

Algonquin; Smoke Lake, Big Porcupine, Bonnechere, Kirkwood, HarnessCache, Little Island, to Smoke Lake.



Participants: Bill and Janice.

Total Distance: 49.3 Km. with 6,300m in 13 portages.

Sat. July 31/04: 24.7 km, 1,265m in 5 portages. *Bill:* We left Madawaska Kanu Center early and went to the Canoe Lake Portage Store in Algonquin Park. I registered while Janice dealt with the runs. We had breakfast in the restaurant and then unloaded the canoe at Smoke Lake Access Point #6, which was straight across hwy. #60 on the road to Canoe Lake. We left the car behind at 10:10am. We had a long distance to go today because I couldn't book a lake closer in our circle route than Kirkwood Lake. We boogied down the calm lake through all the loons to the end and then checked out the rapids coming down the old log chute. There was a dam at the top after the portage which was a good climb before it leveled out. We passed the Ragged Lake Dam and carried on. We found the portage to Big Porcupine Lake at the end of the South Bay. Here was even a longer higher portage than the last one with logs laid down to terrace the hill into steps. We had lunch at the put-in to Big Porcupine. A group from Camp Arrowhon came along with 2 leaders and 7 girls about 10 or 11 years old. They had to carry barrels and packs that were too big for them. They could hardly stand, let alone walk with them. The 2 girl leaders also had huge packs and one carried the canoe with a pack, while the other carried 2 packs. I'm sure they have no problems sleeping at night. We canoed around the big point in the lake that we could have portaged 395m through. The 200m portage to Bonnechere Lake wasn't bad along with the 175m portage into Phipps Lake. There was a windy channel through a grass meadow. We lifted over the beaver dam with just me getting out and giving it a push. The portage to Kirkwood Lake was a short 60m and now we were in the lake we have to stay in tonight. There is a nice waterfall at the end of Kirkwood Lake. It's worth a picture. We passed by the island site because the site at the end of the lake looked promising. We made that our camp for the night at 4:50pm. We had to make a lot of stops for Janice today and she didn't feel good so I let her rest and set up camp and did supper and the dishes. We are in bed by 9pm.

Sun. Aug. 1/04: 9.8 km, 1895m in 3 portages. *Janice:* Today we slept in. I really needed that sleep and Bill worked hard yesterday. I'm feeling better today, but I still haven't shaken this bug. I don't know whether it was something I ate or something I caught. We left the camp site at 10:50am. We paddled east through the lily pads speckled yellow and white with flowers. We did the 715m into Pardee Lake. It had a nice easy trail with a slow steady grade down on the Pardee side. We met a family on this portage; man, wife and son. I heard him coming before I saw him, he was wearing bear bells. The 145m portage into Harness Lake was neat. We walked on a little board walk over a small creek. There were log jams on both sides of the boardwalk. We floated on Harness Lake and had a gorp type lunch break. The 1035m portage into Head Lake was extremely steep on the Head Lake side. Thank goodness we were heading the right way, downhill. I surprised a tiny little garter snake near the end of the portage. The start of Head Lake was a windy creek through a lake meadow. We rammed our way over 2 beaver dams. We were traveling the right way and we just pushed our way through them. Head Lake opened up and we checked all the campsites along the lake before we found one on the north end closest to the 1640m portage. This site is rustic and grassy. It doesn't have a lake front, but is more up in a meadow by

the bush. It is a mix of soft woods and hard woods. We had a good split pea soup and cooked bannock for lunch tomorrow. We saw a couple of guys trying to find a site at 6pm. They weren't having any luck. We did offer that we had lots of room, but they headed to the 290 portage to Kenneth Lake and we didn't see them again. We are in bed early to avoid the mosquitoes. The loons are calling.

Mon. Aug. 2/04: 14.8 km, 3140m in 5 portages. It's another nice day; three days of good weather! We were on the water at 8am. We paddled the short distance to the 1640m portage into Cache Lake. It is a good trail with lots of boardwalk to keep you out of the marshy areas. We found every time we stopped a whole wack of mosquitoes came to feast upon us. There are lots of fresh moose tracks and droppings along the trail. We paddled Cache Lake. It is busy with boats, motor boats and people. The river connecting Cache to Tanamakoon Lake was deep and wide enough for motor boats. We didn't meet any. We had a nice quiet paddle and a gorp break. Tanamakoon Lake was really where things became busy. We encountered groups of paddlers as well as a camp group. Those poor girls loaded up with packs as big as them to portage the 120m portage. At least the next 3 portages weren't too hard. The 120m into Sheriff Pond and 320m to Little Island Lake were pleasant walks. The 320m portage to Little Island Lake had 2 put-ins. We had lunch on a site on the island and then did the 225m portage to Kootchie Lake. We then got ready for the 835m portage into Smoke Lake. Kevin Callan is right, we are portaging this one in the right direction, downhill to Smoke Lake. Smoke Lake is choppy and we are lucky enough to be able to tack across to the dock. Lots of people have been wind-bound on Smoke Lake. There are many loons; a flock of about 16 or so. They were here on our way in as well. I wanted a picture, but now it is too choppy. We load up at 2:30pm and are off to Canoe Lake to have a much needed shower. We took our roylex canoe on this trip because we needed it for the MKC course we took just previous to entering the park. We did our portages in 1 1/2 trips, except the shorter ones and those we did in 2 trips. This canoe is too heavy to carry everything in one trip. The portages were all well trodden. The only moose we saw was the one along the highway on the way here. Nice trip, but fairly busy at times, but then again, it is the long weekend.