

Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada

Route 6

Route 6 is also catalogued in this guide as an overnight route, but offers several day trip opportunities as well.

Kejimkujik (pronounced kej-im-koo-jik) National Park encompasses 381 square kilometres of forests and interconnecting lakes, offering the visitor a variety of paddling experiences in natural, undeveloped surroundings. Many of the canoe routes follow those of the original Mi'kmaq, whose historical influence in this area extends back over 5000 years. A paddling or hiking trip into Kejimkujik's backcountry is a chance to experience the tranquil, wild landscape that makes this national park so special.

The park offers day trip opportunities and longer routes that will take you well into the backcountry. Routes are serviced with well-maintained portages and "primitive" camping sites. Campgrounds, group campgrounds and canoe rentals are also available. Other activities in the park include hiking, supervised swimming, picnicking, guided interpretive programs and self-guided trails. Kejimkujik is home to a wide variety of wildlife such as white-tailed deer, porcupine, beaver and the endangered Blanding's turtle.

Visitor Centre: ①

Jake's Landing: ②

Boat launch

Canoe/kayak rentals

Rentals include paddles, PFDs, bailer and whistle

Phone: 902 682-2282, Email: info@whynotadventure.ca

Eel Weir: ③

You may purchase detailed maps of all navigable waterways and campsites from the park. The map accompanying this guide is therefore general in nature. Inquiries regarding specific information on Kejimkujik's canoe routes, campsite reservations (online www.reservation.parkscanada.gc.ca) and general park regulations can be obtained at the Visitor Centre (2) at the park or by contacting:

Kejimkujik National Park, Box 36A, Maitland Bridge, NS, B0T 1N0

Phone: 1 902 682-2772, Email: Kejimkujik_Info@pc.gc.ca

Website: www.parkscanada.gc.ca or www.friendsofkeji.ns.ca

Wilderness Canoeing:

Canoeing is the best possible way to experience Kejimkujik National Park. By using the craft of the early Mi'kmaq, you can enjoy the unfolding landscape as you travel from stillwaters to small lakes and, finally, across the island studded expanse of Kejimkujik Lake. The routes described below are classified Level 1 (very easy), by Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia. All canoeing is in flat water and portages are good. Normally, no white water canoeing is available in the park except on some stretches of river in the spring, or during flood periods.

Be Prepared:

- Paddlers may encounter high winds and waves, and should have navigational and canoe camping skills. Foul weather may force you to stay put until conditions permit safe travel. Ensure your trip plan allows for extra time and provisions in case this happens to you.
- Portages, marked with yellow and brown signs, are provided around all areas, which are hazardous

during high water periods, or impassable when water levels are low. You will have to carry your canoe at all portages.

- Regulations require that you have a personal floatation device (PFD) for each person. These should be worn at all times.
- You must have a bailer, throw rope and a noise-making device for attracting attention if you require help. A whistle attached to your PFD is recommended. Each canoe must have two paddles. One extra paddle and a light are recommended.

Backcountry Camping:

- You must register at the Visitor Centre before beginning an overnight trip.
- We recommend advanced reservations (www.reservation.parksCanada.gc.ca or 1-877-737-3783). Reservations start on the first Monday of May at 8 am, and can then be made for any time during the operations season. A reservation fee and nightly camping fees are charged. These can be paid by credit card. Sites can also be rented at the Kejimikujik VRC for same day departures.
- You must camp at the established sites, which have been designed to provide good facilities and concentrate use at selected locations so that most of the backcountry will remain undisturbed. Each site has a gravel tent pad, an outhouse toilet, fireplace and a picnic table. Cut firewood is provided at all campsites.

Group Size:

The number of people that may stay at a single backcountry campsite is limited, and most accommodate a maximum of six people. This keeps impact and erosion within acceptable limits, and controls the number of people in the backcountry so that everyone can experience the tranquility and solitude they seek.

Big Dam/Frozen Ocean (26km):

Starting Point: Take Portage 'Q' (0.4km) from the Big Dam Lake parking lot.

This is the best route for the inexperienced canoeists, or the first time visitor who wants a two or three day outing. After years of experience, it may well remain your favourite. Each lake is unique, but Big Dam Lake is the most striking. Joined in the middle by a narrow passage, it is really two water bodies in one. The southeast portion has clear water fed by springs and runoff, while the northwest portion is filled with the dark red-brown water borne by a large brook, which flows through a bog.

All along the route you'll notice the tips of old logs floating just above the surface. Sphagnum moss, sundew and cranberries now grow on logs, which were lost while being driven downstream many years ago. The last logging drive was in the mid 1950's; the first was about a century ago. While this trip can be done in two days, plan on taking three to enjoy it best. Spend a night on Frozen Ocean Lake and then one on Kejimikujik Lake. If you start late, stay at Big Dam Lake the first night and at Frozen Ocean the next.

Except for Kejimikujik Lake, the lakes are generally small and are usually not too windy during the day. The stillwaters and the flowing part of the river are easy canoeing. Portages are of short to moderate length and, on a multi-day trip, the going is easy.

Kejimkujik Lake (8km x 5km):

Starting Point: Begin and end at Jakes Landing, or at the Mersey River Bridge (Eel Weir) below George Lake.

The shoreline and islands of Kejimkujik Lake, and the rivers leading into it, can be explored without portaging. The mood of the big lake changes constantly from misty mornings through bright, windy afternoons, to peaceful sunsets. The islands vary from tiny sandspits to large forested islands, each with its own personality.

Some have small hidden beaches; others may harbour a doe and her fawn. The rivers leading from the lake are excellent for viewing beaver and deer; the open lake is good for spotting loons, gulls, tern and the occasional osprey.

Peskowesk Lake System (48km):

Starting Point: Cross Kejimkujik Lake from Jakes Landing, or start from the Mersey River (Eel Weir) below George Lake.

The Peskowesk Lake System is also the gateway to the Tobeatic Wilderness Area or the Shelburne Heritage River System. Here you will experience wilderness canoeing at its best. Fewer people travel this route because more portaging is necessary than in other areas. Many old-timers favour this part of the Park, where the landscape of windswept stands of red and white pine is reminiscent of the Canadian Shield. This system of a dozen lakes is connected by thirteen portages. Some of the lakes are spring fed and clear, others are fed by dark brown streams flowing through bogs. As their name implies, the Silver Lakes are among the clearest in the region. As you paddle, you can see the rocks and plants, metres below on the bottom.

You should be well prepared to portage, and anticipate stiff winds (prevailing westerly winds) on both Peskowesk and Peskawa Lakes in mid-day. Ask a staff person when planning your trip. In the summertime there are wilderness patrols on Peskowesk Lake. Refer to Kejimkujik's regulations on the website and note:

- Pets can be a threat to wildlife and must be kept on a leash at all times. We recommend they not be taken into the backcountry.
- It is illegal to leave a fire unattended. Please make sure that the fire is out!
- It is illegal to build a fire outside the designated area. Please use only those areas that are provided.
- Pack in, pack out policy



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Disclaimer

The Municipality of the County of Annapolis does not have control over the canoe routes, portages or wilderness tent areas listed in this guide, and therefore assumes no responsibility for the safety of the canoeist paddling the route, walking the portage, or using the wilderness tent areas.

We recommend that users approach all canoe routes and wilderness tent areas in a safe and responsible manner, and conduct visual inspections whenever possible and practical.

Conditions can change through fluctuating water levels, addition of natural debris, and commercial logging activity.

As we are not the owners of any of these lands or routes, any special arrangements must be made directly with the owners and you are accountable to them for any damage, loss or other problems that you may cause.

Although the information in this guide is believed to be accurate, we assume no liability for any errors or omissions that may exist, or for changes that may have occurred on the routes after the publication of this guide.

We recommend, as a supplement to the information herein, that you use Natural Resources Canada 1:50,000 topographical series maps of the general canoe routes.

Annapolis County Recreation Services requests that you read the sections on Safety, Equipment, Trip Planning and Wilderness Ethics before you travel on the lakes and waterways of the region.

Always tell someone where you are going and when you are returning. Please be aware that many portages/canoe carries are not marked.

Map Legend

Entry, Exit Point



Landmark



Portage



River Section



Rapids



Existing Tentsite



Beach



Highway 101, Exit



Public Highway



Highlighted for clarity:



Municipal Boundary



Contour/ Elevation



Grid North



Grid Line



Scale Bar

