

NOTE: the DRUC assumes NO responsibility, direct or implied, for the safety of diving at this site using this information.€ The information in this report presents general information on conditions and certain known hazards, but conditions are variable and other hazards may exist from time to time.€ It is every diver's own/personal responsibility to ensure that the conditions are adequately safe with respect to his/her training and experience – THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT YOUR OWN RISK!

Dive Report¹ – Petawawa River Pool (Town of Petawawa)

The “Petawawa River Pool” site is an excellent dive site – one of the best sites in the Upper Ottawa Valley, and is well worth diving there numerous times to investigate different part of the pools and different species of fish that congregate there during different times of the year. Access is easy (excellent), and underwater conditions are often excellent (but variable). There are diving hazards that exist at this site, namely boats and strong current, but both are manageable by choosing at the time whether the conditions are right for you. Overall, I'd rank this site 8 out of 10.

Attractions

Clean/clear water, warm water early in summer, very little silt, interesting artefacts, fishing lures, clay wall that you can write messages in, numerous species of fish, variable terrain.

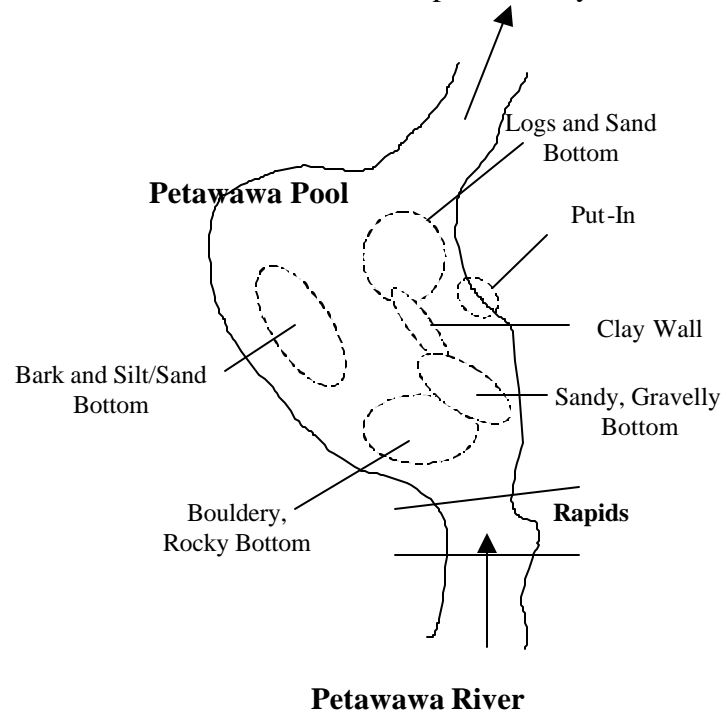
Site Overview

The site is the pool below the last set of rapids in the Petawawa River (next to the golf course, but accessed via North Street opposite the golf course). The map below outlines the locations of the main features of the site. The maximum depth of the pool is about 35 feet, but the most interesting diving is in the 10 to 20 feet depth range. At the point of access there's a shallow platform that extends roughly 40 m from shore (4 to 6' deep). At the edge of this platform (the first drop off) is where the clay wall is located (3 to 6' high). From this wall, swimming upstream will take you across a washed sandy terrain, then gravelly, then bouldery and rocky, as you approach the base of the rapids. The river current at times is highly variable – surges occur at times that not only increase the water velocity, but direction (discussed below). If, from the clay wall, you swim downstream, you'll encounter a tangle of logs over a washed sandy bottom. Among the logs are many fish, and lost fishing lures. The far side of the pool has a darker bottom that varies between rocky, sandy and bark-covered (from decades of logging activity on the river). This is also where you'll find dozens of golf balls from the neighboring golf course.

VIS is dependent on depth. In the middle of the pool at the bottom (35') the darkness results in greatly reduced VIS - <5', but with lights this can be extended to ~10'. In shallower water (10 to 15') there's enough ambient light to see, and VIS is more like 15'. There are times when the VIS is greatly reduced (<5' at shallow depths), such as after a period of heavy rain when bank erosion and possibly the flushing of the town storm sewer system deposits sediments to the river. In the spring time VIS is also reduce because of suspended particulate, but VIS is not nearly as badly as after a heavy rain.

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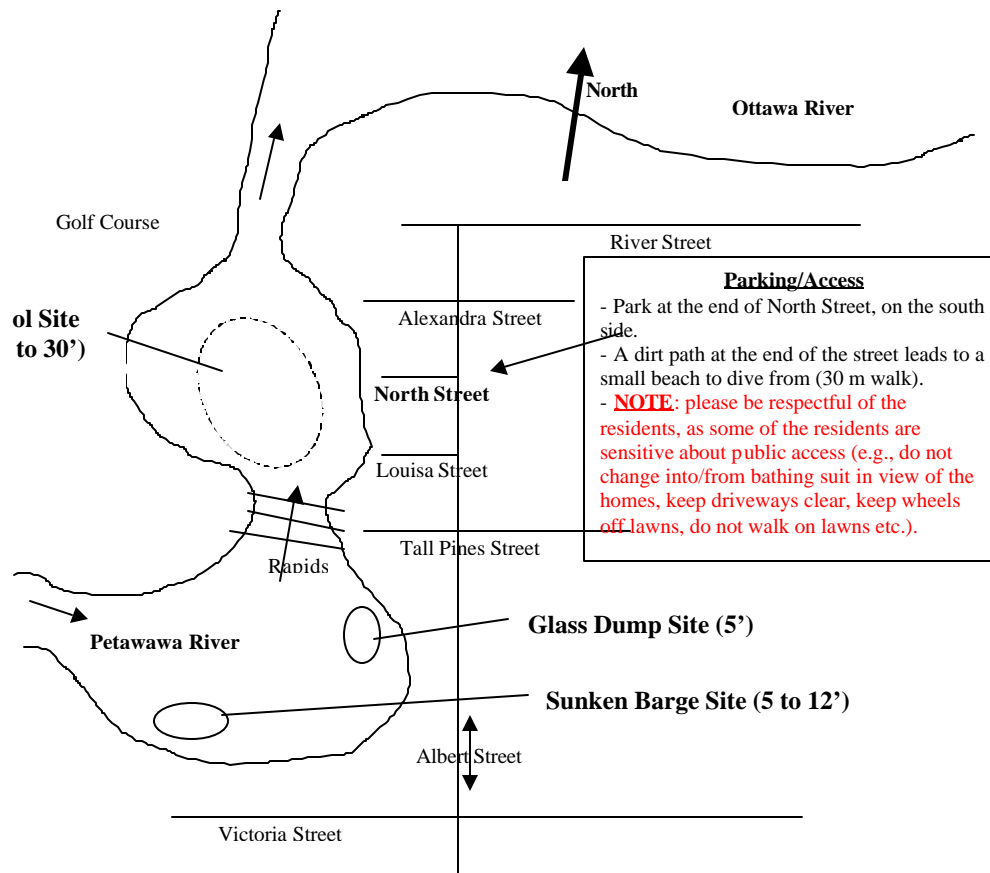
Being a pool in a decent-sized river, there is never a thermocline at the site. And being a river, the water is self-cleaning in terms of silting. But, this natural feature only works if you swim upstream and there are no other divers upstream of you.



Dive Site Sketch – Petawawa River Pool

Access

Access to this site is excellent. As shown on the map below, the site is located off North Street within the Village. There's a small gravel parking area at the end of North Street, then a short haul (30 m) along a path to a small beach on the shore of the river. As indicated on the map, particular care must be taken at this site to be respectful of the residents and their properties, e.g., do not change into/from bathing suits in view of the homes, keep driveways clear, keep wheels off lawns, do not walk on lawns, etc. The access, as described, is public (the right of way for the street extends to the river bank), but the small beach is in plain view of the neighboring residences.



Access Sketch – Petawawa River Pool

Hazards (refer to footnote 1)

Current and surges – Watch for surges (the river current at times is highly variable), which occur randomly. The surges are not only sudden increases in water velocity, but *also direction*. The best tactic is to grab onto a rock or log and wait for the surge to subside (less than a minute). But, if there’s nothing to hang onto, the surge can push you downstream or towards the bottom of the pool. These surges can be a cause of separation of the buddy pairs, so be sure to discuss your “lost buddy procedure” before entering the water. The current can also gradually push out towards the Ottawa River, so periodically check your position in to pool by surfacing.

Boats – the dive site is also a popular fishing site, so watch for overhead hazards and fishing rigs.

Recommendations

1. **Check your compass bearings before the dive and monitor your position using your compass:** within the pool, downstream is not always downriver, because of the surges.

2. **Check your position:** also related to the surges – you'll be surprised where you can end up in the pool, and what's displeasing is realizing that you've been blown from the pool (resulting in the need to walk upstream along the river bank).
3. **Do not dive after a heavy rainfall event:** after a heavy rainfall event the VIS rapidly drops to near-zero, for whatever reason (storm sewers for the town drain into the river?).
4. **Be *ultra respectful* of neighboring residents and their properties:** the access, as described, is public, but the small beach is in plain view of the neighboring residences, e.g., do not change into/from bathing suits in view of the homes, keep driveways clear, keep wheels off lawns, do not walk on lawns, etc.