Saugeen River
The Saugeen River rises in one of the highest points in Southwestern Ontario, flowing west through rolling scenic landscapes to Lake Huron. Although the route crosses agricultural land, it is bordered for the most part by heavy mixed forest. The official route begins at the Hanover Town Park (Access Point #3) and ends 102 km downstream at Denny's Dam (Access Point #15), near Southampton. Access Points #1 and #2 (not shown on map) are recommended for experienced paddlers only who may encounter at high water, obstacles and heavy rapids. Victoria Day weekend may not be suitable for families due to the high volume of river paddlers.
The river varies from wide, slow-flowing sections to stretches with rapids and eddies, making the Saugeen ideal for family canoeing. The rapids present little difficulty except in early spring when water is high, fast flowing and ideal for learning the basics of rapid water navigation.
Portages are short, by-passing four dams along the entire route. The first three portages are located upstream between Hanover and Walkerton. Although some paddlers may extend their trip to Lake Huron (Access Point #16), most will pull off the river at or before Denny's Dam (Access Point #15), where there is plenty of daytime parking. By car, this property can be reached by following Carlisle Street, immediately east of Bruce Rd. 3 and Highway 21 junction.
Fishing the Saugeen
Visit, lure or fly! Upstream from Lake Huron, you will find some of Ontario's best Steelhead and Chinook Salmon runs. Comprised of naturally sheltered feeder systems and spring-fed lakes, the Saugeen River system is also an angler's Mecca for Brown and Brook Trout, Largemouth and Smallmouth bass, Northern Pike and Muskie. Check the Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary, published annually by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, for catch information and seasons.
Paisley to Southampton
(Access Points # 9 – 16)
33 km / 9 to 12 hours
Several gentle rapids occur within this area. In the vicinity of Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area, clay bluffs along the river form the edge of a well-defined floodplain. Further downstream, the river is braided with sandy treed islands that are remnants of a former delta. During periods of low river flow in July and August, paddlers may have to occasionally disembark to seek deeper water.
Portage
Denny's Dam – Dock and steps located on the left (south) bank on Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) property.
Hanover to Walkerton
(Access Points # 3 – 5)
35 km / 4 hours
This section includes three dams once used for milling and hydro-electric generation. From Hanover to the Maple Hill Dam, the waters tend to be deep and slow moving. Downstream, several gentle rapids are encountered before arriving at the Hydro Dam. This section of the route is the most heavily forested. The only vertical cliff-face east of the Rocky Mountains was constructed at the Walkerton Dam in 1986.
Portages
Maple Hill Dam – Portage on the left (south) bank, immediately upstream of bridge. The dam is 50 metres (165 feet) downstream of the bridge.
Hydro Dam – Portage is approximately 30 metres (100 feet) above the dam on the left (west) bank.
Walkerton Dam – Portage signs posted on far left (west) bank.
Walkerton to Paisley
(Access Points # 5 – 9)
40 km / 7 to 10 hours
Downstream of Walkerton, a number of high sand and clay bluffs bordering the river are home to bank swallows and kingfishers. Exercise caution in this section as rapids, large rocks, and flood debris can be encountered. This is the most challenging section of the river. In the downstream portion, forest cover gives way to gently rolling pastures.
Note: Access Point #7 is available only from Bruce Rd 19.
Southampton
Saugeen River Access #16
Saugeen Village
Saugeen River Access #15
Denny's Dam
HNB Dam
Chantry Island
Thornecrest Outfitters
Lake Huron
Port Elgin
Elsinore
Saugeen River Access #14
Arran Lake C.A.
Arran Lake
Tara
Invermay
Arkwright
Burgoyne
Saugeen River Access #13
Saugeen River Access #12
Dunblane
Elderslie - Arran
Willisocroft
Dobbinton
Saugeen River Access #11
Saugeen River Access #11
Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area
Saugeen River Access #11
Salisbury
Saugeen River Access #10
Saugeen River Access #10
Paisley
Saugeen River Access #9A & #9B
Lockerby
Gillies Hill
Chesley
Scone
Saugeen River Access #8
Saugeen River Access #8
McNabb C.A. (River Access Only)
Vesta
Ellengowan
Saugeen River Access #7
Saugeen River Access #7
Pinkerton
Eden Grove
Elmwood
Saugeen River Access #6
Saugeen River Access #6
Cargill
Chepstow
Solwary
Pearl Lake
Saugeen River Access #4
Saugeen River Access #3
Saugeen River Access #3
Hanover
Hanover Park
Saugeen River Access #2
Saugeen River Access #2
Allan Park
Dunkeld
Walkerton
Saugeen River Access #5
Saugeen River Access #5
Walkerton Dam
Maple Hill
Maple Hill Dam
Saugeen River Access #4
Hydro Dam
Greenock
Carlsruhe
Hampden
Bruce Rd 19
Bruce Rd 3
Bruce Rd 20
Bruce Rd 10
Bruce Rd 4
Bruce Rd 6
Bruce Rd 9
Bruce Rd 12
Bruce Rd 15
Bruce Rd 17
Bruce Rd 21
Concession 14
Concession 12 East Arran
Concession 13 West Arran
Concession 6 Elderslie
Concession 8 Elderslie
Concession 10 Elderslie
Concession 12 Elderslie
Concession 22 Elderslie
Concession 24 Elderslie
Concession 6 Brant - Elderslie
Concession 14 East
Concession 14 W
Concession 12
Concession 8
Concession 6 West
Concession 6 East
Concession 4 West Brant
Concession 6
Concession 8 East
Concession 8 West
Concession 10 South
Concession 2 NDR West
Concession 4 Elderslie
Concession 6 Elderslie
Concession 8 Elderslie
Concession 10 Elderslie
Concession 12 Elderslie
Concession 14 NDR
Concession 12 NDR
Concession 10 NDR
Concession 8 NDR
Concession 2 SDR
Concession 4 SDR
Concession 6 SDR
Concession 8 SDR
Concession 10 SDR
Concession 12 SDR
Concession 14 SDR
Sideroad 10 North
Sideroad 20 North
Sideroad 30 North
Sideroad 40 North
Sideroad 15 North
Sideroad 25 North
Sideroad 35 North
Sideroad 45 North
Sideroad 5 North
Sideroad 8 North
Sideroad 10 North
Sideroad 12 North
Sideroad 15 North
Sideroad 20 North
Sideroad 25 North
Sideroad 30 North
Sideroad 35 North
Sideroad 40 North
Sideroad 45 North
Sideroad 5 South
Sideroad 10 South
Sideroad 15 South
Sideroad 20 South
Sideroad 25 South
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