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New Brunswick delivers on its promise of an outdoor playground second to none with cottage getaways, beautiful beaches and ziplining adventures.



Lakeway Houseboat Vacations



Fredericton Tourism

# Magic Moments at *Mactaquac*

A ton of fun and a great bonding experience – all in one place by Dale Dunlop



Fredericton Tourism

Last fall, just before returning to his diesel mechanics course in Vancouver, my 23-year-old son decided he wanted to spend his last weekend in Atlantic Canada with his old man. With limited time, we looked for a place that could provide a wide variety of outdoor activities in a small geographical area at a reasonable price. It didn't take long to settle on Mactaquac Provincial Park, just outside of Fredericton.

Just over 50 years ago, the New Brunswick government came up with a plan to dam the mighty St. John River at a point about 15 kilometres north of the capital city. Although hundreds of jobs would be created and a tremendous amount of electricity generated, there was a catch—the impoundment created by the dam would flood out several small villages and many farms.

To make it up to New Brunswickers, the government promised to build an outdoor playground second to none on the shores of the rising reservoir, and it was true to its word. Mactaquac Provincial Park's location

in the heart of New Brunswick makes it easily accessible from anywhere in the Maritimes, and from Quebec and New England.

Much of what Mactaquac has to offer is built around water-related activities. There are two marinas; one for powerboats and a second for sailboats. For those interested in vacationing right on the water, houseboat rentals are available at the power marina from Lakeway Houseboat Vacations ([lakewayhouseboats.com](http://lakewayhouseboats.com)). Between the two marinas is one of the finest freshwater beaches in Atlantic Canada.

There's also the fishing. New Brunswick is justly famous for its Atlantic salmon-fishing areas, and the St. John River is equally famous for the variety of other fish species found within its waters; it is the only muskie habitat in Atlantic Canada. In addition to providing excellent small-mouthed bass fishing, the river hosts one of the few healthy Atlantic sturgeon populations in the world. Some of the best spots are found below the Mactaquac Dam.



# Town of Woodstock

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Settled on the banks of the Meduxnekeag and St. John Rivers at the intersection of the Trans Canada Highway and the I-95, Woodstock is one of the major commercial hubs in the St. John River Valley. Stroll Victorian homes, riverbank trails, and numerous unique shops, reflecting Woodstock's rich heritage and tradition.

## Places to Visit

Hon. Charles Connell House  
L.P. Fisher Public Library  
Old Carleton County Courthouse  
Woodstock Historical Walking Tour  
Woodstock Farm Market  
The Meduxnekeag Valley Nature Preserve

## Annual Events 2011

NB Pro Bass Tournament ~ May 14  
Canada Day Celebrations ~ July 1  
Old Home Week ~ July 30 - August 6  
Miss New Brunswick ~ August 2  
Dooryard Arts Festival ~ August 10-13  
NB Sportfishing Association Tournament ~  
September 3 & 4  
Victoria Christmas ~ November 18 - December 20



824 Main Street, Woodstock, NB E7M 2E8  
Tel: 506-325-4600 ~ 1-866-843-9748  
[www.town.woodstock.nb.ca](http://www.town.woodstock.nb.ca)



From top left: plenty to keep you entertained—Mactaquac Provincial Park is home to a surprisingly challenging public golf course, several nature trails, houseboat rentals and two marinas.

However, it was not the water, but the land that drew my son and me to choose Mactaquac for our weekend getaway. Since the day it opened in 1970, Mactaquac Golf Club ([mactaquacgolf.com](http://mactaquacgolf.com)) has been a magnet for golfers of all abilities. As a public facility, Mactaquac has neither the stuffiness of some private clubs nor the pretensions of some resort courses. Golfers warming up on the driving range have a panoramic view of the Mactaquac Dam, and things just get better from there.

This course is famous for two things—enormous greens and equally enormous bunkers. The fairways are generously wide, allowing an opportunity to skirt the bunkers with a good second shot. If the bunkers do come into play, the sand is very fine, making for an easy exit. There are a lot of doglegs, some of which offer great birdie opportunities for long hitters. Once on the green, there might be a putt of white-knuckle length on grass that is usually lightning fast.

At over 6,400 yards from the white tees, Mactaquac is long by conventional standards, but the course is a fair test of golf skills on well-maintained fairways and greens. It is a frequent host of the New Brunswick men's amateur golf tournament. As a bonus, a deer sighting is almost a certainty.

My son and I had come with one other experience in mind, and after a day of golf, it was time for something a little more exhilarating: TreeGO ([treegomactaquac.ca](http://treegomactaquac.ca)). Opened in 2008, TreeGO is Mactaquac's newest attraction, and certainly its most frenetic. While many people are familiar with ziplining, TreeGO takes the experience to a whole new level that includes Tarzan-like swinging from tree to tree, tightrope walking four stories up with no net, and rope suspension bridges.





Fredericton Tourism



Lakeway Houseboat Vacations

The TreeGO course stretches up and over a steep ravine that becomes an inlet of the Mactaquac impoundment. All told, there are 72 ladders and platforms to traverse in just about every manner imaginable. Participants check in at the small trailer that is the TreeGO headquarters and, after filling out a waiver form, are provided with a harness that fits between the legs and buckles at the waist. The harness has three carabiners, which are safety clips. Two are to be attached to an overhead wire and the third is for ziplining.

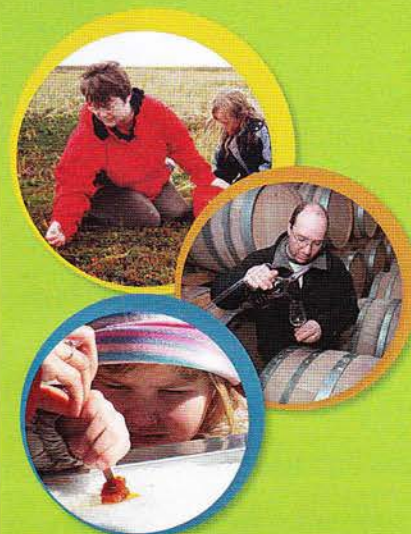
After a quick safety check by a guide, it's off to the demonstration area, where the proper use of the equipment is reviewed. Visitors are shown how to climb the ladders and traverse a zipline; they are then given a chance to fall back in mid-air to gain confidence that the line will not break. After that, they are on their own. The guides make it clear that it is up to each individual to figure out how to get from one platform to another, and that there will be no assistance if they simply freeze up in terror. There must be a real emergency in order to be rescued.

TreeGO is divided into four types of platforms with challenges of increasing difficulty. Participants can choose to exit after the third section. I'll be honest: it was a lot harder than it looked. A freely swinging log is extremely difficult to maintain one's balance on, and I was constantly holding onto the overhead wire with two hands, in effect holding my entire weight up.

After traversing tightropes, ladder suspension bridges that rocked crazily and finally a welcome zipline, I was exhausted, and my son was ecstatic. TreeGO was an adventure that was worth every penny, but it is definitely not for the faint of heart or the weak of limb. 🐾

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