

Algonquin Adventures

Crotch Lake Trip Report – 2010

by: Al LeBlanc April 29 – May 1, 2010

I will start this story with “It was the best of times and it was the worst of times” but the reference to worst of times was short lived mainly due to the staff at Check Point 17, Shall Lake. Their help and support coupled with our propensity to adapt is what saved our 5 day vacation in AP this year. I will deal with the unfortunate part 1st and then get on with our story. Hopefully those at the AP Reservation system will read this because it was a reservation mistake by them 1st and my mistake 2nd that caused our Tattler Lake cabin to be double booked. And it was my friend and I that were left without the keys so we lost the argument.

I vividly remember calling a month late and renting the cabin. It was December 29th for an April 29th access date. The reservation person and I talked a little about Kitty Lake cabin but it was Tattler Lake that we wanted and that I had asked for. I was a month late in calling and was surprised that the cabin wasn't booked. I also mentioned this to the voice on the end of the line. It was noted that there was a new reservation system coming and that my information was being taken manually and that I would receive e-mail confirmation at a later date. I did receive a confirmation e-mail on March 3, 2010 and again on April 11, 2010. I neglected to proof read the e-mail both times. Note to self: read important information. So, a mistake by them was not caught by me. Never again!

There is normally 1 man that works CP17 and he wasn't there when we arrived. His helper was there and Jim arrived about an hour later. His helper whose name I never knew, immediately tried everything in his power to rectify the situation including looking for other cabins (Kitty L. and McKaskill L.). Neither was available for us. There was a gloomy outlook to the weekend but Jim saved the day and offered to lend us his tent and tarp. It could have been a spare tent for just this type of occasion but we are going to believe it was Jim's tent and tarp and enjoy his generosity. We loaded the canoe and headed off towards Crotch L., or so we thought and the island site since we are trying to keep away from bears etc. We didn't have proper equipment to hang our food. A cooler is a little difficult to hang with flimsy rope.

Being all excited from both the loss of the cabin and finally setting off in the canoe we took off without studying our map and we headed straight for Shall L. without

thinking. It finally struck us that we shouldn't have passed under hydro lines and we were going the wrong way. We turned around and finally made it to a nice site at the island on Crotch L. Here is a view from the camp site.



View looking south from Crotch L. Island

Since we were not equipped for a 5 day stay in a tent and rain was forecasted for the weekend we started talking about how long we would stay. This discussion lasted until the next day around 2PM when we decided we would stay that one more night and leave Saturday morning. So, we arrived Thursday afternoon and would be leaving Saturday. We would join up with a house party we were missing that same weekend. It still sounded like a full party weekend so all was OK.

Late Thursday we took off in the canoe looking for firewood. We filled the canoe and returned to the site. We built a very nice fire with the help of a new buck saw I purchased at MEC. We were burning birch logs that were about 7 – 8” in diameter. We kept these logs burning by adding smaller branches which burnt quickly. After a while the fire was so hot all we needed to add was the large wood.

When you rent a cabin all you basically leave behind are your tent, hanging ropes, chairs and this year we also left behind our tarps. Next year I will have these items in my truck just in case something happens that we can't get the cabin. We were carrying in extra stuff like candles, reading material that could be left behind and a cooler that we didn't mind portaging the two short portages to Tattler L. Since we had our regular sleeping gear we had the typical sleep you can expect from a mummy shaped bag and a sleeping pad. So off to bed we went. The evening was mild and we slept well.

The next day looked promising and that the rain would hold off. We paddled back on smooth waters to CP17 and talked to Jim some more. We met some folks that were coming in and chatted a bit. Then we headed off looking for more firewood. We found a large birch log but it was too long to put in the canoe so we towed it behind us.



Robin Lake – northeast of Crotch Lake

On the way back we came across Dennis from Pennsylvania. Dennis had a cool looking cedar strip canoe which was built for solo. He had been in the park for 6 days and was on his last day. He told us about a unique lake nearby. It was strange in that the May Flies were out around this lake but not anywhere else. Due to the May Flies being out there were many birds like robins and black birds up at Robin L. Dennis had spent one night there.

You can't book Robin L. because the reservation system doesn't recognize it. You can book Crotch and arrange with the CP17 that you are going to Robin. It is a nice little lake with bird activity at the end of April. Dennis said it was well named. Robin Lake.



A good breeze and bottom vents make a great fire.

That night we rebuilt the fire pit. We made sure there were vent holes at the ground level to take advantage of the breeze. The birch logs burnt great. We got a good bed of coals and cooked the best steak ever. The rest of the evening was spent

solving all the world's problems and all that good male bonding stuff. We had a great time.

The next day we headed out for home. We made up a gift package for Jim and thanked him for lending us his tent and tarp and for saving our weekend. We went back to my friends place where I spent the night and we partied some more. The next day I helped put his dock in the water then went home. It was a great Algonquin Adventure. Not one I would like to repeat but a memorable one.

Al