

# Planning your Peace River Canoe Trip

The Peace River is a unique place that holds a variety of wilderness experiences for a variety of different groups. No matter what your group's goals and experience levels, we can help you plan the canoe trip that best fits your crew.

## **POINTS COVERED IN THIS GUIDE:**

- 1) WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES?**
- 2) SEASONAL WEATHER, RIVER CONDITIONS**
- 3) BEST TIMES**
- 4) BEST PLACES**
- 5) PADDLING SKILL REQUIREMENTS**
- 6) LOGISTICS AND SAFETY**
- 7) GEAR CHECKLIST**
- 8) MAPS, GUIDES, PUT-IN AND TAKE-OUT LOCATIONS**
- 9) TERESA GRIFFITH DISTANCE GUIDE**

*For personal assistance in trip planning call 877-835-1277(USA and Canada) or +1 835-1271 (International) and talk to Anne*

## **1) WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES?**

Many people are unable to really express what they get, or hope to get, from wilderness river tripping. Like planning any trip, there are pitfalls, so the payoffs need to be real and possible!

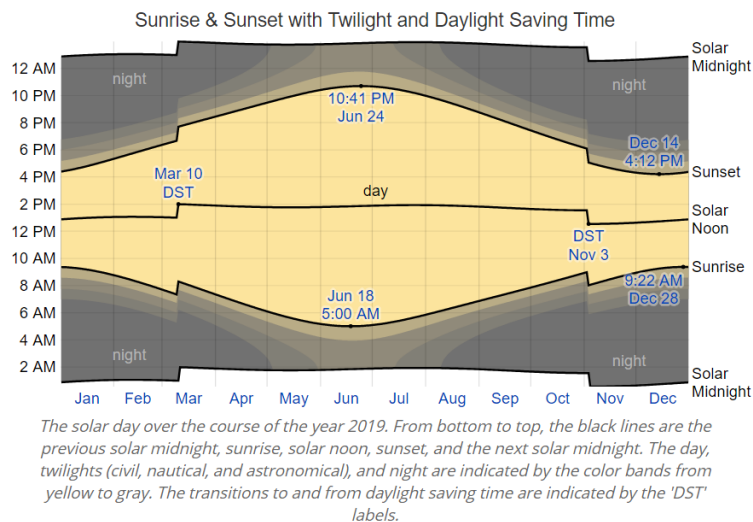
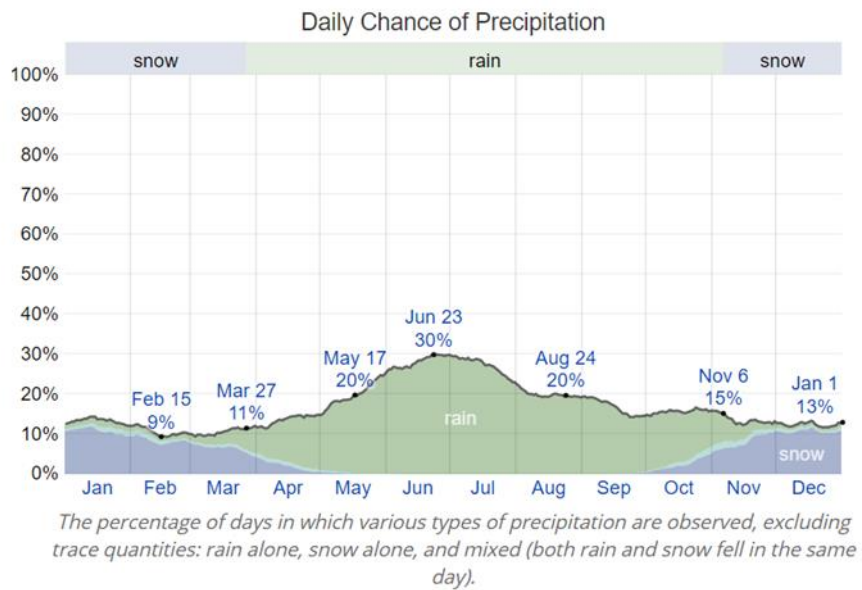
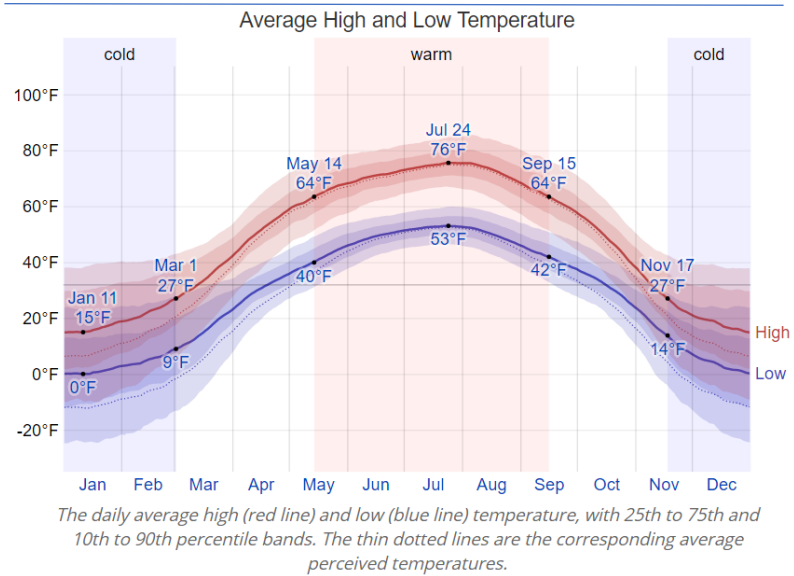
Add this (totally non-exhaustive!) list of benefits to your own:

- Leave stress and worries behind
- Challenge yourself mentally and physically
- Spiritual healing from nature
- Connect on a deeper level with special people
- Learn, practice and improve outdoor and photography skills
- Try out new gear and stretch your skill level
- Play and chill
- Teambuilding

How long is this going to take? 5 days or more is an ideal amount of time to allow time to leave the hustle bustle at home and get into rhythm with the wilderness. That said, you can still have a great time on a shorter trip.

## 2) SEASONAL WEATHER, RIVER CONDITIONS

- WEATHER



- **WEATHER (cont'd)**

- Shoulder season paddling May to mid-June and mid-September to mid October can have unpredictable conditions, both in weather and river flows. Residual ice on the south banks of the river in early spring can limit access. Later in the fall, frost and snow are not impossible. **For more detailed weather information, go to [this site](#)**

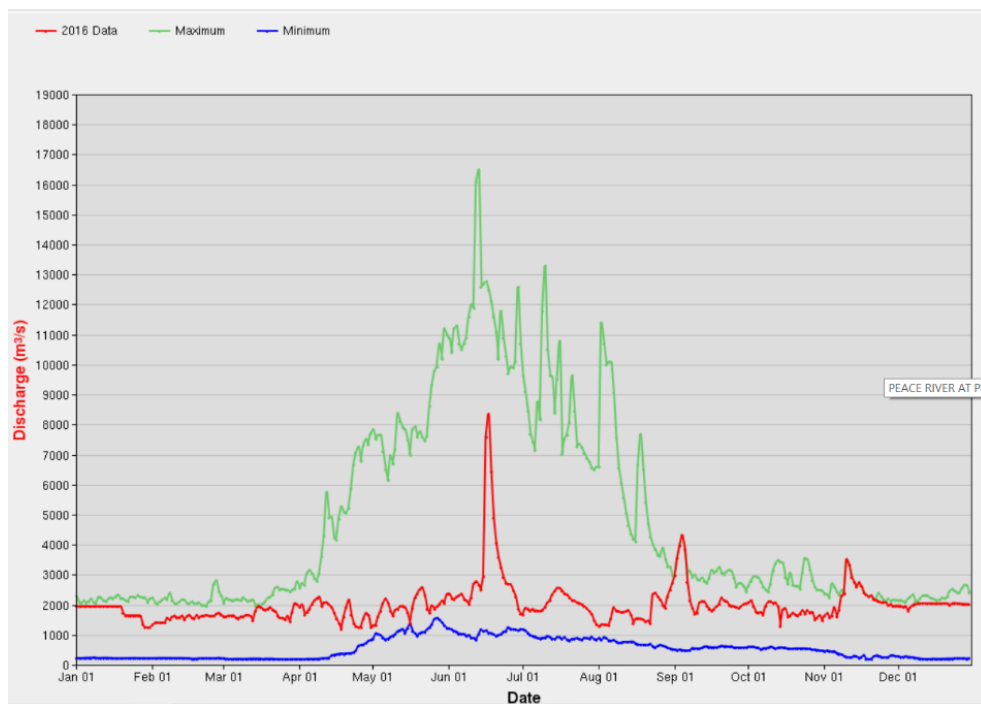
- **RIVER CONDITIONS**

The Peace River flow levels are consistently inconsistent. The combination of precipitation, and the powers that be regulating the Bennett Dam near Hudson's Hope BC, make it basically unpredictable on any given day.

However, in general river flows are likely to be highest in June of any given year. It's always good to check seasonal or current conditions of the river, and campsite access.

Current river flow conditions at <https://rivers.alberta.ca/> or [https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real\\_time\\_e.html?stn=07HA001](https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/report/real_time_e.html?stn=07HA001)

- At High water levels: Caution is needed in entering and exiting the river. You're going to get where you're going much faster than average. Fishing isn't going to be great. Finding camping spots on islands and riverbanks could be more challenging but not impossible.
- At Low water levels: great for fishing and swimming. You might get stuck occasionally on sand bars. Lots of choices for camping spots.
- Variability can be a lot on a daily basis so never leave a boat untied overnight, or you might be walking or swimming to your destination the next day



**The red line shows the 2016 levels, green is the max over last 77 years, and blue is historical minimum.**

### 3) BEST TIMES

- Fishing: any time but amateurs will find it easier in clearer water of Aug-Oct
- Berry picking: mid-June to late July
- Swimming in the river: Late July, August NOTE: ***the Peace has a very strong current and swimming should only be done in side pools and backwaters, A HIGH DEGREE OF CAUTION IS REQUIRED FOR CHILDREN, DOGS, OR POOR SWIMMERS***
- Almost no signs of civilization on the river: spring and fall
- Wild flowers: June
- Spectacular colors and awesome sunsets: September
- Northern Lights: October to May
- Bird migrations: mid Sept. to mid October
- Bugs – if problematic, they will be at their peak in June. However most years bugs are not going to be a significant factor until you get to the more northern reaches, ie north of the Manning area (Guide #19)

### 4) BEST PLACES

- There are multiple possible entry points along the river. (see Distance Guide below). The upper part of the river is the most scenic, (upstream from our location) since the hills get progressively lower as you finally reach Fort Vermilion.
- Exposure to civilization is least on the upper (above Pratt's Landing) and lower( after Peace Island) parts of the river

### 5) PADDLING SKILLS REQUIREMENTS

- The Peace is a relatively benign river, with no significant rapids from any start point below the Bennet Dam to Fort Vermilion. However, note that the Vermilion Chutes at Fort Vermilion are impassable by canoe and must be bypassed or portaged.
- That said, the less experience you have, the more preparation you should put in, including acquiring basic paddling skills, plus getting local advice and good maps
- With a good leader, the Peace is an excellent venue for families and beginners

### 6) LOGISTICS AND SAFETY

- Planning your put in and take out:
  - The top end of the river is the Bennett Dam, you will have to enter below the dam. The distance from Hudson's Hope to Fort Vermilion is 812 kms, so there are lots of choices for trip duration and locations.
  - Site C dam: water access through the Site C dam site has been stopped as of fall 2020. A seasonal portage program is in place May-September "[\*Portage program: To move boaters around the construction area, we have set up a\*](#)

*seasonal portage program to transport non-motorized vessels (up to 20') by road past the dam.”*

- Check the [Site C Project Website](#) for updated information regarding passage through the site
- The program will operate between the Halfway River boat launch and the Peace Island Park boat launch from May 15 to September 15, 2021.
- There is excellent highway access to many put points along the river. We can give you current information about the condition of the more remote accesses
- A nice average paddling day is 40-50 km for medium exertion
- If you want to leave the logistics, planning and details to us, consider one of our guided trips. Custom multi day guided trips are available for groups of 4 or more. <https://peacrivercanada.com/guided-tours.php#Guided%20Hikes>
- Or if you still want to tackle the trip on your own, Peace River Cabins and Outdoors take care of any part that you don't want to do. We offer [outfitting, shuttling and pre- and post- trip accommodation.](#)
- The hot showers at our facility, or maybe a wood fired hot tub experience, make for a great ending to successful river tripping!
- Safety
  - Communication devices: For some, there is peace of mind to be gained by carrying some kind of communication device on your trip. Cell phone reception is sporadic along the length of the river but possible. Make sure to leave it off when not using to preserve battery power. Or carry a mobile charger.
  - Consider using Peace River Cabins and Outdoors as your emergency rescue contact
  - Wildlife sightings are common. Avoid feeding wildlife and have a plan for food storage

## 7) GEAR CHECKLIST

- There are numerous checklists out there. Here's one: <http://www.camping-expert.com/canoe-camping-checklist.html>
- We would add: 1) bear spray, make sure you know how to use it properly if need be 2) small axe and saw, 3) bird & plant identification guides, 4) water purification gear

## 8) MAPS, GUIDES, PUT-IN AND TAKE-OUT LOCATIONS

- The [Backroads Map Book for Northern Alberta](#) is a good basic river guide for short trips, available in many stores including drug stores and on Amazon. Topographical maps are also an option.
- For more detailed information on points of interest, takeout points, GPS coordinates and campsites, we recommend the Teresa Griffith Guides. See links to pdf files at the end of the guide. Or we can forward them on request for no charge by [email](#).
- Mark's Guide for Alberta Paddlers 2nd Edition is another one that is available at multiple sources such as MEC, it has less detail.



## 9) TERESA GRIFFITH DISTANCE GUIDE

This chart contains links to the Teresa Griffith guides up to #12. **For guides 13-25 or you are unable to download PDF's please [email Peace River Cabins and Outdoors](#)**

<a href="#">Download the first 9 Guides (31 MB, PDF file)</a>	Download the GPX file (for use in a GPS device)	Download the KMZ file (for Google Earth)
<a href="#">Download Guides 10-17 (21 MB, PDF file)</a>	Download the GPX file (for use in a GPS device)	Download the KMZ file (for Google Earth)
<a href="#">Download Guides 18-25 (23 MB, PDF file)</a>	Download the GPX file (for use in a GPS device)	Download the KMZ file (for Google Earth)

Guides #1-6	Starts at Hudson's Hope	Ends at Cotillion Recreation Area	Places along the way	Road access at the starting point?	km paddled each day	km from Hudson's Hope	km from Peace River
1  T Griffiths1Hudsons Hope.pdf	Hudson's Hope	Hudson's Hope	W.A.C Bennett dam, Peace Canyon Dam	yes	0	0	
2  T Griffiths2 Hudsons Hope to Halfway Rive	Hudson's Hope	Halfway River	Lynx Creek, Gates, Farrell Creek	yes	38	38	
3  T Griffiths3 Halfway River to Islands End.d	Halfway River	Island's End	Bear Flat, Waterfall, Cache Creek	yes	32	70	

4	 T Griffiths4 islands End to 101km campsi	Island's End	101-km Campsite	Site C dam, Old Fort St. John, Taylor, 3 bridges	no	31	101	
5	 T Griffiths5 101km campsite to Driftwooc	101-km Campsite	Driftwood Campsite	Beatton River, Raspberry Island, PR Corridor Prov. Park	no	32	133	
6	 T Griffiths6 Peace River Corridor to Coti	Driftwood Campsite	Cotillion Rec Area	Clayhurst Bridge, Pouce Coupe River, Clear River	no	32	165	
<b>Guides #7-14</b>								
		Starts at <b>Cotillion Recreation Area</b>	Ends at <b>Peace Island</b>	<b>Places along the way</b>	<b>Road access at the starting point?</b>	<b>km paddled each day</b>	<b>km from Hudson's Hope</b>	<b>km from Peace River</b>
7	 T Griffiths7 Cotillion to Many Islands.doc.p	Cotillion Rec Area	Many Islands Park	Beverly (Deadman's) Island	yes	40	205	
8	 T Griffiths7 Cotillion to Many Islands.doc.p	Many Islands Park	Pratt's Landing	Montagneuse River, Carter Camp	yes	41	246	
9	 T Griffiths7 Cotillion to Many Islands.doc.p	Pratt's Landing	Fort Dunvegan	Ksituan River, Dunvegan Suspension Bridge	yes	28	274	
10	 T Griffiths10 Dunvegan to Camp Is	Fort Dunvegan	Camp Island	Green Island, Long Island	yes	42	316	

11	 T Griffiths11 Camp Island to Tangent Parl	Camp Island	Tangent Park	Kieyho Park, Peace Valley Guest Ranch	yes	36	352	
12	 T Griffiths12 Tangent Park to Peace River.pc	Tangent Park	Town of Peace River	Mackenzie Cairn, Strong Creek Park, several historic sites	yes	24	376	0
13		Town of Peace River	Graham's Flat	Rail, highway and DMI bridge	yes	32	408	32
14		Graham's Flat	Peace Island	Encampment Island, 30-mile well	no	25	433	57
<b>Guides #15-25</b>	<b>Starts at Peace Island</b>	<b>Ends at Fort Vermilion</b>	<b>Places along the way</b>	<b>Road access at the starting point?</b>	<b>km paddled each day</b>	<b>km from Hudson's Hope</b>	<b>km from Peace River</b>	
15		Peace Island	Sunny Valley	Whitemud River, Cadotte River	yes*	34	467	91
16		Sunny Valley	McCracken's Flat	K u l y n a ' s F l a t s	yes	38	505	129
17		McCracken's Flat	Notikewin Provincial Park	H o r s e s h o e B e n d	yes	42	547	171
18		Notikewin Provincial Park	Beaver Campsite	pipeline crossing, nice beach	yes	33	580	204
19		Beaver Campsite	Cigar Island	B i g B e n d	no	32	612	236
20		Cigar Island	Old Carcajou	Howard's Landing, Carcajou, Wolverine River	no	33	645	269
21		Old Carcajou	La Crete Ferry Campground	Armstrong Flat, Buffalo River, Keg River	yes*	31	676	300
22		La Crete Ferry	Horse Point	Le Fleur's Post, rockhounding, Horse Island	yes	32	708	332



	Campground						
23	Horse Point	Aspin House Area	Moose Island, La Crete Landing, Etna's Landing	no	36	744	368
24	Aspin House Area	Wieler's Landing	Hungry Bend, Gooseneck Point, Prairie Point	no	40	784	408
25	Wieler's Landing	Fort Vermilion	Big Island, Lawrence Island, Highway bridge, Buttertown	yes	28	812	436