



The Voyageur's Companion

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANOE CLUB

October 2004

Presidents' Fall Report

From Ron and Nancy Stanker
Presidents' End-of-Term
Message

How quickly this year has passed. We're amazed when we think back over all the activities we've been involved in these past twelve months. It has been rewarding serving as the Co-Presidents of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club. We have gained more experience as paddlers and have made many new friends while canoeing with the Club this year.

We plan to be very active with the RMCC next season, but due to a change in our personal plans, we cannot stand for Co-Presidents again. We trust that some one, or perhaps another couple, will take over this position at the November 12th Fall Potluck and Video meeting where the Club traditionally hold elections

for the officers for the following year.

The Potluck starts at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, November 12th at the REI Flagship Store in Denver. Please bring a main dish, salad, or dessert to share. The Club will supply the paper products, condiments, coffee, ice tea, and dinner rolls. Plan on bringing pictures of your canoeing trips from the year, digital format on a CD is preferable, but photo albums work well, too. The main thing is to come, share in the wonderful camaraderie of our Club, eat some good food (last time we had homemade key lime pie), and swap paddling stories. Then, at a short business meeting, we'll hear a State-of-the-Club report and hold officers' elections.

Believe it or not, the indoor pool sessions at the Meyers Pool in Arvada start right around the corner in November. Karen Jankowski, our pool liaison and coordinator, has posted the dates on the website. There are a few closures in Nov. Dec. and Jan. for

holidays, so please check the website for this information. The rate for the coming year is \$6.75 per session. The times remain the same on Sunday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

One exciting thing that came our way was an opportunity to purchase a canopy like the one the Club traditionally rents every year for the Rendezvous from the Denver Tent Company. We asked Denver Tent to notify us if a used canopy was ever for sale at a discounted price. One was available, and after an impromptu polling of the officers, we decided to purchase it. We will have it as part of our Club resources for future events.

We would like to acknowledge all the officers and the great job they have done in running and supporting the club this year. Again, we have really enjoyed serving as the Co-Presidents of the Club this past year and look forward to many more years of paddling adventures and activities in the future.

Trip on the Missouri

The Upper Missouri River in Montana provides excellent opportunities for an extended class I trip of a week or more into a fairly remote area of prairie wilderness that is rich in history and offers excellent scenery, camping, and wildlife viewing. I provide a brief trip summary below for RMCC members who haven't yet paddled the Upper Missouri but might be considering it as a future trip.

Our group of five solo paddlers representing four states and several different canoe clubs met in Ft. Benton, MT on July 25th. Our objective: paddle the 149 mile stretch of Wild and Scenic Missouri River from Ft. Benton to James Kipp Rec. area (Robinson bridge at hwy. 191). Our fleet consisted of two kayaks, two rubber duckies, and my canoe. Although this trip is



nominally done in 7 days, we opted for a more leisurely eight and a half day itinerary. Shorter variations are possible by putting in or taking out at Judith Landing (mile 88; river miles are from Ft. Benton). For those who just can't get enough, it's possible to continue further downriver from James Kipp through (or around) Ft. Peck Lake and then paddle another 185 miles on the river through downright lonely country to the North Dakota border. The first 88 mile stretch from Ft. Benton down to Judith Landing passes through the famed White Cliffs section with some

awe-inspiring geological scenery.

The lower 61 mile stretch from Judith to James Kipp is in the Missouri River Breaks Natl. Monument where jagged cliffs give way to rolling hills with stands of pine trees, offering good cross-country hiking possibilities.

FORT BENTON: This tidy historical town offers free camping in a shady city park adjacent to the city swimming pool. Check the night time water sprinkler schedule at the rest rooms, or you might also get your tent washed for free. For those with more luxurious tastes, excellent

accommodation and good food can be had in historical landmarks such as the restored Grand Union Hotel (see www.fortbenton.com for more info on lodging). A must stop is the BLM visitor's center on the riverfront at 1718 Front St. Their door chime is a croaking frog. This is the place to obtain river maps and a wealth of other literature (see below), register your trip (but no permit is needed), and get up to date on any recent changes to river regulations. The boat launch is located on the riverfront right in town. If you are using a commercial shuttle (see below), vehicles can be left in the parking lot next to the boat launch where they will be picked up by shuttle drivers and taken down to your takeout.

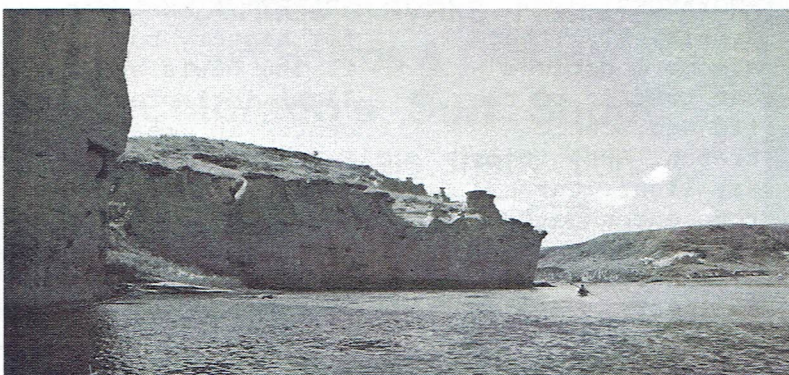
DOWNRIVER SERVICES: Potable water was available via a pump at Coal Banks landing (mile 42). There is also a BLM campsite here and a boat ramp. There is a small concession

store at Judith Landing (mile 88), which sells expensive water, ice, and basic junk food (got spam?). Check opening hours in advance if you plan to resupply here. There is also a BLM campground staffed by a BLM agent in a trailer and a boat dock at Judith. There are no services from Judith down to James Kipp.

CAMPING: There are about 20 established BLM campsites on the 149 mile Wild & Scenic stretch of varying quality. Some such as Hole-in-the-Wall and Slaughter River are in very good condition (privies, fire rings, three-sided shelters, and panoramic river views), but others have been seriously degraded by cattle grazing (watch your step). Expect company at the larger BLM camps. For more privacy, camp in undeveloped areas in majestic cottonwood stands along the river. Much of the land is public and finding undeveloped sites is easy except for the final 11 miles above James Kipp where the river enters the Russell Natl. Wildlife

Refuge and camping is restricted.

L&C CAMPSITES:
Lewis & Clark



campsites are marked on the BLM river maps. For a historical flashback, you can set up your tent in the same place that they camped and read about what they did there if you carry a copy of the journals. Our first night's camp was at mile 23 where the Marias River enters the Missouri. L&C base-camped here for nine days, scouting up both channels to determine which channel was really the Missouri. The crew mistook the Marias for the Missouri based on its similar water color. But, L&C were not fooled and after considerable deliberation they correctly concluded that the southern channel was the real Missouri. Had they called it wrong and headed up the Marias, they would probably have

ended up somewhere near today's Glacier Natl. Park.
LEVEL-OF-

DIFFICULTY: The entire 149 mile stretch is class I. The river is wide and there are no major obstructions such as diversion dams or fences to worry about. This is a great stretch for beginning paddlers to practice basic strokes and learn to read the river. The river can generally be paddled all year, with flow levels peaking in May and June.

DANGERS: There are few on-the-water hazards, except for a couple of cable ferry crossings that have low cables at high water. High winds can come up quickly. Falling tree limbs in cottonwood stands (see photos at the BLM office in Ft. Benton for proof.) Plenty of rattlesnakes, and some were spotted

by our group. Kayak cockpit covers recommended while boats are in camp.

ANNOYANCES:

Surprisingly, there is some motorized boat traffic on the Wild and Scenic stretch. But, it is very light. Our group encountered one outfitter ferrying gear in a small outboard, and two Dept. of Wildlife agents on jet skis.

WILDLIFE: Birdlife is prolific. A bald eagle was perched in a tree directly above our tents at one campsite. Elk can be seen (and heard) on the lower section in the Russell Natl. Wildlife Refuge. My favorite sightings were fluorescent green leopard frogs, a large bed of mussels where our boats were brought ashore at one camp, and a large beaver that swam directly in front of my canoe and then slapped its tail with a loud 'ka-thunk' before going into a collision-avoiding dive.

FISHING: Good fishing for warm water species (northern pike,

catfish). The prehistoric paddlefish inhabits this section.

NEARBY: A must see for history buffs is the Lewis and Clark interpretive center in Great Falls (about 30 miles sw of Ft. Benton).

group used Adventure Bound with no problems (<http://www.montanarivertrip.com>). If you plan to do your own shuttle, count on consuming a large part of a day for the round trip from Ft. Benton to James Kipp.



Canoe Colorado

Performance Canoes & Sea Kayaks



9990 E Kentucky Dr
Denver, CO 80247
303-344-2813

Bell Whitewater Playboats

Arriving December 8th

Ocoee Prodigy Prodigy X Nexus

These whitewater playboats will arrive in time for the winter pool sessions. You can fine tune the boat, and have it fully outfitted for early season play.

We have the full line of Mike Yee Outfitting, available both as kits and professionally installed.

RMCC Members get a 5% discount on boats, and 10% discount on accessories.

Reserve yours now for the best selection!

www.canoecolorado.com

COMMERCIAL SHUTTLES: Several outfitters operate in Ft. Benton, offering canoe rentals and vehicle shuttle services. Our

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Skinner.

New + Used Ski Gear

We are taking ski gear on consignment, so bring us your old gear and upgrade to new gear or check out our awesome deals on both new + used gear.

We want your winter business!



BOC **BOULDER OUTDOOR CENTER** **Winter Gear Rentals**

Alpine, touring, telemark, all terrain, avalanche safety gear and snowshoes. We have it all!

Avalanche Clinics + Snowshoe Clinics

New:

Hut Trips + All Terrain Trips!

Canoes Kayaks Rafts

Surf Boards & Clothing

Colorado's Surf Shop!

Sales Rentals Instruction

www.boc123.com

2707 Spruce St. Boulder

303-444-8420

All your boating gear

At the best price!

**Everything you need,
we have it!**

**Kayak Instruction and
our awesome
kids kayak programs.**



Canoes!

Who never said it rains in the desert?

By Karen Jankowski

Paddlers Karen and Greg Jankowski, Bonnie Gallagher, Justin Gilbert, Eric and Greg Omer, Lindell Baker and Don Griffiths launched from Sand Island, Utah on the Green River flowing through Desolation and Gray Canyons with a pleasant morning of no mosquitoes on June 27th, at 8 am sharp. We all showed up Saturday afternoon to get a head start on rigging our crafts so we would be on

the water early as we had 26 miles of flat water ahead of us. This is my sixth time down this section and the earliest in the season that I have done it. I have had to cancel this trip the previous 2 years in August due to low water.

As for the mosquito situation at Sand Wash, I found out from the Ranger that if the Green River fills at 23,000 cfs which is bank to bank full or if for a period of 3 to 4 weeks the river stays at 16,000

cfs the river back flushes and ponds on the sides of the river will fill from the overflow and the mosquitoes breed. This year was another low water year and thus we enjoyed no insects other than the white deer flies (the ones that were not taught any self preservation skills). We were told by the check in ranger, that we were the first canoe group of the season. We had 8 days of a great flow starting at 4400 cfs and winding down to 3200.

Day One we saw the wild horses on river left. The left side of the river from approximately Jack Creek to Coal Creek which was the vast majority of the trip was on Indian Reservation. There is a \$20.00 fee to camp and hike on their land. We chose to camp on river right. We paddled at a leisure stroke down the river having water fights along the way and one boat in particular attempted to take a nap. The camp sites from 5 years ago when we last did this run looked different due to the low water years. There were many camps that we had camped at in previous years that were overrun by tamarisks. Our first camp was Stampede Flat. It had a feel of the Yampa where we were up off the river with lots of trees. We had a great hike viewing some neat rock formations.

Day 2 we camped at Jack Creek where we were visited by wild turkey while sitting around camp. We have photos to prove it. We were going to let Greg Omer dispatch it with a thrown rock and cook it in our dutch ovens but chose not to. We

enjoyed a side hike up Jack Creek.

Day 3 was our darkest and rainiest day on the river. We were rained on periodically on our first 5 days of our trip but this was the coldest and dreariest. I wore a wetsuit for 5 days, which is unheard of for a summer desert trip. We were hailed on at day 3. Our para wing that we brought for shade was used more for a rain shelter. We saw many waterfalls, mudslides and were across the river from a rock slide. Most of the tents were flooded by the downpour and many had to move their location. We used the lay over day to dry out our things. Day 4 on our lay over day at Rock Creek we hiked to the cabin, creek and toward the ruins and we saw fresh bear scat and that they had enjoyed the choke cherries. We made a point of hanging our food at this camp. The highlight of this camp was two cowboys had rode in on their mules from 95 miles away. They were looking for a mule that they had lost earlier in the week. They asked a lot of questions as to how one could canoe on

a river such as this, we also asked a lot of questions as to how hard is it to ride in from civilization. It certainly felt like we were in the Wild West. The next morning we were greeted by a beaver swimming up the river while we were washing our dishes. The beaver dens were holes in the banks with the thick brush. There were no signs of scarred trees.

Day five the rapids were larger and the fun began. There are approximately 48 rapids on this 90 mile trip. We decided as a group that we liked our lay over day so much that we would paddle longer days to have another lay over. We got up extremely early to launch early. Our second layover was at Wire Fence Rapid. We used that second day to empty our boats and play in the rapids, swim through the rapids, and scout Three Fords which was right around the bend. We finally had sunshine and this night we finally had stars and a great moon shadow of the canyon walls across from camp. During our lay over day we had company from the next camp upriver, Mr.

Swasey the grand nephew of the Swasey Homestead, the named rapid, and the takeout. He had a dozen boy scouts in three rafts out on the river. They also swam the rapids and carried their rafts up and reran the rapids.

Day 7 was going to be a long one as we planned on paddling 18 miles and had the 2 biggest rapids on the river. We started with a scout of Three Fords and later Coal Creek and had safety raft at the ready. Team Gallagher and Gilbert had a loaner Sun Bailer installed for the trip, they pushed the limits and found it did not work well on a few occasions as they swamped then submerged the bow deck plate about a foot and a half under the water in these rapids.

Day 7 we camped at Rattle Snake Canyon. Greg and I hiked up the wash and saw over 2 dozen chucker birds. We

had high winds that blew one tent down the beach a hundred yards. Every night we had great Dutch oven cooking, great stories were told, and we all shared in group desserts around the campfire.

At our take out we were greeted by mountain goats. We were also impressed at the take out as they had a new boat ramp, paved parking and the road leaving was paved. Our trip ended with Paddler Magazine's and our favorite boating restaurant which is Rays Tavern in downtown Green River. It has great boating pictures and boating t-shirts on the walls.

We look forward to seeing you at the next video meeting to share our collection of over 600 photos of this great river contributed by most of the group

Ask Wally?

He's back! Like Ahnold of California. Or a bad foot fungus. Ask Wally has returned. For those of you who may not recall, years ago club member Wally wrote articles for the newsletter which helped members learn about canoeing. Whether you are an expert in whitewater or a novice in the bathtub, Wally is here to help.

This article addresses what to wear when canoeing. Unless you are a canudist, you may want to consider clothing. And even if you are a canudist, you may want to consider some of the following advice as canoe saddles can chafe.

Let's start at the bottom. No, not that bottom. Your feet. Teva's or similar sandals are quite popular among experienced paddlers. That's because

experienced paddlers seldom fall out from their boats, and obviously have enough money to become expert paddlers. The fact is, if you are flailing about in the cold water (another cautionary note to male canudists) you will soon be watching your brand new Tevas floating just beyond your reach. They have a tendency to get sucked from your feet like a bad comb over in a Chinook wind.

Wet suit booties used to be popular, but they give the impression that you believe you will be swimming the next rapid, and since canoeing is 90% confidence, booties may not be what you want. Besides, this type of footwear encourages all sorts of strange water borne creatures to get next to and

between your toes. Like leeches, fungus, and small trout.

In terms of overall body cover, overalls are not recommended. Having swum through much of Brown's canyon, I often recommend a suit of armor. Others try either wet suits or dry suits. As best as I can tell, there is no difference between them. A wet suit allows water from the outside to get into your suit and (theoretically) be warmed by your body. You will soon discover that peeing in your suit will accomplish the same thing, and since taking a wet suit off requires the combined efforts of your entire canoeing party, most wetsuits are, well, soon "lost".

The idea of letting cold river water next to your skin to warm it is so ridiculous that eventually people came up with the idea of a dry suit. The dry suit keeps ripcord that, when pulled, will inflate a sixteen foot self bailing raft complete with frame, oars, and a hot meal.

Finally, to top off your ensemble, most people these days are wearing helmets. As you have probably noticed, people wear helmets when skiing, roller skating, bicycling, having sex, or whenever the potential for unanticipated contact may occur between your head and a hard place. This is probably a good thing for people and a bad thing for emergency room physicians. I tend to wear a bright green helmet because I assume that it will help searchers locate my body downstream faster than if I was, say, wearing the dented bucket that I first used for protection. By the way, don't ask how it got dented. However, I have since discovered a new use for the dented bucket, and I no longer get canoe saddle chafing. See you on (or in) the river soon.

Walter S. Booth, Ph.D.
303 840 3346

water, air, and other important nutrients from getting close to your skin. You are sealed tighter than the lids at a Tupperware party. This, of course, means that you will sweat like Bush explaining weapons of mass destruction. Because your perspiration stays inside the suit until you remove it at the end of the day, people standing near you often become disoriented and, well, soon "lost".

Personal flotation devices are recommended because, well, they float even when you're in them. That is a great advantage when you are screaming for God's mercy as you head for places with inviting names like widow maker and room of doom. Today's really cool paddlers wear very thin pfd's. What the rest of us uncool paddlers don't know is that under these tiny little vests is a

The *Voyageur's Companion* is a periodic publication of the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club. It is primarily the venue for the RMCC to post trip schedules, classified ads, and related material, enabling members to share and enhance their canoeing interests. Members are invited to contribute articles on canoe trips as well as informative articles on subjects such as: Paddling techniques, Equipment, Rigging the canoe, Environmental issues, River safety, Camping techniques, Canoe history. Please restrict articles to less than about a page and a half. BUT nice photos enhance the interest in your news.

Submitting Articles: Editorial material for the The Voyageur's Companion should be sent to: Lyndon Berry, Editor, The Voyageur's Companion,

Prefer Word format via email, but most other formats and paper is OK too. I have a scanner, so pictures are welcom. JPG format is preferred for electronic photos, but other formats OK also.

Rocky Mountain Canoe Club 2004 Officers
We are here to help, call us

Co-Presidents

Ron and Nancy Stanke

Instruction and Whitewater & Freestyle

Bob and Jill Stecker

Treasurer and Membership

Paul Holscher

Instruction - ACA Trainer and Basic

Jeff Oxenford

Newsletter

Lyn Berry

Trip Planning Coordinator

Karen Amundson

Web Master

Dave Allured

Conservation

Doug Green

Advertising

Doug Hurcomb

Quartermaster

Bob and Carol Aikin

RMCC Membership:

\$20.00 per Household per Year.

Contact Paul Holscher

Mail applications to :

Englewood CO 80110