



NORTHERN PADDLE & TRAIL NEWSLETTER

SUMMER EDITION 2011

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- July 16, Sat. 8:30 am** **Hike the Shannon Loop** 2 to 3 hr. hike. Meet at the trailhead on Hwy 155, go 2.75 mi. north from St. Germaine to Lost Lake Dr. So., go north 1 block to Found Lake Rd. Go 2 mi. on Found Lk. Rd. to trailhead. There are 2 loops: green – a 2.3 mi. loop around Shannon Lk. is especially scenic and intermediate difficulty; yellow – 2.3mi loop and easy Difficulty. Contact Maren at 715-282-7557 or maren1@frontiernet.net
- July 23, Sat. 10:00 am** **Paddle, the Willow Flowage** – We'll paddle to the island where we will have lunch and paddle back. Meeting place TBA, intermediate difficulty. Contact Dan & Marge at 715-362-6118 or dmehring@frontiernet.net
- Aug. 6, Sat. 2:00 pm** **Bike the Bearskin Trail** – Meet at the trailhead on Hwy K. Take Hwy. 47 to Hwy. K (west) just before Hwy 51. State Trail Pass in required. Contact Catherine at 715-499-1027 or cm@newnorth.net for details.
- Aug. 12-14 Fri.- Sun.** **Camping & Paddling the Pine and Brule Rivers** Paddle the Pine River with Larry on Aug. 13. This is an all day paddle on one of Wisconsin's wild rivers. There are 2 portages depending on skill level. Contact Larry Zibell at 715-546-2131 or lzibell@gmail.com Paddle the Border Brule (intermediate) with Jean on Aug. 14. Camp as long as you like at Lost Lake Campground. First come basis. Sites can be shared. Contact Jean Johnson 715-369-1433 or jaj4111@newnorth.net
- Aug. 19 – 22 Sat. – Sun.** **Hike the Lake Superior Hiking Trail** This is a 4 or 5 day outing, traveling 2 and hiking 2 – 3 days. For a shorter outing, day hiking is a possibility. We will use a base campground and shuttle to various trailheads for day hikes. Meet in Rhinelander to carpool. Contact Catherine at 715-499-1027 or cm@newnorth.net.
- Sept. 9, Fri. 5:15 pm** **Paddle/Bonfire The Pelican River** Annual fall paddle, potluck & bonfire. Paddle the Pelican River to Joppa's Pier. Potluck to follow. Contact Catherine Joppa 715-362-3731 or 715-499-1027 (cell) or cm@newnorth.net
- Sept. 18 Sun. Time TBA** **Hansen Lake Clean-up** Community Service event – Meet Hansen Lk. trailhead parking Lot. Bring gloves, garbage bags, grabbers (arm extenders that can pick up stuff), waders, water shoes or hiking boots. We will be wading and paddling the shore and hiking the trails picking up trash. Some may want to bring boats to collect trash along the perimeter of the lake. Contact Mary at 715-550-4563 or northwoodsmary@yahoo.com for details.

LAST SNOWSHOE

Mary McCarren

Seven women, including two non-NPT members, snowshoed or hiked the icy Holmboe trail behind Taylor Park at about 27degrees and windy. Jean was the sweep and took the short-trail hikers back to the parking lot for treats and hot drinks. Then the sun came out and she and her dog Sophie joined the remainder of the hikers on our return. We managed to make short work of the delicious bars and hot beverages waiting for us at the tailgate. It was an exhilarating and beautiful hike. It's such a great "in town" silent trail with the beauty of the hemlocks and cedars and the varied terrain.

CRANE COUNT CHRONICLE

Pat Dugan

It's April 16th as I write this, and I spent the wee hours of [this morning](#) participating in the annual crane count. I've done this for most of the last 10 years, and it's a good excuse to get up before dawn and explore a new section of the county. [This morning](#) it was about 32 degrees, with about an inch of new snow/sleet on the ground, and a light freezing mist. In other words, a beautiful spring day in the northwoods. This year we brought our kayaks and paddled out in an area with some open water. Despite the weather we saw (or heard) 5 cranes, a plethora of various ducks and other birds, and were entertained by a very vocal pack of coyotes. When we returned to the Rhinelander airport restaurant for the count tally we saw migrating horned larks. Maybe we're crazy to be out in this weather, but I can't wait to do it again.

RAVEN TRAIL HIKE

Jay Joppa

On Sunday, [May 22](#), ten NPT members ventured out to hike the Raven Trail, which is part of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest. The Raven is located on Hwy 47 southeast from Woodruff 3.5 mile on Woodruff Road. The day started out sunny with blue sky, warm and pleasant. The trail took us into a moderately hilly forest of mixed hardwoods of maple and oak. Gathering around the trailhead sign, it was agreed upon that we would not do the red trail, which is the longest. The group decided on breaking up into groups of different abilities and taking different tails, all leading to the shelter. Even though we went on different tails with varying lengths, we all arrived at the shelter at the same time. After eating a snack and relaxing with our NPT friends, we were off. Again, some of the group decided to take different trails back to the trailhead parking lot. The trail is not overly strenuous, but two hours of hiking does have some affect when you're not used to it. When we got closer to the parking lot we heard rumbling off to the west and the clouds were getting darker. As we entered our cars and headed home the sky opened up and the rain came down in buckets. Another dry hike with good friends and memories made.

NEW MEMBERS 2011

Kathy & Randy Bates
Sandra Bergman
Ken & Sarah Juon
Barb Weaver Krause
Hank Narsu
Bev Schoenenbergr
Carol & Tom Van Nelson
Sandy Zeznanski

Please welcome the following people and when you see them, be sure to introduce yourself and encourage them to join an upcoming activity.

Ozark Paddling in the Springtime

Lynn Zibell

After only one day of driving, a band of WI paddlers took off this past spring for a week of paddling in the Ozarks of Missouri. Staying in the small town of Eminence, the Stokstads', Hansens' and Zibells' took the nearby Jack's Fork, Current and Eleven Point Rivers. The timing was perfect. Temperatures were between 70° and an unusual high of 95°. Rain fell only one morning allowing the group to take the "Prong" section of the Jack's Fork.

Daily, Guy's goal was to be on the road by 9 a.m. and after shuttling and readying boats and gear, to be on the river by noon. Most days, after a hearty, homemade Breakfast, we met our trip planner's goal. On the first day we did the Jack's Fork, a narrow, winding river with dramatically high, limestone bluffs and undulating hills on both sides. Being early spring, the leaves were just emerging, the redbuds were in blossom, and we could see deep into the forest. The patches of Virginia bluebells carpeted the shoreline. Spring beauties, Dutchman's Breeches and phlox were sprinkled amongst the grasses. Looking down into the clear blue water, we often saw schools of trout amongst the boulder strewn river bottom.

Typically, we had fast water with riffles when the river narrowed, racing downward toward a bend in the river. The river then flattened out with gravel bars sometimes to the side. Along the river we could often peer into the limestone caves. This year, the caves were closed off due to a fungus decimating the white bat population. Evidently, humans are carriers of this fungus. We did see quite a few turtles lined up on logs lodged along the river banks sunning themselves. They would flop in the water as soon as they felt our presence.

We were spoiled with 2 more days on the Jack's Fork. There was a little excitement as the Hansen canoe broached on a tree stump. The Zibell canoe rammed into them, dislodging them, but almost wrapping their canoe around the same stump. Lots of muscle power undid the canoe before it could wrap. It was the 95' day, and the water was refreshing.

The Eleven Point was nice, but just didn't measure up. It was mostly flat and the sights were not as dramatic. We did most of our own shuttling of boats and cars, but decided to pay for two shuttles, one on the Current. Big mistake, big rip off! In the previous year, we negotiated a fair price with a younger family member running Acres Landing. This year, our negotiator, Guy was given a flat rate, by the owner, even if they only used one of their drivers, instead of three. In hindsight, we realized we should have shuttled ourselves and used the money to buy beer. The Current River trip went quickly due to the fast current and few gravel bars. Our other shuttle, provided by Windy's out of Eminence, was totally worthwhile. We were then able to do a section of the Jack's Fork, not otherwise done due to the extremely long shuttle. We left the Ozarks just days before heavy rains closed these rivers to paddling. Our timing was perfect!



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

As I take over as editor of the NPT newsletter, I find myself struggling with trying to produce the newsletter in Word format. It seems to get harder to learn new things with each passing year, so please bear with me as I muddle thru this transition. I fear the first couple publications will not be as slick as I had hoped but I will keep trying, so please stick with me.

You may have noticed in this issue that there are many different names on the articles. Thank you to all who got articles to me. I strongly encourage everyone to send articles for publication to me even if you haven't lead a trip; perhaps you have noticed interesting thing while walking in the woods or paddling. You may also have noticed a list of 11 new members so far in 2011. Let's see if we can add at least 11 more before the end of the year. Talk to friends and family about joining. Tell them about our varied activities for all experience levels. Tell them about the friendly helpful people in NPT and them hand them a membership form.

NPT has received a donation of a canoe trailer from Mike and Rita Shores. The trailer is for the use of all NPT members. Thank you, Mike and Rita.

This has been a very dreary spring for scheduled outdoor activities. At least five have been canceled so far, mostly due to weather. However, things are looking up!

Scott Watson had a Washburn Trail work session on June 25. There was a good turn-out of workers who whacked weeds and brush, raked, pruned and chopped roots. Afterwards we ate a simple lunch sitting outside by the lake while we talked and planned.

If anyone has an idea that will improve this club, promote community involvement, or enhance the silent sports we all enjoy, please contact a board member and tell them what you think. -- JJ

WISCONSIN RIVER PADDLE

Jean Johnson

On a calm, overcast, misty morning, two paddlers pushed off amidst a hatch of Cadis flies into gentle current and leafless underbrush. After having to cancel an earlier paddle on the upper Wisconsin River due to wind, rain and temperatures in the low 40's, this was a perfect day with the bushes full of warblers and an unusually large number of Rose Breasted Grosbeaks singing their beautiful song.

As we paddled silently along with no sign of civilization except for distant highway sounds occasionally, we marveled at the ancient waterway we were traveling. We talked of Indians traveling down stream in canoes loaded with wild rice gathered from Lac Vieux Desert and wondered, how far south did they go? Watersmeet Lake? Trading Post at the confluence of the Pelican River? Mississippi River? Beyond?

After about two hours, we came to a bend in the river where a small stream entered on the right and had an arching bridge over it. It was Buckatabon Creek, named after Chief Buckatabon who once lived on the shores of the lake just up stream. We got out to explore and found high above the river, a snowmobile trail intersection complete with shelter, fire pit and grills. It was a beautiful, peaceful setting and there was not a snowmobile to be seen. We got our lunches and sat on a fallen tree overlooking the river bend, barely speaking, just enjoying the awesome silence and beauty for almost an hour. We beat ourselves up for forgetting our binoculars and bird books. We reached the take-out after another hour of paddling as the current slowed and the river widened a bit.

WOLF RIVER PADDLE

Jean Johnson

On June 11, NPT finally launched a successful paddle trip on the Wolf River. (*Word has it that there was a trip on the Pelican River on June 2, but no reports have come in to verify it.*) We put-in below Lower Post Lake dam along side a very nice park used by paddlers and fishers. As we were packing our boats prior to pushing off, Mary B. noticed she had forgotten a very important piece of equipment – her kayak paddle. Mary, being a very determined paddler, considered using her hand to paddle rather than sit this one out. But wait, Joppas to the rescue, had brought along an extra canoe paddle. Things were looking up even if a few of us were secretly snickering as we pictured poor Mary way behind as she constantly switched sides of the boat to paddle.

As we started our trip, we noticed a large number of bobbers, sometimes with tackle attached, caught in the brush and debris along the river. This was obviously a good fishing site. Some of us started gathering them up as this can become a problem for wildlife. It was like an Easter egg hunt! Then it became a competition. After it started to feel like a never-ending job, and a dozen or more bobbers were piling up in the bottom of the boats, we decided we'd rather paddle.

Off we went, expecting to fly past Mary who was somewhere ahead of us fighting the current with, of all things, *a canoe paddle!* After about a half hour of paddling and still no Mary in sight, I stopped snickering. Much of the trip was thru areas where tall marsh grass along the river obscured our view. We did see the usual wildlife -- ducks, eagles and even otters. Occasionally we saw high sand banks; one of them was named Turtle High Bank and was riddled with holes from egg-laying turtles. Upon finally catching up to Mary, I noticed the front of her kayak was caked with mud, the result of plowing into the banks while trying to negotiate a sharp turn with a single blade paddle.

We ate our lunch sitting in our boats mid-stream. There was no dry land and the mosquitoes were fewer on the water. Upon reaching the take-out, the mosquitoes sought revenge and ate us alive as we loaded out boats onto the vehicles and got the h--- out of there.

BIKING THE BOULDER

Catherine Joppa

This day was magic. Weather, Northern Paddle and Trail friends, and the glorious beauty of the Boulder Junction Trail. Mary Boyer, Jay and Catherine Joppa and Larry and Lynn Zibell biked just under 22 miles. Stopping at Cathedral Point for a snack tempted all to say that water and clear sandy beach sure looked nice for a swim. We didn't. That nice water would have been very cold. Larry and Lynn commented they must get their boat out on Trout Lake. Over the terrific hills and along the sparkling lakes, we went to Boulder Junction. A good round of double ice cream cones at Mad Jakes filled refreshment needs, and we headed back to Hwy M&N where we had originated our ride. Tired and happy, we loaded up ready for a good night's sleep.

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The Lessons of Old Rock

Marcia Obukowicz

Hit the big 50 this past May. For most of my life, I thought that this birthday would mark the half way point of my life. Now, I don't take such days for granted. Birthdays have a milestone quality. So my friends planned and gathered, made me a prune bouquet (It is beautiful!) shared food, cake and some late arriving sunny weather. What a wonderful foundation they bring to my life. Rock solid!

A week later, Tim and I stopped at Eau Claire Dells to check on the wildflowers. The predicted showers held off long enough for us to dodge the gigantic mosquitoes and admire the carpet of trillium. We changed course from our usual route and walked counterclockwise. I stopped to take pictures, Tarny sniffed around and Tim reminisced about ice age trail adventures. The area to the south of the bridge and the falls were some of the best views of the hike, he said. He especially liked the "old rock" we were walking up.

So just how old are the Dells of the Eau Claire? The rocks date back to the Precambrian period! This rhyolite schist, very hard, formed as sponges, anemones and flat worms ruled the animal world, yet is still here for me to scramble up. The sedimentary layers were pushed up to vertical exposing cleavage planes that were carved into the gorge we see today about 10,000 years ago as melting glaciers let loose. WOW!

I think it's nice to be on old rock, it's been here awhile and I like the permanence of that. Something solid and comforting in sharp contrast to the end of the world movie we had watched with Henry on Wed. night. 2012, the movie brought an exploding Yellowstone, Hawaii heaving lava and a mile high tidal wave wiping out most of human life. Southern Africa ended up as the high spot after the Earth axis shifted. But I kept thinking that the Canadian Shield held and Wisconsinites would be safe.

There has been a lot of nature drama as of late. Watching the movie brought up the same anxieties that the 6 Degrees series did a few years back. Is our lack of connection to nature leading us toward doom? How climate change at the first degree would bring increasingly violent storms. The closeness of the Merrill tornado and the dramatic wipeout of the Japanese tsunami triggered this same thought. Add in the spate of tornados in the south... and my head and heart start screaming! We have to reconnect with nature, understand her laws, recognize her challenges. Of course I am touching a testament to time as I think this. The Dells stretch out before me, water flowing through its channels much as it has for 10,000 years. Old rock, solid! I watch the families, kids moving around on the rocks, jumping or hiding in its cracks and creases. Reassuring to see the next generation connect with this place!

Life does go on. We can move forward like the water in this gorge, navigating the bumps and walls as best we can. The drive is strong, the bead lily pushes up through a crack in the rock, the rain clouds hold off until we are safely in our car, friends gathered around a table, kids engaged with the natural world, the Japanese dog, swept from his family by a wave, guarding his hurt buddy was rescued, folks picking through what was left of their home found the wedding pictures and some beloved pots and pans. Help pulled up to the curb in Joplin to start the rebuilding, arriving from other towns hit by the same type of strong winds in the past, the roof was rebuilt in a couple days on a Merrill home just east of Hwy 51, the old white pine bent but did not break. All give me a hope for the future that is rock solid!