

Great Loop Trip: North Third, 2,000 miles in 50 days from VA to WI : ICW, Hudson, Erie & Trent-Severn Canal Systems & Great Lakes

by Sandy & Debbie Williamson

Seattle Boat Show

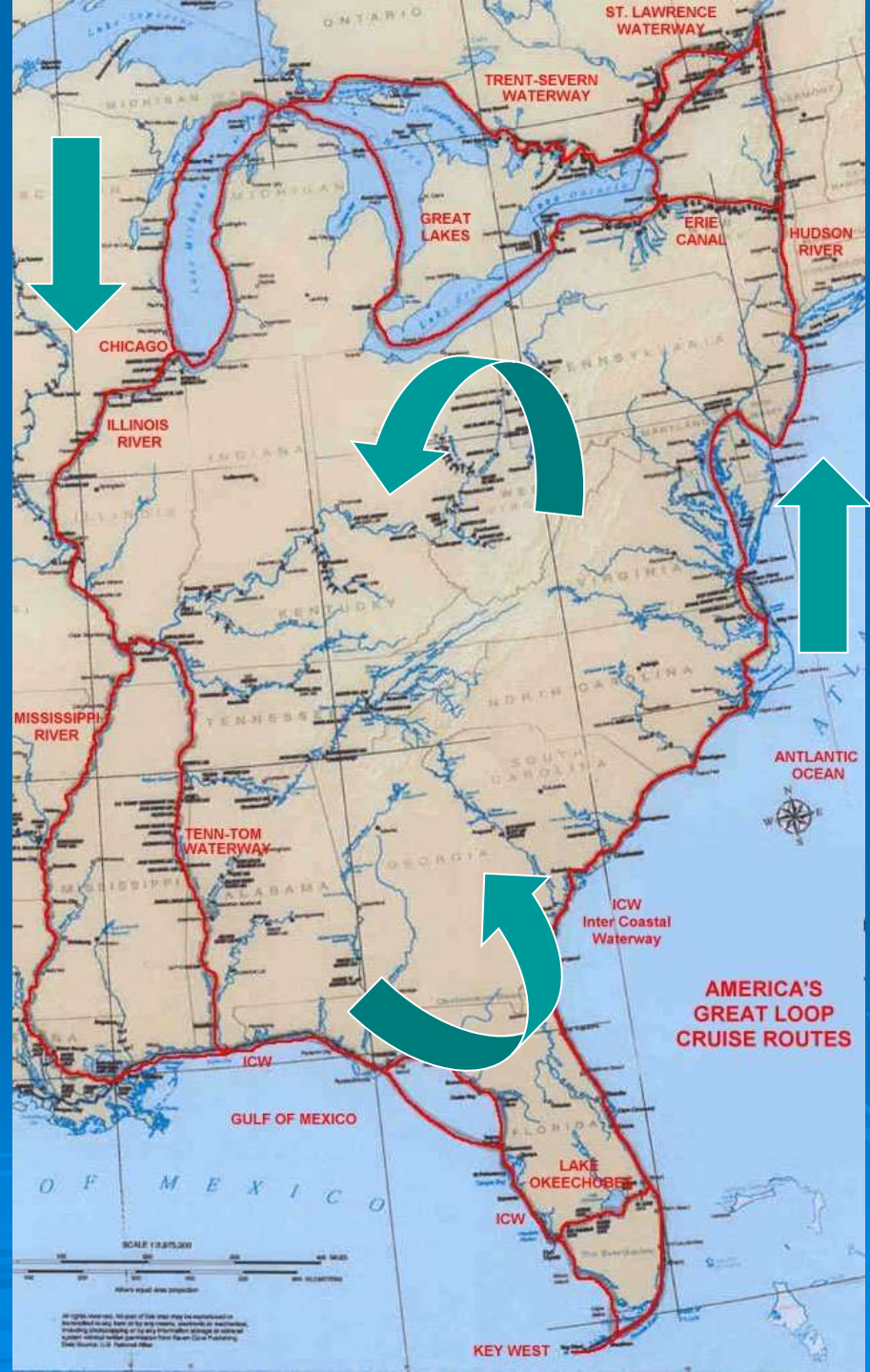
Fri 1-27-17 315pm

An East Coast Trip by West Coast People

GreatLoop.com

6,000 miles. Most take a year starting and ending in FL in the winter to stay in good weather.

Current & wind counter clockwise.





High Adventure/ Low Risk



- 26,629 finished the Boston Marathon (2016)
 - 1,000 completed the Appalachian Trail (2015)
 - 658 climb Mt. Everest (2013)
 - 96 successfully swam the English Channel (2015)
- Less than 100 boats complete the Great Loop in most year (127 in 201 was the most ever!)



The Route

- **Spring: East coast**
 - Head north as weather warms
 - May on the Chesapeake
 - Canals open ~June 1st
- **Summer: New York, Canada**
 - Chicago by Labor Day
- **Fall: River System**
 - Hold up in Alabama until Nov 1st
- **Winter: Florida, Bahamas**



Debbie and my Background

- We've Owned 18 boats in last 45 years
- ½ power ½ sail, 9 Cruisers, mostly trailers
- Chartered 13 X: Olympia to Desolation, Columbia R., BC Lakes, SF Bay & Delta, Gulf, ICW, New England, Caribbean (BVI), Baja Mexico, English Channel, Greece
- Cruised over 5,000 miles, >350 Days
- Operated >100 boats in my business
- Teach Sailing-50 ton Captain-Trailerred 40K

End:
Green
Bay, WI

Trent-Severn
trent-severn waterway

Erie Canal
erie canal

us
not
this
way

End

finish in chicago 4-7
weeks later

Our trip on the Great Loop

Start:
~WA
DC



Why did we do it?

- Read the book, “Honey, I bought a boat” Rob & Eva Strob from Southern California.
- 2007 Preparation for retirement/carrier change 2010 and going while we still physically could
- Testing if we would we like cruising more than a week or two? Answer was Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Long, interesting trip in protected waters
- Preparation for future trip to Alaska that is less protected.
- Had winter work project providing many ‘free’ trips to DC

Trip Requirements

- Budget \$15,000 and two months
- A boat that would plane in order to make the trip in time, but that we could afford.
- 17 ft. vertical clearance - no sailboat.
- Two semi-private sleeping areas for us plus a couple of guests
- Had owned and chartered Fly Bridge and decided on Sun Bridge style.

Options for An East Coast Trip For a West Coast Family

1. Buy the boat and sell it at the end of the trip a la “Honey, I bought a boat” Rob & Eva Strob – their budget \$40k (PLUS) and a year.
2. Have our boat towed there and back \$5k+ each way. Might be what I would do next time.
3. Hybrid that we did, buying there and leaving options at the end:
 - Leave there with broker to sell, \$2000 plus for winter storage plus more repair costs
 - Leave there for more of the loop trip next summer
 - We had it towed home for me to sell in my business.

Buying a boat remotely – Try 1

- Had winter work project providing many 'free' trips to DC
- Boat bought on EBay 9-1-06. 26 ft. '85 Carver Montego 2657 with rear cabin/door and v-berth/dinette, \$4100
- Bought tandem galvanized trailer on Craigslist NY 20 miles from boat.
- Flew into JFK, rented Budget Box truck to pick up trailer -- seller not awake and trailer not ready. 4 hour delay.
- Picked up boat and drove through NYC
- Poor fender clearance required stops to cut fender and re-adjust rollers with car jack.
- Made it just barely to marina near DC. Some problems...

Buying a boat remotely – try 2

- On 12-30-06, my search on yachtworld.com turned up 85 Bayliner 2850 with 5.7 duoprop, AC, windlass, AND Radar for \$6,000.
- Decided to sell Montego [sold for \$6000] and buy 2850
- Discovered 2850 had blown head gasket
- Ordered complete motor for \$4100 and hired 'heavy lifting' of motor install and I did rest of new motor install.

Buying a boat remotely - 3

- I installed wiring, cooling system and water heater, fuel system over several weekends, some with my retired brother.
- Each flight I packed 99 pounds of gear.
- Bought folding bikes shipped to boat.
- Ended up buying aluminum trailer on eBay in WI while on the trip, for the hired tow home after the summer.

Specs for the trip

- 2,000 miles in 7 weeks = about 50 miles/day
- 5 days for outdrive replacement and 2 day side trip by car to Niagara falls.
- Average of 14 mph or 4 -5 hours/day
- \$4500 for 1100 gal of fuel, \$4500 on marinas and food and \$7,000 on the boat. Sum \$16K.
- Almost half at 7 kn = 2.5 mpg and half at 23 kn and 1.5 mpg
- 70 locks – half in the USA and half in Canada

The boat



02.08.2009 08:07

The Boat – “Sea The Sounds”

- 1985 Bayliner 2850 - 10 ft beam, enclosed aft cabin, heat pump AC, radar, and windlass
- 5.7L [with duoprop outdrive 30% more efficient]
- Bought for \$6k, repowered for \$7k
- Bought a trailer in WI via eBay while on the trip.
- \$2500 to tow home via U-Ship [EBay for shipping]
- Sold for \$9k almost 2 years later
- Very comfortable for its size - 2 queen beds plus dinette for four. 3 depth, 2 GPS, 2 fuel flow

7/22/07

Sea the Sounds

TACOMA, WA

7/6/07



7/7/07

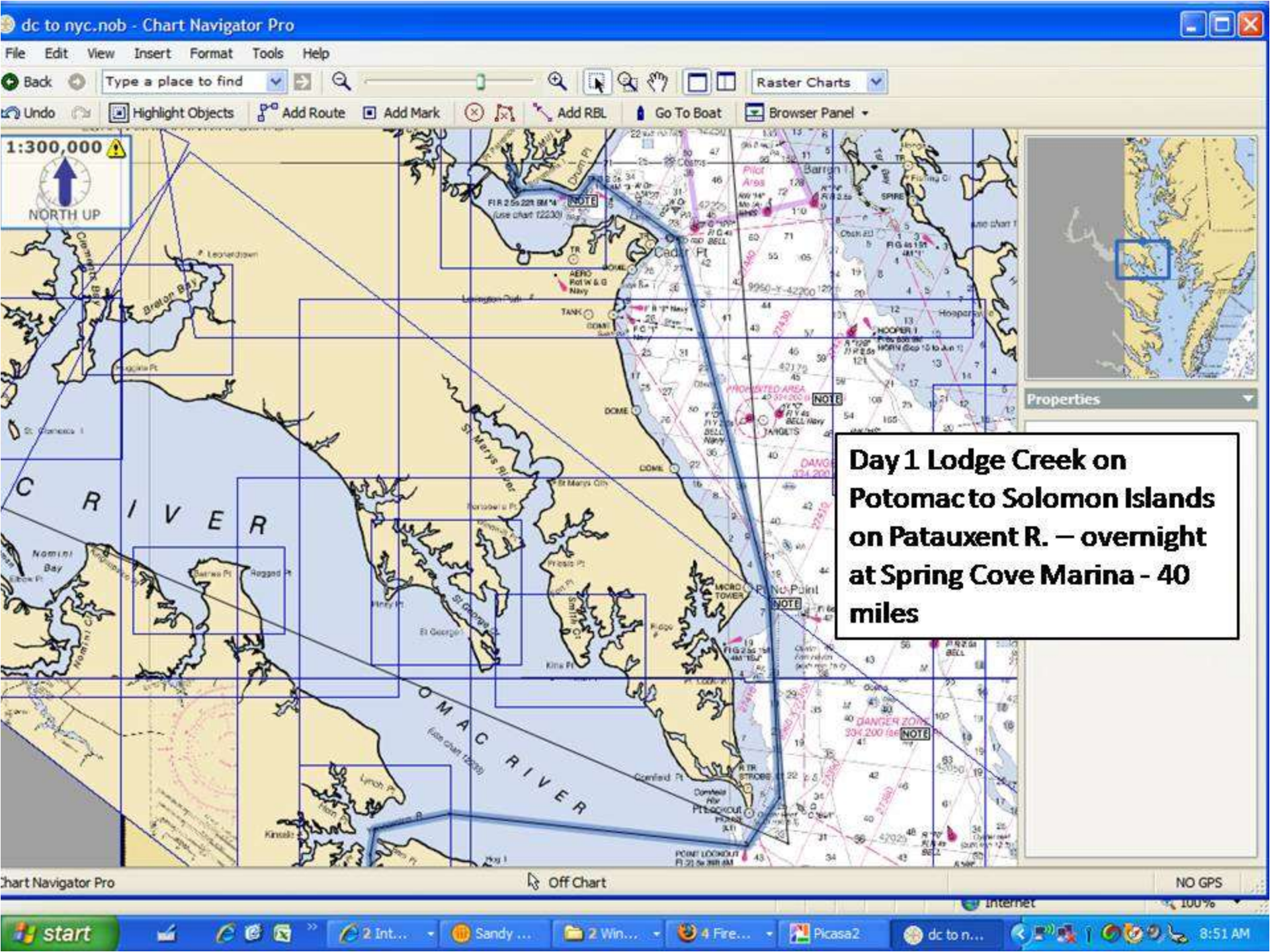
Gage Geek: 3 depth, 2 GPS, 2 fuel flow, Radar



6/25/07

8 ft dinghy
with electric
trolling motor






**Day 1 Lodge Creek on
Potomac to Solomon Islands
on Patauxent R. — overnight
at Spring Cove Marina - 40
miles**

6/27/07

Lots of cool different
lighthouses in the
SHALLOW
Chesapeake!



6/27/07



More than half of the
Chesapeake is less than 10 ft
deep.

6/28/07

Baltimore



How do you handle guests for part of the trip?


- Surprisingly easy. We told them when/where to fly in/out of: We rented an Enterprise car [they pick you up] and we did pick up & drop off.
- Son Josh from Philadelphia to NYC--1 week – used rental car for pickup and to see historic sites. NY taxi/train/subway for drop off
- Daughter Amy from NYC to Syracuse NY, 1 week – used car to see Niagara Falls with her.
- Brother & Wife from Syracuse to Toronto 1 week
- Last half of the trip by ourselves.

Cape May NJ



One of our favorite places on the trip.

7/2/07

A photograph taken from the perspective of someone on a boat, looking towards the Statue of Liberty. The statue is green and stands on a small island in the middle of the water. The sky is blue with many white clouds. In the foreground, the back of a boat and a black outboard motor are visible. The water is dark and has some ripples.

Very inspiring approach.
Came back at night for 4th
of July fireworks.

7/2/07

The Big Apple



7/4/07

Independence Day



7/4/07





**Also inspiring approach to
West Point from the Hudson R.**

7/7/07



7/6/07

Catskill NY



First 'Road sign' on the water



7/7/07

Erie Canal, Lock #1 of 70



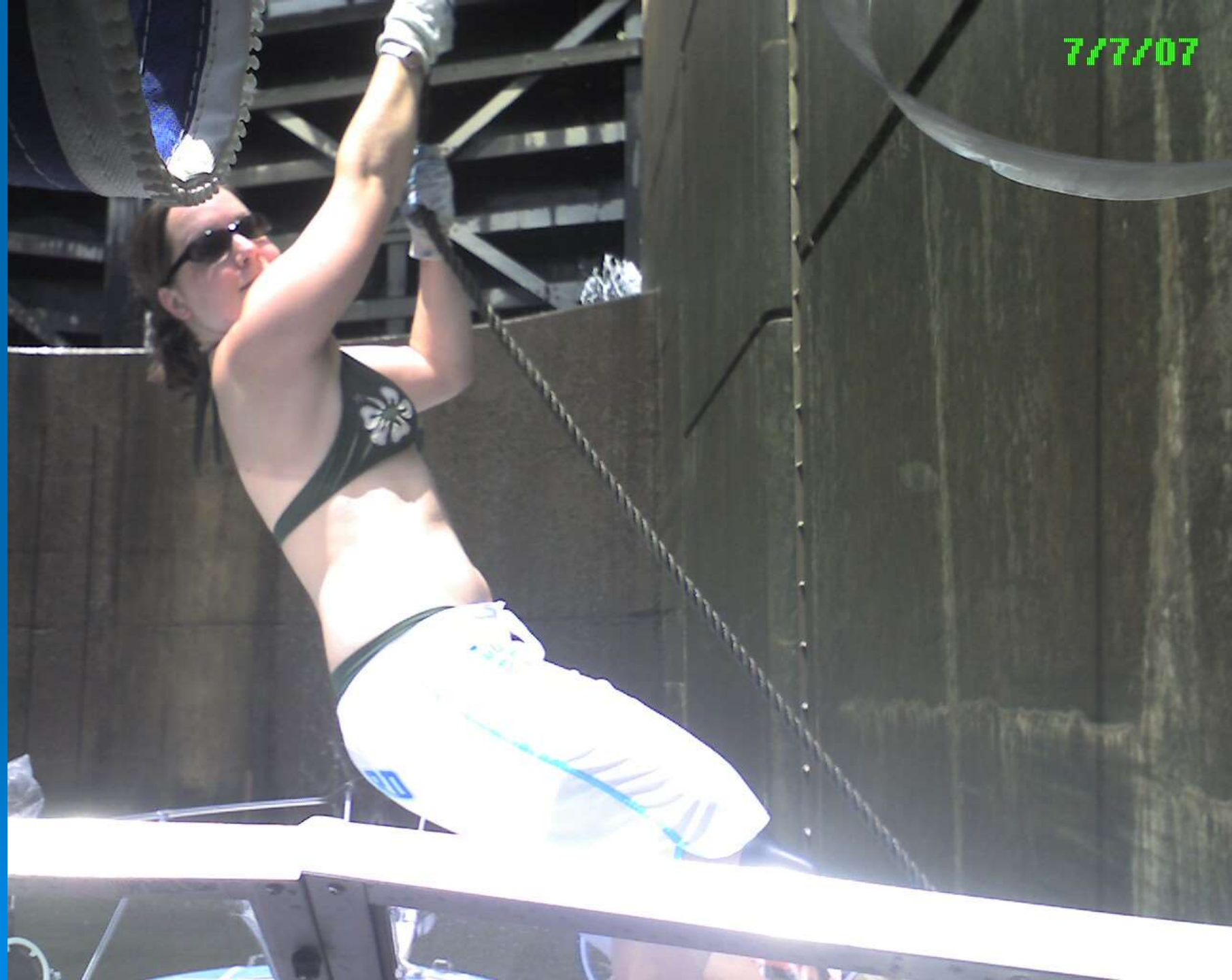
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7/7/07



7/7/07



7/9/07



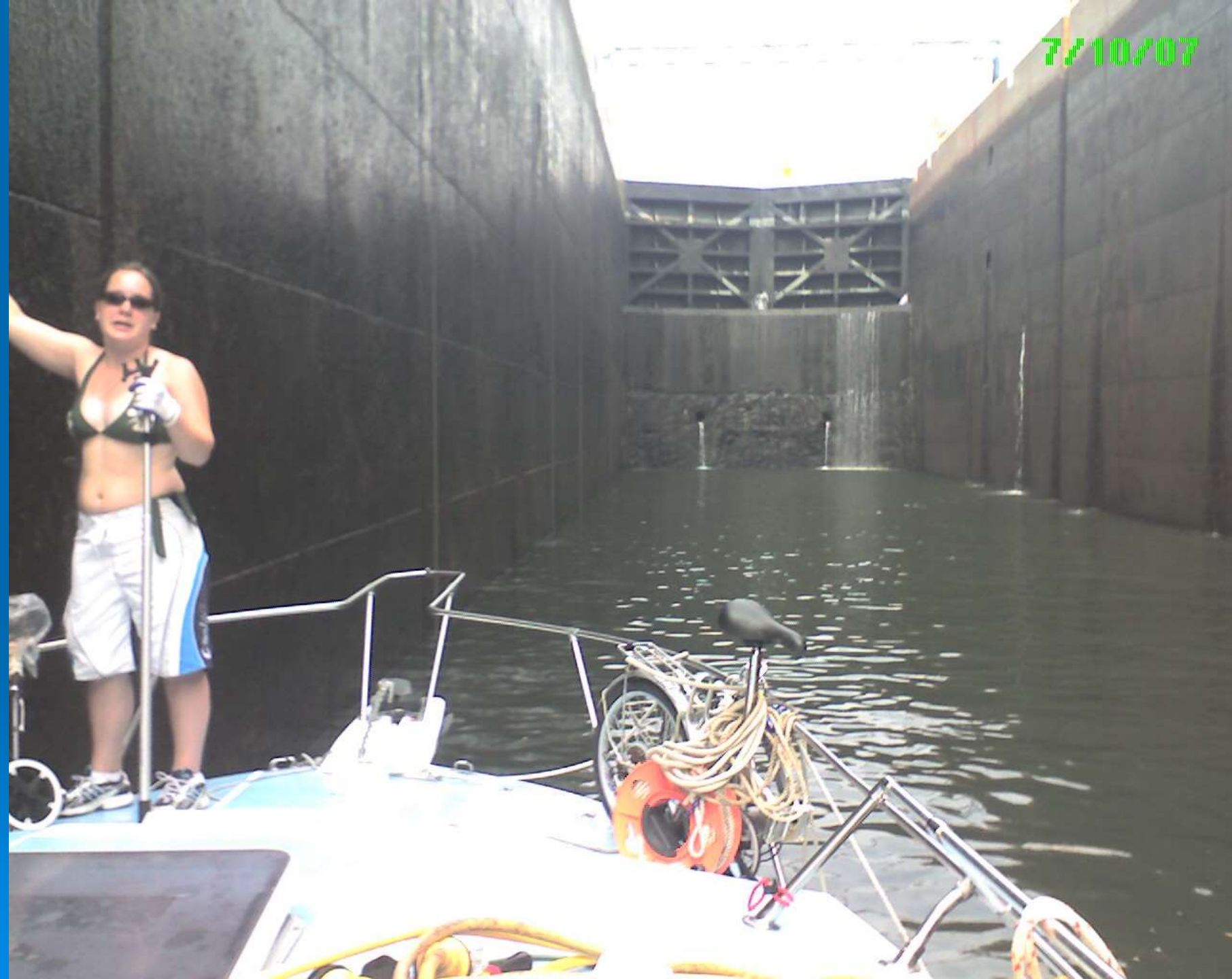
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7/11/07



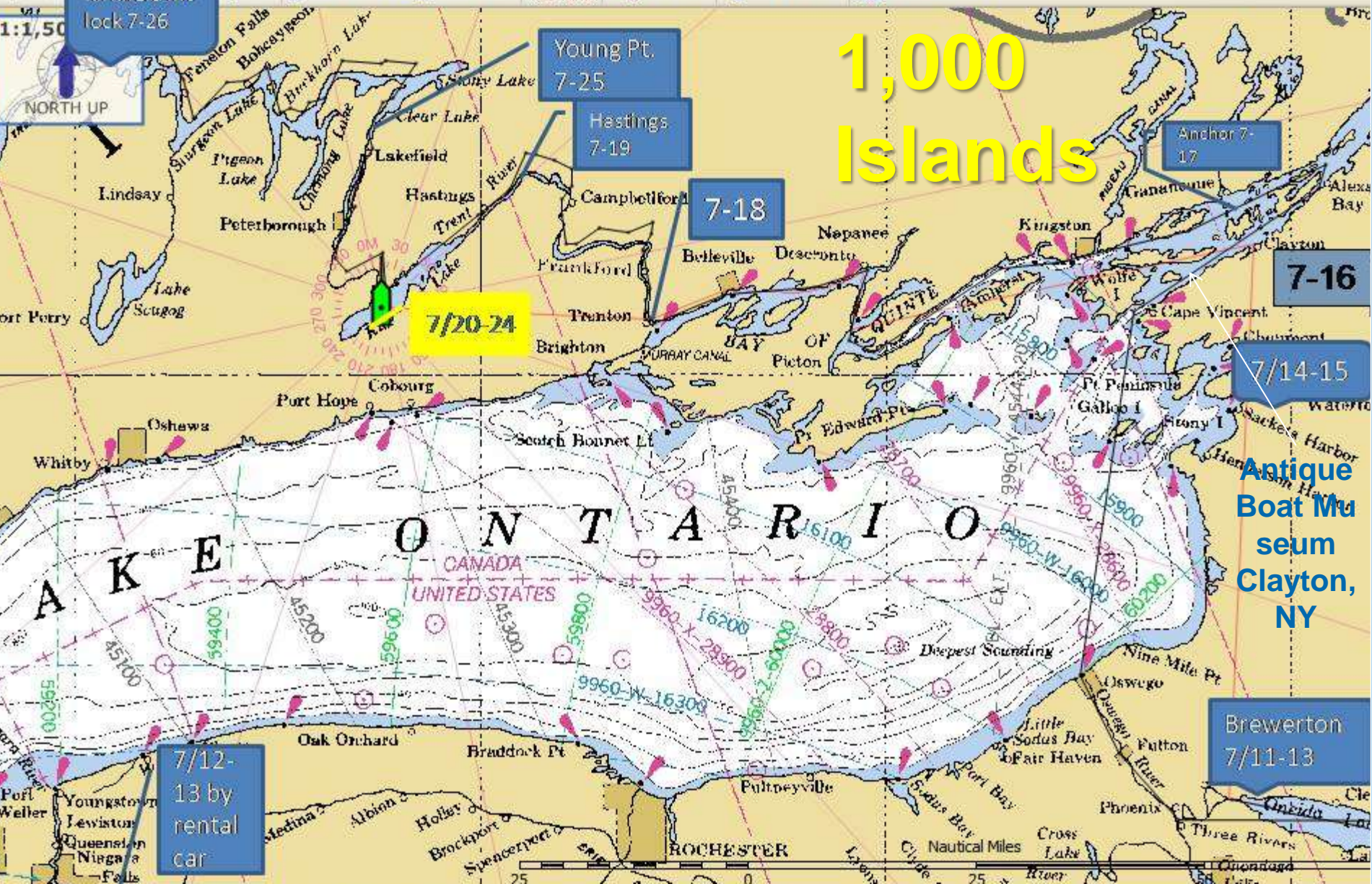
7/13/07



7/12/07

**Maid of the Mist
same since 1957**





Many 1 house islands



7/16/07

**Great
Antique
Boat Museum
Clayton, NY**

Pardon Me



Canada

USA



7/17/07



Two Canal Systems

US Erie Canal:

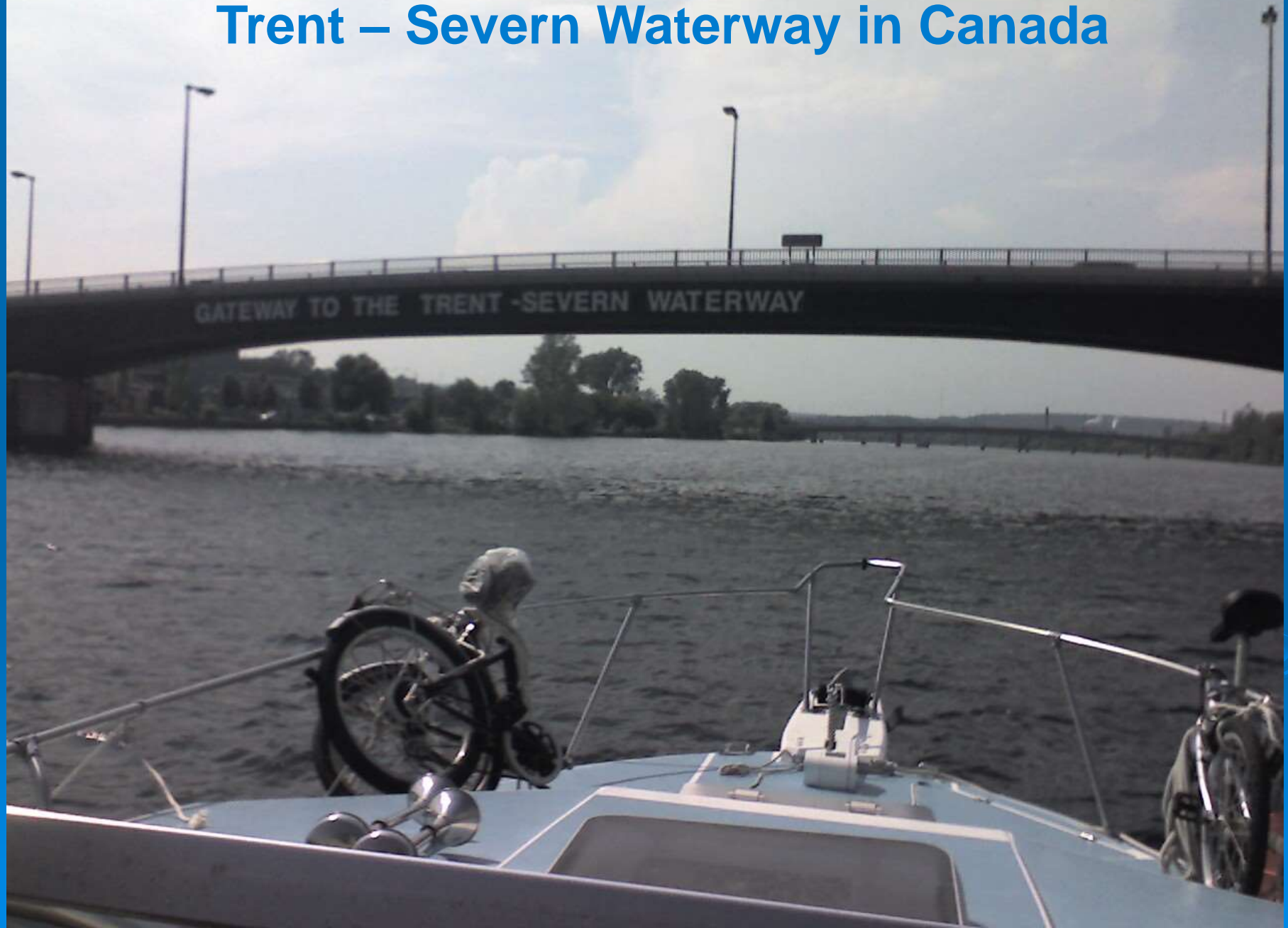
- Completed on time in 1850
- Much Commercial traffic
- Still sort of Industrial
- We passed only a few boats in a week.

Canada's Trent-Severn Waterway:

- Completed late in 1870
- Railroads completed 1st and stole all traffic
- 2nd vacation home area developed >100 yrs ago
- Now very busy with pleasure traffic – as many boats as Erie Canal week in ONE lock.

7/18/07

Trent – Severn Waterway in Canada



7/10/07



7/24/07

MERCURY
Outboards • MerCruiser

Harris Boat Works
Since 1947
• SALES • SERVICE •

MERCURY
MerCruiser

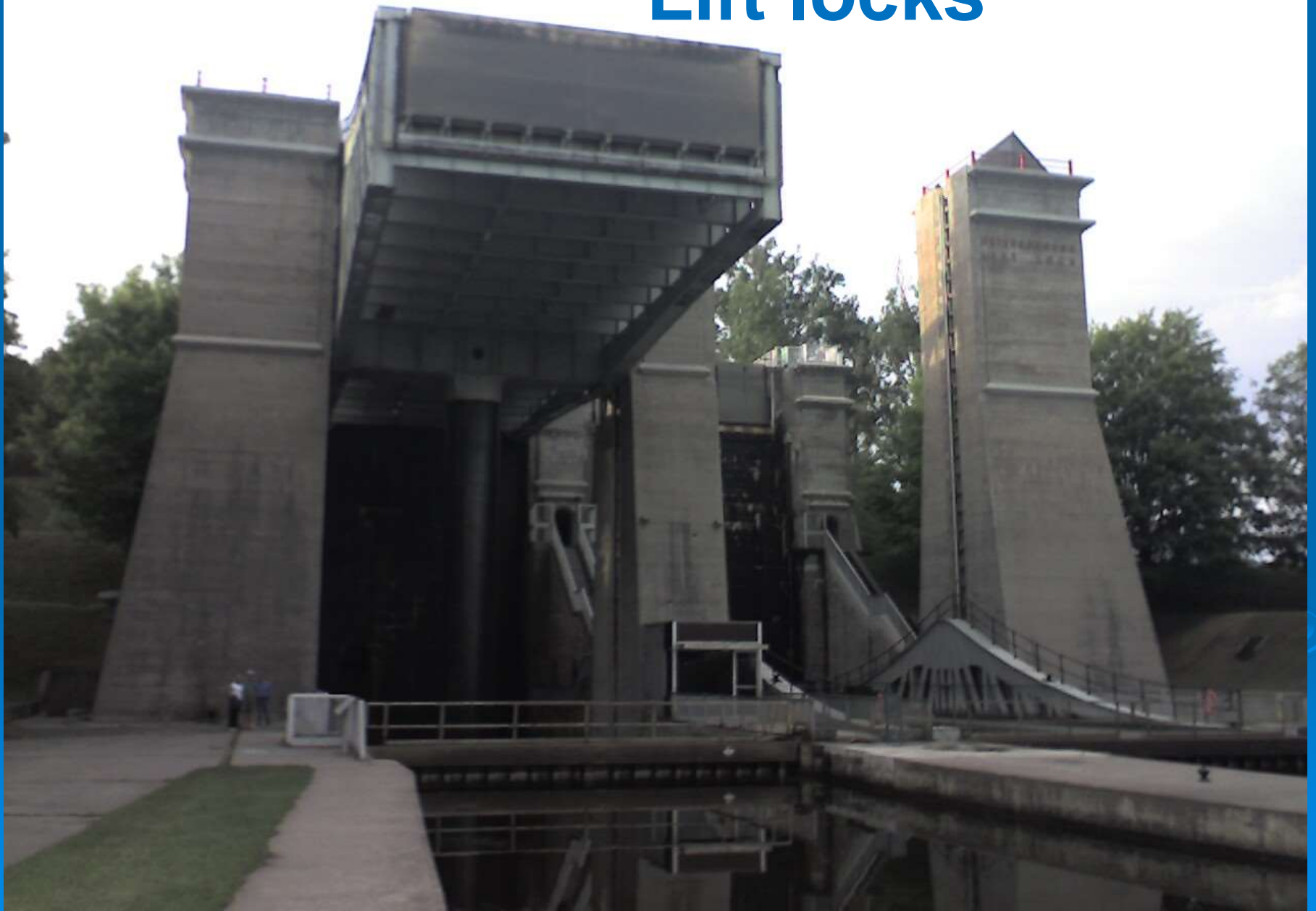


MERCURY
The Water Calls



7/20/07

Lift locks



7/20/07



7/25/07





7/25/07




7/25/07



Best dinghy tow position



A photograph of a butterfly on a dahlia flower. The butterfly is perched on a bright orange dahlia flower. In the foreground, there are several other dahlia flowers in shades of pink, red, and orange. Behind the flowers is a white utility box with some faded text. In the background, there is a wooden deck with a blue and white striped umbrella, and a blue house with white trim. The scene is set in a grassy area under a clear blue sky.

**Butterfly
followed us 6+
hours till here**

7/25/07



7/26/07



7/26/07



7/26/07





7/27/07



7/27/07



7/27/07







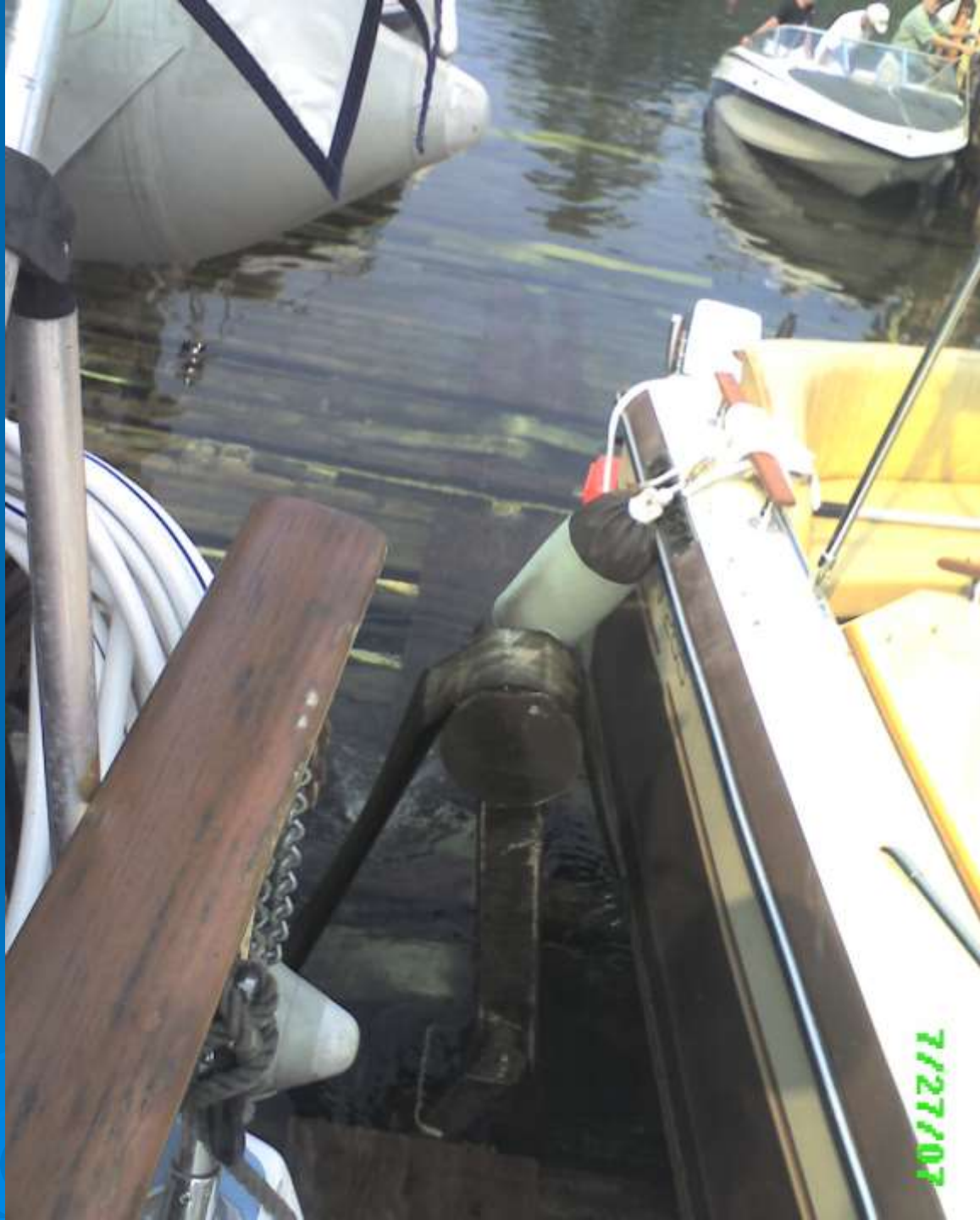
7/27/07

Marine railway over a drainage divide





**Hydraulic
operated
strap at
stern,
Bow on
the wood
deck. All
boats
loaded in
2
minutes!**





7/27/07



7/27/07

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Getting On The Car

The specially-designed railway carriage is lowered into the water on a submerged track. The boat is then floated onto the deck of the car and cradled by slings. The carriage is slowly raised out of the water, and the boat "settles" into the slings for support.

"Riding the railway" in a boat is simple! Follow our boaters, Eddy and Flo, as they get a lift downstream on the Big Chute Marine Railway.

2. Down We Go!

The carriage is lowered down the slope by wire ropes attached to winches inside the Visitor Centre. It stays almost level due to a unique double track, which allows the front legs of the carriage to follow one set of tracks and the back legs another.

3. Back to the Water

The boat is floated off the sling, resumes its journey downstream, carriage is now ready to accept load of boats travelling in the direction.

MODE DE FONCTIONNEMENT

Voyez comme il est facile de se déplacer sur une voie ferrée en bateau! Suivons nos plaisanciers, M. et Mme Danleau, qui se font conduire en amont sur le ber roulant de Big Chute.

1. L'embarquement dans le chariot

Le chariot est descendu dans l'eau sur une voie submergée. Le bateau est ensuite placé sur le pont du chariot et maintenu par des élingues. On sort lentement le chariot de l'eau et le bateau repose dans les élingues qui le soutiennent.

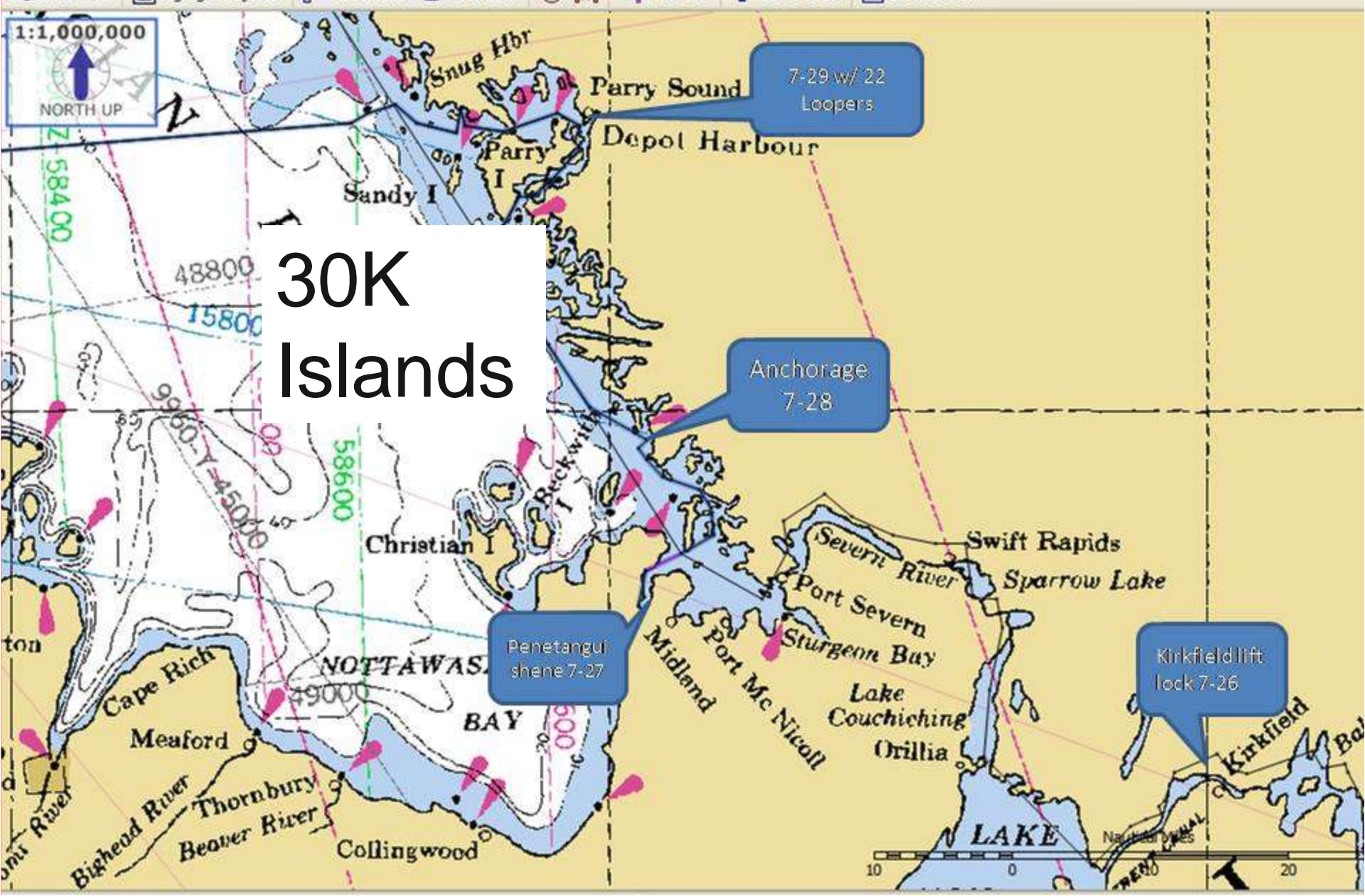
2. On descend!

Les câbles d'acier fixés aux treuils situés à l'intérieur du Centre d'accueil descendent le chariot en bas de la rampe. Une voie double de conception spéciale maintient le ber à peu près à niveau, puisque la partie avant du chariot suit une série de voies et la partie arrière, l'autre.

3. La remise à flot

On retire les élingues et le bateau reprend sa route en amont. Le chariot est maintenant prêt à accepter un nouveau chargement de bateaux agent en sens inverse.





8/1/07



Finally caught up with the 'Looper group'



Is. 8-1

Raster Charts

1:1,000,000



7-31
Portage
Bay Anchor

North Channel

5 fathom marine
park, Tobermory
7-30

Nautical Miles



ONTARIO

Sault Ste. Marie

St. Marys River

Thessalon

Spanish

Killarney

North Channel

DeTour Passage

Mississagi Strait

Gore Bay

Little Current

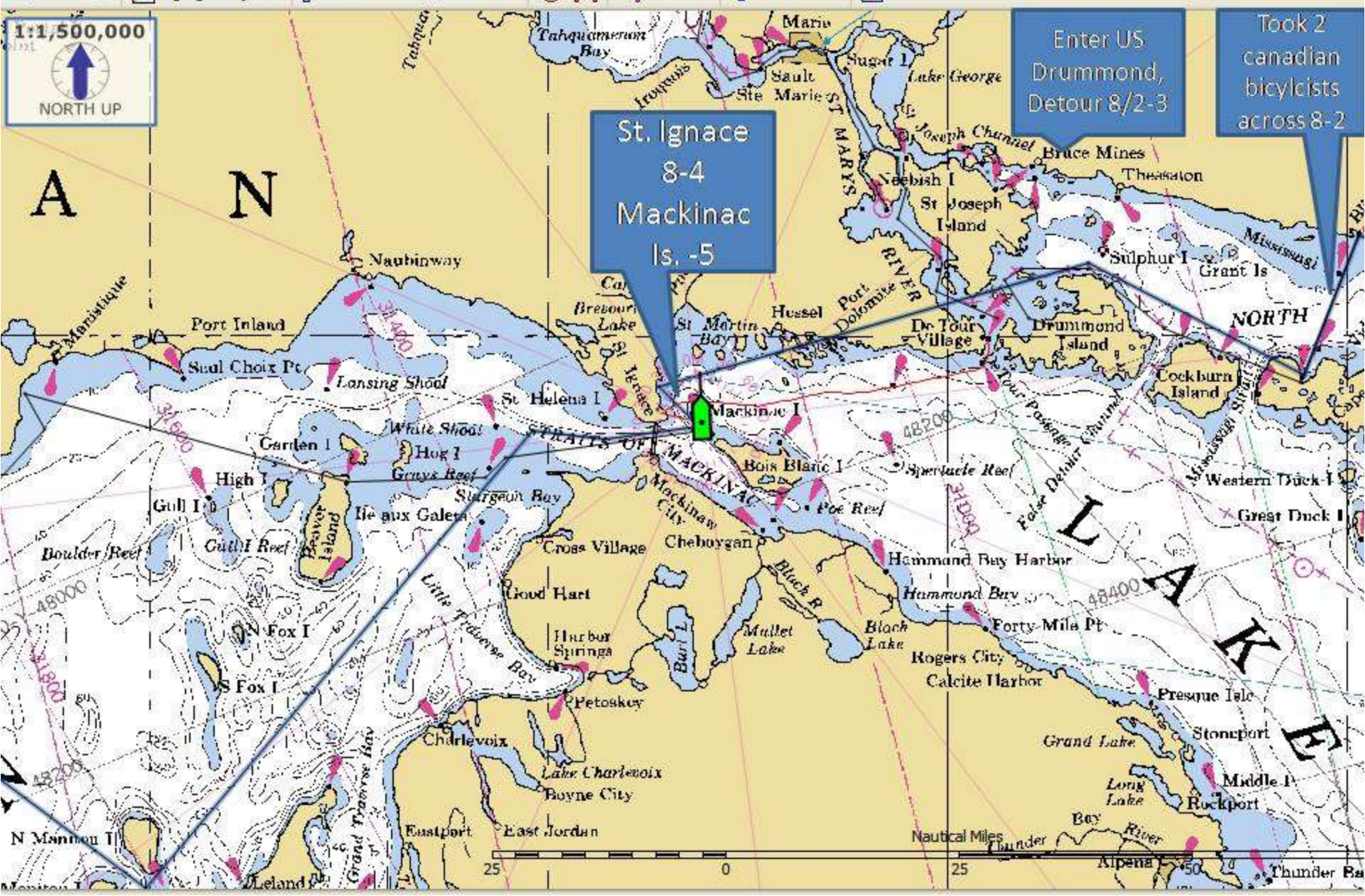
Manitoulin I.

Tobermory

MICHIGAN

LAKE HURON





8/5/07

Mackinaw Is. Resorts Less busy than 60 yrs ago.





dominated the southern Great Lakes. In the north, dense evergreen forests were interspersed with clean lakes and rivers. Now only a few, small vestiges of the original forests remain. Toxic air and water pollutants are found even on isolated Isle Royale.

While we exploit our natural resources, we are damaging the capacity of the ecosystem to renew itself, thus destroying life within it - perhaps including ourselves.

LE AND THE GREAT LAKES

8/10/07



Very Large Yacht assembled and launched in 60 minutes

8/9/07

The end



Surprises - 1

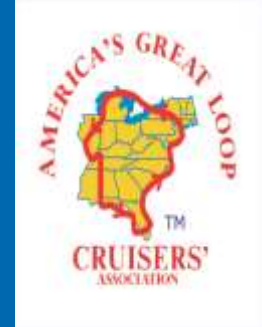
- Half the trip in Canada -- cell phone expense
- Less than half the trip with internet access, blogging was difficult
- How good BoatUS was with the outdrive damage – paid \$7K repair with ease.
- \$150/yr. BoatUS towing paid off
- Comparison between Canada and US canal systems
- Met very few “Loopers”: we traveled too fast and started too late.

Surprises - 2

- Did not need radar for this trip.
- Used mostly marinas to power AC – w/o good generator setup
- VA Marina with no security and many immovable boats with owners that frequented there – cheap, social “beach house”
- 8 ft Dinghy with electric trolling motor was good compromise.
- Only used the folding bikes 1 time on Mackinaw Island.

The End - Links

- Greatloop.com - join to get newsletter
- Blogspot.com/sandeb2/SeaTheSounds
- boatUS.com Did I plug BoatUS.com?
- Boattest.com for fuel economy tests
- Wordyachts.com & WORDBoats.com
- EcoCruiser.net
- Sandy 253-376-8273
- sandy@WORDBoats.com



Introduction to the Great Loop



FAQs

- Most common boat for the Great Loop
 - 40 ft Trawler
 - Requirements for the Great Loop
 - Less than 19.6' air draft
 - Less than 5' water draft
 - 250 mile fuel range

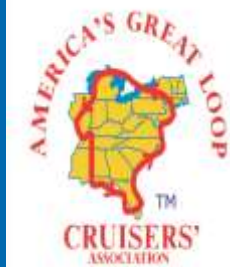


FAQs

- How much will it cost?
 - <Insert general info about costs>
 - Most expensive line item for Loopers is generally dockage
 - Fuel is second biggest expense



Great Loop Basics



- Approximate Stats <you can modify this to your exact stats>
- 15+ states & provinces
 - 1+ countries
 - 5,250+ miles
 - 100+ locks
 - 365 (+ or -) days





The Route



- <Provide a “tour” of the route by inserting pics and/or places you went, info on highlights, etc.>





7/6/07

