



FOUNDED 1989  
ACA PADDLE AMERICA CLUB

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# The MOUNTAIN PADDLER

ARTICLES OF INTEREST  
FOR OUR PADDLING COMMUNITY

## EDITOR'S NOTE by Sue Hughes

This *Mountain Paddler* brings you the last of the Summer '09 and Fall '09 paddle reports, and more articles that Club members have written about their paddling experiences during the past year.

Its sister publication, *The RMSKC News*, will be coming soon with "From the Cockpit" written by President Larry Kline, pictures and details from the Club's Winter Party, a Steering Committee update with new Committee members' biographies, the Treasurer's Report, membership news and the beginnings of our 2010 paddling schedule.

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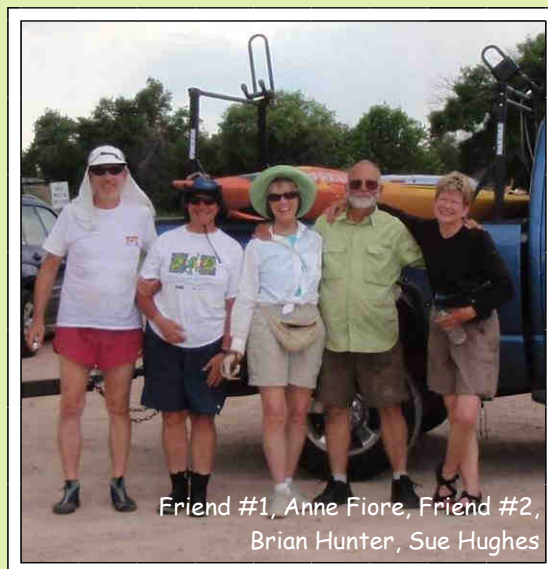
Flowers from last summer on Lake Dillon remind us that paddling weather will soon return. In the meanwhile, meet your friends at a pool near you for some fun practice and a little exercise.

## SUMMER PADDLE REPORTS

### South Platte Re-run: Club Friends, but not Club Sponsored; July 12, 2009

The spring multi-club paddles on the South Platte were so much fun that several RMSKC members talked about doing it again in a smaller group. With Anne Fiore's lead, Brian Hunter and Sue Hughes met at the Ft. Lupton put-in on July 4<sup>th</sup>, but with all the rain in 2009's early summer the river was running high and fast and the trip was scrapped.

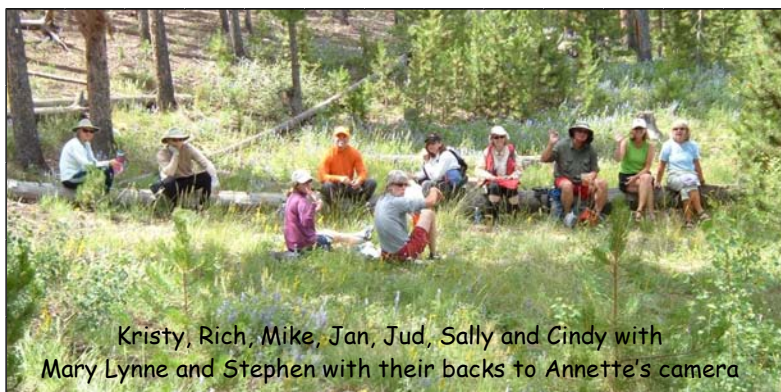
Brian had other plans and headed home, but Anne and Sue enjoyed a "paddle and chat" around Union Reservoir in Longmont before Anne returned to Lyons. Lots of background about parenthood, daughters, work experiences, and who-knows-what-else was shared; one of the benefits of Club membership is getting to know new friends to do things with.



Friend #1, Anne Fiore, Friend #2,  
Brian Hunter, Sue Hughes

The next weekend the flow was more reasonable for a small group, some of whom weren't experienced with moving water. White-water paddling friends of Anne's joined the three Club members and they had a nice river run on the scenic (not so much) South Platte, which was moving about 3 mph with some fluffies. There was a brief "whoops" when the divided channel the lead picked, with Sue following too closely, turned into a dead-end with strainers. Frantic waving alerted Brian, who caught the signal, took the center channel and stopped to help rope their boats over the mini-island created by the torrents of the week before and back into clear water. No one was ever in danger, but having enough people, and the right equipment (bow and stern lines and Brian's throw rope) was essential for the happy outcome. You can be sure they'll remember, next time, to have the lead paddler wearing a whistle on the *outside* of their PFD.

### Summer Dillon Paddle and BBQ; July 25, 2009



Kristy, Rich, Mike, Jan, Jud, Sally and Cindy with  
Mary Lynne and Stephen with their backs to Annette's camera

They all enjoyed a sunny day on the water, a snack in a field of lupines, and the famous Anson & Faulkner hospitality back at their condo after the paddle.

Mike Anson and Jan Faulkner hosted the Club's annual summer outing on Lake Dillon again this July. They were joined by Sally Edwards, Jud Hurd, Mary Lynne and Stephen Kneller, Annette Mascia, Cindy Miller, and Kristy and Rich Webber.



Mike, Jud and Annette





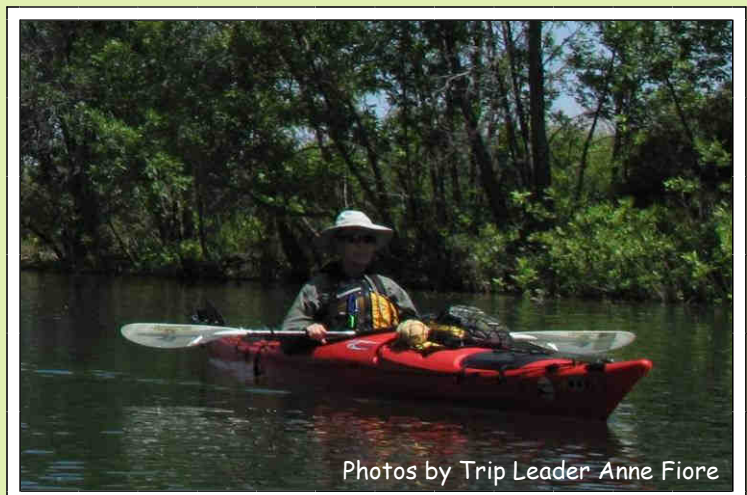
Marsha Dougherty reports: After introductions and a bit on signals and safety by trip leader Anne Fiore, the group (left to right, above: Tim Fletcher, Gary Cage, Jud Hurd and Marsha Dougherty, with Janet Scervino in the photo below) started counter-clockwise around the lake, which was surprisingly full compared to previous years. First they explored a lily pad/swamp area and small creek on the southwest end. It was hard to paddle through the growth, which kept getting caught in their paddles, but they continued until the underbrush got too dense to thrash through and then retraced their steps.

They then proceeded around the lake, traveling southeast continuing to look unsuccessfully for an inlet from Welch Reservoir, which Jud had seen on the map. For the most part, this edge of the lake was tree-less. They paddled along the southern shore, stopping for a quick lunch on a sandy beach at the edge of a grove of cottonwood trees and then on to the next cove which was actually quite large. It was interesting to see how far back they could paddle amongst the trees and brush. They noted that the water in this cove was much clearer than the first and surmised that the first cove was often landlocked.

Their next stop was down the channel to the outlet a short distance from the main body of the lake, which was bordered by trees. Finally they turned and began to head back to the starting point, going past the outlet and exploring each new cove in turn.

The water was perfectly calm when they started, but a breeze began to pickup—enough for them to pay attention but not enough to cause a discussion—although the coves were calm. In the coves along the north side they saw blue herons and pelicans.

The group spent approximately four and a half hours on the lake with a short lunch break and paddled exactly 5.0 GPS miles. Obviously they goofed off quite a bit; it was a nearly perfect day and everyone had a good time.

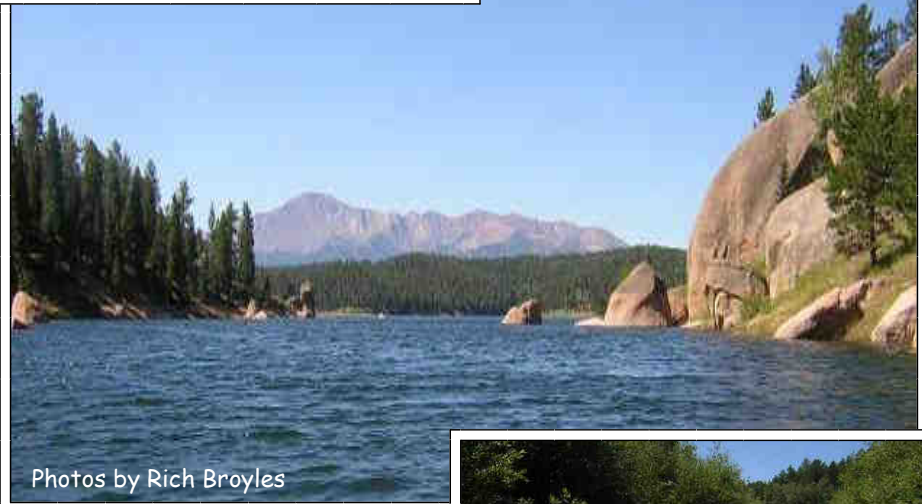


# SUMMER AND FALL REPORTS

## Rampart Reservoir; August 22, 2009

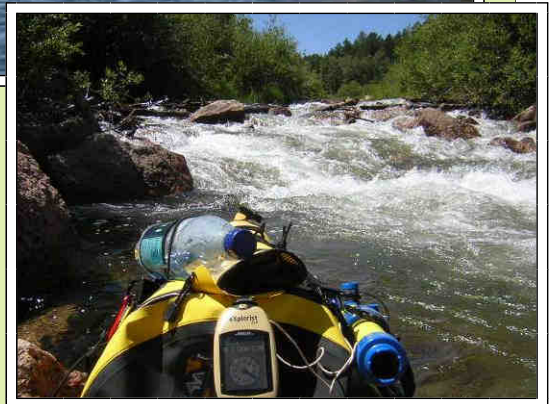
The "Fourth Saturday" paddle for August was lead by Rich Broyles, who picked Rampart Reservoir, northwest of Colorado Springs.

Rich and fellow southern Club member Annette Mascia enjoyed a day paddling around the nooks and crannies of the lake. They stopped for pictures and lunch and were out for three and a half hours; they paddled slightly more than seven miles.



Photos by Rich Broyles

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are lots of paddling places south of Denver. Another is Blue Mesa Reservoir, which Lou Ann and Dave Hustvedt paddled in October on their back from the Lake Powell trip. They plan to scout it better this summer and then lead a trip there. Hopefully we will have more happening in the southern part of the state in 2010.



## Union Reservoir; October 24, 2009

The "Fourth Saturday" paddle for October was lead by Jud Hurd. Marlene Pakish and Julie Reckart, and Kristy and Rich Webber joined him in Longmont. The day was beautiful but a little windy. They paddled east around the lake and the wind died down some so Jud thought it would be okay to continue farther, but before they got all the way to the backside the wind picked up again big time. They agreed it was best to turn around and head back instead of continuing around the lake. Turning around was a challenge in the wind and waves! Jud reports that he was blown into the reeds which made paddling and turning harder as he couldn't get a good bite on the paddle. He says at one point it felt like he was going over but a good brace kept him up. They did all finally get turned around and headed back into a strong wind out of the west, so they were taking winds from their front right quarter. It was hard paddling but they all made it safely. Once back to the beach Jud declared this Club paddle officially over. Then, of course, the wind died down again.



# COLD WATER PADDLES

## Chatfield and Cherry Creek Reservoirs; November, 2009

Brian Hunter, Gary McIntosh and Ray Van Dusen paddled Chatfield Reservoir on November 4th. They practiced some cold-water rescues, and Brian did additional experimenting with the effects of cold water at Cherry Creek Reservoir the following week. More of us will need dry suits before we can safely extend the paddling year here in Colorado like these hardy souls.

## Penguin Paddle; November 7, 2009

Sue Hughes, Lou Ann and David Hustvedt, Larry Kline, Kristy and Rich Webber and Stan White joined hosts and trip leaders Mike Anson and Jan Faulkner the first Saturday in November for the Club's annual Penguin Paddle on Dillon Reservoir.

The reservoir didn't have the lovely ice forms around it that people remembered from the year before, but the warmer weather was appreciated by everyone. Mike and Jan pedaled their Hobie sit-on-tops outfitted with pontoons and Jan took pictures. The rest were in their sea kayaks.



New member Stan White, who lives in Dillon, has canoed the reservoir for years and suggested the group check out Pirate's Cove. The reservoir was full enough to get across the bar at its entrance and the weather had been so mild that there were dry, grassy spots up the bank in the trees for a snack break.

As always, the wind picked up on the return trip to the marina but no one had any trouble. Grilled hamburgers and brats, tasty side dishes and Lou Ann's famous deviled eggs were enjoyed back at Mike and Jan's condo. Eating and yakking about kayaking adventures and future plans is always a fun part of these Club get-togethers.

Additional note: Sue Hughes reported that, although she'd just gotten back from a couple 15-20 mile days on Lake Powell that hadn't made her the least bit sore, the day after paddling the six or seven on Dillon Reservoir she hurt all over. She'd paddled that morning knowing that she didn't have the right gear: the weather was balmy but the water temperature clearly required a dry suit. Isn't it strange that being tense would cause six miles to feel like a couple dozen? It's time for an article about buying a dry suit!

# PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLYSTONE: HOW TO STICK TOGETHER AND ENJOY THE RIDE

By Marlene J. Pakish



SUNDAY, 26 JULY 2009: After much planning and a day together at Chatfield getting ready for this trip, it was finally time to bring this trip to fruition. Julie Reckart and I had been in the Tetons for the previous two nights so we secured a room at Grant Village for Sunday night. We were meeting the boys at the Ranger's Station at 3:00 p.m. We all arrived safely: Dick Dieckman, George Ottenhoff and Brian Hunter riding together and Larry Kline, Bernie Dahlen and Rich Broyles in another vehicle; it's a good sign when everyone gets to the meeting place on time. We signed in, got the required permits, watched the required video and planned to meet for our "last" supper that evening. After dinner we all walked down to the launch site and discussed the meeting time for the next morning. It was breezy and the waves were rolling in and Yellowstone Lake looked huge. Thoughts of, "What the heck did we get ourselves into?" went briefly through my mind but the excitement of the whole trip outweighed those.

MONDAY, 27 JULY 2009:

Grant Village to Campsite 7L5, 10.9 miles; stormy with low thunder clouds

We were up at 7:00 am, had breakfast at the Lakeside Restaurant and headed to the launch site to unload kayaks, cars and get everything ready. Launch time was set for 10:00 but we didn't leave until 10:30. Unfortunately with such a late start, the clouds started to roll in and the sky was getting a bit intimidating. We stopped for a lunch break and decided to continue paddling even though the wind was picking up.



About half an hour later, Larry told us all to pull off the water and take shelter on land because the storm was upon us and for safety reasons we needed to be off the water. We waited out the storm at Breeze Point for about 40 minutes and continued to our first campsite. The paddle that day turned out to be 10.9 miles and took approximately five hours although about an hour and a half was lunch and the storm sit-out.

Julie and I were both exhausted and hoped that the rest of the trip wasn't going to be this tough. We were on tap for cooking that night, as were George and Dick. One thing I will say is, "These boys can cook!" I was amazed at the food the guys brought both for sharing at dinner and the elaborate breakfasts that were made. Julie and I had picked up dried food that could be made within the pouch by just adding water. The guys brought fresh veggies (corn on the cob), real eggs, and Spam, of course.



TUESDAY, 28 JULY 2009:

Campsite 7L5 to Campsite 5L6, 7.0 miles; light breeze, sunny

We got an earlier start on the water, heading to campsite #2. It was much better weather and the lake wasn't as rough. It was a lot easier to have conversations while paddling since we weren't trying to out-paddle a storm. We arrived at our destination after 7.0 miles of paddling and the mosquitoes were out in force.

We had a bear box at the first campsite but from here on out we had to hang our food. The regulation is that the food has to be 10 feet off the ground so that means the bear pole had to be at least 14 feet off the ground. After a day of paddling, that's a big throw but after about eight attempts, we finally got our rope over—whew. We also didn't have to cook so we sat back and enjoyed the dinner from Dick and George who made Panag Curry and Rich made a spicy rice and tuna dish. Dishes were done and it started out to be a nice evening, except for the mosquitoes, but the wind picked up and so did the waves on the lake. That meant two things: bye-bye to the mosquitoes but hello to a windy night and crashing waves on the shore.



WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2009

Campsite 5L6 to Campsite 5L3, 5.6 miles; high winds, breaking waves, sunny

This morning there was much discussion as to whether or not to launch. The waves were crashing onto shore, the wind was against us and there were four of us that had not launched our kayaks in waves like that. We soon learned how to, though, with two of the more experience paddlers launching first and getting past the breakers to wait for those of us that were white-knuckled paddle holders. Two people held my kayak on shore, I got in it and got my skirt on and they pushed me out, at which time I paddled like hell to get past the breakers. Once past those it was a little calmer although not smooth. We were told by Larry that once we got out farther to turn down the shoreline and head for the cove, which I did. I felt my kayak being pushed into shore again so I paddled

my hardest and made it to the cove, where the water was calmer. I looked back expecting to see at least four kayaks behind me and saw no one. Hmm, did I hear wrong? Was I the only one told to go to the cove once I got out? Oh, wait, here comes everyone so we were all good and everyone made it out safely.



Marlene and Julie protected with mosquito netting over all exposed surfaces

We were staying two nights at Camp 5L3, which made that morning's adventure even more worthwhile. Of course the mosquitoes had followed us and down by the water it was a little breezy. George and Brian continued their fishing derby but were only able to catch cutthroat trout, which had to be thrown back in. Whew, since I'm not a fresh water fish eater the fish gods were on my side.

THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2009

Campsite 5L3, 2 mile paddle to get to the seven mile hike; sunny

This was our day to stay in camp or paddle or hike or both. Dick talked about a hike that we had to paddle to and the trail looped around. Everyone decided to go since hiking was a nice break from paddling. This turned into a seven mile hike and a few of us watched as an osprey dove into the water and grabbed dinner. The hike took us through open fields and into shaded treed areas. We were all amazed at the amount of bear scat on the trails

with some of the guys even taking pictures of it! The day was beautiful and the sun was out the whole time.



On the paddle back to camp, a few of the fellows circled Peale Island to get a closer look at the cabin out there and the rest of us headed back to camp to get settled in before dinner time. A fire was built with coals this evening because Brian was making some biscuits in the dutch oven he brought. I really think he had a secret compartment in his kayak since I don't know how he managed to get everything in his boat.

FRIDAY, 31 JULY 2009

Campsite 5L3 to Campsite 7M6, 7.5 miles; sunny in the morning, stormy by noon

The past two nights had been very cold, getting down into the 30s but the stars were out in force. There was frost on the tents and a chill in the morning air. This morning we were leaving everyone's favorite campsite and we got a later start than previous mornings. Since Larry, Julie and I had not been out to Peale Island, we decided to head over there before meandering to the next campsite. The island had a well-kept cabin on it with wood cut and stacked and a little yellow boat—it looked real cozy. A well kept secret of this paddle was the sighting of two common loons who were talking and diving for quite a while. Larry, being a bird guy, was totally enchanted and I thought they were pretty cool although the osprey diving for dinner was my favorite. After looking these birds up on the internet, it is totally amazing that we saw any loons since the population in Yellowstone is only about 46 total.



As we continued our paddle farther down the lake, the clouds were building and it was getting a little breezy. Dick, Larry, and Brian would check out different campsites along the way, I'm assuming for another trip to Yellowstone in the future. Julie, Rich and I were looking at the skies and wondering how far it was to camp 7M6 and shouldn't we be setting our sights on that! A few of the faster paddlers were ahead of Julie and me and there were three paddlers behind us. The wind picked up, as did the swells on the water, and Julie and I were keeping close to the shoreline, although because of the Yellowstone fire there wasn't a shoreline, just downed trees. Julie yelled she couldn't paddle against the wind and waves and was heading into "shore." I turned back slightly and tried to get my kayak nose in to shore but unfortunately that didn't work so well for me.



My boat ended up parallel to shore with the waves knocking in and over it. I managed to get the front of it partially under a tree and tied but the waves were relentless and quickly filled it with rocks and water. Julie was able to get her boat in nose first and secured.

Somehow Brian, who was ahead of us, knew we had to pull in and marked our location on his GPS. Larry was behind all of us and was making some headway in the three foot waves. Just by chance, out of the corner of his eye, he saw my yellow kayak and then Julie and me on shore. He made sure we were okay and said he would send help once the storm settled down.

Everything in my kayak was pretty much under water but as Julie and I were sitting there we knew we would be okay even if we had to spend the night: she had the tent, the stove and some of the food in her kayak! But the land and water rescue did arrive, with Bernie and Brian coming by land and Rich and Dick in kayaks. Bernie and Brian were brave souls, getting into the pounding lake, fighting the waves to empty out my boat as best as possible, and turning it around so it faced out. I got in and once again paddled like hell to get away from shore. Dick had me follow him to the campsite, which was only a half mile from where we were. Bernie and Brian lined up Julie's boat the same way and she followed Rich back; everyone in kayaks made it to camp safely. Bernie and Brian had the half-mile hike back to camp across downed trees with a bit of bushwhacking, too. It took them an hour and a half to get through that, and they also carried some of our gear back (like my camera).



This was definitely a day for contemplation: what went wrong, what could have been better and most importantly that sticking together as a group is critical. See the following article, titled *South Arm Express*, which is Larry's account of these events.

SATURDAY, 1 AUGUST 2009

Campsite 7M6 to campsite 7M3, 5.3 miles; sunny

After the previous day's adventure, I was more interested in getting to the next campsite, and then paddling if the weather held, than taking my time. The day turned out to be beautiful and the water a lot calmer. Our campsite was in the farthest part of the lake where only hand-propelled boats are allowed...except, of course, for the ranger. Speaking of the ranger, he did visit us at this campsite and pointed out the bear marks on the pole where our food was hanging. We had not seen a sign of a bear the entire trip except for the scat on the hiking trail. Seeing the claw marks made us all realize there *are* bears in them there woods.

The talk around camp that evening was not about the bears but that there were five of us leaving in the morning to head back to Grant Village. The departing five were Dick, George, Brian, Julie and me, and we had a 13.5 mile paddle ahead of us. Knowing that the storms come up around noon on the lake, we all decided on an 8:00 start, the earliest of the whole week.



SUNDAY, 2 AUGUST 2009

Campsite 7M3 to Grant Village, 13.5 miles; sunny, lake was glass

What a perfect morning and, although we were leaving Rich, Larry and Bernie as they were staying another night here, we were heading to civilization and pizza! Julie and I had not showered the entire time and we were pretty campy so in addition to pizza we were looking forward to a hot shower.

The paddle this day was "Zen like" as Julie described it. The five of us stayed together; we paddled in a line at times and really didn't talk much. Most of the morning the water was like glass and we stopped for about 15 minutes at Breeze Point but, of course, the wind picked up

about half a mile from Grant Village. We could see the cars and buildings and decided that overall it was a great paddle, even with the 10-knot winds because we made it to shore in 4 hours, 10 minutes.

That's the end of my story although Larry, Rich and Bernie had a nice day paddling down the Flat Mountain Arm and had another night at camp 7M3 before heading out on Monday to Grant Village.



Dick Dieckman, Marlene Pakish, George Ottenhoff, Brian Hunter and Julie Reckart set out for civilization on a glassy lake



Left to right: George Ottenhoff, Dick Dieckman, Rich Broyles, Brian Hunter, Julie Reckart, Bernie Dahlen and Marlene Pakish

In conclusion, the trip was awesome: the group dynamics were outstanding and we all learned that to have a successful trip without anyone getting hurt or lost you have to stick together like peanut butter and learn to roll like jelly in situations that test your skill set.

Would I do another trip with this group? Yes, in a heartbeat.

Pictures for this article were taken by Marlene Pakish, Julie Reckart and Larry Kline



## SOUTH ARM EXPRESS

By Larry Kline



HOW A GROUP OF PADDLERS GOT A NOT SO GENTLE REMINDER TO KEEP A SHARP EYE ON THE WEATHER AND NEVER LET THEIR GUARD DOWN ON YELLOWSTONE LAKE:

The group of eight was spread out some 1.5 miles from head to toe as the South Arm Express roared into the station at precisely 12:40 on Day Five of an eight-day paddle into the South Arm of Yellowstone Lake. It came at them head first.

Two at the head of the group were just 0.2 miles from the destination campsite and experienced only one-foot waves and moderate winds. Tail-End Charlie had stopped for a snack and to put on a spray jacket 1.5 miles back as the first winds arrived there. Those in the middle experienced two-foot waves as they rounded a point of land known here as "Stormy Point," 0.7 miles from camp. Two of them came to a standstill against the wind and waves and decided to head for shore. Unfortunately, the shore was a mass of jumbled, downed timber from the 1988 fires at the Park. One of them found a small slot and shot in bow first while the other got caught broadside; that boat quickly swamped on shore. One of the other middle paddlers had the presence of mind to mark a waypoint on a GPS. It was 0.5 miles from the campsite.

Tail-End Charlie paddled on into increasingly higher waves and thought about stopping in a small sheltered bay 0.3 miles before Stormy Point but didn't. He saw the soon-to-be log jammed duo rounding Stormy Point ahead; the waves were fully three feet high when he arrived and it was often difficult to see over their tops. His boat nose-dived into the oncoming waves. Winds were 20 to 25 mph, maybe more?



After rounding Stormy Point, to his surprise he spotted the two on shore. They gave him the OK hand-on-head signal and he paddled on to the campsite 0.5 miles ahead. By then all the other paddlers were there; he arrived some 30 to 40 minutes after the two at the head of the group. The S.A. Express was still roaring through the station.

Immediately the six at camp split up into a Land Party and a Naval Escort Party, and two stayed at camp with VHF radios to prepare hot drinks and set up tents for the "survivors" and their rescuers. The group learned later from the two that they immediately took steps to

warm up, set up camp, and spend the night if the rest of the group could not get to them before morning: a smart strategy to keep one's mind focused away from the "helpless factor".

The Land Party had the toughest job as they had to cross 0.5 miles of fallen timber and swamp land. They set out with a GPS, VHF radios, extra line, food and satellite locator beacons: a well prepared team to say the least. Soon the wind and waves subsided to less than two feet. They radioed to say they had arrived at the

*(Continued on page 12)*

duo's location. At that moment the Navel Escort Team took off. The Land Party helped unload three inches of pea to golf ball sized gravel from the full length of the cockpit of the broadsided boat and emptied it of water. They then plunged waist-deep into the lake to help the two launch their boats into one-foot waves. From there the Naval Escorts paddled with them back to camp. They arrived safely about two hours after the S.A. Express had first appeared. The Land Party returned 45 minutes later. Needless to say, there were some stories to share, but everyone was in good spirits. Hot chocolate was enjoyed by all.

After dinner they shared experiences and agreed that sticking together (which they *had* done rather faithfully all four prior days) would have helped make the situation better. Of course, the adventure would have proceeded differently if the group had been together:

- (A) at the campsite when the S.A. Express had first arrived: the best scenario.
- (B) when the group was back with Tail-End Charlie as he finished his snack; perhaps they would have sought shelter in the small bay before Stormy Point.
- (C) when the group was between Stormy Point and camp: probably the most precarious place to be due to the lack of bailout points along the log-cluttered shoreline.

## KAYAK CAMPING CLASS'S LAKE GRANBY OVERNIGHT

By Marsha Dougherty

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2009: We gathered at Sunset Point, loaded our boats, and got a brief compass lesson and safety review from our leader, Dick Dieckman. There were ten of us: Dick, Julie Reckart (also a trip leader), David and Lou Ann Hustvedt, JJ Scervino, Mike Anson, Jan Faulkner, Richard and Kristy Webber and Marsha Dougherty. We put in at approximately 11:15 am. The weather was overcast and the lake was smooth as glass: just beautiful.

The orienteering lesson didn't go as smooth as the lake. The search for Harvey Island was a bit confusing and we ended up off course somehow. Later comments about how the mistakes were made mentioned having preconceived notions and not reading our equipment carefully. We got there though, and had lunch. It rained lightly after lunch.

We paddled on to the campsite and some of us set up a tarp, and Mike and Jan served a tasty treat of cream cheese with special sauce and crackers. Kristy, Richard, and Marsha paddled up the Colorado River arm for about a mile and then were scared back by thunder. They made it back in time to get sheltered by the tarp from a hail storm. Then after the weather cleared most everybody paddled up the river arm again all the way to the end; we saw lots of wild life: bald eagles, blue herons, etc.

We had a bonfire in the evening with plenty of conversation and a song and dance duet from Mike and Jan.

We broke camp Sunday morning and paddled by Deer Island and saw two more eagles. A good time was had by all!





EDITOR'S NOTE: This article describes a paddle on the part of the Colorado River from Fruita or Loma in Colorado to Westwater, Utah. Sometimes this trip is referred to as "Fruita to Westwater" and sometimes "Ruby-Horsethief", although the river goes through Horsethief Canyon first. There was a Club-sponsored trip on this same section the following weekend; read about it on page 15.

## "RUBY-HORSETHIEF"

### SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2009

By Anne Fiore



2009 was the *fifth* time we've done this section of the river, and probably the best trip ever! This year, we put in at Fruita on the last Saturday of September and took out at Westwater on Sunday, making it a two-day/one-night excursion. Normally we like to take three days and two nights, as that gives a day for hiking into one of the side canyons, but there were new-job vacation constraints this year.

Our group was Karen Moldenhauer, a friend from Colorado Whitewater Club, Lou Ann and David Hustvedt from Rocky Mountain Sea Kayak Club, and Gary Cage and me.

The first three years we launched from the put-in at Loma, but last year we started to launch at the State Park in Fruita. The park provides convenient camping for the night before as well as electrical hookups to make a pot of coffee and fire-up the microwave for breakfast burritos. We reserve well in advance and go for the trailer spots as they are the most pleasant. The walk-in sites are nice, too, but there's no electricity. You need a State Parks pass to park at the launch area at the park (parking at Loma is free) but the convenience is worth it.



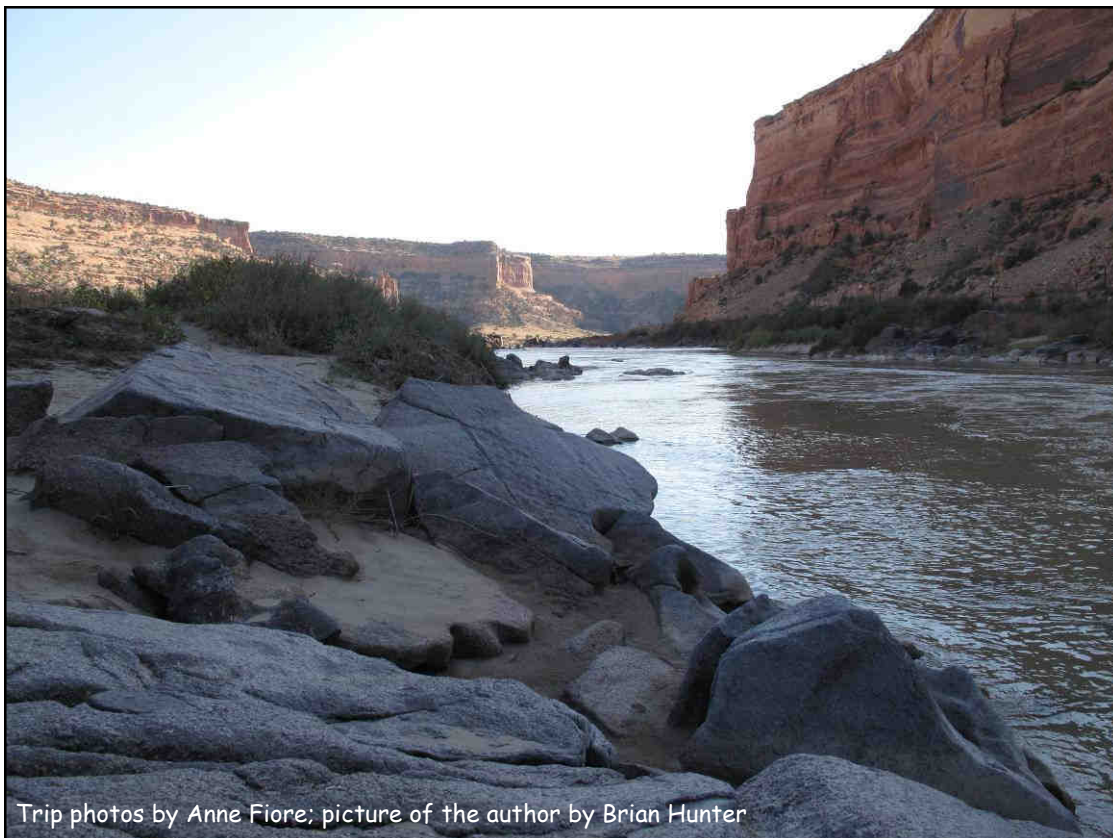
Dave and Lou Ann Hustvedt



We've also taken to doing the shuttle the night before launching, so Karen and I headed to Westwater, Utah, to leave a vehicle and stop at the Loma put-in to sign up for camping on the river. We had intended to stay at Knowles, which is about 18 miles down-river but those two spots were taken; our next choice was Black Rock. It is definitely scenic and usual filled so we were lucky to get a site there. The round trip for the shuttle takes about ninety minutes.

#### ON-THE-RIVER HIGHLIGHTS:

First, the flow was just above 4000 cfs, the highest we've ever run it. Even with the higher level, the water was not at all pushy, and the gentle current from behind felt like we did not even have to paddle! It seemed like we were at Black Rock by mid-afternoon!



Trip photos by Anne Fiore; picture of the author by Brian Hunter

Another aspect of the flow was that the rapid at Black Rocks was pretty much washed out, as you can see in the photo. At lower levels, this used to be pretty splashy and swirly.

The weather was warm and sunny, in the 80s during the day and quite temperate at night, with hardly any wind. That was a treat; last year's paddle out into a constant head-wind remains in my mind.

Finally, the weather was also great for the trip back—with not a drop of snow or rain anywhere—another real treat! It was a great trip with wonderful people!

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

From Brian Curtiss

- Club web site with more information on this stretch of river:  
<http://www.rmssc.org/places/colo-l-w.html>
- Black Rocks video from September, 2006, before it got washed out:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pey9EYOiQBM>
- Current river flow, water temp. & statistics:  
[http://waterdata.usga.gov/co/nwis/uv?cb\\_00060=on&cb\\_00011=on&site\\_no=09163500](http://waterdata.usga.gov/co/nwis/uv?cb_00060=on&cb_00011=on&site_no=09163500)
- BLM information: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gjfo/recreation/boating/coloradoriver/html>
- BLM map: <http://www.rmssc.org/documents/blm-colo-l-w.pdf>
- Jerry's River Guide: <http://home.mesastate.edu/~jerry/guide/c2d.htm>
- Info from GORP: [http://gorp.away.com/gorp/activity/paddling/pad\\_colo.htm](http://gorp.away.com/gorp/activity/paddling/pad_colo.htm)
- Two sites for portable toilet ideas:  
[http://www.rmssc.org/info/Human\\_Waste\\_Disposal.pdf](http://www.rmssc.org/info/Human_Waste_Disposal.pdf)  
<http://www.blm.gov/or/resources/recreation/rogue/portable-toilets-kayak.php>



# RMSKC's FRUITA TO WESTWATER ON THE COLORADO RIVER

OCTOBER 3-4, 2009



Rich and George, Kristy's red boat



This 30-mile Class I/II trip on the Colorado River has been a long-standing Club tradition. It starts west of Grand Junction in Fruita (four river miles east of Loma), and goes through Horsethief and Ruby Canyons with a night's camping near Mee Canyon.

Frank Bering, Dick Dieckman, Eric Niles, George Ottenhoff, and Kristy and Rich Webber had mostly sunny paddling. It was in the 40s at night and the water was chilly.

Following ACA guidelines, they carried helmets to wear for Black Rocks Rapid and, for the BLM, a firepan and BLM-approved portable toilet systems.



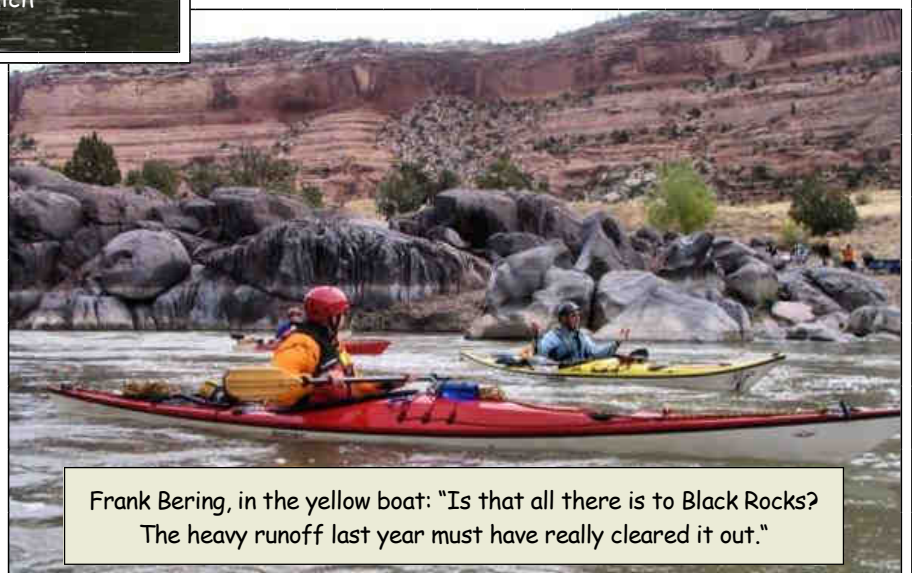
Mouth of Mee Canyon



Black Rocks: pre-Cambrian metamorphic rock which forms a narrower channel for the river

Eric Niles, who took these pictures, reports that it was the trip that almost wasn't: Brian Curtiss, the original trip leader, got sick at the last minute but Frank Bering, Club member from Grand Junction filled in.

Several other paddlers were troubled with health issues but everyone enjoyed the paddling and the strong, cohesive group. Eric mentioned that they saw wild turkeys and that good land shoes would have been useful.



Frank Bering, in the yellow boat: "Is that all there is to Black Rocks? The heavy runoff last year must have really cleared it out."



Dreaming about a trip to Lake Powell started in late spring, and over the next months leader Dan Bell worked for hours to research possibilities, recruit participants, communicate decisions and help finalize The Plan: we would leave from Bullfrog Marina in Utah, rent a houseboat for water storage, ease of cooking, and indoor plumbing, and go the second week of

October when rates were lower. Dan's planning was wonderful and his emails were a joy to receive: each a careful summary of the decisions and details, leavened with his wry humor.

Our group (Dan Bell, Frank Bering, Gary Cage, Anne Fiore, Gary Greeno, Brian Hunter, Sue Hughes, Jud Hurd, Lou Ann and Dave Hustvedt, Annette Mascia, and Anna Troth) started the morning in snow but everyone's drive was uneventful. Many of us car-pooled or caravanned, a companionable way to make the long trip to Glen Canyon National Recreation Area south of Hanksville, Utah.



In the morning we got our boats inspected for mussels and stowed them on the top deck, gear was thrown in everywhere and off we motored to our first camp in Moki Canyon. Captain Dave Hustvedt made piloting the boat seem lots easier than deciphering the directions at the entrance kiosk.



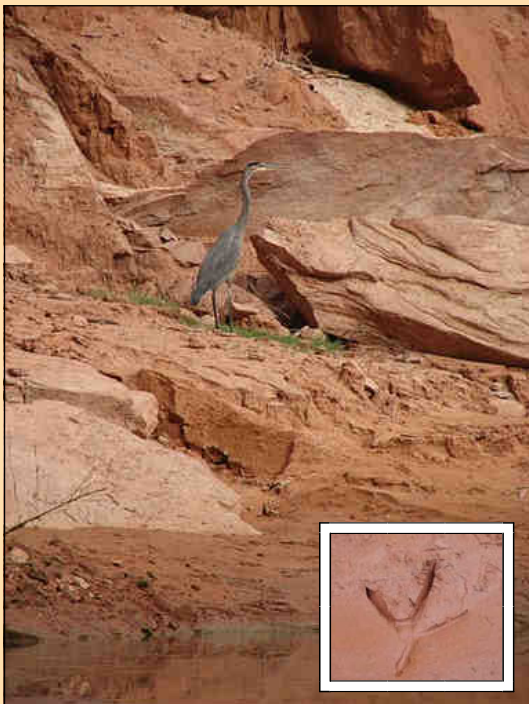
*How does this machine work? How much are kayakers supposed to pay?*





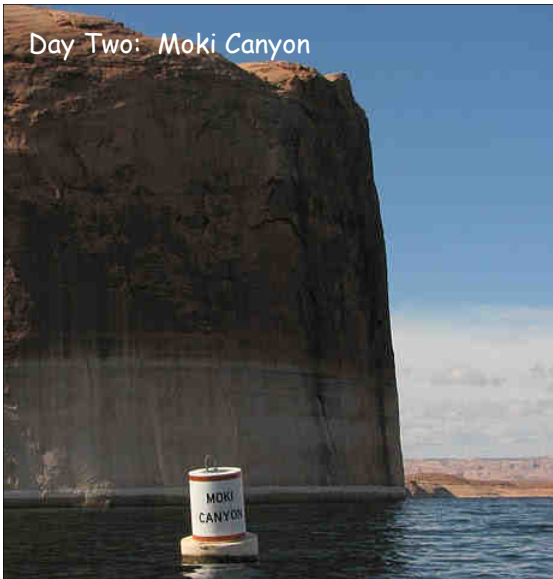


We unloaded the kayaks and people set up their tents, some on shore and others on the top deck. Then small groups paddled off to explore the end of this arm of the canyon. It didn't go far, but being on the water was a nice teaser for the next day when we had time to explore Moki all the way to the entrance.





## Day Two: Moki Canyon

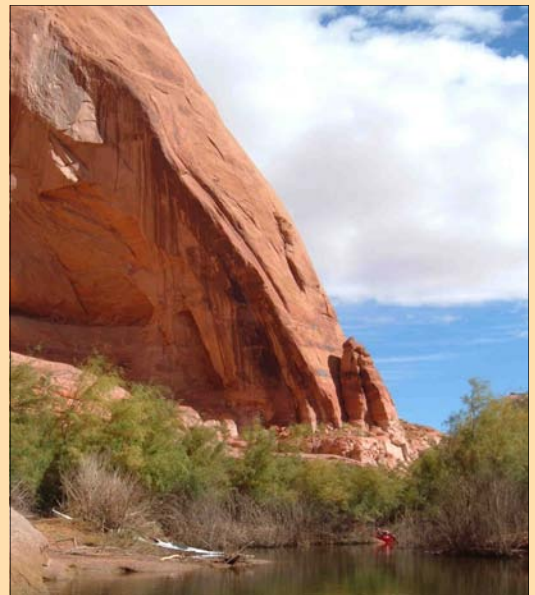


All of us loved paddling for miles and looking at the rocks. You'd think you would get sick of red rocks but each canyon and side canyon seemed different. Sometimes the walls came straight down hundreds of feet into the water, other places there were hanging gardens of plants growing in cracks fed by seepage from above, or even a sloping shoreline with sandy beaches. Some cliffs were weathered, others cracked off like sharp pieces of peanut brittle; some were solid colored but many had a white ring indicating higher water levels or stripes of "desert varnish," dark stains from minerals on the surface.

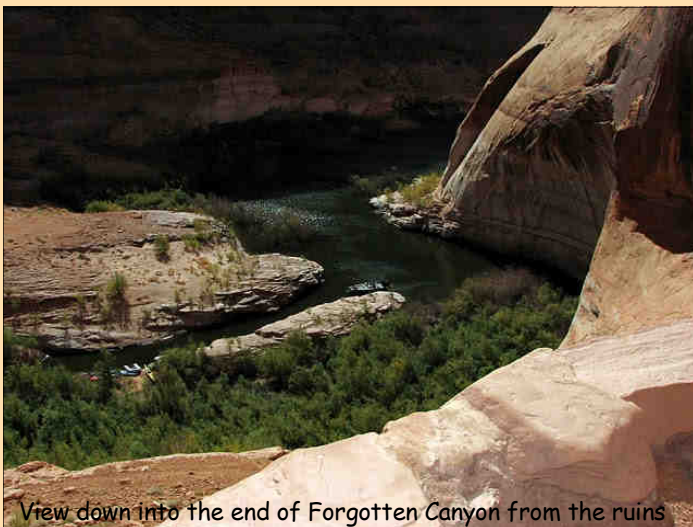




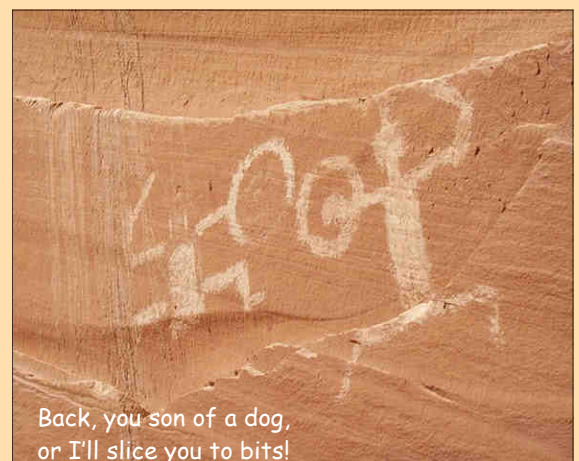
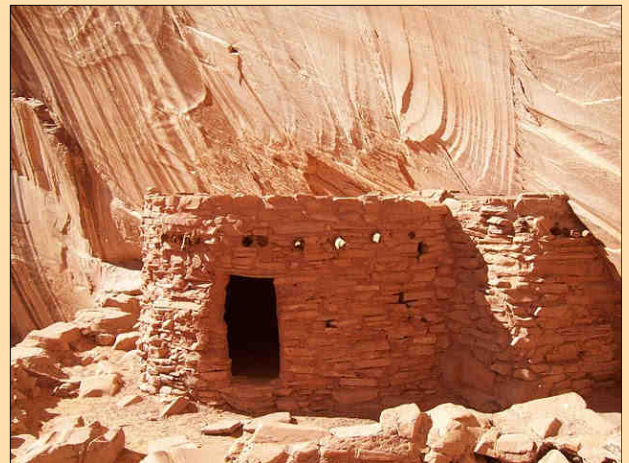
### Day Three: Forgotten Canyon



After two nights in Moki Canyon we moved a couple hours farther up-lake to Forgotten Canyon, arriving in time to paddle back to the trail to Defiance House, an ancient Ancestral Puebloan ruin. Was it a dwelling for a small group or an outpost for protection? The impressive rock-art warriors on the wall beside it would make any attackers think twice.



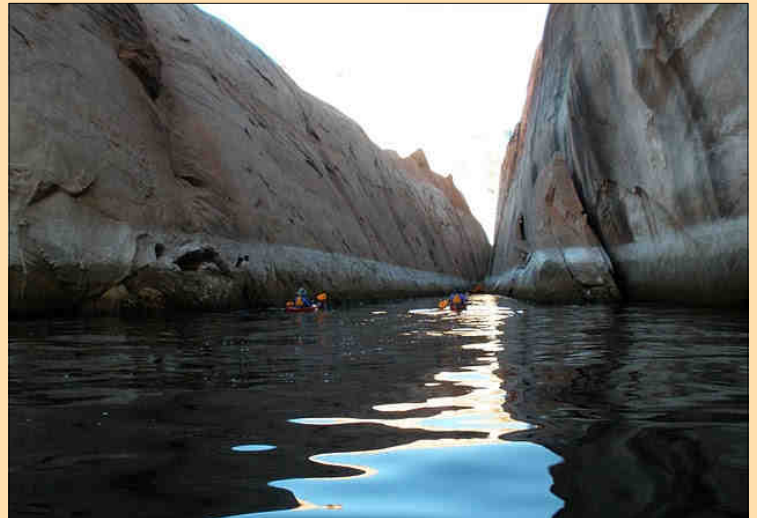
View down into the end of Forgotten Canyon from the ruins



Back, you son of a dog,  
or I'll slice you to bits!



After visiting the ruins some people went out toward the main lake; they found an arm that turned into a long slot canyon only wide enough for a single boat.



Annette remembers, "Paddling silently through magnificent eons-old canyons, weaving past massive rock formations, and exploring every slot, nook, cranny and cave I came upon made for a truly surreal experience. As I rounded each turn with anticipation, my eyes were treated to one extraordinary view after another; I felt dwarfed and insignificant by the splendor surrounding me and was in a constant state of awe. This must be where 'awesome' began!"

Anne Fiore wrote, "Every day was great but the most memorable was the last day. First, we paddled across the lake and up the Smith Fork Canyon. The water was like glass! It really was quite a paddle up to the end where our part of the group had lunch. There was an actual stream flowing into the lake at that point, a nice surprise. After lunch, some of us hiked upstream and were rewarded with a very cool grotto."

#### Day Four: Smith Fork Canyon and Knowles Canyon



Smith Fork Canyon

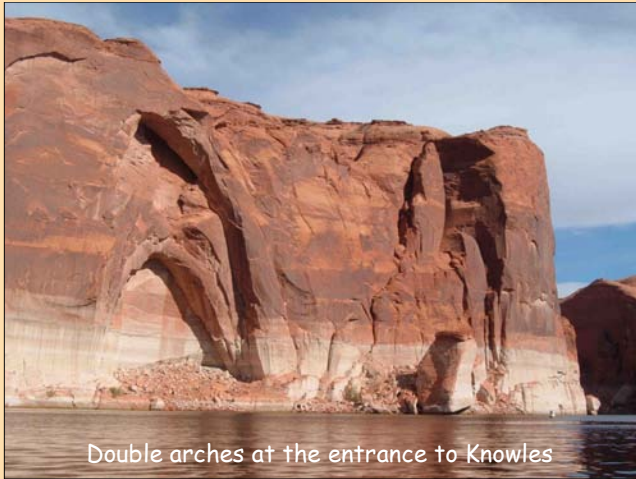
On their return, these paddlers checked out the slot canyon that people found the day before.

Annette, Brian, Frank and I had wanted to explore Knowles Canyon so we left the others in Smith Fork before they got to their lunch stop and paddled back across and a bit farther up-lake.





Knowles was wonderful and we were sure we'd found the canyon with the most diversity, that *ours* was the jewel of the trip, until we listened to their descriptions that night at dinner. The final verdict? We'll all just have to come back to make sure we really saw the best there was.

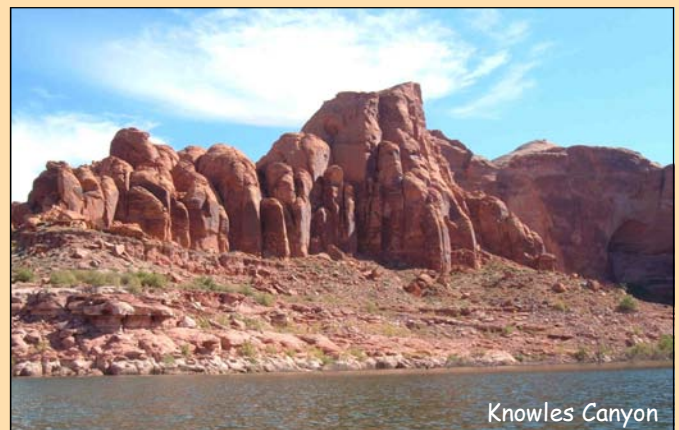


Double arches at the entrance to Knowles

The next morning we were up at dawn to load and head home. The earliest risers were thrilled to see one of the most lovely sights of the whole trip; Gary Greeno took this photo:



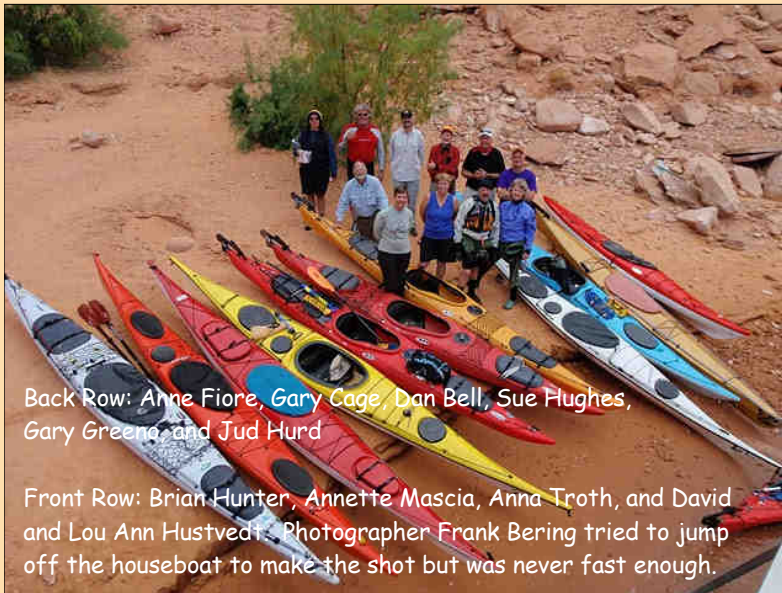
In the main lake, on the way to Knowles Canyon



Knowles Canyon



Photos supplied by: Dan Bell,  
Frank Bering, Gary Greeno,  
Jud Hurd, Brian Hunter,  
Annette Mascia and Anna Troth



Back Row: Anne Fiore, Gary Cage, Dan Bell, Sue Hughes, Gary Greeno, and Jud Hurd

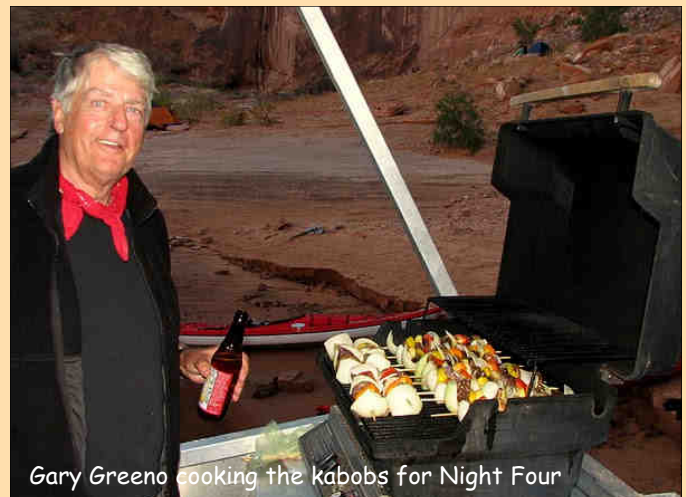
Front Row: Brian Hunter, Annette Mascia, Anna Troth, and David and Lou Ann Hustvedt. Photographer Frank Bering tried to jump off the houseboat to make the shot but was never fast enough.

Frank Bering: "Our group was the best. Dan's leadership had just the right balance of safety vs. freedom, and Captain Dave was amazingly skilled at seamanship and engineering. I loved our trip."

Brian Hunter: "People looked after each other when paddling; Annette stayed with me to show me the really narrow slot canyon while the others went back to camp. Everyone helped do dishes. Gary Greeno scouted ahead for camp sites in his rubber power boat."

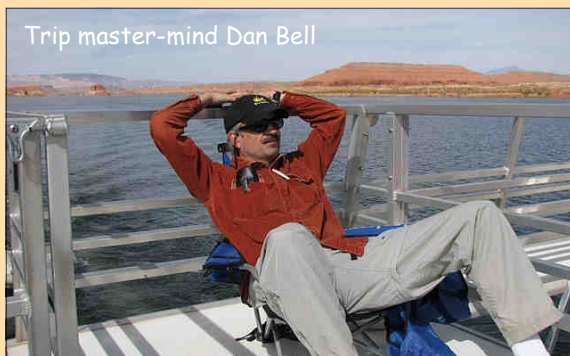
Jud Hurd: "The food was great. As a matter of fact it was a little too great. I was expecting to maybe drop a couple of pounds which usually happens on multi-day trips. However, given the cooking accommodations on the boat and all the delicious food people brought, I actually gained a couple of pounds. Those are the main memories I take away from this trip. I encourage everybody to make this trip. You won't regret it."

Gary Greeno: "What great impressions at Lake Powell: Venus chasing the moon before morning. A woman who built her two-story house all by herself and lived without water and electricity while doing it. A man who offered to help weld my trailer, kind and finely equipped for kayaking, sending our whereabouts every night to loved ones back home. An artist who played the Indian flute flinging haunting melodies that pulled the echoes of ancient spirits from the red cliffs. A quiet man and a quiet woman with the souls of an explorers and adventurers. A teacher with a quick wit and a drive for excellence and a taste for good wine. A warm Christian man with a heart of a servant. Our captain, a picture of calm. The visitor from Woodland Park who strapped a solar panel on the back of his kayak so he could power his CPAP machine at night to maintain his health and

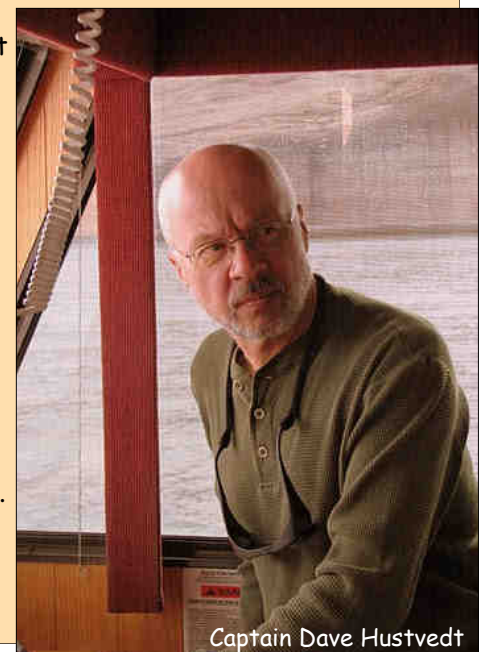


Gary Greeno cooking the kabobs for Night Four

his relationship with his wife. A man who started as a ski bum and ended up owning three restaurants. Everyone willing to help and share. Chicken Gumbo and exotic dessert, kabobs on the barbie. Competency abounded. What fun!"



Trip master-mind Dan Bell



Captain Dave Hustvedt



AUTHOR'S NOTE: When Dan Bell first talked to us about Lake Powell he said it was strange that every time he'd ever gone he was terribly disappointed with his pictures when he got home, but when he looked at them later they seemed to have improved and it was obvious why he would want to go again.

I had the same experience with the hundreds of photos people sent me for this article. When I first saw them I thought they didn't do the area justice at all, but now they bring it back clearly and I'm planning my return trip just like Dan.



Does he snore or did we?

I intended to have a list of specific credits for these pictures but I don't. I am so sorry; the only consolation is that they are all wonderful. Thanks, photographers!

Our instructors remind us that there are lots of skills that can be learned and practiced in an indoor pool, so don't wait until summer to get your boat in the water.

Here is a "Newcomer to Pool Practice" article we ran last year if you're wondering about the basics.

## OPEN POOL PRACTICE IS A **BLAST**; HERE'S WHAT ELSE I LEARNED:

- Yes, the doors and hall-ways are wide enough to get a 16' boat into the building without any trouble.
- Both the pool room and the water were warm, but I was glad to have on my farmer jane because it protected my legs when I was practicing re-entries.
- I also wore the long-sleeved poly-pro shirt that I usually wear kayaking and that worked very well. Everyone had paddle clothes on, not just swimming suits. People wore their PFDs, too.
- I had to learn how to get into my boat from the side of the pool. I did it a lot of times, from both sides, and feel more confident now about entering and exiting from a dock.
- Since last fall I seemed to have slipped a bit on boat handling. It even took a minute or two to re-think how to get it on and off the car. I tried a couple brace turns that I whiffed so badly that I fell in. How embarrassing, but how nice I didn't do it in cold water on an outing.
- Whoops, I stowed my paddle in the fore-most bungee...and the end near me pivoted out away from the boat so far I couldn't reach it. It had never happened before and that's another lesson I'm glad I learned in warm water with people who could paddle over and hand it back to me.
- Good Hint: I should have brought a big plastic bag for my wet-suit, PFD and spray skirt; when I rinsed the chlorinated water off of them they got lots wetter than they usually do and they made a mess in the car.
- Hope to see you there! If you have questions email: [suehughes@yahoo.com](mailto:suehughes@yahoo.com)

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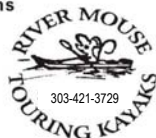
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