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**JPLucas** 2 days ago

+9

Of course it's ridiculous! Never mind that the falls and portaging might be a risk to the public, the public should be a risk to a government that treats its citizens this way. What's next? Canoes with warning labels "May cause wetness" ?

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**Alistair McLaughlin** 2 days ago

+5

Don't even joke about it. Some safety bug will demand the canoe - that quintessentially Canadian vessel that has been used for 10,000 years, should be banned due to "stability concerns".

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**Turning Left** 2 days ago

+9

The government sure knows how to make itself hated.

These are public lands, and we don't need this nanny state of being told "it's too dangerous".

Infuriating

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**anotherlostpoet** 1 day ago

+5

The ban is too ridiculous for words and was clearly put in place to irk the townspeople (I live in Bala). Why the government wants to pay high power rates to a company that would destroy a town's heart is anybody's guess, especially when we sell off our excess electricity to the Americans for next to nothing. Most people don't know there is an excess of power in Ontario. It's time for Ms. Wynne to step up to the plate. This is a quote from The Globe and Mail, Oct 7, 2013:

"She (Wynne) defended cancelling the (Oakville) projects, contending it was the correct response to community opposition, and vowed a new process would be put in place to make sure residents are consulted in the future before power plants are built."

We are still waiting for the process, Ms. Wynne. When are you going to do what you promised?

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**Gundi** 1 day ago

+4

A portage ban is not only ridiculous, it is a direct attack against both Canadian history and Canadian culture.

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**Pamphleteer** 2 days ago

+4

lol at the bottom sign. "Public" use of the land prohibited pursuant to the "Public" lands act.

Irony and bureaucrats. Not a healthy mix.

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**The Last Truthbender** 2 days ago

+3

major highways running east west in the US were all native trails and footpaths at one point in their earlier life, and after that the trails used by settlers on foot and then cart and wagon

what should we do shut down route 66 and all the other historic interstates

paths were meant to be used and no culture has a claim on them

go up to temagami and you'll see that many portages derived from ancient footpaths are just common sense - the shortest route between two bodies of water

they'd be developed anyway by anyone wanting to get from point a to point b

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**varun xm** 2 days ago

+3

The photos make me sad.  
I havent been on water in over a year.  
:-(

But yea, what the others said. The ban seems misguided.

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**Peakeman** 1 day ago

+2

I wish I had learned of this earlier. I could have saved Mr Turnbull a lot of time. I have written two books on Thomson and transcribed the journal of his 13-day Muskoka survey that was part a book called Summertimes published about 20 years ago to commemorate the MLA's 100th anniversary. Whether Thompson would fight to save the portage is unlikely, however, as he was not only looking for a possible canal route from Georgian Bay to Ottawa, he was also recording the area's suitability for settlement and farming. It's worth mentioning, too, that the lakes are much different now than in Thompson's time. With dams at Bracebridge and Bala, water levels are much higher and more stable. The locks at Port Carling eliminated the rapids and control the water levels of Rosseau and Joseph, the dredging of Port Sandfield removed the isthmus that separated Lake Joseph from Rosseau, and the blasting of a channel on the Little Joe R. eliminated the two sets of rapids. And yet, there should be a portage at Bala, regardless of a dam being built or not. In fact there may be an old, old law that came about during the negotiations of Indian treaties that says a portage must be maintained around any hydro development to permit passage beyond said developments. Need an old, old lawyer to verify this, tho'.

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Alistair McLaughlin 2 days ago

+2

Just outside Red Wing Minnesota, there is a walking trail that goes around one of the "bluffs" (steep, tree covered hills) of the Mississippi headwaters. At some points, that trail is right at the edge of a nearly vertical drop off. No fence or anything. Families with small children routinely hike the trail. It is not difficult, and it is very scenic.

About a decade ago, I hiked it with a friend of mine who lives there, along with his then 6 year old son. When we got to the point where the trail was on the edge of the vertical drop, my friend said to me, "Good thing this isn't in Canada or they would have closed this trail to the public a long time ago." At the time I just thought it was a cheap, frivolous complaint about his former home country. I may have even said so, but I don't remember. Looking back, he was simply stating a fact. I doubt very much such a trail would be left open in Manitoba or Ontario. ( the mountainous provinces are another story - no keeping people away from ledges there, so they don't bother trying).

I don't know when or why we have become so thoroughly apathetic towards nanny statism and our own freedoms, but we really need change that. No government can protect us from everything. So why do we delude ourselves into accepting these petty and meaningless infringements on our freedoms? Any decent person should feel revulsion towards such "it's for your own safety" bureaucratism. Surely government officials have more important problems to deal with.

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Peakeman 1 hour ago

0

Did some checking into existing laws. Ontario Gov cited section 28 of the Public Lands Act (1990) for the closure. That is contradicted by section 65 (4) of the same act:

Right of passage over portages

(4) Where public lands over which a portage has existed or exists have been heretofore or are hereafter sold or otherwise disposed of under this or any other Act, any person travelling on waters connected by the portage has the right to pass over and along the portage with the person's effects without the permission of or payment to the owner of the lands, and any person who obstructs, hinders, delays or interferes with the exercise of such right of passage is guilty of an offence. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.43, s. 65 (4); 2000, c. 26, Sched. L, s. 9 (11).

So, the closure is invalid. As well, the Navigational Waters Protection Act and Common Law, as cited by Transport Canada, trump Ontario law.

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**Middlelane** 7 hours ago

0

The government better think long and hard about a portage ban, this has been a tradition that dates back centuries on this continent. The environmental impact is basically of the extremely low type unless one looks with a highly observant eye, one wouldn't notice that people have actually portaged in the area, plus the vegetation over takes the visibility of paths so I really can't buy the environmental impact of this practice.

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**BuckSaver** 10 hours ago

0

Having read Peakeman's comment I would have to wonder if this whole situation is covered by the Navigable Waters Act of Canada which covers navigation of waterways and that would include navigation around or over obstructions such as dams.

It was my understanding many years ago that for example on the Ottawa river at Hydro Dams, that individuals could actually request assistance from personnel in portaging around the man made obstruction(s).

Maybe there is some responsibility on the owners of the obstructions at Bala to provide assistance, whether that is an alternative route, a vehicle to transport the canoe from a non prohibitive area or legal assistance in the fight with the Ontario Ministry?

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**stan hunter** 2 days ago

0

In Bala the portage is down Portage St. This is a case of the mayor taking on the province over a hydro plant she and 237 loud residents don't want. The rest of the township is indifferent or for the plant. Her portage only appeared after the silver maple tree she tried to make special proved to be a recent shrub, and every other tactic she has attempted has failed such as designating crown land as a heritage zone. No one carried their canoe over their heads down a vertical slope when the best option has been around the corner.

[3 replies](#)

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**anotherlostpoet** 1 day ago

Portage St. ends in private property. The only public land available for portage is the now-banned site.

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**allanfromBala** 1 day ago

Just to set the record straight. I have seen hundreds of canoeists use the Bala Falls portage; very few use Portage Street which is many times longer. I live within sight of the Bala Falls; Mr. Hunter lives many miles away from them. I am in a position to know how often the Bala Falls portage is used; Mr. Hunter is not.

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**Gloria Galloway** 1 day ago

Really? How do you know that there are exactly 237 loud residents complaining about the hydro plant Stan? Did you count us? If so, I don't remember you counting me! And everyone else I know with a place on the river! This hydro plant will destroy the falls, destroy some long-time businesses, ruin the beauty of the town and make boating and swimming near the falls unsafe. It serves no purpose but to give the Ontario Liberal government some cover for it's other failings on the energy file.

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**J\_R** 2 days ago

Hydro electric power is not considered "green." It disrupts the local ecosystem for the worse. "Green" power comes from solar and wind.

0

[4 replies](#)

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**TheIvoryTower** 2 days ago

Solar panels are full of arsenic compounds that never decay.  
Wind power is supplemented by CO2 producing natural gas.  
Potato batteries need processed minerals for metal in the anode and cathode.  
If you want electricity, it won't ever be green.

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**three left feet** 2 days ago

This one is a run-of-river project that is using a reservoir that has already been held back by weirs for more than a century.

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**Alistair McLaughlin** 2 days ago

Wind turbines are shredding purple matins and other valuable song birds. There is no "green" energy. The only green thing we can and should do is use less of it. Much less. How it is produced will always be a distant secondary factor to how much we use... And waste.

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**Gundi** 1 day ago

Maybe solar, but wind turbines are hardly green technology. For that, they create much too much noise pollution and kill too many birds.

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**C. Parsons** 2 days ago

**-3**

Any hampering of the habitual indulgences enjoyed and demanded by the privileged of Muskoka is worth a trip to the Ontario Court of Appeal.

[1 reply](#)

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**Gundi** 1 day ago

How is portaging an indulgence?

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**David Gibson** 2 days ago

**-4**

LOL..... Before they are finished, McWynnety governments will be among - if not THE - worst provincial governments in Canadian history, and they will be handsomely paid and pensioned for it.

[2 replies](#)

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**Alistair McLaughlin** 2 days ago

The pensions would be worth it if they retire. I'd offer to double the pensions if it meant we got rid of them now.

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TNAI 2 minutes ago

The purpose of the Section in the Public Lands Act

Right of passage over portages

(4) Where public lands over which a portage has existed or exists have been heretofore or are hereafter sold or otherwise disposed of under this or any other Act, any person travelling on waters connected by the portage has the right to pass over and along the portage with the person's effects without the permission of or payment to the owner of the lands, and any person who obstructs, hinders, delays or interferes with the exercise of such right of passage is guilty of an offence. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.43, s. 65 (4); 2000, c. 26, Sched. L, s. 9 (11).

is to allow the existing land portages over/around natural obstructions to continue such as apparently existed pre patent at Bala Falls. Then came the patent. Then came dams. Then came a need for a portage around them which may be via a portion of the Frank Miller Memorial Route (named after the late Conservative Premier). Now apparently a bigger structure is 'in the works' that is not making friends.

If there was to be a ban at every 'modernized' historic portage area, Ontario could be rife with the proverbial bunch of "Unhappy Campers" stacked up throughout its waterways.

Surely the new facility proposed should be able to provide a safe land portage via a requirement under the damming process?

If not, a scurrying through the ancient common law regarding an 'easement of necessity' may trump the apparent inability for the Crown in the Right of Ontario to serve its persons.

BTW - the Reed Canoe Ontario 'dust up' was apparently over a man made dam that made an 'unnatural obstruction' built after the patentee took over. If there was to be respectful recognition by both parties of who owned what and how to maintain a 'getting along' with the other party a la 'take your garbage with you canoeist and please be careful on our land", a more politically sapient land owner and respectful canoeists might have saved angst and built toward a better Ontario.

Respectfully,

Derek G. Graham OLS OLIP

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