

## Cut Stones from an Ancient Sea Limestone Crevices of Amisk Lake



*The extremely straight edges of crevice walls were formed by a natural process.*

The walls of the crevices are so straight and so precise that it's easy to imagine that they were cut by hand or by some gigantic machine. But these uncommon formations are natural—remnants of an ancient sea. Some 450 million years ago, coral reefs on the floor of a warm sea were gradually transformed into layers of limestone. With climate change over the centuries, repeated freezing and thawing has widened the deep cracks in the limestone, creating a labyrinth of crevices and caverns. Some of the chasms are up to 12 metres deep, and even in mid summer, you might be able to see snow or ice at the bottom. Adding to the attractive setting is the almost unreal golden colour of lichen that blankets some rocks, against a backdrop of green forest.

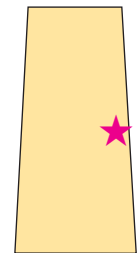
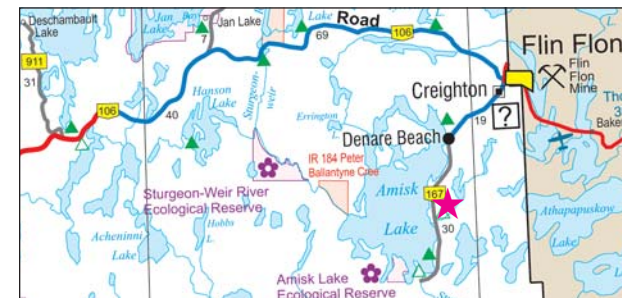
**Location:** Near the east shore of Amisk Lake, about 15 km south of Denare Beach along Hwy #167.  
N 54.53909, W 102.13380



*A birch tree grows from deep within a limestone crevice.*

**Difficulty Rating:** 1 Easy

**Getting There:** Hwy #167 heads south of Creighton to Denare Beach, and eventually to the south end of the lake. The approach to the site is not marked, so it's best to note your car's mileage where the pavement ends just south of Denare Beach. Continue south along the good gravel road for another 15 km and watch for a minor approach to the east (there are no signs). If you arrive at the Meridian Creek picnic site, you've come too far; head back north 1.5 km. Turning onto the approach, you come to a cement structure that used to be the base for a fire tower. It's a short walk further east into the forest to see the series of crevices.





*Limestone Point on Amisk Lake.*

**Caution:** This is not an “official” tourist site, so there are no guardrails or other safety features in place. Be very careful with your footing on the flat and polished stones since there are sudden sharp drops into deep nasty places. Do not let children wander on their own.

While in the area, it’s definitely worthwhile visiting another nearby interesting limestone formation. Continue south along Hwy #167 to its end where the Sturgeon-Weir River flows out of Amisk Lake. Right at the end of the road, a short sandy trail less than 0.5 km long heads north to a picnic site at Limestone Point. From the patio-like table top at the picnic area, you can explore the scattered flat limestone rocks at the water’s edge. The surfaces of many have been sculpted by waves and ice, and are pocked-marked with indentations that turn deep red when they’re wet from splashing waves or rain.

If you have a canoe or boat, you might want to explore the many more fascinating limestone formations along the lake’s south shore; you might discover caverns, jumbled rocks almost completely encrusted with brilliantly coloured lichen, and trees growing right out of cracks in the ancient rock.

Amisk Lake is unusual in that it straddles a geologic transition zone. The northern part of the lake lies in the Precambrian Shield, but limestone outcroppings and dolomite cliffs characterize the southern part.



*A limestone cave near the south shore of Amisk Lake.*



*Limestone outcroppings covered in lichen along the south shore of Amisk Lake.*