

TETONS CAMP AND PADDLE, 2026

AUGUST 14 TO AUGUST 20

21 people, most from RMCC, a few left-overs from Rocky Mountain Sea Kayak Club, and three from HASK (Houston Association of Sea Kayakers) shared a group site in the Colter Bay campground. It rained every day, and the campsite parking was more restrictive than on previous RMSKC trips, but a good time was had by all.



A group this size may sound too big to be fun, but if there are lots of paddling opportunities clustered near the campsite, everyone gets to do what they want, when they want, with a small, like-minded group.

Most people took a rainy day off to sightsee, but there were still 16 paddles, with many of the popular ones done several times. The number of people on a trip ranged from two to nine, but the average was about four.

The most popular trips were String Lake to Leigh Lake, Jenny Lake, the Oxbow on the Snake and Two Ocean Lake. A section of the Snake with the put-in at Wilson was explored. At 5,000 cfs out of the dam it required good reading skills and had Class II+ rapids.

Paddling Jackson Lake was complicated because the usual put-ins were affected by the low water level; several trips put in at Leek's Marina, north from Colter Bay.

SEVERAL THINGS WE LEARNED:

- The Colter Bay group site could accommodate 25 people but had only 12 approved parking spots, and the rangers were vigilant about parking only in paved spots. This was a problem for us because there weren't enough for all the cars that our 21 paddlers brought.
 - One solution would be get a group site for more people just to have the additional parking; the rangers don't care how few people you have as long as you pay for the minimum. It would be more per person, but wouldn't leave someone completely out because they'd gotten there late.
 - Another approach would be to say that "the first 12 vehicles" were on the trip and that trailers would probably have to be parked off-site. Individuals would still have to pay the \$17 per person per day, but it would acknowledge that the trip was limited by the parking at the campsite.
- Parking at the put-ins is a problem at GTNP, but leaving the campsite by 7:30 or 8:00 worked for the groups that weren't super-early risers.
- If you make .PDFs of all the early emails they are easy to send to people who sign up late. That way you're sure everyone has gotten all the same information.
- Arrange to have at least one tarp that will cover several picnic tables.



Check with Sue Hughes for more info on group camping in the Tetons, or her multi-tab spreadsheet if you're organizing any large-group outing.