



THE CAMP KAWARTHA

TRIP JOURNAL



The heart of tripping is connection, humility, and wonder....

-Gemma Romano, Summer Camp Director and former Trip Director



What's New?

Bring-a-Friend Discount!

Everything's better with a friend! **Campers who register with a friend are eligible for a 20% discount on their Beginner's Canoe and Camp, or Intermediate Canoe Trip fees!** Paddle lakes, traverse portages and experience the challenge, growth, and fun of tripping alongside a pal!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Virtual Canoe Trip Info Night!

March 3rd, 2026 @ 7pm EST

Wondering whether or not your child is ready to jump into tripping? Join us to learn more about everything our canoe trip programs have to offer, including 2 new sessions designed just for beginners! This meeting will happen virtually, on Tuesday, March 3rd @ 7pm EST. Click here to register:

<https://forms.office.com/r/vfhWPzvZA>



A welcome message

Paddling Together, Growing Stronger...

Hello families, and welcome to the programs we have on our youth. Read inaugural CK Trip Journal! Canoe on to hear from some very special tripping has always been a CK Alumni, explore photos from cornerstone of the summer camp past tripping seasons, and learn journey, and we're excited to share more about what we have to offer more about our 2026 trip offerings this summer. We can't wait to see and the profound impact these everyone out of the water!

A few words from Tego...

My belief in canoe tripping comes from living it for four summers at Camp Kawartha. Those seasons shaped my life, and they're the same lessons that guide how we design tripping experiences for our campers and staff. Life on the land deepens respect for nature, and leading trips shows how immersion and learning can turn that respect into stewardship. When individuals have opportunities for quiet, powerful moments, like respectfully sharing space with a moose or watching stars spill across a night sky untouched by city lights, they return home more compassionate and more aware of their impact on the environment, and those benefits ripple outward into our whole community."

-GEMMA ROMANO, SUMMER CAMP DIRECTOR





"What do I remember about leading teenage girls on canoe trips in Algonquin Park in the 90's?"

Canoe Trip Memories from Corin Ford Forrester...

I remember the sun sparkling off the water, the breeze on the lake and the smell of pine needles on a hot portage trail

I remember the laughter of the girls as we had a floating lunch in the canoes or splashed in the water of our campsite.

I remember starting a trip on a cold and windy day and paddling all day into a headwind on Lake Opeongo.

I remember eating from scratch cinnamon buns made in a Dutch oven and the taste of iodine in my lake water with iced tea crystals.

I remember the shock of seeing logging roads and trucks in the otherwise idyllic wilderness

I remember the treats that lifted spirits after a hard day of paddling and portaging: candies, a magazine and peelable facemasks.

I remember the frustrations and perseverance of the girls as they portaged canoes and heavy packs 3km through the bush

I remember how special it was to get Vito's Pizza and Kawartha Dairy ice cream in Bancroft on the drive back to camp

I remember how the group would eat dinner outside alone after returning to Camp, having gotten so use to our own company and the peace and quiet of the outdoors.

Corin Ford Forrester is a Canarvon, ON based fine art photographer exhibiting her work both locally and internationally. She is also, of course, a proud CK Alumna! Check out her work @ corinfordforrester.com or on insta @corin_ford_forrester_



Peterborough Museum and Archives VR 3262-10. Long-time Camp Director Doug Loomis and a staff member stern 2 freight canoes on Clear Lake. Photo circa 1928

A reminiscence....

The two large freight canoes...each accommodated twelve or fourteen boys with a helmsman in charge, turned out to be most useful, in fact, almost indispensable. Young, inexperienced paddlers could sit on the thwart and use a small paddle.

They soon got onto the "swing" with the result that it became a familiar sight for the cottagers in that district to see the camp canoes going across to the spring to get drinking water or to the post office or taking the Catholic boys to church on Sunday morning to Young's Point, about three miles to the Southwest. I also suspect that when Doug Loomis hadn't anything in particular for the boys to do, he would send them across the lake to the spring or post office and thus work off some of their surplus energy.

-Claude Rogers, Rotarion and Founder of Camp Kawartha



A moose spotted by campers and staff while out on trip. Photo courtesy of Gemma Romano

Alumni Spotlight

Mary Elizabeth Konrad (a.k.a Grylls)

For me, canoe trips are an unparalleled opportunity to unplug from the stresses and distractions of regular life, and instead truly feel present and connected to myself, my trip-mates, and the natural landscapes we get to call home for a few days or weeks. Camp Kawartha's canoe tripping programs gave me six summers of unforgettable memories and personal growth in a safe, empowering, and inclusive environment. I will forever be grateful."



"Camp Kawartha's canoe tripping programs gave me six summers of unforgettable memories...I will be forever grateful."

-MARY-ELIZABETH KONRAD



In Photos...Tripping 2025



Room with a view...there's no better place for a meal and some R+R than a hammock amongst the trees.



Practice makes perfect! Campers hone their portaging technique under the guidance of our highly trained staff.



Skills at work! Showcasing their personal growth and development, a camper completes a solo portage while out on trip.



A visit to the Sisters. Campers and staff embark for a day paddle to the sister islands, right here on our very own Clear Lake.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HILARY STEWART

Alumni Spotlight

Hilary Martin (a.k.a. Glow)

The tripping program at Camp Kawartha was instrumental in shaping my confidence as a teenager. I went on a nine-day canoe trip in Killarney when I was 15. Our counsellors challenged us day-by-day to take on increasingly larger leadership roles within the group and helped us work up to bigger physical challenges (like carrying a pack and a canoe on a portage). I came away from that trip more confident in my ability to work with others, make new friends, and conquer new challenges that came my way. I also learned a ton of amazing camping recipes that I still make today!

"I came away from that trip more confident in my ability to work with others, make new friends, and conquer new challenges..."



-Hilary Stewart



Mini Blog

Is a canoe trip right for my child?

Canoe tripping is one of the most rewarding experiences we can provide. Offering incredible opportunities for growth, these sessions often become unforgettable summer memories for your camper. If you're wondering whether your child is ready to take this exciting next step, we've compiled a short list of things to consider:

Enjoyment of the outdoors is a great place to start. Canoe trips mean spending several days outside, in all kinds of weather, with bugs, dirt, and relatively limited comforts. Campers don't need to be experts in the outdoors, (and we'll always do our best to make things as comfy as possible), but they should be curious, able to adapt, and open to facing new challenges in a supportive setting.

Comfort around water and basic swimming skills are important. While all trips are carefully supervised by our highly trained staff, campers should feel comfortable wearing a lifejacket and confident participating in water-based activities.

Readiness to work as part of a team is key. Canoe tripping involves cooperation, with all trip activities being tackled as part of a group. Paddling together, sharing camp responsibilities, and supporting one another on portages are just a few of the tasks campers will undertake with their peers. Children who are able to actively listen, communicate effectively, and problem-solve tend to thrive.

Finally, a willingness to try, even when things feel hard, goes a long way. Whether it's carrying a canoe, learning a new backcountry skill, or encouraging peers on a long paddle, canoe tripping encourages campers to build confidence and determination. Many campers finish their trips with a tremendous sense of accomplishment and belonging.

If your child enjoys challenge, working with peers, and time spent outdoors, they may be more ready for trip than you think! With supportive staff guiding every step of the journey, canoe tripping is a powerful opportunity for growth, both on the water and beyond.



Executive Director's Corner

Connecting with Nature

At Camp Kawartha, canoe tripping is more than an adventure, it is a way children learn to care for the world around them. Traveling by canoe slows life down. Campers learn to tune into the natural world by paddling on quiet lakes, hearing the haunting call of the loon or smelling the fragrant scent of pine. Campers work together, carry what they need, and leave places better than they found them. Overnight trips build confidence, empathy, and responsibility as children cook together, sleep under the stars, and experience the quiet rhythms of the natural world. These shared journeys help young people feel a sense of belonging to the land, and discover that stewardship begins with respect, teamwork, and wonder.

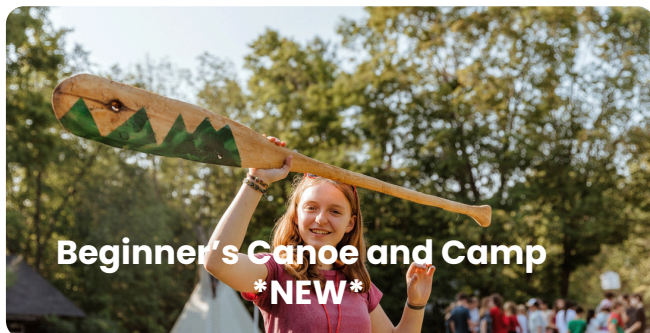
-Jacob Rodenburg, Executive Director, Camp Kawartha.

"At Camp Kawartha, canoe tripping is more than an adventure, it is a way children learn to care for the world around them."



-Jacob Rodenburg

2026 Programs at a glance...



Beginner's Canoe and Camp

NEW

- 5 or 6 night program (Multiple dates)
- Run directly from our main site on Clear Lake
- Includes a 1-2 night hike in camping trip on our 200 acre range property
- Campers receive instructional canoe programming, while also enjoying a variety of traditional overnight camp activities.
- This program is designed for beginners – the perfect introduction to camping and paddling, and serves as a foundation for longer, offsite trips in the future.

Prerequisite: None

Campers must be ages 8-12 to register



Junior Canoe Trip 2

- This 7-day, 6-night session runs from Sunday, August 9th – Saturday, August 15th
- Includes a 4-night canoe trip in Kawartha Highlands Signature Park
- Campers build confidence, resilience and independence
- Campers develop back-country and paddling skills including paddling, portaging, fire-making, navigation, water purification, etc.
- Junior Canoe Trip 2 is perfect for campers with some previous canoe trip experience who are looking broaden their skillset.

Prerequisite: None

Campers Must be 11-14 to register



Junior Canoe Trip Level 1

- This 6-day, 5-night session runs between Sunday, July 19th – Friday, July 24th
- Includes a 2-night trip in Kawartha Highlands Park
- Campers work as a team, building confidence and resilience
- Campers are introduced to back-country and paddling skills including portaging, navigation, camp set up and tear down, fire making, etc.
- Junior Canoe Trip 1 is the perfect introduction to offsite canoe tripping, and no previous experience required!

Prerequisite: None

Campers must be ages 10-12 to register



Intermediate Canoe Trip

NEW

- This 13-day, 12-night program runs from Sunday, July 5th – Friday, July 17th.
- Includes a 5-6 night canoe trip to Algonquin Park
- Campers navigate lakes and portages together, developing resilience, teamwork, and leadership skills that carry far beyond camp.
- Intermediate Canoe Trip is perfect for campers looking to develop more advanced canoe tripping and backcountry skills. Previous camping or canoe tripping experience is recommended, but not required.

Prerequisite: Some previous canoe tripping experience is recommended, but not required

Campers must be ages 13-15 to register