

Mississaugi, Flack & Ten Mile Lake Loops

By Flack L, Ezma L, to Rodge L & Back Through Ten Mile L, Dollyberry L to Flack L.



Participants: Janice and Bill.

Total Distance: 57.5 km, including 10,780m in 23 portages.

Janice: Mon. July 9/01. I am waiting for Bill to take the van back to the Mississaugi Park office. Jim, the superintendent there, strongly suggested we do this and said someone would be there to give him a ride back. It'll be a long walk after our trip to go get the van (approx. 3 km). Not what we had planned. Bill left at 9:25 am. We are loaded and ready to go. We are trying a new day pack (a clear seal line bag with a strap we glued on) and I have a new paddle. Flack lake was as smooth as glass when we got here but the wind is getting up and it's starting to get choppy. There is one big beautiful mountain across from the bay (Old Baldy). This is part of the old Canadian Shield. Bill arrives back at 9:45 am and Jim the Park Ranger is going to have our van here waiting for us on Sunday. Cool.

Bill: We canoed over to the south side of the lake and followed the shore along. We saw the logging alligator wheel under the water. It was a nice view of Old Baldy Peak as we canoed along. We saw the old fire tower off to the right and took a picture to capture the memory of the two. We thought of Gerry who is going to climb up there for a closer look. We just used binoculars. The 490m portage to Bruce Lake was all up hill and very rocky with a small decent at the end. The 850m portage to Olympus Lake was also all uphill except for a little dip by a dried up creek bed and it was rocky too. We had our lunch here at 1pm. The 1100m portage to Astonish Lake was up hill at the start and then it levelled out to a small boggy area in the middle which was OK because it was all dried up. We arrived in a different place than what our Adventure Map says. They show it going to the middle bay on the east side, but we came out at the more northerly bay. It had a new portage sign on it and the one in the middle bay has a snowmobile trail sign saying 5 Miles to Laurentian Lodge. I bet if you take that trail you will be right through the middle of the bog. As we were heading to the next portage we saw three minks swimming across the narrow channel and then they ran along the shore for a bit. We did the 650m portage into Ezma Lake and it was fairly flat and wide like a cart trail. The 200m portage to Swamp Lake and the 265m portage to Upper Mace Lake were easy compared to what we had done and they were both down hill. We paddled to the west side of Upper Mace Lake against the wind to the campsite on the peninsula of land separating Secret Bay. We decided to camp to the right of the one marked because of the rock and better fire pit and flatter land to put our tent on. There is 2 sand beaches here and on the one to the north we saw where a moose had walked along before it headed back to Secret Bay. We haven't seen a person all day except for 2 fishing boats out on Flack Lake that were there when we arrived. It had been a sweltering hot day today (28-32 degrees C.) and we drank way more water than we usually do. Last week they had snow here and we think the black flies think it is spring again. The bugs were pretty bad and Janice forgot her bug jacket so she ended up wearing a wind jacket and her bug net with her hat. It was pretty hot for that. We had split pea soup with sausage for supper and hot chocolate and then tea for drinks. We got everything cleaned up and put away and then settled for a sponge bath because there were leaches in the water. We were in the tent at 9pm and then wrote in this log. There was a nice view of a red cloud to the east as the sun was setting in the west.

Janice: Tues. July 10/01. We didn't move until very late this morning. We had a hectic schedule before we left home and I think it has caught up to us. We were up at 8:00am, had breakie, packed up and walked to Secret Bay which is directly behind our campsite. We left our site at 10:00am. We thought

Upper Mace Lake was pretty but quite shallow. We canoed to the 220m portage into Lake Five. The portage is along a creek on flat rock. The put in at Lake Five was full of sharp rocks. There is a cabin high on the hill on the west side. An ominous sky is now chasing us across the lake. We decided to do the 370m portage into Lilypad Lake. It is a nice portage, high on a ridge with a decline into Lilypad. It would have been nice to enjoy it a little more, but we were still being chased by those clouds. We decided to have lunch on the first available rock and we stopped on the east side just before the camp site. We hadn't checked the map until lunch and realized we were near a site. We found a large bear scat here (it must be on a diet of ants). We just packed up the canoe ready to go and got our rain gear out when the storm hit. We are now sitting under our tarp waiting out the rain. Bill says it can quit any time now, but it is still rumbling. It is now 1:15pm. It's now 2:45pm and we are on Lower Mace Lake at the narrows just before the bay to the 490m portage into Pathfinder Lake. Blue sky is coming toward us as we sit on the lake and Bill pumps some fresh water. It was 24 degrees in the shade this morning when we got up, hot and sweltering around lunch time, and now it has cooled off slightly. It'll probably become warmer again once the sun comes out. We have had a cloud of black flies, some mosquitoes and deer flies on us since about an hour after we got up. They get a little trying. We worked hard to get in Lower Mace Lake, the channel from Lilypad was low and we had to lower over a large drop from a beaver dam and push and pull through the shallow water. The birds sound lovely and the water is like glass. I better help Bill since he is paddling alone. Not a soul in site but some boats at some of the portages; two at this one. It's too bad some people put their boats right on the portage trail so you can't get off the water and pass through easily. The 490m portage into Pathfinder Lake was up and over a hill and down again. We paddled past Portage Island to the 390m portage to Rodge Lake. Concerned that there might not be a campsite on Rodge Lake (the park attendant didn't think there was one), we left our packs and just took the canoe and checked it out. The portage is a four wheeler trail with one huge climb halfway and then a decline not so huge. We found a nice campsite on the small island at the south end of Rodge Lake so we went back for our packs. It took us an hour from the time we left the packs till we got back to them. We huffed and puffed up that huge hill again and over one huge ant hill and left. We just rounded the tip of the large island when it started to pour. We made it to our small island site and set to work making it home. It rained off and on all evening and we are in the tent at 9:00pm. It had been a long day with the rain. The birds sound beautiful here and we heard that "who cooks for you" owl, a grouse is thumping it's wings and the loons are calling.

Wed. July 11/01. We had another late morning; not up until 8:00am. The sun has tried to shine, but we've had scattered showers all day. It's a good day to stay put. We cleaned ourselves up and did some laundry and dried our stuff out from the rain yesterday. All morning and off and on in the afternoon, I've put those clothes on the line and off the line. Bill has been cooking bannock all afternoon it seems. There is no grill so he is cooking it on a rock on foil over a small fire. He just gets it going and it rains again, enough to almost kill the fire and then he starts over again. John, Mike and his two boys arrived here from Browns Point, Matinenda Lake in the middle of the afternoon. They came by boat and four wheeler. It was great to see them, we had a nice visit and it poured again. Our tarp is a bit small to fit 6 under. After we said goodbye and watched them round the corner of the point Bill resumed his bannock cooking (bannock is today's and tommorrows lunch) and I played the game with the laundry and the rain once again. Bill has had no luck with fishing. John said the locals say brook trout don't bit in the summer but he didn't know why.

Bill: Well I threw a few choice lures at the water but no fish. There was a float plane landing and taking off from Pathfinder L. several times today and it seemed loud for being in the next lake. Janice made a very good meal from Swiss Chalet gravy from Jay and Joe and rehydrated green beans and ground turkey on top of mashed potatoes. We had a nice relaxed evening and saw a rainbow in the east. It looked like the pot of gold was probably over Matinenda L. Today we said hello to Keith and June on John's digital camera which also takes short movies and you can see it on the camera. We watched the fire go out and went in the tent at 9pm.

Thur. July 12/01. We were up at 6am and got moving about 15 min later. It was cold in the night so we had to put our hoods on from our mummy bags. We had cream of wheat for breakfast and were on the

water at 8:40am. We backtracked to Lower Mace L. and headed east to the 650m portage to Claim L. It was a bit hilly and a few places where the rocks were hard to walk through. At one point I slipped and fell on a wet slippery rock. Janice tried to help, but there wasn't much she could do because only my pride got hurt. We had lunch on Claim L. at 12 noon and passed the only other couple tripping that we have seen yet. They just left a very nice looking site on the point. The 1400m portage to Dunlop L. was pretty good and took us from 12:25 to 1:05pm to do. We had to watch our footing on the slippery rocks. All the other lakes have been windy so far, but Dunlop L. wasn't. There were a couple of motor boats fishing in this lake. The 390m portage to Ten Mile L. was a wide trail with a bit of a climb. At the end I fell again as I put the canoe in the water while trying to balance on the rocks in a heavy wind. This lake was a little bit slower because of the wind against us. The salt and pepper islands look neat. Janice was getting sprayed in the front by the splashdowns. It is a pretty lake. We made it to the 200m portage to Hyphen L. and checked out the water falls and took a picture. It was a steep climb up to the lake. The lake was calm and we had to lift over a beaver dam to Callinan L. We made camp on the N.E. point of the bay. It is on a hill and hard to find a flat spot for the tent. There was lots of garbage around which we picked up and burned. We had spaghetti sauce and macaroni for supper with a chocolate mousse for an appetizer. There is a creek with rapids behind us. We were entertained by a flock of cedar waxlings catching bugs out over the water. We picked some blueberries to go in our oatmeal tomorrow morning. There is a whippoorwill calling and frogs croaking and a grouse flapping it's wings.

Janice: Fri. July 13/01. We are up and moving at 7:15am. We are not planning on going very far today. After a relaxing breakfast of oatmeal and blueberries by the waters' edge we finished packing and are on the water at 9:00am. We canoed to the 290m (or less) portage into Dollyberry L. The first half of that portage is all up hill until you hit the start of Dollyberry L. and then it was too low to paddle so we portaged to the very end of the trail. What a climb! We paddled with the wind in our face (again) to the 220m portage into Bobowash L. You wouldn't know the portage was there if it hadn't been for the sign way, way, up on the cliff. We decided to do that one in a two carry. After you made it up that steep start the portage is easy going with a gentle down hill slope. There are more campsites in Bobowash L. than most of the smaller lakes. We are on a nice island site with a great view at 10:30am. Bobowash is a lovely lake, pretty with its points and islands. We had a quiet day, canoed the lake and washed up and hung out some clothes and except for the bugs it would have been perfect. The wind is still blowing and it has been a nice mix of overcast grey clouds and sun. It seems as if we might get rain half the time and then we don't. I guess we are lucky. We have a garter snake sunning on our point. It's the third garter Bill has seen. A seagull came looking for dinner and a loon passed by, a flock of cormorants and a merganser. It's 8:30pm and we are enjoying the fire, chores done. Every night we lay in bed and the hum of the mosquitoes creates background music for the birds to sing and tonight is no exception.

Sat. July 14/01. Today is John's birthday! I got up in the night. What a beautiful night. The moon and stars reflected back at me from the lake; gorgeous! Then I was attacked by thousands of mosquitoes. We had to turn on the light in the tent to kill all the mosquitoes that I let in. That was wild!

Bill: I killed the last one when I woke up at 6:30am and it was full of MY blood. We had oat bran for breakfast and were on the water at 9:15am. We headed for the 125m portage from Bobowash L. to an unnamed lake. We headed for the boats on the shore but the portage was to the left of that. It was a nice trail to the lake. The next 110m portage had an interesting start with a switch back on a rock face. Once past that, the trail was nice but the put in was mucky. We had a break on Samreid L. and drank some juice and ate our gorp at 10:15am. Towards the end of the lake we saw a garter snake swimming across it. We could see the Wilkie fire tower straight up the lake. The 210m portage to Lost Canoe L. was OK and went beside a babbling brook. We found the lost canoe in the lake. It was an old cedar strip canoe broken in two at the entrance to the narrows to the north. The 140m portage to Monster L. was OK but I had to move a fallen tree at the put in. We couldn't decide if it was called Monster L. because you could kind of see a face on the rock face at the east side or because of the size of the big snapping turtle we saw warming itself on a rock or the huge frog in the water. The 1140m portage to Flack L. was pretty good. We started at 12:00 noon and were on our camp site beside the portage at 12:35pm. There is giant crevasses in the rocks here. Hope we don't fall in. We set up camp and had some tea and lunch. From

2:45 to 3:45pm we watched a yellow Province of Ontario float plane land and take off with water for a forest fire to the north of Flack L. It was really neat to watch because it would fly right over our head and head into the wind and touch down for a bit and then climbed back up again. In seven minutes it would do it again. We could see the spotter plane where he headed off to drop his water. We are just lazing around and it is time to get supper started. We had a swim first at the portage where the rock shelf was unique with different levels so we could slowly get used to the cold water. Then Janice made supper while I cut up a stump for a seat. I fished after supper but nothing bit. Janice made tea biscuits on the fire which we are supposed to have for dessert and breakfast, but we decided to eat it all while it was hot and have some left over snacks for breakfast. We sat up and watched the sun set at 9:10pm and then we went to bed.

Janice: Sun. July 15/01. We woke at 6:00am and decided there was no need to rush so we slept some more and moved at 7:30am. We had a breakfast on the rock overlooking Flack L. and listened to the hum of the fishing boats. The lake is like glass today. We left at 10:00 and we got to the take out at 10:35am. We were a little reluctant to end our trip and we were in no hurry. We cleaned up at the van (which was waiting for us; Thanks Guys!) loaded and left. We went over to the camp ground and gave our thanks and met Tracy the Park Superintendent. We left Mississagi Provincial Park at 12:00 noon.