

# Killarney Outfitters

## Killarney Provincial Park Lake and Portage Descriptions

### **CHIKANISHING CREEK AND GEORGIAN BAY, Killarney Provincial Park**

#### **DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT**

Chikanishing Creek Access Point is located just off Highway 637, just minutes from the George Lake campground. Turn off at the sign marking Chikanishing Creek Road, drive a short distance to find the parking lot and put in area.

Paddle a short distance down Chikanishing to reach the creek mouth on Georgian Bay. This quick route down the creek is a great place for less-experienced kayakers to practice their skills before heading out on Georgian Bay. Once you reach the bay, we recommend a quick look backwards at the entrance to the creek to take note of its appearance. You'll be thankful for this mental snapshot on your return!

#### **CROWN LAND CAMPING**

Philip Edward Island and the smaller islands around it are almost all Crown Land, meaning that no camping permits are required for Canadian citizens. If you are an international visitor, your rentals from Killarney Outfitters will exempt you from these permits as well. However, you will be required to purchase parking permits in order to leave vehicles at the Chikanishing Access Point. These are available for purchase at the George Lake Campground. Leave them in your window and you're ready to go!

Since it is Crown Land, you may camp anywhere on Philip Edward Island and the surrounding islands. This allows great flexibility in terms of your route – just keep paddling until you get tired or find the perfect spot. Although a rarity, remember that bears can (and will) swim out to island campsites, so take every precaution that you would on the mainland.

\*Please note that a section of the northern shore of Collins Inlet is within the Killarney Provincial Park Boundary, so permits are required for the two campsites there.

#### **GEORGIAN BAY**

Georgian Bay is separated from the rest of Lake Huron by Manitoulin Island (the largest lake island in the world) to the north, and the Bruce Peninsula to the west. The bay is often referred to as the "Sixth Great Lake" due to its enormity and the fact that it behaves like a great lake – creating its own waves, currents, and even weather. The granite which forms the basin of Georgian Bay, and the islands within it, is a small part of the Canadian Shield – bedrock was exposed over 11,000 years ago by glacial activity at the end of the last ice age. The aqua clear waters found throughout Lake Huron are fully on display here; set against the magnificent rock formations that comprise Philip Edward and Manitoulin Islands. Like much of the Killarney area, the rugged beauty of Georgian Bay was a great source of inspiration for the Group of Seven artists these artist are celebrated Canadian painters most famous for their Canadian wilderness landscapes.

Archaeologists have made discoveries at Sheguiandah (on Manitoulin Island) which indicate that Paleo-Indian and Archaic cultures lived in the Georgian Bay region from 10,000 BCE to 2000 BCE. Later, Georgian Bay was the territory of the Anishinaabeg First Nations peoples on the northern shore, and the Huron-Petun (Wyandot) to the south. At this time, the waters of the bay functioned as an important trade route between the Algonquin and Huron Nations. Manitoulin (meaning "spirit island") is revered as sacred land by the Anishinaabe people who used to inhabit it.

After the European discovery of North America, Etienne Brulé became the first European to explore the Bay in 1610. Brulé was sent by Samuel de Champlain, then Governor of New France, to exchange places with a young Huron named Savignon. The famous Champlain himself visited soon after, and became the first European to map the area in 1615–1616. At this time, Champlain named the Bay "La Mer Douce", meaning "the calm sea". In 1822 it was renamed "Georgian Bay" after King George IV of England by Lieutenant Henry Wolsey Bayfield of the Royal Navy.

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The Killarney region was first settled by French Canadian fur trader Étienne Augustin de Lamorandière and his Anishinaabe wife Josephite Saisaigonokwe in 1820. The couple established a trading post named Shebahonaning (“canoe passage”) where the town is now located. Until 1962, when Highway 637 was constructed, the primary access to Killarney from the outside world was via Georgian Bay.

### **PHILIP EDWARD ISLAND**

If you are planning to paddle the loop around the island, it is best to do so counter-clockwise due to the prevailing winds in the area. This route covers approximately 50km of island shoreline from start to finish. From the Chikanishing Creek mouth, head into Georgian Bay and follow the southern shoreline towards Beaverstone Bay on the island's south eastern end. On windier days it is best to paddle through the channels formed by the many islands rather than venturing further out to keep out of any unpleasant weather.

An alternative option for shorter trips is to simply tour around the islands on Philip Edward Island's southern shore such as the Fox Islands. We recommend the south shore rather than Collins Inlet for smaller trips because it is more scenic and there are far more islands, peninsulas, and bays for you to explore. The southern shore is not sheltered from the Bay as Collins Inlet is, so be prepared for some waves.

Philip Edward Island has been rated by several international canoe and kayak magazines as one of the top ten paddle destinations in North America. It was originally formed 4.5 billion years ago with the rest of the Canadian Shield. Over time, Philip Edward Island was split from the mainland by the fault line which lies beneath Collins Inlet. More recent glacial activity (roughly 4 million to 12 thousand years ago) has scraped and carved out spectacular rock formations and left behind the innumerable small islands, bays, inlets, and coves.

### **COLLINS INLET**

Collins Inlet is a beautiful location that is steeped in Canadian history. Long before the paddlers and motor boats of visitors today this was an important sheltered route for Native Peoples and early European explorers as they navigated the rough waters of Georgian Bay. Samuel de Champlain – founder of Quebec City and New France in 1608, passed through Collins Inlet to make camp at (the present day location of) Killarney in 1615.

An old logging town once thrived at the mouth of the Mahzenazing River when the industry was booming in the late 19th century. Beginning in the 1850's, logs felled in the area around Bell, Johnnie, and David Lakes and were sent to Collins Inlet via the Mahzenazing River to be milled. All that is left to remind us of these bygone days are the remains of the old sawmill which still litter the area. Massive pilings that once supported wharves stand out of the water to speak to the intensity of past industrial activity. Although mere ruins today, this was certainly a prosperous hub at one time – capable of supporting several lumber companies and hundreds of citizens by the 1880s. In 1918 a fire destroyed the mill and effectively shut down economic activity, causing the decline and eventual abandonment of Collins Inlet.

### **FOX ISLANDS**

The Foxes are a great destination for those who don't have time to paddle the entire loop around Philip Edward Island, as it is only a day's paddle out to them. The one drawback is that it involves paddling on the open waters of Georgian Bay for 2-3 km, so this is only advisable in good weather conditions. Around the Foxes there is plenty to explore by foot and by boat; it is all set against a magnificent backdrop of scenery. To one side the La Cloche Mountains tower above the trees, while to the other Manitoulin Island rises out of the vastness of Georgian Bay. These small islands are a group of smooth pink granite rock formations topped by juniper bushes and rugged pines. These islands play host to a great variety of amphibians and reptiles, including three of Georgian Bay's threatened species of snakes (eastern fox snake, eastern hognose snake, and the massasauga rattlesnake), spotted turtles, and five-lined skinks.

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The Fox Islands are located roughly 7km from the Chikanishing Creek mouth, just off the southern shoreline of Philip Edward Island. When you exit the Chikanishing, paddle towards the tip of Philip Edward Island ("South Point"). Bear south around this point and continue along the southern shoreline of the island, passing dozens of other small islands along the way. The Foxes have many sheltered bays in which you can land your kayak

Please note that Low Island is privately owned, and thus the only one of the Foxes where visitors are not permitted.

### **Solomon Island**

Solomon Island is one of the larger islands around the western end of Philip Edward, and a lovely place to camp.

### **East and West Desjardins Bay**

Together the two Desjardins are one of the larger bays on the southern shoreline. The many small islands, shoals, and unique rock formations make this area lot of fun to paddle and explore.

### **Solomon's Bay**

Hiding behind Campbell Islands lies Solomon's Bay, also accessible (depending on water levels) via the marsh on the north-eastern end of East Desjardins Bay. This is a beautiful sheltered area.

### **Big Rock Portage**

The one optional portage in this area is located around the mid-point of Philip Edward Island on the Big Rock peninsula. This 400m portage is the best way though this particular area on a windy day, as this is the roughest water around Philip Edward. During

### **Garbage Bay**

Garbage Bay is quite charming with many rocks. As its name states there, at one time, was a "pile of garbage" or bygones from another decade on its shore; this as been cleaned up over the past years, however, still holds its name.

### **The Chickens**

This group of islands are a popular resting place for paddlers making their way to French River. Many also enjoy checking out these islands as day trips while circumnavigating Philip Edward Island. With clear water and rounded rock formations The Chickens are inviting for explorers and photographers alike.

For the more adventurous advanced paddlers – The Hawk Islands and Green Island are an approximate 4-6km from the southern shore of Philip Edward Island. Island hop from The Foxes to make this trip more scenic! This route is only suggested for strong paddlers as it can be very choppy on the open water and wind conditions can change fairly quickly. Check the marine weather report for Georgian Bay before venturing out to this area.

### **RETURN POINT – CHIKANISHING CREEK**

This return trip can be a bit tricky; the entrance to the Chikanishing Creek is easy to miss if you do not come at it from the right direction. The best way to go about this is to paddle due north towards the shoreline from the very tip of Philip Edward Island (South Point), then turn your boat westward and paddle between two small islands on your left and the shore on your right. This is a marshy area that is deceptively passable and leads into the Chikanishing Creek.

If you are going the right way, you will see a painted yellow star and a right hand turn street sign, which have been put up to help you find your way. If you pass the Chikanishing Creek access point you will start to see the East Lighthouse for the town of Killarney. This is when you need to turn back and try again.

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Paddle up Chikanishing Creek back to the access point where you started. You may leave your boat here, and we will come and pick it up. Please return your equipment to Killarney Outfitters. There is a large grey box in front of the paddle shop for late gear returns.