

## McKewen Lake and Black Lake Trip



Participants: Bill and Janice, Joe and John.  
Total Distance: 30 Km., 5,165m. in 16 portages.

Oct. 10, 1998. Janice: Left home at 4:10 am. We had breakfast at Cookstown. Arrived at Wren Lake just before 9:30 am. The road is newly paved and there is a new access point just north of the bridge on the east side with a path to Black River. We decided to go to Five Mile Bay access point on Raven Lake and put in there. We left at 10:00 am. The trees are beautifully coloured, and there is no wind. We stopped and had a gorp break on the campsite just before the dam going into Black River. Nice site. We portaged 85m. around the dam and went under the bridge to Wren Lake. We portaged 230m. around the falls and some rapids. We had lunch here. Very nice. We wound our way through the Upper Marsh to the next portage. There was a bridge here with snow mobile club signs on the trails. We met some four wheelers and one gentleman with two dogs showed Joe and John the trail. There are a number of four wheeler trails around here. We canoed the short jaunt over to the portage, which was a hill into Horse Lake. Gorgeous. The next portage was to McKewen Lake. The northeast site was taken and the other was too dark for this time of year, so we moved on to Dan Lake. We didn't have to portage into Dan Lake. There was a canoe trail just wide enough to paddle through. We camped on the west side of Dan Lake around 3:00pm. Nice lake and a good site.

Bill: We had a delicious spaghetti supper made from dried ingredients from scratch. We fished for a bit but didn't catch anything. We went to bed at 9:00pm. after sitting around the fire. Noticed the half moon in the clear sky in the night.

Oct. 11, 1998. Up at 7:15am. and made bannoch for breakfast. Joe liked his plain but we had ours with butter and syrup. We were on the water at 10:00am. and paddled through the dead tree portion of Dan Lake. There were bird boxes about 10 ft. up from the water. We did the 310m. portage into Margaret Lake and towed Joe and John towards the next portage while they had a gorp break. The 665m. portage into Three Island Lake was nice. We did the 450m. portage into McKewen Lake and had lunch at the put in at 12:30pm. The people were milling about at the campsite where we had wanted to stay the day before. We did the portage into Horse Lake and back down the hill to Lower Marsh. The wind and current pushed us down to the next portage. There is a nice falls and rapids going down to Black Lake which we portaged around. We had to do the 740m. portage because the water was low. Janice and I went off to get a camp site while Joe and John went back for their canoe. We got a site on the north side point and found a four wheel trail just behind it. When Joe and John came, John told us he got stung by a bee. The doctor had told him he wasn't allergic anymore. I would rather he didn't test it on a trip. He got a bit swelled up on his hand and that was it. Luckily we didn't have to end our trip. We are having soup and dumplings for our Thanksgiving dinner and it looks real good.

Janice: It was good! This is a large site with good tent spots. We had an evening fire and headed off to bed at 9:30pm.

Oct. 12, 1998. Happy Thanksgiving! We had a nice relaxed morning. I washed my hair with lake water. Was that cold! Bill seemed like he enjoyed pouring the water over my head and then commented that since I didn't look like I was enjoying it, he wouldn't bother doing his. I guess some people are tougher than others. We left camp at 10:15am. and checked out the island campsite. Too, too small for a campsite. We portaged back into Lower Marsh and then Upper Marsh, through Wren Lake and left John and Joe at Little Wren Lake to fish. We carried on to our put in point on Five Mile Bay. We took out at 2:00pm. and then drove back to get Joe and John. They were waiting in the parking lot and complained of no fish. It was a good trip, but I bet it is too busy in the summer. There are four wheeler trails everywhere. Once John and Joe got their portaging mastered, there was no keeping up to them. Way to go guys!

John's little quip: Canoeing is still a relatively new experience to me and I relish any chance to get out. The forest and water has a calming, natural quality that our worlds of concrete definitely lack. Fall is a nice time to go with colour splashed over distant hills and the giant northern rocks giving you a feeling of your small place in this large world. The challenge of pushing yourself through portages and wind gives a much better stress than that of work or school. To those experienced outdoors men, I envy you and I will always look forward to dipping my paddle in the cool clear water and to the gentle lap of waves on rocks to put me to sleep.

Bill: It was a good trip with great weather. The meals we had were really, really delicious and well worth the effort to dry and package our own food. Looking forward to the next trip.

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