

THE MOIRA & SKOOTAMATTA CANOE GUIDE

"Everyone must believe in something. I believe I'll go canoeing!"
Henry David Thoreau

INTRODUCTION

The text in this brochure is for informational purposes only, and no responsibility can be taken for its accuracy since river conditions are dictated by weather and season, and continually change. This brochure and the information contained therein is not intended as a comprehensive list of all hazards and conditions that a paddler may encounter in the rivers, nor is it an all inclusive course of advice in dealing with such hazards. All canoeists and kayakers using the watershed do so at their own risk and Quinte Conservation assumes no responsibility for any injury, loss or damage to person or property from the use of the watershed, or the information contained in this brochure. Those wishing to spend more than one day on the river are advised that no designated camping exists along the route. Keep off and avoid all dams.

CONSERVATION AREAS

The Moira and Skootamatta Rivers flow past four conservation areas owned and maintained by Quinte Conservation, and several conservation lands.

Embracing the scenic Skootamatta River at the western limits of Flinton, the five-acre **Flinton Conservation Area** contains the Flinton Dam. In former years, the Flint Mills was located here, later replaced by a gold mine. An earlier dam was constructed here in the early 1920s, and rehabilitated in 1979.

The Price Conservation Area is also located on the Skootamatta River, near the junction of Highway 7 and Highway 37, at Actinolite. This 22-acre (8.9 hectare) site is rich in flora and fauna, and contains a white pine plantation.

Vanderwater Conservation Area, east of Thomasburg is picturesquely located along the Moira River, and the river here cascades over a series of limestone steps. The 635-acre (257.97 hectare) area was named after Colonel Roscoe Vanderwater, founder of the Moira River Conservation Authority (now a part of Quinte Conservation) and its first chairman. There are lots of places along its three-kilometre length to pull in for lunch or enjoy the network of hiking trails.

The Moira River also flows past the **H.R. Frink Centre** near Plainfield, and one of the hiking trails is located right along the shoreline. A pause here to explore the many trails will be an unforgettable experience.

Just beyond the H.R. Frink Centre and west of O'Brien's Bridge at Highway 37, the Moira River also flows past the **Thurlow Wildlife Management Area**. However, majority of this property is wetland. Another conservation area, **Deerock Lake**, is accessible via Partridge Creek, northwest of Flinton.

PADDLING SAFETY

1. Never attempt a trip that exceeds your ability.
2. Know signs, symptoms and treatment for hypothermia.
3. For extended trips, waterproof all gear, and be sure to carry: a first aid kit, extra food, and a personal survival kit.
4. Carry an extra topographical map.
5. Never attempt to run rapids before viewing them first.
6. Seasonal changes in water levels are characteristic of the Moira and Skootamatta Rivers; therefore it is impossible in this brochure to identify all possible hazards. Keep alert for any other possible hazards.
7. Areas of open water such as Moira and Stoco Lake can be dangerous as winds can quickly generate large waves. Always stay close to the shore in such situations.
8. You are responsible for your own safety. Use sound judgment.



WHAT YOUR CANOE OR KAYAK MUST CONTAIN

The Canadian Coast Guard Small Vessel Regulations state that every canoe or kayak must contain:

1. Canadian approved life jacket/P.F.D. for every passenger
2. one buoyant heaving line of not less than 15 metres in length
3. a propelling device (paddle), or an anchor
4. a bailer or manual water pump
5. sound signaling device

Additional Recommendations to Above: A pealess whistle is best for canoeing or kayaking. Include an extra paddle in your boat. Above all, WEAR your lifejacket/P.F.D. when on the water.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

- 1 Use existing trails and portages.
- 2 Carry out all garbage.
- 3 Use utmost courtesy on private lands. It must be remembered that almost the entire route is flanked by private lands. Only the northern most reaches are crown land.
- 4 Leave no trace of your presence on the river, so others behind you may have the same pleasurable outdoor experience.
- 5 Use common sense during the dry season. If there is a fire ban, or the surroundings look too unsafe to start a fire, use a small portable single burner camp stove.

MAPS

Maps for each section of the Moira and Skootamatta Rivers are included in this publication. More detailed topographical maps may be obtained from the source below.

Belleville	31C/3	Tweed	31C/6
Kaladar	31C/11	Mazinaw	31C/14

Canada Map Office

Centre for Topographic Information
Natural Resources Canada
615 Booth Street, Room 180
Ottawa Ontario Canada
K1A 0E9

Telephone: 1-800-465-6277

Fax: (613) 947-7948

E-Mail: topo.maps@NRCan.gc.ca

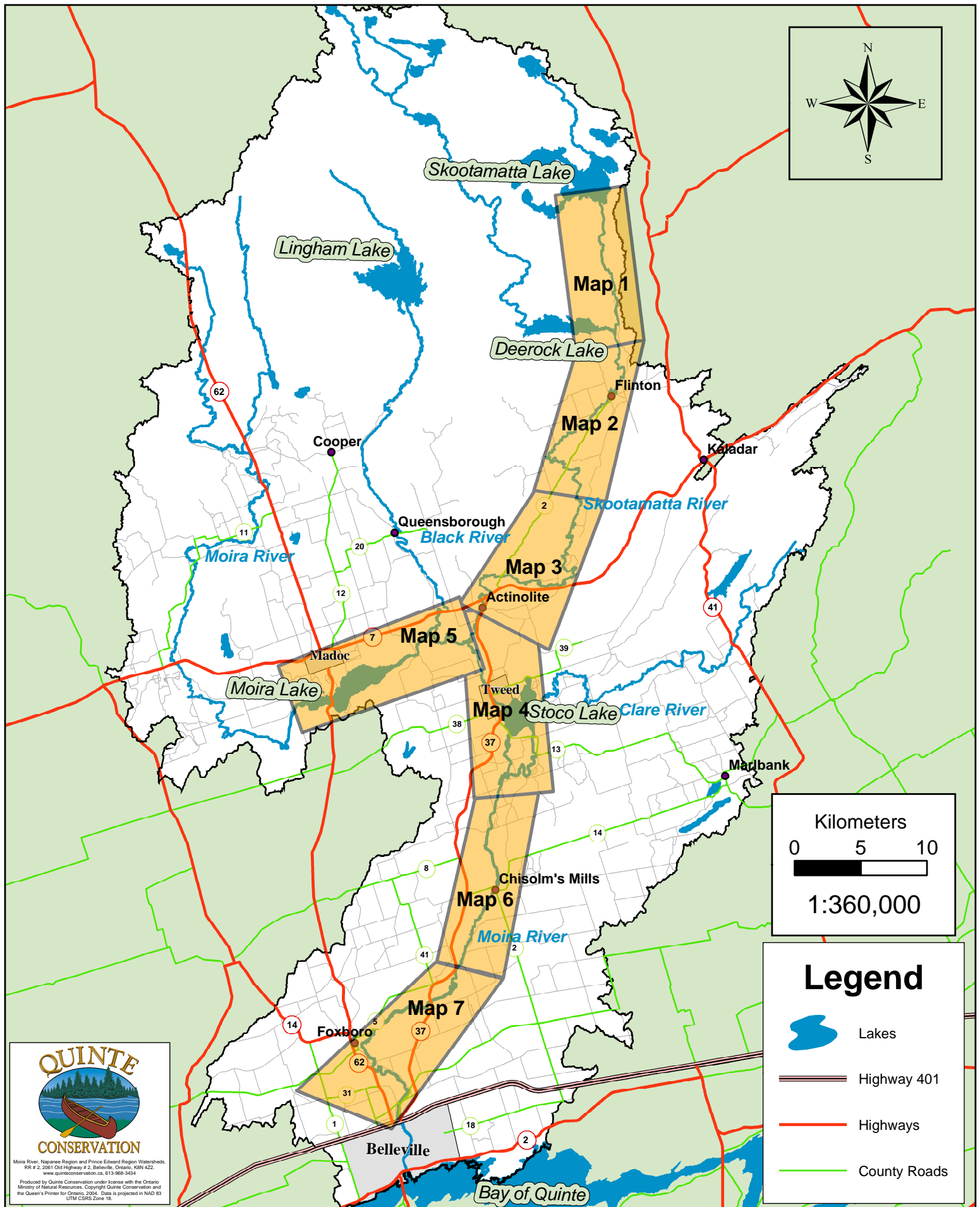
USING THE GUIDE

This canoe route guide contains maps for the entire length of the Skootamatta River and the Moira River downstream of Moira Lake. Both rivers are divided into sections, three sections for the Skootamatta River and four sections for the Moira (see map below). Opposite each map is a description of that particular section of the river, along with the distance, portages, access points and any hazards. The numbers on the description correspond with those of the map.

A separate description has been provided for each section, depicting suitable locations and access points for families interested in a pleasant afternoon paddle by canoe or kayak.

PLEASE REFER TO CANOE ROUTE – INDEX MAP

Canoe Route -- Index Map



MAP 1 – Skootamatta Lake to Partridge Creek

Skootamatta Lake



Distance: 12 km

Number of Portages: 6

Access Points: Skootamatta Lake. Follow Highway 41 for 22.5 km from Kaladar north to Cloyne. At the north end of Cloyne, take Skootamatta Lake Rd. (across from Pineview Free Methodist Church).

Follow this road for about 1 km, and keep left at the fork following Sheldrake Lake Road for a further 4.2 km. There is access and parking on the north side of the road, and another launch site at the bridge. Another boat launch is located on the north side of the lake and can be reached by following Skootamatta Lake Rd. from the fork for another 1.4 km to the Skootamatta Lake sign, and a further 1 km to a launch and spacious parking.

Description of Route/Portages:

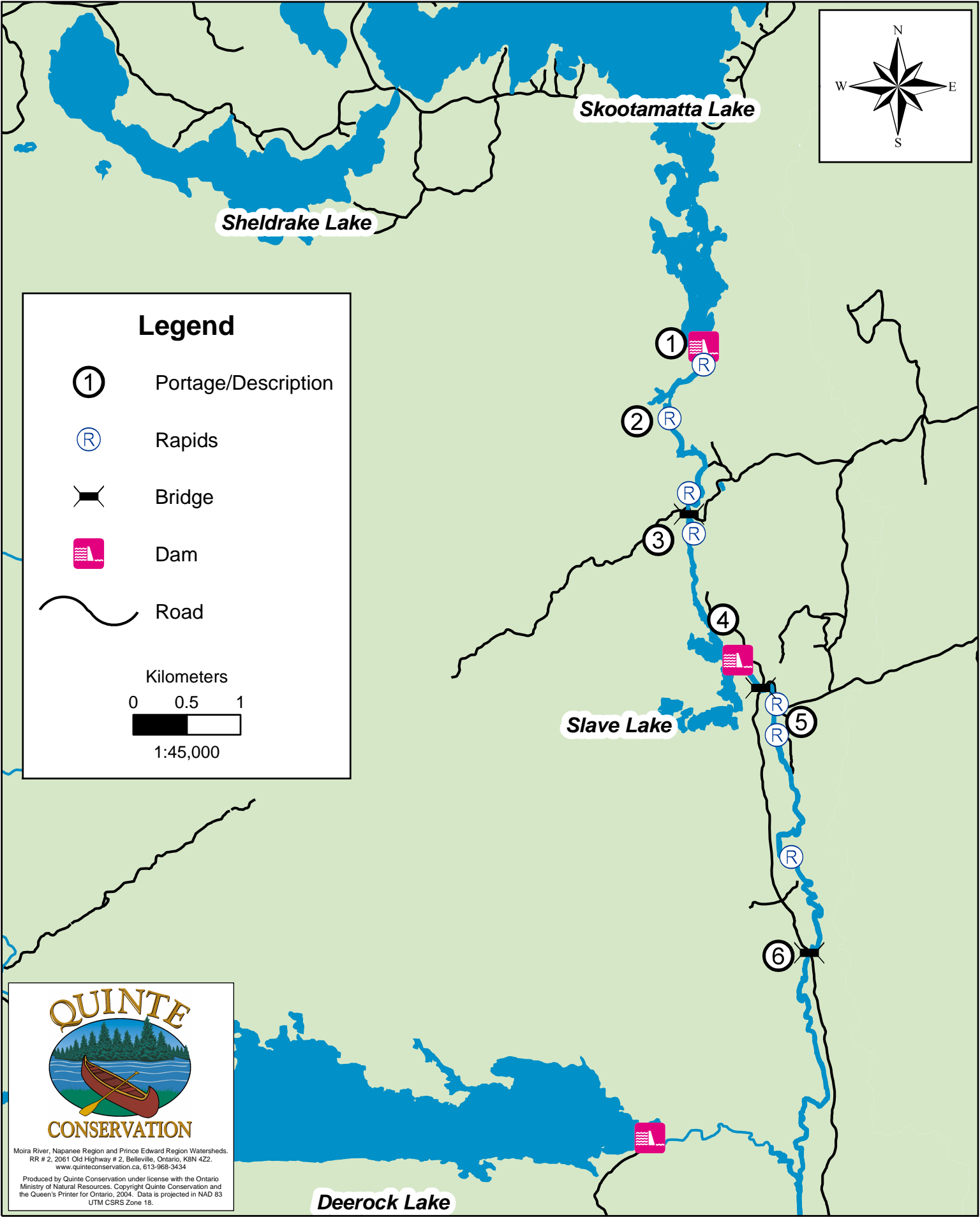
Note: Most of this stretch of the river is not suitable for canoeing due to a large number of beaver dams and fallen trees. Anyone wishing to challenge this stretch must be prepared for numerous incidental portages to circumvent these numerous obstructions.

1. 2 km from the access point is a dam. Take out on the left side of the dam and follow to the base of the rapids.
2. About 800 m from the dam there is a short set of rapids. Carry down on the right side.
3. At the power line, there is a long, shallow set of rapids. Two possible routes exist. You may portage along the power line road for 800 m, or follow the river into Slave Lake. The river will usually pose less difficulty, but if you choose the road, then take out on the left side and carry east to the road on the right.
4. Continue south down Slave Lake until you reach the first dam on the east side of the lake. Take out on the left side of the dam and portage to the base of the rapids.
5. At the bridge, take out on the left side and carry past the rapids to a pool 100 metres downstream. Beyond this point there is a shallow set of rapids that can be either run or waded.
6. A second bridge exists 3 km downstream. Take out on the left side above the bridge and carry down along the road for 200 metres. Put in at the base of the rapids. The next 3 km is marked by a series of beaver dams and log jams which can easily be stepped over.

Day Paddling Opportunities

Skootamatta Lake: Put in at Skootamatta Lake. From either of the two access points along Sheldrake Lake Road, it is a pleasant paddle south for two km to the dam, and back. This is a very remote section of the Skootamatta and you will likely have the river all to yourself on this short paddle. Wildlife should be abundant.

Map 1 - Skootamatta River



MAP 2 – Partridge Creek to Flinton Road

Skootamatta River challenge

Distance: 18 km

Number of Portages: 13

Access Points: Flinton



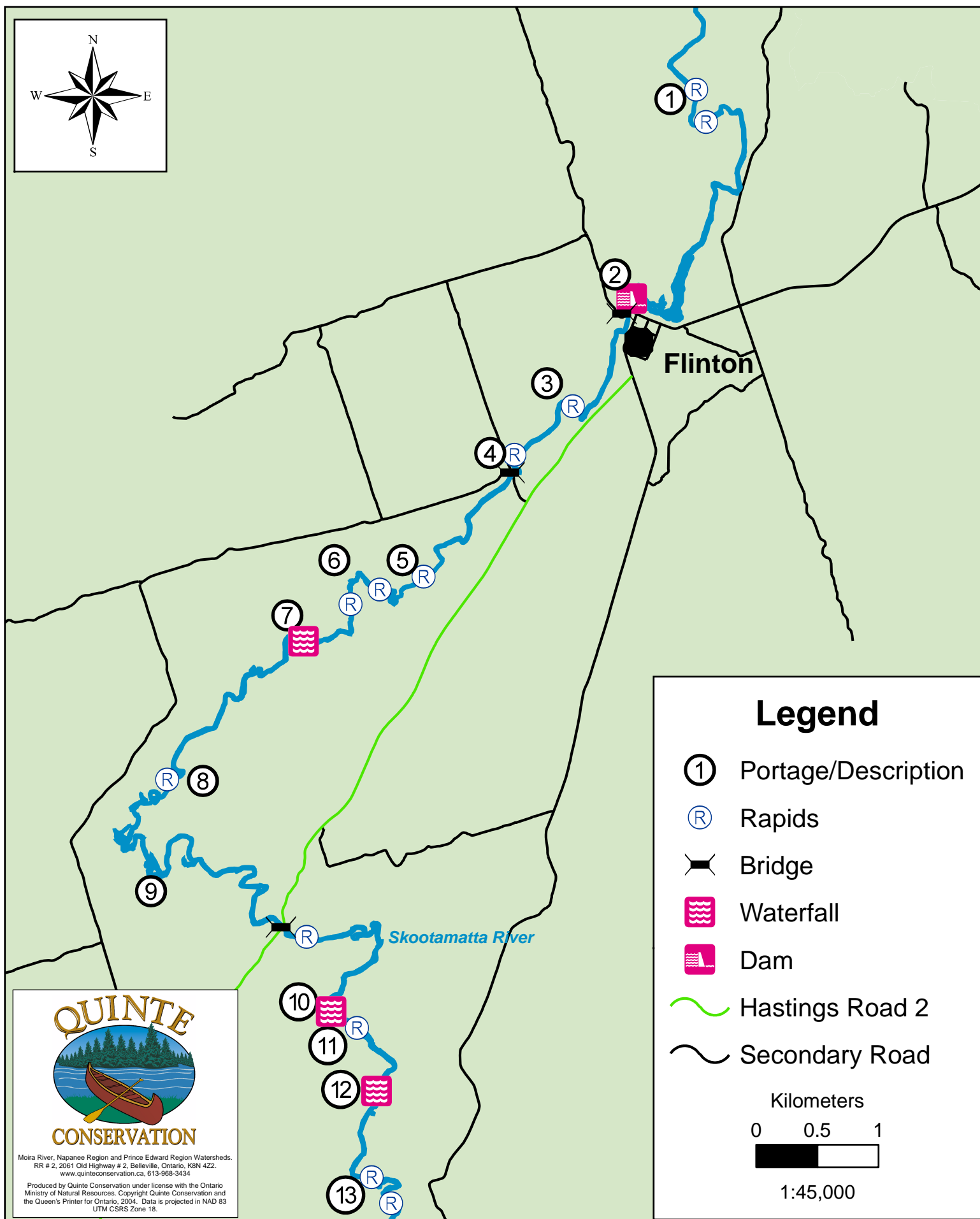
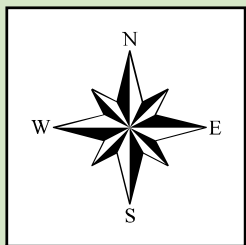
Description of Route/Portages:

1. A long series of rapids and shallows are best avoided by carrying down on the left side of the river for approximately 400 m. In the spring, this is a good stretch of water for the experienced whitewater canoeist.
2. Flinton Conservation Area: At the park in Flinton, portage left around the dam, through the conservation area, and put in below the bridge. A few small rapids mark the next section, but no difficulty should be encountered.
3. 2 km from the dam there exists a chute. Step around the chute on the left side.
4. A short distance further is another step over around a rapid and a bridge. In high water, caution is required to land safely.
5. Next is a long series of rapids. They either may be portaged around on the left side of the river for approximately 800 m, or run carefully using many lift overs.
6. These rapids are avoided by a short carry on the right side of the river.
7. At the falls, carry around on the left side of the bank.
8. Approximately 2 km downstream carry left for 100 m around a section of shallow rapids.
9. For the next 4 km, there is a series of log jams, beaver dams, and a few small riffles, all of which can be waded through.
10. Approximately 2 km below the Hastings Road 2 bridge, carry right around the falls.
11. Carry right around the rapids.
12. Take the channel on the right side of the river. Carry around the falls.
13. Carry left around the chutes and the two sets of rapids

Day Paddling Opportunities

Flinton: Put in above the dam at Flinton, and paddle upstream to the rapids, and return. Total distance is about 4 km.

Map 2 - Skootamatta River



Legend

① Portage/Description

Ⓡ Rapids

— Bridge

Waterfall

Dam

Hastings Road 2

Secondary Road

Kilometers

0 0.5 1

1:45,000



Moira River, Napanee Region and Prince Edward Region Watersheds.
RR # 2, 2061 Old Highway # 2, Belleville, Ontario, K8N 4Z2.
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MAP 3 – Flinton Road to Highway 7

Skootamatta River at Highway 7

Distance: 18 km

Number of Portages: 9

Access Points: Actinolite or Storing's Bridge



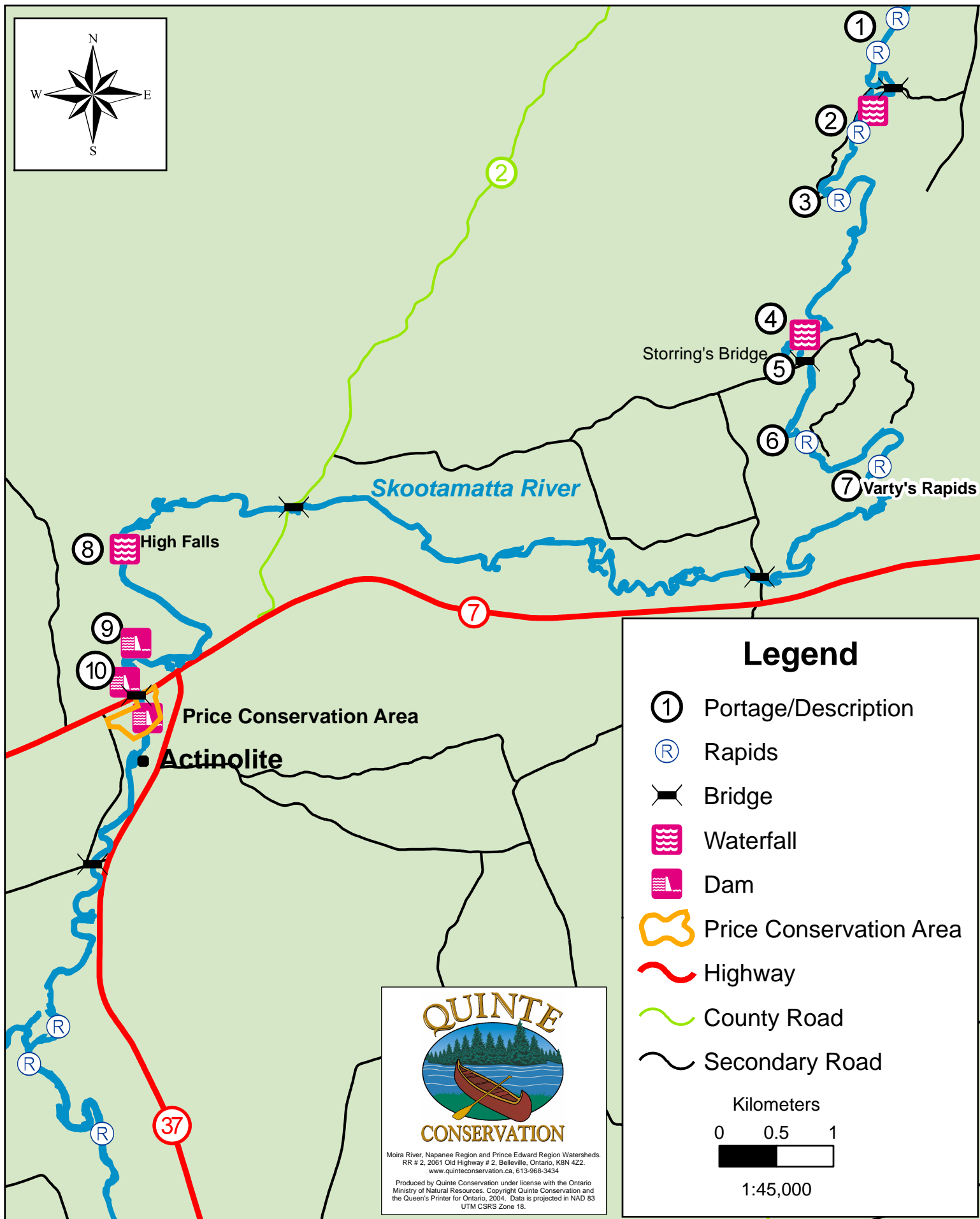
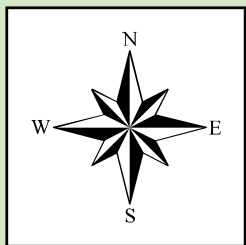
Description of Route/Portages:

1. Carry right around the rapids, falls and chute. Put in at the large pool at the base of the last rapid.
2. Log Jam Falls: At the falls, carry around on the left bank. At the bottom of the hill the footpath reaches a beaver pond. Follow the path to the right of the pond which will lead you back to the river. At the base of the falls there is an iron rod imbedded in the rock. This was used for holding logs during the late 1880s.
3. Carry right around the chute.
4. Carry left around the falls.
5. Storing's Bridge: The small falls must be portaged on the left. Put in at the base of the rapids.
6. Carry left around the rapids.
7. Varty's Rapids: Carry around on the left side and put in at the pool beyond the rapids. The next 8 km are deep, slow and winding
8. **High Falls:** High Falls must be portaged around on the right side. Follow the path to the base of the rapids and put in at the large pool.
9. There is a private dam between High Falls and the dam at Highway 7. Proceed with caution.
10. At the next dam, take out on the left side by the stream gauge structure, and carry over Highway 7 to the base of the old dam at the Price Conservation Area. Put in here and cross the pool over to the right bank and follow the path to the road. Turn left down the gravel road and put in below the bridge.

Day Paddling Opportunities

Highway 7 to High Falls: Put in at the dam on the north side of Highway 7, and paddle north to the base of High Falls, and return. Total distance is about 5 km. This section is more suitable for summer or fall paddling as the current of water in the spring can be swift.

Map 3 - Skootamatta River



Legend

- ① Portage/Description
- Ⓡ Rapids
- ⚡ Bridge
- 🌊 Waterfall
- 🏰 Dam
- 🟡 Price Conservation Area
- 🔴 Highway
- 🟢 County Road
- ⚫ Secondary Road

Kilometers

0 0.5 1

1:45,000



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MAP 4 – Highway 7 to Lost Channel

Stoco Lake



Distance: 17 km

Number of Portages: 6 to 9, depending on water levels

Access Points: Tweed Dam or Stoco Lake

Description of Route/Portages:

1. Approaching the junction of the Moira and Skootamatta Rivers, the water increases its pace. At the first set of rapids, portage on the left side.
2. Moira River. Portage left around the rapids.
3. Railroad Rapids. This is a section of small rapids. Either run the canoes or line down the bank. This last stretch before Tweed is fairly shallow in summer, but no difficulty should be encountered.
4. At the dam in Tweed, take out on the left side of the river above the bridge and cross it. Turn left at the first street and put in past the mill if you want to run the rapids. If not, you may continue walking past the mill south along the street until you reach the park at Stoco Lake.
5. After crossing Stoco Lake, two choices exist. If water levels are high, the West Channel will be the better option. During low water levels, take the East Channel, but proceed with caution on the lower portion.
6. Caton's Bridge and Weir. When you arrive at the low dam and bridge, veer right along the north bank. In high water this can be paddled or roped around, but in low water you must wade through or portage along the bank.
7. Carry right at the rapids.
8. Lost Channel. During high water levels the junction of the two channels to the base of Lost Channel should be attempted by experienced paddlers only. The rapids on the left have a higher degree of risk while the rapids on the right may be navigated by a series of lifts. Please use sound judgment!
9. Beware of this dam and proceed with caution.

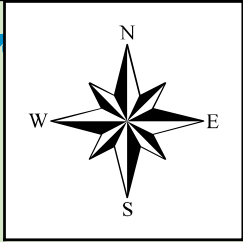
(See Map 6 to continue Moira River route)

(See Map 5 for Moira River side trip)

Day Paddling Opportunities

- a. Stoco Lake: Put in at the park in Tweed and paddle any portion of Stoco Lake. Total distance, if you follow the west shore to the West Channel, and return is about 5 km.
- b. Stoco Lake to Chapman's Weir, West Channel: Follow Marlbank Rd. to the bridge, and paddle down the West Channel to Chapman's Weir, and return. Total distance is 4 km.
- c. Stoco Lake to Caton's Weir, East Channel: Follow Marlbank Rd. to the second bridge, and paddle south to Caton's Weir, and return. Total distance is 5 km.

Map 4 - Moira River



Legend

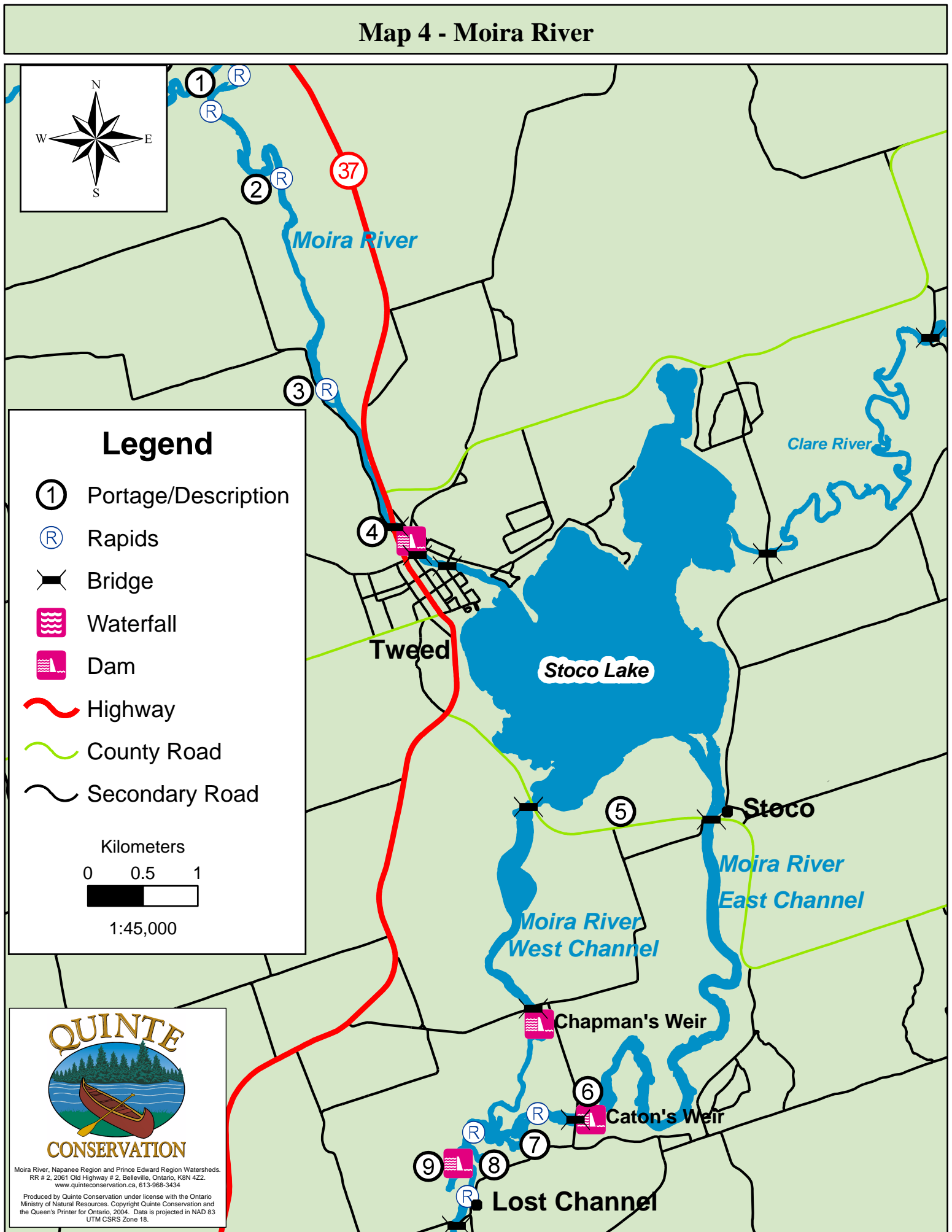
- ① Portage/Description
- Ⓡ Rapids
- ⚡ Bridge
- 🌊 Waterfall
- 🏰 Dam
- 🛣 Highway
- 🛤 County Road
- 🛩 Secondary Road

Kilometers
0 0.5 1
1:45,000

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MAP 5 – Moira River & Black River Sidetrips

Moira Lake



The following descriptions are three short side trips
All of which may be accessed from the Moira River.

Description of Route/Portages:

A) Moira Lake Side Trip

1. From the public boat launch located on the causeway crossing Moira Lake, follow the lake east to the Moira River.
2. Downey's Rapids: Portage left across the road to the pool at the base of the rapids.
3. Once you reach the mouth of the Skootamatta River, refer to Map 4.

Total distance from the Moira Lake boat launch to the Skootamatta River is 12 km.

B) Black River Side Trip

Black River may be accessed from where it enters the Moira, or from the bridge on Highway 7. A few small rapids may block your way but these can be lifted or waded through without too much difficulty. Distance one way is 4 km.

C) Clare River Side Trip

The Clare River may be accessed from Highway 41 at the east end or from Stoco Lake from the west end. This side trip is approximately 18 km in length and will take less than a day to complete. For this side trip, please refer to Map 4.

Day Paddling Opportunities

For a casual day of family paddling, Moira Lake is the best option, but be aware, that the prevailing westerly winds can make the lake choppy. Choose your route and destination carefully.

Map 5 - Moira River



MAP 6 – Lost Channel to Latta

Lost Channel



Distance: 14 km

Number of Portages: 3

Access Points: Vanderwater Conservation Area, Bridge at Latta, or bridge at Chisholm

Description of Route/Portages:

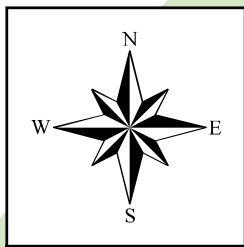
1. Once past the rapids at Lost Channel (described in the Map 4 text), the river is straightforward to the bridge at Vanderwater Road. Through the first section of Vanderwater Conservation Area the water follows a slower pace.
2. At the rapids at the limestone ledges, carry left into the picnic area. This area provides an excellent opportunity to rest or walk the hiking trails within the conservation area. From this point to Chisholm's Mill, no difficulty should be encountered.
3. Chisholm's Mill. At the mill, carry left around the dam. (Warning/Danger: Do not swim at the dam.) During high water levels, the next 8 km should be run by experienced paddlers only. During low water levels, this section can be run using a series of lift overs and possible lining. This section of the Moira possesses great aesthetic value and is well worth any hardships encountered.
4. Moira Caves and Scuttleholes (Private Property). These caves are located on the east bank of the Moira a short distance north of Latta. They are part of the Moira Karst, a section of the Moira River Basin where unique features have been created in the limestone bedrock by the dissolving action of water. Features of this area range from slight depressions in the bedrock surfaces to an extensive cave system.
5. At Latta, take out above the dam on the right side and put in just below the mill. Below Latta are several sets of rapids stretching for 1.5 km.

Day Paddling Opportunities

- a. Vanderwater Road Bridge. Put in at the boat launch on the west side of the river, just east of the bridge. The paddle upstream to the base of the rapids near Lost Channel is about 2.5 km one way, and passes by scenic banks lined with cardinal flowers, sneezeweed and water-willow.
- b. Vanderwater Conservation Area. Take the road into the conservation area and follow to the closed gate at the far end where there is parking and a suitable launch area along the river. The paddle south toward Chisholm's Mills is about 2 km and follows the edge of the conservation area property for much of the distance.

Note: The above described areas are more enjoyable in summer and fall once the strong spring current is no longer a factor.

Map 6 - Moira River



Thomasburg

37

1

2 R

Vanderwater Conservation Area

Legend

① Portage/Description

R Rapids

Bridge

Dam

Vanderwater Conservation Area

Highway

County Road

Secondary Road

Kilometers

0 0.5 1

1:45,000

Chisholm's Mills

3

R

R

R

R

R

Moira River

4 Moira Caves
and
Scuttle Holes

37

5

R

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MAP 7 – Latta Rapids to Hwy 401

near O'Brien's Bridge

Distance: 17 km

Number of Portages: 1

Access Points: O'Brien's Bridge, Foxboro, Corbyville

Description of Route/Portages:

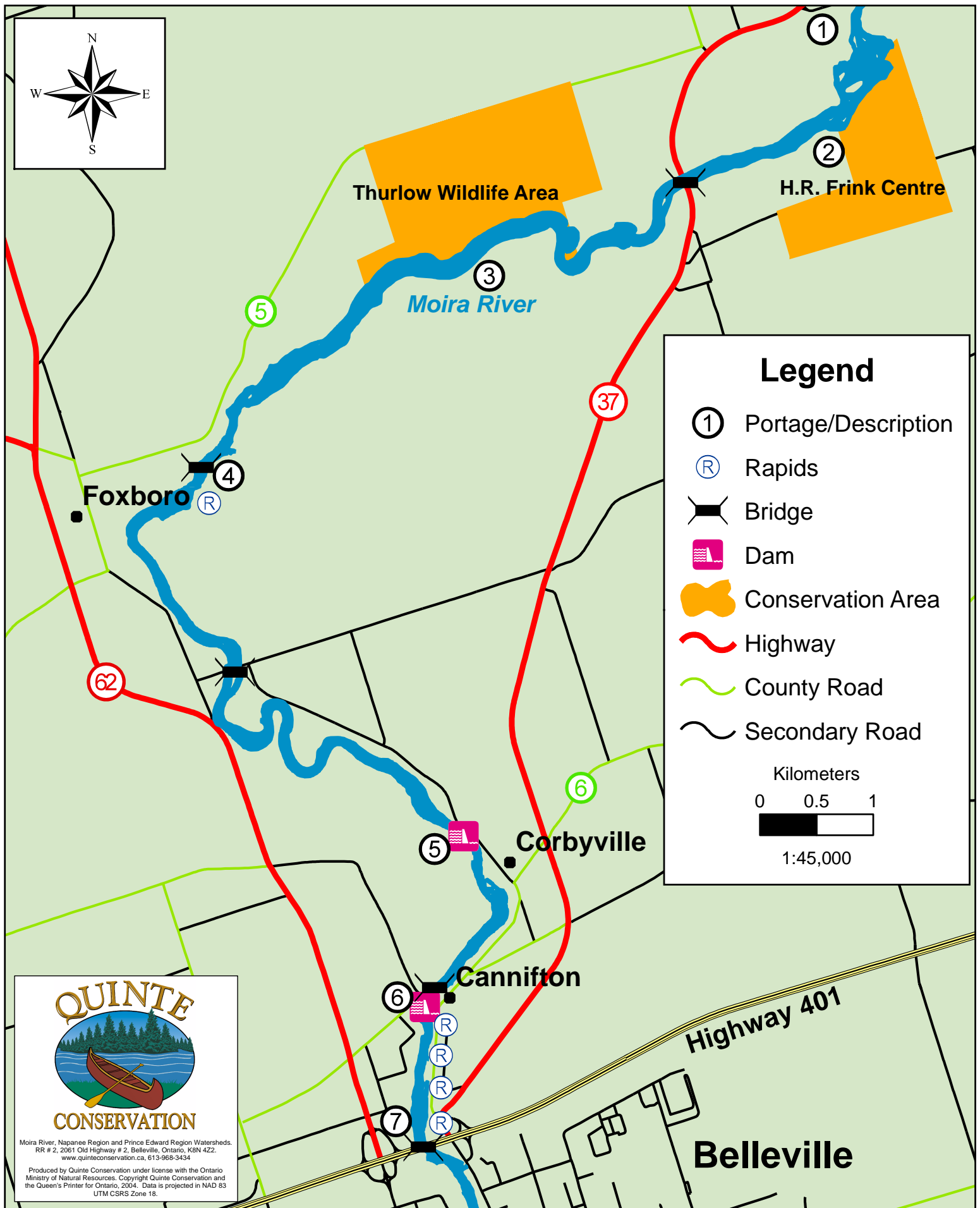
1. From the Latta Rapids to Corbyville, the pace of the river is slow but enjoyable. The area is rich in wetland vegetation and abounds in waterfowl.
2. The H.R. Frink Centre property is located on the east shore, providing an opportunity to rest before continuing on, or taking advantage of the many hiking trails on this property. At O'Brien's Bridge, at Highway 37, there is a boat launch on the right.
3. Just past O'Brien's Bridge on the right is the Thurlow Wildlife Area, comprising 600 acres (243 hectares) of conservation land, and owned by Quinte Conservation. However, there are no access points or hiking trails here.
4. If portaging is necessary at the rapids under the railway bridge, carry on to the flat rock to the left.
5. Corbyville Dam. At the dam, carry around on the right side. From Corbyville to Cannifton, the pace of the river begins to quicken.
6. The bridge at Cannifton marks the end of your trip. Just downstream of the bridge is the Arthur Holgate Dam, built in 1988, the first of 6 ice control dams.
7. The next 5 km from Cannifton to the Bay of Quinte are solid rapids. The 5 remaining dams marking this stretch were built in the late 1970s and the 1980s to prevent flooding in downtown Belleville. **Canoeing or Kayaking through this remaining stretch is practically impossible and very dangerous.**



Day Paddling Opportunities

- a. O'Brien's Bridge on Highway 37. Put in at the boat launch and paddle upstream for 2 km to the base of the Latta Rapids. Along the way, you will pass the H.R. Frink Centre where you can pull up and sample some of the walking trails. This stretch is dotted with small islands and wetlands with plenty of wildlife. This is a very scenic paddle through a maple swamp and past the Thurlow Wildlife Area.
- b. O'Brien's Bridge on Highway 37. Put in at the boat launch and paddle downstream to the hydro lines where you can turn around (4 km one way), or proceed to the dam at Corbyville if going only one way, for an additional 6 km.

Map 7 - Moira River





Stoco Lake, Tweed

T. Sprague photo

NOTES

All photos courtesy of Terry Sprague
(Photo Map 2 by Russ Kitchen)



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