



Maine High Adventure
Troop 101, Northborough, MA
8/9/08 – 8/18/08



Blue Crew: Tyler C., Steve C., Tom H., Harry G., Matt P., Dan P., Brandon W., Mr. Clausen, Mr. Polanowicz, Brian Austin - MHA

8/9/08

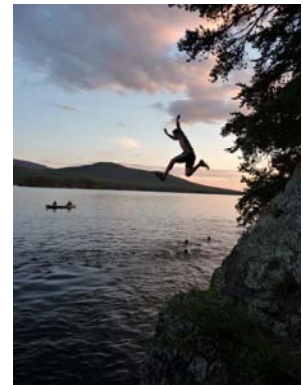
After a 5:00 a.m. wakeup and muster at Trinity Church at 6:00, we were off to Maine by 6:25 – not bad by Troop 101 standards! We had about 400 miles ahead of us, a sunny day and not enough coffee – almost a perfect start. We picked up Tom H. on the Maine Turnpike which saved his parents a trip to Northborough from Booth Bay – Mr. H. was very grateful. We stopped in Millinocket for gas and lunch. While the boys were disappointed we didn't hit McDonalds (luckily under construction), we had a great lunch at the Appalachian Trail Café. We were thinking of staying to watch Olympic Beach Volleyball, but we thought better of it and headed upward for Mt. Chase Lodge. Once there, Rick and Sarah who have been there for more than twenty years gave us a great welcome, showed us our rooms upstairs and then we went out for a



swim and game of 'can you sink your canoes?' We then had a hearty lasagna and spaghetti supper – Rick and Sarah really put the feed bag on for us. It was so good; we decided to come back for breakfast on our way out. Tom serenaded us in order to get his sunglasses back. It was a moving lullaby. After dinner, it was some Olympics, some Magic card games and then lights out at ten. Long day, but tomorrow had us going into Grand Lake Matagamon.

8/10/08

We were up (well some of us anyway) at 5:30 – breakfast was promptly at 7:00 and we had to be out of there by 7:30 to make way for the outgoing crew. Pancakes, eggs and sausage really hit the spot. Then we were off to Grand Lake Matagamon. We met some of the staff at the boat launch and headed across. Today would be a logistics and shakedown day. Get all our crew gear, maps, food and unpack all the extra junk that we usually bring. Luckily our packs that we shared between two people were slightly larger than a bread bag, so we had tons of room – not.... Oh, for some of those Duluth packs from the Boundary Waters. Our guide was Brian Austin – a very cool guy – mechanical engineer who had guided at Northern Tier and Maine High Adventure, so we knew we were in good hands. After that we finalized our route for the trip – did our pack checks and headed to the outward bound campsites. We set up, got a fire started (albeit slowly) and had a mac-n-cheese dinner. Luckily, the mac-n-cheese was edible – compared to our disaster in the BWCA with the same meal. We finished the night with an extended round of Acapulco Cliff Diving (for you Wide World of Sports Fans). A couple



of scouts were nervous about the long drop, but we were very proud of them displaying one of the tenets of the Scout Law – a Scout is Brave. At the end, they were very happy to have done it. After that, we headed back to our tents as we had another 5:00 wakeup.

8/11/08

Up at 5:00 this morning, a big breakfast of a mini-bagel, cream cheese, an apple and an orange for the road. Clearly the steak and eggs we paid for must be for another day. Harry (our crew leader) did a good job motor-vating everyone and we got to the boat launch a half hour early and met Al who was to drive us the **5 hours** to Johnson Pond.

Five (5) hours ensue.....

Finally, Johnson Pond and lunch. PB&J on pita and some gummy fruit. Thankfully Dan had some Cape Cod chips to tide us over. Now we were really underway from Johnson Pond to Allagash Stream, which was quite jungle-like, to Allagash Lake. We wanted to stay at the Ice Caves camp – but some furtive behavior by the folks who were there already convinced us to go to Sandy Point, a very nice place. We got settled, had mashed potatoes, beef gravy and mixed in our rice and vegetables for good measure. The Scouts went out for an evening paddle and a shot at fishing. No luck there, but fun. It started raining about the time we tuckered out, so we all hit the sack. 5:30 wakeup tomorrow.



8/12/08

Up at 5:30 and a hearty oatmeal breakfast. We packed up and headed off to Ice Caves for some spelunking. We got to the caves and went right down. It was pretty open at first, and then got increasingly narrow, cramped and cold. We made it about as far as you could go without crawling down a chute face first and then headed back up. We jumped



in the canoes and headed for the Ranger Station on Allagash Lake. He arrived just as we pulled up. After a quick check of our paperwork, he left and we headed up to the Fire Tower, some 500 feet up. After a steep, muddy climb, we all made it to the top and all climbed the tower for a

super view. Katahdin was shrouded in fog, but the 360° views from up there were worth the climb. While we took turns going up to the lookout, the rest picked wild blueberries for either pancakes or cake. We headed back down for a lunch of Hudson Bay bars and cream cheese, cholesterol levels greater than 150 needed not apply.....



We got going and headed north to the outlet of Allagash Lake and our campsite. But first we stopped at Outlet Camp for a quick primer on white water canoeing. The primer would have been perfect if not for the Maine has been getting absolutely hammered with rain and all the lakes and rivers are quite high. This made our first white water canoe experience very interesting. The Scouts did a great job and other than a few canoes going the wrong way when we tried to eddy out (we all did it), we had a heart pounding, good time. We finally made it out of the Allagash Stream into Round Pond and the Little Allagash Falls campsite. As soon as we arrived it began to rain (hard) which made setup

difficult, starting a fire impossible and everyone cold and wet. After a valiant fire starting effort by our trip advisor Brian, we succumbed to using the stove for Wild West Chili. Thankfully.

At the end of the day (8:00), we were all cooked and trooped off to bed.

8/13/08

Today – white water – yikes!! The water was really cooking over the top of Little Allagash Falls so we knew we were in for some rough water. We headed down and after a bit eddied out and went on foot to scout the first drop. It had a hard drop, and then you had to take a quick right turn or get dumped over the next (much bigger) drop. We talked about how to run it and sent Brandon and Brian back to do it first. Eyes wide with excitement, they made it look much easier than it was. One by one each crew went back to their canoes,



zipped up their man suits and headed downriver. On by one we either hit the rocks, the roots or the bank! But we all made it. We scouted the next two drops but decided to portage. The first drop would have been OK if we didn't mind capsizing half the canoes. But with five days left, we thought better of it. The second was a hard left turn, under a bridge and through a three foot standing

wave. Again, safety and a desire to stay mostly dry (as if we weren't soaked by rain every day) had us portage it. Then it was onto the Tramway portage. The Tramway was an old device that was designed to move logs single file from Eagle Lake to Lake Chamberlain. You



could still see the mechanism along the route and the steam boilers that were used to drive it. The system could move half a million board feet (a 10' 2x6 is 10 board feet) of lumber **a day** across the tram. At the end of the portage which would have made the mom's throw our socks away immediately (ankle to calf deep mud throughout), we got to Eagle Lake. Another crew from Maine was nice enough to pack up all the gear we left/lost and even gave us a helmet to make up for the one Steve misplaced. At that end of



the portage were two steam locomotives, just sitting in the woods where they had been left there by the Eagle Lake and West Branch Railroad which had fully replaced the Tramway in 1926. When the lumberman developed log haulers, they eventually replaced the trains and it would have been too expensive to move them off their 13 mile long track from the Tramway to Umbazooksus Lake, so they were just left there. We spent the night at Farm Island where it – anyone?? Rained. The Scouts played

Battle Barge after dinner while we baked a cake and added the wild blueberries we had picked. Brian had an ingenious idea to make cream cheese maple sugar frosting (yes, we learned that cream cheese goes with everything...). It was delicious. We finished the evening with game of Pass the Pigs, where Tyler absolutely 'pwned' us.

8/14/08



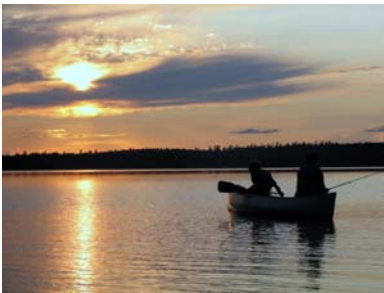
Up at 5:30, today was Pancake Day – we added the last of the wild blueberries – they were scrumptious. The downside was it took us four hours to get out of camp. Then we headed over to Smith Brook, where supposedly 40 or so moose had been seen. The Scouts weren't interested, so we headed back to Martin Cove. We stopped at Pillsbury Island

for a great lunch of cheese and summer sausage quesadillas – 'riveritos.' We headed down to Lock Dam and our camp for the night. Just about the time we got the fire started – wait for it Wilma.....it rained. Hard. With lightning. Rained so hard it almost flooded the fire with a big pool of water. Finally it slowed down to a nagging rain and we grabbed dinner. Brian wowed us again with some corn bread in the camp kitchen. It was fantastic – good enough to brew a cup of coffee to go with it.



8/15/08

Moose! But more on that later. Up at 5:15 and the sun was out! Dan and Tyler made up the hash browns and scrambled eggs (augmented with cream cheese...) and they were great. We packed up and headed down Chamberlain Lake. We stopped first at the Nugent (yes, Cat Scratch Fever Nugent) Sport Camp. What was really cool (in addition to the wild raspberries on shore) was the contraption we found there. Clearly steam



powered to drive a huge cog which turned a drive train – but how? And for what? We then moseyed down to Chamberlain Farm – one of the only farms in the area during the logging days (Thoreau mentioned it in *The Maine Woods* when he was paddling through this

area in the 1850's). Not much left so you had to imagine it in its heyday as a bustling farm with horses, loggers and others all in one spot. We headed for our camp for the night – Gravel Beach. It had a great beach and other than fifteen minutes (keeping the record intact) of rain, it was beautiful all day. We dried out, napped, fished and chilled. After dinner we took a sunset canoe trip over towards Mud Lake. A couple of us headed into the outlet and the others stayed in Chamberlain to fish. Matthew came upon a young bull moose deep in the water grazing. Mark got some great shots of him – he was huge! Now our trip to Maine was complete. Brian joked that the 'moose-view insurance' paid off. We headed back to



Chamberlain for a moonlit paddle back to camp – it was so quiet and peaceful, it was amazing. When we got back we all bagged the fire and headed straight to bed.

8/16/08

Up early, everyone had a great sleep. We packed up and headed south down Chamberlain Lake – winds were relatively calm so paddling was easy. The Arm of Chamberlain is a



huge inlet off the main waterway that is much less traveled, so we decided to explore (after some grumbling from the crew...). We found a small stream and went deep up into it and found the remains of an old camp. Mark found an antique gas pump that he wanted to haul out – unfortunately, we couldn't decide which Scout we were going to have to leave behind to make room for it, so we left it. We paddled to the

end of the Arm and then headed back towards that night's camp spot. Another beautiful bald eagle shadowed us as we made way along the shore.

Quick stop for lunch and the last of our Hudson Bay bars (and cream cheese – who knew it would last this long?), then a hard paddle to outrun an incoming thunderstorm. We stopped at the Ranger cabin on the Chamberlain Thoroughfare for the first non-iodinated water of the week – it was sweet! We talked to the Ranger about the legend of the Allagash Alien Abduction and the source of the foam in the white water sections. He was very tolerant...



We headed down through Round Pond and into Telos Lake and our campsite at High Bank. It was a cool site with a beautiful view of Mt. Katahdin. The Scouts were very surprised to have paddled 15.5 miles that day and were glad that they had decided to paddle the Arm.

We all worked together to lay in a ton of wood as this was

our last night and we wanted a great, last campfire. After dinner, we whipped up a chocolate cake in the camp oven that rivaled L'Bernadin! We had our last Roses, Buds and Thorns of the trip and all realized that while we were initially concerned about having a 'guide' along with us, that Brian had become more of a friend and teacher than a guide. At this point, we had the biggest bed of coals that we had seen and just hung out in fellowship and (mostly) silence. The moon was coming up and it was a perfect night – this is one of the reasons to do high adventure – for times like this.



8/17/08



Off from High Bank back to the Chamberlain Thoroughfare. The wind was up so it would be easier to head straight across to the lee side of Telos Lake and then head north. Tyler and Brandon must not have heard us, headed up lake and suffered the only capsized canoe of the trip. We hot-paddled it back to the center of Telos Lake to get them sorted out and then (again) headed to the lee side and our pullout. David met us there and we loaded up for the 100+ mile ride back to Matagamon.

Interestingly, David had to stop and ‘tighten’ down the canoes right at the Irving gas station that had soda and junk food. The Scouts were crestfallen that there was no Dr. Pepper, but spirits rose when the sodas were on a 2 for 1 special...

Back at Matagamon Landing we had lunch and then set out for Matagamon Base. What made the crossing interesting were the three to four foot waves rolling across the lake. We hove to the North and then turned and surfed back to the base – it was crazy! Mr. Clausen looked like that guy in the cartoons – when the front of the canoe was on the peak of the waves he paddled like mad but couldn’t reach the water – wish I had gotten that on video.



We pulled out and began the cleanup of all our gear and our debriefing from MHA. We ran into the other crew and swapped stories of what we had seen and done. We were set for ham and bean pot dinner when the MHA folks came by with 20 freshly steamed lobsters! It paid to be the last crews on the water (same thing happened at Philmont last summer). What a feast! We finished off the night with hot showers (woo hoo), platform tents and a good nights sleep.

8/18/08

Up at 5:30 to get ready to ferry back to Matagamon Landing. We said our goodbyes to Brian and the rest of the MHA crew and then headed back to Mt. Chase Lodge for a lumberman’s breakfast – now that really did hit the spot. Then we were on our way back to Northborough.

We pulled in about 4:30 – 1,110 miles by vehicle and 67 miles by canoe and an infinite number of great memories and hope for more high adventures with Troop 101.



Respectfully submitted,

John Polanowicz
A/SM Troop 101
High Adventure Coordinator

