

January 15, 2011

A large, enthusiastic group met at Dave and Eleanor Clark's beautiful home in Montfort to launch the Saturday touring season. Given the thin snow cover, leader Dave opted for a lakes tour which took us to the end of lac Saint-Fran ois-Xavier, up and over a beaver dam into Mud Lake, then up a steeper incline that led to Lac Victor. There we admired the lakefront homes, including one belonging to a member of the rock band, Rush.

Pressing on, we reached the end of the lake and took what shelter we could find to eat snacks or lunches. By now the wind seemed to be picking up and it was clear that our return journey would mean skiing into the wind and blowing snow. Dave had offered the option of looking for a trail off the end of Lac Victor that would take us through the woods and over a road to Lac Cyr, reported to be a mere 500 metres away.

The wise members of the group (and that meant all but four of us) opted to forego this temptation to explore, and set off to retrace their tracks. The "unwise" quartet did make a valiant attempt but were thwarted by heavy undergrowth (what, no trail clearing there?) and at least one of us breaking through the ice on a stream. At that point, our better judgement kicked in and we struggled out of the bush and back onto the lake for the return journey. Skiing into the blowing snow was a challenge, with more clothing, mitts and hand warmers being added. The quartet did make one good decision: to avoid the route the main group had taken over Mud Lake, the beaver dam, etc. and take what later became named "Barney's Diversion" – a pleasant, snow-covered, out-of-the-wind, hilly trail that brought us out at the end of lac Saint-Fran ois-Xavier.

Then it was back to the Clarks, where wonderful hospitality, two kinds of delicious hot soup and an array of goodies awaited. Many thanks to Dave and Eleanor for an excellent first tour. The bar is set high!