

WA Trip Report
Georgian Bay Sea Kayaking
June 2 – 4th , 2014

Participants: Bill and Donna, Linda and Larry, Ross and Karen, Val, Jody, Desi, Chantal

On Friday the 2nd of June, we met at the Dillon Cove Public Dock at 12:00 noon and were on the water by 1:00 pm. The conditions were ideal with a 5 to 10 km breeze out of the SE, little swell, sunny conditions and a perfect 20 C temperature. The ten of us headed down the Shebeskekong Channel, with three double and four single kayaks keeping very close together – a group of top paddlers! Along the way we observed a monstrosity of a cottage on Tennant Point and others at the head of Sand Bay, and finally as we got closer to our destination an incredible old growth conifer, which resembles a Sequoia. Our Sequoia (only found on the west coast) is, of course, a cleverly disguised cell phone tower, which is a major landmark when sea kayaking in this area.

We eventually cruised into the Shawnanaga Inlet, heading first to the osprey nest on Newburn rock, then to the red navigational buoy and eventually McCormick Island where we camped in the cove on the northern shore. The cove had lots of smooth rocks to pitch tents, great spots to haul out the kayaks and it caught enough wind to keep the black flies away. A great camping spot, giving us the opportunity to walk around the island, and to observe and speculate on previous black bear visits. The only drawback with this site is limited soil to build a proper bivvy though we were able to do so. I would say that this island really cannot handle a much larger group though, however, there seems to be lots of spots on nearby Hertzberg Island and in fact all types of places in the area for great camping.

Ross and Karen prepared an incredible dinner that was both a delight to view and to eat. It even doubled as lunch the next day for some (names unmentioned) who forgot their lunch. Chantal provided appetizers and dessert that were gobbled up quickly by all. Delicious! After breakfast the next day lovingly prepared by Linda and Larry, we prepared for a full day on the water. Once again, we had absolutely perfect conditions again – light wind, no swell to

speak of, sunny skies, moderate temperatures and only a few bugs. We headed out to Georgian Bay proper and because of the great conditions; we were able to get to the northwest shore of the McCoy Islands. A nice chunk of rock, though one snake was enough for me to say let's move on.

We headed towards the small islands to the NW of Hertzberg, first cruising by Jolliffe, and then the islands to the W of Shawanaga Island. The rocks around Kishkadena Island were incredible to cruise through and after a lovely lunch spot, we headed NE passing first Empress and then Objiway Island. On Objiway Island is the Objiway Club which was originally a hotel built in 1906. It is an incredible sight to come along as you kayak these shores. It is now a club operated as a social and recreational centre for Pointe au Baril's summer community.

We kept on heading N passing first Eureka Point, Maskinonge and Black Bass Island and then the tip of Nadeau Island, before we finally heading E along the Shawanaga Inlet. We passed a few cottages on Hopewell Bay but the northern shore of Shawanaga Island has only a few dwellings, and most of them on small islands off of the main island. After passing Frederic Inlet, which is between Shawanaga and Hertzberg Island, we were able to see our tents on McCormick. It ended up being a 30 km day that we leisurely enjoyed over six hours. The last hour coming home was a little tough, as muscles were sore and some people had put on a spurt to only find that camp was "just a little further". But with the cold beer and wine awaiting us, we managed to give it one last shove on.

Dinner that evening was chicken by Donna and Bill, and appetizers and dessert by Desi. The hungry paddling team once again dug in and enjoyed all that was presented. That evening we had a beautiful sunset and everyone was off to bed early.

Jody and Val treated us to a delicious breakfast the next morning as we fortified ourselves for a tougher day of paddling - during the night the wind picked up and by morning we had large swells and wind coming from the SE. We had heard the weather forecast the night before and

we were ready for a slog directly into the wind. However, with this expert team it took us only 2 ½ hours (versus 2 hours on the way out) to get back to the dock at Dillon.

This was a most enjoyable sea kayaking trip with great company, great padding, great weather – it couldn't have been better. And the old television trivia was fun too, especially for the “senior” crowd.

What we liked the most about the trip:

Desi: Feeling so energized paddling through the islands, going point to point, through the channels, avoiding submerged rock ledges that mysteriously pop out from the deep. I could have paddled on forever! Ok, maybe I got tired at km 26, but then the nice, cold beverage at the end of our journey started calling me home.

A more practical memory was applying scatology 101 to the bear poop discovered to the bear poop found at the campsite - how old was it? Was it still warm? What did it eat? Where did it get those red berries? Really, where did it get those berries this time of year??

Larry: Weather and company was great. I think what I will remember most about the trip was getting up at 5am and seeing the sun coming up on the horizon, and the calm water shimmering with the colours>>fantastic.

Donna: For me, it was the ability to get so much further than we ever have and see so much. But also the dinner "display" that Karen and Ross created - amazing!! The group was absolutely the best too!!

Val: What really stands out in my memory is the natural beauty of Saturday. It was literally a picture-perfect day. Georgian Bay was close to dead calm in the morning with a clearer sky and

sharper horizon than I ever remember. I didn't expect the big change between the flat austerity of the McCoys to the Muskoka-like terrain of northern Shawanaga.

Ross: Memorable moment... once again reconnecting with the amazing starry skies in totally clear, calm conditions. Mother nature is awesome!

Karen: Karen's memorable experiences, trying out Chantal's Greenland paddle aka the seal club and of course the warm weather... the best we've ever had on that weekend in the past. (Really regretted not bringing a t-shirt, or shorts or sandals or a swim suit....)

Chantal: I really loved kayaking around the islands and exploring the various rock formations up close on our 7 hour paddle on Saturday - GB is magical!