

Gibson-Mc Donald Canoe Route



Participants: Janice and Bill
Total distance 44 Km. 1.9 Km in portages.

We planned on canoeing Mc Ewen Lake of the Leslie M. Frost area but things changed.

Janice: April 10, 1998. Left home at 4:30 am. It was tough rolling out of bed so early but it's OK now. The rivers have been flooded up in the Haliburton area. We have an alternate route if the Black River is too high. It's still dark out but the moon is shining brightly through the hazy sky. Tomorrow night is the full moon. Breakfast at Cookstown 7:00 am, left at 7:30. It is now 11:57 am. Great egg salad sandwiches Bill! Boy! The lakes are still frozen east of Bracebridge and north of Minden. We stopped in Norland at an outfitters and a couple of stores. They have no books or information on tripping here. What to do? We are now traveling toward Georgian Bay on 503 (45).

Bill: We had a lesson on being flexible. Went to Six Mile Lake Camp and they were closed. Went to Oastler Lake Camp and they were closed. Ended up at the information center just south of Oastler Lake and they gave us a pamphlet for the Gibson-Mc Donald Canoe Route and we bought a top map of that area. We called Jay to tell of the change in plans and then we were all set. Left the access point off of Hwy. # 400 at Georgian Bay road at 3:00 pm, and portaged into Mc Donald Lake. Portaged 250m into Mc Crae L. There was a group of kids at the falls and that was the only people we saw. Made camp at the last site before Georgian Bay around 5:00 pm. It was a good thing we had a top map to go by or we would have been lost. Great chili supper and fruit punch surprise. It was a nice sunny day and now that the sun is going down at 8:00 pm, it is getting down right cold.

Janice: Nice camp site. Spacious.

April 11, 1998. We are up at 7:10 am. Bill dreamt, thought or imagined an animal was pushing up under his thermal rest. He said it could have been me though. There is frost on the tent and the ground. We had breakie, packed and left by 9:00 am. Since we were this far down Mc Crae L. we decided to do the trip opposite to most because the levels were so high.

Bill: We saw the shrine at the rapids we had to portage. Paddled past the cross on the right, which is falling apart. Paddled too far past Bone Is. and got into Brown Bay. Had to go back past Longuissa Point. Next time head for Blue Triangle roof. Had to line up the rapids and paddle against the current. The 25m portage was OK and the Three Rock Chute was beautiful. The portage around Three Rock Chute was hard to do due to the hilly, rocky terrain. The Musquash River was really thundering into the Gibson River and its current helped us go upstream. The 200m portage was difficult also because it was

hard to follow and was up and over a hill. It was time to look for a camp site and the first one we past on the north side was the best, so we came back to it. Saw an otter just before our camp site. Some people in a power boat scared him off. We were there at 4:30 pm. There is a cottage across the way and we watched somebody wade across the icy water to get a canoe to get the rest of the people and stuff. Brrr! There is a beaver dam behind us and we watched a large beaver work on it. Supper was great with a curry chicken and rice meal we made up. There is an owl calling "who cooks for you", while we are sitting by the nice warm fire we made tonight. The full moon is coming up and it might make us howl tonight.

Janice: April 12, 1998. Up at 6:45 am. It is warmer today. Had breakie, packed and checked out the beaver dam and lodge. The beavers have been busy already today. We watched two beavers working away. I have never heard a beaver until today. Left camp at 9:30 am. We are traveling against the current in little wind. The 10m portage before the bridge was easy since the water was high and we just paddled through. We arrived at the Hwy. # 400 bridge at 10:00. Have you ever paddled up river in an unnaturally narrow tunnel? Exhausting. Well we made it. Gibson L. is all cottages. We portaged the road into Hungry Creek and in a short distance had to lift over a beaver dam. There is another natural lift over a bit before the dam. It was a nice spot for a picnic and we had lunch here at 11:30. There is a nice camp site here and there are several campsites around the dam. Once again as the creek opens up there are cottages all around. The wind died down and it was what seemed unusually calm on the large Six Mile Lake. We used our compass here and stayed right on course. We portaged the 250m around the dam and falls. Paddled under the bridge of the #400 Hwy. and portaged the 250m from Mc Donald to Mc Crae L. and picked a nice campsite at the start of Mc Crae L. It is hot and the mosquitoes are out. We cleaned ourselves up and a kayak went by and then a canoe. The guy in the canoe asked if we fell in because our hair was wet. He said the people in the other site were swimming. We had heard their whooping and we told him that we warmed the water up and washed on land. Had spicy onion soup mix in our stew. Too hot! Could hardly eat it. Good thing we didn't add any other spices. We won't try that again. A weasel swam by. How wonderful!

April 13, 1998. We slept until 7:30am. The sun is shining through the tent. You can hear the highway and the falls from here. I guess if you want a more tranquil spot, you need to go farther down the river. The weasel is out playing in the water and the birds sound lovely. Time to get up. There are two beavers playing in the bay behind us and a muskrat or weasel slipped quickly away into the water. We had an enjoyable morning and left at 10:30 am. We paddled back to our takeout, packed and talked to the people who came in at the same time as us and are now leaving also. (The two guys are the ones that went swimming.) We went for a little walk and are on Hwy. # 400 (69) at 12:00, heading for home. I hope this sets a trend for the year in that we had no rain and it was sunny!

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