

**Algonquin Provincial Park;
Access 17; Shall Lake, McKaskill Lake, Dickson Lake, Lake
Lavielle, Dickson Lake, Booth Lake, Farm Lake Loop.**



Participants: Janice and Bill

Total Distance: 104 km with 21,380m in 21 portages.

Fri. Sept. 15/06: *Janice:* We left Clinton around 4pm and were in Whitney at 10:30pm. We saw a fox as we travelled through Algonquin Park. The fog set in and it was a long drive!

Sat. Sept. 16/06: 13 km, 4,735m in 6 portages. We stayed overnight in Whitney, had breakfast and then headed to the Shaw Lake Access#17. After we signed in and received our permits we loaded the canoe and left at 9:40. The put-in is actually between Farm Lake and Crotch Lake. We headed easterly under the bridge towards Crotch Lake. It was busy with some canoeing activity and we were happy to leave it behind. The lake is clear as glass and the scenery is very nice. We reached our 1050m portage and set things ready. As we started the portage a fellow canoed up. The creek was flowing into Crotch Lake and we wondered if we should try to tackle it, but we didn't. We planned on a 1 ½ carry, but ended up doing a 2 carry because we were at the end before we knew it. This portage is wide and flat. We had a short paddle through Shirley to the 515m portage. The guy portaging behind us is camping here; nice lake. The site by the portage was level and very spacious. After another fairly flat portage we entered into Ryan Lake and zipped over to the last island site at the east end. We had ¾'s of an hour here with lunch at 12:30; big site, nice. We started the 230 portage and noticed that the portages are not quite as big as city streets any more. Big Red was a nice little lake, no campsites. The 545m portage to Shrew was a little rougher. The campsite on Shrew looks like a nice one from the lake; we paddled around a bit and then started the 2355m portage. We did the last two portages in a 1 ½ carry. The 2355m portage was quite a mix of things. It had lots of roller coaster hills, wide smooth flat areas, and we skirted the edge of hills. I am tired after this one, but we still have to do the 40m carry after the little pond. It was easy though. We had a gorp break here and pumped water in McKaskill Lake. It has been hot and the mosquitoes crazy. We finally resorted to bug spray and nets on the 2355m portage. That's wild for Sept, isn't it? There is very little wind and the lake smooth. We are camped at the right shore point before the big island. We could see the ranger cabin as we came in, but we didn't bother stopping. This site is large and spacious; lots of room

for tents, it has a picnic table, and there are very few people on the lake. I saw a striped salamander the colour of a garter snake when I was brushing my teeth.

Sun, Sept. 17/06: 9 km, 4,805m in 3 portages. *Bill:* Janice heard a beaver slap its tail before we went to sleep last night. We slept really good and got up at 6:45am. We were on the water at 9 am and finished our 1st 430m portage to Hidden Lake by 10 am. The next 1550m portage to Fairy Lake we had finished by 12:30 and we had lunch there overlooking the water. The longest portage for the day was 2825m to Animoosh Lake. We started it at 1:15 and finished at the campsite where we stayed at 4:30pm. Towards the end of it we had to canoe across a marshy area in front of a beaver dam. We tried to see if we could get to the lake by water, but it was a dead end. All of the portages were relatively flat with a few hills and wet spots, but none were killer hills. There are lots of big trees in this area which is nice to see that they have not been cut down yet. We were as tired as we were yesterday, but with a few more aches and pains. Janice is having trouble with blisters on her one foot and both our feet are sore on the bottom. We have a nice sandy beach at our campsite, so we walked in the water to sooth our feet and rinsed the sweat off our bodies. It was a cloudy day with the sun breaking through a few times. We had a good noodle meal with tuna and chocolate mousse for dessert. That mousse was the only one I've seen so far, but we've seen lots of moose tracks. There is a smelly critter around here somewhere, because we keep getting a whiff of it. We are in the tent at 8:30pm after doing all the chores.

Mon. Sept. 18/06: 12 km, 1,310m in 2 portages. *Janice:* I slept a long sleep and we woke to an overcast hazy day. We left our sandy beach campsite at 9:15. We paddled across Animoosh Lake and decided that we were glad we picked the site we did, just for the beach alone. The 1220m portage was fairly level with some boardwalks and lots of roots, rocky, and flat spots. We had a small break at the end and loaded up and headed across Cisco Bay. We started the day with no wind, but it is trying to blow now. All of the sites we looked at from the canoe look big and open. We had lunch at the site on Dickson Lake where the red pines are very old. We put on our rain gear and sat in the bush to avoid the rain. This site has some pretty big old hemlocks and white pine. Bill took my picture standing inside of a hollow tree trunk. There were some big blown down trees. After lunch we headed north to do the easy 90m portage into Hardy Bay (complete with 3 docks). We checked out the first 2 sites in the narrows and decided to carry on. The left one was too open for the wind and the right had some big old birch trees that we didn't want to set our tent under. We went to go to the next site on the left and found a sign on it saying "Site closed". There were a **lot** of trees fallen across the whole campsite. We carried on to the island and decided to camp on the southern end of it at 3pm. The campsite sign is hard to see because it is on a pine tucked inside the opening. It has rained all afternoon and we are sitting under the tarp thinking about doing dishes and getting our stuff into our wet tent. A loon has stopped by and we tried to get his picture. Well, I better get moving, it's dark early.

Bill: At 7:15 we saw 2 canoes with 2 people each go by in the rain as it was getting darker and I don't think they even saw this site. There is a site at the north end of this island, but they will be setting up in the dark and rain.

Tues. Sept. 19/06: 15km, 290m in 1 portage. *Janice:* I woke in the night and noticed how dark it was, black as black could be! At 5am I awoke to the loon calling and a barred owl hooting. Nice.

Bill: Got up at 6:45 and packed up our gear. The tarp and tent were still soaked, but it wasn't raining anymore. We left the site at 9:15am and headed north. Janice thought she saw someone in the bush at the far end of our island, so that must be where the 4 people ended up last night. When we hit the larger part of Lake Lavieille Janice put up the ground sheet to use as a sail till we hit the narrows that lead to Lake Lavieille Dam. We did the 185m portage to Crow River past the dam. We decided not to go any further because the pesky black flies were in our face. Janice took pictures of the river and I found the thunderbox down a trail to the right. We went back and paddled in front of the dam. It looked to be built up with rocks and then had a level cement curb along the top. Behind the cement were wooden slats like a boardwalk tilted slightly down so that the water fell through like a sieve. We went back to Lake Lavieille, all the way fighting a head-wind and fine rain. We had lunch on the point to the east of the large island and considered camping there. Someone had lots of time here and had carved 2 figures out of tree trunks. The site was open to the cold wind coming off the lake and every nice tent spot had a tree that looked like it would fall on it. We decided to fight the wind and waves and go over to the large island. We went around the east side of it and up the north side. We couldn't find the campsite at the west end of it, but the site on the little island is there with a couple on it. We asked them if someone was on the island to the north and they didn't think so. They said we could stay if we didn't want to cross the lake, but we said we would be fine and kidded them that they could come and save us if we tipped. We are at the site at 2pm and the first thing we did was set up the tarp by the kitchen to block the wind. We had a nice afternoon and planned the direction we will go tomorrow to get to Crow Bay. With night time coming we got all the chores done and optimistically took down the tarp so we can cross the lake earlier tomorrow. We watched the fading light over the lake and a few stars that got covered up by clouds. We are in the tent at 8:20pm and can hear the wind picking up again.

Wed. Sept. 20/06: 9 km, no portages. *Janice:* We loaded up and are on the water at 9:15am. It was cold, 10 degrees in our vestibule this morning and has started what looks like an all day misty rain. We have a strong north wind and the waves are whipping up already. We plan on crossing Lake Lavieille and heading into Crow Bay. It took us ½ hour to cross and we were happy to enter the quiet water close to Crow Bay. There are lots of campsites at the narrows and the water was calm in the first section. We met 2 canoes here; 3 Texans and a Canadian who had gained a Texan accent. He said he was the only one in Texas that said "yah-all-eh". We paddled down to the open span of Crow Bay and stopped at the campsite on the north side. It was a nice site, but the temperature had dropped to 8 degrees and the wind was roaring through the site. It was rainy misty rotten weather. Since the wind was blowing in our faces we decided to head back and camp at one of the sites before the large body of Lake Lavieille. We are on the site to the north of the island, the site with a large rock front. There is a site on Lake Lavieille directly behind us. Bill set up the tarp to the southwest and we are very protected from the wind. I like it a lot! We set up, made bannock and had an enjoyable afternoon. We didn't see a single person for the rest of the day. We had funny weather, all afternoon it would lightly rain every once in a while. It was odd because the dark clouds were not above us when it rained and occasionally the sun would be out, but there was no rainbow. It has been dark since about 7:30. We sat by the fire and are in the tent at 9 and boy its cold!

Thurs. Sept. 21/06: 15 km, 90m in 1 portage. *Bill:* We are up after a very cold night at 7am. The thermometer read 4 degrees under the fly. We had a special breakfast of stewed fruit with dumplings and were on the water at 10am. There were scattered clouds and the wind was already picking up. We went down the west side of Lake Lavieille with the canoe gently surfing the waves. We stopped for lunch at the site where the lake narrows before Hardy Bay; the site that was closed by the MNR. The large trees were blown down across the whole campsite. Glad we weren't around when that storm came through. We met 4 guys at the portage to Dickson Lake. They came in from Opeongo and are going to Lake Lavieille to fish for a few days. They had tons of gear and I asked them how they kept bears out of their coolers. The one guy answered that they haul them up by a rope over a limb. I didn't think they would do that with a cooler. We passed a couple in Dickson Lake that looked lost, the way they paddled across the lake and kept looking down and up as if they were comparing the map to the lake. We ended up at 2:15pm on the island site across from the 4895m portage that we have to do tomorrow. Janice set up the tent and I did the tarp because it looked like rain. It did rain and remained raining off and on for the rest of the day. The sun came out in the rain and we noticed a rainbow. Janice finally had a chance to wash her hair and she took it. I did mine too and had a shave also. There is a heron in the marsh in the bay across from us. We found a huge moose pooh on the island, so we will keep our eye out for a huge moose. As we went to bed we heard the loons and Canada geese calling out. It is 7:45 and we have to start using the flashlights. It gets dark early these days.

Fri. Sept. 22/06: 5.5 km, 4,895m in 1 portage. *Janice:* We had a great sleep last night. It was a nice level soft spot. We took our time doing our morning stuff and we were ready to leave at 10:30am, but before that I said to Bill that I was sure that I heard an ATV travelling in the bush in the direction of our portage trail. Anyway, just before we left camp 2 guys dressed in green (rangers I presume) hauled an aluminium boat out of the forest climbed in, pushed off and started to roar out into the lake. They noticed me, slowed down for a bit, waved and then took off. Well, I'd never have known that boat was tucked away in the bush in our little bay. I couldn't help but think of all the work it took us to get here and wouldn't you know it, in they drive. The portage is 4895m and wet and slippery. I've heard this portage dubbed "The mother-in-law". It took us some time to get our gear packed into 3 bunches; 2 big packs and 1 smaller one with the canoe, paddles in the canoe. The first couple of kilometres were the hardest. We carried up to the top of the hill in a 1 carry. That was too much and we decided to do a 1 ½ carry and shuttle across. There are 2 really steep drops to creeks and it was on the first one I decided I needed my paddle for a walking stick to help me down stuff like that, however it levelled out somewhat and life was better. We saw another red backed salamander on the way. The portage crosses 2 roads and there are markings to show you the right way. The bush opens up towards the Round Island Lake side and changes from hemlocks to maples with beech trees mixed in. It was great when we finally reached the end. We had lunch on the trail and snack at the put-in for Round Island Lake. We paddled to the point on the south end of the lake and we have a nice view of Round Island and the coloured trees on shore all around us. We finished the portage at 3:30, took our break and got to this site at 4:15pm. Bill made Tom Thompson bannock and upset another salamander in the fire-pit. There was no one on the portage and no one on this lake. There are lots of black flies and those funny light bulb flies here. It's been a long day in the bush, a little

too much bush to see at one time from the middle of it. Its 8:45 and we are enjoying a nice fire.

Sat. Sept. 23/06: 10 km, 4615m in 5 portages. *Bill:* We were up at 7:00am and listened to the rain, not wanting to get up to go out into it. By the time we packed up the stuff inside the tent it had slowed down to a steady drizzle. We were on the water at 10am. The first 4 portages from Round Island Lake to Mountain Lake 680m, to Marshy Lake 620m, to Presto Lake 730m, and to Chipmunk Lake 610m were pretty tough to walk. They were like dried up creek beds with mossy rocks and roots and slippery boardwalks and some good sized hills too. Half way on the portage from Marshy Lake to Presto Lake we had to go back and get the canoe before we could cross the 20ft of water which was Presto Creek. We had lunch at Presto Lake. We heard a squeaky clothes line bird that Janice said sounded like a red winged blackbird, but these had yellow wings when I saw them fly. Chipmunk Lake had a couple of red squirrels upset that we were there. The 5th portage was 1975m to Booth Lake was the easiest to do with a wide path to start and then a rocky section and then a wide path to the end. We walked past a marshy pond that should have had a moose in it, but we didn't see it. We walked past an old log cabin that only had about 4 feet of cedar logs left and trees were growing up inside it. The last time I picked up the canoe to portage it a salamander was in it and I flipped it out as the canoe swung up. We decided to set up camp at the end of the portage at 3:30pm. It was windy so we hung stuff out to dry and it also looked like it could rain, so I put up the tarp. There are a lot of mosquitoes and black flies here. It didn't rain, but we had a bit of drizzle when we went to bed.

Sun. Sept. 24/06: 8 km, 640m in 2 portages. *Janice:* Last night at dusk we heard a rustling of leaves and an animal was flushed out of the bush; it turned and tore back into the bush again! You could tell by the sound of the thudding of its feet it was going at full speed. It was about mid thigh to hip height. I couldn't identify it because it all happened so fast and there were no tracks. I lay awake listening to the rain last night. Later on in the night we had harder rain and thunder and lightening. We were up packing and dressing in the tent at 7am. The wind was blowing when Bill went out to start breakfast and while he was heating up the water the winds hit, fierce and gusty. We sat under the tarp and watched as branches blew like tumbleweeds. We could hear trees falling in the bush. CRACK!! It was something wild. I now understand why some of the camp signs and portage signs are torn or missing; those winds ripped most of our sign off the tree. We were very careful as to where we placed our tent and tarp because of all the blown down trees we encountered earlier. Our little tent stood firm and our tarp bowed, but held strong. We drank our coffee and walked down to the next site to see how they weathered the storm. They had lots of stories to tell and their larger dome tents did not like the wind. The winds eventually died down and the wild white capped Booth Lake settled down. We broke camp and left at 10:30. I'll have to be careful on the steps (this campsite has a big set of steps to the beach). I don't want to go for a ride on them like I did last night. The gravel on the steps is like walking on marbles and my feet slipped and I couldn't stop my downward momentum. We paddled the wavy lake to the end of the narrows where we caught up with a group of girls (3 canoes). I said to Bill, I thought that might be Sandy. I asked where they were from and sure enough she was there. They had stayed at the cabin at Tattler Lake. We did the wide easy 550m portage and chatted with Sandy and the girls. It began to rain again, so I kept the camera in the case. We paddled Kitty Lake and the

rapid into Farm Lake, thus avoiding the 90m portage. Our Algonquin map does not show the island in Farm Lake, but it does have a campsite shown where it should be. We were off the water at 12:30. We met another girl from London at the access. She was heading to the Tattler Lake cabin. I hope she has a good trip, we did. We checked out the visitor center and left the park and could not get a shower. All the hydro was out from Parry Sound to the east side of the park due to the storm. There were many trees down on hydro lines all along the highway and in the parks. We finally found a sink in Arrowhead Provincial Park with cold running water; they had no hydro either. We cleaned up as best as possible and headed for home.