

Project 2004

Flooded Stonecliffe Village Site

Many farms and depots and a few villages were flooded in the mid-1950's when the hydroelectric dam at Rapides des Joachims was constructed. We are fortunate to have topographic maps of this area before the dam was built. These maps show numerous dive sites, including larger features like the Mackey Railroad Bridge (300' long, in 60' of water - if it's still there), the Village of Mackey (in 70 to 90' of water), the Dumoine Depot (90'), and the lower and upper parts of the Village of Stonecliffe. With the upper village being in 18 to 25' of water, this site is an easy and interesting dive. This site hosts the remains of several buildings, such as the church (relocated to a site on the highway in the new village) and a railway station (see sketch). Since the prep work for the reservoir involved relocating the buildings that would be flooded, the remains are just building foundations, and brickwork. Still, with photographic records of the upper village available, its an interesting exercise to examine the remains while recalling images of the buildings and imagining the daily activities that took place in what's now an underwater world.

This site has been partially "developed" in that a guide line has been laid on the bottom (by the Petawawa club) that starts in shallow water near shore and leads you directly to the front steps of the church. As you swim along the line, your eyes gradually adjust to the increasing darkness, so swimming along the line is a pleasant way to access the site. A fork in the line occurs close to the church, with the second line leading to the neighboring railroad station. If you carry out compass traverses off the guide lines (i.e., swimming parallel to shore back and forth), you'll find the remains of other smaller buildings, cut off telephone poles, a well box (or outhouse), and a wooden fence. What would be worthwhile to do in further developing the site is install signs identifying the church and railway station, and install another guide line that starts at the church and leads to the neighboring general store, and the Tait residence (with signs). Additional lines could be installed, leading to other buildings in the 25' to 35' depth range. Mapping of the site based on photographic records and visual observations would also be useful - there are many areas at this site where there is considerable material such as bottles, plates, cups, shoes (back yard dumps).