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# The MOUNTAIN PADDLER

ARTICLES OF INTEREST  
FOR OUR PADDLING COMMUNITY

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### EDITOR'S NOTE by Sue Hughes

This issue has the last of the paddle reports from our 2014 season and an interesting review of the rudder-skeg debate. I hope you enjoy reading them; please thank the people who wrote the articles and sent in their pictures for publication.

The Winter Party is coming up when we'll be listing ideas for trips, day paddles and classes for 2015. You'll be able to read about the beginnings of those plans in the upcoming *RMSKC's NEWS*.

When you do, please remember Rocky Mountain Sea Kayak Club is a volunteer organization; if you don't see paddles and destinations that meet your needs consider stepping forward to organize them. Our paddle coordinator, Jud Hurd, will be glad to help you. The reporting procedures for day paddles are simple but the logistics for extended trips can be a lot of work... and it's not healthy that trip planning seems to be done by the same people season after season.



Seaweed in Maine

## FRIDAY, 20 JUNE 2014

By 6:30 we're on the road to Jud's house in Ft. Collins; Marsha and Sue are there and Marsha's boat is already on Jud's car. Sue seems to have come down with a really bad cold. We make a stop at Walgreens for cold medicine and head out on I-25 toward Cheyenne. It's not very windy, which is a huge treat!

We stop for the inspection in Cheyenne then continue north to Glendo. Sue is feeling worse and is having second thoughts, so we pick an exit in Sheridan and agree to meet there. By the time we arrive, she has found a motel room and Marsha's gear has been transferred to Jud's car. We bid Sue goodbye. She did a great deal of the coordinating so this is not a happy ending for her.

The remaining four of us—Gary, Jud, Marsha, and me—continue to Billings and north to Roundup, where we grab a bit to eat at a local kitchen; then we are on our way again, with about 100 miles to go. On the trip north, even Wyoming was green because of the extraordinarily wet spring, but Montana is downright lush—lots of fields of good grass, rolling hills, and rock outcropping,

It's still light when we arrive at the Kipp Recreation Area, so we hurriedly set up the tent and prepare the pads and sleeping bags and have a beer. We are camped in a huge grove of old cottonwoods and our tent is on grass, definitely a treat from the dry gravelly areas of Colorado and Wyoming. Gary and I walk down to the entrance area where the pay booth is and we see an owl perched on the electric wire.

## SATURDAY, 21 JUNE 2014

### DAY 1

The shuttle arrived at the take-out at Kipp Recreation Area promptly for our 9:30 meeting time. Boats and gear were packed up quickly and we were on the road by 10:00 AM. Our driver's route took us north and then west through Ft. Belknap, Havre, and quite a few other towns. Havre is big enough for all the modern conveniences: McDonald's, Pizza Hut, etc. It is pretty country,

flat and rolling, with many named drainages, called coulees. I remember a line from a Ferlinghetti poem, "...towns held to the tracks as if by magnets." In this case, they're are held to water as if by magnets.

We arrive at Coal Banks around 1:30 PM and sign in with the ranger. We unload, pack up and are on our way by 2:30. It is a nice flow (11,800 cfs/5 mph), definitely not pushy and once I get going, I can easily ferry.





The sun is out, the sky is blue and we have a nice tailwind. The landscape surrounding today's section is mostly the soft rolling hills similar to those I remember from the Ft. Randall Dam area on the Missouri River in South Dakota. There is pastureland and lots of cows.

The camp at Coal Banks is downriver about a mile or so on the left, in a nice grove of cottonwoods. Once we pass the campground, the river braids into three though I see only two. Gary mentions he is going right and suddenly he is nowhere to be seen. The remaining three of us eddy out at the end of the left-most branch and wait...and wait...but he does not come. Then finally Marsha and Jud see him downstream, beyond the end of the island on the far right. We paddle down and meet up and then continue down being more aware of where everyone is and their possible routes.

We simply paddle. At one point we go down the left channel. There are cows on the left but also one on the island and I wonder if he swam there. Actually, we are all wondering the same thing when he steps out into the water and walks across! He's hardly up to his haunches, which gives us an idea of how deep the river is (or isn't).



Our original itinerary had us paddling five or so miles the first day to Little Sandy Boat Camp so we pull out there. It is a nice setting with an outhouse and two fire pits but it's pretty early yet. Marsha suggests continuing on down to the Eagle Creek Camp Site, another 10 miles so perhaps two more hours of paddling which would get us there at 6:30. The weather is great and we have lots of energy, so we decide to go for it. On this leg, we put more effort into paddling and move right along. Marsha says we are traveling at 7 or so mph; based on that, we'll be at our destination in less than 2 hours.

After Little Sandy, we enter the point where the White Cliffs begin. And here I expected that both sides of the river would be public land but it seems like it is mostly private.

I keep looking at the guidebook and then at the map to figure out where we are. There is a feature called "Black Butte". Many of the round points we pass have a dark layer toward the top so I think

any of them could be it. But then I read closer and see it is made of igneous rock and realize I should be looking for a pillar of black rock. Before long, I look ahead and see a butte shaped rock that is dark from top to bottom. Finally, Black Butte! But I look again and see the name is actually Burned Butte. Our camp is not far beyond.

I am the last in our procession, so by the time I arrive, Gary is already pulled up on a sandy/pebbly shore. Ahead, I see a camping sign and start to pull ahead. Jud is already out and gives a thumbs up but I notice there are two canoes pulled ashore and decide to move on down a bit further where there is a nice wide beach and pull out there. There are no parked boats, so that is a good sign. I convince Jud to move on down. Gary arrives and is OK with this site. We are home for the night. We unload, setup camp, and settle down to beer and cooking. A great river day and a great place to be!

Wildlife today: in addition to the cows, there are hawks and ducks. Gary, on his right river branch foray, saw two sets of geese with goslings. We also see barn swallows that are dark on top and orange underneath. They make nests on cliffs and there are plenty of cliffs in the "breaks".



Swallow nests

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2014

DAY 2

Our original plan called for two nights here at Eagle Creek with a full day of hiking. So after breakfast we start in to hike. We look across the river at a huge dark bird down at the shore which we expect is a golden eagle. Also, along the way we see an eastern kingbird with its white tail band scurrying from bush to bush.

Our first stop is a Lewis and Clark campsite which turns out to be on the other side of Eagle Creek with no easy way to cross, at least not without taking our shoes off. We decide to come back later with river shoes so for now we hike up the creek. We follow it until we reach a spot where it isn't passable without getting our feet wet so we backtrack a bit, remove our shoes and socks, and cross and continue up the other side until again we cannot continue without getting our feet wet.



In all, this hike is much like our Utah wanderings of cliff bands which have been worn into monuments and pillars of various shapes, but the rocks are mostly white and there's much more vegetation. I look but don't see any rock art and actually wonder why.

We head back with the intention of finding that Lewis and Clark campsite (since we are now on that side of the river). We find many places that look ideal for a camp but do not find the plaque. We give up after awhile and cross the stream to our camp to rest.

Jud and Marsha stay in camp while Gary and I head over to investigate Neat Coulee, the next coulee heading downriver. This is a different kind of hike as compared to Eagle Creek; it is a narrower canyon to start with, becoming more narrow as we progress. We pass a window high up in the wall of the canyon and stop to take a picture. Again, this is reminiscent of Utah, except the color of the rock is different.

This canyon does neck down into a slot-like canyon. There are puddles to pass over and in a couple of spots we stem and chimney. I realize that both are easier once you get started. There are also a couple of chockstones we pass up and over. Then we approach a very large one. We might have been able to shimmy underneath and then through, but I am starting to get tired and this seems like the standard turn-around point so we head back. In retrospect, I should have tried; it may not have been hard, but my mind was on snakes.

Here's the snake story: I was a bit behind Gary and looked down at something flat and striped, almost like a child's beaded bracelet. Then it moved! I realized it was a flattened-out snake that might have inadvertently been stepped on. But by the time we got back to that place, it was gone.

We head back to camp, make supper and sit up for awhile before turning in.



Walking back toward camp from Neat Coulee



MONDAY, 23 JUN 2014

DAY 3

We were up at a reasonable hour and on the river by 10:30 or so. We decide we like the developed camps simply because of the convenience of a toilet, so our goal today is Slaughterhouse River camp, about 20 miles or so, which is also the site of another Lewis and Clark camp. It was a very pleasant paddle downriver, again with a tail wind which was not too strong, and again the day was through white walled canyons.



We see another bald eagle at the top of a dead snag guarding its nest...and a couple of smaller birds harassing it. At the Slaughter River camp, there are yellowish birds with dark colors, species not determined.

Also today there is a deer at the shoreline and four different families of geese and their goslings floating across the river. And, as every day, there are the sounds of birds in the pre-dawn hours.

We had lunch at Hole-In-the-Wall camp, another developed camp

with an outhouse but very little in the way of trees, so named due to a window in the rock outcropping downstream from camp. Evidently folks will hike on the outcropping above hole-in-the-wall but I imagine it's a bit more exposure than I prefer plus its access point is another half-mile downstream. Before leaving, we haul a bucket or two of water from the river and water the cottonwood saplings the BLM has planted.



Hole-in-the-Wall



The Citadel

Then back in the boats and again turn downstream. Another point of interest along the way is the Black Butte Campground, another developed campsite.

The book notes that this is a place for hiking and indeed it looks like there are cool canyons and hills to explore behind camp; it's a good place to keep in mind for another time.

We continue on and we pass Pueblo Springs Campground; this one is labeled 'primitive' with no bathroom but it's in a small grove of cottonwood trees.

Around 4:00 or so we arrive at the Slaughter River campsite. The take-out is pretty muddy but we manage to get our boats hauled out. There is a nice stair-step approach to the camp which is fenced to keep the cattle out. I am tired and take a quick rest before helping to set camp up. I turn in by 8:00 or so and sleep very soundly. I wake up when Gary comes in, take some naproxen and fall back asleep almost immediately.



The Seven Sisters

**TUESDAY, 24 JUN 2014**

**DAY 4**

We wake up fairly early, by 7:30 or so, make breakfast, break camp, pack up and paddle away by 10:30. Today we have a short paddle, our goal being Judith Landing. We alternately paddle and float, taking in the surrounding landscape. We do have a moderate headwind, not ferocious, and not a struggle to paddle into.

As we approach Judith Landing, I expect to see a strong-flowing Judith River coming in from the south but we pass without even noticing it. What is notable is a group of horses at the river's edge, enjoying the shade of the cottonwoods and a drink of water.

An aside about the river, and the landscape in general: The river is wide and flat, moving along but by no means rushing and I have been able to paddle upstream.

The surrounding landscape has been a variety of flat benches, grassland, sagebrush, the white cliffs of the 'breaks' and other land forms of barrier hills of layered rock of different hue and colors. In all, much like Ruby Horsethief but differently colored.



We arrive at Judith Landing at about 12:30 or so. Turns out, there is no country store (and hasn't been for at least four years), so no cold beer or ice or twinkies or whiskey. Lucky for us, we did not count on these supplies. We take out, eat lunch, dispose of trash, and walk up to a marked Lewis and Clark site.



Then we climb back into our boats again. We have not really reached a consensus about where to spend the night. In 8 miles (at mi. 96) there is a grove of cottonwoods mentioned in both the guide and in *The Complete Paddler*. We assess the campground, but opt to keep going (the lack of a toilet impacts this decision). We had planned to camp at McGarry Bar but it is closed, according to the sign at Judith, due to nesting eagles.

That posting mentions camping at the McClelland Ferry but when we arrive there are no appealing camping areas and no sign of a bathroom (although there is a ferry) so we continue paddling. The sky is beginning to look threatening and we wonder if we should just pull off at a nice cottonwood grove. At the ferry, we have paddled 27 miles and need to think about finding a place to camp. We check out spots down river from the camp at McGarry Bar but none seem like home. (Along the way Gary and Marsha spy a snake swimming across the river. The Missouri was not that wide but I'm sure it's an ocean to a snake. Gary stays with him until he is safely across.)

The book mentions Greasewood Bottom. We raft up, discuss the situation and decide to head there since we are using time and energy checking out places that are not panning out. I take a closer look at the maps, trying to line them up with landmarks. Having the topo maps is now paying off as I can count the creeks and landforms between where we are and Greasewood Bottom. Though, of course, the cottonwoods are really the telling landmark, and before long they are visible. We paddle, pull up, unload, and set up camp. Everyone is tired. We've gone 33 miles, making this the longest I have ever paddled. I am tired, but not bonked, and my arms and shoulders do not ache, a very good sign.

We decided to spend two nights at Greasewood Bottom. It seems like a rest day would be wise and this is a recommended hiking area.



Gary, headed up the canyon for a hike from our camp at Greasewood Bottom



WEDNESDAY, 25 JUN 2014

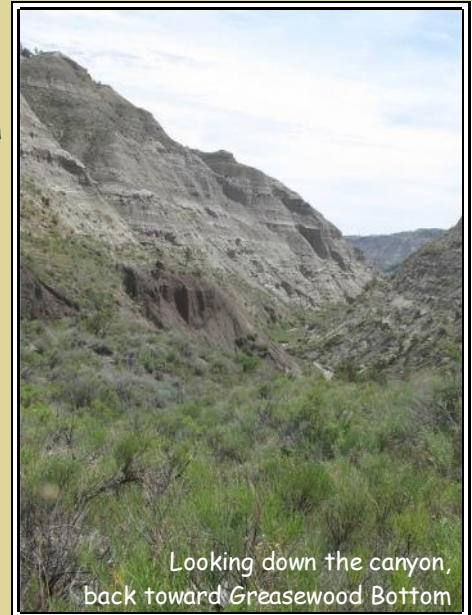
DAY 5

Gary and I decide to hike today so we leave from the Greasewood Bottom camp in a northwesterly direction at the sunny hour of 11:30. First we step up to the bench above the tent area (our tents are on a landing above the river at the same level as the cottonwoods). On the bench above is sagebrush and another plant similar to sagebrush but with much greener and shorter leaves. Gary wonders if it is Greasewood; here is what Wikipedia says:

Greasewood is a common name shared by several plants:

*Sarcobatus vermiculatus* is a green-leaved shrub found from southeastern British Columbia and southwest Alberta, Canada south through the drier regions of the United States (east to North Dakota and west Texas, west to central Washington and eastern California) to northern Mexico (Coahuila). It is a halophyte, usually found in sunny, flat areas around the margins of playas.

The *Sarcobatus* plants are deciduous shrubs growing to 0.5-3 m tall with spiny branches and succulent leaves, 10-40 mm long and 1-2 mm broad. The leaves are green, in contrast to the grey-green color of most of the other shrubs within its range. The flowers are unisexual, with the male and female flowers on the same plant and appear from June to August. The species reproduces from seeds and sprouts. *S. vermiculatus* was discovered in 1806 by the Lewis and Clark expedition's westward exploration of North America.



Looking down the canyon,  
back toward Greasewood Bottom

We have our sights set on a canyon that snakes its way between two ridges made of huge mounds of what looks like mud and expect to flow away in the first big rainstorm. Yes, they are wearing away but not any time soon!

We hike up into the gully which is a bit of a canyon of the worn down leftovers of the mounds littered with various types and colors of pebbles. I pick one up, brick red in color. Later, Gary spies a bit of quartz, which is interesting as there are not many pieces of quartz to be seen. There are bits of agate plus that cement-like composite we've seen elsewhere in the west. We continue up, winding along the gully bottom which is wet enough to sink our feet in every now and then.

After about an hour or so, the gully narrows with higher walls. So we hop out and climb up onto the bench and continue upward. It's obvious we are nowhere near the top so we take a lunch break and look out over the canyon, though we cannot quite see the river.

After a bite to eat, we retrace our steps, arriving back in camp around 2:30. On today's hike, there was no sign of early habitation although this would appear to be a likely area for human dwelling, though perhaps not as inviting as the Eagle Creek Area.

We rest a bit then head down to the river to wash clothes. Then we swim, a nice respite from sun and sweat, going in only chest high so the current is manageable but it feels strong enough to push us around some, although where we enter the water is in a big eddy so we are protected from the main force of the current.

Once done back at camp, I write. Everyone is resting and relaxing, a nice R and R. After a bit, Gary calls us over to the next tree where a bull snake is slithering up, being chastised by a small yellow bird (this one had a yellow head, white underbelly and long pointed dark beak) which Marsha thought was a warbler.



THURSDAY, 26 JUN 2014

DAY 6

This is the only place where there is a mud wallow to cross, and the vault toilet is about full. Other things about the last camp at Lower Woodhawk: finding a landing spot definitely takes some time. There is no post as is the case at nearly all the other established camps, primitive or developed. We first stop just past the halfway point of the cottonwood grove. Big surprise as we sink in up to our knees. Gary goes down on all fours and makes some headway. I follow suit and find this to be quite effective. Once across, I scurry up to camp, locate the picnic tables and vault toilet, then look for a beaten path to the shore. Once found, I follow it and there is Jud, debarking in a more solid area. Meanwhile, Marsha paddles back upstream to where he is. Gary and I re-cross the quicksand, and paddle upstream and debark.



The trail at Lower Woodhawk Camp, with Jud's bug house, in the background

FRIDAY, 27 JUN 2014

DAY 7

Today, our last day, Gary is being attacked by gnats nearly the whole way out and is quite envious of Marsha's bug hat. So a word of advice: bring a bug hat and another hat like a ball cap with a brim to keep the net away from your face.

We arrive at Kipp around 2 PM. We drive straight back to Lyons arriving about 5 AM.



Jud and Marsha, wearing her bug hat



Flowers: The Prickly Pears were blossomed out yellow with a very orange center as compared to those at Eagle Creek which had

yellow centers. There was also a purple aster-like flower, and white morning glories near the shore with white flowers similar in size to those that grow in my yard, much larger than the bind weed along the front range.

Speaking of these observations in nature, I think again of pursuing yet another avocation, that of a naturalist as well as gaining more knowledge of native American history and migration: Where did they live? In Montana, what does one look for to find a site? And so on...

Did I mention I would do this again? Absolutely. The memories of just sitting and floating and/or paddling: Bliss beyond measure!

Article by Anne Fiore;  
photos by Anne and Jud Hurd



Another aside, about other groups on the water: Actually, there were not very many people along the way. When we first got to Eagle Creek campsite, there were already two canoes. We chose a site down at the far end to allow them as much privacy as possible. They left the next morning and were replaced by a flotilla of two rafts, two canoes and a standup paddleboard.

Also stopping by to visit at Eagle Creek were two men from Missoula, Montana, who recommended hiking the Neat Coulee. They planned on continuing on to Hole-in-the-Wall campground that day. At lunch on Monday at Hole-in-the-Wall two men paddled up in canoes with outriggers. And at Pablo Springs there was a green canoe, perhaps the two Missoula guys.

Definitely the most interesting was a young man who stayed at Slaughter River on Monday night. He had been on the river since June 3<sup>rd</sup>, putting in at Twin Bridges, Montana (on a tributary of the Missouri) and intended to paddle home to Dallas, Texas; the last leg would be up the Red River in Texas. Here is his website: <http://www.canoevoyage.com>

#### MISCELLANEOUS POST TRIP NOTES:

- 7 gallons of water in my sea kayak turned out to be not that big of a deal, although I had supplies strapped on top of both the front and back hatches. Definitely do a practice pack. Those long narrow liters I bought worked well but platypuses might have done as well.
- Jud's bug house/group shelter would be an essential for this trip. I think overall our bug encounters were small (compared to the Flattops and the South San Juan Wilderness) but without it I would have cooked and eaten and pretty much stayed in the tent. It was nice to be in the bug house and socialize after a day of paddling.
- We definitely could have put in at Ft Benton and taken out at Kipp. If we did this again, that would be my plan. We should have planned on 20 - 30 miles a day instead of 15 - 20. Also, we could have done half-day hikes and done a few river miles instead of doing two nights in one place. (This comment does not apply to canoes or rec kayaks. On this river, I'm not sure how mixed boats would work.)
- It doesn't get dark till about 10 PM and sunrise is about 4:30 AM. So, not much time was spent star-gazing if you are like me and like to be in bed at 8:00 and up at 7:00.
- On the last day out, I lost count of the number of beaver holes in the bank. I always saw them in the banks with steep sides and with a curtain of branches.
- The flow at Coal Banks was 10,800. By the time we were at Kipp it was a moving lake, so either the flow decreased or the river widened.
- I would ask the UMRBNM or BLM rangers what their favorite campsites and hikes are.
- My personal perception of what the Missouri River is like is based on readings and learning about Lewis and Clark's adventure in the wilderness. For an east coast child, this means thick forests and fast rivers; the Missouri through the Missouri Breaks is neither.
- The primary reference we used, in addition to the river maps from the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, was David L. Miller's *The Complete Paddler: a Guidebook for Paddling the Missouri River ...*
- *Montana's Wild and Scenic Upper Missouri River* by Glenn Monahan is a picture book recommended by Larry Kline and well reviewed on Amazon.

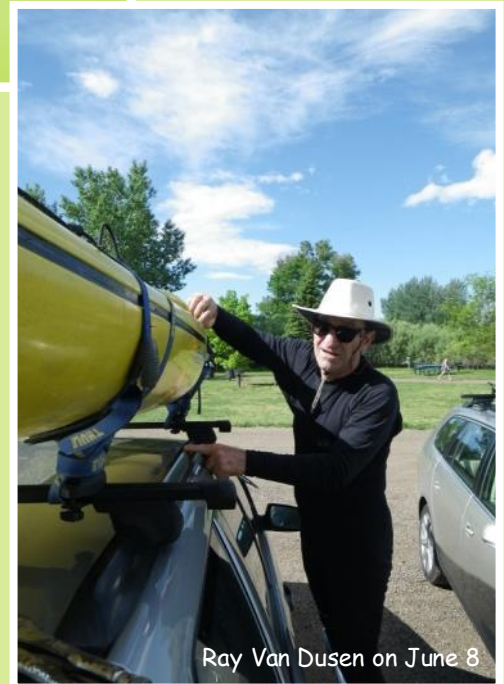


# END-OF-SUMMER CLUB PADDLES AND INSTRUCTION

Lots more instruction, Club paddles and impromptu get-togethers occurred this past summer than got written about. The learning, the exercise and the fun still happened but it's too bad all the doings weren't common knowledge; the more we hear about people out paddling the more likely we are to get our boats on the car ourselves.

**JUNE 8, MAYBE:** Anne Fiore, Sue Hughes, Brian Hunter, Jud Hurd, Jud's houseguest AJ Libunno, Brian Hunter and Don Manton joined Ray Van Dusen for a spin around Union Reservoir.

Sue says the records of this paddle are sketchy—who exactly went, did some of them go out to lunch afterward to quiz Ray's knowledge of paddling in Montana, did she take pictures of AJ and send them to Jud? Who knows? It's for sure that some of them did eat Mexican food with Ray and get a ton of helpful information about paddling the Missouri, and Ray did work on Sue's new-for-Montana boat...but when?



Ray Van Dusen on June 8

**JULY 13, ROLL CLASS AT SODA LAKES:** Gary McIntosh and Ray Van Dusen worked on rolls with Richard Ferguson, Brian Hunter, Don Manton, Janet Scervino and Kristy and Rich Webber. They were too busy to take any photos, but pictures of lessons are less interesting than the activities, anyway.

**JULY 20, ACA CERTIFICATION:** The next week many of the same people were at Soda Lakes again for an ACA Certification class. Teaching and learning were Gary McIntosh, Rich Webber, Ray Van Dusen, Brian Hunter, Jim Dlouhy, Jud Hurd and Clark Strickland.

**AUGUST 21, DOTSERO WHITE WATER TRAINING:** Gary MacIntosh and Ray VanDusen lead a group of club members (Kristy and Rich Webber, John Ruger, Jane Lewis, Jay Gingrich and Marsha Dougherty) to practice on the Colorado River near Dotsero. They were going to paddle two days but, although they had great weather the first day, they got rained out on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

They launched at the new put-in at Dotsero. Marsha wrote, "It is no longer under the bridge; it's maybe a thousand feet upstream, but still on the northeast corner of the river and I-70. There is a turn off the frontage road to the north, with a newly developed BLM parking area, pit toilet, and boat ramp. I think there was a \$3 fee."



"Gary and Ray gave us tips on reading the river and bracing and we got plenty of practice peeling out of the eddies, ferrying, and going down the Class 1 or 1+ rapids. What we would do is go down the rapid and then come back up river in the eddy and then peel out into the rapid, not at the top, but about three-quarters of the way up and go down again. We took out at the Hanging Lake exit rest stop, which is a steep bank to take out on.

"Generally this is considered to be a ten mile beginner stretch, but I had 12.4 miles logged on my GPS by the end of the day. I guess that was an extra 2+ miles of ferrying and goofing around. We camped at the BLM Gypsum Recreation area, just a mile or so west of the traffic circle of Gypsum, on the south I-70 frontage road."

**SEPTEMBER 20, HORSETOOTH RESERVOIR:** Jud Hurd, Jim and Karen Dlouhy and Gene Langlinais enjoyed a nice outing on Horsetooth. A serious incident during the paddle scared them all, but had a positive outcome. Gene's account of the action and some lessons to be drawn from it are on the next pages.

**GROSS RESERVOIR, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25:** Marsha Dougherty's report: "We had a beautiful day on Gross Reservoir getting ready for our trip to Lake Powell in October. There were six of us, Anne Fiore, who was trip leader, Gary Cage, Brian Hunter, Sue Hughes, Jud Hurd and me. We paddled counter-clockwise, staying closer to the shore than we have other times. About three-fourths of the way around we took a break at the South Boulder Creek inlet. We had gone seven miles in at this point, and then everyone headed for the barn on the way back to the takeout. The weather was perfect and the company superb. We logged 8.3 miles total."

**OTHER SUMMER PADDLES:** Editor Sue says, "Although no other reports or pictures were submitted for Summer, 2014. paddles, I know I paddled with lots of people this past season, once I recovered from the bug that kept me from going to Montana, and I've heard about lots and lots of other people getting on the water all summer long, with their old and new friends, or by themselves.

No one sent in accounts of these paddles, but we shouldn't think that we were all just sitting home watching our boats fade. I don't think many of us were. "



Pollen on Lonetree Reservoir, September 2014

# A Scary Incident on Horsetooth Reservoir

By Gene Langlinais

Having met up with Jud, Jim and Karen at the appointed hour at Horsetooth Reservoir, we exchanged greetings and proceeded to launch for a few hours of paddling. New to Colorado, this was my first visit to the reservoir and I was struck by its beauty nestled in the mountains.

We paddled south along the west shore exploring the many coves and inlets, one more spectacular than the next for this "new bee". Being fostered by a light head wind making the boats dance along, with power boats helping add to the mix of wind and waves, was great fun. We decided to lunch in one of the coves out of the waves, and enjoyed the sun and relative calm of a muddy beach for take-out and launch.

However, shortly after getting back on the water Karen said she heard someone yelling for help. I didn't hear the cry, but once she pointed in the general direction I spotted someone bobbing in the water with two power boats near by. One of the power boaters had thrown a flotation cushion which the swimmer grabbed but seemed too weak to do anything with.

I realized the swimmer was Dry Drowning, and rushed to him with all possible speed. He went under twice on my way to him. I instructed him to grab my bow lines and quickly paddled him to shore all the while talking to him and reminding him not to try crawling up on the boat, to which he complied. While I was doing this someone on one of the boats contacted the park rangers who dispatched first responders to our location.

I stayed with the swimmer as he lay on a ledge out of the water, in the sun, physically exhausted and having trouble breathing, and coughing up small amounts of water. I stayed with him in case emergency care was required. Thankfully he remained conscious. Rangers arrived within a very short time and began urgent care. His name is Ernesto, age 28, from Lubbock, Texas.

Suerte amigo!

The four of us continued on our way which remained uneventful, except for some huge honken' power boat waves!



The author on Union Reservoir

EDITOR'S NOTE: Read Gene's important information on Dry Drowning and his debrief of this incident on the next page.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Saving someone is not just about pulling them from the water but also knowing what to watch for in the next 24 hours that could mean the difference between life and death.

Gene suggests googling "Dry Drowning" and I did. This is one link that frightened me and made me want to read more: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20140602/dry-drowning-faq>

## DRY DROWNING

By Gene Langlinais

Dry Drowning is a term for someone in distress who, when taking breaths between periods of having their head submerged, also ingests small amounts of water directly to their lungs as they try to catch their breath. This action can cause serious lung infections, even death, within less than 24 hours if not treated immediately. The signs are: extreme weakness, total exhaustion, coughing, and/or shortness of breath.

As a Red Cross instructor I know people react differently in emergencies. Here are some valuable points this emergency revealed:

- There were at least seven people on two power boats, but no one went in the water to help. Although the weather and the water were perfect, most just watched.
- The cushion that was thrown was waterlogged, but at least someone did something to help.
- Someone also had the good sense to call for help. If you do nothing else, dial 911.
- We should all be carrying marine radios and/or cell phones.

If you haven't already, google Dry Drowning to learn more. It may help you save a life.

Any sport carries with it risks, and it is everyone's responsibility to understand those risks and decide whether they are prepared to accept them before undertaking an activity.

Kayaking is no different; it can be dangerous if not undertaken in a safe manner and should never be done without proper training, experience on the water with more capable paddlers and the correct use of safety equipment.

Because of this, the Rocky Mountain Sea Kayaking Club cannot accept responsibility for any injury or accident which may occur as a result of articles, advice or images published in its publications or on its website.

RMSKC wants everyone to paddle safely: take lessons to improve your boat control and rescue techniques, and own and use the proper equipment for the water temperature and possible changes in weather.

# 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 Dahl, Sue Hughes, trip leader Jud Hurd, Julie Rekart and Clark Strickland, who knew the area from years of family vacationing on the coast. The 26<sup>th</sup> 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 Island 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 Island 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 Island 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!

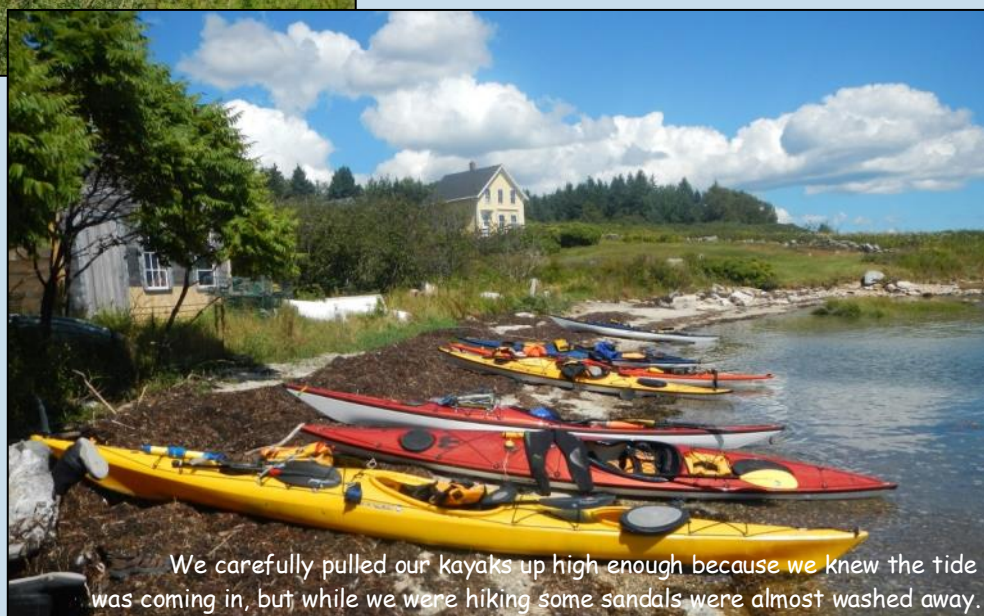


Marlene's lobster

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 leatherman 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.







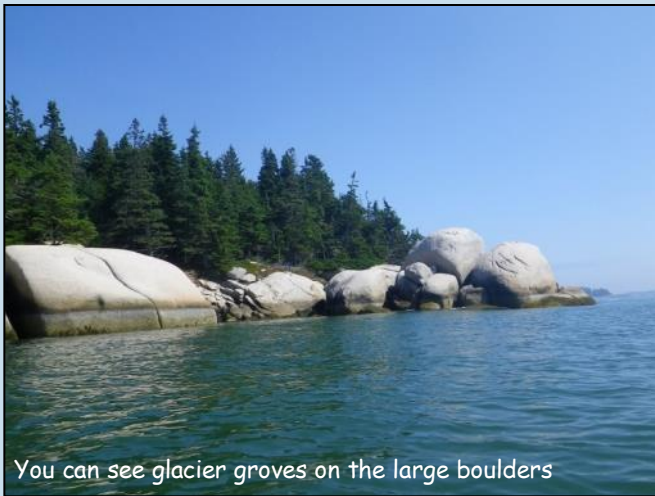
Saying good bye to Matt at Pemaquid Point.

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.

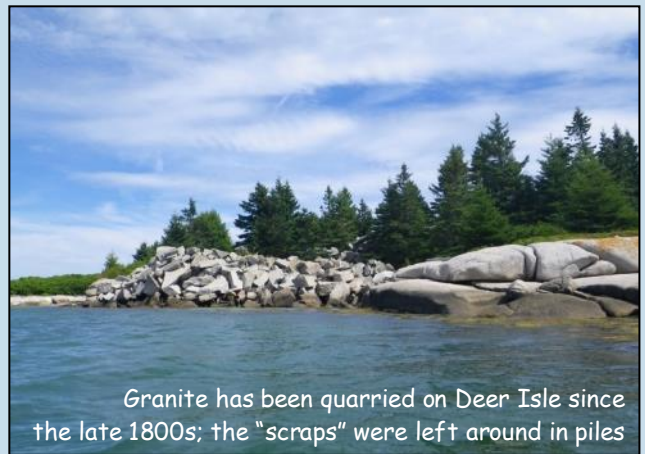
On Saturday we started our paddle out to Russ Island with winds about seven mph. We passed Green Island where there was a large stone quarry with lots of granite. We stopped for lunch on Potato Island and I pulled a "Dan" getting out of my kayak which meant I landed in the water. (Again, no photo available.)



Clark's truck on the suspension bridge to Deer Isle



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

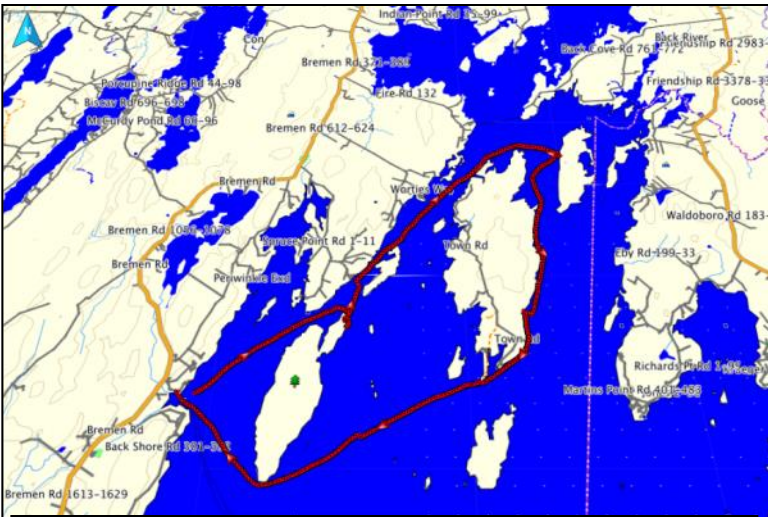


Lobster boats and large and small fishing boats were everywhere



# DAILY GPS MAPS

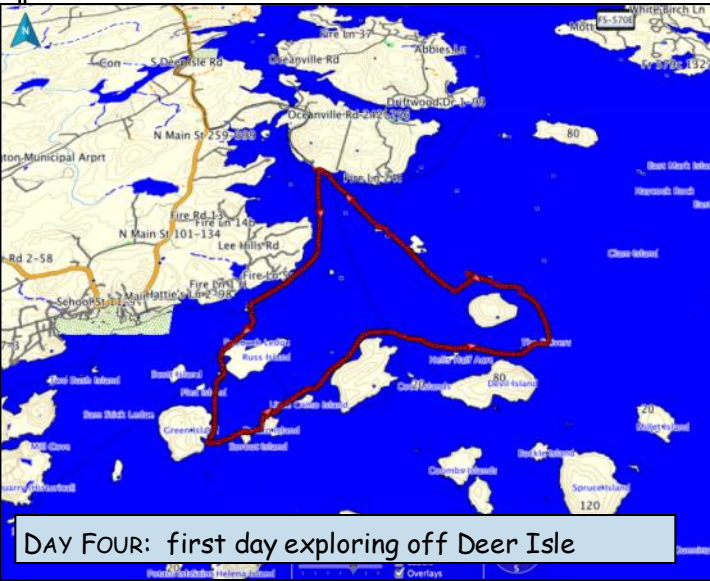
By Bernie Dahlen



DAY ONE: first day with Matt, out of Muscongus Harbor



DAY TWO: a hike and rough water coming home



DAY FOUR: first day exploring off Deer Isle



DAY Five: calm water around the island



DAY SIX: at A we just weren't ready to head back





# CAMPING AT LAKE POWELL, OCTOBER 2014

Base camp across  
the channel from Knowles Canyon

EDITOR'S NOTE: There have been three Lake Powell houseboat trips and many self-supported outings reported in the *Mountain Paddler* in the last handful of years. Ten club members went again this October. A couple of them shared their impressions but no one wrote a full trip report. Here are some pictures and a few details about that trip.

The group left from Bull Frog Marina on a very windy morning. Some were having trouble steering and they quickly pulled out to discuss the situation.

After checking the forecast and looking at options they resigned themselves to camping within a mile of the put-in. Thankfully, there was better paddling weather for the whole rest of the trip.



Brian bowled tumbleweeds  
with his Greenland paddle



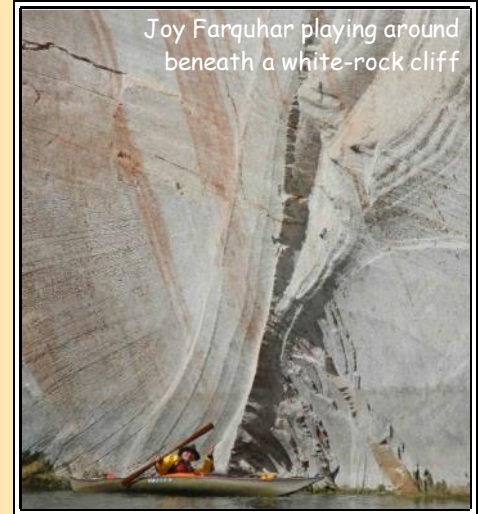
They could tell which way the  
wind blew from Al's beard

In the morning they went up-lake about 13 miles and camped across from Knowles Canyon. Over the next four days people divided into different small groups and explored nearby canyons. Trip Leader Anne Fiore and



Gary Cage went up-lake to Sevenmile Canyon and beyond. The others visited Defiance House in Forgotten Canyon, Crystal Spring and Hansen Canyon, Knowles Canyon, and Warm Springs and Cedar Canyon.

Everyone except new member Joy Farquhar had kayaked on Lake Powell before, but the returning paddlers (Anne and Gary, Marsha Dougherty, Sue Hughes, Brian Hunter, Jud Hurd, Dave and Lou Ann Hustvedt, and Al Lovas) thought the cliffs and the reflections, the vistas, and the plants and wildlife were as wonderful as always.



Joy Farquhar playing around beneath a white-rock cliff



Paddling home in front of desert varnish on the main channel cliffs

## CLIFFS AND REFLECTIONS



Al Lovas in a classic reflection picture



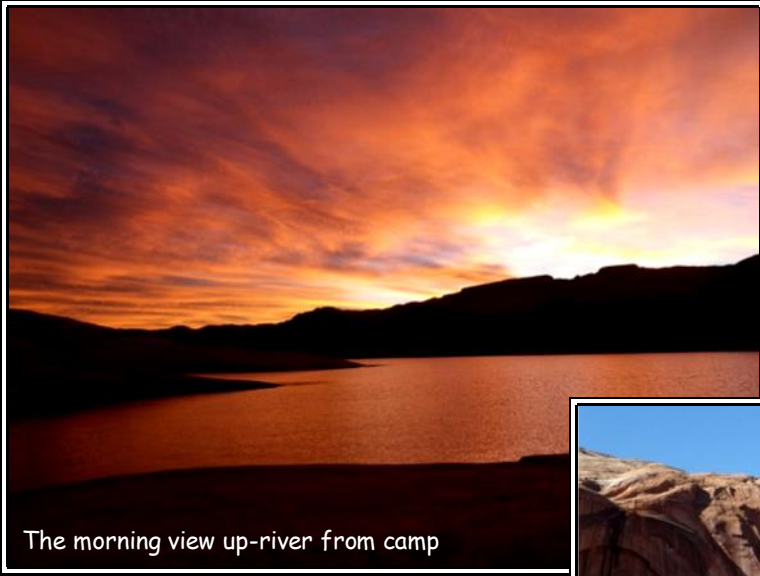
Reflections in another color of water

The zebra reflections in the photo to the right undulated in the kayaks' wakes. Their movement would have made a good video.





## VISTAS AND PLANTS



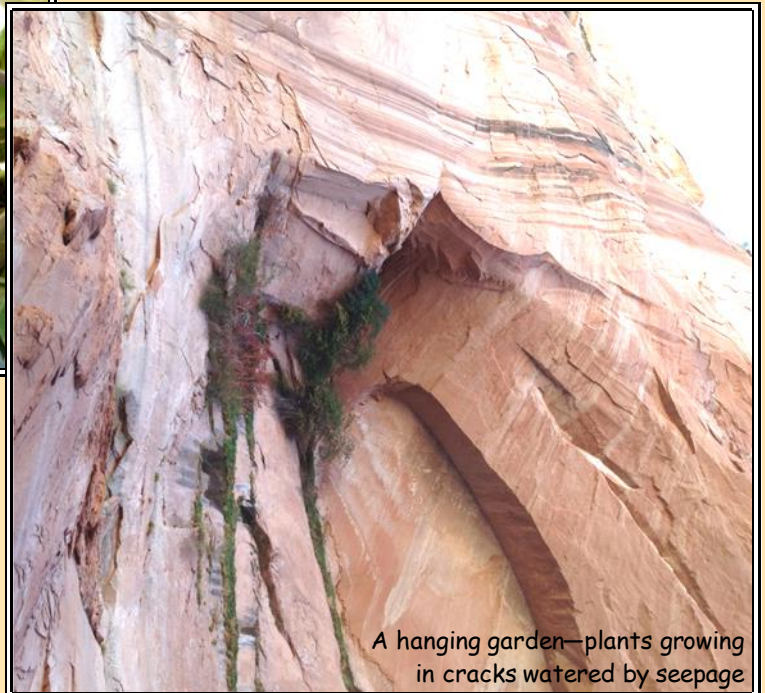
The morning view up-river from camp



Cattails and Evening Primrose  
in Cedar Canyon



Datura has large white trumpet flowers  
and spikey seed pods the size of ping pong balls



A hanging garden—plants growing  
in cracks watered by seepage

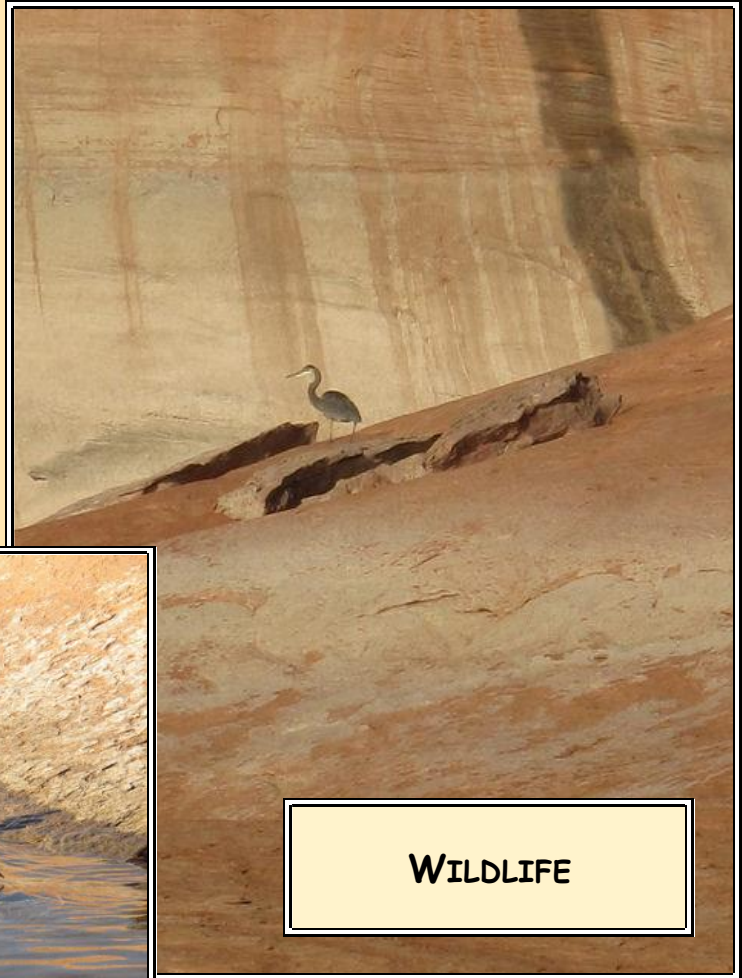


The group saw a blue heron almost every day near a small drainage behind their campsite.

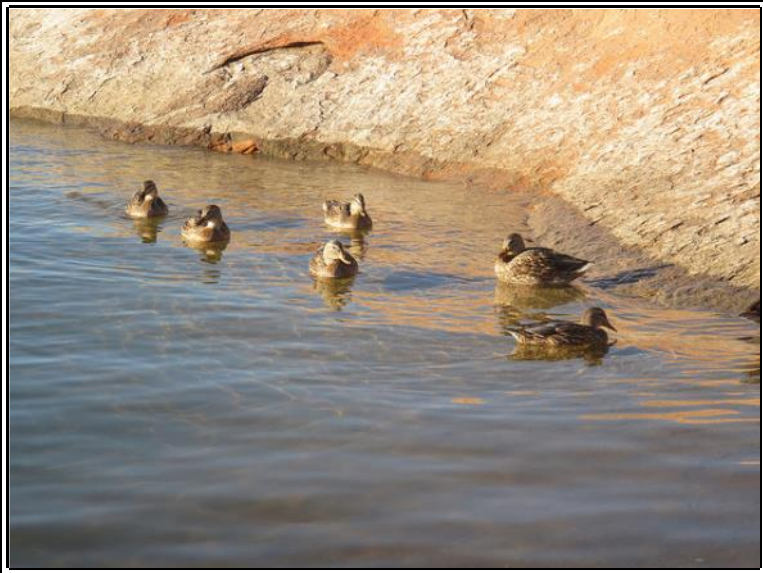
These ducks came by in the morning to see if they'd get fed.

There was an old catfish in the launching area that wouldn't take Dave Hustvedt's bait.

Dave did catch sight of a fox that was rattling things in camp one night.



**WILDLIFE**

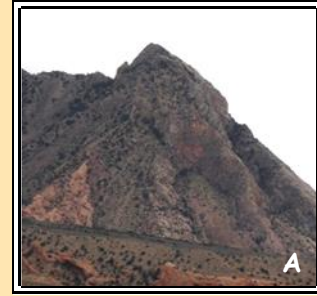


Who knows what got Sue's MRE that was jammed way up in her bow.

Maybe it was the same varmint that ruined her lunch dry bag.



## CAMPING AND KAYAKING PICTURES



Dave Hustvedt says that the formation on the hill at Mile 19 [A] is the bullfrog that the marina is named after. Can you see it?

Tied the usual way, the skeg-pull string got worn off and had to be replaced. The problem was solved when the knots [B] holding it in place were tied above the edge to protect the cord from being scraped.



IKEA bags (C) are sure handy for hauling gear and keeping it out of the sand.

Dave and Lou Ann pitched their tent up the hill on the rocks. One of their "stakes" was especially well shaped [D].



The group ate dinner at the Tamarisk Restaurant, 870 Main Street, in Green River on the way home. The service was good, especially considering they'd been camping for a week, and the food was outstanding.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Joy Farquhar has kayaked for years, but this was her first time paddling in Canyon Country and her enthusiasm was fun to watch. Here are her memories and impressions of the trip, and more information about the geology of the area.

I am writing this brief report three months after our group kayak at Lake Powell. My memory still brings the awe felt on first paddling beneath the towering sandstone cliffs. In 1957 I visited the Glen Canyon Dam project; never did I dream that one day I would paddle on those dammed up waters.

What a congenial group! Need help? It was gladly given. Go it alone? No problem. Flexible days? Make and share plans to fit the individual wishes. Follow the rules? Be safe!

The geology was often a central focus. Turn a corner and there was a new formation, new colors, new sculpting, and new "ohs" and "ahs"! Conversations were often questions:

Where and when were these cliffs formed?

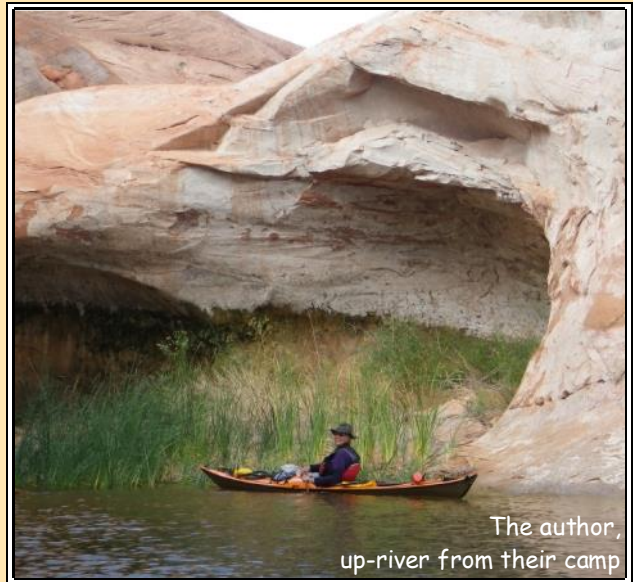
What caused the colors and why?

What are the mysterious iron concretion marbles we found gathered on the shore surface?

How did all this happen?

Who lived here?

The experience lingered on long after the return to home. Answers to geology questions could lead you to *Mysteries of Sandstone Colors and Concretions in Colorado Plateau Canyon Country* by Marjorie A. Chan and William T. Parry. Here attractively written explanations of the geology are accompanied with diagrams and pictures which will answer much, and maybe more than you want to know.



The author, up-river from their camp



Joy in her orange Avocet

There were obviously other conversations: What are you cooking? What equipment, kayaks, clothing work best? How did you sleep? What's the forecasted weather? Will you come back?

That last answer is, "Yes!" I hope to return to Lake Powell again and hopefully with RMSKC. Thanks for being there and welcoming me, the newbie, to the group.

## CONCRETIONS, A BIT OF LAKE POWELL GEOLOGY

By Joy Farquhar

I mentioned my fascination with the geology of Lake Powell and the concretions found there. I did a little more research using the book I mentioned, *Mysteries of Sandstone Colors and Concretions in*

*Colorado Plateau Canyon Country* by Marjorie A. Chan and William T. Parry. The information I'm using here is found in or copied from that source.

It turns out that the largest concentration of the concretions that we saw are found in that 4 Corners area. They are also called iron nodules, iron sandstone balls, or moki marbles. They range from baseball to pea size; pictures show them in many areas of Lake Powell and nearby.

The Jurassic Period, 144-206 million years ago, was their beginning. (Utah was closer to the Equator then.) The sandstone we see was a result of the largest dune event to ever exist in North America. In some places the dunes were up to 2500 feet deep. The concretion association to the sandstone is complicated but fascinating.

Briefly, by chemical processes the red pigment, hematite, was leached from the weathered granite by "reducing water" over millions of years. The iron was concentrated and came from the same red sandstone that has been bleached. We see the result of bleaching when we look at the various colors there: white, yellow, green, etc.

The hematite cemented around the quartz sand grains hundreds of feet underground. About 25-6 million years ago the iron concretions occurred. When the Colorado Plateau uplifted 80-150 million years ago and weathering and erosion occurred, these more weather resistant concretions were exposed.

Sometimes they are not spherical, but can be seen as columns, pipes or wavy flat sheets. Scientists are still studying the "why" of the spherical concretions. Suppositions include that they may have formed around "some seed or nucleus which altered the local chemistry to precipitate iron in a uniform (spherical) shape." They were there at our campsite!

These concretions were not unknown to early peoples here. They were found in Puebloan villages ranging in size from pea to large nodules. They had many uses: as coloring agents, pictographs, ornaments, grinding tools, for cooking and for ceremonial purposes by medicine men. (Years ago I was given a "moki" by a native women owner of the trading post on Highway 20 near Concrete, as a good luck piece for my travels, a bike trip across the U.S. It had traveled to her from her Navajo family in the Southwest. I have kept it as a valued gift.) Special permission is needed to remove any rocks or concretions from these protected areas.

So this book is a valuable resource! Many other sources are included and may be helpful to learn more.



The author with a concretion





On a 2013 trip to Lake Powell, Brian Hunter practiced rough water self rescues

**BRIAN HUNTER'S ACCOUNT:** October 11, 2014, gave us perfect driving weather for our self-supported Lake Powell trip. We stopped in Fruita for lunch a little

before noon where gas was just \$2.99 a gallon; I can't remember when I paid less than three dollars a gallon. The ride to Bullfrog was beautiful and uneventful.

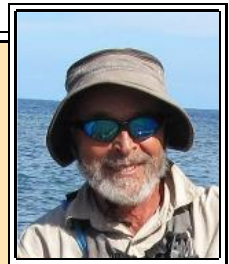
Lake Powell is known for sudden and ferocious winds that can be made worse when they funnel down the deep canyons. We were expecting high wind in late afternoon but it was already blowing in the low to mid teens at launch time. After a short pow-wow the group decided to give it a try. We were paddling in a tail-wind which quickly got much stronger with white caps forming everywhere you looked. The bow of my Kodiak was constantly awash. I had almost 90 pounds of gear not including the three gallons of water behind the seat making the kayak handle the weather much better. I was glad I had a rudder which made the kayak easier to control than a skeg would have done. The wind and waves continued to build so the group hauled out just a mile from the Marina to see if the wind would lay down. We ended up making camp still within sight of Bullfrog Marina because the winds were averaging 25mph gusting to 30. In those strong gusts, the whitecaps were tearing off and flying downwind.

We must have paid our weather dues on that first day because the rest of the trip we had decent weather. In October the water is too cold for a comfortable swim and the days and nights are on the cool side.

My first three trips to Lake Powell were on a house boat and I yearned to experience this wilderness self-supported. I was not disappointed; every time I go to Powell I see the same things differently. I am always filled with gratitude and awe at the rugged grandeur and spiritual nature of the water and canyons.

Every time I visit the water levels are different which means the camp sites from the last trip may be too high to climb to or under water. That's what I like best about Lake Powell: it's the same but always different! There is always the potential for a new challenge that will highlight each trip.

**INFORMATION FOR FISHERMEN, FROM JAY GINGRICH:** It is noteworthy that Utah has published warnings about eating striped bass from Lake Powell, due to mercury accumulation. Stripers are voracious predators and are higher on the food chain than smallmouth bass. A significant amount of the mercury comes from the Navajo coal generating station at Page, Arizona.



**FROM THE EDITOR:** This is the twelfth account of a trip to Lake Powell in the RMSKC publications archived on our website. Search "Lake Powell" in the *Index of Publications*, and then look for other articles that interest you in either the *Current Publications* or *Earlier Articles* sections.

Photos by Anne Fiore, Joy Farquhar, Sue Hughes, Brian Hunter, Jud Hurd and Dave Hustvedt

# FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE OR RUDDER VS. SKEG

By Brian Hunter



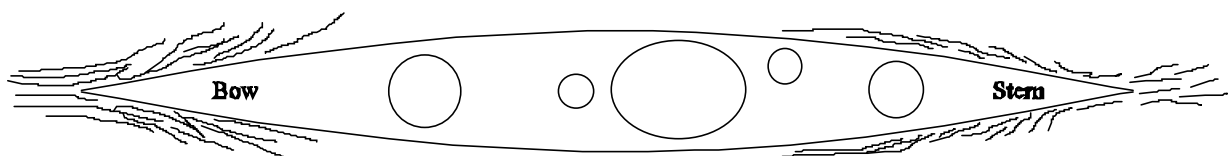
The author at Lake Yellowstone with his Prijon *Kodiak* that sports a rudder

Not to flog a dead horse in this often heated debate, but I would like to share my experiences and thoughts on rudders versus skegs. I have always been told that they both do the same thing, prevent weather cocking. The truth is while they do correct for weather cocking, they do it in exactly opposite ways: rudders cause a kayak to turn and skegs prevent a kayak from turning. Conventional wisdom says they both keep your kayak going in the intended direction in wind. The thing that separates the men from the boys or more accurately rudders from skegs is that a rudder actually steers the stern and changes the direction of the kayak but a skeg can only keep the stern locked into place, preventing the kayak from turning. Locking the stern in place is a problem when you need to maneuver with the skeg down.

Weather cocking is probably not a new term to you but let's cover it anyway. All sea kayaks have certain characteristics in common; in this case both the bow and stern are pointed. It does not matter much if the kayak is moving on the water or the water is moving under the kayak, the leading edge of the bow begins to part the water. As the water is pushed aside by the ever-widening hull, an area of higher pressure is created, locking the bow in a direction. At some point the kayak reaches its widest beam and gradually becomes smaller, terminating at the stern. This narrowing of the hull towards the stern creates an area of lower pressure leaving the following stern loose. If you are paddling backwards or the water is moving from stern to bow then the stern is locked and the bow is loose.

To sum it up, if there is relative movement between the kayak and the water from bow to stern, the bow is locked into place by an area of higher pressure and the stern is loose in an area of lower pressure. This means that the stern can be more easily moved changing the direction of the kayak. Now if the kayak is moving forward and we add a little wind to the mix, especially on the beam, the loose stern will blow downwind turning the kayak into the wind, aka weather cocking.

**WEATHER COCKING:** When there is movement of water past a kayak the bow creates a high pressure area and the stern creates a lower pressure, making the stern loose. Wind on the beam will push the loose stern downwind, which is called weather cocking.



As the bow moves into new water the water is pushed aside creating higher pressure.

As the kayak narrows toward the stern, the water moves back in creating a lower pressure.



Five WAYS TO COUNTER WEATHER COCKING, listed from most effective to least effective:

- Use a rudder with the caveat that it is controlled by gas pedal style \* foot braces.
- Drop a skeg; find the best effect by changing the amount of skeg below the kayak to match the amount of correction needed for conditions.
- Employ a stern rudder and/or sweep paddle strokes.
- Paddle harder on one side of the kayak than the other.
- Edge the kayak. \*\*

The fact that the stern is loose is actually a good thing. Some WAYS TO USE A LOOSE STERN TO YOUR ADVANTAGE are:

- Low brace turns
- Stern rudder paddle stroke
- Sweep strokes

\* **GAS PEDAL FOOT BRACES:** There are two types of rudder controls. The preferred style, called *gas pedal controls*, has a fixed lower portion (under the arches of the foot) and a movable pedal on top by the balls of the feet that can be pressed to change the rudder angle. This allows a fixed foot brace distance. Since your feet and thighs are stationary, keeping your thighs locked into the thigh braces, you will have better control of the kayak.

The other style, called *moving foot braces*, changes the rudder angle by pulling on a cable as the sliding brace is pushed forward. This means that force must be applied to both foot braces to keep the control cables tight and the rudder at the correct angle. The constantly moving foot pegs make it more difficult to use your foot braces for proper stroking, bracing and keeping your thighs locked into the thigh braces to edge and roll your kayak.

\*\* **EDGING A KAYAK:** Edging reduces the effects of a symmetrical hull by reducing the influence of the bow and stern when there is relative movement between water and kayak. Putting the kayak on edge reduces or eliminates leading and trailing edges from locking the direction of travel.

Hard and soft chines produce different effects. I prefer a soft chine, because it allows the kayak to slip more and provides more movement and control. I noticed this when paddling a Current Designs *Sirocco*, which turns much quicker than my Valley *Aquanaut*, because the *Sirocco* has more rocker and softer chines. I could feel it slide into a turn.

Getting back to the original question of rudders vs. skegs, the following are lists of the positive attributes and the disadvantages of each:

#### ADVANTAGES OF A RUDDER

- Rudders steer the kayak.
- Gas pedal style controls allow a fixed foot brace distance which is far better than moving foot braces.
- Rudders are often easier to repair. If one cable breaks, a bungee can be attached to that side of the rudder making it operational until the cable can be repaired.
- Most rudders will "kick-up" if you run ashore or ride over a submerged object; skegs won't.
- In my experience, rudders tend to break less often than skeg cables kink.
- Unlike skegs, rudders are mounted externally and do not take up valuable cargo space inside the kayak.
- When fishing from a kayak, a rudder is a big advantage as the angler can turn away from the fish to add resistance or turn towards the fish to reduce resistance.
- Rudders can control direction when drifting, this is useful when fishing, taking pictures or fiddling with a GPS, etc.

### DISADVANTAGES OF A RUDDER

- Rudders with moving foot brace controls make it more difficult to use foot braces for proper stroke and bracing. This of course is eliminated by using gas pedal controls.
- In poor designs (i.e. Prijon Kayaks) rudders can make changing foot-peg distance more difficult. Sea-lect Designs has overcome this problem with a clever, effective design, more on that later.
- A kayaker might depend on the rudder to turn the kayak and not learn advanced paddling skills.
- Rudders add a small amount of freeboard when not deployed that can catch the wind. Usually when the wind is blowing, the rudder is deployed making this disadvantage a moot point.
- In some cases rudders get in the way when attempting a cowboy rescue.
- Rudders may run afoul of tow lines in a rescue.

### ADVANTAGES OF A SKEG

- A skeg cannot steer the kayak and may lead to improved paddling skills.
- A skeg locks a kayak in a given direction without compensating with paddle strokes.

### DISADVANTAGES OF A SKEG

- Turning a kayak with the skeg down is difficult. The skeg must be retracted, the maneuver made and the skeg redeployed. This is a huge disadvantage.
- Skegs cannot turn a kayak and must be adjusted to the weather conditions. Changes in wind speed and direction require continual adjustments.
- The skeg box takes up valuable room in the kayak that could otherwise hold cargo.
- Skeg boxes are prone to leaking and are usually tough to get at to repair.
- Forgetting the skeg is deployed when landing often ends with a kinked cable.
- A deployed skeg can snag a spray skirt when attempting a cowboy reentry.

A skeg (in my experience) is more likely to kink, requiring replacement. While I have never personally seen a rudder fail, I have seen three different skegs fail with a kinked cable. Replacing a skeg cable ranges from very easy to very difficult. Some kayaks require Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) replacement cables.

Skeg cables usually kink when running aground or paddling over a submerged obstacle when the skeg is deployed. Cables are also kinked when a user pushes on the deployed skeg to force it back into the skeg box. Always use the slider to retract the skeg, never push the skeg into its box. Since the kink usually occurs inside the skeg box it is not visible until the skeg is removed. For this reason a kinked skeg cable is sometimes misdiagnosed as a "sticky cable". [Check the picture on page 24 for a solution to another skeg issue.]

No doubt you have determined that I prefer rudders to skegs because they do more than keep the kayak from turning, they are much less prone to fail and I find they are more intuitive as well. I suppose my only caution is to learn how to maneuver your kayak without depending on a rudder. Edging a kayak is one way to help reduce weather cocking and is also a primary skill for maneuvering and controlling your kayak.



**RETROFITTING OR CHANGING RUDDERS:** If your kayak has neither rudder nor skeg, a rudder would be simpler to add, as a skeg box would be difficult to install. A semi-permanent skeg could be attached but would not be adjustable and could be in the way at times. This approach was used by the Inuits on their skin-on-frame kayaks.

There are several after-market rudder assemblies that can be added. Some kayaks come "rudder-ready" making aftermarket installation simpler. Kayaks that were never intended to have a rudder can present problems for the installer.

However, I recently installed a Sea-Lect designs rudder in a Delta kayak and had very few problems even though it was not designed for a rudder. The gas pedal style controls allow for moving the foot braces fore and aft but do not alter the rudder setup. I was not fond of the way the rudder itself is deployed as it seems to be a bit sticky, but when the moving parts wear in it should deploy smoothly.

If your kayak has a rudder but does not have gas pedal style controls, upgrading is usually not difficult. Sea-Lect offers a simple upgrade by replacing the existing foot braces with their adjustable rudder control foot braces. Start with model K747200 and look at the slightly different models to find the best one for your kayak. Here are some web links to places where I have purchased components:

<http://www.rutabaga.com/sea-lect-designs-trucourse-rudder-kit>

<http://www.duckworksbbbs.com/hardware/canoe-kayak/rudder-fb/index.htm>

<http://www.austinkayak.com/search/rudder%20kits/page/1>

<http://www.clcboats.com/sitesearchgoogle.html?q=rudder+kits>

Here are web links for TruCourse and SmartTrack rudder kits. Both offer gas pedal controls.

<http://www.sealectdesigns.com/groups/2418-trucourse-rudder-footbrace-kit>

<http://www.smart-tracker.com/introduction.htm>



Brian's Valley Aquanaut,  
which has a skeg

**AN ASIDE:** This article talked about using rudders or skegs to counteract weather cocking, which is when the stern of a boat swings away from the wind. If, however, the **bow** of the boat swings away from the wind causing the stern to point upwind, it is called lee cocking, an uncommon condition that causes difficult paddling and is hard to compensate for. (On the bright side, it could be a good way to improve bracing skills!)

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