



The Voyageur's Companion

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

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club
www.rockymountaincanoeclub.org
August 2012 Jeanne Willson, editor

New territory for RMCC: The Rio Grande in New Mexico, led by Karen Amundson. Photo: Werner Duecker



The View Down River

Bill Ashworth, President

Like some of you (about a quarter of the club), I'm a member of the American Canoe Association, and as such I receive a periodical called *CanoeRoots*. With each issue I pour over, I'm reminded of why I make my way down Western rivers in an open boat with a single bladed paddle. Goodness knows, it's not to be popular! Increasingly, canoers are a small and shrinking population in much of the US. In fact, *CanoeRoots* is published in Canada. No, I favor a canoe because it easily carries all those things that make my time in the wilderness a joy (like a loving bow paddler, a box of wine, and a comfy mattress). The fact that canoes can be challenging to learn and may take a lifetime to perfect only enhances the pleasure. Those are some of the reason I canoe; what are yours?

TAKE NOTE!

Paddling opportunities

Cisco to just above Big Bend

- Colorado River near Arches Natl Park. Class II experience required. Sept 1-3

Poudre Paddlers Rodeo Reminder

- RMCC members received an invitation from Bill Ashworth Aug 20th with more details
When : Sunday, September 9th, 10:30 AM - 4:00 PM
- Where: Union Reservoir in Longmont - see link below for info
- Who: You, your family, friends - anyone interested in paddling
- Why: To practice paddling skills, learn new things, share stories, try out other boats, eat, and have big fun.

Ruby Ranch – Mineral Bottom

- Sept 12-16, Green River

Ruby-Horsethief on the Colorado

- Two days in Red Rock Canyon country. Class I, one Class II. Sept 22-23

Our season is more than half over by some estimates, and by and large it's been a good one for the club. Despite the horrendously low snow pack in most of our important basins, water levels have generally been adequate (only two trips had to be cancelled due to low water) and our recent Rendezvous had a good turnout and great runs at historically average flows. Participation has been above average and we welcomed a number of new members (and welcomed back some prodigal sons and daughters). Coming up are a Labor Day weekend Cisco-Big Bend Colorado River outing, our annual Loma to Westwater weekend (with a reservation in hand this year), and a five day Green River Ruby Ranch to Mineral Bottom extended trip. I'll be on a couple of those, and hope to see you out there on a river.

Keep on paddlin',

Bill

Editor's Eddy Lines: Science, Safety, Skills, and Suppertime

Jeanne Willson

Science and Safety: The following information is from the BLM website out of Green River, UT. Carol reports that the Deso-Gray trip encountered two bears. Your editor thought this information would be timely and useful!

Photo at the put-in for the San Juan River trip, in Bluff, UT, taken during the May 20, 2012 annular eclipse. Although we were in the path of totality, since the moon was so far away from earth, it remained quite light throughout the eclipse. Carol, Werner, and Jeanne finished the Gunnison trip and high-tailed it down to Bluff to experience the eclipse.



The Deso-Bear



The Rio Chama hot springs...some years are cleaner than others. No bears at the moment.



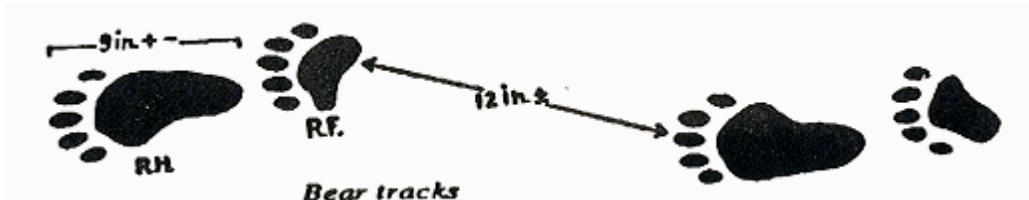
A River Runner's Strategy for Avoiding Bad Encounters with Black Bears

Introduction: American black bears are seldom seen yet common residents of Utah's river canyons. Despite the name, black bears come in a variety of colors, with black, brown and cinnamon being the most common. Seeing and observing one of these creatures in its native habitat can be a high point on any river trip. A bad encounter with one can ruin your trip and lead to fatal consequences for the bruin. The following tips are offered to reduce your risk of a bad encounter. The main objective is to: ***Keep wild bears wild!*** The way we accomplish this is to prevent bears from ever associating your activity as a source of food. If a bear gets into your food stocks, you have contributed to its death. ***A fed bear is a dead bear.*** Allow a bear to get into your *Fig Newtons*, and you probably won't be the person that has to squeeze the trigger, but you killed the bear none the less.

Camp Site Selection: Upon arriving at a campsite, do a quick sweep of the beach and the trails leading into the campsite. Look for recent bear tracks and other signs of bear activity. If you find recent bear sign, either move to a different site or ratchet up your bear awareness and avoidance.

Food Preparation, Storage and Dealing with Waste:

- Plan on leaving coolers and dry boxes on the boats. Bring to the kitchen only the food you are going to prepare and consume immediately. All coolers and boxes should be **latched and strapped** down.
- Return all food and garbage to the boats and secure after meals. Rinse cans and bottles with river water to reduce odors.



- Set up a dishwashing station as close to the river as possible. Wash dishes after every meal. Strain the dishwater, put food debris in your trash, then disperse dishwater into the river.
- Wipe down tables and stoves with a bleach solution after every meal.

Sleeping Area

- Select an open site - like the beach. **DO NOT CAMP ON A TRAIL!**
- Sleep in a tent. Keep the tent and sleeping gear free of food items and food odors. Avoid using scented lotions, perfumes or any other odorous substances.\
- Sleep in clothes different from the ones you wore while eating or preparing meals.
- Locate sleeping areas away from the kitchen by 100 yards, if possible.
- Keep tents in close proximity. A large number of snoring people are less likely to be attacked. If an attack happens, a group will be more successful in driving off the bear and rendering aid to the victim.

Hiking

- Hike in groups. A person hiking alone is most at risk from a bear attack on the trail. In Canada, hikers are encouraged to keep in close groups of four, within 4 meters of each other at all times.
- Make noise, talk loudly, clap hands, especially in dense brush or hiking into the wind.
- Do not whistle; it makes you sound like that tasty bear snack, the marmot.
- Hike mid-day, avoiding dawn and dusk.
- Avoid natural bear food sources – carcasses of large animals, berry patches, etc.

If you encounter a bear.....

On the River:

- Quietly observe from your boat. Maintain a safe distance of at least 50 yards. If you are going to close that distance, make noise and let the bear know of your presence.

On the Trail:

- Stay calm. If the bear is unaware of your presence, quietly leave the area.
- Mutual respect and retreat is a good strategy for you and the bear. If the bear sees you, let the bear know you are human, talk normally and leave the area. Stand your ground if the bear charges or follows.
- Never corner a bear or obstruct its escape route.
- If you see a cub, mama is somewhere close--Retreat.

In Your Camp

- Allow the bear to move off.
- If the bear does not move off: Stand your ground, defend your territory, protect your food! It's time for "tough love." *A fed bear is a dead bear.*
- Get your group together. Attempt to drive the bear from camp by making lots of noise. Bang pots, blast an air horn, yell, throw rocks and generally make the bear feel unwelcome,
- Check to make sure you have done a good job of securing food, garbage and minimizing food odors.

Keep wild bears wild. Report all bear encounters to the agency administering the river segment.



Deso-Grey, August, 2012



Will G. leads the way down Rio Chama rapids not far from the takeout at Big Eddy.

Safety: Lightning

National Lightning Safety Institute ~

Section 4.8

Lightning Safety for Campers and Hikers

By Richard Kithil, President & CEO, NLSI
Article published in *The Outdoor Network*, vol ix, no.2, 1998

1.0 Summary. Some unexpected situations present extreme danger - an angry fer-de-lance, a Class VI rapid, crumbling cornices and rotten rock - these can be perilous events. There is no defense for lightning's "bolt-out-of-the-blue" occasional strike. But for the most part, lightning safety is a risk management procedure.

Early recognition of the lightning hazard, with an awareness of defensive options, will provide high levels of safety.

At the Rio Chama put in, base of El Vado Dam, NM. No hint of the deluge that will hit us in a few hours.



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND MYTHS

1. **Lightning never strikes twice...** *it strikes the Empire State Building in NYC some 22-25 times per year!*
2. **Rubber tires or a foam pad will insulate me from lightning...** *it takes about 10,000 volts to create a one inch spark. Lightning has millions of volts and easily can jump 10-20 feet!*
3. **Lightning rods will protect my ropes course...** *lightning rods are "preferential attachment points" for lightning. You do not want to "draw" lightning to any area with people nearby.*
4. **We should get off the water when boating, canoeing or sailing...** *tall trees and rocky outcrops along shore and on nearby land may be a more dangerous place.*
5. **A cave is a safe place in a thunderstorm...** *if it is shallow cave, or an old mine with metallics nearby, it can be a deadly location during lightning.*

2.0 Atmospheric Physics 101. At any one time around the planet, there are 2000 thunderstorms and 100 lightning strikes to earth per second. The frequency of lightning increases in the lower latitudes (closer to the equator), and in the higher altitudes (mountainous terrain). In the USA, central Florida experiences some 10-15 lightning strikes per sq. km./yr. The Rocky Mountain west has about two thirds this activity. Central Africa, parts of Southeast Asia, and the Latin American mountain regions can experience two to three times

as much lightning as central Florida. Lightning leaders from thunderclouds proceed in steps of tens of meters, electrifying ground-based objects as they approach the earth. Ground-based objects may launch lightning streamers to meet these leaders. Streamers may be heard (some say they "sound like bacon frying") and seen (we may notice our hair standing on end). A connecting leader-streamer results in a closed circuit cloud-to-ground lightning flash. Thunder accompanying it is the acoustic shock wave from the electrical discharge. Thus, thunder and lightning are associated with one another.

3.0 Flash/Bang. We all possess a first-class lightning detection device, built into our heads as standard equipment. By referencing the time in seconds from seeing the lightning (the FLASH, or "F") to hearing the accompanying thunder (the BANG, or "B"), we can range lightning's distance. A "F" to "B" of five seconds equals lightning distance being one mile away. A "F" to "B" of ten = two miles; a "F" to "B" of twenty = four miles; a "F" to "B" of thirty = six miles; etc.

New information shows successive, sequential lightning strikes (distances from Strike 1 to Strike 2 to Strike 3) can be some 6-8 miles apart. Taking immediate defensive actions is recommended when lightning is indicated within 6-8 miles. The next strike could be close enough to be an immediate and severe threat.

Lightning is a capricious and random event. It cannot be predicted with any accuracy. It cannot be prevented. Advanced planning in the form of a risk management program is the best defense for maximum safety.

The heat before the storm ... Rio Chama



4.0 Standard lightning defenses. The wilderness environment is different from situations where substantial buildings or fully enclosed metal vehicles are the recommended shelters. Lightning in remote terrain creates

dangerous conditions. Follow these guidelines:

LIGHTNING SAFETY TIPS

AVOID: Avoid water. Avoid all metallic objects. Avoid the high ground. Avoid solitary tall trees. Avoid close contact with others - spread out 15-20 ft. apart. Avoid contact with dissimilar objects (water & land; boat & land; rock & ground; tree & ground). Avoid open spaces.

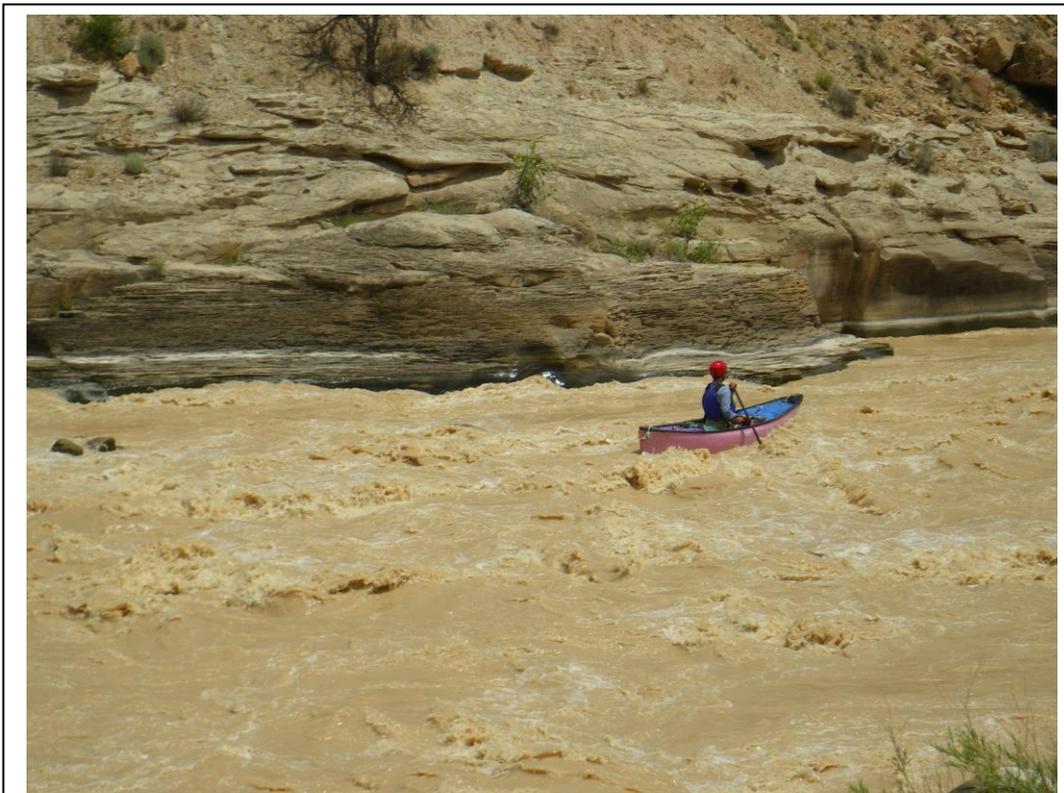
SEEK: Seek clumps of shrubs or trees of uniform height. Seek ditches, trenches or the low ground. Seek a low, crouching position with feet together with hands on ears to minimize acoustic shock from thunder.

KEEP: Keep a high level of safety awareness for thirty minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder.

Important: You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder. Knowing how far away a storm is does not mean that you're in danger only when the storm is overhead.

5.0 Medical treatment and symptoms. Treat the apparently dead first. Immediately administer CPR to restore breathing. Eighty percent of lightning strike victims survive the shock. Lightning strike victims do not retain an electric charge and are safe to handle. Common lightning aftereffects include impaired eyesight and loss of hearing. Electrical burns should be treated as other burns.

Mat shows us how it is done: Rio Chama





Rock art on Deso-Grey

Skills:

Richard Ferguson contributed his version of a Hand Wash Station:

“I brought my hand wash station on a recent paddle trip, and was surprised how much positive feedback that I received, so I decided to write it up.

The key part of the hand wash station is a tin can with three holes in the bottom. The can I selected was about 3 inches in diameter, and a little over 4 inches high, a one pound bean can. I drilled three 1/8 inch holes in the bottom, although you could punch holes with a nail just as well.

As you can see, I took some heavy aluminum wire and bend it into a bail for the can. I also made a hook to hang the can. Obviously this was more or less free, although I did buy a folding bucket. Not shown in the photo is the bucket used to fill the can, or the pump hand soap.

To set up the station, tie the string with the hook to a tree or bush. The ideal location is probably near the kitchen, on the path to the groover or outhouse, to encourage people to wash their hands on the



way back from the bathroom. The bucket should be full of river water. Note that the bucket should not be under the tin can. The hand wash water, full of dirt and soap, should fall on the ground, not in the bucket, lest the water in the bucket be contaminated.

To use the station, take the can by the bail, scoop up some water out of the bucket, and hang the can by the hook. Then you can use the water draining from the can to wash your hands, using the provided hand soap. If needed, you can scoop up another can of water to finish washing your hands. As far as future enhancements, I am considering using alum to precipitate the particles of dirt out of the river water, as well as adding some bleach to the water in the bucket.”

And More Skills:

Several members took Jeff Oxenford’s trip leader training course in April, 2012. The course covers many aspects of how to lead a successful trip, how to encourage safety, and how to prevent or deal with emergencies. Thanks, Jeff!





Rio Chama, July, 2012 – The river looks full (of hot chocolate) but the releases from El Vado Reservoir are depleting the water reserves. The reservoir appeared to be below 50% capacity.

Suppertime:

Some ideas for eating on the night before a canoe trip, or on the first night on the river:

- Stir-fry frozen dinners-in-a-bag for two. Saute for 10 min. on your backpacking stove & frying pan
- Tortillas with pre-cooked meat, green peppers, beans, and/or rice filling. Karen A. does a teriyaki sauce version-yum! Or use fajita or taco mix.
- Salads from the deli section of an en-route supermarket
- Freeze your pre-made spaghetti sauce or other meat for the trip. Fill your cooler over half full to keep food near-frozen & safe
- Vegetables that last include most fresh, non leafy vegetables; frozen ones do not last after they are thawed. We love cucumber & tomato & dill with either sour cream or a vinaigrette a few days into a river trip.
- But seriously. Subway.

Carol and Werner work it ... remember that all boats are laden with 3 days of camping gear and fresh water. Chama photos all by Tom Jacklin.



Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Information

CLUB CONTACTS

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



In This Issue: Bear safety; Lightening safety; Hand Wash Station; photos from Deso-Grey and Rio Chama

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

Membership: \$10 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



Deso-Grey August 2012 photo by Werner and Carol Duecker

