

Navigating the Credit River by Canoe, Kayak, Raft and Tubes

NOTE: Credit Valley Conservation does not endorse navigation of the river, trespassing nor suggests that it is a safe recreational activity.

General Considerations

- Given its overall high gradient currents can be dangerous especially during high flows at locations (old dams or log jams) where constricted flow chutes are present.
- At low flows many boulders and shallow riffles are present (even a small single person kayak gets scraped, bumped and beached).
- Lifejackets are a must, and hypothermia a serious concern in late spring.
- Water quality can be unsafe for body contact (eyes, ears, nose, mouth and cuts) especially following rainfalls (Never drink the water).
- Log jams and beaver dams can be numerous in some reaches requiring portages.
- Some reaches may have fencing or barbed wire stretched across the river.
- Much of the upper reaches are privately owned (at least the bed and banks) such that trespassing is a concern (the Ministry of Natural Resources should be consulted).
- Privately owned dams (existing and old) along the Credit require portages that result in trespassing.
- Dogs and even cattle along private property could present a problem.
- Liability and injury concerns re: navigation through various golf courses.
- Watch out for poison ivy and stinging nettle plants along the banks.
- The entire Credit cannot be navigated in one day and there are no camping opportunities along the way, but one is usually within an hour or so from a public road crossing.
- Public phones and General Stores are found near the river in Orangeville, Alton, Inglewood, Terra Cotta, Glen Williams, Norval, Huttonville, Meadowvale, Streetsville and Port Credit.
- Topographic maps for navigation purposes are not readily available for the Credit River from CVC but are available from normal government map outlets. Two National Topographic Series (NTS) maps and about 15 Ontario Base Maps (OBM) cover the river from source to mouth. Even the best ones do not show rapids, old dams or constrictions and log jams.

Orangeville to Hwy 10

- Orangeville Reservoir (Island Lake Conservation Area) is ideal for non gasoline - motorized watercraft, although it is often exposed to high winds. An entry fee is required and boat and canoe rentals for use in the Conservation Area only are available.
- South of the reservoir there is a massive wetland complex owned by the Town with several beaver dams, dead end channels and ponds. There is also a channel

originating from the sewage treatment plant. An informal foot bridge is at an old crossing where the channel reforms into a more easily navigable single channel.

- Just before Hwy 10 there is private property abutting the banks with another foot bridge. Trespassing could be an issue here.

Hwy 10 Crossings, Melville Dam to Porterfield Road

- Private property, posted no trespassing on some properties.
- Beaver dams, bridges and log jams present.
- Melville dam (private) creates impoundment through Orangeville Golf Course
- Former cattle pasture with fencing across river may be present.

Upper Credit Conservation Area

- Former cattle pasture with plantings and footbridge leading into section with many log jams.
- Parking lot is far from river that is not ideal for launching access.

“The Grange” MNR Property

- Public access from Porterfield Road to Beechgrove Sideroad
- Most of this reach requires several portages due to the excess amount of log jams and woody debris.

Beechgrove Sideroad

- Posted no trespassing downstream of road crossing with a private residence and trout club.

Charles Sauriol Conservation Area

- Public access via trails/road allowance only.
- Log jams and beaver dam present.

Hwy 24 to Forks of the Credit

- Publically accessible Provincial Park at bridge crossings.
- Navigable from Hwy 24 (one portage past old dam) until first pedestrian bridge in Forks of the Credit Provincial Park in Cataract.
- Cataract Dams and Falls must be avoided and even if portaged is not navigable (except by tubers) due to high gradient and a lengthy boulder strewn gorge.

- There is no parking in Cataract and is limited along the roadside further downstream at the Forks, Dominion Street bridge.

Forks of the Credit Road to Grange Sideroad

- Mostly posted private property and two landowners have a cable stretched across the river.
- A few log jams are present.
- Downstream of the Grange Sideroad there are no postings and leads to the Ken Whillans Resource Management Area.

Ken Whillans Resource Management Area to Inglewood

- This Conservation Area only has Parking at Hwy 10 and involves a bit of a hike to the River via the Caledon Rail Trail.
- Navigation on through to Inglewood is permitted in cooperation with a private landowner downstream of the Conservation Area.
- A few log jams exist and often pile up thick in some years.

Inglewood, Cheltenham and Terra Cotta (1/2 day)

- There is a small parking lot with easy river access on McLaughlin Road in Inglewood. This is a popular starting point for many attempting a long journey down the Credit without too many portages required. Log jams are much less frequent from here on downstream. Shallow riffle water can still be common.
- Immediately downstream is the Caledon Golf and Country Club which requires a portage over a rock dam. This could be a trespassing issue if not a liability concern from flying golf balls. Be quick, courteous and keep low through any golf course!
- Private residences and trailer parks become very common through Ferndale, Cheltenham and Terra Cotta along the banks but know one seems to mind canoeists just passing through. There is one old dam creating a chute of water upstream of Boston Mills Road. Portaging this could be a trespassing issue, but better safe than sorry if you dump.
- Another portage is also made by the chute at the old Haines Dam in Cheltenham
- Other road crossings include Mill Street (near Cheltenham General Store), Mississauga Road, Heritage Road and Winston Churchill Blvd. in Terra Cotta. There is a small public playground in Terra Cotta with a phone booth and parking lot just across the road. A few tourist shops can also be seen.

Terra Cotta, Georgetown and Norval (1/2 day)

- Continue downstream of Winston Churchill respecting private lands along the banks.

- There is a cattle pasture with electric fencing along the banks downstream of the 9th Line bridge.
- At Glen Williams, Preston's Convenience Store will be visible from the river at a small park providing good public access.
- The only portage usually necessary is at the old Paper Mill Dam site in Georgetown where the water flows through a restricted chute. This is a popular public access area for locals using River Road.
- You will note how incised the valley becomes by the span of the rail tressel and shale cliffs walls along the river bank. Keep to the more gradual opposite banks if in doubt of safety.
- Some trails exist along this valley as well as Conservation owned lands. Parking access is questionable.
- This reach has a consistent high gradient. Overall it is not posted along the river although these private lands must be respected to avoid trespassing becoming an issue. Corporate holdings include Sheridan Nurseries and Upper Canada College.
- You must take out in Willow Park (Ecology Center) at the Silver Creek confluence on the west bank of the Credit before the Norval Dam. The impoundment has created a few islands and side channels as the waters slow down. Some buildings in Norval will also be apparent.
- *NOTE: The courts have agreed with the private landowner that portaging the Norval Dam is an offence under the trespassing act.*
- One can portage over the foot bridge and up the west bank of Silver Creek through the park to the Village on Guelph St. (Hwy 7) and down to the river along Winston Churchill. There is a corner store and public phone.

Norval to Meadowvale (1/2 day)

- Generally farm lands with urban expansion and old villages.
- Before Huttonville at Mississauga Road there is an old dam that may require a portage over private posted land. Below the bridge is the Lionshead Golf Course spanned by bridges and greens that may raise a liability issue.
- The historic village of Churchville now hugs the banks in Brampton where public access to Eldorado Park is popular.
- Downstream you enter the Meadowvale Park and Conservation Area accessible from Old Derry Road further downstream.

Meadowvale to Port Credit (3/4 day)

- Some of the last farmland now becomes subdivision where valley lands are in public domain and linked by the City of Mississauga's David Culham Trail. Easy access is found at Credit Meadows, Streetsville and Erindale Parks.
- Be prepared to portage an old dam / bridge constriction and around the privately owned Streetsville Milling Dam. The Croatian Parklands are also private property.
- Conflicts with anglers during the peak of the fall salmon run may occur from above Burnamthorpe to Dundas Street.

- One last golf course, the QEW and rail tressel will be passed by before the Lake Ontario lighthouse is in site. In Port Credit you will see cattail marshes emerge in turbid waters active in boat traffic and rowers from the Don (?) Rowing Club. The lack of current makes it as easy to travel upstream from the public parks around the mouth. Avoid any motorized boats or travelling out to the harbour and lake.

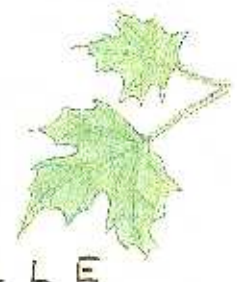
Comments

The following was based on a personal experience over a period of days during the summer of 2000. No portrayal of the real experience is presented above including the natural flows and eddies of the river as a natural “bloodstream” connecting landscape physiology, climate, plant and animal life in the watershed. Most commonly appreciated were simple sightings of sand bars, shale cliffs, dense cedars, damselflies, blue herons, ducks, kingfishers, mink, muskrat, beaver, fish and even how man was historically dependent on river life and the people I met canoeing, tubing, sunning, swimming, fishing, frog catching or passively contemplating life down by the river. A slide show is available depicting this journey.

It is recommended one read *The Credit: Canoeing in Suburbia in Canoeing Ontario's Rivers – Great Canoe Trips in Canada's Northern Wilderness* by Ron Reid and Janet Grand, William Fox, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco.

NORVAL
Norval Dam
Highway 7

BRAMPTON



HUTTONVILLE

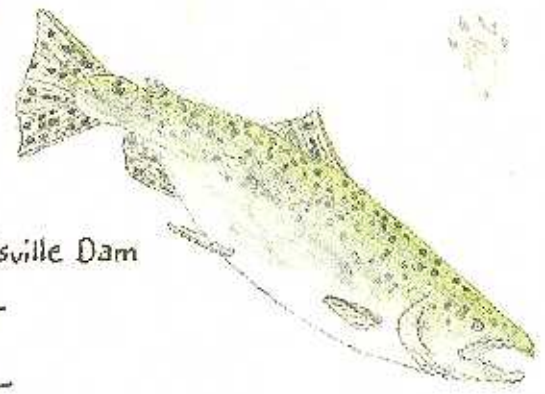
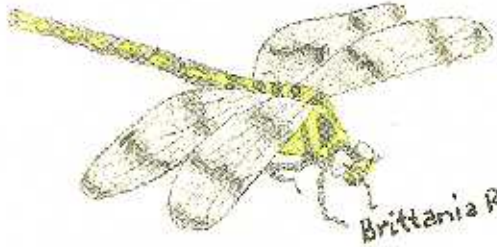
CHURCHVILLE

MEADOWVALE

STREETSVILLE

MISSISSAUGA

PORT CREDIT
Lake Ontario



Winston Churchill Blvd.
Heritage Road

Mississauga Road
Creditview Road
Old Dam

Steeles Avenue

Highway 407

Derry Road
Old Derry Road

Highway 401

Brittania Road

Bristol Road

Streetsville Dam

Eglinton Avenue

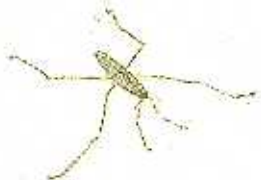
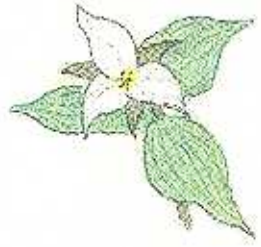
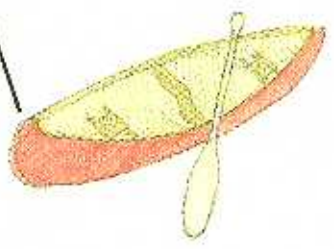
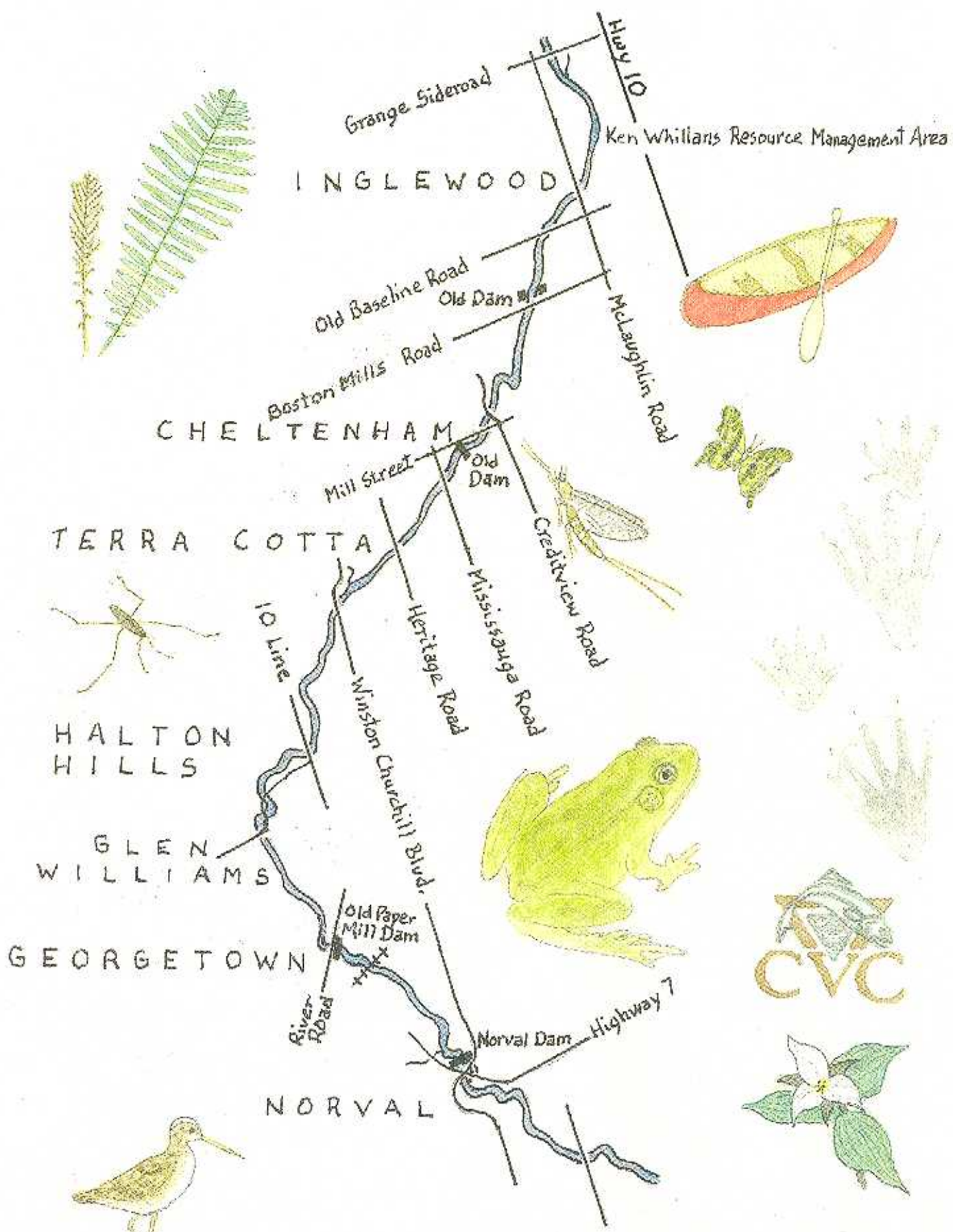
Highway 403

Burnamthorpe Avenue

Dundas Street

QEW

Lakeshore Road



ORANGEVILLE

Island Lake Conservation Area

Orangeville Dam

Highway 9

Melville Marshes

MELVILLE

Melville Dam

Highpoint Sideroad

ALTON

MNR 'Grange'

Parkerfield Road

Highway 10

Beechgrove Sideroad

Charles Sauriol Conservation Area

Old Highway 24

CATARACT

Cataract Falls

McLaren Road

CALEDON

Forks of the Credit Provincial Park

Forks of the Credit Road

SLIGO

Grange Sideroad

Ken Whillans Resource Management Area

INGLEWOOD

Golf Dam

Old Baseline Road

Old Dam

McLaughlin Road

