

Kejimikujik National Park

Cover: Morning mist on Mersey River

Jacques Landing

Tree lichen

Introducing a park and an idea

Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than halfway to the Equator.

There is a great variety of land forms in this immense country, and National Parks have been created to preserve examples for you and for generations to come.

Kejimikujik, approximately 145 square miles in area, is a superb example of inland Nova Scotia, with its lakes, streams and forests. Under development since 1964, the land was a gift from the people of Nova Scotia.

The park was named after its largest lake. Kejimikujik is a Micmac Indian word, meaning "place that swells". Its significance in relation to the lake is obscure.

The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that National Parks are "dedicated to the people for their benefit, education and enjoyment", and must remain "unimpaired for future generations."

The park environment

Each National Park has its own character, its unique story as a living outdoor museum. The Kejimikujik story is the charm of numerous lakes with countless islands and concealed coves, the diversity of gently rolling landscapes and a mixture of coniferous and hardwood forests.

Land of lakes

The flat landscape and abundance of lakes in Kejimikujik National Park are a heritage of the last ice age in Canada, when thick glaciers scoured the rocks and gouged shallow lakes. After the climate warmed and the ice melted, huge granite boulders carried by the ice were scattered across the land and left in the lakes.

The largest lake is Kejimikujik, which is about five miles long and three miles wide. It is fed by three rivers, but drained by only one, the Mersey. One large area of the lake is so shallow and rocky that it is hazardous for boating. Local sportsmen call it the "granite barrens".

The layer of glacial soil left behind after the ice melted is generally thin and rocky, and covers the underlying parent rock, except in a few places. The eastern portion of the park is underlain by slates and quartzites of very ancient origin. Here the deeper soil was later pushed into dome-shaped hills by the powerful glacial ice. The western portion is higher and consists mainly of granite rock formed much later than the rocks in the eastern part.

Plants

Plant life in Kejimikujik National Park reflects the influence of climate and historical factors. After the last ice of the Pleistocene melted, plants invaded this area from two major plant zones. The northern hardwood forest of eastern North America and the northern coniferous forest of northern Canada meet here and intermingle.



Almost all of the forest has either been logged or burned within the past 200 years, but regeneration is rapid, owing to the favourable climate. The forest is generally a mixture of hardwoods and conifers, but pure stands occur where local conditions are favourable to particular species. Red oak, sugar maple, beech and white birch grow on the hills and on other well-drained soil. In the lower, wetter areas grow red maple, black spruce, red spruce and larch. Hemlock thrives along the rivers and lakes. White pine is scattered everywhere and pure stands grow on abandoned farmland near the park entrance. Wire birch and balsam fir also grow on land that has been farmed, logged or burned over.

A small portion of the park contains plants normally found much farther south, such as green brier, meadow beauty and bladderwort. This has led botanists to suggest that these plants entered Nova Scotia over the exposed coastal plain at a time when the sea level was much lower.

Wildflowers are most abundant in the spring before the hardwood trees form a shade canopy over the forest floor. Typical flowers are mayflower or trailing arbutus, violet, starflower, painted trillium, common lady slipper orchid, spotted coral-root orchid, bunchberry and wild iris. Goldenrod and aster are plentiful in late summer. Poison ivy is present here and should be avoided.

Large, treeless bogs often border lakes and low-lying wet areas. They are crowded with low, hardy shrubs which belong to the heath family, including rhodora, leather leaf, labrador tea and sheep laurel. Huckleberry and blueberry are abundant on poor acidic soil.

Animals

Animals, like plants, depend on suitable environment for survival. Chipmunks feed on the abundant nuts and seeds found in hardwood forests in the park, and survive the winter by hibernating. Often seen in the mixed woods are red squirrel and white-tailed deer, while porcupines make their home in hemlock stands. Black bears are occasionally seen in remote areas, especially in bogs where huckleberries or blueberries grow.

Active at night, and rarely seen, are raccoon, bobcat, varying hare and northern flying squirrel. Beaver, muskrat and river otter thrive along the waterways. All are protected and must not be molested or disturbed in any way.

Bird life is abundant both in the woods and on the water. Again, birds live in zones which supply their needs for food and shelter. Often seen on the lakes where they nest are common loons, great black-backed and herring gulls, osprey and black ducks. Blue jay, grey jay, robin, veery, slate-coloured junco, and countless sparrows and warblers are active in the woods. Colourful woodpeckers are numerous here, and even the large pileated woodpecker is sometimes seen.



The park and vicinity have more types of reptiles and amphibians than any other area in eastern Canada except southern Ontario. Five species of salamander, eight species of frog and toad, five species of snake and three species of turtle survive here owing to the mild climate. They escape the winter by hibernating. Possibly relics from a warmer climatic period from 6,000 to 4,000 years ago, the ribbon snake and Blanding's turtle are unique to this area in the Atlantic Provinces.

Game fish found in Kejimikujik include eastern brook trout, European brown trout and white perch. The warm, shallow water is not ideally suited to trout.

The fish hatchery at Grafton Lake, operated by the Department of Environment, is a pleasant spot to visit.

A brief park history

Hundreds of years before the first European discovered Canada, these woods were the winter home of the nomadic Micmac Indians. After fishing all summer on Nova Scotia's coasts, they moved inland in search of caribou and other game, and often camped beside the rivers and lakes of Kejimikujik. Primitive arrow-heads and pottery have been found in the park, and rock etchings or petroglyphs, on the lakeshore depict Micmac legends. After about 200 years of contact with Europeans, the Micmac was greatly reduced in numbers and Indian reservations

Nova Scotia



were established, one of which was at Kejimikujik Lake. In 1842 there were about 40 Micmacs here, but they soon wandered on.

In the 1820's the surrounding communities of Maitland Bridge and New Grafton were settled, and a few farms were cleared on the present park.

The park is largely unsuited to farming and settlement, but has been heavily logged in the past. In early times white pine and red oak were cut and floated down the Mersey River to help build sailing ships along the coast. Numerous sawmills also operated within the park, and in more recent years conifers were cut for the manufacture of pulp and paper.

Since about the turn of this century, the Kejimikujik wilderness has been widely known as a sportsman's paradise. A rod and gun club operated on Jim Charles Point as early as 1909, and catered to paying guests soon after. Other resorts and private cottages were also active until the area became a National Park.

How to get there

The only way to reach the park is by car or boat. The road entrance is at Maitland Bridge on Highway 8, which runs north-south from Annapolis Royal to Liverpool, Nova Scotia. The closest port of entry is Digby, which has frequent daily ferry service from and to Saint John, New Brunswick. The park is accessible by motor boat via the Mersey River and by canoe from several other directions as well.

Amphibious aircraft may not land in the park except with prior permission from the superintendent. **Admission to the park is free.**

How to enjoy the park

Season—The park is open all year. However, some visitor services are only seasonal. Most people come in summer, but winter sports of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are growing in popularity.

Canoeing—This is one of the best ways to explore the park. There are three established canoe routes, all suitable for overnight camping. Detailed information is available from the park information office and from any park warden.

Boating—Motor boats may be used on Kejimikujik Lake, provided they carry proper safety equipment and conform with federal navigation regulations. For the protection of boaters, a 10-mph speed limit is in force.

Boat Rentals—Canoes, rowboats and motor boats, can be rented in the park.

Walking—There are several good trails in the park, of varying lengths and different wilderness experiences. Many of these trails are suitable for overnight camping, and detailed information concerning them is available from the park information office and from any park warden.



Fishing—To fish in the park, a licence must be bought. At the time this was written, the licence required was a provincial one, and provincial fishing regulations applied, but by the time you read this, fishing in the park may well have been transferred to federal jurisdiction. Please inquire upon arrival.

Some don'ts

Initialling, marking, collecting, removing or damaging any rock, fossil, structure, soil—any part of the environment—is expressly forbidden. So are picking flowers and removing or damaging plants or trees. No plant life, no matter how abundant, is exempt from this restriction.

Feeding bears and harassing, capturing or killing any animal life are also strictly forbidden. The only exemption is fish, taken on permit.

You may bring your dog or cat, but dogs must be kept on a leash. No permit or vaccination certificate is required.

Where to stay

Camping brings you into the closest contact with the natural environment and the values for which the park was created. Facilities are provided at one major campground at Jeremy Bay and more are planned for the future.

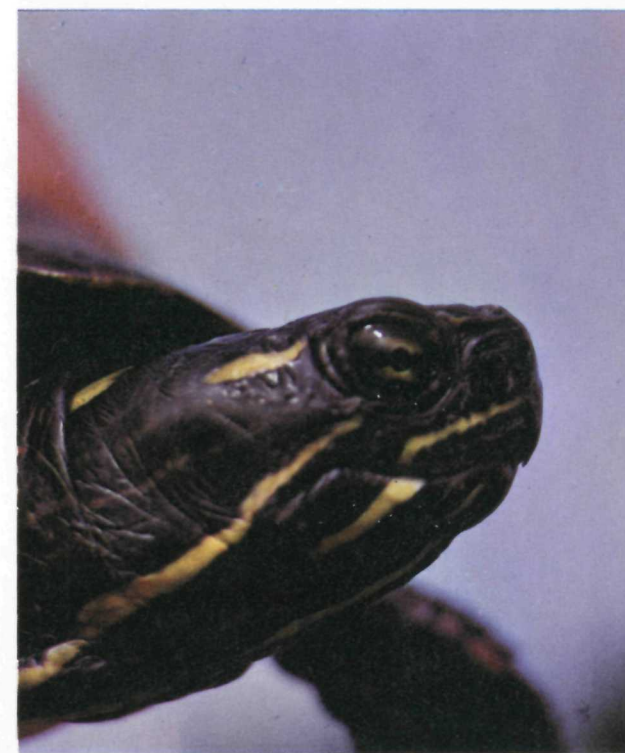
Tents, trailers, and tent-trailers are welcome, although there are no trailer "hook-ups." A nominal daily fee is charged. Camping space is allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Campgrounds open about mid-May and close about September 30, depending on weather conditions. The maximum allowable stay in a campground is two weeks.

It is not permissible to camp outside established campgrounds, although visitors on overnight trails or boat trips may camp en route, provided they have previously registered with a park warden and obtained a travel permit (no charge). There is no overnight accommodation in the park other than camping. Details of commercial accommodation in the surrounding area may be obtained from the Nova Scotia Travel Bureau at Halifax, Bridgewater, Liverpool, Annapolis Royal and Digby, N.S.

Fires

Fires may be lit only in indoor fireplaces, in outdoor fireplaces provided by the park, or in portable stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or picnic areas, and all coals must be dumped in existing park fireplaces.

Anyone who observes an unattended fire in the park should try to extinguish it, or if it is beyond control, report it to the nearest park employee.



How to get the most out of your visit

To help you understand and appreciate Kejimikujik's natural environment, you are invited to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by a park naturalist and his staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, land formations, lakes, plants and animals are interrelated. It will make your stay more rewarding.

By day there are conducted hikes; in the evening, in the campgrounds, there are talks, usually illustrated by slides, and sometimes films are shown.

Self-guiding trails, roadside exhibits, signs and viewpoints, as well as slide shows and displays in an interpretive trailer, also explain the park's natural features.

A naturalist will meet and address organized groups if arrangements are made in advance. Information on the interpretive program is available from bulletin boards, the park information centre, the trailer and park staff.

Where to get information

Prospective visitors may obtain information on Kejimikujik by writing to the Superintendent, Kejimikujik National Park, Maitland Bridge, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia. Requests for information on other National Parks should be addressed to The Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 400 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H4.

Upon arrival, assistance may be obtained from the information office, about three-quarters of a mile from the park entrance. Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes and tell you about the various areas and facilities in the park. Special events are posted on bulletin boards.

The park wardens, charged with protecting the natural values of the park and with visitor safety, are particularly helpful in planning trips into isolated areas.



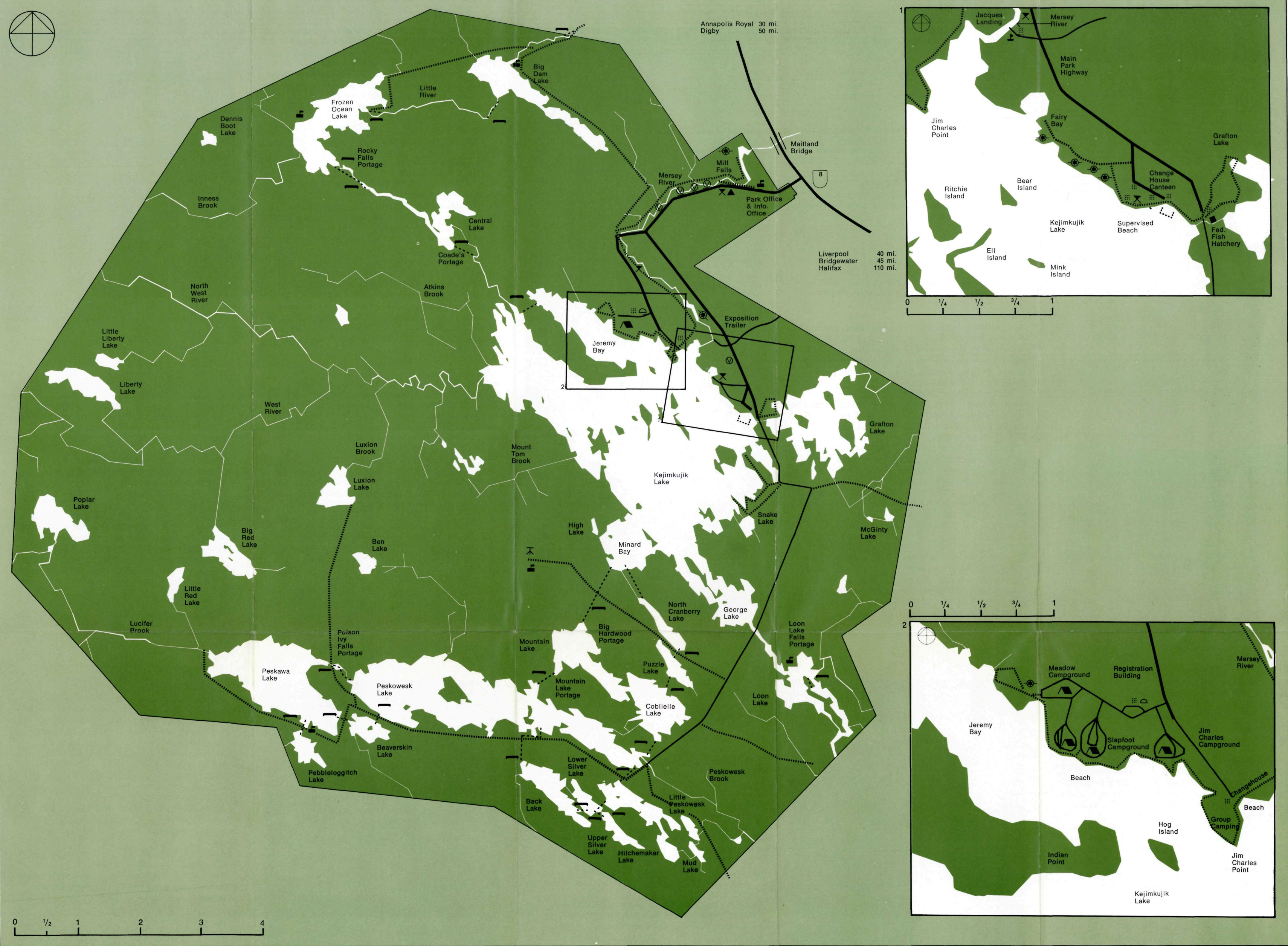
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Kejimikujik National Park

Note: This is a reference map only, designed to give you a general idea of what you will find in Kejimikujik National Park. It is not to be considered as a precise hiking, boating or road map.

- Legend**
- Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Stream
 - Lake
 - Walking or Hiking Trail
 - Warden's Cabin
 - Picnic Area
 - Campground
 - Supervised Beach
 - Boat Launching and Rentals
 - Parking Area
 - Canoe Portage
 - Highway Viewpoint
 - Nature Trail
 - Outdoor Theatre
 - Fire Tower
 - Highway Number



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