



The Voyageur's Companion

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club
www.rockymountaincanoecub.org

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December 2011 issue

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Jeanne Willson, editor

The Darn it, it is still winter! issue

The View Down River

Bill Ashworth, President

With the temperature standing around 60 degrees outside, it's hard to believe that our paddling season has ended for the year, but the calendar insists it has. But what a great season we've had. Let's review:

Thanks!

To Jeanne Willson and Kathryn Mutz (and Chet Pauls) for generously opening their homes for Club potlucks

To all our serving (and returning) club officers: Jeanne Willson as Newsletter editor, Kaj Toivonen as Webmaster, Doug Hurcomb as Quartermaster, Kathryn Mutz as Treasurer, and Jerry Nolan as our unofficial Conservation blogger. *(Photo: Kathy and Bill Ashworth)*



TAKE NOTE!

Permit Party

The annual winter permit party is January 14, 2012, at Karen A's house. Watch your email for directions.

When I (your editor) joined the club, I really wasn't clear on how the permit system worked or even what rivers I would feel comfortable paddling on. I eventually figured out that the permit party, aside from another excuse to get together with other paddlers, would help us improve our chances of getting on the rivers that we would be targeting for that year. We come to some sort of agreement about our targets, then we individually submit entries into the various permit lotteries. If you are a very new paddler, you will want to chat with others, especially trip leaders, who can help you assess your skills relative to the requirements of the rivers you are interested in.

Plan on attending this year's permit party, either to weigh in on trips you want to do in 2012, or just to enjoy the food and camaraderie and see how the process works.

Other notes

I am told that spring will come again, although I am dubious at this time. Our first 2012 outdoor paddle will be the traditional all-club paddle in mid-March on the South Platte.



Labor Day Weekend on the Green River from Flaming Gorge Dam to the Swallow Canyon take-out. It's a perennial favorite trip. This year the last part of the trip, through Swallow Canyon, was silent and we all drifted silently for about an hour. What an experience. Photo by Garrett Downs.

To our past Membership chair, Mark Roberts, who's taking a sabbatical to house-break a new baby

To our newest officers, Carol Duecker as Trip Scheduler and Gene Ehlers as Membership Chair

To Karen Jankowski for facilitating the Winter Pool Sunday practice sessions at the Arvada pool

And to Karen Amundson for her continuing dedication in organizing the river trips that are the lifeblood of the Club.

Trips and Events

... In addition to many private trips, 130 members participated in 10 club outings this year. In addition, a number of us paddled on the joint clubs March "season opener". Here's a summary to the trips, number of paddlers, and trip coordinators:

January – Permit Party (20, Mutz/Pauls);

April - South Platte (9, Ashworth); **May** – Gunnison (11, Willson), Niobrara

Rattlesnake camp site on the permit-only Smith River in Montana (a non-club trip). Miles of stunning limestone canyons, with lush fields and forests full of wildflowers. July 2011.



El Vado Reservoir (in the distance) on the Rio Chama, pre-trip campsite for the Poudre Paddlers trip in May 2011. Rio Chama (midground) flows in to the reservoir. The put-in for the 3 day, permit-only trip is at the base of the dam.

(24, Ashworth), Dolores (8, Amundson); **June** – Yampa (16, Amundson); **Aug** – Colorado (8, Amundson), Rendezvous (30); **Sept** – Green Flaming Gorge (16, Ashworth), Green Canyonlands (2, Mallory); **Oct** – Colorado Rattlesnake/Horsethief (6, Willson); **Nov** – Fall potluck and election (20, Willson)

Membership ... Last year, we had about 100 households on our roster and this year, we have about 90. Given the national decline in the popularity of canoeing, this is perhaps not unusual, but it should encourage us all to be better marketers of our favored sport. One way of doing this is to offer more introductory-level – something we can all help out in. Invite a friend along on a trip next year; we can almost always scrape up a “loaner” canoe on any given trip.

Finances ... Our beginning balance was around \$4700 last year and we’re ending the year around \$6000. This \$1300 gain reflects the cost savings we’re experiencing going from a printed, mailed newsletter to a web-based edition. Since we’re a non-profit organization, we need to take steps to balance our income and expenses. At the November potluck and elections meeting, we discuss several options including reducing the dues, increasing club underwriting of safety and boating classes, contributions to river conservation and access organizations, or combinations of all of these.

What are do you think? The club officers will be resolving this in January and would appreciate your input.

Looking forward ... It’s been a pleasure to serve as your Club President the past year and Kathy and I look forward to an even better year next year. Here’s hoping to see you at the Permit Party in January and somewhere on a river next season.

Day Trippin’ on the Niobrara River, May 2011 ...easy paddling, lots of waterfalls and thousands upon thousands of birds. The Niobrara is an important food and water source for spring migrations.



The hike to Rattlesnake Arches up from the Colorado River (far right) goes up this canyon. The trail is not much more than a game trail. It's steep, with some mild scrambling. Round trip is roughly 7 miles. October 2011



Editor's Eddy Lines

Jeanne Willson

Science: On the Yampa trip in July this summer, I noticed – how could I help but notice? – that the mosquitoes were fierce and their bites caused painful red welts that lasted for weeks. They were mosquitoes that laughed at DEET and bit you anyway in spite of your DEET-drenched full-skin-covering clothing. I have been used to the sweet, mild-mannered mosquitoes of the mountains of Colorado, that take the smallest sip of your blood, and bite sites barely itch and in any case disappear within hours. I strongly suspected that something was different about the Yampa mosquitoes, so I did what my



years of science training taught me to do: I googled Wikipedia and the internet. Note that my spell checker does not admit that “googled” is a word but “Wikipedia” is just fine. Go figure.

Findings: Many scientists say that disease-bearing mosquitoes are the most dangerous animals on earth, as some transmit several of the most harmful diseases of humans and their livestock. Worldwide, there are over 3,500 species of mosquitoes. Many mosquitoes do quite well feeding on nectar and other plant juices, so not all are blood-sucking menaces. Mosquitoes (and other arthropods) have quite complex saliva; it has anticlotting, anti-platelet, and vasodilatory substances as well as antimicrobial agents (for the mosquito’s benefit, not ours). Mosquito saliva also contains enzymes that aid in sugar feeding. They are tough little beggars and adults can successfully hibernate over our Colorado winters. Yes, only female mosquitoes bite mammals; the males are strictly herbivores. Certain species of mosquitoes may transmit the viral diseases yellow fever, dengue fever and Chikungunya; various species of mosquitoes are also vectors for roundworm, malaria, elephantiasis, encephalitis, and West Nile virus, causing millions of deaths in humans each year in parts of Africa. Mosquitoes do NOT transmit AIDS virus. Visible, irritating bites are due to an immune response from the binding of IgG and IgE antibodies to antigens in the mosquito’s saliva. And most important to us river rats, the various species of floodplain (Yampa River) mosquitoes produce more nasty antigens (and more painful bites) than our mountain mosquitoes do. There, mystery solved!

The thoughtful reader may be wondering if global warming may enhance the transmission of those diseases, particularly malaria, which we think of as a tropical disease, in higher latitudes and altitudes. It turns out that as recently as World War II, malaria was quite common in the US, especially in the southeastern states, and it occurred in northern Europe as far north as Norway, Finland, and Russia. Furthermore, during the Little Ice age of the 1600s, there were thousands of deaths from malaria in Europe in spite of the cold. Most likely, better living conditions, better medical treatment that killed the malaria parasite (a protozoan) and more mosquito controls (including, until 40 years ago, DDT) along with other environmental factors did more to reduce or eliminate malaria in countries with higher standards of living, regardless of higher (or lower) temperatures. Public health wins again.

Safety: Carol Duecker took a multi-day wilderness first aid class this fall. Thank you, Carol, for your efforts and for making our trips safer. Remember, the club offers rebates for taking first aid classes; check the web site for current information.

Karen A. and Candace on the Rattlesnake Arches hike up from the river. Land access is possible (Land access does require 4WD to get to the trail head) but either hike is long. Your efforts take you to a stunning collection of arches in the Entrada Sandstone (Jurassic). It’s the 2nd largest in the world, after Arches Nat’l Park. October 2011.



Skills:

Plan to attend the winter Sunday morning pool sessions in 2012. It's a great place to practice various paddling skills, try out other peoples' boats and paddles, chat with others about favorite rivers, and so forth. Watch your email and the web site for dates.

Supper time:

Riverside Stir Fry Chicken Fajitas

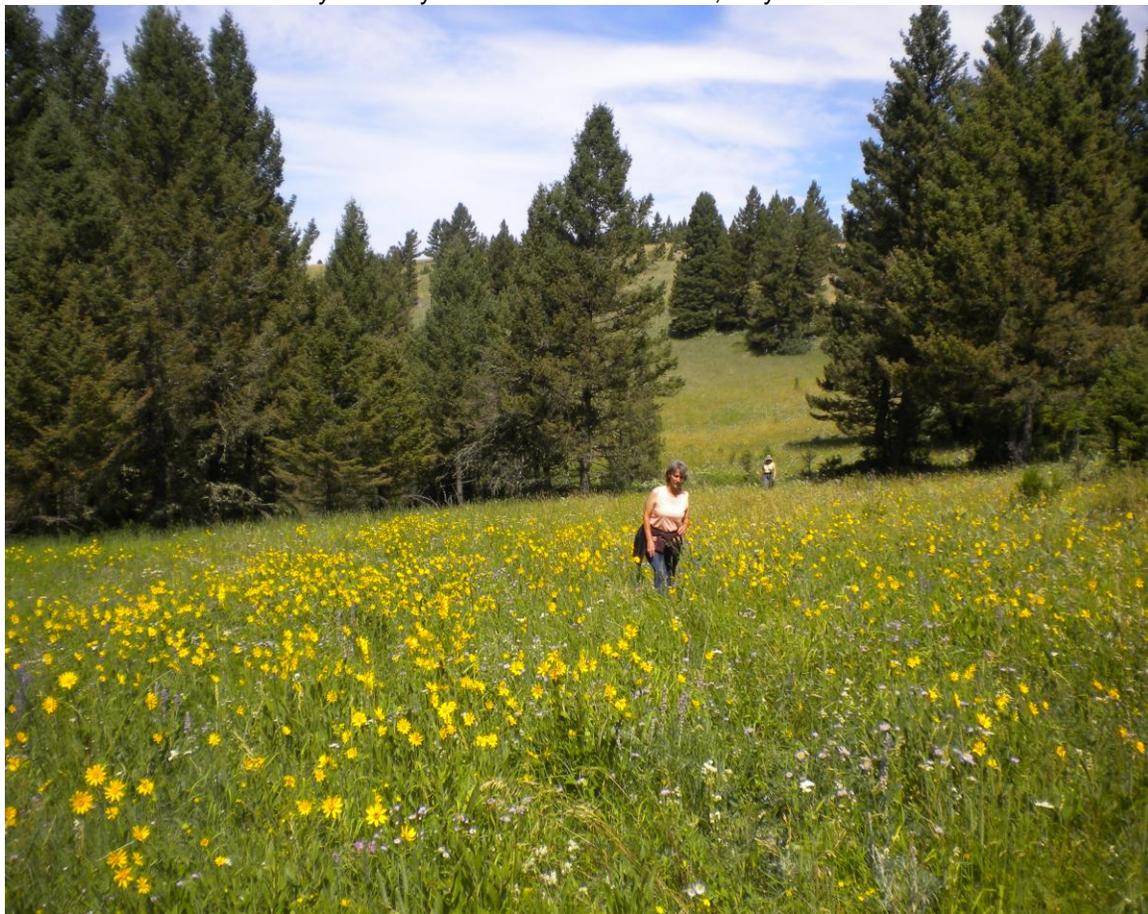
- 1/8 C soy sauce or make/buy fajita spices
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- Tbsp lemon juice
- Tsp red chili
- 3 to 4 tortillas
- 2 spoons olive oil
- Medium onion, chopped
- 5 to 8 mushrooms, sliced

8 oz chicken, precooked and kept cold, preferably frozen.

- 1 to 2 cloves garlic
- Bell Pepper
- Lime guacamole salsa

You know what to do. Chop the stuff that is too big, sauté the stuff that needs sautéing, mix what needs mixing, and get as much as possible stuffed into your (possibly pre-heated in your fry pan) tortillas. Use spices to taste; don't just trust me. What do I know?

Carol and Connie on our layover day hike on the Smith River, July 2011



Eric, Bear, and Liz Petersen on the Dolores River, SW Colorado, June, 2011



Candace W. provided a Picassa slideshow of pictures from our hike up to Rattlesnake Arches from the Ruby-Horsethief trip on the Colorado in October. Thanks, Candace!

<https://picasaweb.google.com/rockymtndiva/2011100709GrandJunctionHikingAndColoradoRiverCanoeing#>

The Rattlesnake Arches hike would be terrific even without arches. October, 2011



In case you missed it in Jerry Nolan's Conservation News Roundup, the Ruby-Horsethief trip from Loma to Westwater will become a permitted river section. On our October trip, after our long trip to the Rattlesnake Arches, the campsite that we had signed up for was occupied when we arrived, which has become a common occurrence.

Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Information

CLUB CONTACTS

President Bill Ashworth
Treasurer Kathryn Mutz
Newsletter Jeanne Willson
Schedule, Web Carol Duecker
Membership Gene Ehlers
Conservation open
Conservation News Roundup / Jerry Nolan
Quartermaster Doug Hurcomb



In This Issue: President's season wrap-up; Mosquitoes on the Yampa; Flaming Gorge trip photos; Ruby-Horsethief paddle and Rattlesnake Arches Hike

Website: <http://www.rockymountaincanoecub.org>

Membership: \$20 per year, per household. See Membership section of our website for forms and information.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB c/o Kathryn Mutz, Boulder, CO 80308-1064



Paddling the nice 'n easy Yampa River downstream from Craig (photo from Eric and Pam)

