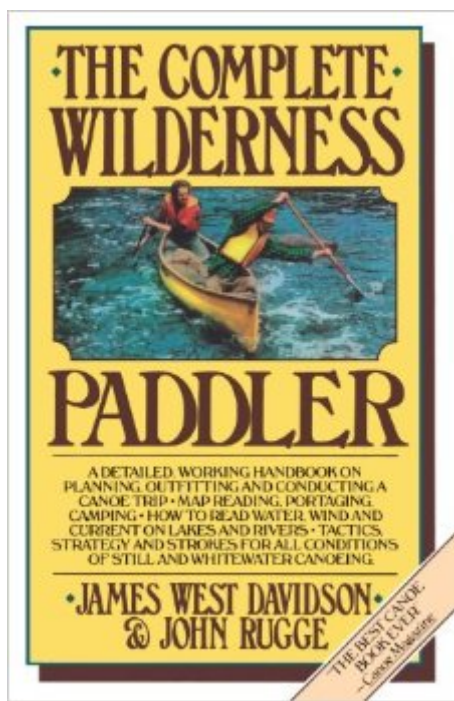


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The Complete Wilderness Paddler



Synopsis

A combination of detailed instruction and text (based on actual adventures) of all the techniques of canoe camping and wilderness cruising. You learn how to "find a river," navigate, cope with accidents and much more. With 65 drawings and 11 maps.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (16 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The Complete Wilderness Paddler takes you step by step through the month long adventure shared by four men on the Moisie River in Labrador. The authors use this backdrop to explain how to successfully plan and execute a similar trip. The book does not read like an instruction manual. Instead, it explains certain things as the need arises. For example: as they were paddling across large lakes an explanation of flat-water strokes was given. Later in that chapter there were also sections on crossing ice-covered lakes and on navigation. The part of this book that is really interesting is not the explanations (though they are done well), rather it is the adventure story. After all, the theme is that of a true wilderness trip to the heart of Canada. It is hard not to get caught up in the spirit of this book. I constantly found myself imagining that I was in the bow leaning into a high brace past Igloo Rock or trying to find the portage trail that hadn't been used in ! 20 years. The book also shares stories from camp that make the characters seem more human. I recommend this book to anyone who has ever looked out a window and declared to himself that he would rather be "out there" than "in here." As for the information, I do not believe this book is all you need to plan your excursion (though it's close). To me it seems to be a wonderful place to start. It covers the basics and then some. It is worthwhile to read this book even if you just want to catch the spirit that is

always prominent in this story.

My husband and I read "The Complete Wilderness Paddler" before we went on a three week canoe trip north of the Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories. It contained exactly what we needed to learn. We even ended up singing the authors' "Little Black Flies" song a few times ourselves--see Chapter Nineteen, "A Disquisition on Some (Justly) Unsung Creatures of the Woods." This chapter not only contains the black flies song ("Black flies, little black flies/ Rum bum umble dum little black flies...") but also charts a technique for unobtrusively shagging your black flies off onto an unsuspecting decoy, e.g. your husband or the guide. Priceless. This is the kind of stuff you really need to know if you're planning any kind of camp-out north of Indiana. The authors had to portage around thirty-two sets of rapids (not easy with a canoe balanced on your head) on their trip down the entire length of Labrador's Moisie River. They include invaluable information on trail-finding (if there is a trail) and bushwack portages, accomplished with "compass, map, and horse-sense." (Nowadays, one might also use a GPS device). One of the suggestions if you happen to be looking for the next lake across the watershed, is to head for the point on the horizon where the trees dip the lowest, "but not if the topo shows it to be the Dismal Swamp." Just remember that you may be bushwacking the next body of paddleable water with the center thwart of a canoe across your shoulders. You won't have a lot of energy for sight-seeing. If you are going to traverse a well-known river, you might not have to read the chapters on "Scouting" and "Lining." However, it might still be a good idea to know the information they contain, just in case your 'well-known' river is running high or very low. Jim, Rug, Joe, and Peach (the 'wilderness paddlers') also spend a great deal of time demonstrating via diagrams and text, the tactics and strokes for handling all conditions of still and wild water--the Moisie River had them all--not to mention ice, haystacks, eddy lines, souse holes, curlers, and roosters. There is also advice on bailing techniques, and how to recover when your canoe capsizes. This book is 'the' classic for anyone who wants to take off into the Wilderness and do some heavy-duty paddling. It's authoritative, extremely detailed, and also enormously fun to read.

A wonderful story. The title is wrong; this is not an instruction manual. This is a true story of four young men who find the headwaters of the Moisie River and then canoe its entire length. But it is a story written with wit and sensitivity, from the finding of the Coke bottle in the wilderness of Labrador to the final shoot to the St. Lawrence. Get it. Don't hesitate. you'll love it.

This is a great book if you like to canoe, of course, but it's also a great story of a bunch of friends taking on a huge adventure! I love this book for its practical tips about canoeing and hiking and camping. But instead of just tackling the nuts and bolts of this is how you read a map, this is how you pick a campsite, use this type of stroke in this type of current; the author also explains how the interpersonal relationships affect the trip. My dad gave me this book years ago to borrow. I bought a used copy online. Love this book.

Others have written much better reviews than I can on this book, so I will just say it is a wonderful book to help get you excited about canoeing that is filled with practical advice on many aspects of canoe tripping.

In 1977 a friend gave me this book (I was moving from Maine to North Carolina) and said, "Read this. We're going to Labrador next year." Yeah, Right!! I read the book, learned quite a lot about wilderness canoeing, and grew increasingly enchanted with the prospect of doing The Moise. I drove to Caribou, ME in August of '78, met my five companions, drove to Sept Isle, flew to Lac Opacopa, and did the Moisie. Boom! Just like that. It was my first big adventure, and it was awesome. We could not and would not have done it had it not been for this book.... which was written with talent, respect, awe and love. Be careful when you read it, you might find yourself retracing their paddle strokes. And you'll love every minute of them... the book and the trip!

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