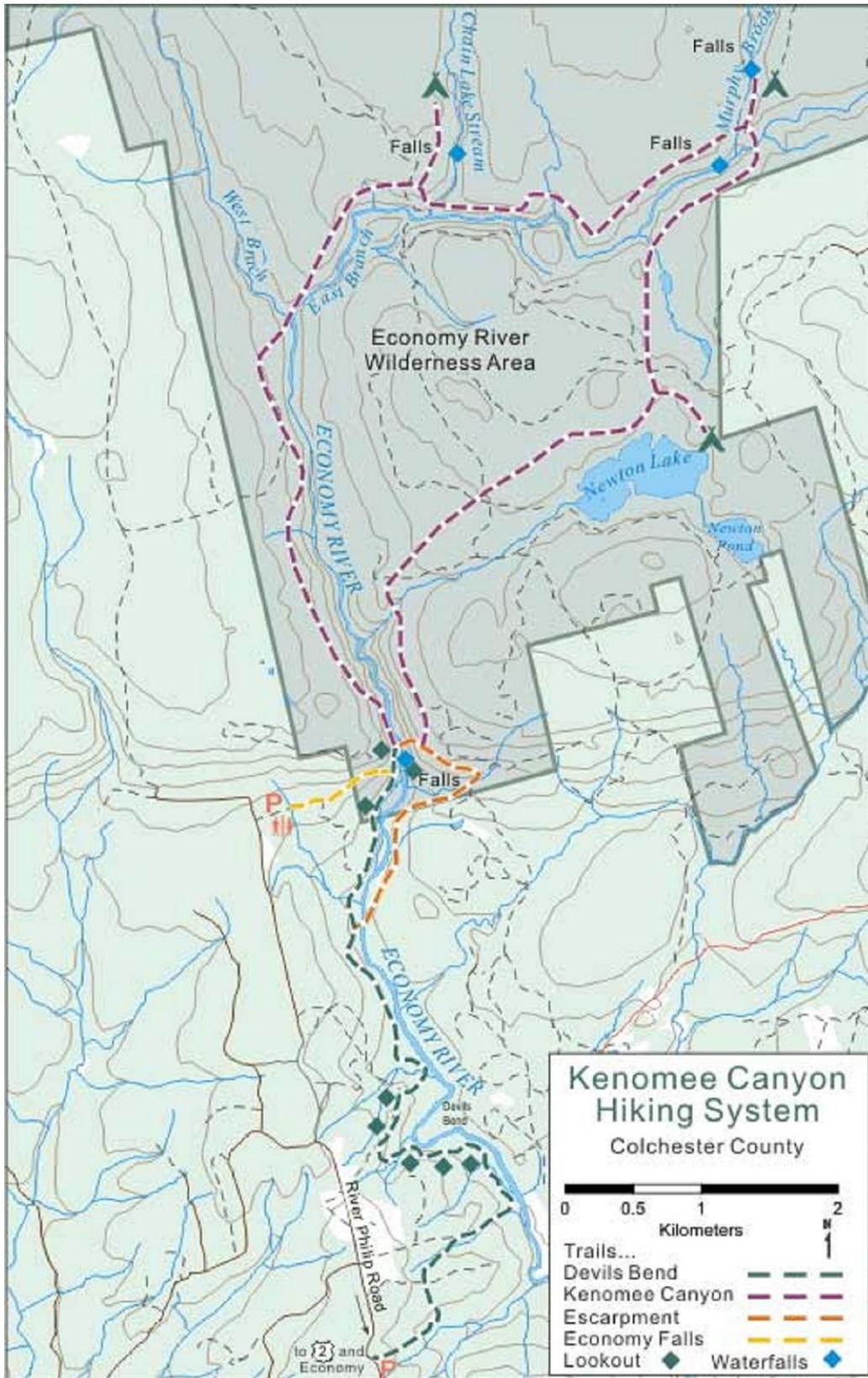


KENOMEE CANYON TRAIL SYSTEM



(source: trailpeak.com)

Kenomee Canyon Trail is one of my favourite hikes in Nova Scotia. It's located in Economy, Colchester County and is an 18 km loop trail with three wilderness campsites and four significant waterfalls along the route. It's part of the Kenomee Trail System that consists of Devil's Bend Trail (6.6 km linear trail), Economy Falls Trail (1.0 km linear trail) and Cobequid Escarpment Trail (2.5 km loop trail), and can be done by itself or in combination with these trails. I usually park at the Devil's Bend parking area and add the Devil's Bend Trail to the Kenomee Canyon Trail thus making my hike 13.2 km longer, round trip.

The "Kenomee Canyon Trail 18K Marathon" can be done in about 6 to 11 hours but I prefer to camp overnight. The campsites are very private and two of the three sites are located next to a waterfall. The trail is rated "challenging" because there are some steep sections and several stream crossings but overall, I think an experienced hiker would find this trail more along the lines of moderate to difficult. Over the course of two days, we forded four or five streams and depending on the time of year, there could be more; there could be less; but never none. The highest crossing was just deep enough to irritate a 13-inch high beagle because his little belly got wet. Awwwww! My poor baby!

This time, we chose to do a two-day hike on the 18 km Kenomee Canyon Trail by itself in a counter-clockwise direction. It rained the night before so the trail was slippery in spots, and as always, we found the trail to be confusing at times. We'd also been told there were lots of blow downs in this section but none proved to be a problem and we had a good hike. The first day, the skies were gray with a couple bouts of drizzling rain but the second day was perfect -- blue skies and sunshine -- with lots of great photo ops.

We began our hike at the Economy Falls parking area and from there followed the wide dirt path down to the canyon. After passing the intersection to the base of Economy Falls (you can either go down at the beginning or at the end of your hike), we turned right and crossed the wooden bridge over the Economy River above the falls.

The trail then twists and turns through softwoods and hardwoods, ferns and wildflowers. In about 7 km, the trail runs along the shoreline of Newton Lake and at 8 km, you'll come to the side trail leading off to Newton Lake Campsite. If you plan to stop here for the night, keep a close watch for the side trail because the sign is pretty obscure and the side trail is overgrown. The campsites are located about 700m off the main trail.

After Newton Lake, the trail goes back into the woods for a few kilometers, then after crossing a small brook, you ascend a ridge and have great views of the brook down below. At around 11 km, you'll ford Black Brook. Watch for the sign and side trail to Murphy Brook Campsite a few hundred metres further up the trail on your right. The campsites are located about 500m off the main trail next to a small waterfall on Murphy Brook.

Continuing on the main trail, you'll soon ford Murphy Brook and around 14 km, you'll ford Chain Lake Stream where it enters Black Brook and then do a brief but rocky climb straight up an ATV trail on a steep hill. At the top of the hill, the trail is rather indistinct so watch for the trail markers in a wooded area on your right. From this spot, the view of the Cobequid Mountains is spectacular, especially in the fall.

The trail then goes back into the woods for just "a jig" before reaching the intersection to Chain Lake Stream Campsite and Chain Lake Falls. Again, watch for the sign and side trail on your right or you might miss it. Whether you plan to stay over night at Chain Lake Stream or not, this 1.0 km side trail (one way) is well worth the hike in and out to see this spectacular waterfall, eat lunch and take a dip in the pool at the base of the falls.

Further along the main trail, the trail follows a ridgeline offering a great view of the gorge and then descends down to river level where you ford the Economy River, at around 16 km. From here the trail follows the hillside above the gorge of Economy River for the last few kilometres. In the final stretch,

you'll hear the roar of the river before turning right at the end of the Kenomee Canyon Trail and continuing back to the parking lot or down to view the falls.

The Kenomee Trail System was christened for the Mi'kmaq name for the area above Economy waterfall on the far bank of the river. It is located in the 6000 hectare Economy River Wilderness Area which is protected under the Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas Protection Act. No campfires are permitted within this area. Visitors are asked to stay on the trail, be diligent in their care of plants and animals, and camp in designated areas.

Additional information:

<http://www.colchester.ca/kenomee-trail-system>

Directions:

Take exit 11 on route 104 (TCH) at Glenholme, about 17 km west of Truro, NS.
(45° 24.589'N 63° 31.920'W)

Turn onto Highway 2 and drive for 34 km to Economy, NS. (45° 23.085'N 63° 54.865'W)

Turn right onto River Phillip Road (dirt) and travel 4.6 km to where the road forks.

Turn right at the fork, and drive about 2.3 km to a road on the right.

Turn right and drive about 300 meters to the Economy Falls parking area on the right.
(45° 26.653'N 63° 55.680'W)

Note: Avoid the River Phillip Road in the winter until at least the first weekend in May. Snow cover and really soft rutted surface guarantees you will get stuck.