

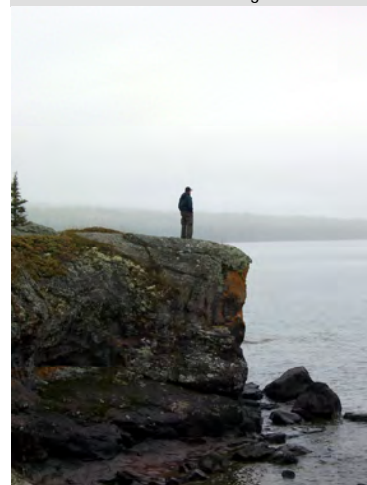
SECTION SEVEN: Water Routes

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Overview:

These are descriptions for some of the water routes on the island. It is not complete and they are only routes I have done, or am planning on doing soon. All water routes vary greatly in difficulty due to protection from the lake, and will vary GREATLY based on the water conditions. Any of the routes on Lake Superior, can in fact, be life threatening. The inland lakes are not as threatening (with the exception of Siskiwit Lake), but care should be taken just the same. I am going to dwell mainly on the waters of Lake Superior in terms of warnings. The lake IS cold. It is very cold! Did I mention it is cold? If you end up in the waters of Lake Superior, you have little time before your body and brain will begin to lose function. I stay near the shore and only cross open waters when the conditions are good, and it cuts a lot of miles off the route. There are also many areas where it is hard, if not impossible, to land on the shore. The vast majority of these areas occur along the north facing shores of the island. In addition to the water conditions and exposure, the big lake can have very strange currents due to being by the main island and all of the surrounding islands. There can be a surface flow of waves, and a large rolling current underneath, that is usually going in a different direction. This usually occurs when around spaces between the islands and exposed to the big lake, but also happens at times when paddling straight coastline and the wind direction is different than the general lake flow direction.

Bluff near Rock Harbor Lighthouse.



I list both statute miles and nautical miles at the beginning of the description for the boaters. The difference is that a nautical mile is the distance, following the curvature of the earth, from one minute of latitude to the next and a statute mile is the straight line distance between the two, not taking into account the curvature of the earth. Because the straight line distance between two points is shorter than a curved path between them, a statute mile is 5280 feet while a nautical mile (at the equator) is 6076 feet. Aircraft and sea vessels use nautical miles for navigation because they cover great distances and must account for the curvature of the earth when planning.

At the beginning of each trail description is a chart with details of the route as described below. There is a complete chart for all of these available in **Section Twelve: Reference Charts** under "Chart of the Water Routes".

About My Descriptions:

Statute and Nautical Miles: are the miles calculated by tracing the route with MyTopo Terrain Navigator™.

Danger: Paddling danger is based on the area paddled and the threat of the lake. Each route is rated on a scale from 1 to 10, a 10 being the most dangerous. The basis for this is a 1 being paddling across Lake Livermore and a 10 being paddling from Duncan Narrows Campground to Merritt Lane Campground or, Huginnin Cove Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground. Danger will of course vary based on the water, wind speed and wind direction. There are locations where it is impossible to get on shore in case of an emergency. Most of these are concentrated on the north shore of the island.

Overview: The general description of the route.

Key Points: The highlights and/or landmarks on the route in statute miles.

Details: A detailed description of the route with landmarks and statute miles.

Relative Campgrounds: A listing of the adjacent campgrounds to go to or come from.

GPS Miles (if listed): are based on my actually paddling the route. They take into consideration the actual route taken based on conditions and where I felt like paddling (i.e. wanting to see something or going to a shore to avoid wind and/or waves) and they are averaged if there is more than one reading.

Paddle Time (if listed): is based on actually paddling the route and include conditions when paddling. This is to give some idea of the difficulty and time based on conditions.

Side Trips (if listed): Places on the way or nearby that may be of interest.

Detail Maps: The detail maps are captured from maps at 1:24,000 scale and reduced to 45%, unless indicated differently. Miles shown on map are statute miles.

Beaver Island Campground to Grace Island Campground

East to West

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 3.28 | 2.85 | 6.0 |

Overview: This is a very nice paddle that goes almost the entire length of Washington Harbor. It ends at the mouth of the harbor and cuts south toward the protection of Grace Island. There are some fairly open sections that can be rough when the wind and waves are coming from the west or southwest. The last section, at the mouth of the harbor, and going south around Card Point, can have some very interesting currents and can be dangerous in a west wind.

Key Points:

- 0.00 – Beaver Island Campground dock
- 1.17 – Beginning of small cove to south
- 2.67 – West end of Card Point
- 3.28 – Grace Island Campground dock

Details: Leaving the dock from the campground, it is usually good to cut across to the south shore of the harbor, unless conditions allow you to paddle right down the center of the harbor. Cutting south from the dock, you reach the shoreline at 0.33 miles. Once along the shore, the shoreline is relatively straight until 1.17 miles, when there is a small inlet of about 700', lasting for only 900'. It then becomes relatively straight again coming to Card Point, and making a turn straight to the south at about 2 miles, and ending up due west of the point at 2.67 miles. Heading south from here, the west point of Grace Island is 0.2 miles away. The west point of the island is a sand bar, and once around it, the campground dock is about 0.2 miles away.

GPS Miles: 2.75 miles

Paddle Time: 55 minutes on a flat lake with light following wind

Side Trips: The America Shipwreck is 1.07 miles away. Washington Island and Barnum Island with the John's Hotel is about 1.25 miles away.



Looking east towards Beaver Island (with dock) in the fall.



Sandbar at the east end of Grace Island.



Belle Isle Campground to Crystal Cove Dock

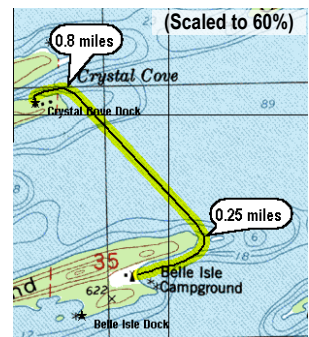
South to North

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 0.81 | 0.70 | 5.0 |

Overview: This paddle is a piece of cake if the conditions are right. The only variable that can hurt you is a stiff wind coming down Amygdaloid Channel. This wind can kick up in the heat of the sun and you should keep an eye on conditions once you get there. Even in a stiff current or wind, it can be paddled, but you will most likely have to do some tacking.

Key Points:

- 0.00 – Belle Isle Campground beach
- 0.25 – East end of Belle Island



0.75 – East end of Amygdaloid Island

0.81 – Crystal Cove dock

GPS Miles: 0.76 miles

Paddle Time: 21 minutes in 6 to 8" waves and a few white caps to the side / 23 minutes in 10 to 12" waves and many white caps tacking into waves and back

Crystal Cove dock and some buildings, 2012.



Belle Isle from Crystal Cove south bluff.



Birch Island Campground to Pickerel Cove Campground

West to East

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 2.39 | 2.08 | 7.0 |

Overview: This route is very dependent on the lake conditions. The nice thing is you can see the north side of the lake before exiting McCargoe Cove. The entrance to the cove can have some very tricky currents. Once out of the cove, there are very few places where it is possible to land safely until you get into Herring Bay. There is one open stretch of water cutting across a bay that, if conditions got bad, you could go into and find a place to land, but it is a half mile in. This is the last place to bail until about a quarter mile before the campground.

Key Points:

0.00 – Birch Island CG dock

0.03 – West side of McCargoe Cove entrance

0.64 – Beginning of open water and a bay

1.00 – Other side of the bay

2.39 – Pickerel Cove CG

Details: Leaving the dock at the campground, you pass through the entrance of McCargoe Cove where the currents can be quite interesting. There is a small cove to the east, it is possible to tuck into and to observe conditions or wait. After passing this cove, you paddle past a peninsula, and cut across a long bay and into open water that lasts for just under 0.4 miles. This is the most dangerous part of the trip as you are up to a quarter mile from a shore while cutting across. Once across this bay, it is possible to follow the shore the rest of the way, but the shoreline is all rock a cliff faces. There are a few places to land, but no where you can get up the cliffs off lake level. At about 1.7 miles, the shoreline becomes a bit more forgiving and it is possible to land. The campground is hard to miss as it is in a bay and there is a well-worn trail leading to it. The portage post is very easy to miss and is a few feet west of where you see the trail to the campground. Be sure to read the description for "Herring Bay to Pickerel Cove" under "**Section 8: Portages**" before going here.

GPS Miles: 2.25 miles



View across the long bay.



Cliffs along the south shore of Herring Bay.



Chippewa Harbor Campground to Lake Whittlesey Portage

East to West

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 1.67 | 1.45 | 3.5 |

Overview: This is a wonderful paddle with some of the best views on the island. There are some great cliffs and it has a great wilderness feeling. The route is very well protected, and except the cliff faces, there are always places to land.

Key Points:

- 0.00 – Chippewa Harbor CG dock
- 0.60 – Enter the narrows dividing the harbor
- 0.75 – exit the narrows dividing the harbor
- 1.30 – harbor begins to narrow towards portage
- 1.67 – Chippewa Harbor to Lake Whittlesey portage post

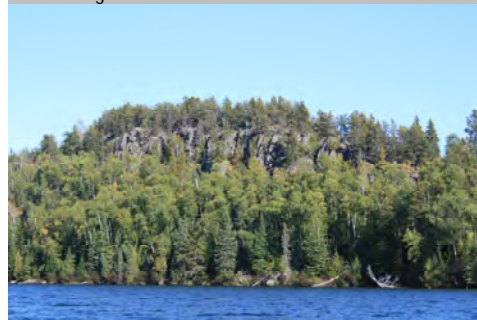
Details: On leaving the dock and heading west along the shore, you will come to the wreck of the "Ah-wa-neesha" along the shoreline. Continuing west then southwest towards open water, you will see a narrows that goes through to the other side of Chippewa Harbor. Passing through the narrows, the water opens up again and there are very nice cliffs and rock outcropping along the south side. This is a nice paddle to enjoy the views before the harbor begins to narrow again and comes to the easy to find portage at the southwest end. Rest up as this portage is not as easy as it looks.

GPS Miles: 1.80 miles

Paddle Time: 55 minutes with light head wind (empty canoe) / 32 minutes with light following wind (empty canoe). / 44 minutes with calm waves and wind



Cliffs along the south side of the west section of the harbor.



Duncan Bay Campground to Duncan / Five Fingers Portage

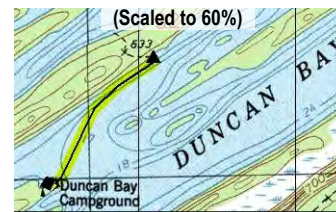
Either Way

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 0.43 | 0.36 | 2.0 |

Overview: This route very easy and it would be very rare that it could not be done.

GPS Miles: 0.46 miles

Paddle Time: 14 minutes with following wind.



Duncan / Tobin Portage to Duncan Bay Campground

Either Way

| Statute | Nautical | Danger |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 0.9 | 0.78 | 2.0 |

Overview: Except for a very short stretch of open water from the shore to the campground, this is an easy paddle and can be done under most conditions.

GPS Miles: 0.9 miles

