

Petawawa River – Town Run

Vitals

Locale: Petawawa, Ontario

What It's Like: Big water fun in the spring with great surfing. Good river running most of the year as long as it's not frozen.

Class: III-IV pool-drop

Scouting/Portaging: Very easy.

Level: Online gauge: http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/graph/graph_e.html?stn=02KB001. Normal levels are 2.8 to 4.0. 3.2 is medium.

Time: 1-2 hours. Second laps are much faster.

When To Go: March through June for snowmelt. Rain fed in late summer and fall.

Info From: Many visits.

Other Beta: Hell or High Water <http://five2nine.ca/events/>

Description

Contributed by Philip Kompass.

The Petawawa is a beautiful river, draining much of Algonquin Park out into the Ottawa River about 30 river miles upstream from the famous Rocher Fendu section. Bordered on the river left shore by Canadian Forces Base Petawawa the river has been kept somewhat free of development for many years. It is a real gem of a river offering a long season, a variety of boating from surfs to boofs, and very easy shuttles and access.

The Petawawa is easy to find; look for the town and the Town Run is dead smack in the middle of it. Most of the major rapids can be scouted from roadside stops or park space, and with a little ingenuity you can figure out the shuttles with no trouble. The common put ins are either upstream of Hwy 17, just off of Rantz Rd (Murphy Rd exit) or for the shorter run - there is no warm up using this one - at Railroad Rapid just off of Wilson Ave. The clearings for parking are easy to spot on Google Maps, and easy to find on arrival.

The take out is located at Golf Course Rapid - a great little play hole at medium and high flows. It is located on Tall Pines Rd, a dead-end street found by following the river downstream or by turning off of Albert Street.

By putting on at the highway start you get a nice little class 2/3 warm up drop and a 2 km moving flatwater section before arriving at Railroad. This is a big, long rapid and worth scouting for most. There are significant holes - easily avoided - at most flows. There are heaps of line choices here to keep you entertained.

Railroad is followed by boogie, flat water and 3 of the notable rapids in quick succession - Lovers, Catwalk and Suicide. Lovers is straightforward fun, Catwalk has good surf at levels over 2.9 and Suicide, while probably not as deadly as the name would suggest, has some challenging lines to choose from. Finally, run out to the play waves at Golf Course, where the Pet reaches the Ottawa River.

Now it's over but note that the second run takes only a fraction of the time of the first, so head up the 4-minute shuttle and whip off another lap. Your wife, husband or significant other will understand... Enjoy the Petawawa while it lasts. This wonderful river is threatened by a micro hydro project that would ruin this public resource forever. Also, be sure to check out the Hell or High Water Race each spring!

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