



Melanda Morden and Caleigh Levallee on the Eat 'Em Up portage

Dry at last! Cool, wet 12-day for Outers

M. McKinnon

Thirty-four Outers made it through the fifty-second annual twelve-day spring trip, arriving home in fine style at Nym Lake to a big crowd of family and friends Tuesday afternoon.

Overall it was a wet, cool trip. "The weather was never really horrible, but it did rain on nine days," said Outers director Shane Fiore, who travelled with the girls brigades.

Both groups were windbound on day two, Saturday the tenth, the boys on Burntside Lake, the girls on Sturgeon.

"That left us about half a day behind - same for the boys - but they were able to make it up pretty quickly."

Thanks to a great push, the girls got to Darkwater Lake by nightfall on day three. The girls were a little short, numbers wise, and that became a challenge as the days wore on.

"We had two brigades of five and one of four - we'd never started a girls trip with a brigade of four - and that doesn't leave any room for error," said Fiore.

It was the Outers' choice - "We could have gone to two brigades of seven" - and they backed it up with an outstanding work ethic.

Knowing what was ahead, the girls decided to skip a small loop (Crooked Pine and Argo Lake) on day four, and take on the Death March portage on day five. They got through that in good shape, but had to deal with a thunderstorm - the severest storm they would face all week - about twenty minutes after they pulled into camp at Delahey Lake. The next day, it was "in and out all day", as they dealt with nine portages on the push to Fred Lake, their solo site.

"Needless to say, they were pretty happy to get to solo," said Fiore. "And they were all successful. Most of them had a lot of success fishing, too. The bass and the walleye were biting."

The girls managed the Death March by combining forces and tackling it as one group (rather than as three separate brigades), and staffer (and 2015-16 Outer) Shawnte Anderson stepped in to help on day six.

For the boys, the biggest challenge came on days four and five, as they worked their way up from Sarah Lake into Side Lake and then Kashapiwi. They did master the long, challenging

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Boys brigade one almost makes it over a beaver dam....

Outers

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portages, and a lot of in and out, and that paid off later on the trip, as they faced Have a Smoke and Bonhomme Sauvage.

The boys soloed on MacKenzie Bay in Kawnipi Lake, and like the girls enjoyed complete success.

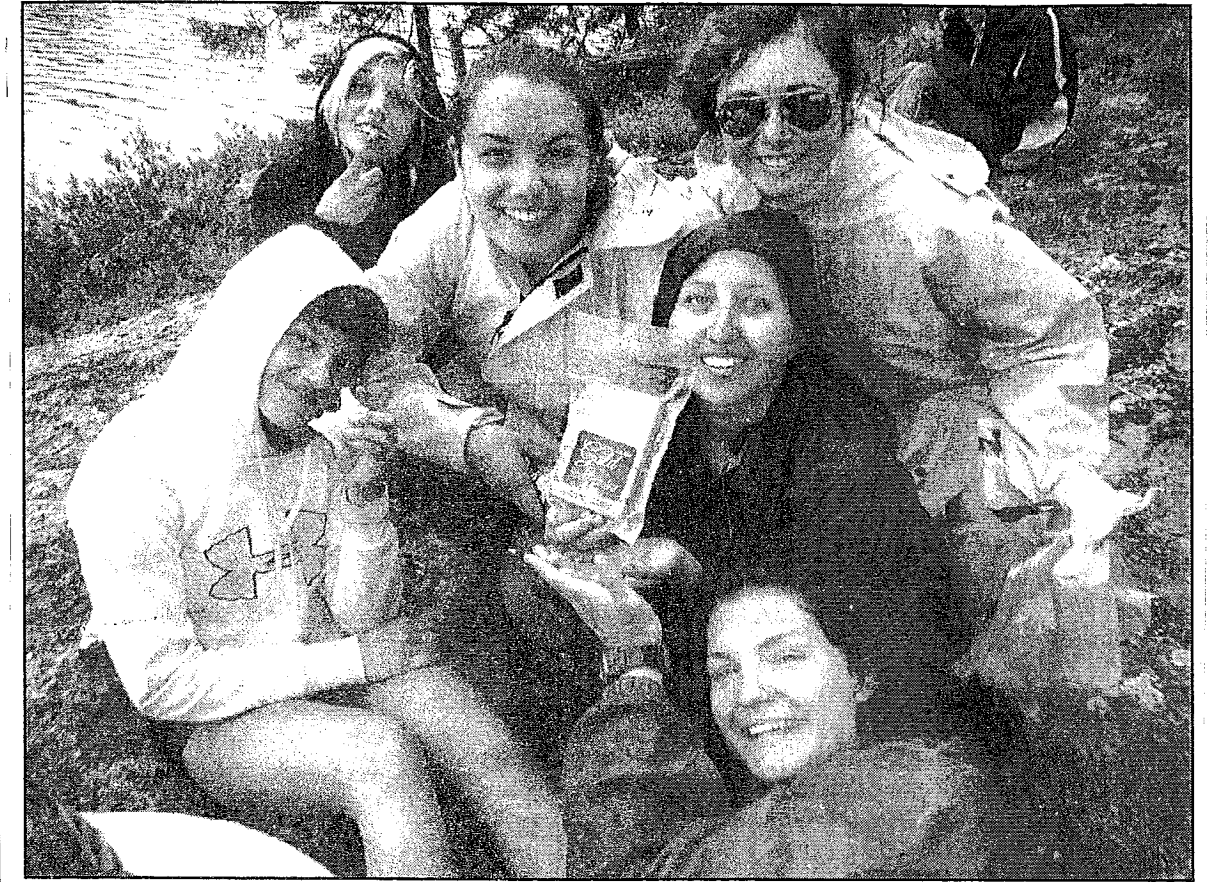
Boys Brigade one: Adam Poulin, Brodie Strom, Griffin Garuk, John Ribey, Kyler Gannon. Brigade two: Brady White, Bryan Ribey, Cole Kaus, Hunter Zacharias. Brigade three: Austin Loew, Davin Ojala, Nate Rusnak, Nick Warren, Rodney Green, Zandre Degagne. Brigade four: Davis Mullner, Jackson Geurts, Nathan Desaulniers, Colin Kretchmer, Will Carr. Staff: Mike Krassey, Ed Ojala, Tyson Grinsell, Brandon Brown, Alex Templar.

Girls Brigade one: Alexis Paquette, Anya Grant, Claire Poulin, Kira Sulkko, Page



The girls are all smiles after enjoyed the post-solo feast prepared by staff.

Skrenski. Brigade two: Christy Meekis, Cloey Brigham, Hailey Manford, Kaylee Oskineegish. Brigade three: Baylee Thorson, Caleigh Lavallee, Kaitlyn Gouliquer, Melanda Morden, Payton McMullen. Staff: Shane Fiore, Pam Bujold, Lana Puumala, Glenna Kehl, Shawnte Anderson.



POST DEATH MARCH What could beat a little Atikokan Gold after facing - and meeting - the challenge of the Death March Portage? Cheesemaker Rob Bang outfitter each of this year's Outers with a block of his fine smoked product, and reports from Alexis Paquette, Melanda Morden, Kira Sulkko, Anya Grant, Page Skrenski, and Claire Poulin are that it hit the spot.



That's all the boys, at the end of the Split Rock Falls portage, near the end of the 12-day spring trip.