

Topographic Map 31 C/I
Navigation Chart 1439
Reference Map ①



Cedar Island's proximity to Kingston, abundant picnic sites and fine walking trails make it a popular destination for a leisurely day on the Water. The Cathcart Redoubt, a short walk from the dock, was an important part of the defenses of Kingston and the Rideau Canal.



ROUTE

Kingston Isles



The waters near historic Kingston hold a wealth of short and extended paddling trips for beginner through expert paddlers. The protected marshland channels of the Cataraqui River offer unique sites for bird watching, or practicing your technique for the larger waters of Lake Ontario. When the wind on the lake is up, the waters off Kingston's shore are coloured by all manner of sailboats and windsurfers harnessing its power. The Wolfe Island shores offer plenty of spots to explore and Big Sandy Bay is a popular destination for paddlers to surf the rolling waves. Cedar Island is a popular destination for daytrippers and paddlers beginning a trip into the heart of the 1000 Islands. Downriver, Milton Island is a wonderful place to end a day of paddling, walk the trails and set-up camp before watching the sun fade over Lake Ontario.

DEPARTURE POINT

An ideal access point for this route is the public boat launch at the Cataraqui Canoe Club, beside the Woolen Mill Building just off Rideau Street. It offers a launching ramp, docks, and ample free parking. A public telephone is located inside the entrance of the Woolen Mill building.

TRIP LENGTH

A return trip to the pleasant destination of Cedar Island is a good day paddle. The sandy beaches on Wolfe Island are a fine destination for a full day paddle, but should only be attempted when the winds are light. Paddlers travelling from Kingston to Milton Island should make an early start and allow a full day for paddling.

DISTANCE

It is 3.5 km from the Canoe Club to Cedar Island. It is another 5 km between Cedar and Milton Islands.

WRECKS OF THE RIVER

When war broke out in 1812, between Britain and the United States, British Commander James Lucas Yeo saw the advantages of a gunboat flotilla to defend the river and access to the Great Lakes at Kingston. In letters to his senior officers he recommended a fleet of gunboats over more prestigious warships. He asked for, and received nine, which he assigned to three sections of the river; Kingston, Gananoque and Prescott.

Gunboats were not glamorous craft; however their ability to carry up to three cannons and an entire troop of soldiers, while drawing less than a meter of water, made them eminently suitable for the Thousand Islands. However, their broad, flat hulls also made them vulnerable targets as they were difficult to manoeuvre in the windswept Great Lakes.

Today several gunboats are among the wrecks on the bed of the mighty St. Lawrence River. Visit the Historic Gunboat exhibit at the Mallorytown Landing day use area of St. Lawrence Islands National Park, and the Maritime Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston www.MarMus.ca to learn more about this part of our history.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Cataraqui Marsh

The winding channels of the Cataraqui River are lined with dense cattail marshes. The recreational boating channel lies between these rough shorelines, allowing powerboats to navigate the shallow waters. Paddlers are not bound by the channel markers, and can freely explore the marshland shores, a special place for viewing wildlife especially marsh birds. Brilliant red-wing blackbirds, boisterous wrens, and enterprising beavers inhabit this rich river marsh habitat.

Kingston Mills

The Rideau Canal is a historic waterway constructed in 1826 to allow safe passage of supplies and troops from Kingston and Lake Ontario to the Ottawa River. It operates today as the world's oldest, continuously operational canal. Discover the sights and sounds of Canada's history with a visit to the restored Blockhouse that guards Kingston Mills, the first of a series of lock stations that traverses eastern Ontario. A full day can be spent travelling the winding marshes of the Cataraqui River, and paddlers may embark on a trip up the Rideau Waterway from here. Camping is available on the Kingston Mills lockstation grounds. Call 1-800-230-0016 or visit www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/index_e.asp

Navy Bay

The Royal Military College and Old Fort Henry flank this small bay of Lake Ontario. When the winds are particularly strong, you may need to hug the shores on the way out to Cedar Island.

Old Fort Henry

From its foundation atop Point Henry high above the city, historic Fort Henry protected the naval dockyard at Point Frederick, the entrance of the Rideau Canal and the town of Kingston. Today sentries stand guard at the entrance to this 19th century British military fortress, where the present day has been replaced by British garrison life during the year of Canada's confederation. Venture in to Navy Bay and steal a glimpse of the stronghold as it might have appeared to invaders approaching on the water. Call 1-800-437-2233 or visit www.parks.on.ca/fort



Cedar Island

Cedar Island is one of the most westerly islands of St. Lawrence Islands National Park. It lies only 250m offshore of Cartwright Point, a short paddle from Kingston Harbour. The pink granite cliffs lining the steep southern slope of the island are a striking contrast to the limestone shelf that lines the island's northwest shore. Paddlers will find the 2 sheltered dock sites on the northeastern corner of Cedar Island the easiest spots to disembark. From here trails leads through an old hardwood forest of oak, ash and hickory, leading to Cathcart Redoubt. The island's proximity to Kingston, abundant picnic sites, and numerous trails make it a popular destination for a leisurely day on the water. Four campsites on the island allow paddlers on extended trips to spend a night under towering pines surrounded by the waves of Lake Ontario. Cedar Island boasts a spectacular view of Fort Henry and historic Kingston Harbour, best enjoyed in the early morning light or fading sunset.

Cathcart Redoubt

The strategic location of Cedar Island made it important to the defence of Kingston during the War of 1812 and later during the Oregon Crisis. In 1847 Cathcart Redoubt was erected on the western end of Cedar Island, with other Martello Towers on the waterfront to reinforce British defenses. These towers are recognized as a National Historic Site. A short walking trail from the docks on Cedar Island leads to this historic structure. Note the interesting difference in vegetation as you near the tower. The western half of the island was completely cleared of trees when the tower was operational to allow 360 degree visibility.

Milton Island

Milton Island guards the western entrance to the Bateau Channel. This long, heart-shaped island hosts a mature mixed forest of white pine and red oak, interspersed with hemlock. Blueberry and serviceberry shrubs line the ground. Paddlers can easily access Milton Island in the sheltered bay at the east side of the island. Its quartzite shores host a diversity of microflora, including brilliant orange lichen that gives the island a unique tone



HAZARDS

Kingston Harbour

All sorts of recreational craft and tour boats make Kingston Harbour a busy spot all summer long. Be sure to exercise caution as you approach or paddle past.

Wolfe Island Ferry

A large car and passenger ferry traverses the waters off Kingston to join Wolfe Island and the mainland. These large vessels create a large wake and move at a surprising speed. Exercise caution when in the vicinity of the ferry terminals, or better yet stay clear of the activity by paddling the eastern side of the Cataraqui harbour as you cross under the highway bridge.

Exposed Crossing

The route includes a brief crossing from the mouth of the Cataraqui River at Point Frederick to Cedar Island. This short stretch is fully exposed to the southwesterly winds that develop across the long fetch off Lake Ontario. Check the waters as you near Point Frederick and be prepared to use good bracing technique if the winds are up.

Tour Boats

The route to Cedar Island is often shared by tour boats that operate out of Kingston harbour. These vessels use the recreational channel and can pose a hazard to paddlers. An especially dangerous spot lies off the northeastern corner of Cedar Island, near Whiskey Island.



KINGSTON

Kingston, the westernmost access point on the Thousand Islands Water Trail is one of Canada's oldest settlements and its first capital. Among its many attractions it boasts more than a dozen, art galleries, museums and historic sites. Kingston has an impressive number of fine restaurants, many featuring outdoor patios and terraces. Many inns, hotels, motels and B&B's are found here, just a short hop from the water's edge. If you need to buy or rent equipment several of the outfitters listed in this guide are found in Kingston. A listing of guides and outfitters may be downloaded directly from the web site at www.paddle1000.com/paddling/outfitters.htm A wonderful farmer's market, that operates just behind city hall, is a great place to pick up a few things for snacks and meals.

Visit the Tourist Information Centre in the old train station, on the waterfront, across from the City Hall or contact:
Kingston Tourism Information Office
1-888-855-4555
<http://www.kingstoncanada.com>

especially vibrant in the early evening. As a national park island, it offers a full range of facilities for paddlers including some ideal campsites (3) on the water and a densely wooded trail to explore the island perimeter. Paddlers destined for routes downriver should camp at Milton Island, or use mainland accommodations, as there are few facilities on the lengthy Bateau Channel route.

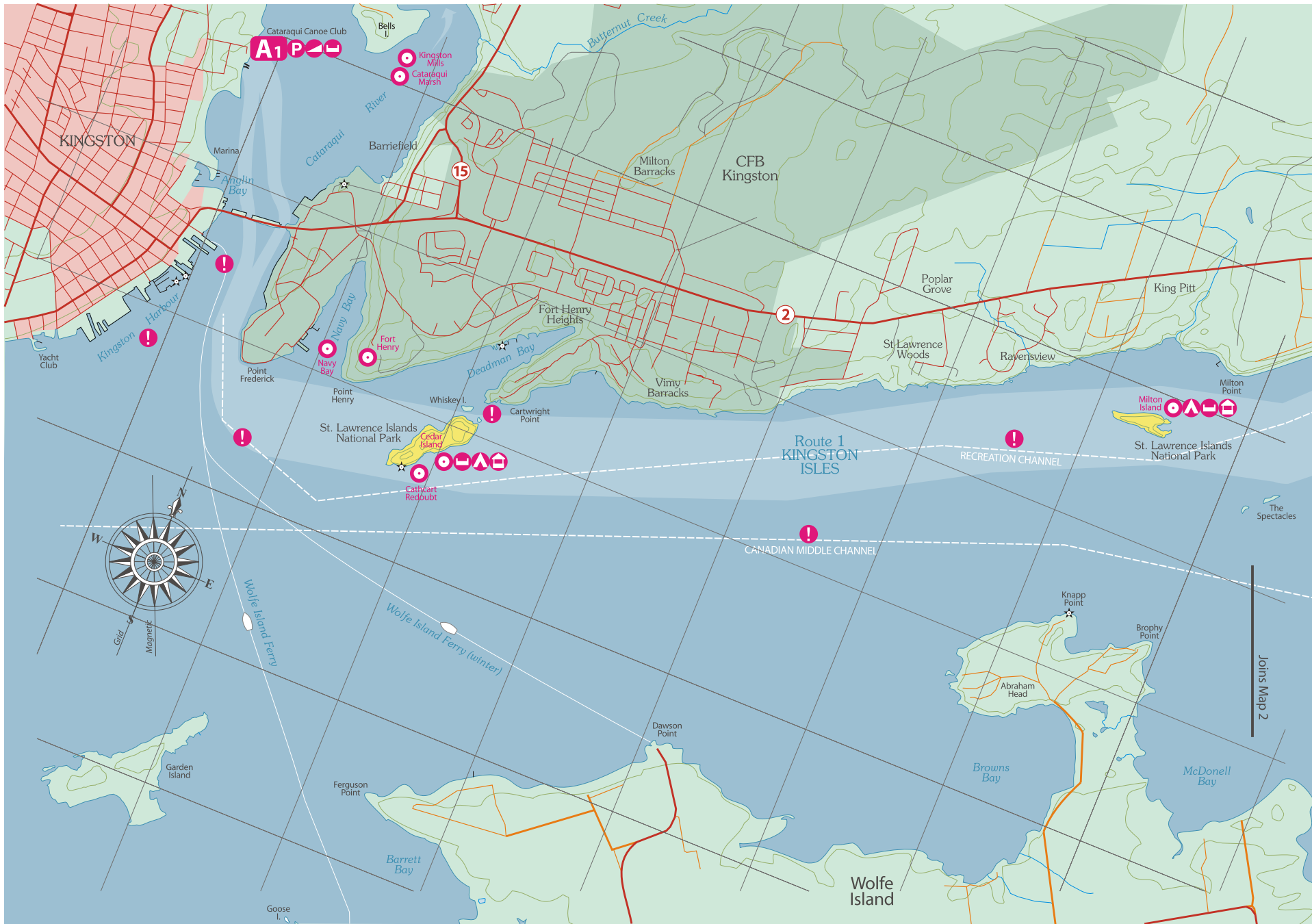
Big Sandy Bay

Big Sandy Bay on the southwestern tip of Wolfe Island is a favourite destination for hikers and paddlers alike. It is nearly as difficult to access by land as by water, but is a great place to surf the large rolling waves of Lake Ontario. The long, open crossing from Kingston Harbour to the western tip of Wolfe Island can be very difficult when the winds are strong.

EXTENSION

Downriver from Milton Island, the lengthy Bateau Channel route (#2) leads to the heart of the Thousand Islands, while across the harbour lies Wolfe Island surrounded by the big waters of Lake Ontario. Northward, along the Cataraqui river lies Kingston Mills the first lockstation of the historic Rideau Canal, as it begins its long journey across eastern Ontario to Ottawa and the national capital region.





Route 1:
KINGSTON ISLES

MAP 1