

HEAVENLY PADDLING ON THE GREEN

By Brian Hunter

Moving water has been my nemesis for a long time. Last year I worked and improved my skills to the point that the thought of paddling 70 miles down a river was still intimidating but no longer terrifying.

My apprehension was quickly laid to rest by the tutelage of our trip coordinator, Gary McIntosh, and others who were also helpful and supportive in their guidance on several occasions. I am so thankful I went.

I paddled sweep and had the joy of seeing the others as they were inspired and awed by the remarkable beauty of Labyrinth Canyon. One paddler commented, "I'm in Heaven". I admit I shared the sentiment.

Paddling the Green River is a little like paddling Lake Powell but it is narrower and has the added element of moving water which helps the miles to melt away. Another difference is the meandering bends that present amazing monoliths of red sandstone crowned by towering mesas on one side opposed by box-like alcoves on the other (mile 78-77 in the illustration). One such bend, The Bowknot, is seven miles around and only a quarter mile across at its narrow point (mile 70 to 63). Some of our group climbed to the saddle of this mesa for a breath-taking view of the other side.

I recommend Belknap's waterproof *Canyonlands River Guide*. As you can see from the illustration this book is chock full of excellent information about the trip.

Mother Nature truly conspired to make this a "bucket list" trip for us. The days were not too hot and the nights not too cool. According to someone who was on the river ten days earlier the bugs were horrific, but we had very few. We found good camp sites which is never a given on the Green. There was no wind which is also not often the case, and the scenery is to die for, as was evidenced by some of us thinking we were in the Promised Land.

