



The Voyageur's Companion

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

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October 2012 Jeanne Willson, editor



The View Down River

Bill Ashworth, President

Though this is being written before the “official” end of the club’s paddling year, I’ll take this opportunity to reflect on the 2012 paddling season – call it a *State of the Paddling Union* address:

Thanks!

- Most importantly, to all the **Trip Coordinators** (a record **TEN**) whose efforts made all our Club trips possible;
- To Karen Amundson and Richard Ferguson for generously opening their homes for **Club potlucks**;
- To all our **continuing club officers** (assuming no revolt at the annual meeting in November): Jeanne Willson as Newsletter editor, Doug Hurcomb as Quartermaster, Kathryn Mutz as

TAKE NOTE!

Trip tales

There is much to tell about our 2012 paddling adventures! We’ll share photos and stories at the **ANNUAL MEETING** on Saturday, November 3rd, at Richard’s house. See email from Oct. 15 for details. If you have never gone on a paddle with the club, come to this event and share trip tales with many friendly and enthusiastic paddlers.

Trippers, please consider writing up your own trip tale for the winter newsletter.

Paddling opportunities

It’s getting cold, meaning that Sunday morning canoeing at the indoor pool will be starting up again soon. Some of us are still trying to get in workouts on Cherry Creek Reservoir before it gets too cold. So clean up your gear and get ready for our first 2013 paddle in mid-March on the South Platte, or “Splatte!”

Treasurer, Jerry Nolan as our unofficial Conservation blogger, and your humble servant as President;

- To our **retiring Membership chair**, Gene Ehlers. Gene has done a wonderful job but with the elimination of our on-line database, his job has been made redundant. Now he can get back to dancing!
- To our retiring **Webmaster**, Kaj Toivonen. Kaj is no longer paddling and is stepping down. He has agreed though to continue assisting me in transitioning the website to a more stable platform during the winter. He has been invaluable over the past two + years. We will be recruiting a new Webmaster in the New Year;
- To our ACA instructor Jeff Oxenford for a wonderful series of club classes and instruction;
- And finally, again this year, to Karen Amundson for her **continuing dedication** is organizing so many of the river trips that are the life blood of the Club.

Trips and Events

Last year at this time, I trumpeted the increased number, year over year, of our outings and participants. And this year I'm delighted to announce that those numbers have SUBSTANTIALLY increased again. To wit:

No. of outings and events:	2011 (11)	2012 (22)
No. of participants:	2011 (185)	2012 (270)

Here's a summary to the outing and events, no. of participants, and coordinators: **January** – Permit Party (20, K. Amundson); **March**-Joint Clubs Paddle (15 K. Mutz); **April** – Trip Coordinator Training (8, J.Oxenford); **May** – REI Paddlefest (5, B. Ashworth/M. Bozek, White River (8, D. Hurcomb), Gunnison (10,J. Willson), Basic Canoeing Class (5, J. Oxenford), Niobrara (16, B. Ashworth), North Platte (12, C. Duecker); **June** South Platte (8, A. Fiore), Colorado @ Dotsero (6, J. Mallory); **July**- Rio Grande/Rio Chama (16, K. Amundson), Gross Reservoir (12, K. Ashworth/K. Mutz), Rendezvous (30, B/ Ashworth); **Aug** – Glendo-Guernsey(11, A. Fiore), Deso-Grey(11,K/Amundson); **Sept** – Cisco to Big Bend (17, J. Willson), Canyonlands (8, J. Mallory), Fruita-Westwater (8, B. Ashworth); **Oct** – Potash-Spanish Bottom (16, K. Amundson); **Nov** – Fall potluck and election (20, R. Ferguson)

I think we achieved a good balance of outing types this year but would love to see more day outings on the schedule next year: 2012 day outings (4); weekend outings (8); extended outings (4)



Instruction

We were fortunate to have Jeff Oxenford provide two training opportunities this year. Eight members participated in a Trip Coordinators class in April and many went on the coordinate trips over the year. And 5 members took *An Introduction to Solo Paddling* class in May.

Membership

We increased our membership this year (after a small decline last year) and saw 104 primary members and 18 linked members (generally spouses) on the roster at the end of the year. And though we lost some members, we welcomed 18 new households into the Club.

Sadly, two of the missing names from our roster were due to deaths during the year. Jim Baker-Jarvis of Lyons, long-time member and past Club president died on New Year's day near his home in Lyons. And Don Griffiths of McCall, ID died on a private river trip early in the summer. Both were memorialized at our July Rendezvous and both are warmly remembered and sorely missed by all who knew and paddled with them. The Club helped with Jim's memorial service reception in Longmont.

Finances

Last January, your officers took the controversial decision to cut the dues in half for calendar year 2012. By virtually every measure, the results have been positive: membership up, participation up, increased new members, and stable finances. The officers will formally review the decision in January. Our treasurer has provided a Financial report separately, but in summary we began the year with a reserve of \$6020 and we end the year with a reserve of roughly \$6000.

2012 Financial Summary

Prepared by Kathryn Mutz

Submitted by Bill Ashworth

10/27/2012

Beginning Cash	\$6,020.22
Receipts:	
Dues 2012	\$930.00
Dues 2013	\$60.00
Miscellaneous	\$90.00
Total Receipts	\$1,080.00
Disbursements	
Newsletter	\$0.00
Internet	-\$95.98
Dues (ACA)	-\$212.50
Brochures	\$0.00
Events	-\$611.51
Other*	-\$182.00
Total Disbursements	-\$1,101.99
Ending Cash	\$5,998.23
Total Receipts	\$1,080.00
Total Disbursements	-\$1,101.99
Net Change	-\$21.99

Looking forward

It's been a pleasure to serve as your Club President for another 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.

Keep on paddlin',

Bill Ashworth, RMCC President

Lots of rain, thunder and lightening, all three days on the Chama. Photo by Eric Niles



Trip Tales: Dos Rios in New Mexico – July 4 to 8, 2012

Karen Amundson

The original plan was to take advantage of the holiday and break up the drive to the Chama with 2 day-long paddles in Southern Colorado, but Mother Nature dealt us a dry deck. So seven of us drove to Pilar – 13 miles south of Taos – and then six miles up the Rio Grande to the small Taos Junction Campground where we enjoyed two of the four sites with ramadas. With seven campgrounds in six miles and very low water, we got our first choice.

On July 4th, we hiked La Vista Verde trail, found petroglyphs, and had great views of the Taos Box Gorge. Then the Dueckers arrived, so the nine of us did the Class II Orilla Verde run. At 210 cfs it was quite easy; we just had to pick the deepest route. We only went 4.4 miles, and found out later that we could have added two more miles, including a class III rapid. Bill A.'s sleuthing for a dinner spot was undermined by holiday closings, so we finally ate in Taos and saw a few fireworks.

On the 5th we scouted the Racecourse (class III-IV) which two rangers thought was easy at low water; but hundreds of rocks and a 3' drop scared us away. We stuck to our original plan, the 6.8 mile Bosque section (class II) below the Racecourse. It was scenic with many cottonwoods and some cute ranchettes.

I had located these two sections of the Rio Grande at BLM and other websites, but at the Visitors' Center and the Yacht Club Cafe in Pilar we found a great new book with lots of detail and good maps: The Rio Grande

by Paul Bauer. It covers 9 sections in northern NM, and the one that I want to do sometime is the White Rock Canyon 25 mile run south of Espanola; it ends at Cochiti Lake. It has petroglyphs, ruins, and rapids similar to the Chama.

The Rio Grand , New Mexico, about 220 cfs, July 2012



After the Bosque, we drove to the Manby Hot Springs on BLM land 15 miles NW of the Taos plaza. We hiked ½ mile to the bottom of the Rio Grande gorge and enjoyed the pools – three of them at good temperatures. We drove through Tres Piedras and the beautiful Carson National Forest to get to El Vado State Park.

The three days on the Chama were delightful in spite of heavy afternoon rains. We had the full set of 16 people (BLM's max) and found it easier to travel in 3 sets of 4 boats sometimes, especially while in the rapids. We spotted an elk and a golden eagle.

They now have 4 sites that can be reserved by parties of 10+ boaters at the put-in, so it is best to pick early if you want Aragon and Huckabay; both of these have nice short hikes. The ranch building (with a sheep dip spring) has burned down, so it is no longer worth a stop, but the hot springs were worth a short dip.

The ranger helped us find an unmarked camp 8 miles in on river left which had an old 2-track making for a pleasant hike up the ridge. We set up 3 large tarps to protect us during an extended downpour. Paddlers mobilized into 4 groups: bucketeers draining low spots in the tarps, dam builders, canal diggers, and nappers who just couldn't deal with it. No foolin' – the water came down so fast that we had to find ways to divert it around our dry areas under the tarps. The 2nd night several engineering-minded paddlers created a new tilted, overlapping tarp design, which worked better though it was just mildly tested.

The Aragon Rapid had a chunk of cliff fall in on river left months ago, so now you go middle and then right. But each boat found itself forced into a tight eddy, and this was tricky for the 4 tandems. We would elevate the classification of Aragon to a III now, and all agreed that Dark Canyon Rapid should be demoted to a II and not scouted. We didn't scout as it is too hard to land 12 boats there. The ranger says the dinosaur tracks

are somewhere in that area, but a rafting guide told me the ¼ mile trail to them starts at a set of willows a couple of miles above the monastery. Some day we will find them.

Our second camp was Chama Wall, and all of the 2nd night camps are truly beautiful with huge trees and nice cliff views. After the rains cleared, 6 of us found a lovely trail that went upstream past at least 3 campsites in a forest with wonderful vegetation. We then followed cairns up the drainage .7 miles above Chama Wall camp into a slot canyon with waterfalls.

The 3rd day had many rapids and some day boaters too. Skull Rapid is long with about 4 sections, including a hole that filled my Freedom and almost tipped us. Gauging Station was by far the hardest rapid, with ¼ mile of waves and rocks and we scouted the entire length this time. Screaming Left scares many of us so badly that we get sucked into a pushy eddy on river left rather than get near the cliff wall.

It was a talented crew, as nobody flipped in spite of the many rapids. Water was at 700cfs. They had been draining El Vado Reservoir at 1000cfs for 5 weeks prior to our trip to provide water for agriculture (Rio Grande was mostly claimed by the San Luis Valley) and enable repairs as El Vado has the only steel dam in the U.S. and it needed work.

It was a wonderful trip and it's one of the few rivers that I want to do every year. But the likelihood of drawing a permit seems to be less than 20%, so we need lots of applications to make it happen.

Trip Tales: Glendo to Guernsey, August 4, 2012

Anne Fiore

North Platte River from below Glendo Dam to the Wendover train crossing just above Guernsey Reservoir

This run has been on my to-do list since boating upstream on the North Platte from Guernsey Reservoir many years ago.

It was pretty windy on the drive up on Friday. Despite the forecast for Saturday of winds less than 10 mph, I was sure it would end up being too windy to paddle but the winds calmed sometime after midnight and we awoke to clear skies at 6 AM.

We were all at the put-in before the 7:30 agreed upon time. Boats were deposited and the drivers began the shuttle to Wendover, some 50 miles away. Like clockwork, 2 hours later the drivers reappear and after a short safety talk we were underway.

A wonderful group of 11 people (Anne Fiore, Penelope Purdy, Kerry and Pauline Edwards, Mary Jo and Steve Houser from RMCC; Gary Cage and Jud Hurd of RMSKC; Andrea Faudel from Poudre Paddlers; Fred Nelson and Greg Cook) and 8 boats: 3 sea kayaks, 1 white water kayak and 4 canoes, including one solo. Everyone stayed together throughout the trip.

What a wonderful river! At the put-in, the current moved right along (at 5100 cfs) but the way was wide and clear with no funny swirls: yes, my kind of river! The description called for a rapid about 10 minutes into the trip and there it was: At this level it was straightforward and really quite mild. From there, we really just floated along, with just a few strokes added here and there. We were in a canyon of pine and junipers which varied to include low-lying fields and some deciduous trees. There were lots of twists and turns and a

sprinkling of islands. We kept to the lines where we could see our way, though Gary and others explored various side channels and all were fine.

We passed “lunch island” since we’d hardly been on the river for 45 minutes but soon spied a picnic table with 2 grills on river right, decided that was the ‘lunch place’ and headed that way. Gary had settled on a log that I noted some had carved rectangles into – as we were finishing up, Kerry Adams referred to ‘the alligator’ and noted there were teeth carved into it, a la Seymour Lipton, so photos were in order.

Now back on the water. More junipers, more pines, more canyon walls which became high and reminiscent of Utah except that their composition seemed to be of a material much softer and lighter and grayer in color.

We made a very sharp left hand turn - the current flowed to the far side on river right with a huge eddy on river left. I wondered where the haystacks were as we entered a different kind of canyon, much higher though of a composition similar to what we’ve seen all along. Ahead I saw Kerry Adams had stopped and as I got near, there was the roar of water in the distance as we approached the haystacks. The canoeists got out and tried to observe the route. I stayed in, preferring to try and find a route as we approached (slowly). The canoeists followed Kerry; Andrea followed Gary. Jud seemed to have disappeared and I hoped all was well. I heard Gary say someone was swimming. I focused on following the tongue, then looked up. This was not what I expected! The waves are pretty high, not very wide: Not the river-wide south-canyonesque river wide bumps I imagined.

I turned into the eddy. Now I was being pulled back upstream and really worked hard to move downstream, finally overcoming the eddy and catch up with the others. Swimmers were out of the water and boats were being drained. All was well!

According to Jud, he and Gary were paddling together looking down river at the two sets of waves and he told Gary that this wasn’t the Haystacks. He went through the first set of waves which were pretty easy and eddied out river right to wait for people. When he saw people coming down, he pulled out and thought it

would be another easy run through the second set. All of a sudden he saw it was the Haystacks and it was too late to push hard to bypass on the left, and he was pulled into the side of these. He handled the first one okay but the second one pushed and dumped him. Drawing upon past experience he floated down and people helped him get to the shore and recover. He didn't want to leave it like that so he went up to try them again and made it, even getting turned around and going down backwards.

Andrea and Greg and Fred all took another pass at the haystacks as did Jud. After a bit, we all headed downstream.

N Platte River, Glendo to Guernsey, August, 2012



Before long, the river widened and slowed just a bit. Up ahead, Kerry and Pauline were pulling out with others lined up behind them. It was around 3:30. I headed toward the others, sad that the trip was over.

Two of the more experienced boaters had this to say: First, during the safety talk, we should remind folks that if they do take a swim, get to shore ASAP -- hanging onto the boat makes it harder to coax the boat back to the shore; Also, we need to get better at eddying out. This allows us to get ever closer to check out what's coming and be able to select or change a line at the last minute.

Trip Tales: Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness **Bill and Kathy Ashworth**

Remote – it's not that thing on the coffee table (from a tee shirt in the Sawbill Outfitters shop)

Many paddlers, I suspect, harbor mental wish lists of places or rivers they long to explore before their knees, wallets, or energy finally recede to nothing. Some of the places I've heard around the fire are the Adirondacks, the upper Missouri, the Green through Canyonlands, the Snake below the Grand Tetons, the Main Salmon, and on and on.

But one place always turns up on almost every list, and that's the vast lake-filled wilderness in northeastern Minnesota and southern Ontario: we call our part The Boundary Waters, and they call theirs Quetico. It's

Kathy, Bill and friend in camp in the Boundary Waters



certainly been on my list since I was a Scout in California during the Harding administration. But for decades it was always next year, next year. Well, 2012 finally became THE year.

With nearly a million acres in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), a thousand lakes to choose from, Forest Service permits to navigate, and outfitters to deal with, we knew we needed some help in making this happen. Fortunately, we were able to enlist the aid and company

Beavers vs. Ashworths



of a Boulder couple who have returned biannually for years, and together we put together a six day trip on the Sawbill Trail starting on Labor Day. Our jumping off point was in Tofte, roughly half way up the Lake Superior shore between Duluth and Grand Marais. For those of a certain age, Superior is Longfellow's Gitchigoomee.

After picking up our 42 lb, 17 ft rental Kevlar canoes from the outfitter and accepting a drive to our put-in about 20 miles away, we set out for a six day, 5 night trek back to our parked vehicle at Sawbill Lake. Along the way, we traversed about 9 lakes (several in the path of a huge 2011 burn), paddled around 30 miles, portaged nearly 20 times covering a trail distance about 4 miles, and maneuvered over untold beaver dams. The scenery was spectacular, the solitude is generally very good, and the campsites (you can only stay in designated sites) were never worse than fair and sometimes wonderful. We had reasonable weather (a couple of rainy nights but only one rainy day – our last one). And NO INSECTS. NONE! Going after Labor Day is the secret there, I think. The lakes were very comfortable for swimming and the fishing seemed good, though none in our group tried. Since our route involved many portages (ranging from a few dozen yards to over a mile), radical gear trimming was required – an attitude much at variance to our normal river packing regimen. Freeze-dried meals predominated and we discovered that there's a wonderful selection out there. And we fell in love with Fry Bread from Cache Foods – had it almost every night.

Learnings-

- The BWCAW is REALLY far away (about 1200 miles from Denver)
- NOBODY takes Royalex canoes to the BWCAW; they buy or rent Kevlar
- The lake water is remarkably dark (tannins?)
- No cans or bottles in the BWCAW
- All BWCAW campsites have fire grates and pit toilets
- You can't kneel in a BWCAW rental boat – the seats are set too low – pray for low wind
- Portage distances are measured in rods (not miles) on all the maps

So, we've checked off the BWCAW from our wish list, but we'll be back to recapture the beauty, challenge, and unmatched feeling of remoteness and solitude that a week there can provide.

**Editor's
Eddy Lines:
Science,
Safety,
Skills, and
Supertime**
Jeanne Willson

Science:
Candace Winkle did some world-class sleuthing for sites of interest on our recent 51 mile Potash to Spanish Bottom trip on the Colorado River. I had never seen such a



The fossil wood was black and easy to see against the red Chinle.

grand display of fossilized logs. One tree had several sections all lined up, and appeared to be about 75 feet long based on pacing it off – 25 giant people-steps – and that was just what was left of it; it was probably much taller in life. Many of us could only reluctantly tear ourselves away from the area. She and Karen also led us to several different sites of former human habitation, including granaries and cliff dwellings. Jeannie Younghaus alerted me to some beautiful panels of marine fossils at the pour-over up a side canyon at our 3rd campsite; it included many beautiful brachiopods and crinoids, among other fossils.

Safety, Part 1:

On the Potash-Spanish Bottom trip, we had a grim reminder of how very far we were from emergency care and how important self-sufficiency is on these trips. One of our participants had a reasonably serious eye injury, and as it turned out, it took about 48 hours to get to the hospital in Moab. There simply were no other options for getting out earlier due to our extremely remote location. It goes without saying that there was no cell phone service where we were. Although it was not needed in this situation, we learned that Moab has no emergency medical helicopter and our SPOT messenger was essentially useless since the jet boat cannot travel the shallow, treacherous river in the dark. The injured person is now fully recovered. ALL trip participants should consider getting Wilderness First Aid training and repeating the course every two to three years. All trip participants should discuss with their doctors how to handle backcountry medical emergencies; doctors may prescribe legal painkillers and antibiotics for short-term personal use in an emergency following severe wounds, broken bones, etc., when medical attention and evacuation may take days.

Professor Valley scenery is hard to beat! Our campsite is right around the corner, still many miles upriver from Moab.
Photo by Fred Nelson



Safety, Part 2: Using and caring for your life jacket or PFD

Excerpted from the REI website

Features

Consider these features when deciding which PFD is right for you.

- **Tabs:** Look at the number of tabs and their location on the front and back on the PFD. Tabs let you attach a knife, whistle (which is required in many areas), strobes or other accessories.
- **Pockets:** Consider size and placement. Are there pockets to warm your hands or have easy access to your doodads? Is there a pocket for a hydration unit?
- **Color:** A bright color improves visibility.
- **Reflective tape:** This adds visibility in low-light conditions.
- **Ventilation:** Where will you be paddling? Do you need a little or a lot?

PFD Care

Before using:

- Do not alter a PFD to make it fit. Get one that fits. An altered life jacket is not USCG approved.
- Check your PFD for rips, tears and holes. Check that seams, straps and hardware are in good shape. Give the straps a quick yank to make sure they are secure.
- Check that there is no waterlogging, mildew odor or shrinkage of buoyant materials. These are indications of buoyancy loss.
- Faded material may indicate loss of strength and buoyancy.
- Write your name on the jacket.
- Test it in shallow water.
-

During use:

- **Don't use a PFD as a cushion, kneeling pad or boat bumper. It will lose buoyancy.**
- Do not put heavy items in the pockets.
- Be careful to not put objects in the pockets that could puncture.
- Don't leave the PFD lying in the sunshine for long periods.
- Rinse with fresh water after use, especially after being in salt water.
- Drip-dry before storing.
-

After use:

- Don't use harsh detergents or dry clean a PFD.
- Drying it in a dryer or direct heat can destroy its buoyancy.
- Don't store it in sunlight—UV rays can damage the fabric.
- Store in a cool, dry, dark place where there is good ventilation.
- Older foam PFDs may lose buoyancy and need to be replaced.
- Get rid of old PFDs by cutting them up and properly disposing so a person who finds one does not try to use the faulty PFD.

Skills:

Jeannie Younghaus has a great suggestion for paddling in cold rain: Take along some fleece gloves and a larger-sized pair of rubber dishwashing gloves to wear in the rain. You get good traction on your paddle and your hands may stay drier than they would with more expensive neoprene gloves.

Supper time:

Your editor has a new favorite camp dinner. Buy the very small multi-grain tortillas (6 inch diameter) that fit in the pot-lid/fry pan in your cook set. Tortilla on the bottom, some thin cheese slices on the tortilla, maybe some diced tomato or green onion or banana pepper on top; cover the fry-pot with your aluminum foil pot lid and heat your quesadilla over low heat. Roll it or fold it. Yum!! Now cook another one! You can also add packaged salmon or tuna fish if you don't mind attracting bears, raccoons, etc. Try a side dish of raw carrots alone or dipped in 2 ounce packages of Ranch or other dressing.

The Boundary Waters ... Kathy and Bill Ashworth



Rocky Mountain Canoe Club Information

CLUB CONTACTS

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



In This Issue: Trip Tales: Glendo to Guernsey; Boundary Waters; Cisco to Big Bend; Potash to Spanish Bottom; Fruita to Westwater; Science, Canyonlands fossils; Safety, Skills, and Suppertime.

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



Petroglyphs on the Rio Grande