

Canoe/Kayak Trips on the Jock River

NOTE: Canoeing and kayaking can be risky. Here are few dangers that you may encounter:

Water Level: High water can significantly change both the turbulence and speed of the water. High water levels can change easily paddled sections into treacherous sections for even skilled paddlers. Following extended or heavy rains, water levels can change quickly. In low water, portions of the river may not be passable and may require tracking (walking in the water with the boat), lining or portaging, all of which can be hard on bodies and equipment. At all water levels, be aware of hidden rocks and logs, which can damage boats and cause boats to upset.

Cold Water: From spring flood to early summer the water temperature can be cold. Exposure to cold water can lead to hypothermia. In addition, cold water can prevent even fit people from swimming more than a few swimming strokes, making self rescue difficult or impossible. In the spring, a wet suit or dry suit is recommended. If you do not have those be sure to bring wool or pile clothing and be sure to stow your clothes in a dry secure spot.

Strainers and rocks: Strainers are trees and branches that have fallen into the river. Stay clear of these hazards. Be sure to keep your eyes downstream and watch the direction of the current.

Dams and other man made obstructions: Many of the obstructions such as dams are well marked with signs and many have booms in the river to keep you away from the dangerous parts of the dams. Portage trails are not always marked.

Not being prepared for your river trip can be the biggest danger. Know your paddling ability and do not exceed it. Land your boat well above obstacles, secure the boat and walk the shore to check out the obstacle. You should always prepare for just about any type of weather situation you can think of. Make sure you bring a change of warm clothes or a first aid kit. Ensure that your boat is equipped according to Canadian Coast Guard requirements, e.g. for canoes - throwing line; lines bow and stern; spare paddle; bailer; and PFDs for each canoeist. PFDs must be worn. Always practice common sense.

The following canoe/kayak routes are suggested. Unless otherwise stated, the paddlability of the river is highly variable.

1. Bow of the Jock Park to Richmond and back. Any flow level. The Bow of the Jock Park is on Steeple Hill Cr. off Fallowfield Road near the Village of Fallowfield (first L going W after Moodie). The park has plenty of parking, and there is a canoe put-in on the downstream end of the park. The park is also a great place to have a quiet picnic. Canoe up river to Richmond (est. 4-5 km). The route follows and is not far from the Richmond Road but the road to be too much of a distraction. There are shallows and a small weir (~1m high) near Richmond. A short distance above the McBean St. Bridge in Richmond, you will run into rapids. Scenery is mostly farms but it is still a nice paddle.

2. Munster Side Road to Richmond through the Richmond Fen Wetland, the largest provincially significant wetland in eastern Ontario. Moderately high to high flow. BEFORE ATTEMPTING THIS ROUTE check out the rapids at about Ottawa St. in Richmond (plug in Ottawa Street, Richmond, Ontario into <http://maps.google.com/> to find location) to see first if there is enough water and, if so, second, if you can handle the rapids. The rapids are only class 1 but if you are not comfortable with rapids, give them a pass as the rocks in this section are particularly jagged and you can put a nice hole in your boat. For any of the possibilities, you cannot get lost while on the river and will need only a road map to get there. Scenery is hardwood marsh. There are significant numbers of birds in the Fen and you may see beavers, muskrats and otters if you paddle quietly.

2a. If the answers above are both yes, the route from Munster Side Road to Richmond through the Richmond Fen Wetland is fabulous. You need a car drop at bottom in the park at the McBean St. Bridge in Richmond. The top of the trip starts on the Munster Side Road (W from Richmond on the Franktown Road and turn L onto the Munster Road) and proceed just past the bridge and park near the gate into the field on your right. The access to the water down the embankment on the downstream side is difficult. This is the only entry on public land. Time for the river part of trip is about 2 hours (+/- depending on your paddling speed) or more if you slow down to observe the surroundings. You will likely have to lift over one or two small log jams and one or two small beaver dams but none is particularly difficult. (Take care if logs are wet.) The rapids start downstream of the Centennial Golf Course but are generally class 1, gentle and limited to the last ~2km of the trip. The rapids tend to spread out so make sure you try to follow the deepest water.

2b. If there is enough water but you are not comfortable with the rapids, drop a car at the end of Joy's Side Road. The road runs down the W side of the Centennial Golf Course. Joy's Side Road is about 2 km W of

Richmond on the Franktown Rd. The end of the road is muddy so don't drive all the way to the water. Start as above.

2.c. If either answer is "no", (any flow level), go the Joy's Side Road spot described above and paddle upstream into the Fen. There are many shallow spots and logs in low water. You will have to lift-over the beaver dams. Go up as far as you wish into the Fen and then reverse your path.

3. The Cedarview part of the river is nice but is primarily through farmland with a narrow treed riparian zone. This is flat-water paddling between the rapids and is limited in length. Any flow level. Put in at the Cedarview bridge; best access is on SE side. Flat-water paddling is about 1 1/2 km downstream and about 1 km upstream with rapids on each end.

4. The portion upstream from the Cedarview Bridge to the Bow of the Jock Park is mixed farm and forest. You have to be willing to walk up a few little rapids whilst dragging the canoe. The distance is about 3 km. There is a lift-over of a very small weir (< 1/2 m high) located 100 m downstream of Moodie Drive Bridge and another lift-over of a stone rubble bridge (~1/2 m high) about 100 m downstream of the Bow of the Jock Park. The rapids in this portion can be walked but the rocks are not the typical rounded alluvial boulders. Water sandals may not provide sufficient ankle protection that water shoes or runners would. This trip links into the flat-water portion from the Bow of the Jock Park to Richmond. In high water, this portion can be paddled top to bottom but care must be taken at the two lift-over points (above).

5. 9th Line Road upstream into the headwaters. The scenery is almost entirely marsh with an established central stream channel. This is pristine marsh so expect to see a large number of birds. To get to the put-in from "downtown" Ashton, go W across the Ashton Bridge over the Jock River and follow the main road out of town (9th Line Road). At the first bridge crossing (distance ?), put your canoe in and paddle upstream (S) into the marshes. At most water levels, you should be able to go many kilometers upstream, but there may be the odd beaver dam.

6. The portion of the river from Greenbank Road to the Rideau River should only be attempted by skilled paddlers only in high flow and only after the entire route has been scouted. In very high flood conditions, this section of the river has some substantial standing waves and holes. Intermediate and unskilled paddlers must not paddle this section of the river. In the first part of June, a weir is typically installed (4 ft. high panels) about 400m upstream from the Jock Landing Park where the Jock River flows into the Rideau River and the panels are removed late September or early October. A dangerous

keeper wave is formed downstream of the installed weir. When the panels are removed, the metal beams protruding from the base of the weir structure can damage boat hulls.

The "pick of the litter" is the trip through the Fen.