

NC-29.1 McNeill Cove

From McNeill Cove to...

[Little Current \(NC-17\)](#), 12 miles S&W [Benjamin Islands \(NC-22\)](#), 18 miles W

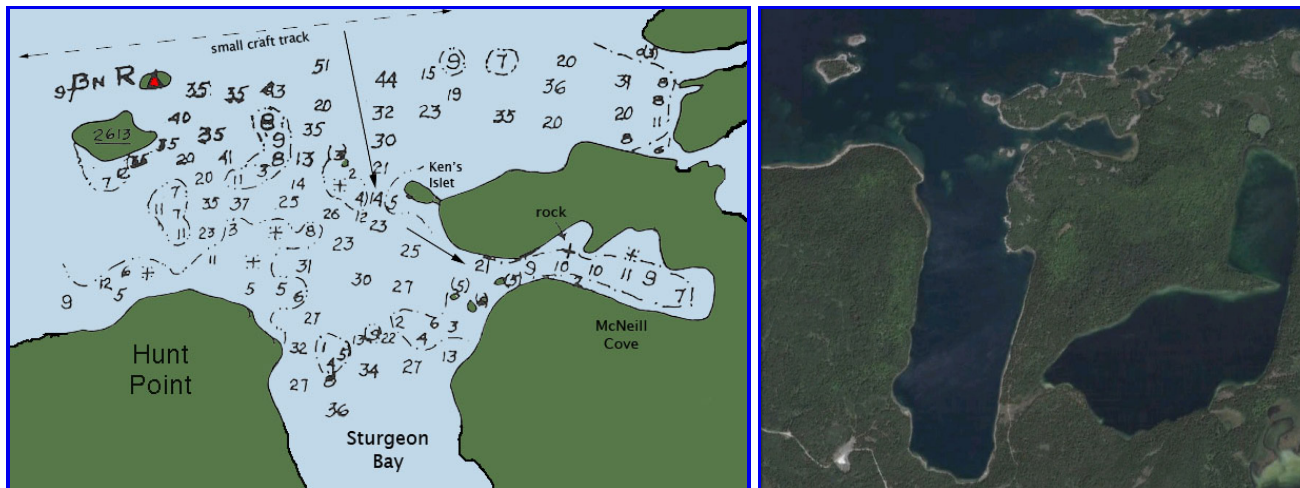
McNeill Cove quick reference...

Type of harbor	wilderness anchorage	Services	none
Location	L 46° 03.5' N, λ 081° 51.2' W	Dockage	no
Charts	CHS 2207, GLCC Chart #1	Anchorage	yes
Phone area code	705	Population	none

Introduction

McNeill is a small cove running east and west, just north of the mouth of [Sturgeon Bay \(NC-29.2\)](#). It is a well-protected anchorage in all winds, though a heavy westerly can cause some surge.

This cove—and Wells Island nearby—are named for an old Canadian family. One member of the family—Kenneth McNeill Wells—was an early GLCC member and intrepid explorer. In addition to the many harbor reports which he contributed to the Club, Wells published two little books—*Cruising the Georgian Bay* and *Cruising the North Channel*—in which he summarized his cruises of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Though these books are not current as cruising guides, they are interesting as historical accounts. You will have to find copies in used book stores or through inter-library-loan, since they are long out-of-print.



Left: sketch of the entrance. Right: satellite image of McNeill Cove and Sturgeon Bay by Google Earth. Click on the images for enlarged views...

Approach

Use CHS 2207 and the inset on GLCC Chart 1 (links to the chart can be found in [NC-29](#), Bay of Islands), for the entrance to [Sturgeon Bay](#). Several different approaches are possible, but the shoals northeast of Hunt Point are quite extensive and usually just below water level during high-water years—they are difficult to identify unless the light is just right. The preferred approach is as follows.

After passing the red day-mark north of island 2613, proceed easterly toward the next red day-mark on island 2384. When about half-way there and due south of the western tips of islands 2615 and 1617, turn south (approximately 180° true) and aim just right of Ken's Islet, which is the little rock island that is the most westerly land of the east shore in the entrance.

Proceed south, passing the tip of Ken's Islet about 75-200 feet off. In normal lighting, you should be able to see the large shoal just to the west of this passage (the shoal will usually be underwater, though parts may be awash in low-water years). Once past Ken's Islet, make a gradual turn to port, into the harbor mouth.

South of you, there will be three rock piles. The only one of concern is the easternmost, which has a large shoal running northerly almost to the middle of the entrance channel. Favor the north shore until past this shoal; then proceed into the harbor in mid channel. The entrance narrows to 85 yards and then again to 95 at the small peninsula point. From that point to the east shore, the cove is 455 yards long.



Two views from inside the anchorage looking west. Left: Ron Dwelle photo. Right: photo by Jim Wooll (click on the pics for larger view)...

Anchorage

Anchor anywhere in the bay. There is room for three or four boats to swing at anchor. Best spot is about at the "11" sounding shown on the inset chart. Note that the rock north of the "11" is only 50 yards from the shore and slightly eastward of where it's shown on the chart. It will usually be clearly visible just underwater. From the rock to the south shore, there is 180 yards, so plenty of swing room.

Bottom is a muddy clay and offers excellent holding. There may be some deadheads in the anchorage.

There are frequently deer feeding on the east shore.

*Report by Ron Dwelle and Tom and Ann Lyons
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