

Oka to Ottawa: The Chief Pinesi Brigade

General Plan and Schedule:

Dates: June 25 – July 1, 2024

Location: Oka, Quebec to Governor Bay, Rockcliffe Park/New Edinburgh, Ottawa, via the Ottawa River. Starting point is at Oka, where the staging area for the brigade will be Parc National d'Oka.

Why:

To provide an opportunity for descendants of Chief Pinesi, other First Nations participants, and non-first nations participants, to commemorate Chief Pinesi and his role in the history of Canada. To draw attention of local communities along the route and Canadians in general to the historic role of Chief Pinesi in the struggle for the rights of First Nations peoples and his role in the War of 1812 in support of the British. To provide a platform to discuss and celebrate reconciliation and restitution for the injustices perpetrated on Chief Pinesi's people and all First Nations peoples. To celebrate the historical and ecological significance of the river that connects our communities, our ecosystems, and people time and geography. To celebrate the canoe as an icon to the values of this country: cultural cooperation, respect for all nations, respect for the environment. To draw attention to the Ottawa River as a Canadian Heritage River, one of a family of Canada's most outstanding rivers for its cultural and historical values, and to the dream of restoring the Ottawa as the world's cleanest, most ecologically healthy river to flow a national capital city.

Traditionally, voyageur canoes carried a cargo of furs and trade goods. But these canoes will carry a different kind of payload – ideas, hopes and dreams. Our mission is to draw attention to the need for everyone, from citizen advocacy to the highest political echelons to the spirit of reconciliation - we want to see a Canada where all cultures can work and live together in peace and harmony and justice.

Big Canoes:

This journey will be organized by canoe crews of 6-18 paddlers. Each crew will arrange for a replica of a "Voyageur" big canoe of 26 – 36 feet, which are normally paddled by 5-16 paddlers at a time. Most crews will have extra members, so that paddlers can be rotated, with those on a non-paddling shift or day looking after setting up camp, shuttling vehicles, preparing or acquiring food. Whether or not

crews choose to have extra members, so that paddling can be in shifts, or whether crews choose to paddle the entire route, is up to the individual crew captains. We are planning for 4-6 big canoes to participate in this brigade, 2-4 36' Montreal Canoes (two from Canadian Voyageur Adventures, and currently arranging for two more from Rideau Roundtable, and 1 26' canoes provided by Canadian Voyageur Adventures.

The 26' canoe is ideally paddled by a crew of six to eight; the Montreal Canoes are best paddled by a crew of 12-14. As noted above, some crew members can take shifts to provide other services, such as setting up camp, shuttling vehicles, so crews can be slightly bigger than the actual number of paddlers needed). **How this is handled is up to the individual teams.**

Max Finkelstein, Paddle Canada Instructor Trainer in the Big Canoe program, will be on hand to assist and advise individual crews. **Each canoe will have at least one Paddle Canada certified 'gouvernail' on board at all times the canoes are on the water.**

Smaller Paddle Craft:

For the Chief Pinesi Paddle for Peace Brigade, we welcome smaller human-powered craft, (canoes, kayaks, SUPS, sit-on-tops, outriggers, rowing boats, etc)., to join in for portions of the brigade. The most desirable section to join in is on the last day, paddling from Petrie Island (the last campsite) to Governor Bay. My personal vision is to see Governors Bay filled with human-powered craft of all kinds.

Small craft paddlers should bear in mind that big canoes go fast and it is difficult to keep up unless you are in a racing craft. Also, small craft paddlers will not be considered as part of the brigade. The Chief Pinesi Brigade organizers will work with local paddling groups for scheduling and information sharing, but administration and liability is the responsibility of local groups or individuals.

Brigade Organizer Responsibilities:

The Brigade organizer is Kichi Sibi Trails, in partnership with the Crichton Community Association, The Brigade is being run under the umbrella of the Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society. **Kichi Sibi Trails** is responsible for setting the schedule and itinerary, registering Big Canoe crew and paddlers, assuring the Safety Plan is followed (see safety plan), arranging

for campsites, organizing events with local communities, liaising with government organizations such as Parks Canada, National Capital Commission, and Municipalities. Brigade organizers will also assist individual paddlers to find crews to paddle with and assist small crews to find additional paddlers.

Kichi Sibi Trails will arrange for camping for the brigade. These will be at communities along the route Oka, Carillon, L'Orignal, Montebello, Plaisance, and Petrie Island.

Kichi Sibi Trails is responsible for arranging meetings with local dignitaries, drumming and singing events, community celebrations, etc.

The Brigade Organizer (Kichi Sibi trails) will also be responsible for the 'branding' of the brigade (for example, hats, head bands, t-shirts, stickers, flags, etc, depending on available funds).

Kichi Sibi Trails will also will be responsible for media coverage, web site development and updating, (the brigade is covered in the web site of Kichi Sibi Trails (kichissibiancienstrails.ca, Kichi Sibi Trails on Facebook), in addition to the Voyageurbrigade.org website).

The Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society supports our liability insurance, provides some tertiary medical benefits, ensures that all participants complete a waiver and that the CVBS managers have access to all participants data for emergency contact.

All participants must become members of the Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society to participate. (See voyageurbrigade.org and look under 2024 brigades)

Canoe Crew Captain Responsibilities:

Participants must be organized into crews for each big canoe and each crew must designate a canoe captain. Canoe captains do not need to be Paddle Canada certified big canoe leaders, nor do they need to be the designated 'gouvernail' for the canoe, although this is often the case, Each individual crew captain is responsible for registering and assembling their crews, arranging transportation to and from the event and throughout the brigade, providing the canoe with safety gear to Coast Guard requirements, adhering to the Safety Plan, ensuring that each canoe has adequate paddles, life jackets, camp gear, group cooking supplies and gear, and food.

Captains and crews are responsible for arranging transportation, food, camping gear and other needs. Note that campsites will have been arranged by the Brigade Organizer and will be at no cost to individual participants or canoe crews.

Individual Crew Member Responsibilities:

Individuals who wish to participate in the Chief Pinesi Brigade have the responsibility to find a crew to join or assist in forming a crew. The Brigade Organizer (Kichi Sibi Trails) will assist individuals to find crews. Each individual is expected to share in camp chores, submit required paperwork to crew captains (waivers and membership in the Voyageur Brigade Society), pay their share of the costs not covered by Kichi Sibi Trails, as directed by their captain, and help the brigade achieve its goals.

Fees and Registration: Travel and food during the brigade will be organized by each paddling crew and costs will vary by crew choices. There will be opportunities to stay in hotels and eat at restaurants during the brigade. This is the choice of individual crew members. All participants must become members of the Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society to participate. The cost for membership for adults is \$18.00 (\$10 for a child). To register for the brigade through Kichi Sibi Trails costs \$300/participant. There are grant proposals that may be successful and this could possibly reduce the cost of participating. Fees are payable to the Crichton Community Association (see registration form).

This brigade is being funded through grants, supporters and participants on a break even basis. Any additional costs will be budgeted on an equal cost-sharing basis. Some costs, such as group campsite bookings, are covered by supporters. The costs of renting big canoes, group camping fees, insurance, 'swag', group meals will be covered by the Brigade Organizer, hopefully through grants. But participants are responsible for costs of transportation to and from the brigade, transportation during the brigade, crew food costs, which will be calculated on a per crew basis by the crew captains.

Expect Registration to open in mid-April. Registration is done through Kichi Sibi Trails and the Canadian Voyageur Brigade Society. Individual participants are responsible for registering through both organizations! **If you don't register, you cannot participate!!!!**

Other Considerations:

- This is not a competitive event. Canoes are expected to travel together, following a lead canoe and forward of a sweep canoe.
- brigade leadership will be shared among crews. Each evening or early morning, crew captains will meet with a representative of Kichi Sibi Trails (the Brigade

organizer) to discuss the schedule for the day, determine lead and sweep canoes, planned events, etc.

- some crews may have support vehicles and non-paddling or partial-paddling members. These folks would also need to register and are expected to participate in all non-water activities.

- Paddle Canada Big Canoe Leader Certification: Each canoe must have at least one member certified as Paddle Canada Big Canoe Leader. Kichi Sibi Trails will provide a Paddle Canada Big Canoe leader for crews that do not have one. If there is sufficient interest, we could provide a Big Canoe Leader Certification course prior to the brigade. There will be time for some Big Canoe training at Oka prior to the start of the brigade but not a Big Canoe Leader course.

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