EXPLORING KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK AND NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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Once again (Bird 2023), the NSIS sponsored a Saturday summer trip to the fabulous Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site, with the primary aim to have a guided tour of the indigenous petroglyph site on the edge of Kejimkujik Lake. The trip went really well, with 7 of us at participating at the start, then 5 of us after the petroglyph tour. I checked at the park on Friday afternoon to confirm the guided tour. They were all set for the tour but unfortunately could not provide a naturalist for a guided interpretive forest walk as in previous years (Bird 2023). Undeterred, some modest afternoon hikes were proposed instead.

On the Saturday morning, after meeting at the Visitors Center, we drove to parking lot one at Merrymakedge Beach. Two very knowledgeable parks staff met us and explained the history of the Mi'kmaq cultural landscape at Kejimkujik, while standing in front of the beautiful historic site monument (Fig 1). We then walked a forest trail over to the petroglyphs, located on large rocks at the lakes edge. We walked on the rocks in bare feet (no boots allowed) and saw the various engraved carvings up close (Fig 2, 3). They are hard to see, worn down by age and lake ice, but the guide pointed some out to us and explained their cultural significance. Fortunately, this site is now protected against vandalism.

After the informative morning tour, we lunched at Merrymakedge Beach, enjoying the beautiful view across the lake and canoeists in the distance. Surprisingly, there were few other people, but the café was open for coffee and snacks. After lunch, I guided five of us on two walks – Peter Point, seen stretching into the lake across from the beach, and the well-trodden path from the visitors center alongside the Mersey River and its water falls. Both walks immersed us in the beauty and tranquility of the park. The weather was perfect and there were few bugs to bug us! All in all, it was a fine late summer's day. We enjoyed lots of good conversation and took lots of photos (Figs 4). Everyone arrived home safely after a long day. Please stay tuned to our excursion program as next year awaits!

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Acknowledgements We thank Parks Canada staff for their time and expertise, making this trip a success, and trip participants for their pictures.

REFERENCES

Bird, H.M.B. (2023). NSIS Excursions 2023. *Proceedings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science* 53(1): 153-156.



Fig 1 **Park interpreters at the Historic Site Monument (Helga Guderley).**



Fig 2 **Petroglyphs on the Keji Lake shoreline (Helga Guderley).**



Fig 3 **The park interpreter Jonathan describing the significance of the various petroglyphs on the Keji Lake shoreline (Michelle Paon).**



Fig 4 **The happy hikers on the shoreline at Peter Point, Kejimkujik Lake.**