

# Canoeing and Kayaking for scouts and venturers in the Northern rivers district

By Peter (SKIP) Fish. VSL, DVSL.

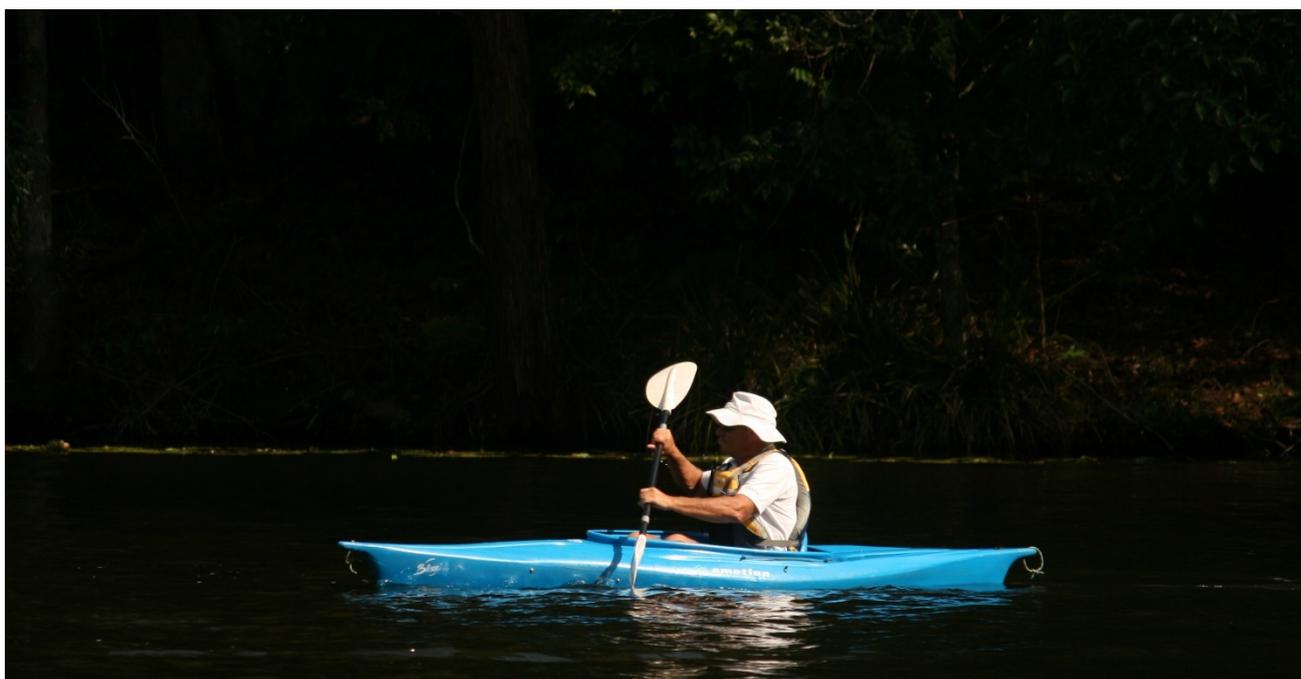


“Believe me, my young friends, there is nothing – absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats”

Kenneth Graham – *“The wind in the willows”*

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How do I find a job doing this?

*Chapter 1*

## **Introduction**

As the water rat said to mole there is nothing like messing around in boats - so long as the safety of all participants is the no 1 priority. This resource has been written with that uppermost in mind

The information contained in this resource is aimed at scouts doing their water activities with canoe elective target badge, venturers doing their pursuits or outdoor tape and leaders undertaking their canoe/kayak level 1-2 training or running canoe or kayak activities.

This information is taken from my own personal experience, resources and kayak log book and should not be considered definitive on the subject. Further information can be gained from – “field book for Australian scouting” there are many other books on the subject and the internet has a wealth of information.

Scout requirements -

All boating and water related activities need to have an E1 (or equivalent activity participation and medical form) and a risk assessment for all aspects of the activity prepared and submitted to the region activities commissioner or their representative, region office and all other personal as/per E1 requirements.

Depending on the activity a separate emergency response plan (if not fully covered by page 4 of the E1) and a minimal environmental impact plan may be needed.

All boating activities need to have a suitably qualified activities coordinator; who along with all those involved in planning the activity should be fully aware of the contents of the – Boating activities standard operating procedures for NSW scouts. The participant to qualified person ratio as required by relevant policy or as set out in the risk assessment needs to be adhered to.

The buddy system is to be used at all scouting activities and when in the water the two participants are to stay within 5 metres of each other. When a number of craft are undertaking an activity the lead craft and the tail craft are to stay within sight of each other at all times. No craft should be more than 20 metres from another craft.

All participants on scout boating activities should be able to swim at least 50 metres.

*Chapter 2*

## **PARTS OF A CANOE/KAYAK AND PADDLE**

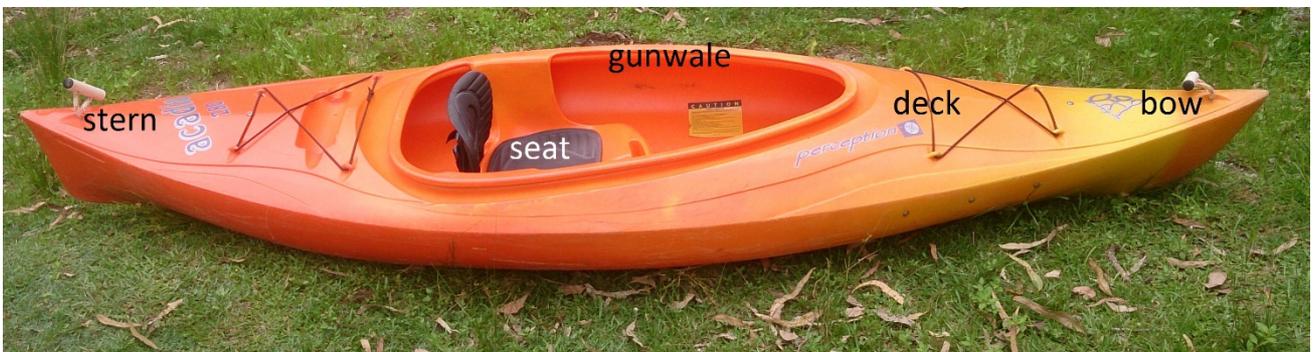
Three seat plastic canoe suitable for scout activities



Aluminium and plastic canoe paddle



Sit in Kayak suitable for venturer activities



Aluminium and plastic feathered blade paddle for kayak



Scout leader hard at work demonstrating how to use a sit on kayak –



### Chapter 3

## **PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES**

PFD'S are divided into five classes/levels –

- 275 – 150 used for extreme offshore conditions
- 100 equivalent to the old rating of type 1
- 50 equivalent to the old rating of type 2
- 50s equivalent to the old rating of type 3

Class 100 PFDs come in inflatable and non-inflatable forms have neck support designed to keep the head above the water, they are in high visibility colours and must be worn by all persons when on open water (ocean) as per N.S.W. maritime law. Inflatable type not suitable for members under the age of 15 years

Class 50 PFD's these are buoyancy vests designed to keep the wearer afloat but without the neck support as in type 100. They come in high-visibility colours and are more comfortable to wear than type 100. This class must be worn by all scouting personal when in any water craft in inland waters (lakes, rivers and creeks). This class also come in a low arm hole cut to facilitate paddling and swimming, these are usually much more expensive. Some brands come with a crutch strap, very useful for younger ages. Mandatory for joey age.

Class 50s PFD's these are the same as 50 PFD's but are not in high-visibility colours (usually blue, green, camo etc) are used for certain water sports. 50s PFD's are not suitable for scouting personal involved in canoeing and kayaking activities.

PFD's are rated for various weight ranges and sizes, this needs to be taken into account when fitting.

Fitting - PFD's must fit the participant, not overlap at the front and be able to be tightened to the point that they will not slip up, if the shoulders of the PFD can be pulled up past the ears it is probably too loose.

Scout policy states that all members of NSW scouts; that is youth and adults must wear an approved PFD while in any water craft on any scout activity.

#### *Chapter 4*

### **IMPORTANT POINTS WHEN PLANING A BOATING ACTIVITY**

- Obtain a weather forecast for the area you are going paddling. This needs to be rechecked regularly, right up to the start of the activity for any changes. Various web sites are available to find all the information you need (storm warnings, likelihood of rain, wind) eg [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- Check tide times if you are going on tidal waters (see chapter 6) to find optimal time for the activity
- Necessary paper work completed - E1 (or equivalent activity participation and medical form) and a risk assessment for all aspects of the activity prepared (risk assessment requirements need to be evaluated and amended as/if situation or circumstances change during activity)
- All appropriate people to be informed of important details ie - Where activity is taking place, who is attending, start time and expected return time. As per E1.
- Have in place a contingency plan to be implemented if any emergency arises at any stage during the activity, especially if the activity involves traveling down water courses that have limited access from the banks.
- Check the serviceability and suitability of all equipment to be used –

#### Canoes/kayaks

Only use craft appropriate to the conditions to be encountered and for the age and section of the participants. (Scouts do not use kayaks) short white water or play kayaks are not suitable for long flat water paddles, as long straight tracking tour kayaks are not suitable for fast moving water with obstacles, most sit on's are not comfortable for long paddles and have a lot of drag so are very hard work to paddle kayaks are weight rated so need to suit participants.

Ensure hull of craft is sound ie (no holes, cracks or leaks) and deemed seaworthy and the seats are comfortable (no cracks).

Canoes and kayaks need a tow ring or hand loop or handle at each end of the craft.

There is a painter/length of rope used for towing or tying up, needs to be securely stowed to prevent entanglement in the event of capsize.

Bailing scoop (can be made out of a two litre juice bottle with bottom cut off) needs to be securely attached. If attached with a length of rope this needs to be securely stowed to prevent entanglement in the event of capsize.

### Paddles

Ensure paddles are in good repair (blade is tight on the shaft, if made of wood no splinters).

The correct size paddle for participant (canoe paddle should fit between ground and under arm to neck when standing beside it), (kayak paddle should fit between ground and hand held stretched up above the head).

### PFD's

Ensure all PFD's are in good condition not perished, all straps and clips in working order and are the correct class for the activity and weight range for the wearer. See chapter 3 on PFD's.

If faults are found or repairs are needed in any equipment ensure that the work is undertaken well before the activity takes place.

## **BEFORE ENTERING THE WATER**

- Check the weather is as forecast – if changes have occurred or seem imminent reassess whether the activity should take place (this is most important).
- Check all participants PFD's.
- Check all other equipment is on board.

Call the office and tell them you're too sick to come in today –



### *Chapter 5*

## **OTHER ESSENTIAL AND SOME OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT**

First aid kit – full kit if troop or group activity – small personal kits if patrol activity.

Communications - PLB's or EPIRB to be carried if outside one hour of emergency response. Mobile phone and/or UHF radio - stored in waterproof container.

Distress devices – whistle, mirror, torch or Australian distress sheet (fluro orange rectangle with a black V), coloured flares.

Navigation – Map and compass stored in water proof container, GPS device

Footwear – appropriate footwear is essential, eg water shoes, diving booties or runners. Thongs, hard soled shoes or slip on foot wear is not appropriate.

Personal – broad brim hat, sunglasses, rain coat, sunscreen, long sleeve or rash shirt

Water and food.

Watch or other time keeping device.

Sharp knife in pouch or sheath, (for use in entanglement situations) diving knife very good for this purpose as they are usually non rusting and in secure pouches.

Wire cutters – As many north coast creeks have fencing wire stung across them or that has been washed away in flood water and become entangled in logs or stumps which can entangle canoes and kayaks.

Spare paddle securely stowed so as not lost in the event of capsize, for kayaks a break apart paddle is easiest to stow.

Canoe/kayak, equipment repair kit - duct tape, cable ties, rope

Dry bags or barrel for storing above equipment.

Overnight – shelter (tent, hammock), sleeping gear, cooking equipment and utensils.

## *Chapter 6*

### **TIDES, CURRENTS AND OTHER DANGERS**

Tides and currents can be a real risk to paddlers especially the more junior members and not so experienced and should always be taken into account and never underestimated.

Tides can prevent small craft from making progress or even push them in reverse; they can change river, creek, and estuary water levels unexpectedly exposing dangerous rocks or reefs. In estuary waters and near the mouth of rivers, small craft can easily be carried out to sea.

The best defence if caught in this situation is to stay close to the banks where the influence of the fast moving water is less. If progress is still not being made and the craft is in danger of being carried out to sea you need to tie the craft to something secure on the bank and wait for the tide to change or if safe to do so get out of the craft onto the bank. Do not leave the craft to try and swim to the bank.

Tide charts are readily available from outdoors, camping and fishing stores and on the internet. These charts should be referred to when planning any boating activity on waters that are tidal or are influenced by tidal activity

River currents are also a powerful force that needs to be taken into account when paddling on the rivers and creeks; especially after rain when the flow is higher than usual and can carry craft into dangerous situations. As with tides the best way to avoid the full force of the flow is to stay close to the banks

When planning a river activity use the current to advantage plan to go against the current for the first part of the trip then return with the current.

Fallen trees are of particular concern the branches of which are commonly referred to as sieves or strainers for the reason that the water is quite often moving faster trying to get past the obstacle, the craft can easily be over turned and the occupants pulled under the water and entangled in the branches and held there by the force of the water.

## *Chapter 7*

### **DISTRESS SIGNALS**

The Australian distress sheet (a fluoro orange rectangle with a black V on it)



A whistle – light and easy to carry (some PFD's have a whistle attached) the international whistle code is – one blast = where are you. Two blasts = come to me. Three blasts = I need help.

Waving both arms (from outstretched to the side to above your head)

Paddle held horizontally means - STOP. Paddle held vertically means – COME TO ME.

A mirror (polished stainless steel is safer than glass)

Waving a flag side to side above head (shirt on a stick if nothing else available)

Torch flashed repeatedly (water proof, only effective after dark)

Coloured flares

*Chapter 8*

## **BUOYS, BEACONS AND NAVIGATION SIGNS**

NSW waters have many different navigation signs most are relevant only to larger boats. The details of which can be found in hand books provided by NSW maritime board or on their web site.

A good rule for scout canoe activities is to avoid areas frequented by powered boating. If an activity is to be held on waters frequented by larger vessels then the number one rule of boating applies – larger boats have right of way over smaller boats. It is a good policy to stay close to the banks well away from larger craft

The buoys that do need to be observed by paddlers are usually advising of dangers like water intakes and spillways on dams, locks, weirs and wrecks or other obstacles and moorings for larger boats, most of these types of buoys carry signs describing the danger. All these types of structures need to be avoided at all times

If paddling in rivers or channels with red or green lateral buoys they should be passed on the correct side especially with groups of canoes traveling together

The rules are –

If traveling upstream that is away from the sea you keep the red buoys on the left hand side or port side and the green buoys to your right hand side or starboard side.

If traveling downstream that is towards the sea you keep the red buoys on your right hand or starboard side and the green buoys on your left or port side.

If there are no buoys the rule is to stay on the right hand side of the water way.

In waters with no buoys or signs it is common sense to stay away from obstacles like wrecks, rocks, tree trunks and stumps protruding from the water especially in fast moving current or swell.

## Chapter 9

### **BASIC PADDLING STROKES**

In two man canoes the rear paddler is in control directing the front paddler which stroke and on which side.

- Forward stroke – used to drive the craft forward - the paddle is put in the water in front of the paddler and pulled back close to the side of the craft, the blade is kept at right angle to the direction of travel.
- Back stroke – used to slow the craft, stop quickly or go backwards – this stroke is the opposite of the forward stroke.
- Sweep stroke – used to turn the craft while still moving forward – the paddle is pulled in a wide arc away from the side, it can be used forward or backward.
- Draw stroke – used to pull the craft sideways – to bring it into or away from a landing or to avoid obstacles – the paddle is put in the water right out away from the side and pulled towards the side, the blade is parallel to the side.
- Pry stroke – used to push the craft sideways – to push away from or into a landing or to avoid obstacles – the paddle is put in the water close to the side and pushed away from the side, the blade is parallel to the side.
- Turning strokes – in a canoe the front paddler does a forward stroke while the rear paddler does a back stroke on the opposite side – or front paddler does a draw stroke on one side while rear paddler does draw stroke on other side.  
– in a kayak a back stroke is done followed quickly by a forward stroke on the opposite side.

### **ADVANCED PADDLING STROKES**

These strokes are more difficult to master but give more effective control of the craft

- J stroke – used to paddle forward and keep the canoe in a straight line without changing the paddle to the other side – the blade is inserted into the water well forward and pulled back as in a forward stroke until it is level with the body then turned out and slightly pushed away from the craft as in a pry stroke
- Slap stroke – used to steady or right a canoe/kayak when tipping – the blade is slapped or placed face down on the water on the side the craft is tipping to, then with a downward push the craft is righted

- Sculling stroke – can be used to draw or pry and to steady or right the craft as in a slap stroke – the paddle is pulled or pushed in small curved motion backwards and forwards beside the body
- Ferry gliding – used to go sideways across moving water to avoid obstacles – the skill is to maintain your position by forward or backwards paddling and slightly turning the craft to the side you want to go to if going against the current or away from the side you want if going with the current

### Boarding a canoe

1. face the bow
2. hold far side gunwale with hand nearest the canoe
3. hold near side gunwale with other hand
4. keeping your weight low as possible lift foot nearest the canoe into and place on centre line of canoe
5. shift your weight onto that foot
6. lift other foot into canoe
7. sit down onto your seat

To disembark reverse the procedure

In two man canoe the stern person boards first, the bow person boards after the stern person is seated.

### Rafting up

A useful skill to learn is rafting up, this is where all the craft come along side of each other the paddlers holding the gunwale of the craft beside. This creates a very stable situation, useful to address all personal at the same time or if crew need to change places with crew from other canoes or bow and stern crew need to change places

To change position with a crew from another craft the procedure for boarding a canoe is used – the first crew moves to centre of their craft then follows steps 1 to 6 then crouch's down while second crew member follows 1 to 7 then first crew sits on their seat.

For bow and stern crew in same craft to change position the bow crew moves to centre of craft and crouch's down. The stern crew then passes over the top and sits in bow seat, the first crew then sits in stern seat.

## **RESCUING CAPSIZED CRAFT**

Rescuing capsized canoes is an important skill that needs to be learnt as soon as possible and can be achieved quite effectively by scout aged youth

Never swim away from a capsized canoe/kayak unless it is sinking

If close to shore swim the canoe to shore or use another canoe to tow it in, turn craft upside down, lift one end then other end to drain water out then turn craft right way up and bail any remaining water out.

Deep water rescues -

There are various methods to achieve this – one method is called the H rescue, this is done by lifting the bow of the upturned canoe onto the side of another canoe and then lifting the stern onto a third canoe thus allowing the water to drain out.

Experience has shown me that this method may be ok for adults but is very difficult for scout aged youth to achieve.

The second method is called the T to X rescue. To effect this method the rescuing canoe needs to get positioned with one side at one end of the upturned canoe forming a T shape, one of the paddlers in the water goes to the other end of the canoe and pushes that end as far into the water as possible, this lifts the opposite end up which helps the second paddler with the aid of the rescuing paddlers to lift that end onto the rescuing canoe. The upturned canoe is then pulled onto the rescuing canoe forming the X shape thus draining the water out, it is then turned over right side up and then pushed back into the water. The empty canoe is then pulled around into the raft up position and held by the rescuing crew while the paddlers climb back into their craft. Experience has shown that for scout aged youth this whole process is made easier and safer if a third canoe assists by rafting up beside the rescuing canoe and holds it steady while the rescue process is going on. This is most important when crew are re-entering the craft as it can be held in a tilted position making it easier for crew to board.

The above method can be used when two craft are overturned, the first craft is pulled onto the underside of the second craft, drained, overturned and pushed back into the water then used to rescue the second craft.



One paddler climbs onto the stern of the craft which assists the bow to be lifted onto the rescuing craft.



Lifting bow onto rescue craft



Sliding upturned craft onto rescue craft till drained of water



Turn rescued craft right side up



Slide rescued craft back into water.

## *Chapter 11*

### **Glossary**

Amidships – half way from bow to stern

Bailing scoop – container to bail water from in the craft

Beam – widest part of any craft

Blade – the wide flat or sometimes curved part of a paddle

Bow – front end of a craft

Buoys – floating devices moored to the bottom to mark channels, banks, rocks or other dangers to boats

Chart – the marine version of a map

Cockpit – the open part where the crew sit

Crew – the members on board a craft

Draught – the depth of water required to float a craft

Drip ring/string – ring on paddle shaft to stop water running down the shaft

Freeboard – sides of a craft above the water line

Grip – the T end of a paddle

Gunwale – the top of the sides of a craft

Helmsman – the person who steers a craft

Hull – the main body of a craft

Keel – the main structural frame running the length of the underside of a craft

Painter – length of rope use to tow or tie a craft up

Port – left side of a craft when facing the bow

PFD – personal floatation device

Reserve/positive buoyancy – makes the craft float when swamped (full of water)

Shaft – part of a paddle that goes between the grip and the blade

Skeg – external extendable fin like keel used to give stability on some kayaks

Soundings – numbers on charts showing water depth in metres

Starboard – right side of craft when facing forward

Stern – back end of a craft

Waterlogged – full of water but still floating

Thwart – metal or plastic pieces that hold the sides apart

## *Chapter 12*

### REASONS TO CALL OFF YOUR BOATING ACTIVITY

I have been asked on several occasions, when do I call off a boating activity?

Answer – when any situation arises that could possibly affect the safety of one or more of the participants. It may be fun messing about in boats but when things go wrong they can go very badly very quickly.

There is no disgrace in calling off a boating activity before or during the activity, it is much better to be live scouts than dead heroes.

Situations classified as emergencies – time to call off activity – or implement your contingency plan

- Change in weather conditions – high winds, heavy rain, storms
- Change in river or creek water levels due to heavy rain further up stream
- Change of tides or unexpected high tides
- Unexpected currents or fast water flows
- Being swept towards mouth of river by currents, tides or wind
- Unexpected white water
- One or more participants becoming injured or ill
- One or more participants becoming separated from the group
- One or more participants suffering from hypothermia or hyperthermia.

- Losing control of craft eg loss of paddle.
- Losing navigation equipment
- Craft becoming unseaworthy eg seriously leaking
- Under estimating time to traverse section of river thus being on the water after night fall

### *Chapter 13*

## **PADDLING LOCATIONS ON THE NORTH COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

There are many locations on the North Coast suitable for safe canoeing and kayaking

The main concern when looking for new locations for canoe/kayak activities is the entry and exit point. It is necessary to be able to get a vehicle to both and get the craft into the water safely. Some locations entry and exit are the same point, these locations the vehicles can stay there. Where the entry and exit are different locations some arrangement needs to be worked out for the vehicle. Any location can be the same entry/exit point by returning on same route, if this method is used it is good planning to paddle up stream against the current for the first half then with the current on the return journey.

All times given are indicative of conditions on the day I undertook the paddle. Paddle times for any trip can vary greatly depending on wind, currents, tides and effort put in by the paddler.

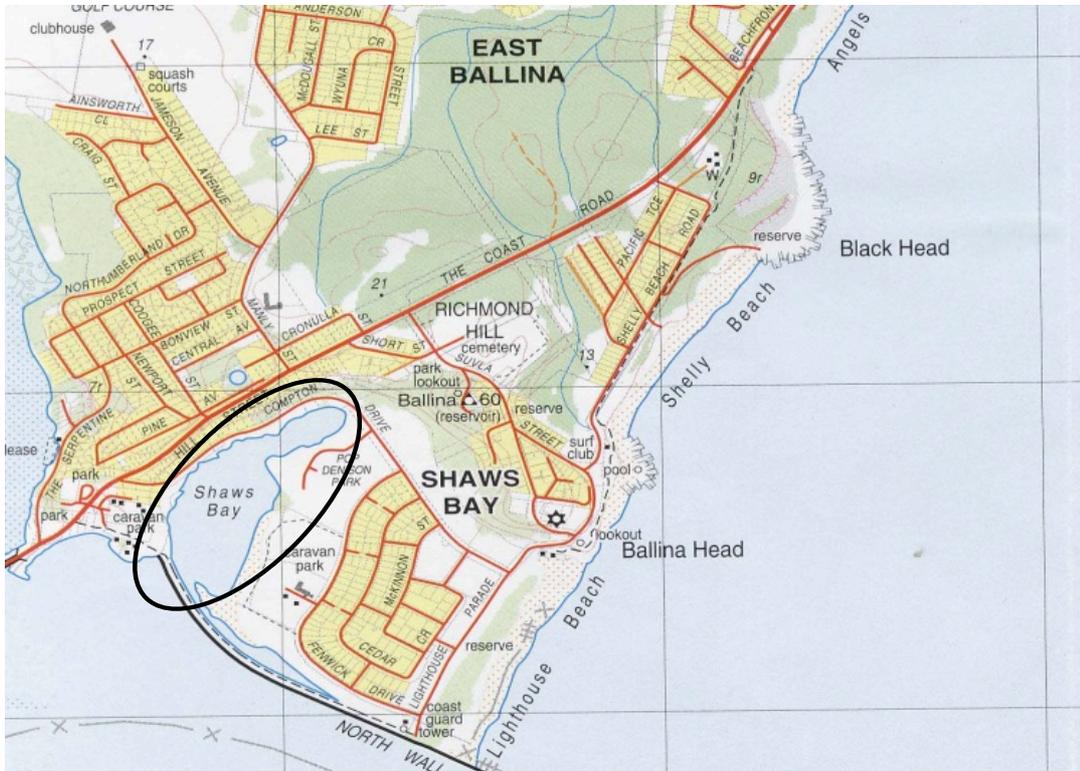
### **Flat water locations with little current for beginners**

These locations have same entry and exit points, the first two – Shaws Bay and Lake Ainsworth are suitable for more junior beginners. The next two – Crams Farm/Clarrie Hall dam and Bells Bay/Toonumbar dam are more challenging, both can develop a swell during windy weather

Shaws Bay - Ballina

Map – Ballina. GR – E568 N067

Easy access from both sides of the lake – salt water



Lake Ainsworth – Lennox Head

Map – Ballina. GR - E578 N158

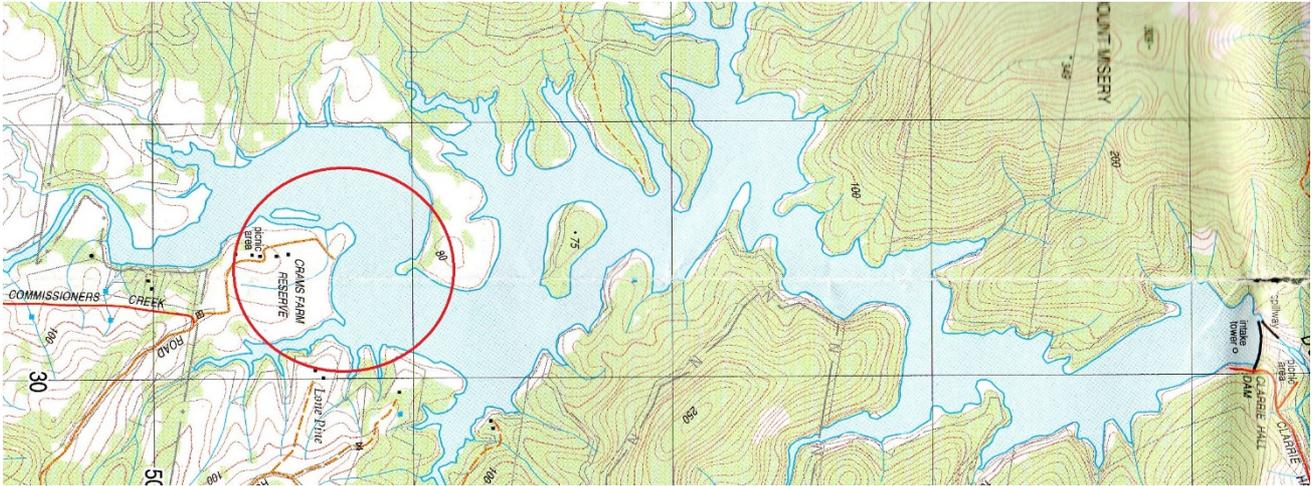
Easy access, check water quality



## Crams Farm Reserve – Clarrie Hall Dam

Map – Burringbah. GR E295 N505

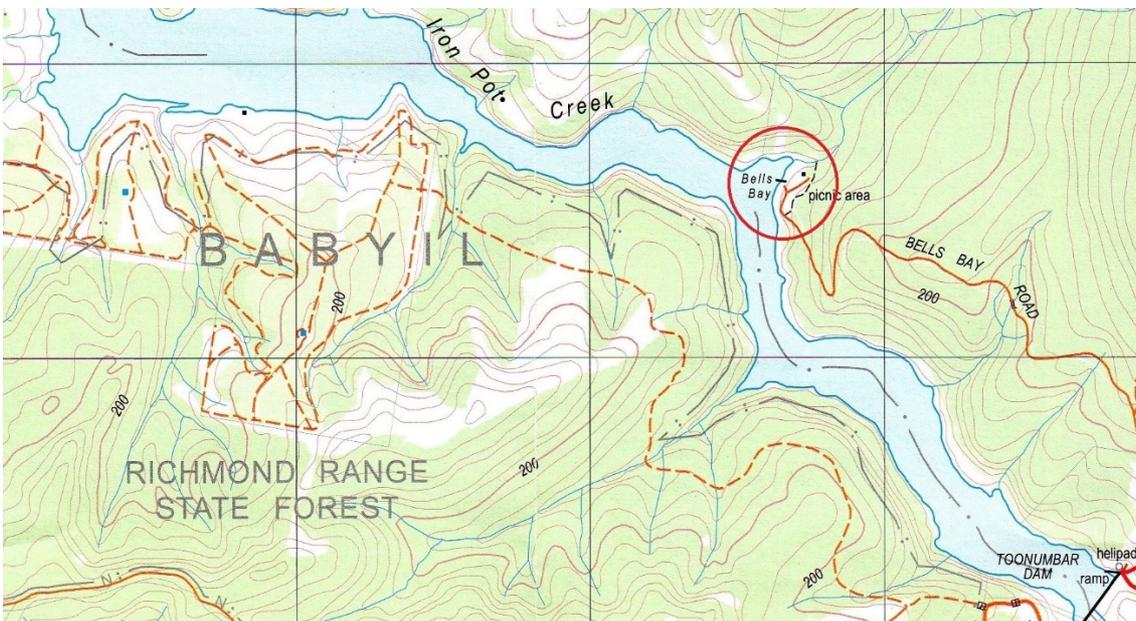
Easy access, excellent location for beginner flat water canoe/kayak activities. Day activities only at this location, no camping



## Bells Bay – Toonumbar Dam

Map – Afterlee. GR E786 N356

Easy access, excellent location for beginner flat water canoe/kayak activities. Camping is allowed at this location, site bookings made at Toonumbar Waters Retreat. Clear water but can be very cold during winter.



## Flat water locations with same entry and exit point

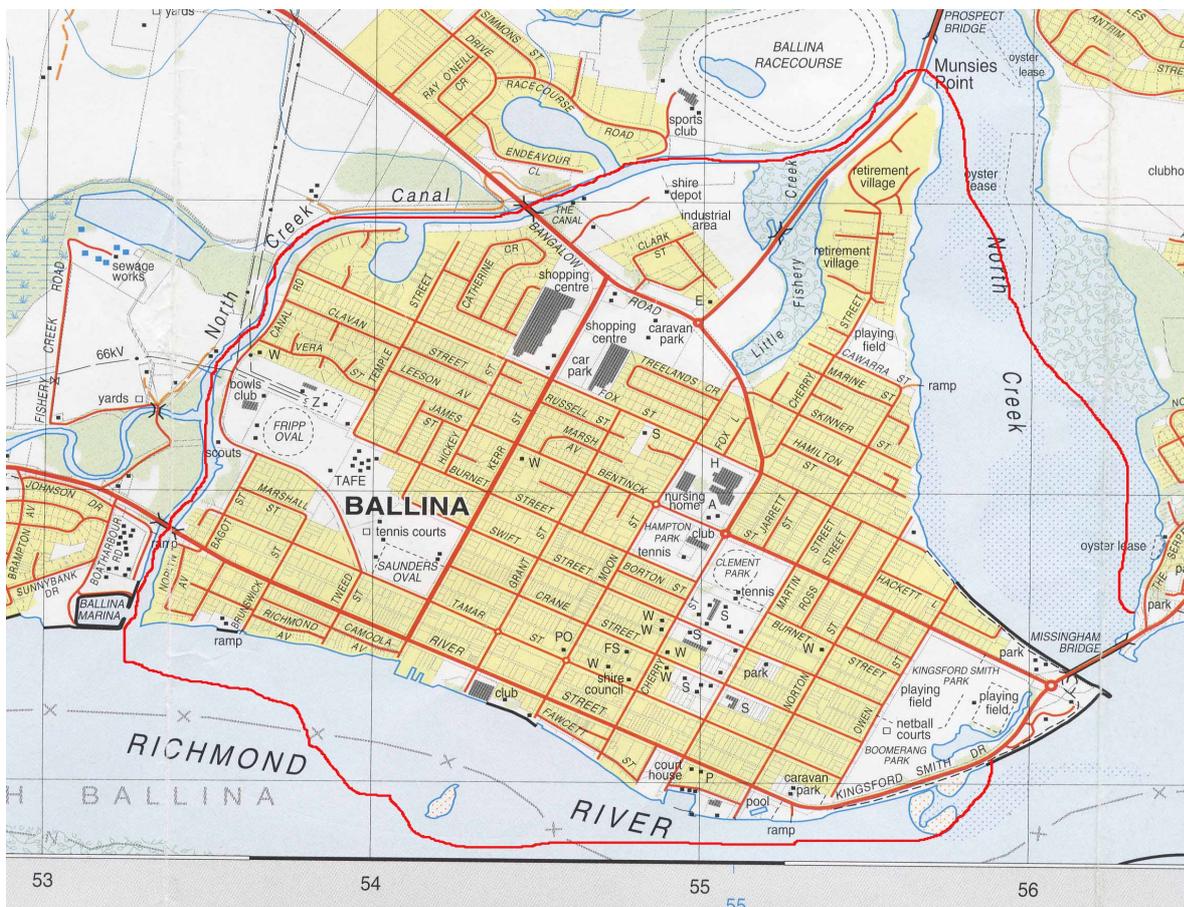
### Ballina Island –

Ballina is surrounded by the Richmond river, north creek and north creek canal. It can be paddled in either direction, the tides will determine which direction is easier. There are many entry/exit points – Ballina Scout hall, anywhere along the Richmond River or North Creek. If you want to avoid going around the point and under the Missingham Bridge which can be difficult due to breaking waves a good entry or exit point is the beach along Kingsford Smith drive to the Serpentine Shaws Bay. These two points are within easy walking distance of each other.

Map – Ballina – The Serpentine GR E54 N067

Distance 9.5 km

Time 2 to 4 hours depending on tide, river current and direction travelled.



## Toonumbar dam

Previously mentioned as beginners site but also suitable for longer paddles. Has two entry/exit points the helipad near the dam wall and Bells Bay. This location can develop waves during windy weather and is cold during winter time. This is a Bass fishing location so fishing boats can be uncouncted but are generally no problem as there is a speed limit.

Map – Afterlee. Helipad GR E798 N343. Bells Bay GR E786 N356. Iron Pot Creek GR E758 N376

Distance – Bells Bay to Helipad + return 4.5km. Time – 1 hour 30 minutes

Bells Bay to Iron Pot Creek + return 10km. Time – 3 hours depending on wind

Helipad to Iron pot Creek following shore line 15km. Time 4 to 5 hours.

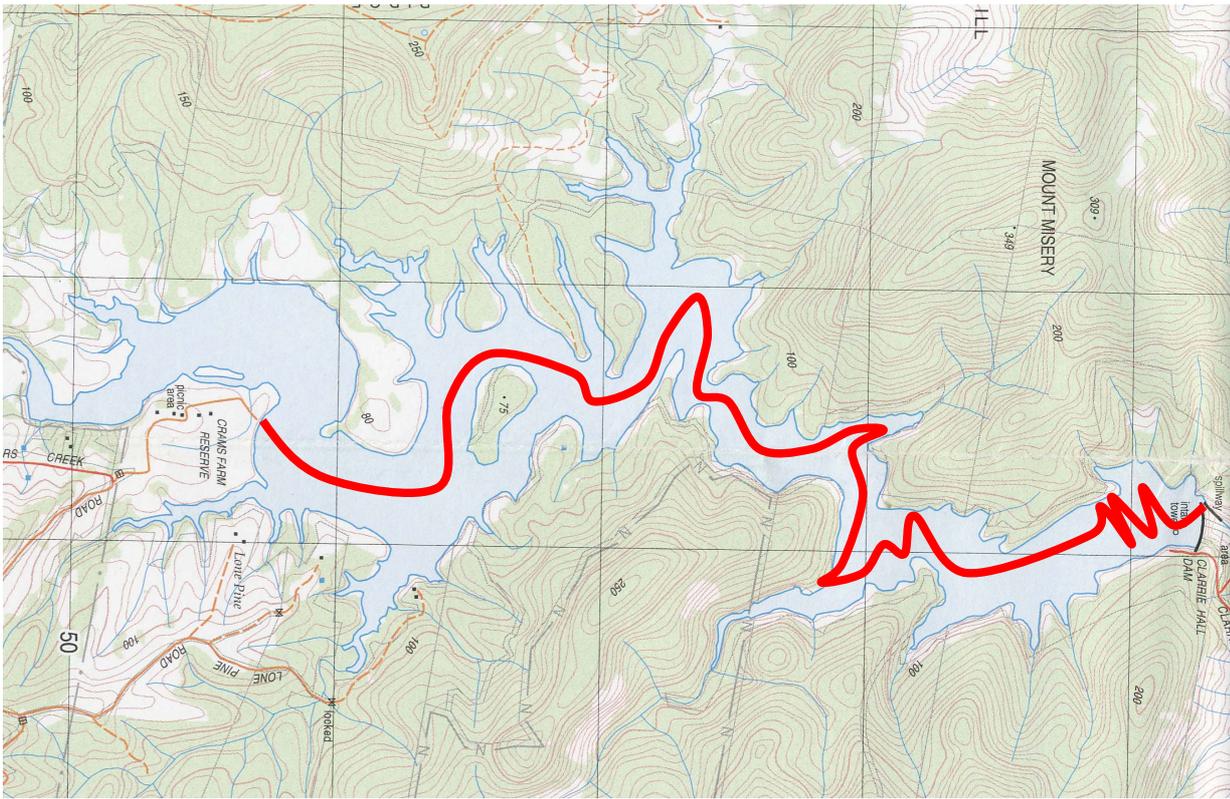


## Clarrie Hall Dam

Previously mentioned as beginners site but also suitable for longer paddles. There are two entry/exit points Crams Farm Reserve and near the dam wall.

Map – Burringbar. Crams Farm Reserve GR E295 N505. Dam wall GR E299 N542

Distance – Crams Farm Reserve to dam wall 9.5km, this can be increased by following shore line. Time – 2 hours 30 minutes to 3 hours.



## Jerusalem Creek Bundjalung National Park

This creek is accessed from The Gap road to Black Rocks trail to a walking track of 200 metres which leads to the head of the creek. The craft will need to be carried along the walking track. This creek is an easy paddle, there is little to no current and is really worth the effort to get there. It is a dunes creek and runs parallel to the ocean eventually opening into the ocean

Map – Tabbimoble. Walking trail access point GR E357 N647

Distance – 9km return. Time 2 hours 30 minutes

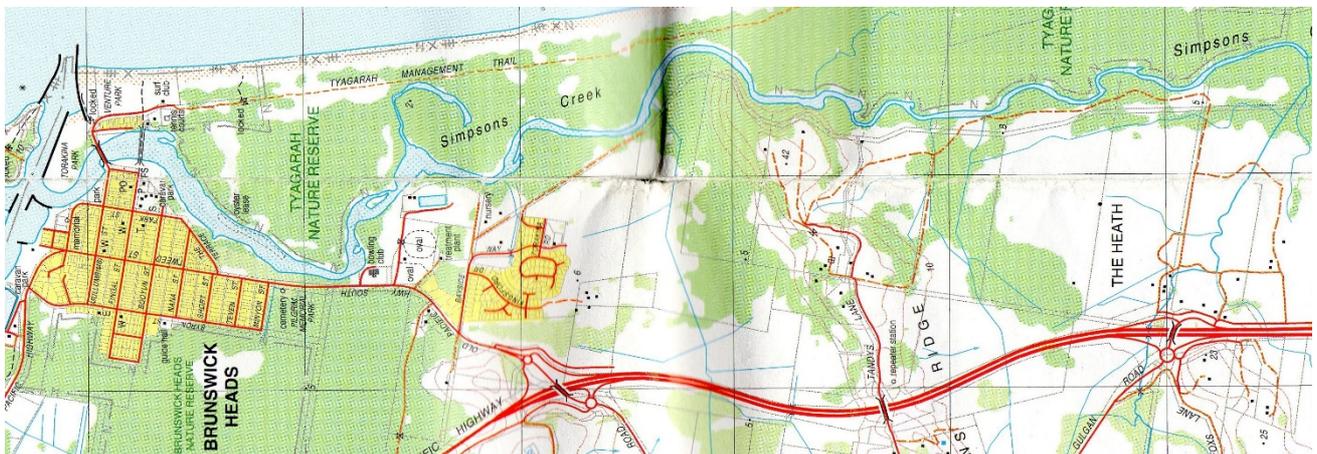


## Simpsons Creek Brunswick Heads

This creek can be accessed from the Brunswick Heads scout hall or from memorial park. This is a worthwhile paddle though mangrove forest but tide charts need to be consulted as this is a salt water tidal creek and is very shallow so you need to go with the tide to be able to get to the end and back. There is a shorter paddle on this creek 5.5km from scout hall go 2km then turn left into Morganson's creek.

Map – Brunswick Heads. Scout hall GR E543 N427 – Memorial park GR E539 N431  
end point near air field GR E545 N374

Distance – 16km. Time - 3 to 4 hours.

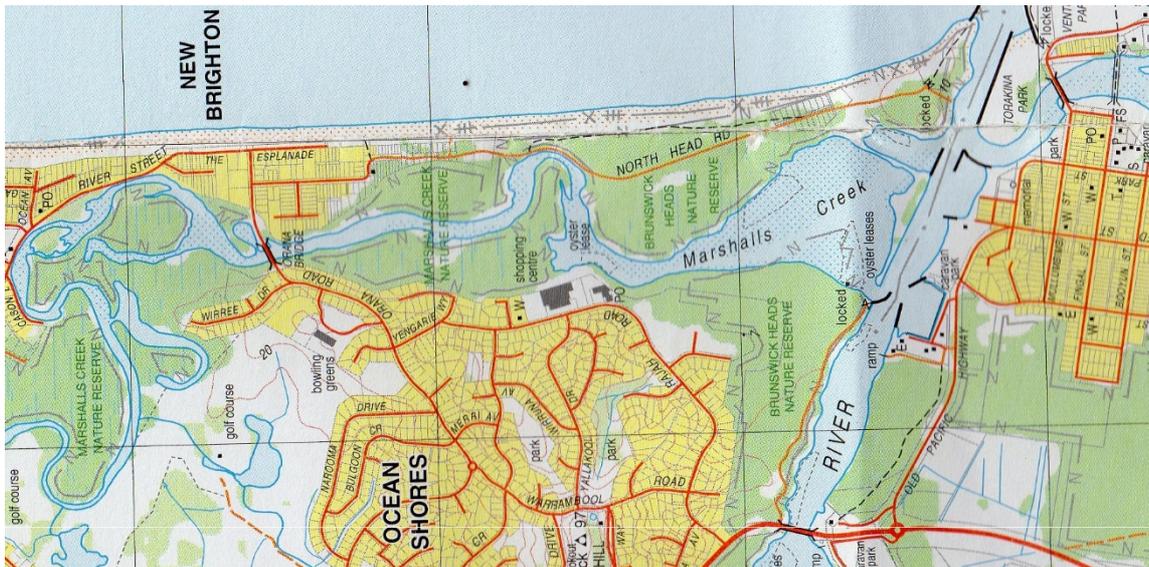


## Marshall's creek Brunswick Heads/New Brighton

This creek can be accessed from same location as Simpson's creek and can be a return trip or a one way paddle. The one way access point is opposite the New Brighton Post Office. A high tide is needed to go further up Marshall's creek.

Map – Brunswick Heads. Access GR as for Simpson's Creek. New Brighton Post Office GR E538 N463

Distance – 10 km return. Time 3 hours



## Flat water locations with separate entry and exit points

These locations can be used as same entry/exit point paddles by going upstream half way then returning, if covering the same water is not a problem or if two cars cannot be organised to do the shuffle. Most are probably best treated as one way paddles due to current.

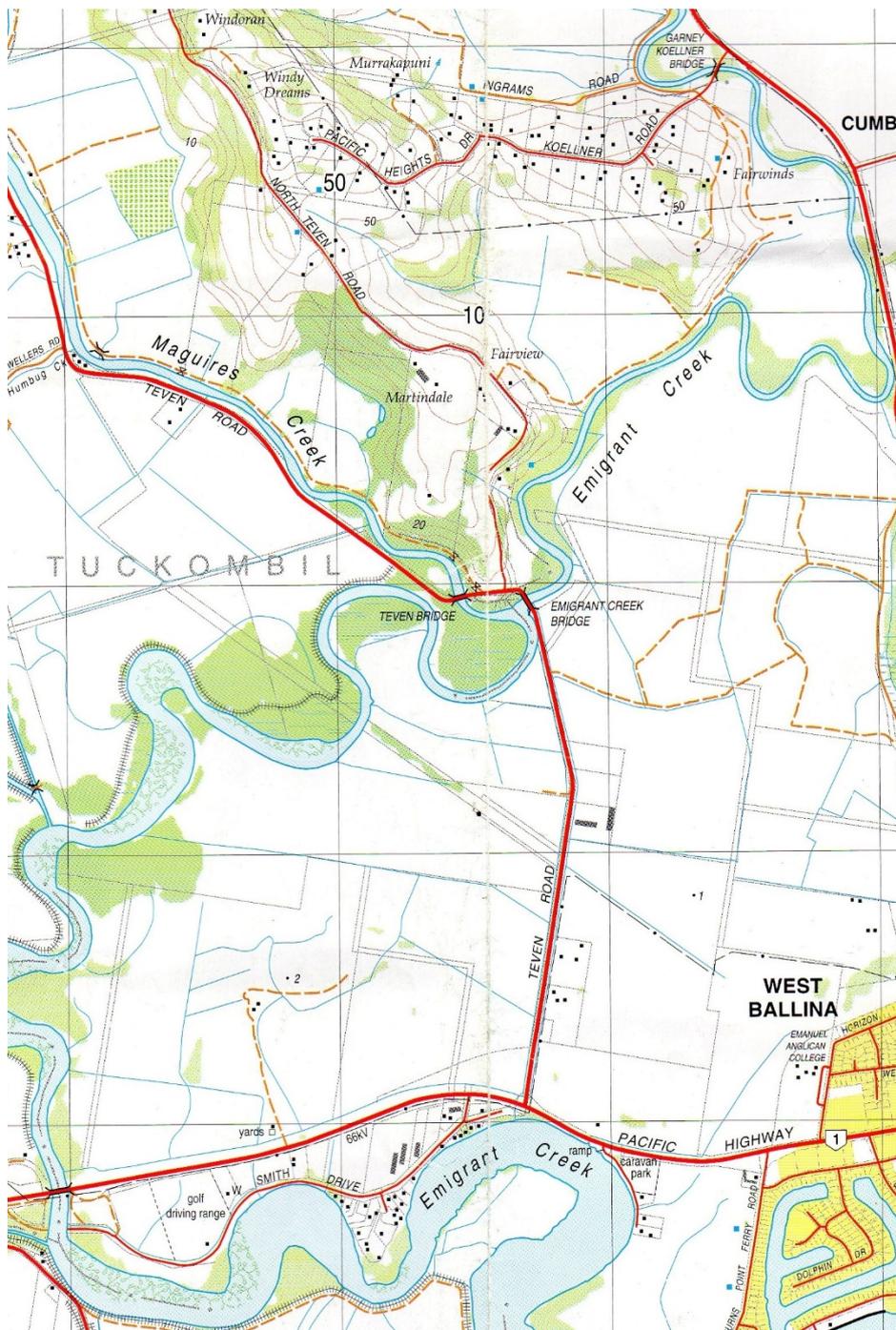
## Emigrant Creek Ballina

This location is tidal and is through cane fields and pasture

Entry point is at the Garney Koellner Bridge on Koeller road, exit can be made at the boat ramp beside the caravan park on the Pacific Highway West Ballina.

Map – Ballina. Garney Koellner Bridge GR E514 N109. Boat ramp GR E509 N069

Distance – 13.5 km. Time – 3 to 4 hours.

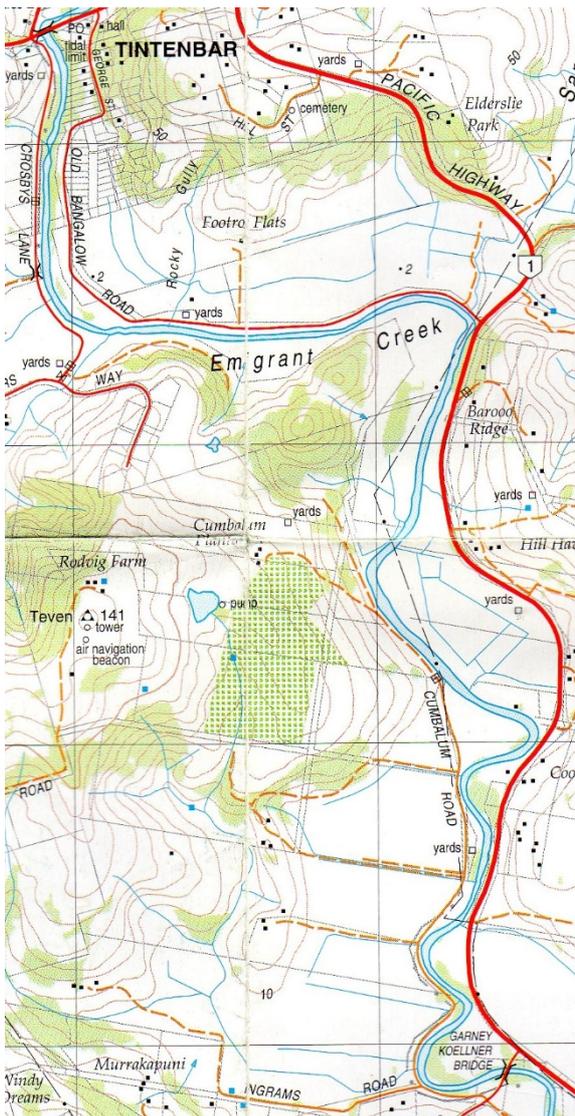


## Emigrant Creek upper section Ballina

The entry point for this location is the bridge at Tintenbar which is the tidal limit for Emigrant Creek. This section could be paddled alone or in conjunction with the previous Emigrant Creek location if a longer route is required.

Map – Ballina. Tintenbar bridge GR E499 N144

Distance – 7km. Time – 1.5 to 2 hours.



## Evens River, Evens Head

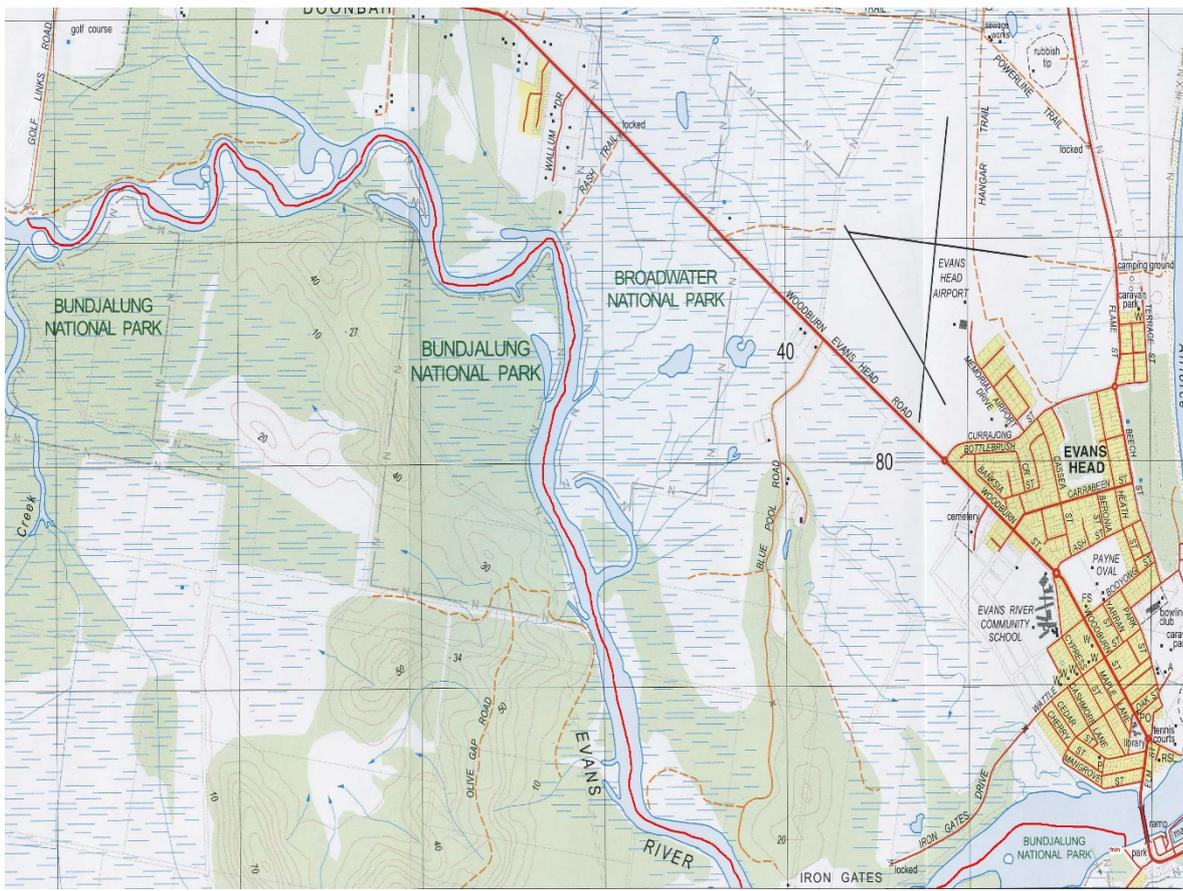
Recommended paddle passes between the Bundjalung and the Broadwater National parks

Entry point for this paddle is the end of Golf Links Road, the exit point is the boat ramp near the bridge to South Evens Head. This river is tidal so consult the tide charts to go with the tide.

A 3.5 km extension to this paddle is entry at the weir on the Pacific Highway at Woodburn. I have not paddled this section so have no idea about the ease of access at this point.

Map – Woodburn. Golf Links road GR E358 N812. Boat ramp exit GR E418 N783

Distance – 13km. Time 3 – 4 hours.



## North Creek Ballina

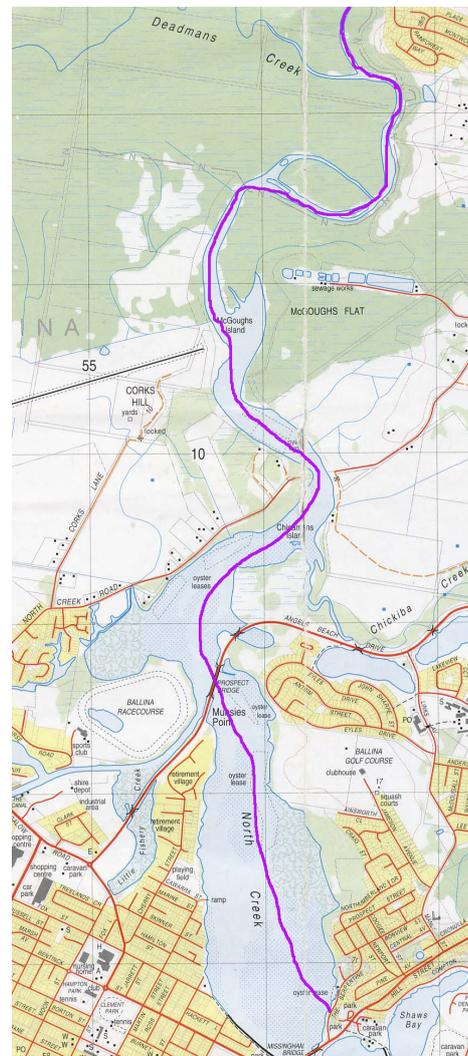
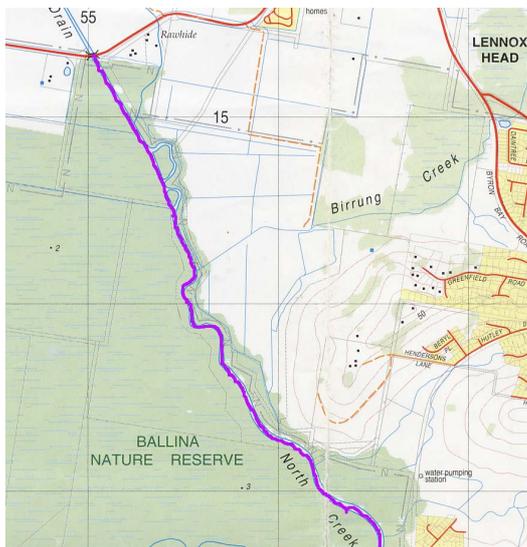
Entry point is at the bridge on Ross Lane, the exit point is The Serpentine Shaws Bay.

This paddle goes through the Ballina Nature Reserve.

A 4.5km extension to this paddle starts at Martins Lane East, which is the tidal limit of North creek. I have not paddled this extension so have no advice about that entry point.

Map – Ballina – Ross Lane bridge GR E550 N154. The Serpentine GR E564 N067  
Martins Lane East bridge – GR E558 N185

Distance – 11.5km. Time – 3hours



## Brunswick River

Entry point is the boat ramp on Mill Street Mullumbimby, exit point the boat ramp Brunswick Heads or the scout hall as for previous entries.

This river has tidal influence so consult tide charts.

Map – Brunswick Heads – Mill Street boat ramp GR E493 N421

Distance – 10.5km time – 3hours



## Richmond River

Most of the Richmond River is suitable to paddle with the upper reaches more interesting. Some sections need reasonable flow rates to alleviate excessive portage. On the other hand it can be a dangerous river when water levels are high.

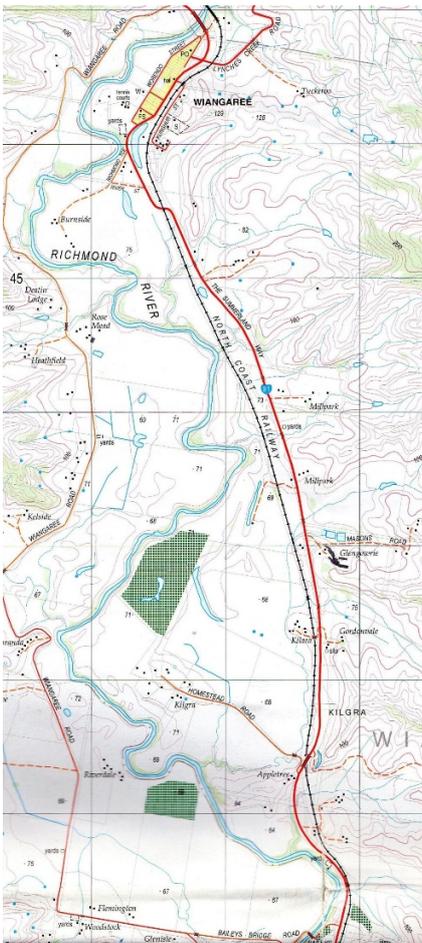
Upper reaches sections –

- Wiangaree – Bailey’s bridge

Entry point is under the bridge at Wiangaree on the northern side there is a road leading back to a gate beside the bridge. Entry point is a short walk from the gate. Baileys Bridge is a difficult exit but close to the road an easier exit is 300 metres before the bridge but involves a longer walk to the road.

Map – Afterlee – Wiangaree Bridge – GR E967 N469. Baileys bridge – GR E976 N401

Distance 11.5km time – 3 hours

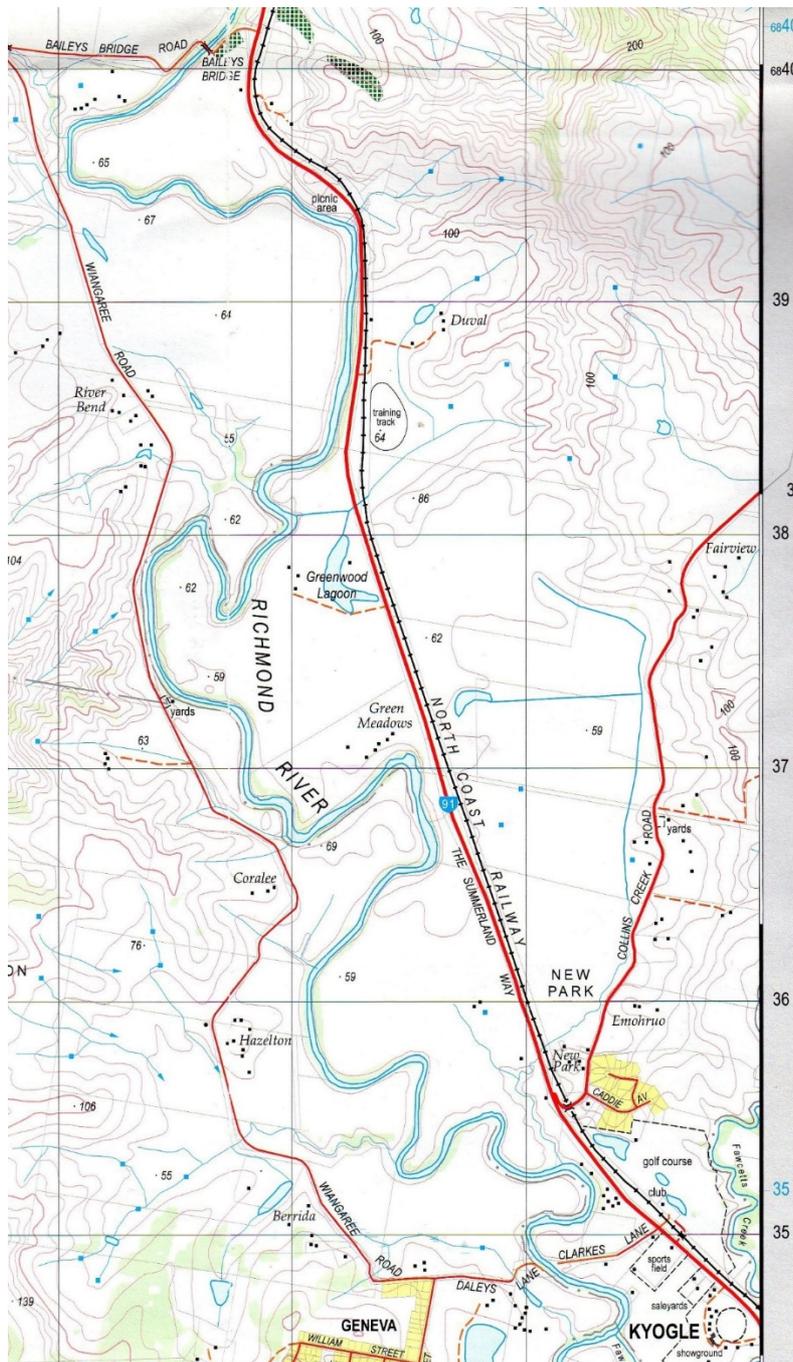


- Bailey’s bridge – Kyogle weir

Baileys Bridge is a difficult entry point due to steep banks. The exit at the weir is also difficult due to limited places to exit. Craft need to be careful to stay away from the spill way. Alternative exit is Clark’s lane.

Map – Afterlee – Baileys bridge – GR E976 N401. Kyogle weir – GR E994 N347. Clark’s lane – GR E991 N348

Distance – 11km time 3 hours

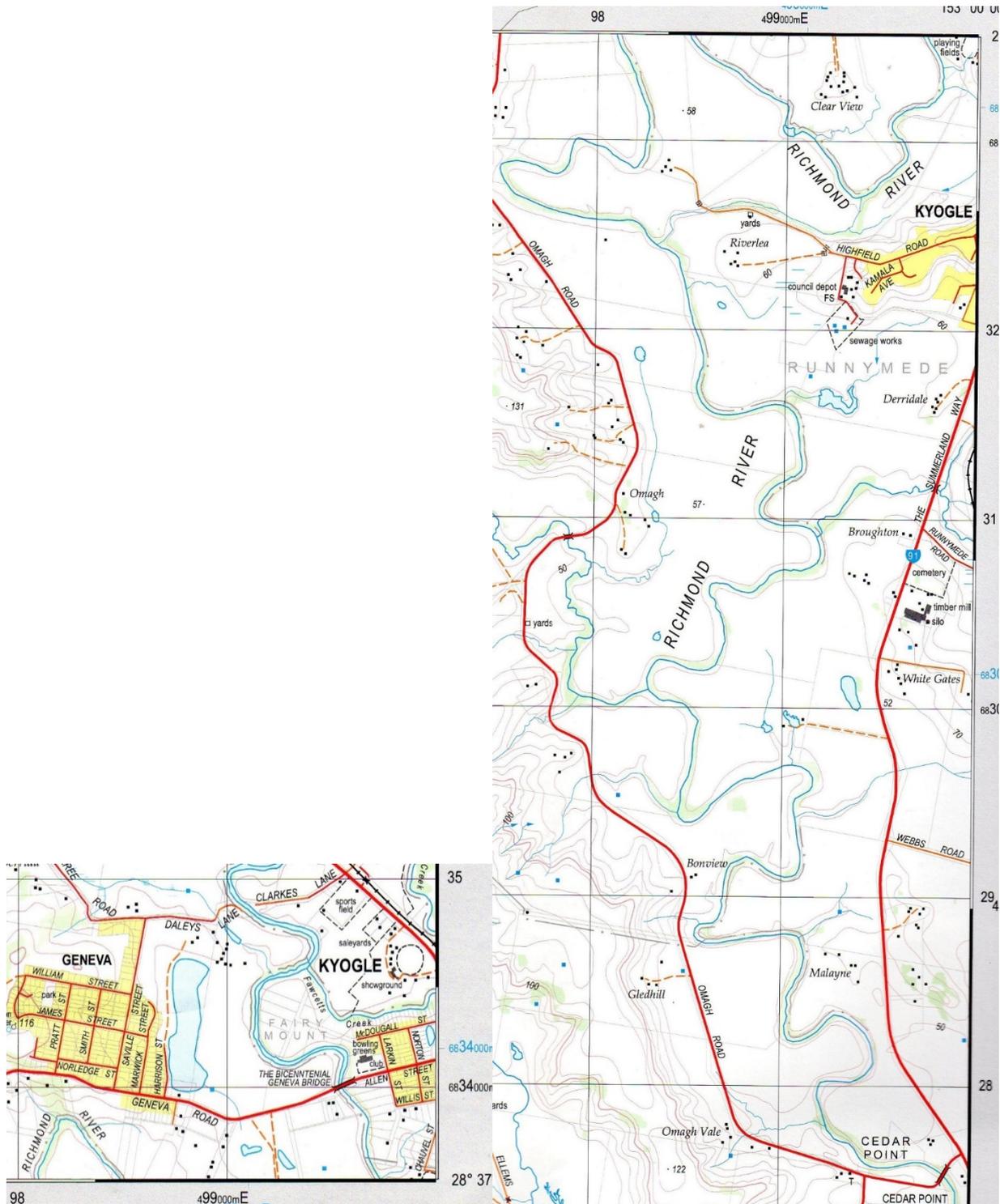


- Kyogle weir – Omagh road bridge Cedar Point

Entry point is below the weir. Exit point at the Omagh road bridge Cedar Point. This section has a number of portages if the water level is low

Map – Afterlee, Etrick – Kyogle weir GR E994 N347. Omagh Rd bridge GR E999 N275

Distance 17km. Time – 4 hours

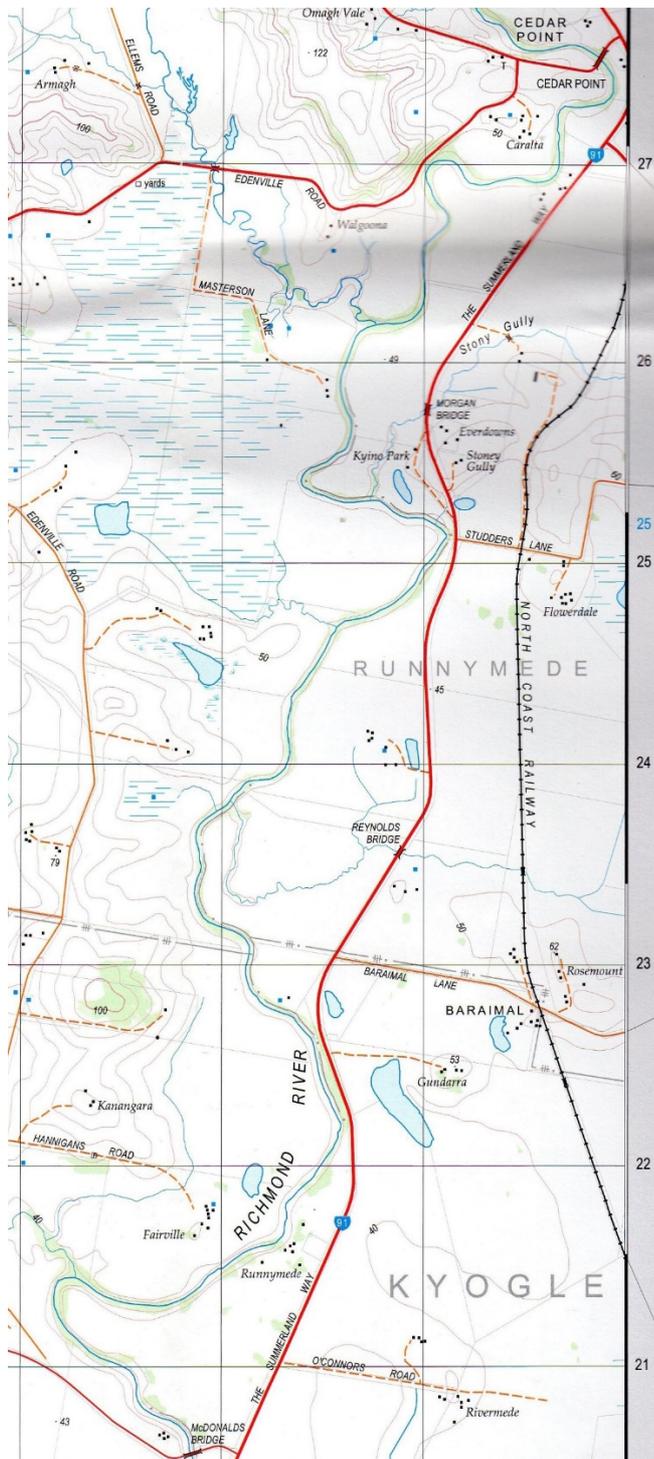


- Omagh road bridge – McDonalds bridge

Entry point Omagh road bridge Cedar Point. Exit point McDonalds Bridge

Map – Ettrick – Omagh road bridge GR E999 N275. McDonalds Bridge GR E979 N206

Distance 11.5 km. time 3 hours

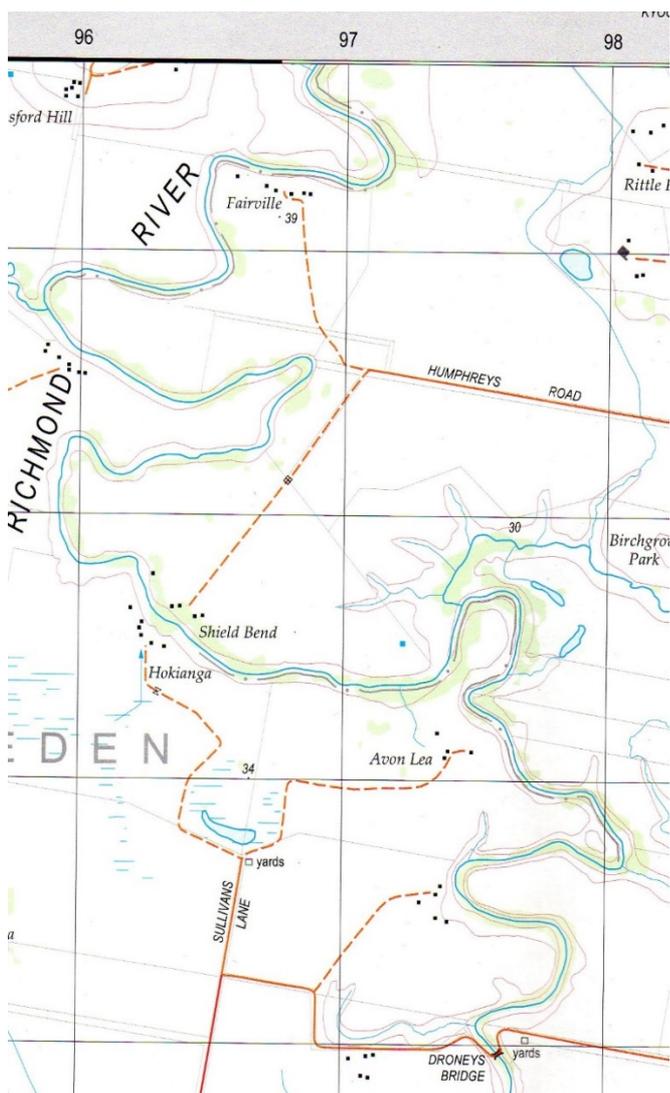
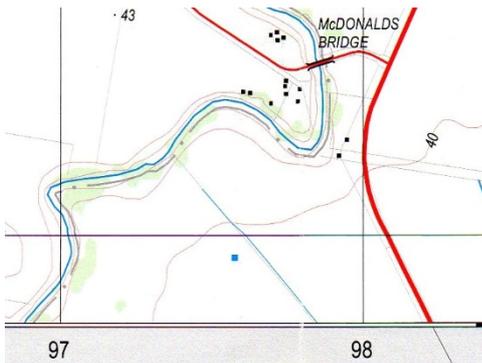


- McDonalds bridge – Droneys bridge

Entry point McDonalds Bridge. Exit point Droneys Bridge – both steep entry and exit.

Map – Ettrick, Mummulgum. McDonalds Bridge – GR E979 N206. Droneys Bridge – GR E976 N160

Distance – 12km. Time – 3 hours

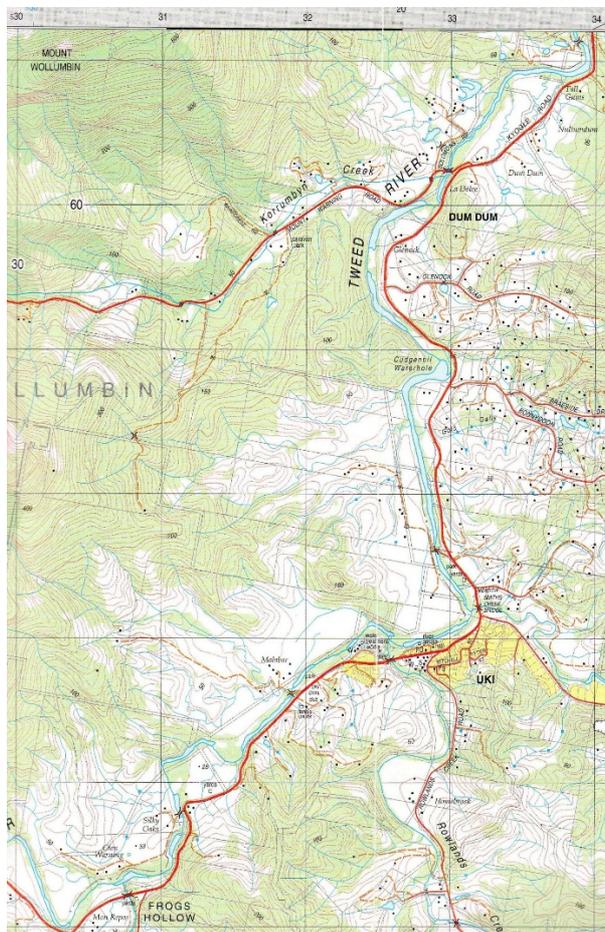
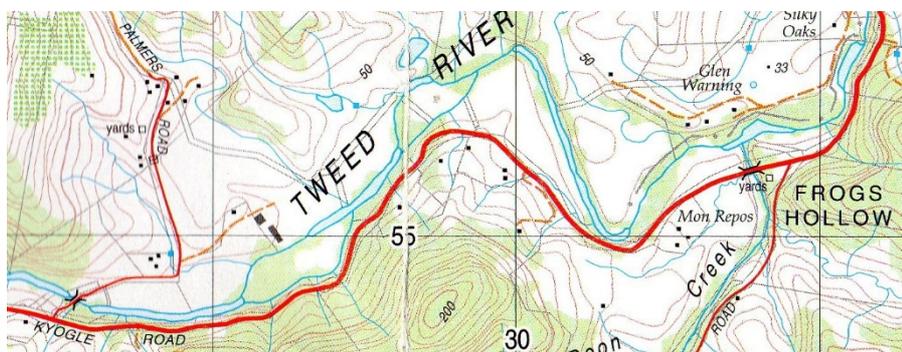


## Tweed River, Uki

Entry point Palmers road exit point Mount Warning road or unnamed road near DumDum.

This paddle is only viable after rain when there is a reasonable flow in the Tweed. More suited to experienced paddlers as there is a section of grade 1 white water after heavy rain.

Map – Burringbar. Palmers Rd GR E285 N548, Mount Warning Rd GR E330 N602, unnamed road GR E339 N612

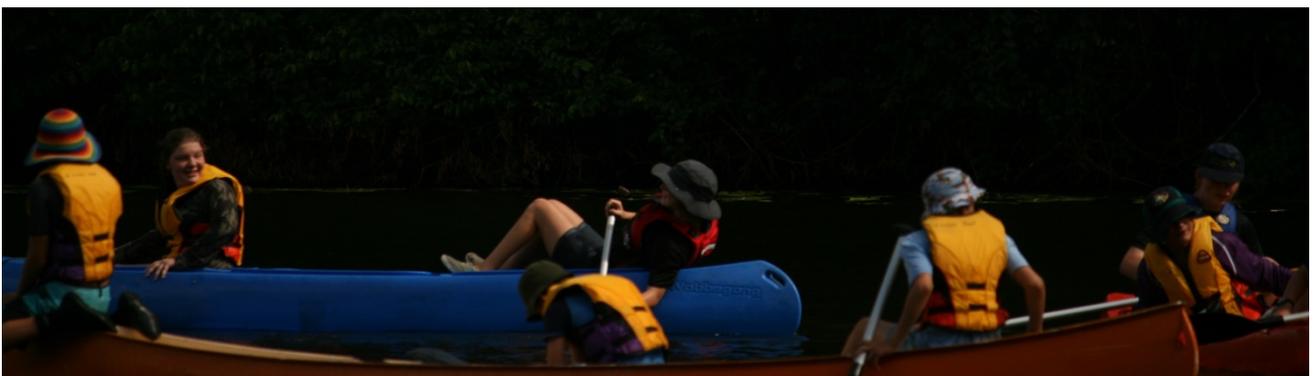


## Other north coast rivers and creeks

There are many other rivers and creeks that can be paddled in the northern rivers district lots suitable for scouts and venturers to paddle some are not suitable, lots only after rain or there will be too much portage encountered. On the other hand many can turn into dangerous torrents full of debris after heavy rain, if contemplating paddling a creek that needs rain to flow it is best to go when the water is falling not rising. The best policy is to investigate any possible paddles well before entering the water. Local knowledge and topographic maps are a must, look for entry and exit points and emergency exits along the route. Also bear in mind many north coast creeks have wire fences across them which can be very hard to see as you approach.

Some other water courses worth investigating, some I have paddled some by other scout leaders –

Lower Tweed River, Rous River, Oxley River, Cudgen Lake and creek, Mooball Creek, Wilsons River, Byron Creek, Coopers Creek, lower Richmond River, Esk River, Clarence River and all its tributaries.



With confidence comes maybe too much comfortable!