

Steel River Circle Route

This document - i.e. historical
artifact! - dates to about 1980.

Ontario

Things have changed!
Logjams and Portages have
moved.



A sense of achievement and personal pride will undoubtedly be felt by those determined individuals who have completed this journey. Winding through beaver meadows and granite bluffs, this waterway is home to a wide variety of northern Ontario plant and animal communities.

Indian families that once lived on Jackfish Lake used to travel from Santoy Lake up through Cairngorm and Steel Lakes to Longlac, to buy supplies and visit relatives. This same route provided the trapper of that time with a minor fur trading passage. Two large falls and a strong current prevented the Steel River, south of Aster Lake, from becoming a transportation link. The canoe route description dates back to the 1890's, when the Canadian Pacific Railway advertised it in a brochure to entice people to travel by rail. The mineral potential of the Diablo to Aster Lake portion was originally documented and recorded in the government report of Exploration Survey Party No. 5 in June, 1900.

Please respect the area you are going into. Remember! The proper handling of fire, burial of all garbage, and observing the fish and game regulations, will preserve this waterway for the enjoyment of future generations.

Access:

You will enjoy this trip to the fullest by travelling with the current. Therefore, we recommend that you start your trip at portage #1 on Santoy Lake. Portages have recently been marked by orange or red triangles tacked to trees, blazes, "Portage" signs and tape are also present in places.

Unfortunately, the canoeist will be facing the steepest and longest portage of the entire trip the first day out. Portage #1 is a climb up and over a steep ravine, that will test the mettle of even the most ardent outdoor enthusiast. Packing light, and being in good physical condition, are prime requisites in order to enjoy this journey. Once over this first obstacle, your perseverance will be amply rewarded by the rugged northern beauty, and excellent fishing for pike and pickerel, you will find along this route.

The Waterway:

Water depths tend to remain relatively constant. However, the drought experienced from 1974 to 1977 reduced water levels by several metres, additional portaging may still be necessary during prolonged dry spells. Winds tend to spring up quickly on the larger lakes, and caution must be observed.

The current will increase rapidly in some areas on the river. There are no dangerous stretches of white water, but shallow rapids can easily puncture a canoe if they are approached without caution. A 20 metre falls, with campsite is waiting at portage #11. South of portage #12 the river starts to dip and wind until, at times, you will feel you are travelling in circles.

Drinking Water:

The water along this route is clear and pure. There are no man-made sources of pollution. It is still advisable to boil your water or use a water purification tablet. Changes in drinking water can affect some people unfavorably, and spoil a trip.

Biting Insects:

Mosquitoes and black flies are present throughout the canoeing season. Other pests such as sand flies, deer flies, and horse flies may be encountered at various times during the season. Long-sleeved shirts and a good quality insect repellent are considered necessities. The most effective repellents appear to be those containing diethyltoluamide. Calamine lotion, or a paste of baking soda and water, are effective in relieving the itch from insect bites.

Weather:

The southern portion of this route is moderated by the influence of Lake Superior, and may be several degrees cooler than the more northerly areas. The weather can change drastically in the north during the canoeing season. Temperatures can range between 0°C and 32°C over short periods. Carry additional warm clothing and good raingear.

Terrace Bay Area 10-year temperature - rainfall

	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
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Temperature C°	10.1	14.6	16.7	15.3	9.8
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Rainfall - cm	20	33	24	23	23
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Campfires:

Never build a campfire in windy or in unusually dry weather. Build your campfire on rock or gravel, or scrape away the surface duff for approximately a 1 metre space right down to mineral soil. Avoid using stones around your campfire as these can hide smouldering embers. Keep your campfire small. Never leave your fire unattended. Thoroughly drown your campfire and stir the ashes before leaving. Make sure it is out.

Garbage:

Garbage is one of the worst problems facing wilderness areas. Funds or manpower are not available to clean up after every canoe party. If you can carry your food in, you can carry your garbage out.

Plan your trip to reduce the volume of garbage. Repackage dried foods and nonperishables in individual plastic bags. This removes a great deal of bulk from the pack and, as the item is used, the package shrinks. Purchase as many items as possible in disposable plastic or paper containers. Always avoid glass jars or bottles. Many items are available in individual servings and include jams, honey, spices, ketchup and relishes. A large variety of freeze-dried foods are available in pouches, leaving little garbage. Many liquids and dry solids, such as: syrups, coffee, or powdered milk, can be transferred to washed out plastic pint or quart containers which are waterproof and sanitary. These containers, when empty, may be burned; the metal cap is the only garbage to be carried out.

All combustible refuse (papers, plastics, etc.) should be burned in the campfire. Tin cans should also be burned in the campfire and then flattened out and buried under at least 30 cm of soil. After burning, tin cans rust out very quickly.

Wild Animals:

Bears or other wild animals will do their best to avoid any human contact, unless tempted by food wastes or fish guts, if their young are threatened, or they are trapped. To avoid problems, burn all wastes as soon as possible, keep your campsite clean, and hang perishables in a tree away from the tents. If confronted by a bear, do not panic. Do not attempt to attract or frighten him, and stay in an upright position. Back off and give the right-of-way if it appears he wants to continue past you. If you see bear cubs first, do not approach them as the mother will be close by. Retreat to the river or camp and make lots of noise (chop wood, sing a song, etc.). This will alert the bears you are in the area, and they will normally move off.

Fishing:

Diablo Lake provides excellent fishing for speckled trout, which may also be taken on occasion south of portage #11 on the Steel River. Large lake trout have been caught in Cairngorm Lake. Angling for pickerel (walleye) and northern pike is considered good to excellent from the south end of Steel Lake to portage #17. Santoy Lake usually provides below average fishing for pickerel and pike.

Be sure to check the Ontario Fisheries Regulations regarding open seasons, catch limits and licences required.

Firearms:

No rifles, pistols or other firearms are allowed to be carried in northern Ontario during the summer months (see Ontario Hunting & Fish Regulations).

Trip Time And Distances:

Steel River System - 156 km - 10 to 13 days

Maps Required:

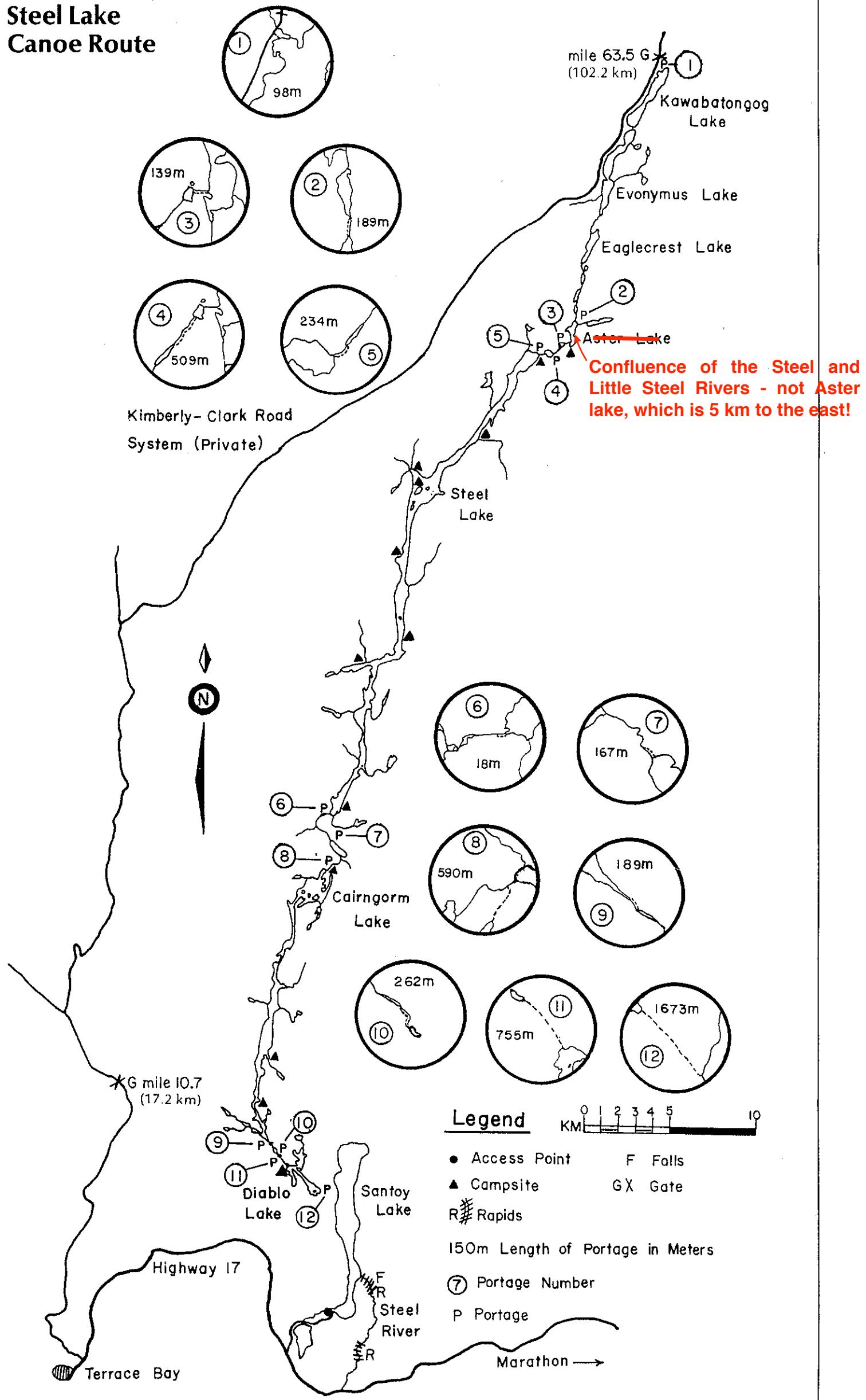
The map most commonly used is the 1" = 2 mile series, Steel Lake 42E/SE, and Heron Bay 42D/NE. Maps are available at the Terrace Bay District Office, or from the Map Distribution Office, Ministry of Natural Resources, Whitby Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1W3. The price per map sheet is \$1.00. Ontario residents must add sales tax.

Safety:

A good first aid kit is a necessity. Do not swim alone or in fast water. Always wear life jackets and stay on shore in rough weather. An extra day added to the trip is better than not returning. You will be a long way from medical aid. Be careful with sharp tools, watch your foot and carry a good first aid kit. Always advise some person so that they are aware of your exact plans - departure and arrival point, time frame, and route. Allow for bad weather and advise your contact, previous to leaving if plans are altered. Your contact person should inform the Ontario Provincial Police detachment nearest your destination if you are overdue. The O.P.P. co-ordinate search and rescue operations in the province. In the event of trouble, stay on the water system and practice standard bush survival techniques, which should be known by all members of your party.

Kawabatonggog Lake to Lake Superior via Steel Lake

Steel Lake Canoe Route



Steel River Circle Route



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Access:

Kimberly Clark Road
Mile 58 (Sun Road)
Mile 59
Mile 63.6

Deadhorse Road

Trip Time and Distances:

Kawabatongong Lake to Santoy Lake – 101 km; 5 to 6 days

Steel River System – 156km
10 to 13 days

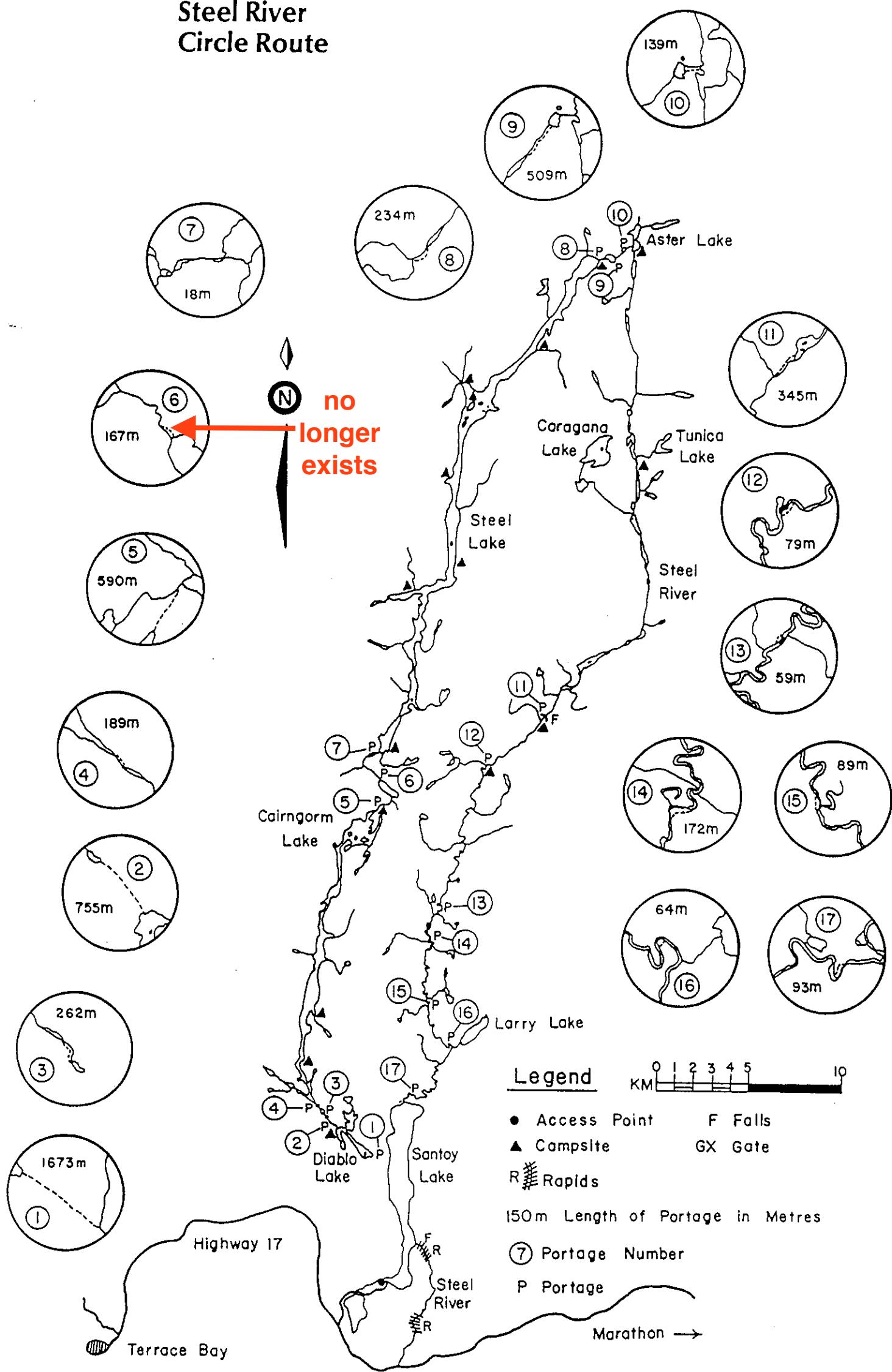
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For further information, contact District Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 280, Terrace Bay, Ontario P0T 2W0.

Steel river Loop With Santoy Lake as the start point

Steel River Circle Route



Steel River Loop With Kawabatongog Lake as the Start

Steel River Circle Route

