

# KEJIMKUJIK NATIONAL PARK

May 25 – 27, 2014

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Berwick and District School

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board

## Who?

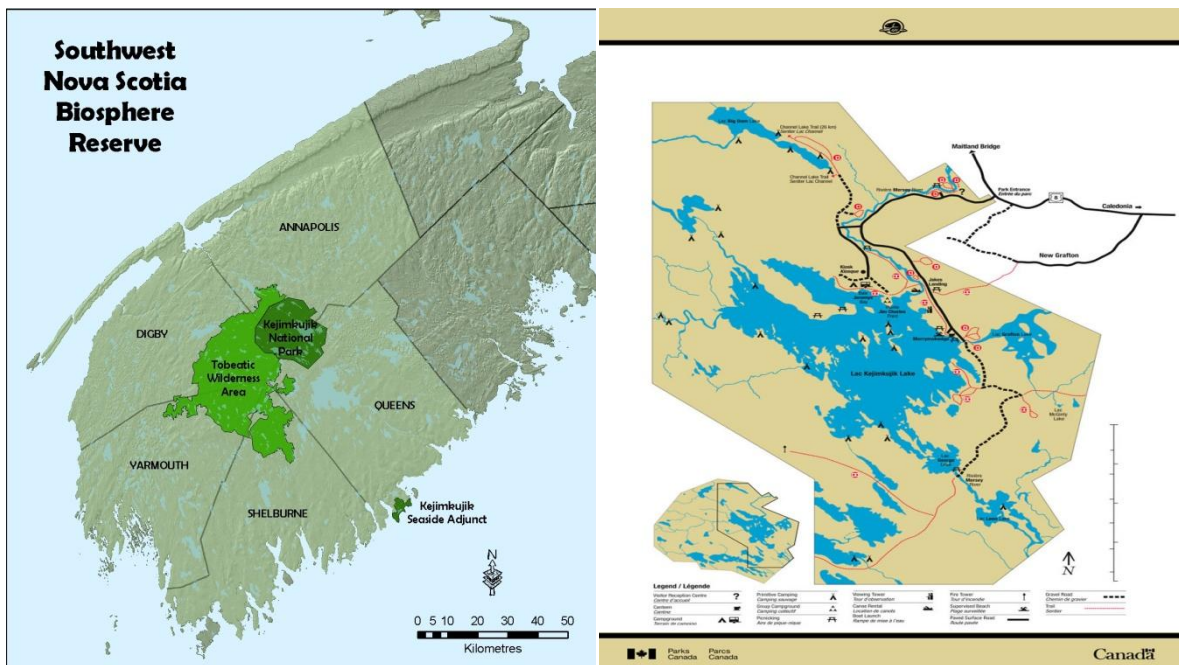
- Twenty one grade 8 students from Berwick and District School.
- Two teachers and four parent chaperones.

## When?

Students left Berwick and District School the morning of Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup> and returned to school in the afternoon on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## Where?

Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia. We stayed on two side by side group camp sites on Jim Charles Point.



## What?

Students arrived at Berwick and District School on the morning of Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>. After loading the cars with all the equipment, students and parents joined together in a smudging ceremony led by Jude Gerrard, a student services consultant in the Mi'kmaq services division with the department of education. This was a great way to start off the trip as Kejimikujik has great cultural and historical significance to the Mi'kmaq people. This ceremony reminded students of the importance of Kejimikujik and of the respect that needs to be shown while there.



After registering at the visitor information center and collecting information about the park, the group hiked out to Mill Falls. This is a short hike of about 2 km but has great scenic views and was a perfect spot to have a picnic. Students ate lunch by the falls and enjoyed skipping rocks in the river.

Our camp site was on Jim Charles' Point. It was here that many Mi'kmaq chiefs would meet together many hundred years ago as many lakes and rivers meet in Lake Kejimikujik. Our site was composed of two different group sites with a large shelter, a washroom and numerous fire pits. Students had to work together



to set up their tents and organize their food. For many of them, this was their first time setting up a tent

or cooking without the help of their parents. We were lucky and were the only ones in the group camping area. This gave the students a lot of space to run around and explore. Many of them look advantage of the large field near the site to play their own forms of baseball and tag.

After setting up camp, the group left for the second hike of the day. Hemlocks and Hardwoods is a 7 km hike at the beginning of the backcountry portion of the park. The trail goes through an old growth forest and shows students the diversity of Nova Scotian forests. Students took photos to bring back to school to look at geographical factors in Nova Scotia. Many of them noticed the change in temperature in old and new forests, some of the largest trees in Kejimikujik, one of the oldest trees in the park at 400 years old and a tree growing on a large rock. They also got to see what backcountry camping sites look like in a national park. This gave students an opportunity to see what camping sites might look like if they continue with Duke of Edinburgh and do some backcountry camping.



For the first evening, chaperones made a fire for students to come together and make s'mores. Many students were tired and went into their tents early but others stayed up to watch the sunset by the lake. The lake was so calm and beautiful that many students just sat by the water for a long



period of time making bird calls. As the temperature dropped, students found emergency blankets in their equipment and wrapped themselves in those to lie out in the field and watch the stars. Kejimikujik is a dark sky preserve and is one of the best spots in Nova Scotia to stargaze. Some students said it was the best view of the stars they've ever seen!

The group started the second day making breakfast. Many students learned that sometimes meals don't work out as you had planned and had to readjust their meals. Some of the meals looked perfect while others tried a few times before getting it to work. The whole meal planning and preparation process was a great learning experience for the students. Many of them learned great camping cooking tips while on the trip and found new recipes they would love to try next time.

The longest hike of the trip was the Mersey River. This is a 5 km hike one way but the students hiked back as well making this a 10 km trip. The trail follows the side of the Mersey River and students had a map with them to follow and answer questions about how they knew they had reached certain points on the trail. This activity created a lot of discussion on the hike of where they were and gave students the chance to follow a map. Many students had debates about where they actually were on the map. Halfway through the hike it started to rain. Students handled this



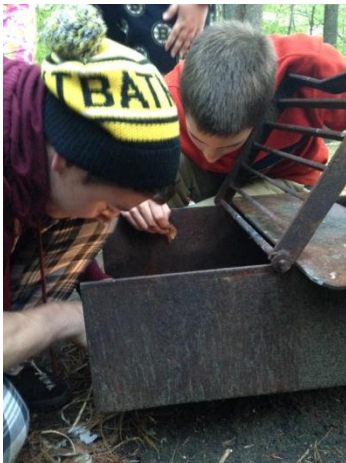
well and kept going with minimal complaining. It was a great experience for them to hike in different weather as they are better prepared to continue on with Duke of Edinburgh in the next few years.





For supper, the group went to Merrymakedge beach. At the beach there is a large shelter, a playground, a few trails with Mi'kmaq encampment recreations and a large lake, Lake Kejimkujik. Students had free time to wander around the site and play on the playground equipment. It was amazing to see a large group of 14 year old kids be so excited about playground equipment! They had a great time and many of them explored the beach and the nearby trails. We found the beginning of a wigwam

beside one of the trail which opened up a lot of great discussion on how it was built and what materials the Mi'kmaq would have used to build them.



On our last evening of the trip, all students got the opportunity to work in small groups to make their own campfires. The firewood was damp making the challenge more difficult but many students were successful while others gave up. Two students even worked with a magnesium stick and after trying for what seemed like forever, they were successful! The whole group, including the adult chaperones, was

very impressed by their dedication and their teamwork.

On our last day, we had organized a tour of the petroglyphs around Merrymakedge beach. Our tour guide was excellent and provided a bilingual tour for students and chaperones. He was very knowledgeable and talked about the history of Kejimkujik. The tour started at a cultural monument and followed a short path to the lake where historic petroglyphs cover the rocks. It is estimated that they are 400 years old but erosion is slowly erasing them from the shore.

Students were asked to remove their shoes to wander over the rocks to avoid erasing them further.

