Fish

The Wabakimi Project

In August of 2008 a red de Havilland Beaver landed on a small lake just east of Hwy 599 on crown land west of Wabakimi Provincial Park. Two other paddlers and I crept out on the pontoons on one side of the plane while three other people crawled into the plane on the other side. I ended up in the canoe with an older guy with a white bushy beard.

The older guy was Phil Cotton, the founder of The Wabakimi Project. I spent the next four days sharing his canoe and hauling his gear as we cut a portage route into Savant Lake. Phil would only paddle on the right side of the canoe because of shoulder injury. I wore out the paddling glove on my right hand because I only got to paddle on the left side. Phil had a very specific way of folding tents, making coffee and clearing portages. Phil also had a very clear vision for The Wabakimi Project and the Friends of Wabakimi.

His vision for the Project was to find, clear and map the historic canoe routes that crisscrossed the Wabakimi region. He did this by organizing a crews of faithful volunteers who followed him into the bush from 2004 to 2017. The amount of work that done by 208 volunteers is impressive. They traveled 3,198 miles to located 1,001 campsites and restore 1,020 portages that covered 266,935 yards! "Uncle" Phil led most of these trips!

While we sat around the campfire eating walleye, I remember asking Phil how he expected to maintain the volunteer effort that he had created. Who was going to carry on his work when he could not carry a chain saw into the bush? His answer was simple, he was going to create not-for-profit volunteer organization called the Friends of Wabakimi. The Wabakimi Project would end and Friends would take on the role of advocating for the park.



Friends of Wabakimi

In 2014 Phil filed the necessary paper work with the Province of Ontario to create the Friends. The vision for this organization was to make the Wabakimi Area an *exceptional destination for wilderness recreation activities for the benefit of present and future generations of visitors*. The mission was to work with a variety of stakeholders and be a voice in the protection and preservation of the cultural and natural resources of this wilderness area. (*Renewals are going out soon. If you're not a current member, Please Join Us!*)



The Transition

When Phil passed away in the spring of 2018 the Board of Directors of the Friends stepped in to fill a huge void. The Wabakimi Project was scheduled to start in late May and volunteers were lined up and ready to go. The work went forward during the summer of 2018. Several volunteer crew leaders stepped in and lead the work.

When the portage clearing ended, the next challenge was to pay the bills and secure the finances of the Friends. Other loose ends included printing an updated planning map and making it available for sale at Canoecopia in March 2019. The Board of Directors and other volunteers have spent most of the last year completing these tasks. The Wabakimi Project has officially ended and the Friends of Wabakimi are now carrying Phil's vision forward into the future.

The Future

At the March annual meeting the following people were elected to the Board of Directors:

Barry Simon of Hubertus, Wisconsin

John Sinclair of Racine, Wisconsin

John Holmes of Waterloo, Ontario

Charles Clise of Alma, Michigan

Vern Fish of Waterloo, Iowa

Dave McTeague of Milwaukie, Oregon

Doug Blount of Palos Park, Illinois

Ray Tallent of Iowa City, Iowa

Dave McTeague was elected Board Chair and I was elected President. You may recognize many of the names. You may have paddled with some of these people. All of these people are very familiar with the Wabakimi Area.



Last fall Dave McTeague put together a survey which a large number of our members filled out. Dave has provided a summary of the results in another article in this newsletter.

As I read through this survey and note the comments of members at the annual meeting, I see the following opportunities for the Friends of Wabakimi.

1. **Collaboration** - *To be a voice in the protection and preservation this wilderness area, we need to build a line of communication with the park superintendent. We have reached out to Shannon Lawr, Park Superintendent, and hope to set up a series of meetings to see where our vision and the park's operational plan can overlap.*
2. **Strategic Planning** - Phil Cotton developed a comprehensive mission statement for the Friends that is still valid. However, we need to create an operational plan to accomplish our mission. The Friends need to do

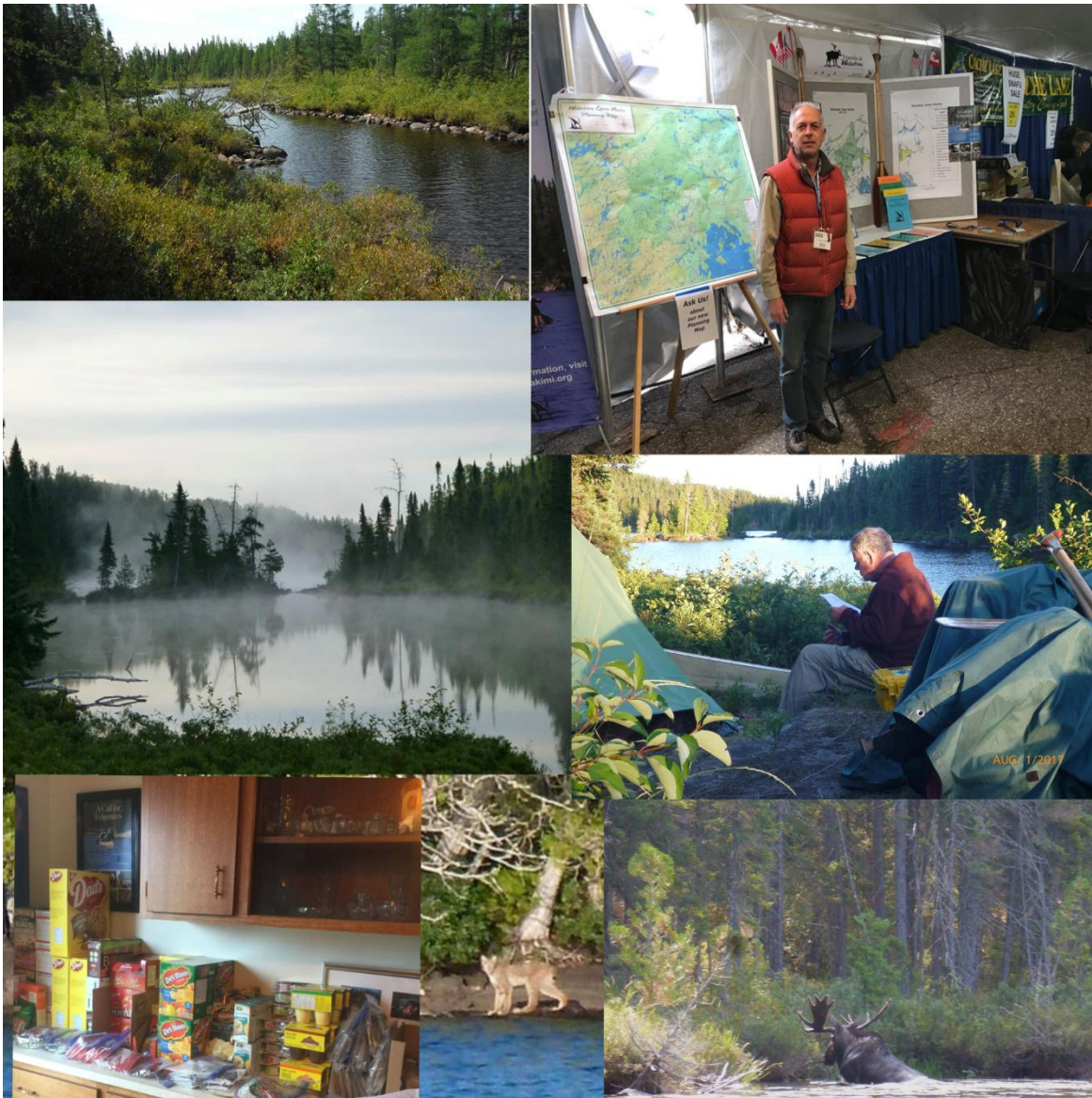
annual or bi-annual strategic planning to create an operational plan. The Board has scheduled a strategic planning retreat for the 2020 CanoeCopia gathering in Madison, Wisconsin next March.

3. **Canoe Guide** – One of the needs highlighted in the survey was the desire to see materials to help visitors plan trips. We already have a planning map and a five volume series of canoe route maps. However, these tools do not provide insight into how to plan a trip on a specific route. A committee has been formed to explore the idea of a creating a Wabakimi Canoe Guide. This guide would provide enough information to help a beginner or intermediate paddlers plan trips on specific routes.

4. **Diversity & Quantity** – We are a small organization. To be fiscally sustainable we need to grow our numbers and encourage more Canadians to join our ranks. We need to be visible at paddling expos on both sides of the border.

5. **Website** – The current website does a good job of telling our story. However, but it must be updated and managed in a timely manner or it lose effectiveness. This is high on our to do list.

I very proud of the fact that I got to paddle with Phil Cotton. I feel it is my responsibility to Phil to make sure that his vision for Wabakimi is carried forward. I look forward to serving as your President.



Interest High in Wabakimi--- Strategic Planning Survey Results

A total of 71 people responded to our recent online survey. Most, but not all, were once The Wabakimi Project participants. Overall, the respondents demonstrated an encompassing knowledge and experience gained from travels in and around Wabakimi Provincial Park.

85% indicated they were either very interested or extremely interested in the Wabakimi area and the Friends of Wabakimi. The results showed a continuing interest in recognizing, protecting, and using the historic canoe routes that have been documented. Virtually all respondents cited maps, entry point information as essential needed information, as well as all aspects of trip planning assistance.

Remoteness (94%), adventure (81%), and large area for distance canoe trips (60%) topped the reasons for canoeing in the Wabakimi area. Willingness to help by submitting trip reports (65%) was number one, followed by self organized reconnaissance/maintenance trips (53%), providing canoe route advice (45%), and making a donation (35%).

There was an even split between those interested in established routes and finding one's own route. Getting into the park, 85% have entered park by float plane, 75% by road and 43% have entered by rail.

Many routes were suggested for possible inclusion in a future Guidebook. Flindt River, Vale Creek, Misenhkow, Shabuskwia, Attwood River, Allenwater River, Kopka, Brennan Falls, Pashkokogan River-Savant River, Little Caribou (various loops), and more.

Many responders cited interest and ways they could help or participate. The FOW Board is looking through these to find folks who will give us hand. *The best way to start is to make sure your Friends of Wabakimi membership is current. (If you're not a current member, Please Join Us!)*

Key findings:

- There is a strong need for “materials to help visitors plan trips”
- Organizing a canoe guide by skill level and section of the park appears to be a preference
- Maps detailing portages, campsite and obstructions is important
- There is need for both established routes and remote rarely traveled areas
- Routes are needed off the rail and road even though the vast majority fly into the park
- People will volunteer to submit trip reports
- There's interest in animals, plants, history, and conservation of this resource.

2019 Trip Reports requested....

Taking a Wabakimi canoe trip in 2019? Please write up a trip report and submit it to us. A narrative report gives us information about routes we'd like to travel in the future—with your permission could be in our newsletter. We need information about the condition of portages, obstructions and campsites.

With a future Guidebook in mind, we're looking for “beginner” routes (a very relative term) that can be done in seven days with reasonable access; and “intermediate” routes for ten to twelve day trips. The more detailed the

2019 Trip Reports requested....continued.

better and pictures are needed too. A trip report reporting form is included in this newsletter—to give you an idea of the information that's helpful.

You can submit reports to friendsofwabakimi@gmail.com (if you're interested in serving on our Guidebook Committee, drop Dave McTeague an email at davemctague@comcast.net)

NEW! Wabakimi Canoe Routes Planning Map

Our first print run of the new FOW Wabakimi Area Planning Map is getting low...so send in your order soon. A second printing will no doubt be in the works.

The cost is \$50, plus \$20 for shipping. Send your check & request to:

**Friends of Wabakimi,
1060 Riverdale Road
Thunder Bay Ontario
P7J 1N2 Canada**



The newer 36" x 36" map incorporates the work of The Wabakimi Project and thousands of hours of volunteer efforts clearing and improving historic canoe routes and portages. Our map maker Barry Simon has shepherded this process from beginning to end. Thanks Barry!

For our detailed map Volumes I-V, the order form can be found here. <http://www.wabakimi.org/maps/index.shtml>

Friends of Wabakimi is on Facebook.

Currently showing A Tribute to Phil Cotton, produced by Ken Babinchak, our communications director. The Wabakimi Project was about many things: rivers, routes, maps, learning, campsites, paddling, portaging, mapping, sawing, flights, meals and equipment... but most of all it was about friendship. Continuing friendships and new paddling partners sustain us now. Thank you Phil for bringing us together in friendship to this productive, rewarding and thoroughly worthwhile endeavour.

Like us, and leave a comment, stay in touch!

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofWabakimi/>



Our CURRENT email contacts:

friendsofwabakimi@gmail.com

(re: general correspondence, trip reports and more)

memberswabakimi@gmail.com

(re: membership and renewal questions)

Postal Address

**Friends of Wabakimi
1060 Riverdale Road
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7J 1N2 Canada**

Debbie Doyle is our main contact in Thunder Bay. She's been on many project trips and was Phil's key assistant in recent years. It was Debbie who kept the last year of the Wabakimi Project organized after Phil's sudden passing. Thanks Debbie for all you do!

FRIENDS OF WABAKIMI

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP (June 2019)

Existing Membership Renewal New Membership or Expired Membership Renewal

I, the undersigned, being eighteen (18) years of age or older, do hereby apply for membership in the *Friends of Wabakimi*, a not-for-profit corporation registered in the Province of Ontario, Canada.

I agree to support and promote the objects of the *Friends of Wabakimi* and enclose payment of twenty dollars (\$20.00) for each year of the term of my membership which shall be effective from the date of issue.

1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years

In accordance with Section 96 of the Ontario *Corporations Act, 1990*, I hereby give my consent for the Board of Directors of *Friends of Wabakimi* to waive an annual audit for each of the fiscal years spanning the term of my membership and instead, to employ a bookkeeper to manage the corporation's books of accounts.

In accordance with Section 6 of the Canada *Anti-Spam Act, 2014*, I hereby give my express consent to receive electronic communications from *Friends of Wabakimi* from time to time. I understand I may discontinue this service at any time using the 'unsubscribe' option contained in each of these messages.

Please print neatly in ink.

Full Name _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____
(Please avoid use of initials or nicknames!) (dd) / (mo) / (yr)

Address _____ Apartment _____

City/Town _____ Province/State _____

Country _____ Postal/Zip Code _____

Telephone (____) _____ E-mail _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Information provided on this form will be held in the strictest confidence and will only be used to communicate Friends of Wabakimi information directly to you. Under no circumstances will data you have provided be disseminated to any third party for any reason except as provided by law.

Remit your payment by cheque or money order made payable to: *Friends of Wabakimi*. To cover currency exchange rate fluctuations, bank processing charges and international postal rates, please make payment in US\$ for any *Application for Membership* submitted from outside Canada.

Mail your completed form with payment to:
(U.S. postage to Canada is 85 cents.
(Please note: this is our current mailing address—June 2019)

**Friends of Wabakimi
1060 Riverdale Road
Thunder Bay, Ontario
Canada P7J 1N2**

For office use only:

Amount Received: \$ _____ Date of Issue ____/____/____ Date of Expiry ____/____/____
(dd) / (mo) / (yr) (dd) / (mo) / (yr)

Friends of Wabakimi

Trip Report Outline

1. **Start/end dates of your trip**
2. **Number of trip days not including the start/end days**
3. **Description of your trip route (one-way, circuit or loop, paddle-in/paddle-out to a base-camp)**
4. **Average distance you covered each travel day**
5. **Total estimated distance you covered during your trip (Miles/km?)**
6. **Primary road used, if any, to access the [Wabakimi Area](#) (Hwy 527, Hwy 599, Graham Road)**
7. **Secondary road(s) used, if any, for access/egress to/from your trip insertion/extraction locations (Vista Road, Road 702, Caribou Lake Road, Airport/Pikitigushi Road, Obonga Road, Pishidgi Lake Road, Trail Lake Road etc.)**
8. **Number of full-time paddlers (excluding young children who may have paddled only occasionally)**
9. **Source(s) of your non-resident Crown land camping permits or provincial park interior (backcountry) camping permits**
10. **Services provided by outfitter(s)/provider(s):**
 - Accommodation
 - Canoe rental
 - Full/partial outfitting
 - Licenses
 - Permits
 - Shuttles
 - Replenishment flight(s)
 - Other
11. **Identity of outfitter(s)/service provider(s) used for insertion/extraction shuttles or replenishment flights, if any**
12. **Mode of shuttles to/from your trip insertion/extraction points, if any (*e.g.*, road, rail, float plane)**
13. **Location of where you left your vehicle(s), if any, for the duration of your trip**
14. **Locations of the start/end points of your trip**
15. **Description of the route you followed (a map would be helpful but is not necessary if sufficient detail is provided)**
16. **Map(s) used in planning and executing your trip:**
 - The Atlas of Canada – Toporama
 - NTS topo maps
 - Wabakimi Canoe Route Maps*
 - Other

17. **Evidence of recent human activity on the portages and campsites used during your trip**
18. **Location(s) of portages or campsites in need of attention. (e.g., blowdowns, washouts, trash, vegetative vandalism) Provide GPS location is possible**
 Portages:
 Campsites:
19. **Location(s) of sites other than portages or campsites in need of attention (e.g., trash, &c.) Provide GPS location is possible**
20. **Number of portages used during your trip with estimated total length expressed in yards, metres or rods**
21. **Number and location of campsites occupied during your trip. Provide GPS location is possible**
22. **Locations of sites of natural, cultural, or historical interest visited during your trip and their respective conditions. Provide GPS location is possible.**
23. **Locations & details of wildlife sightings (e.g., large mammals, fur-bearing animals, birds of prey, reptiles) Provide GPS location is possible.**
24. **Locations & details of human encounters (e.g., lodge/outpost clients, paddlers, portage crews, forestry employees, prospectors, government agents including MNRF & Ontario Parks personnel, First Nation area residents, &c.)**
25. **Location(s) of campsite(s) not currently shown on *Wabakimi Canoe Route Maps* that have a capacity to host two four-person tents. Provide GPS location is possible.**
26. **Errors/omissions on current *Wabakimi Canoe Route Maps* that require correction in future editions**
 Portages
 Campsites
27. **Information, if any, not included above**
28. **Digital photos you took to support your trip report (mail separately on a CD if too large a file to transmit by e-mail)**
29. **Recommendations you have, if any, to improve our canoe route data collection program including this list**

Thanks again for your support of our canoe route conservancy initiative. Your report will go a long way towards helping us monitor the condition and usage of the route you followed.