

SEA KAYAKING IN MAINE WITHOUT A LEATHERMAN

26 August - 3 September, 2014

By Marlene J. Pakish



The author, paddling out of Muscongus

Planning for this trip started months before, with help from former RMSKC president Matt Lutkus, who now resides in Maine. The other paddlers were Dan Bell, Bernie Dahlen, Sue Hughes, trip leader Jud Hurd, Julie Rekart and Clark Strickland, who knew the area from years of family vacationing on the coast. The 26th of August was a travel day, with most of us arriving in Portland, Maine, at different times but getting to our meeting place, Matt's house in Damariscotta, that evening around 7:00 pm to talk about plans for our two days in his area. We were renting kayaks and camping not too far from his house.

Our first day on the water, Wednesday, we headed out of Muscongus Harbor toward Hog I land through a channel onto bigger waters. [GPS maps of the daily paddles are on page 19.] Matt was a wonderful guide, giving us insight into the area and how to maneuver around the fishing boats and buoys. Most of us were getting used to our kayaks since they were rentals, but Clark had the luxury of his own boat since he had driven from Colorado.



Matt pointing out options on his chart



We stopped at Hungry I land for lunch, how appropriate, and before resuming our paddle we had to dislodge rocks from the skeg box on a couple of the boats. So, I learned what a "leatherman" was—not the visual I had in my head—since we really needed one to help with the rocks vs. skeg.

Our afternoon paddle was south along Bremen Long I land back to the put-in. By mid-afternoon the swells became rough and the wind picked up; the end of our 11.8 mile day was hard work.

Getting back to camp was awesome since there were showers at the campground and libations, thanks to Clark, who had also trucked out lots of our camping gear. We headed over to Matt and his wife Julie's house for a real lobster dinner with all the fixings. It was a perfect way to end the day!



Thursday we paddled over to Louds Island and had the wind at our backs and gentle swells of the ocean to carrying us along. It was really interesting riding the swells—nothing like paddling at Chatfield!



Marlene's lobster

We stopped to check out an old village and cemetery but found neither. We did have a nice hike around the island and found sea glass, and Matt found a sea baby for his wife. Launching from the island we needed the leathernan again to pull another stuck skeg.

By the time we headed back, the swells were now white caps, and the wind was no longer at our backs. I thought it was a pretty tough paddle especially trying to stay out of the way of the lobster boats coming back into harbor. We all made it without anyone tipping over, in the ocean at least. However, at least one of us (Dan) did a very ungraceful exit as we were trying to get out on shore. (No photo available.)



We carefully pulled our kayaks up high enough because we knew the tide was coming in, but while we were hiking some sandals were almost washed away.



We went to Shaw's Fish and Lobster Wharf for dinner and then to the lighthouse on Pemaquid Point. It really felt like Maine seeing the lighthouse and waves crashing against the rock shore. I'm just glad we didn't have to launch in that.





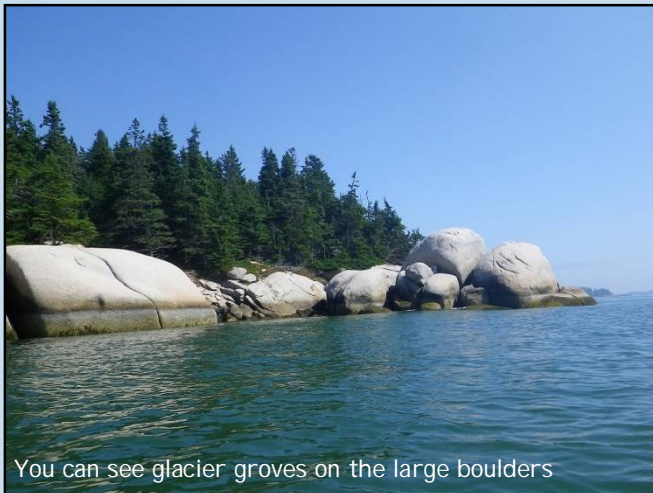
Saying good bye to Matt at Pemaquid Point.

Friday was a travel day as we packed up camp and headed to Stonington on Deer Isle. Julie, Sue and I took a trip into Acadia National Park before heading to the campground to set up our tents. The boys had already been there and were in town having dinner. We were staying at Old Quarry Campsites which is also where we rented different kayaks for the rest of the trip.



Clark's truck on the suspension bridge to Deer Isle

On Saturday we started our paddle out to Russ Island with winds about seven mph. We passed Green Island where there was a large stone quarry with lots of granite. We stopped for lunch on Potato Island and I pulled a "Dan" getting out of my kayak which meant I landed in the water. (Again, no photo available.)



You can see glacier groves on the large boulders



Granite has been quarried on Deer Isle since the late 1800s; the "scraps" were left around in piles



Stonington's breakwater is huge blocks of granite; the curbs in town are pieces of granite the size of railroad ties

Friday, Julie and I opted out of paddling and headed to Ellington for breakfast and drove into Bar Harbor, which was crowded with tourists and cruise ships. It was a nice break and at least we saw another piece of Maine.

The rest of the group checked the tides and timed their route around an island to paddle through the shallow channel at high tide. We heard that we missed seeing Sue's lunchtime slide, at least two yards in stinking black goo. (No photo available.)



An enormous boulder on the back side of the island



Marlene and Julie adjusting a spray skirt in the fog

Our last day of paddling was probably my favorite. We debated going because it was so foggy, but we planned a route that would keep us out of the fishing and lobster boats' way and set off hugging the shore.



Trip Leader Jud Hurd, a bit later as the fog was clearing



The visibility was limited when we started

Soon the weather cleared and it ended up being sunny and beautiful, but you could hear the fog horns all day. It was magical.

Bernie, Dan, Julie, Jud, and Clark
Marlene and Sue



We had lunch on Crotch Island, which is where the group photo was taken. We were happy paddlers but sad the trip was coming to an end; Maine has so many islands and wonderful places to kayak.

It was an awesome trip with a great group of people. A special thanks to Matt Lutkus for his planning help and hospitality, to Jud Hurd for doing most of the research and making most of the reservations, and to Clark Strickland who was driving to Maine for a reunion and brought an ice chest and a pick-up load of camping gear for us. His knowledge of Maine and the ocean added more than we realized to our understanding and enjoyment of the area. [Check the next page for daily routes from Bernie's GPS.]



Marlene trying to organize her photo subjects



Panoramic view of Stonington from our lunch stop on the last day

Article by Marlene Pakish
Photos by Marlene,
Bernie Dahlen,
Sue Hughes and
Jud Hurd



The last day, trying to get gear sorted, dry and ready to repack for the trip home in the morning



Lobster boats and large and small fishing boats were everywhere

DAILY GPS MAPS

By Bernie Dahlen

