

# Algonquin Provincial Park

## Access #4: July 15-23, 2011

### Base camping on Sawyer & Rain with day-trips into surrounding areas

My brother and I have been doing annual pilgrimages into Algonquin Park for the past five years. We have historically explored the South Eastern quadrant of the park, through Access #17. We decided this year to try somewhere completely new. Exploring the South Western corridor, thru Access #4.

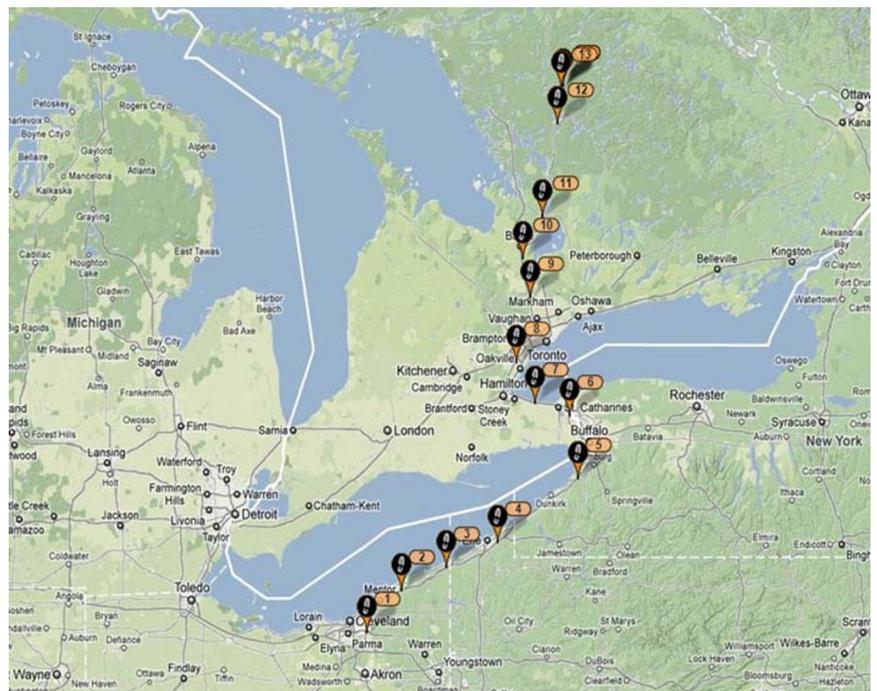
As with all of our trips, we did a lot of research and debating over our route during the "down time" of the winter months. We researched extensively and obtained valuable information from many, which helped shape our 2011 trip.

This year was going to be special since our trip would be limited to my immediate family. My brother Bob, his son David, and me, Andy W. Since we had an odd number going this time, I wanted to use this as an opportunity to learn a little about what it's like to solo before venturing out on my own, sometime in the future. I learned a lot and am glad I did a dry-run beforehand. The advice I received from the Algonquin Adventures Forum turned out to be very accurate and valuable. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Barry Bridgeford for launching and sustaining such an informative, quality forum and to thank all of the AA's who responded to my many inquiries posted throughout the year.

This is my first Trip Report and contribution to Algonquin Adventures and I hope others will enjoy the read.

Plans were laid, provisions made, and finally, for close to a year prior, we were finally on our way back to Algonquin!

**Thursday, July 14th** - I drove up to my brother's house the night before our departure (from McMurray Pennsylvania to Mentor Ohio), assembling at his home, with my nephew David, coming up from Stow Ohio. We provisioned our food supplies and packed everything that evening for an early start (of a long drive to Kearney Ontario) the following day.



**Friday, July 15th** - Although the length of our drive up to Kearney was long, we were running on adrenalin and anxious to get back into Algonquin and the wilderness, the three of us so needed to return to.

We had sunny skies the entire ride up and ran into light traffic skirting around Toronto. We usually experience a lot of congestion, with stop-and-go traffic, so it was a pleasant surprise to be able to breeze through Toronto this year.



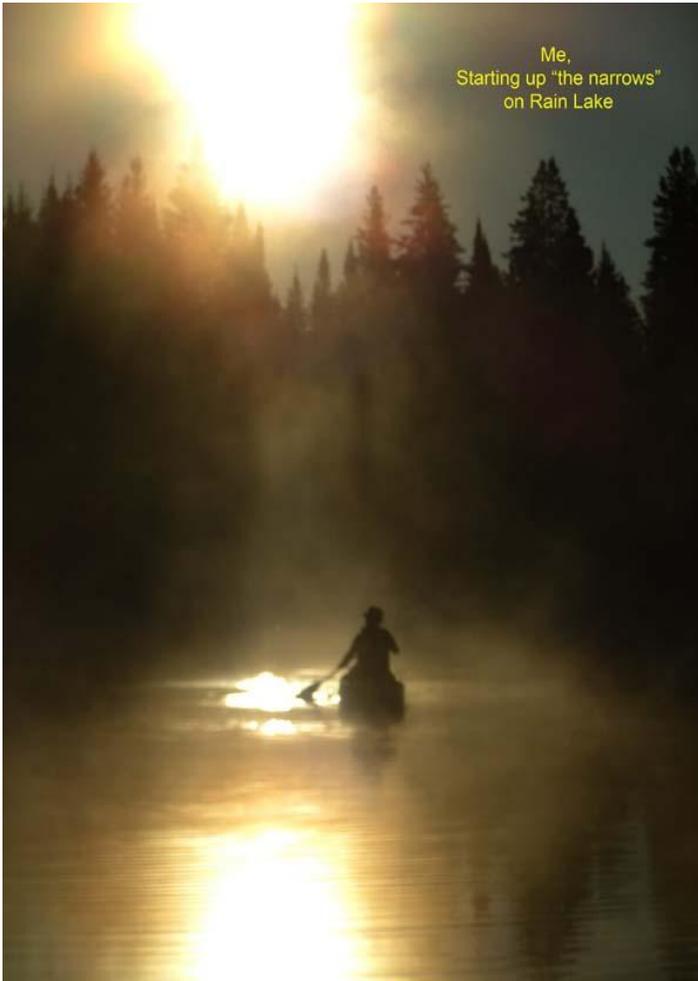
Our original thought was to rent the cabin at Access #4 for Friday evening before heading into the interior, but as luck would have it, it was already booked months in advance.

Rather than figuring out a camping spot, we decided to splurge and spend the evening at a B&B as close to the park as possible. We ended up staying at **Echo Ridge B&B**. Price was reasonable, the proprietor Amy was extremely cordial & helpful. Accommodations were well appointed. Comfortable beds, spacious rooms and very clean. I would recommend this establishment to others.

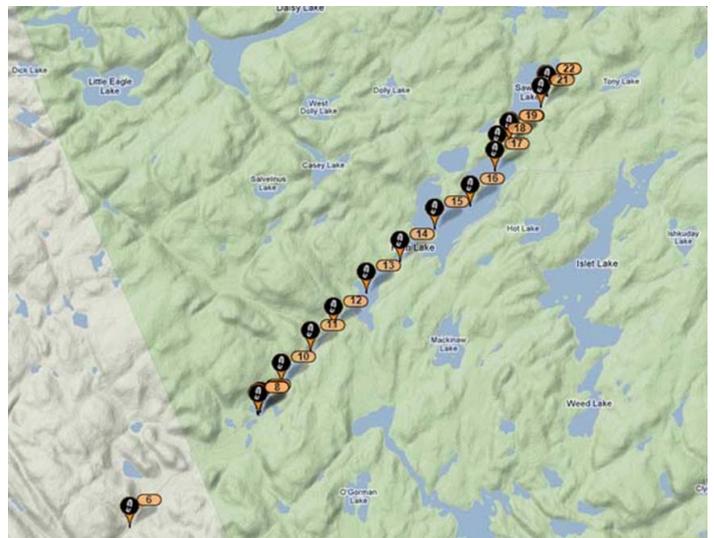


**Saturday, July 16th** - Still running on adrenalin and anxious to get going, we got up at 5:30AM, loaded up the SUV, and headed into the park. The morning couldn't have welcomed us more gracefully. Cool (58 F) morning mist, and slight breeze. The road in was well maintained, making quick progress. On our way in, we were greeted with a bounty of scenery and wildlife. What a way to start our trip !





We finally arrived at 6:30 AM and headed to Sawyer Lake to set up a base camp for the 1st half of the trip. The weather was awesome, with mist coming off the smooth glass surface of the water. A perfect morning for paddling. We traversed the north eastern side of Sawyer, ending up on a reasonably nice site by 9:30 AM. We set up camp and went out to try our luck fishing before sunset. I struck out fishing for lake trout but Bob and David had success catching (and releasing) a few nice small mouth bass, averaging 17".



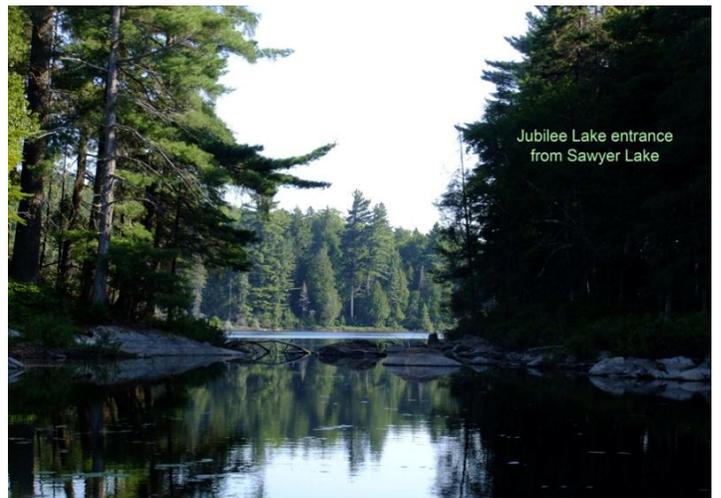
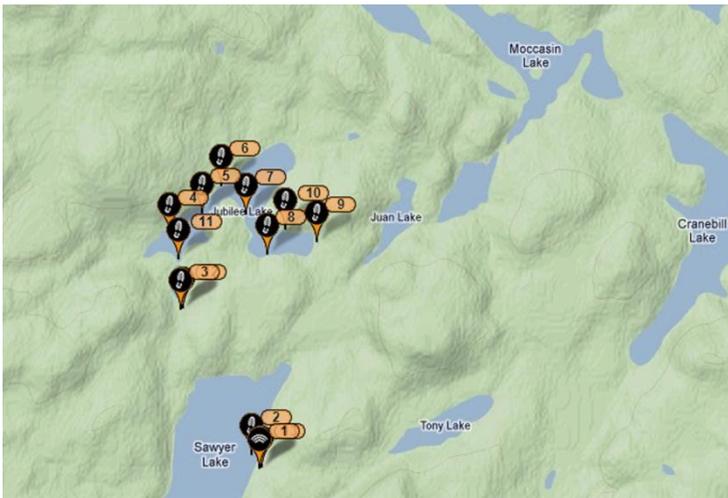
We had dinner around the campfire this evening and enjoyed a beautiful sunset. We headed off to bed around 10:45 PM, content and happy to be back in the park.



**Sunday, July 17th** - As I tend to be an early riser, I got up at 6AM; started coffee and had breakfast started for the guy's. Got everyone up and by 8:00 AM, ate a hearty meal and headed off to explore Jubilee. Other than catching (and releasing) a few small mouth bass, (plus one salamander), the only other thing that we caught were leeches. Yuck! The leeches appeared to be juvenile as they were only 1/4 inch in length. Didn't take much time to extract them from my foot. At the time, I wasn't thinking about this as a photo opportunity, with them hanging on to get a "foot-hold" and suck some blood out of me (pun intended). I just wanted to get these buggers off of me as soon as possible!



- Our 1st day out. Sawyer to Jubilee and back -



Jubilee had a lot of travelers this Sunday. Campers were packing up and heading out and large groups were also coming in for the start of their trip. Temperature was heating up too, hovering around 85 degrees F. With the heat, so too came the wind, making it tougher to paddle and keep up with Bob and David.



While Bob and David tried their luck fishing, I decided to hike down to Juan Lake. On the way down, I was startled by commotion in the underbrush to my left. Whatever it was, it was headed right towards me! What the heck??? Then, no further than 3 feet from of me, appears a Rough Grouse in full strut! From her behavior, it appeared she was challenging me to stay clear of her turf. I didn't want to disturb her, thinking a nest was the reason for this behavior. So, after a quick picture, I continued down the path. But of all things, she continued to harass me and display aggressive behavior. I have never experienced this unusual attitude from a Grouse in all of my years in the woods. Usually when I would come up on a grouse, it would thunder off, flying away from me. It was a really memorable experience that I will never forget. Coming back from Juan, I took special care not to disturb the area but she was no longer there. So I'm uncertain why she behaved that way.



On our way back to camp, the winds picked up stiffly and I was having a tough time keeping up with Bob and David. I didn't realize how much slower it was soloing than tandem. I'm certain my lack of experience contributed to my slow progress as well.

Sunday evening brought another beautiful sunset and with it, cooler temperatures, hovering around 63 degrees F.

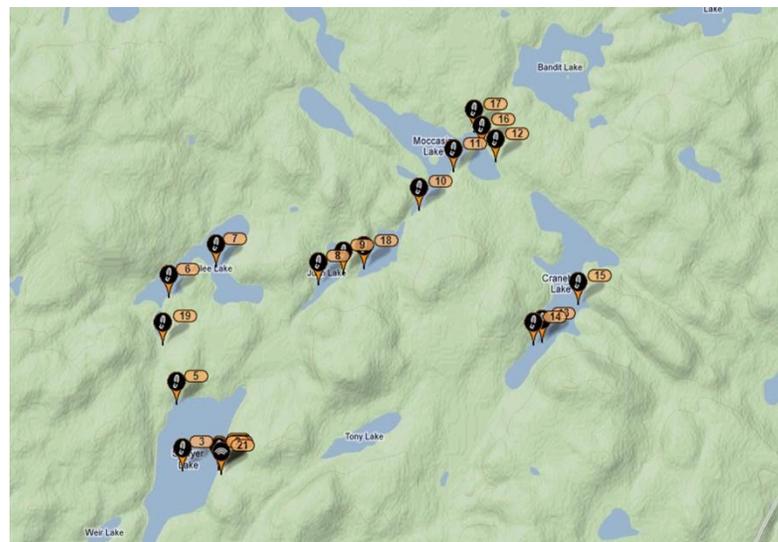
The Loons were talkative this evening. It was hypnotic to hear one lone Loon, at the southern end of the lake, [WAILING](#), and another, closer to us, answering with a [TREMOLLO](#). To me, it was like one was saying "Where are you?" and the other was saying "I'm up here! Hurry up!".



Finally, around 8:30 PM, the winds died down. We were all settled in at camp and didn't feel like going out to fish so we decided to sit around the fire, play some cards, drink a little of our "beverages of choice" and enjoy some good conversation before hitting the sack around 11:00 PM. We could hear thunder rumbling in the distance and could see lightning in the far distance. We went to bed wondering which path the storm would take.



**Monday, July 18th** - At 3:30 in the morning, the storm hit us with all of its force. Heavy rain and thunder boomer's &



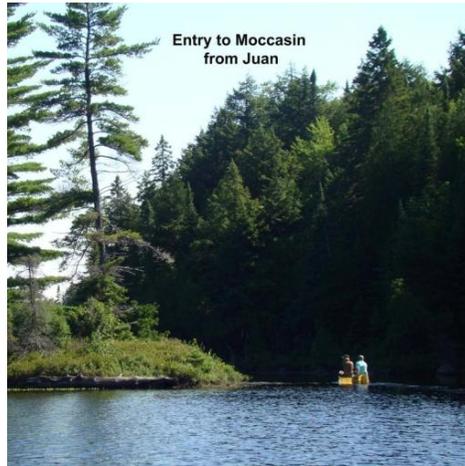
lightening all around us. We hunkered down in our tents and rode it out. By 5:30, the storm was down to a sprinkle and completely stopped by 6:30. I didn't sleep much once the storm came through and was up getting breakfast ready once the rain subsided.

Today was going to be a "day trip", going back up to Jubilee but then pressing on to Juan, Moccasin, down to see Cranebill, with a detour to check out Bandit before heading back to camp. It was going to be a long day but we were all looking forward to exploring areas we have never before seen.

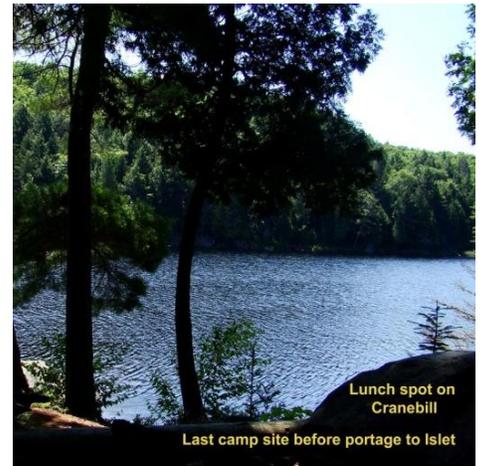
There were no significant events for the day, other than spectacular scenery. Of all the lakes we explored, Moccasin was my favorite. There are only two camp sites on the lake with plenty of pretty coves. Following are some of the photo's we took along the way. Once past Jubilee, we only saw 1 camper on Moccasin for the entire day. Not another person until coming back to Jubilee.



Entry to Juan from Jubilee



Entry to Moccasin from Juan



Lunch spot on Cranebill  
Last camp site before portage to Islet

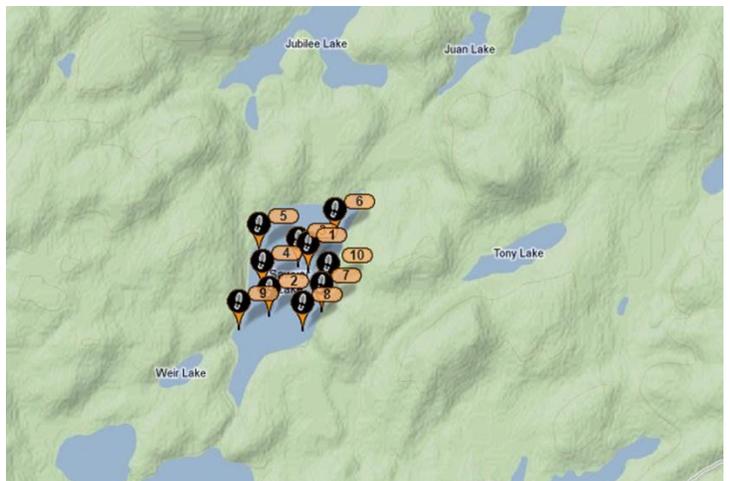
It was a long day, covering a lot of ground and we were pretty tired once getting back to camp. It was well worth the effort to experience places we have never been to before. It was time now for some dinner sitting around the camp fire and watching another beautiful sunset.



Andy's homemade chili  
Aged for 2 Months!



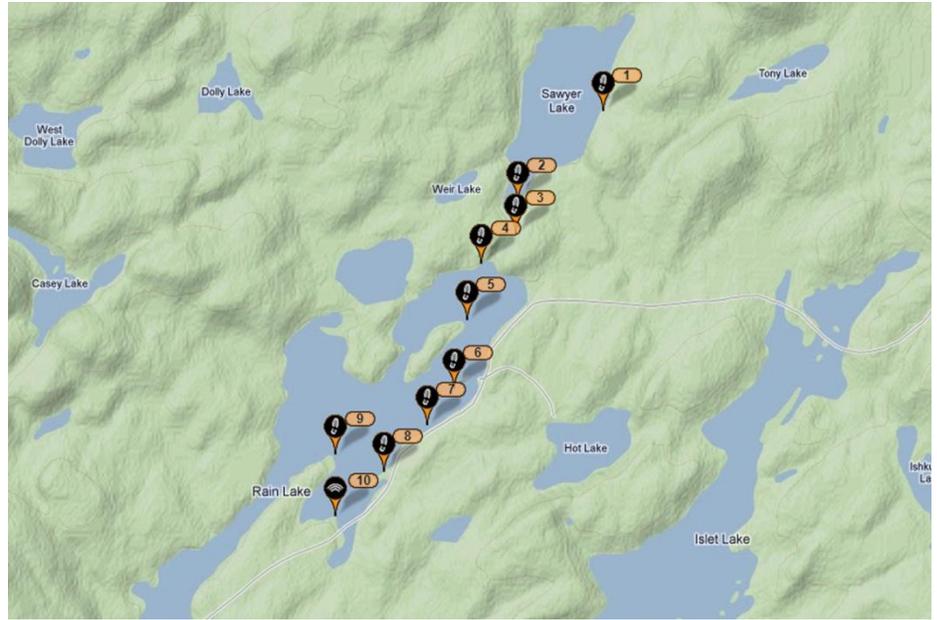
**Tuesday, July 19th** - Today was going to be a slow day, staying on Sawyer. It was turning into another beautiful day with sunny skies and warm weather. Although Sawyer is a pretty lake, there was way too much traffic (for our taste) going on with folks headed in and out of the park. Fishing wasn't much better. I struck out completely and Bob's only success was hooking into a lake trout that got off next to the canoe. I quickly learned there is an art to fishing and taking photos in a solo canoe. Me trying to troll for Lake trout or working the shore line, casting with lures became a comedy of errors for me, particularly when the wind would pick up. Should anyone have been watching, they would have had a good laugh watching me. Talk about "task-overload". I never did get the hang of it the entire week.



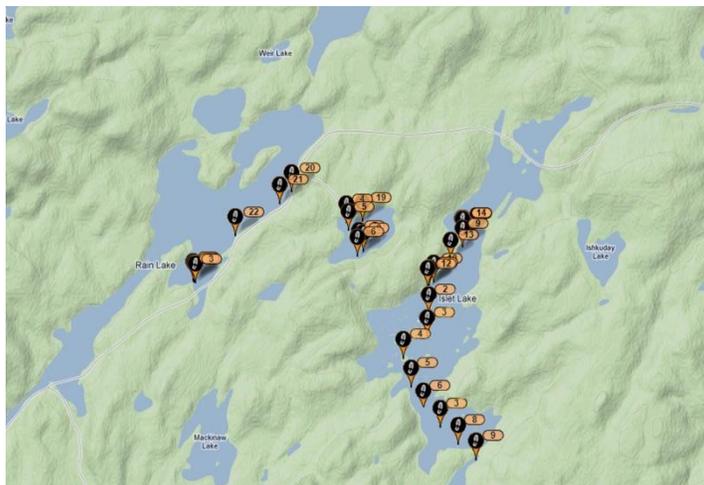
**Wednesday, July 20th** - Today was our transition day. We headed back down to Rain Lake, for the back-half of our trip. We got up early again (6:00 AM), broke camp and headed down to Rain.

We saw many nice sites on the way up to Sawyer, and were hopeful to find a nice one coming back. We had to traverse around a lot of the lake to find an open site but were fortunate to find a nice spacious site, with a great entry, off of Canadian Shield for swimming and stargazing. Also with a northern exposure, we would be able to enjoy sunrise and sunsets, and some seclusion in a bay. The only draw-back was the dust. As there were no pine needles to cover the ground, it was rather dirty.

By 4:00 PM , camp was finally set up. Bob and David went back to the car to restock our food supply while I stayed at camp, cutting firewood and taking a dip in the lake. (Another hot one at 86 degrees F.)



**Thursday, July 21st** - we were up at 6:00 AM, got the coffee going and started making breakfast. A light rain from the previous night made for a beautiful cool morning and spectacular sunrise. A mug of hot coffee, home fries, sausage & eggs, (over easy) with some Tabasco to spice it up. Sitting by the water's edge with a beautiful view of the sunrise. A-h-h-h !!! What a way to bring in the day! Sad though that we only have 3 more days left in paradise. 😞



Today was going to be another day trip. . . Rain, up to Hot Lake, over to Islet, down to see Weed Lake, and stopping for our lunch break, back on Islet. The 700M portage to Hot Lake wasn't bad. Not bad, that is, once you climbed Mt. Everest starting out.

Hot is a small lake but well named. Of all the lakes we fished, we had the most success on this lake, catching and releasing small mouth bass averaging, 12"-14".

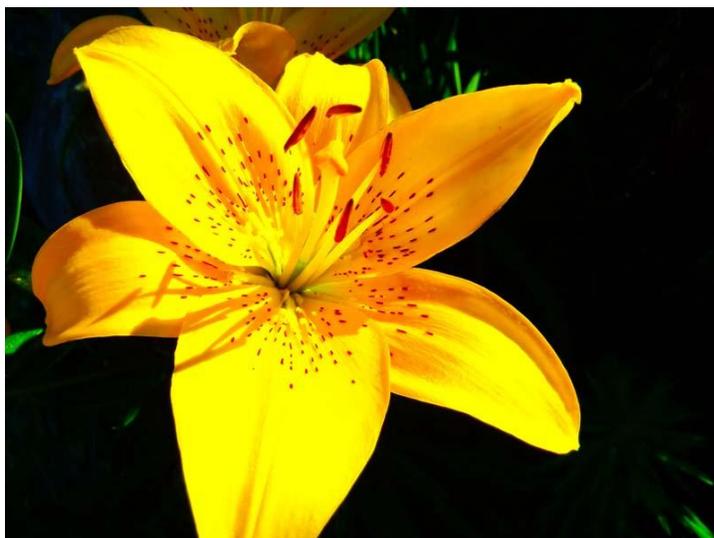
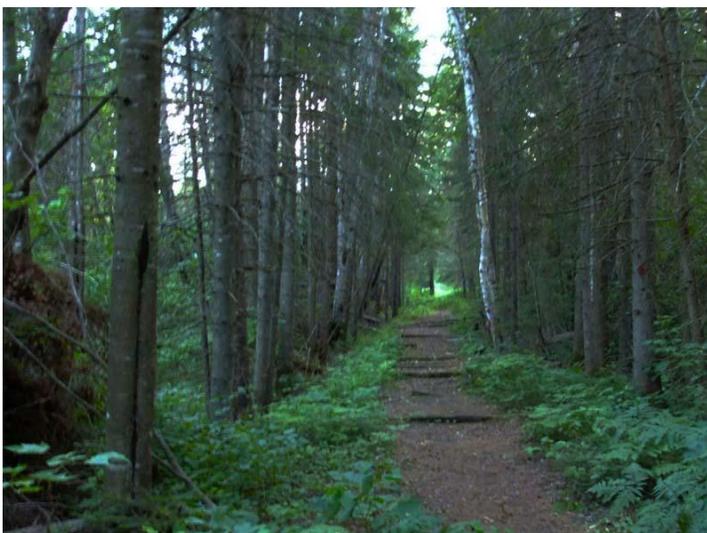




By the time we got to Islet, the winds kicked up and I felt uncomfortable going down to see Weed with the waves starting to gain strength. However, Bob and David didn't have any problems in their 17' canoe, leaving me behind to do some swimming and relaxing on shore while I awaited their return.



It wasn't until 5:30 PM that we got back to camp. Although tuckered out from all of the portaging / paddling it was still early so, we decided to explore some of the hiking trail close to camp, before calling it a night.



There was a lot of flora on the trail, giving us plenty of photo opportunities as we leisurely hiked out and back.

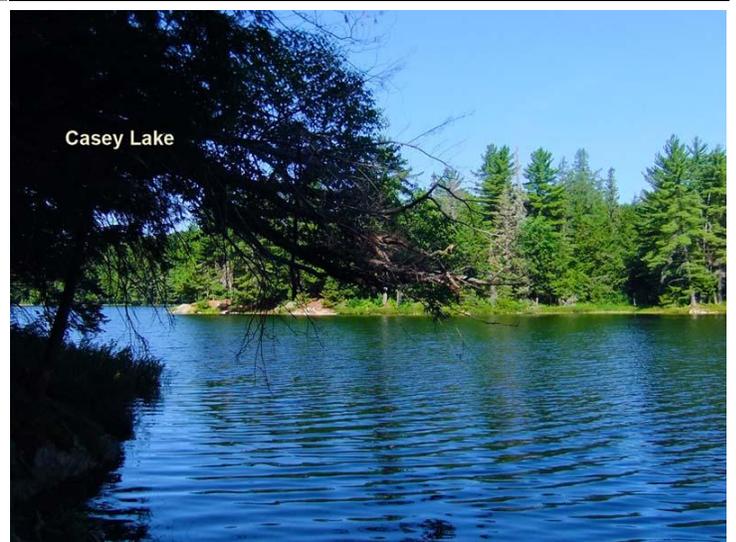
It was another great day in Algonquin, but I was now starting to become melancholy, knowing our yearly trip was coming to an end, knowing I would not have the opportunity to re-visit the park for another year.



**Friday, July 22nd** - It was our last day in the park and I found myself reminiscing over our week together, wishing we would have a couple more days away from the grind of every-day life, in this beautiful park.

It was tough to shake the feeling, but it quickly passed and was back to enjoying the day and companionship with my brother and nephew.

Today was an easy tour around Rain Lake with a walk up and back to see Casey Lake.



**Saturday, July 23rd** - I got up at 6:00AM again and made pancakes for our last meal in the park. It was another stunning morning, with the sun coming up over the horizon and the mist rising off of the lake. It was time to pack up and head home.

