



FOUNDED 1989
 ACA PADDLE AMERICA CLUB
<http://www.RMSKC.org>

EARLY SUMMER, 2013
 VOL.21 No. 1b

The MOUNTAIN PADDLER

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
 FOR OUR PADDLING COMMUNITY

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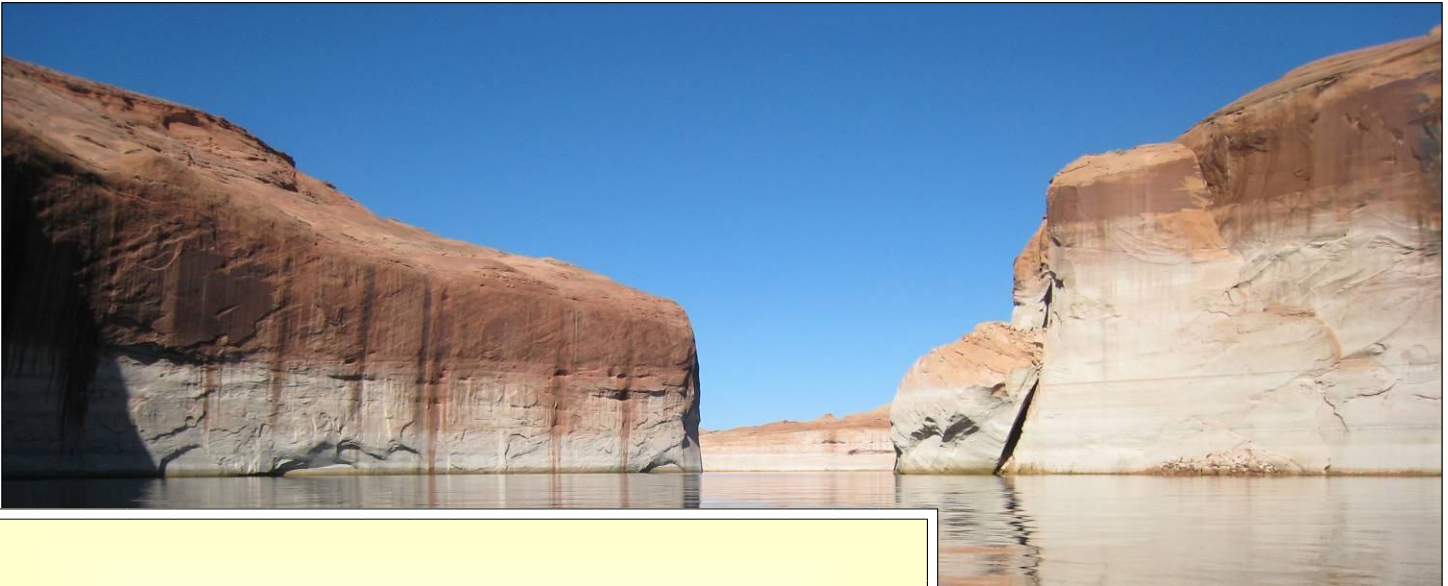
Here are the latest accounts of RMSKC members' paddles and related kayak doings.

The pictures on Page 12 of white sand, white boats and white birds especially tickled me, as did Brian Hunter's beautiful paddles and his new-found rolling ability.

Please notice that several of these pieces aren't much more than some good photographs and a couple sentences of explanation. Full-blown articles are interesting, but if that's not your style never hesitate to send in just pictures and captions.



Photo by Jud Hurd



Self-Supported Kayaking at Lake Powell

October 13 - 20, 2012



The author, Anne Fiore

Gary Cage and I are packed and heading out of Lyons by 9:20 AM. The skies are overcast and gray and snow is forecast for today's drive and we are headed into a strong west wind. Our trip to Bullfrog takes just short of nine hours and we arrive around 6 PM.

David Hustvedt, Jud Hurd and Russ Hardy are already here. They said the ranger mentioned the ferry would be a nice place to put in but it has already shut down for the season which makes that spot too isolated to leave our cars for seven days. We take the spot beside Jud and David's campsite though there are lots of spaces to choose from. I walk down and pay (it's cash only), return, and help Gary put up our tent, then head for supper at the lodge. Gary and I walk back, a nice after-dinner stroll. We have a beer and hit the hay.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2012: We get up around 7:15, later than expected, but we quickly pack up. It's cooled off somewhat overnight; even so, I would say the temperature is still close to 50°. Condensation is everywhere on the tent, not a normal sight when camping in the dry west. The sky is clear and the sun is just about over the ridge to the east. David and Jud peek out and begin packing; Russ shows up just after 7:20 and we are all off to breakfast. The lodge here prepares excellent food and is not too pricey. We stayed at the lodge on our previous Powell outing and the sleeping quarters are recommended as well.

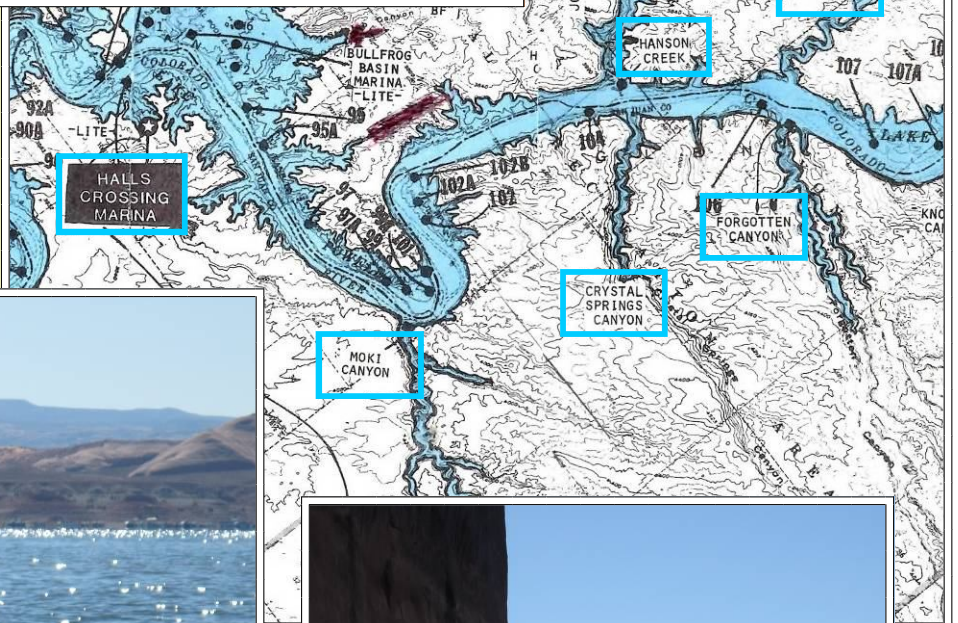
Gary and I head for the mussel inspection station. With our certificates on the dashboard we go to the bottom of "the world's longest" boat ramp, pull off to the side, pop the boats off the roof, and then start unloading gear and loading the boats. I'm frantic. Nothing is fitting as planned. The big heavy bag is ice and beer. The bag with the sleeping bag and pad is also unwieldy. Next time these will be in separate bags. We all agree we should have practiced packing the boat. Gary takes the tent and some food. I put stuff in one of the larger dry bags and



attach it over the back hatch. There is nothing over the front hatch so, theoretically, I have room to spare.

We are all finally ready to go at around 11 AM and we push off. Surprisingly, the full weight does not seem to be that much more to paddle.

We head out beyond the artificial jetty toward Hall's Crossing and the channel, about two miles away. The sky is blue and the air is calm: my kind of paddling. The sunlight dances on the water, which I try to photograph.



We reach the channel and mile markers. Somehow I feel my calculations are amiss. My notes say six miles to Moki Canyon but it's farther based on the buoy marker.

Hall's Crossing is really close. We turn up-lake and in no time are at the mouth of Moki where we stop to take pictures. There are no campsites at the canyon's mouth. There is a sheer cliff on the west side that throws a large dark shadow on the water, another nice scene to photograph.



We turn into the canyon and take in the reflections of the water on the sandstone. Russ and I paddle up on the left hand spur to a very small campsite. In the meantime, Jud and Gary go the other way where they find the nice beach nearly at the end of Moki Canyon. I continue upstream to the end and a mud flat, along the way passing where the houseboat was parked in 2009; I return, debark, unload and get camp set up. The sun is behind the canyon walls and the air is cool.

We started paddling this morning at 11:15 and reached our camp by 3:15. Our original estimate was six miles to the mouth of Moki Canyon but in fact it was seven and the campsite was another three miles.



Russ Hardy taking pictures of the reflections under the overhang



Russ, Gary, Jud and Dave at the first night's camp

MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2012: We are on our way at 10 AM. We paddle the three miles out to the mouth of Moki Canyon, then up-lake. We passed a point of land, about two miles beyond Moki on the south side, that looks to be a scenic spot for an overnight. It's about eight miles or less from Bullfrog, a nice length for a first or last day.

We bypass it and continue on toward Hansen Canyon, our chosen spot for tonight, moving to the north side of the channel. As we get closer to our destination, we stop to check out a promising looking site and have lunch.

We decide the take-out is way too muddy and the tent area has the look of a wash which is still pretty wet from Friday's rain and might not be a good choice if it rained again. I stroll along the rock, it's that nice white Navajo sandstone that's such a pleasure to walk on, and spy another spot about 100 yards farther up-lake. But our goal today is Hansen and we continue in that direction, all the time checking out possible sites.

Finally, we arrive at the mouth of Hansen and turn into the canyon. There is a spot on the east side that Russ gets out to check but his assessment is that it's a bit small. So we turn upstream and continue paddling. I spot a promenade sticking out but its sides are steep and there's nowhere to land. Russ checks out another one on the east side but it's even smaller than the first. Dave and Jud check out another, still to no avail.

We regroup as we're getting farther up the canyon than desirable. So we head back, taking a second

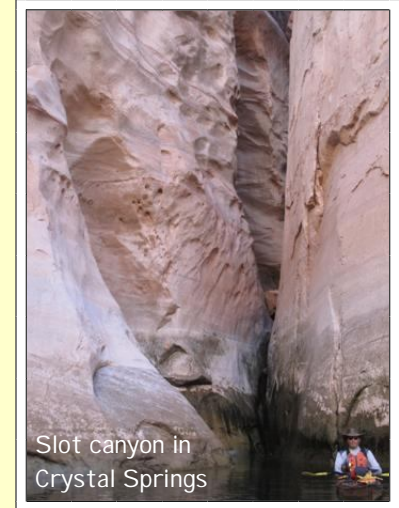


Surrounded by Navajo sandstone at the Hansen Canyon campsite

look at the all possibilities. Gary, Russ and Jud get out at the first one and explore a bit more, since being as close to the canyon mouth as possible is our goal. They decide this is the place, as in addition to the space Russ saw, there are also a couple of other places for a single tent. So we have a home for the evening. We hop out and set up camp. Gary and I chose a site by the water, out in the open but with a great view. We will spend the remaining nights here.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012: We sleep until 8 AM. It's warm by the time we get up and close to 10:00 before we paddle away. Everyone agrees it is nice to not have to worry about a campsite for the coming evening.

Our first destination is Crystal Springs Canyon whose mouth is directly across from Hansen Canyon. It's about a half mile across the lake. Crystal Springs is cool, with twists and turns and high red walls. It's good we are not looking for a campsite



as there are none. I photograph the reflections of the red rock in the stillness of the water. We continue sneaking back farther and finally are at the end, blocked by three rocks tucked into a slot. More photos are in order. We turn and retrace our way. There are those wavy reflections, very clear at the bottom of the rock just at the water line, then fuzzier and fuzzier, covering the face of the rock.

It's approaching noon as we exit the canyon and head back to camp for lunch. After lunch, we head up Hansen Canyon, a different experience than Crystal Springs Canyon. For one, it's wide. For another, though there are steep walls on one side but the opposite side is the white of Navajo Sandstone, and there are pools of sand that look like potential campsites. There are various slots we explore; at the end of one is a half-dozen mallards.

We continue on. Russ and the others explore a larger inlet where there are a number of good camping spots. I approach and enter the right arm and see a group campsite with a sunshade. The end is not obvious but I turn and meet up with the others. Gary has explored the main branch so the end is not far. The four of us continue up, skirting a marshy area. I continue another 300 yards and hit bottom. I could pound my way through past another bend but turn around instead. We head back and pick up Jud who has been fishing his way up. We meet Gary who decides to give the end another go. We return and I check out the arm I was just in which ends in a slot. I take a photo and turn around. The others head up and I go back to the entrance and wait. We turn and head back to camp.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2012: Tuesday evening the wind comes up and stays up. I have trouble sleeping; the tent and fly sound like a freight train. Eventually dawn arrives and then the rays of the sun peek over the ridge. The wind continues to blow. The water in Hansen Canyon is not so bad but there are white caps out on the main channel. Our plan today was to go up and paddle Smith and Forgotten Canyons. We decide that we'll start out, but if anyone is uncomfortable, we will all come back.

Russ decides even before we start that this is not for him. The remaining four set out. As I approach the channel, I realize just how significant the wind and waves are. Jud decides to return. Dave estimates the wind to be 18-20 mph. The waves are strong and regular, seemingly intensified by the steep walls on either side of this part of the lake.

I get out in the waves and note that when turning, the left hand turn is easier. I paddle back into Hansen, catch my breath and paddle back out again. Jud, who returned to camp earlier, comes back out for wave practice as does Russ. I note that a ferry posture makes it pretty easy to cross the lake. It's turning that is challenging. Heading down-wind, as always, is spooky.

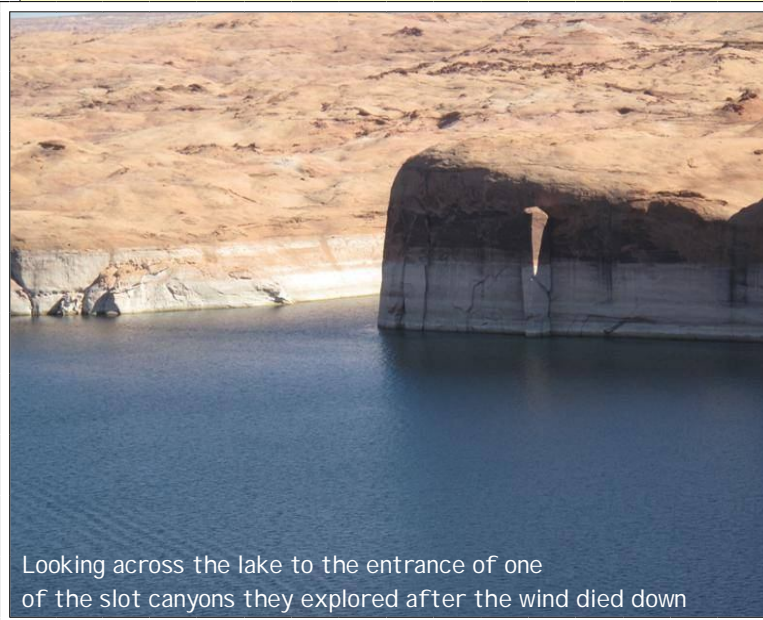
Finally we all return to camp for lunch. On the way, Gary mentions that my rudder does not seem to be working. So we spend time at camp adjusting and readjusting.

After lunch we head up the hill behind our camp for a stroll. I get my hiking fix! Dave turns on the weather radio and it seems like the wind will subside today. We continue hiking up. Underfoot is that Navajo sandstone; it's not too steep and perfect for friction-y hiking shoes or Chacos. There are bits and pieces of what looks like lava rock and I need to read up on the geology of this area. Soon we are on top and heading east to check out a slot that Dave noticed yesterday. We are on our way back down when the wind finally subsides.

The wind stays down so after lunch we head upriver, first across the channel to a large slot then back across to another large slot then back toward Hansen and the smaller slot we were peering into from above. These smaller slots are pretty cool! In one, we see a bird high overhead which can be heard making an unusual sound. It looks as though it has a black body and white breast although that may be a trick of light. Russ spies a couple of coots, so maybe that is what I saw up on the ledge. We head back. Just under four miles today, another wonderful day!



Anne hiking above Hansen Canyon



Looking across the lake to the entrance of one of the slot canyons they explored after the wind died down

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2012: This turns into our 'big' paddle day, 18 miles total. It's a little breezy during the night, but nothing like the previous night and I sleep really soundly. We are awake and out of the tent by 7:00, cooking, getting ready, and ready to paddle by 9:00. Our destination today: Smith Canyon and Forgotten Canyon, across from each other about three miles upstream.

In no time at all, we reach the mouth of Smith Canyon. Of all the canyons, this is the most exquisite—the clear morning light and its high red canyon walls reflected in the still water create a sense of solitude and stillness the others do not have.



Tranquil Smith Canyon

We paddle back into the canyon. I try to take pictures as we go, especially when there is someone ahead in sight. We paddle up and up. There are a couple of side slots to explore and the others do but I bypass them for now and reach the end of the canyon, at least the navigable part. At the end, the bottom turns to sticky mush. A motor boat is coming and I wonder how far upstream he'll get! I turn back and explore the side slots, each cool and interesting, each its own adventure.

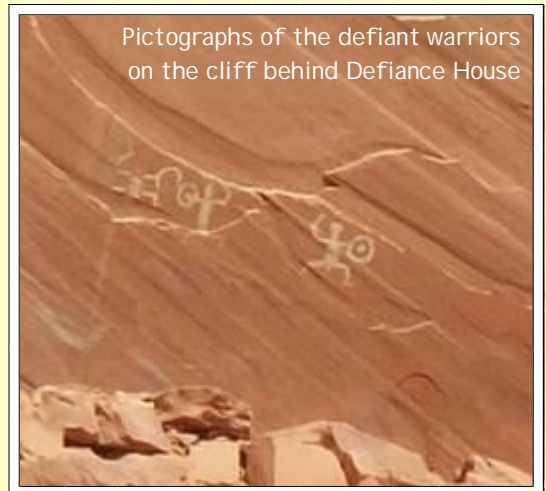
We head back to the mouth of the canyon, across the channel, into Forgotten Canyon and past the floating outhouse. Up we go, always staying in the main canyon to reach the Defiance House Ruins at the end. Dave and Russ's GPS come in handy since with just a map and compass, it's hard to tell which canyon is the main one. We bypass our campsite of 2009. We reach the end, come ashore alongside several motorboats and have lunch.



Defiance House ruins

We hike upstream, across the mudflats, and scramble up to the trail to the ruins. The pictographs are cool, although I compare the experience to our outings to Canyon of the Ancients where things are unmarked and you hike along and find things with a sense of discovery.

It would be interesting to know the age of this artwork compared with that of Canyon of the Ancients. My contention as always: the best are from those periods when times were good.



Pictographs of the defiant warriors on the cliff behind Defiance House

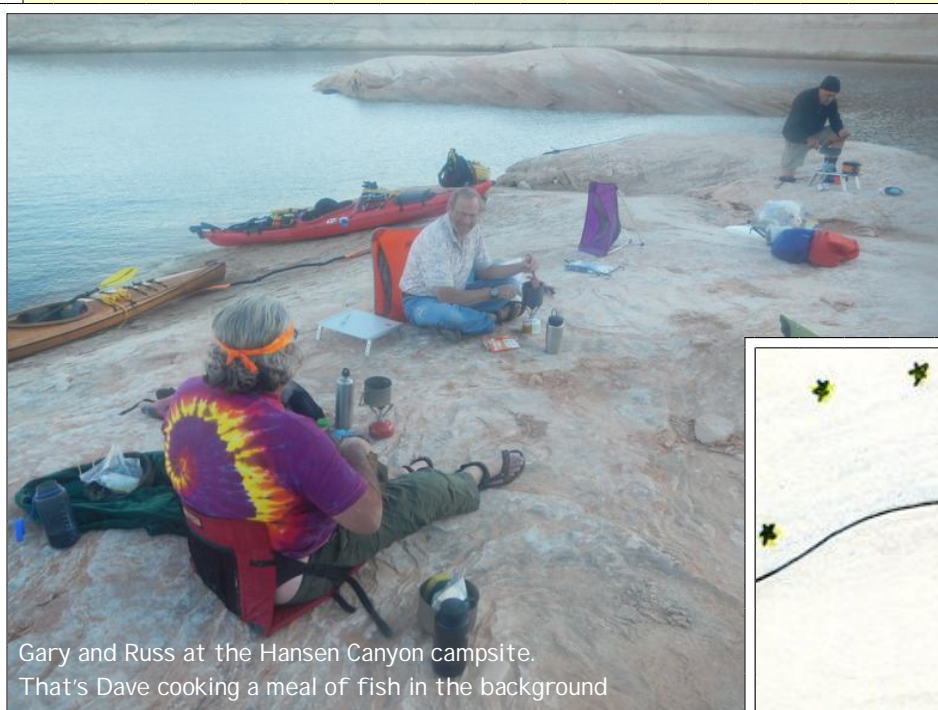


On the trail down from Defiance House

Back down we go, climb in the boats and paddle. Gary mentions he wants to explore the two arms. I like the idea but this means we will add three miles to our already long day. We go for it.

We explore "The Slot" from the 2009 trip, and the "Room of Sound" where we heard the most pristine of echoes. The slot is still in water but, because of lower levels, only the first part of the opening is navigable. We turn and try the echo chamber but there are none. We paddle out and up the other arm. At its end there is a hanging garden with one scarlet-colored bush high up.

We turn and head for the channel and explore possible campsites at the mouth. There is a rope hanging down which David surmises has something to do with the floating bathroom called Dangling Rope. At the entrance to the canyon, there are steps carved into the cliff which appear to lead up to where the rope is anchored.



We've gone 15 miles at this point. My longest day ever! It's Miller Time and we head back. I am pretty tired, but just like after a long hike, I will myself to the finish. I am the last one back. I take out, make supper, enjoy the last of the sweets and treats and turn in while it's still light. A wonderful day!



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2012: Our last day; we are all up by 7 AM, packed and ready to go by 9:00. It's another great weather day.

I am still in vacation mode. But "the guys" are heading for the barn. What surprised me is how far ahead they look but in reality by the time I reach shore, I'm only about ten minutes behind. We are all off the water before noon.

We unload the boats, load the truck, share the one last beer from the cooler, which is still cold although there is no ice left, and are on the road by 1:00. We comment on how interesting the country would be to explore by foot, especially the area between Lake Powell and Hanksville.

We arrive at the Hot Springs Lodge in Glenwood Springs around 7:15, grab a quick supper, change and take a dip in the hot springs. A nice way to end this most outstanding week!

Photos by Anne Fiore and Jud Hurd

Jud Hurd planned a Club trip to Corpus Christi in 2011 but went by himself when health and family issues kept other interested members home in Colorado. You can read an account of his first visit in the 19-1b Spring 2011 *Mt. Paddler* on the RMSKC website.



I. B. Magee Park near the town of Port Aransas

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

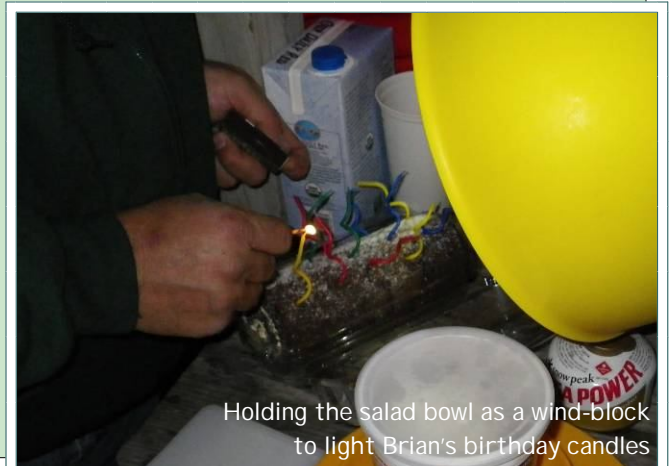
FEBRUARY 20-27, 2013

This year Chris Dohmen, Sue Hughes, Brian Hunter and Clark Strickland joined Jud, planning on four days of salt water paddling in warm temperatures. They had a good time, but it wasn't warm and they didn't paddle four days.

Jud, and Larry Kline on an earlier trip, had camped on Goose Island [A] but it was full so the group scrambled for another campsite. Lake Corpus Christi [B] was considered, but Brian's research showed it was about an hour north of Corpus Christi and the lake was low. Revising their plans again, the group chose I. B. Magee Beach Park near Port Aransas on Mustang Island, the barrier island northeast of Padre Island. It is across Redfish Bay from the town of Aransas Pass. It proved to be a good, centrally located option.

The drive down was slow and long, with rush hour traffic in Denver and fog, rain, snow and icy roads past Limon. It was hard to find a late dinner in Lubbock, but the complementary breakfast the next morning featured Texas-shaped waffles.

The second day was easier driving but almost as long, and everyone was relieved to get the tents set up among the RVers in their huge land yachts before dark. The group shared Clark's spaghetti and Sue's salad, and celebrated Brian's 29th birthday with a present of Bowmore's I slay single malt and a cake, but it was too windy to light the candles.



Holding the salad bowl as a wind-block to light Brian's birthday candles



They had agreed to hire Ken Johnson, a paddling legend Jud knew from his previous trip, as a guide for the first day's paddle to and around Shamrock Cove [C]. It was windy, but Ken brought along another experienced local paddler, Mark Arnold, and the group decided to give it a try.

They began the crossing, and saw a wonderful collection of birds (roseate spoonbills, white ibis, great egrets, great and small blue herons and redhead ducks) but they turned back because everyone was having trouble keeping on course. They later learned the winds were up to 30 mph.

They weren't done paddling and in the afternoon they drove northwest to the Aransas River [D], hoping it would be more protected from the wind. They found the launch site and paddled upriver a few miles; there was almost no current and little wind. It was a beautiful afternoon. Chris and Sue saw a green heron.

Ken, who had offered to paddle with them the other days they were in the area, met them at their half-way point and gave a bit of sweep stroke instruction for their next windy paddle.

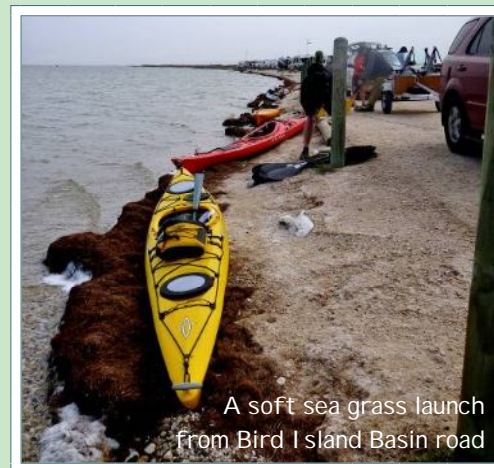
Everyone was tired but they put together chili ingredients and a salad and talked about the day, and their plans for the following morning's trip. They'd arranged with Ken to go to the North Dunes on Padre Island, south of Mustang Island [off the map above, southwest down the barrier island].

They entered Padre Island National Seashore with their senior passes and paid a bit extra to park and launch along the road at Bird Island Basin. The paddle in the Laguna Madre to the dunes was short and sunny, without much wind, and the unspoiled hills of fine white sand were spectacular. Ken brought a friend, Winnie Shrum, who knew all the birds and plants and took lots of pictures, a few of the best of which are on the next page.



Brian, Chris, Clark, Sue and Jud on the Aransas River

Photo by Ken Johnson



A soft sea grass launch from Bird Island Basin road



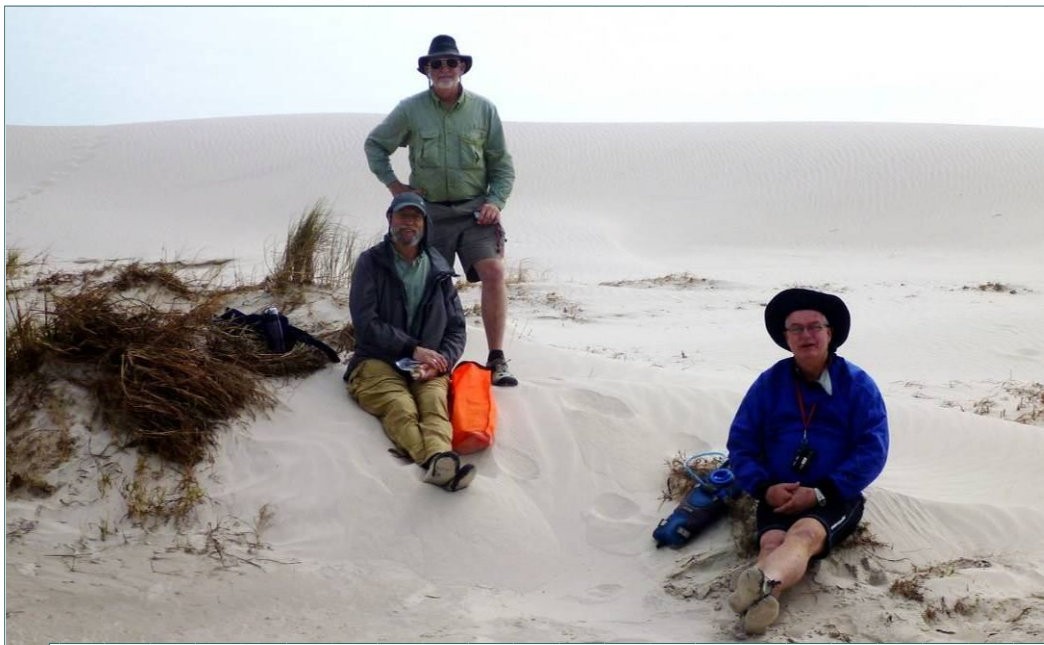
**DUNES ON THE
LAGOON SIDE OF
NORTH PADRE ISLAND**



Camouflaged Lizard



Photos by Winnie Shrum



After eating lunch and trooping around on the dunes the group paddled back, loaded their boats and drove to the Port Aransas marina. There they were dwarfed by real yachts, not land yachts.



Brian, Sue, Clark, Ken and Winnie paddled out of the marina to San Jose Island [E on the map on page 10], across the Lydia Ann Channel from the Lydia Ann lighthouse. The paddling was wonderful—into a light breeze going and zipping home catching the waves. They saw a large flock of white pelicans and a huge flock of avocets.



A wonderful bird is the pelican,
Its bill can hold more than its belly can.
It can take in its beak,
Enough food for a week.
But I really don't know how the hell-he-can.

Limerick by Dixon Lanier Merritt,
courtesy of Brian Hunter



Jud and Chris stayed behind and paddled around the marina and saw lots of dolphins. It was a great day for everyone: the sun was shining and the wind was down.



Dolphin photos by Chris Dohmen

The next day the group decided to paddle St. Charles Bay, between the peninsula with Goose Island State Park and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge [northeast of **A** on the map on page 10]. By the time they reached Goose Island the wind was up again, but everyone agreed they could do it. The area is famous for whooping cranes and there were a couple of them as well as some sandhill cranes in a small marsh in the pasture across the road from the put-in; lots of people had fancy cameras set up taking pictures.



Ken and Chris, paddling across St. Charles Bay in a Mayan Seas kayak that she'd borrowed from him

The group, with Ken and Mark, who had joined them again, paddled a windy 1.5 miles across the bay to get into protected water and then went north along the shore. They had to eat in the kayaks because people are not allowed to land on the refuge.



If they stood in the shallow water they could see some white dots that Mark said were whoopers. He laughed that he had lots of photos of white dots and even more of swirls on the water—all that could be seen of dolphins by the time the picture was taken.

They returned across the bay and into a small lake, using Ken and Mark's knowledge and Brian's GPS. There they got a closer look at three whooping cranes and heard them calling, which was a wonderful experience the people with their cameras probably missed.

Back at the launch site they loaded up across the road from a Texas cow that had just given birth. She and her pasture-mates were defending the placenta from black vultures. There were many different birds on this trip!

As they were loading up, Ken said strong winds—30 mph gusting to 50 mph—were forecast for their final day of paddling. That, and the chilly temperatures and showers, put a damper on their spirits. They stopped on the way back to camp to see the famous Big Tree before going out to dinner.

Everyone had hoped the forecast would moderate enough to paddle on the protected Nueces River, but when they called Ken in the morning the news was not good, which Clark confirmed on his phone. Ken said that the Nueces wouldn't offer enough protection and that their tents on Mustang Island would be in trouble, too. Sadly they agreed it was time to head home, which luckily they turned into a three-day road trip.

They drove to Gruene, a quaint town in the hill country, and spent some time looking around. Then it was on to Fredericksburg, another old German town nearby, to spend the night. There were bothersome strong winds all day and they didn't make good time, but if they'd gone farther they would have driven right into the storm that was dumping 19 inches of blowing snow with six-foot drifts in Amarillo, the second highest single-day snowfall accumulation ever recorded there.



Getting ready to head back across St. Charles Bay to the put-in

Breakfast was pastries and apple pancakes at a wonderful German café; then they headed to Amarillo on scenic roads past Palo Duro Canyon. Sue saw a field of sandhill cranes and they had a lunch on the road that was beyond words. Ask Clark.

It was nicer driving with less wind, but there was still lots of snow when they arrived in Amarillo.

The last day they packed up in deep slush, angled over to the interstate and gunned it for home.



Amarillo in the morning



The road out of Amarillo



Beach shack and BBQ on San Jose Island

It wasn't the sunny subtropical paddle trip that they'd hoped for, and it was a lot of driving for what turned out to be only three days on the water but most people agreed with Clark who said, "I thought it was great driving, company, bird watching, dining and especially paddling. It was another great Jud-led trip."

"Judled" may become a new word for RMSKC.



The group in high spirits before the paddle along Padre Island to the dunes

Sue especially liked riding the free ferry which connects Mustang Island and Port Aransas with the mainland, seeing all the wildlife, driving the back roads and eating shrimp. Brian said he liked paddling in the wind.



Boats on the ferry

MISCELLANEOUS TIDBITS

- LARRY KLINE'S REPORTS: Larry and friends also paddled near Corpus Christi. You can read about those trips in back issues found on the RMSKC website:
Disconnected in the Gulf I : Fall, 2008, issue 16-3
Disconnected in the Gulf II : Winter 2008-2009, issue 17-1
- WILDLIFE WARNING: Never leave food out at a campsite with boat-tailed grackles; check the damage to the avocado on the right.
- LOCAL ABBREVIATION: A main highway, South Padre Intracoastal Drive, is referred to as the SPID, which was confusing at first.
- KEN'S WEBSITE: <http://home.earthlink.net/~johnsonkw/kayak-corpus/>
- WINNIE AND KEN'S PICTURES:
<https://picasaweb.google.com/104857685363900679676/20130222>
- USEFUL BOOK AND MAPS: *Kayaking the Texas Coast* by John Whorff and waterproof maps by Hook-N-Line
- CLEVER GEAR IDEA: Jud made ventilators from cans with both ends cut out. He said that Gary Cage suggested it to keep neoprene booties from smelling and to make them easier to put on after they've dried.
- TRIP DATA: They drove 2,600 miles, with the trip down and back, and driving to paddles and dinners. The camping and gas divided five ways was \$228 a person and the total for three nights lodging with one roommate was \$88, for a cost of about \$316 per person, not counting meals, snacks and personal expenses.



All the birds left was the skin and the pit



- GPS READINGS FROM BRIAN: Here are coordinates of some of the places the group went; they might be useful for future paddles. If you cut and paste them into Google Maps (in satellite mode), you will get a good idea of the lay of the land.



Brian checking his GPS

N 27.725476 W 097.141375	Entrance to Wilson's Cut for the Shamrock Island paddle; no other readings were taken due to the wind
N 27.469102 W 097.313148	Launch for Padre Island Sand Dunes paddle
N 27.484063 W 097.302487	Padre Island Sand Dunes
N 27.838954 W 097.068083	Marina launch to San Jose Island
N 27.841872 W 097.061774	Outside the marina jetty
N 27.851570 W 097.054687	Birds on shore of San Jose Island
N 28.151779 W 096.973693	Launch for Bird Sanctuary paddle
N 28.154632 W 096.947797	First landfall at Bird Sanctuary
N 28.167764 W 096.950134	Lunch at Bird Sanctuary
N 28.167850 W 096.969119	Entrance to the small pond on the Bird Sanctuary paddle where whooping cranes were seen and heard



- TRIP LEADER JUD HURD'S FINAL WORD: This was a very kind description of our trip to Shamrock Cove on the first day. I rented a Mayan Seas kayak from Ken and I couldn't do a thing with it in that wind. No matter what I did I could not turn the bow into the wind and I eventually dumped. Mark came over and we executed a perfect assisted rescue, except we didn't dump the water out. It took a long time to empty a cockpit with a hand pump. Ken gave us a tow back to shore and then, for directionality, towed me back to the launch point. The good part of this story is I got my rescue in rough conditions practice out of the way early this year. You will all be happy to know I had no problems the rest of the trip when paddling in my boat. The trip was wonderful. We had some good weather in between the wind. While the drive was long it was worth it to spend time enjoying my favorite pastime with good friends and I look forward to returning when conditions are more favorable. Many thanks to Sue, Chris, Clark and Brian for joining me on this one. And a special thanks to Ken for his wonderful help and to Mark and Winnie for joining us. They made the trip extra special.



Sue, Jud, Clark, Brian, Winnie and Chris



Ken Johnson



Lone Tree Reservoir

March 31, 2013

Report and photos by Anne Fiore

We had an RMSKC paddle scheduled for March 30th that I cancelled ahead of promised bad weather which did not materialize. The next day was warm and sunny, so off Gary Cage and I went for our first paddle of 2013.

We arrived and put in around 11:00 with hardly a flutter of wind or ripple of water. The reservoir was quite full, so we paddled down the inlet on the west end which seemed like it had more downed trees and debris.

Along the south bank there is a stand of cottonwoods that is a blue heron nesting ground. This time of year, before the trees leaf out, you can see just how many nests, and a number of them appeared occupied.

On to the east end cove, where we thrashed amongst trees before heading down to the dam.



The water level was just above twenty-two feet. Last fall it was just below eight feet.

Then we headed back to the boat ramp. It was a very nice way to start the season.



Great blue herons getting ready for spring

12th ANNUAL MULTI-CLUB PADDLING TRIP on the SOUTH PLATTE - April 6, 2013

Over the years many RMSKC members have enjoyed this early spring outing, and 2013 was no exception. This spring Anne Fiore, Marsha Dougherty, Dave and LouAnn Hustvedt, Jud Hurd, Andy McKenna, Pam Noe, Eric Niles and Wilson joined paddlers from the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, the Poudre Paddlers, the Colorado Whitewater Association and the High Country River Rafters for a morning on the South Platte river between Evans and Kersey Bridge (a nine-mile paddle) or to the bridge at Kuner, for a total of fourteen miles.

Anne Fiore had forwarded the flyer and notification about the cancellation on March 23rd because of snowy conditions. The flyer provided clear details about the put-in and take-out locations, shuttle arrangements, necessary equipment, safety concerns and estimated paddling schedule. As always, it was a well organized, good experience for people new to river paddling.

Read longer, enthusiastic accounts in earlier Club publications on the RMSKC website.



Eric, Pam, Jud, Andy, Dave with Wilson, Anne, LouAnn, and Marsha



Wilson



Part of the lunch scene at the second portage

Photos by Jud Hurd



Moving Water Practice:

Kersey to Kuner on the South Platte

April 13, 2013

Anne Fiore organized the practice and Gary Cage provided expertise from years of white water paddling. With Sue Hughes, Al Lovas, Andy McKenna and new member Jim Pierce they did the second half of the Multi-Club's South Platte run, from Kersey to Kuner Bridge. It was only a five mile stretch but with lots of ferrying back and forth from bank to bank to practice eddying out it took most of the cool and overcast day. Everyone had the usual good time and enjoyed being on the water with old friends and some people they hadn't known before.

As they launched they reinforced good paddling habits by checking for whistles, and Andy asked who had first aid kits and where they were. He spent his lunch break using a grabber to leave the river bank cleaner than he found it; several people thought that was commendable paddling habit that should be adopted by more RMSKC members.



Andy McKenna



The water wasn't moving fast enough to make it very challenging, but part of the fun was aiming for something and ferrying across exactly to it.

Sue was impressed she nailed this can dead-on, but she's embarrassed that she just left it there. That wouldn't have happened if it had been after Andy's good example at lunch.

Lunch and time in the cars running the shuttle got people introduced or caught up on recent adventures.

Anne was please everyone stayed together, which doesn't always happen, and the day's participants all expressed interest in doing another river practice.



Gary Cage and John Ruger



Al Lovas and Jim Pierce



Sue Hughes

Anne is hoping to schedule a day on the Colorado River from Dotsero to Bair Ranch later in the summer. That section is rated 1+ or 2, so it's faster and more challenging than the Kersey to Kuner part of the South Platte.

For additional river paddling opportunities, Anne is leading the Brighton to Ft. Lupton portion of the South Platte the first Saturday in June with the Rocky Mountain Canoe Club; the second weekend in June the canoe club is doing the more demanding North Platte from below Saratoga to I-80.

Email Anne for information, check the RMCC website for their schedule and good river information, and read accounts of previous Rocky Mountain Sea Kayak Club trips to these places:

- DOTSERO: *River Training on the Colorado in Glenwood Canyon* by Sue Hughes in the Summer, 2008 issue (16-2)
- DOTSERO: *Moving Water Class* by Annette Mascia in the Summer, 2010 issue of *The RMSKC's NEWS* (18-3a)
- BRIGHTON TO FT. LUPTON: *South Platte Re-run* by Sue Hughes in the Winter 09-10 issue of *The Mountain Paddler* (18-1b)
- SARATOGA TO I-80: *On the North Platte: A First-Timer's Report of a Great Trip* by Kathleen Ellis in the Summer, 2008 issue (16-2)

FOURTH SATURDAY IN APRIL, 2013

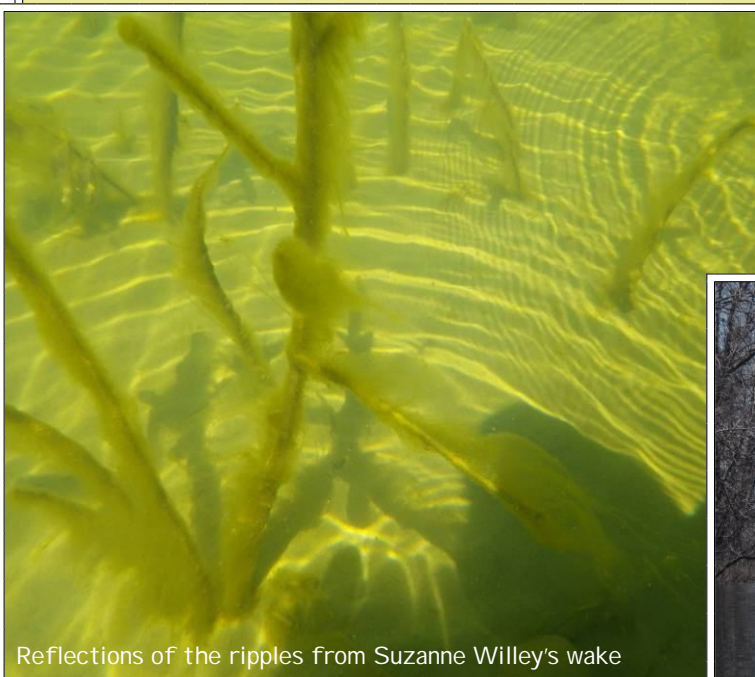


The east end of Lake McIntosh, a sad sight in April, 2013

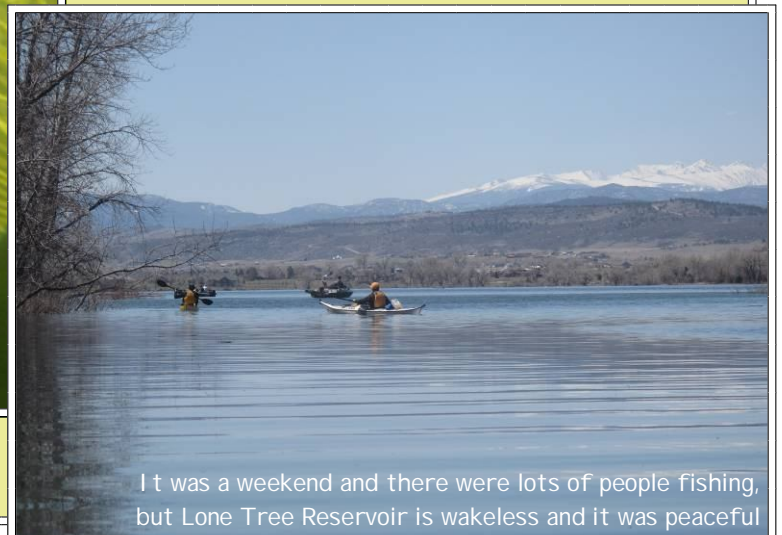
Could the annual *Fourth Saturday Mud Hen* paddle be cursed? It has had to be cancelled a couple of times in the past due to snow, and this year it was moved to Lone Tree Reservoir near Berthoud because Small-but-Free Lake McIntosh is almost dry. Watching the runners circle the lake during the Mud Hen Race is fun, but having an official RMSKC paddle on what, this spring, isn't much more than a puddle didn't seem like a good idea.

After lots of dithering about the location and the time, Anne Fiore, Sue Hughes and Clark Strickland enjoyed a nice morning poking around Lone Tree, which had about a foot more water than it did in the end of March when Anne and Gary Cage were there. They're not birders, but they were happy to see the rookery of blue herons with many full nests, coots, mallards, a downy woodpecker, a pair of common mergansers in breeding plumage, and some other unknown birds.

The temperature was in the low 70s, the sun was shining, and the water was clear; everyone was glad they'd gotten themselves motivated. While they were there they ran into Club members Suzanne and Mark Willey and practiced their boat handling skills by maneuvering to pick up trash.

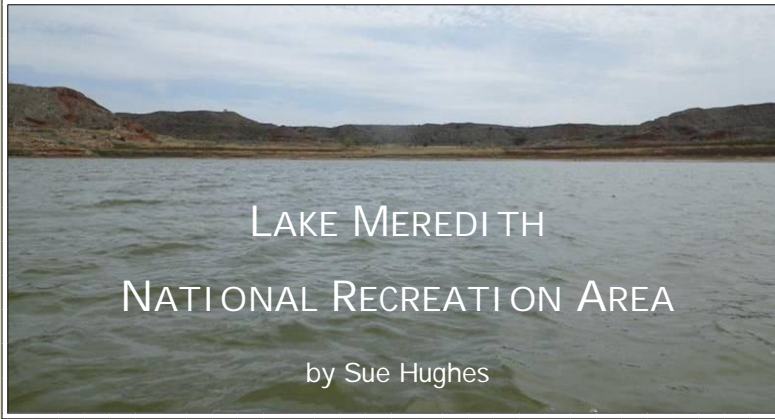


Reflections of the ripples from Suzanne Willey's wake



It was a weekend and there were lots of people fishing, but Lone Tree Reservoir is wakeless and it was peaceful

Photos by Anne Fiore and Sue Hughes

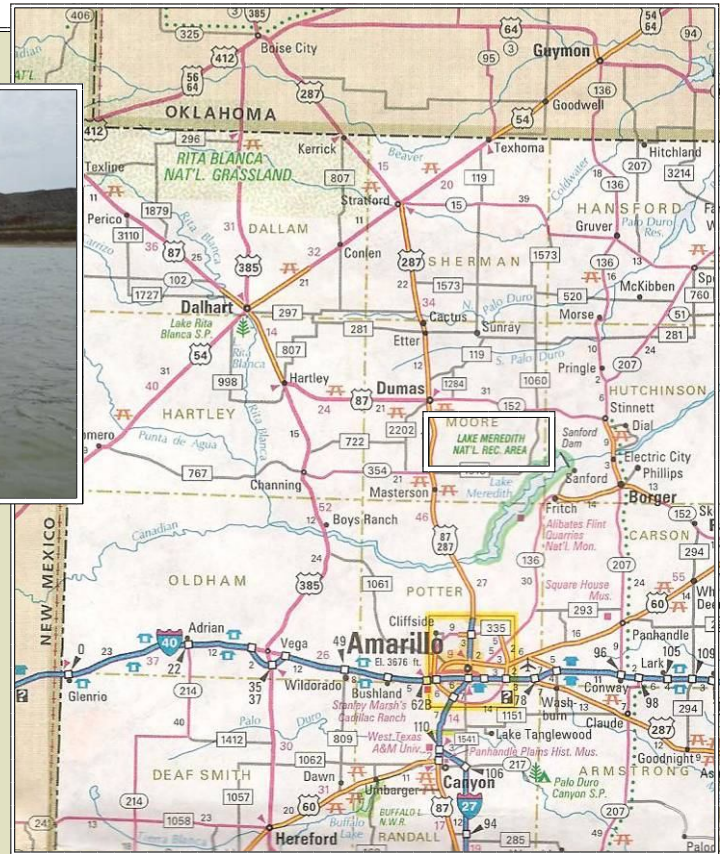


LAKE MEREDITH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

by Sue Hughes

Looking at maps for our trip to Corpus Christi in February we noticed a large reservoir northeast of Amarillo, about seven hours from Denver. The trip to the coast was long enough, and the lake far enough off our route, that we didn't detour over to look at it, but we were curious.

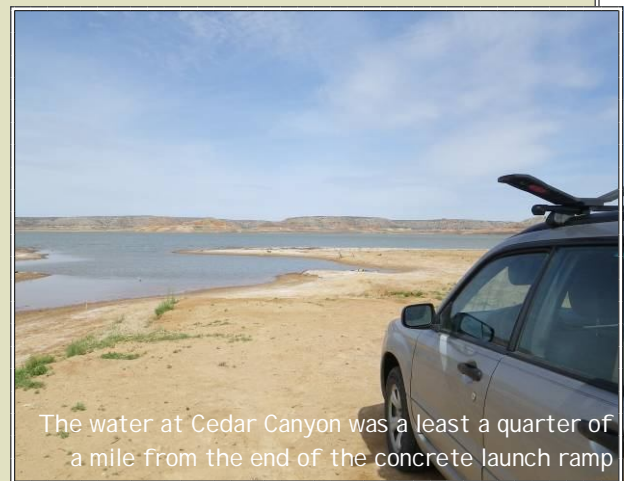
So in May, when I was back in Texas for a Peace Corps reunion in Lubbock, I added a couple of days to my trip and took the kayak. Here's what I learned:



Lake Meredith was created in the early 1960s by damming the Canadian River to provide water for Amarillo, Lubbock and nine other cities in the dry, windswept high plains of the Texas panhandle. It's been dry in Texas for years; the people at the Water Authority Headquarters told me that while the normal water level behind the dam is about eighty-five feet, currently it's less than a third of that: twenty-seven feet.

I could see lots of sloping shoreline and many of the boat ramps are high and dry, but I was able to drive to Cedar Canyon on the south shore between Sanford and Fritch [A] in a car with good clearance and I didn't have any trouble getting my boat in the water.

However, I might have had a problem if I'd driven over the fire remains I found less than a yard in front of where I stopped: there were dozens of nails left from burning construction lumber.



The water at Cedar Canyon was a least a quarter of a mile from the end of the concrete launch ramp

On the way to the lake I had missed the turn-off for the National Recreation Area headquarters in Fritch, so after I got back to Colorado I called (806-857-3151) and spoke with Dee Landry. She provided lots more information about Lake Meredith and boating possibilities there:

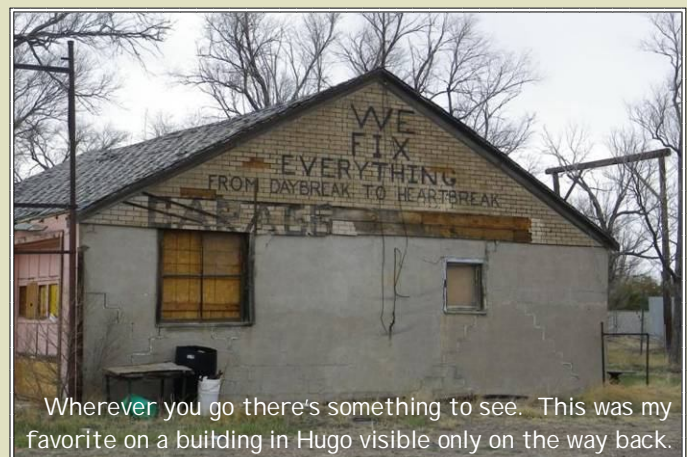
- The lack of water is a much larger issue than just the past years of drought. When it was built the reservoir was fed by the Canadian River, but a dam upstream in New Mexico has cut it completely off. Rains, when they come, soak into the ground and provide very little run-off into the lake. She didn't say it in so many words, but the future for Lake Meredith does not sound promising.
- The lower levels have meant more than just dry boat ramps. They've lost harbors and recreation opportunities. They used to have five major fishing tournaments a year; now there are none, because the marina is gone and the habitat for fish has changed dramatically. The lake is so much more shallow that it's too hot for some species in the summer and it gets too cold for others in the winter.
- However there are still good developed campgrounds on the south side: Sanford-Yake, Cedar Canyon and Fritch Fortress. They are free, with flush toilets and city water available at each campground.
- The rest of the campgrounds are primitive ones. The best bet for lake access for kayak campers would be Blue West, in on Highway 1913 on the north side. [B on the map on the previous page.]
- People in the area should also check out the Alibates Flint Quarries on the south side. [C on the same map.] Archeological records show that prehistoric people used flint found there for at least 12,000 years. The site is open only to ranger-led tours with advance reservations, but they happen twice a day and are free. Phone: 806-857-3151
- The weather is the nicest in April and May, and in the late fall. The best local forecasts come from Channel 10 out of Amarillo, but the weather is famously unpredictable, sometimes even to the point of being called bi-polar.
- Winds on the lake may be less of an issue now that the water is more shallow, but they can clearly still be a serious problem. They frequently go from mild to 30 mph in fifteen minutes and to 40 or 50 mph in an hour. In the past Lake Meredith had sirens to warn boaters, but they were hard to keep working and have been abandoned.
- The entire Recreation Area has cell phone service and 911 in Borger will respond to emergencies at the lake.

I'm glad I had the opportunity to visit this area, and I enjoyed my paddle, but the water was cold and it was blowing hard enough that I didn't stay out long. That was probably a wise decision for a solo paddler considering what the wind might have developed into.

The bottom line? Lake Meredith is less than 400 miles from Denver; it could be worth another look when it's too cold to paddle here in Colorado.

Thanks to Dee at the Lake Meredith Recreation Area headquarters for lots of information.

Thanks to Brian Hunter for his wonderful 170-page *Texas Atlas* with detailed topographic maps. I would have been lots more lost lots more often without it. I wanted to add that book's map to this article, but the Lake Meredith area was split between two pages and didn't copy very well.

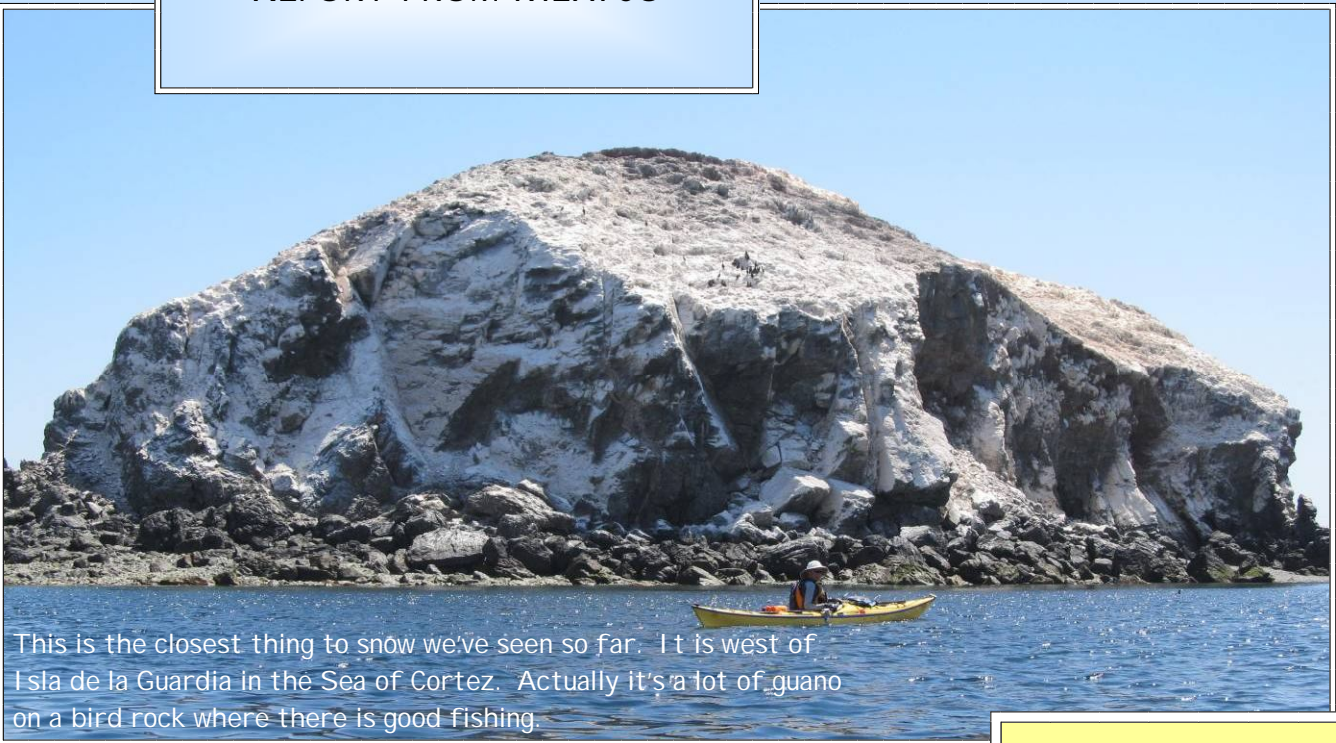


JAY GINGRICH WROTE:

We have been in Mexico and Baja kayaking. There have been reports of late snow up north, and we try to understand what you're going through.



JAY AND JANE REPORT FROM MEXICO



This is the closest thing to snow we've seen so far. It is west of Isla de la Guardia in the Sea of Cortez. Actually it's a lot of guano on a bird rock where there is good fishing.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Email Jay: jaymtb (at) amigo (dot) net to express interest.

We're looking ahead to some longer self-support trips, probably one on Lake Powell in mid-September. Perhaps others may be interested in longer trips as well?



Barr Lake, which people coming from the north see signs for on their way to the airport, is in Barr Lake State Park near Brighton, Colorado.

BARR RESERVOIR

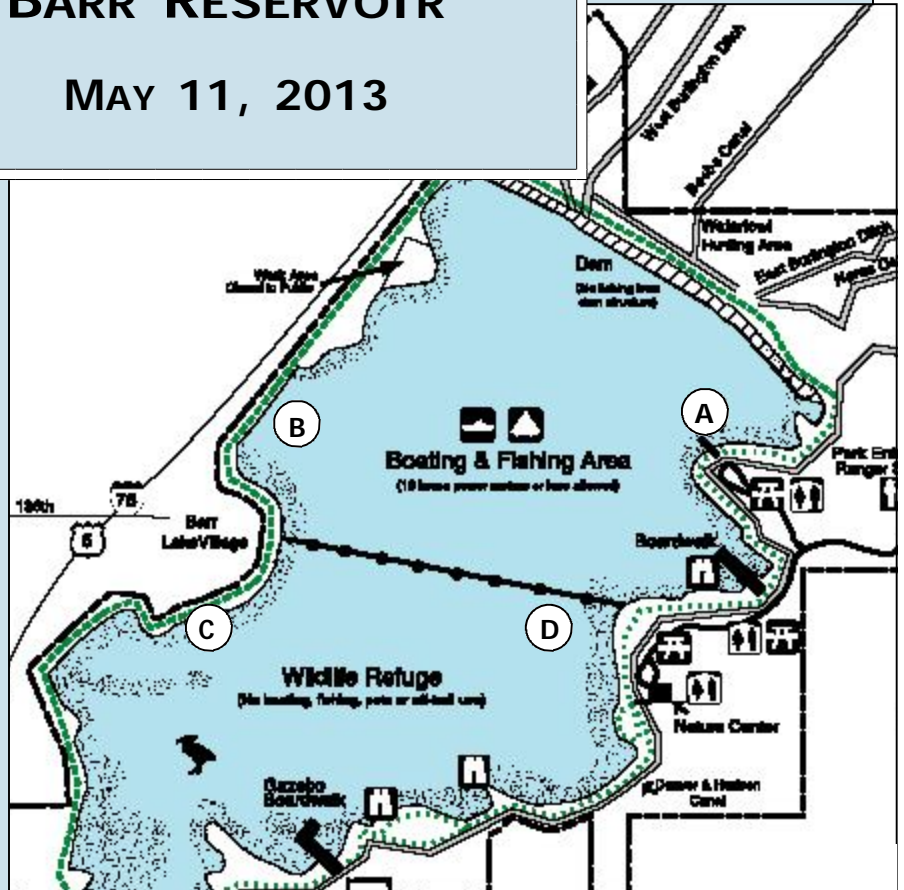
MAY 11, 2013

The reservoir is nearly full so it was good boating for Anne Fiore, Jud Hurd, Sue Hughes and George Ottenhoff on the Saturday before Mother's Day. Usually held at Union Reservoir, this outing was moved due to low water levels there.

It was everyone except George's first time on Barr Lake, and it took longer than they'd realized to find it, get the boats unloaded and the cars parked. So much for "in the water and ready to go at 10:00".

They paddled counter-clockwise from the boat ramp [A] on the northeast corner, enjoying the luxury of lots of water and poking into the wealth of trees, standing and fallen, on the west side after they passed the dam.

At B they were parallel to the railroad tracks when cars and cars of coal came by.

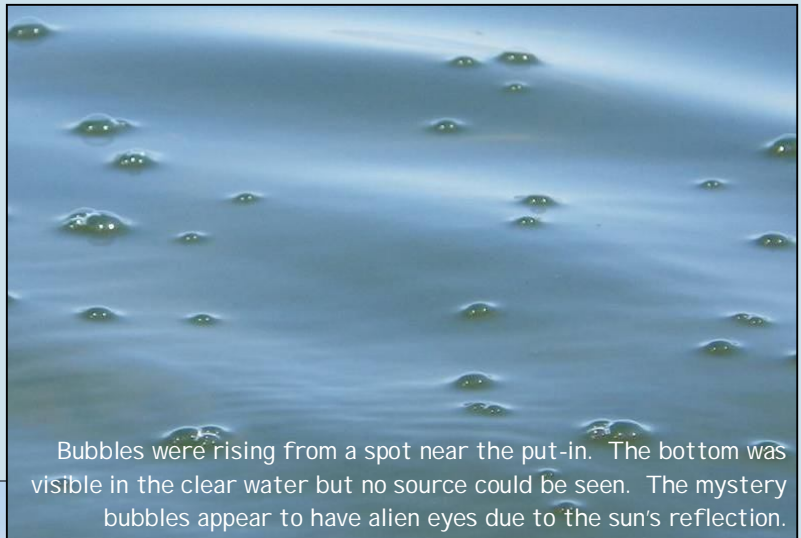


They assumed the Wildlife Refuge would be delineated by floats and rope like the one at Lake McIntosh. They missed the markers, if there were any, on the west side and paddled into the refuge, probably to about C. As they headed back to the put-in they did notice a couple of large can-type markers at D, but could not see any others in a line to the west as they appear to be on the map.

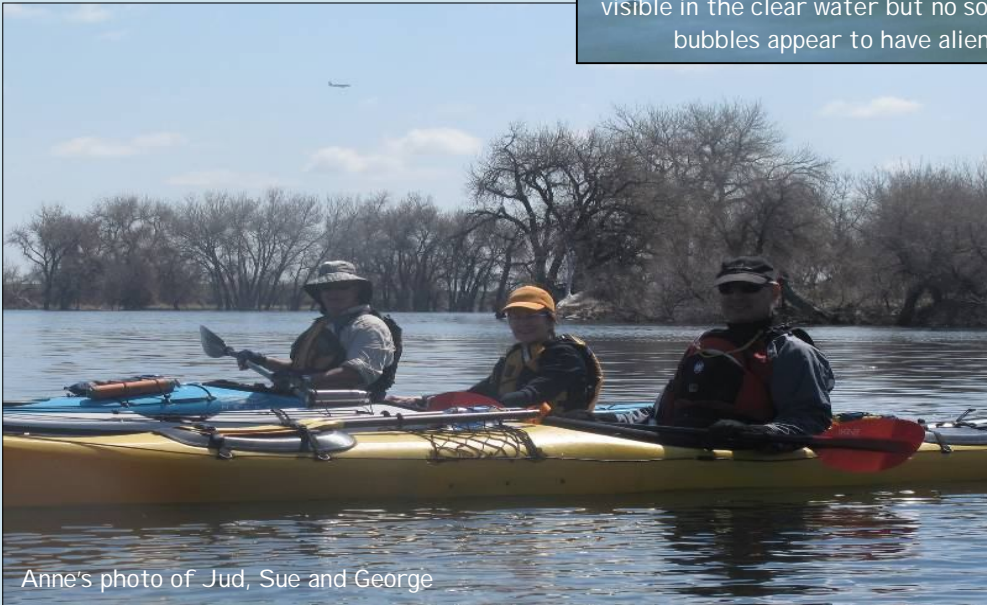
None of them are birders, but they saw the usual coots, grebes, "ducks" (maybe some

northern shovelers), two different yellow birds that Sue's bird book didn't help her with, and what they thought was a juvenile bald eagle.

No one brought their GPS, but they paddled steadily for about three hours and went home happy to have found a new location to enjoy. Barr Lake's website says the reservoir is still filling, so hopefully it will continue to be a place to paddle all summer, although George said that in the past it had gotten full of algae later in the season.



Bubbles were rising from a spot near the put-in. The bottom was visible in the clear water but no source could be seen. The mystery bubbles appear to have alien eyes due to the sun's reflection.



Anne's photo of Jud, Sue and George

MISCELLANEOUS INFO:

- Take \$7.00 cash for the entrance fee if you don't have a State Park Pass
- E-470 is the easiest way to get to Barr Lake from the north.
- There's a nice 8.8 mile trail around the lake with wild life viewing stations in the preserve section.

EDITOR'S NOTE: 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.

Any sport carries with it risks, and it's for you to know those risks and decide whether you are prepared to accept them before undertaking any activity. Kayaking is no

different; it can be dangerous if not done in a safe manner and should never be undertaken without proper training, experience and the correct use of relevant safety equipment.

The Rocky Mountain Sea Kayaking Club cannot therefore accept responsibility for any injury or accident which might occur as a result of articles, suggestions or images published in its publications or on its website.

PADDLING WITH A TWO X FOUR

By Brian Hunter

Since my earliest kayaking days I have been fascinated by the historic roots of kayaks and their use by Inuit and Aleut people. I delved into books that explained the construction and use of kayaks as a primary tool to hunt, fish and travel from place to place. Then I built a West Greenland skin-on-frame kayak and learned a great deal about how design affects stability (experience is a splendid teacher).



The author with the frame of his skin-on-frame and some of the Greenland paddles he has made

I also dabbled with a Greenland paddle (GP) on several occasions, starting with preconceived misgivings based upon the long, narrow appearance of the blades. Initially the idea of paddling with a 7' long paddle made from a 2 x 4 inch stick did not inspire much confidence. My assumptions seemed to be well-founded when the paddle fluttered wildly and the stroke seemed sadly inadequate to propel the kayak, particularly from a stand-still.

I kept an open mind, however, because my assumption of its inadequacy did not tally with all that I had read and heard from others who had learned to use one efficiently. And I knew rowboat oars are typically very similar to GPs in their dimensions and are also often canted in use.

In addition, I'd noticed how well many kayakers did with Greenland paddles—performing maneuvers and rolls with grace, confidence and precision. On a recent trip to Corpus Christi, I paddled with Ken Johnson, a local kayaker and excellent guide. He proved the utility of a GP by out-paddling all of us in a sustained 25 mph wind. Ken and two of his kayaking friends handled the choppy, windy waters with effortless ease and complete control and confidence in their kayaks using GPs.

Although I had misgivings and unsuccessful first experiences, I realized that it should have been no surprise that Greenland paddles are well designed for propelling and maneuvering a kayak. Since I love making things and tinkering with my kayaks I decided to make some Greenland paddles and learn to use them. I began a study of GPs and sorted out their advantages and disadvantages. Here is what I found:

ADVANTAGES:

- On average GPs have 85-95 square inches of blade area which is on par with euro spoon paddles.
- It is easy to orient the GP the correct way (unlike a curved spoon blade), as the GP is completely symmetrical front to back, top to bottom and end to end. With a shouldered GP blade several fingers are normally on the blade itself so that you instinctively know exactly how the blade is oriented.

ADVANTAGES, CONTINUED:

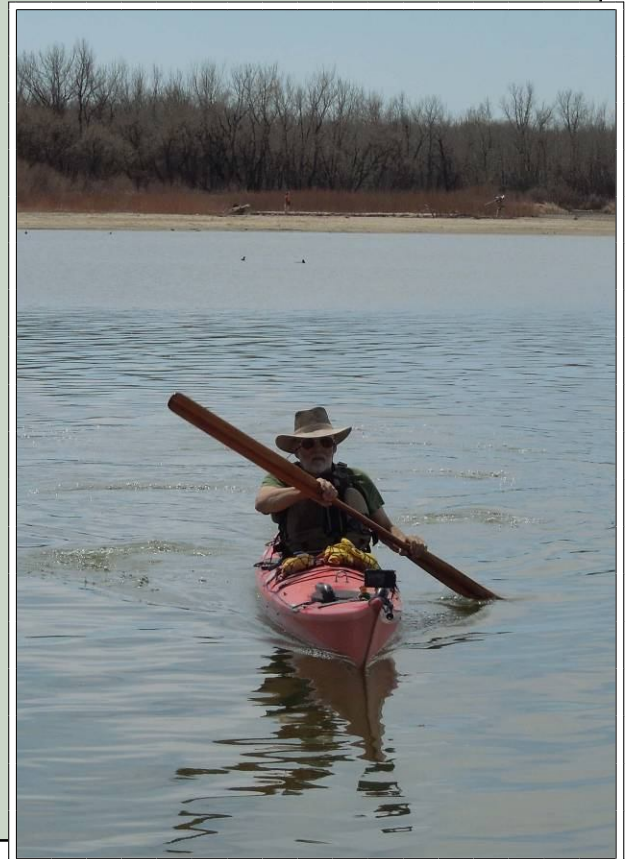
- The Greenland paddle is designed to "slide" in your hands making a much longer lever. This provides more power for sweep strokes, braces and rolls. The sliding technique also reduces blade area exposed to wind and puts more blade in the water where it's needed to produce power on a windy day.



- Extending the paddle in a sweeping slide stroke also provides a bracing component to add stability thereby allowing for more edging.



- Due to the narrow blade, it's much easier to rotate the blade from a power stroke to a slicing stroke. This makes blending of strokes simpler and more natural.
- Overall the Greenland paddle is quieter which may help in wildlife watching and fishing.



MORE ADVANTAGES:

- GPs cause less strain and stress on the human body and are less tiring on long paddles. This point is well illustrated by the fact that Ken, the kayaker and guide mentioned earlier, is still paddling at the age of 80 and finds the Greenland paddle more to his liking than a euro paddle.
- Wood GPs are usually much more buoyant than euro paddles.
- Being symmetrical and un-feathered, GPs make a better temporary outrigger when laid across the coaming for stability.
- For the DIYer, GPs are relatively easy and inexpensive to make, and homemade paddles are completely custom. For the average paddler a 7 foot long Western Red Cedar (WRC) 2"x4" will make a GP.



Ken Johnson, at age 80

DISADVANTAGES:

- GPs are not as suited to whitewater paddling. A 100 square inch area spoon blade on a shorter shaft is much better for turbulent, aerated water in often confined spaces. (Of course there is no one perfect paddle, kayak, PFD, etc. that fits all conditions. The right tool for the job is always best. Even so, I have been known to use a pipe wrench [a tool designed for very specific and limited uses] as a hammer.)
- Greenland paddles are not effective at quick acceleration especially from a stand-still, but they do require less effort to maintain a cruising speed.
- The overall length, blade width and especially the loom length must be correct for the kayak width and the person using the paddle.
- Wooden paddles can break, although this is usually due to improper construction or defects in the wood.
- Truly excellent wood is needed with the proper grain orientation and no run-out, knots, pitch pockets or other structural defects. Laminating smaller lengths of wood can help overcome this problem and typically makes a stronger paddle. Cutting long lengths into narrow strips to be glued together sometimes reveals otherwise hidden defects. Searching lumber yards for the perfect piece of wood is frustrating.

I have recently made and used several GPs, each one a little different. [See the picture on the next page.] There are numerous pages and videos on the internet that explain how to make and use a GP. The book by Brian Nystrom, *Greenland Paddles Step by Step*, [www.greenlandpaddlebook.com] is the best text I have found on making Greenland paddles. Most books on making skin-on-frame kayaks also have a chapter on making GPs.

Initially the GP felt strange; it fluttered and didn't have the bite my euro paddle had. Paddles and oars flutter when the edges of the blades alternately shed vortices. That annoying flutter is easily reduced by proper technique whether it's a Greenland paddle, a euro blade or an oar; you need to hold each paddle with the correct angle for its particular use. Canting (tilting) the blade forces the vortex to shed off of just one side reducing

flutter. Canting the top of the blade toward the direction the paddle is traveling causes the paddle to climb adding a bracing component to the stroke and also reduces flutter.

When held properly with only the forefinger and thumb around the loom (shaft) and the rest of the fingers on the blade, the GP will naturally cant forward (diving blade) which provides the most efficient forward stroke. This diving blade (forward cant) feels strange at first but soon smoothes out and feels natural. It must also be noted that you really cannot muscle a Greenland paddle or it will make swirls and shed most of its energy stirring up the water. This is why it puts less stress and strain on a paddler's body.

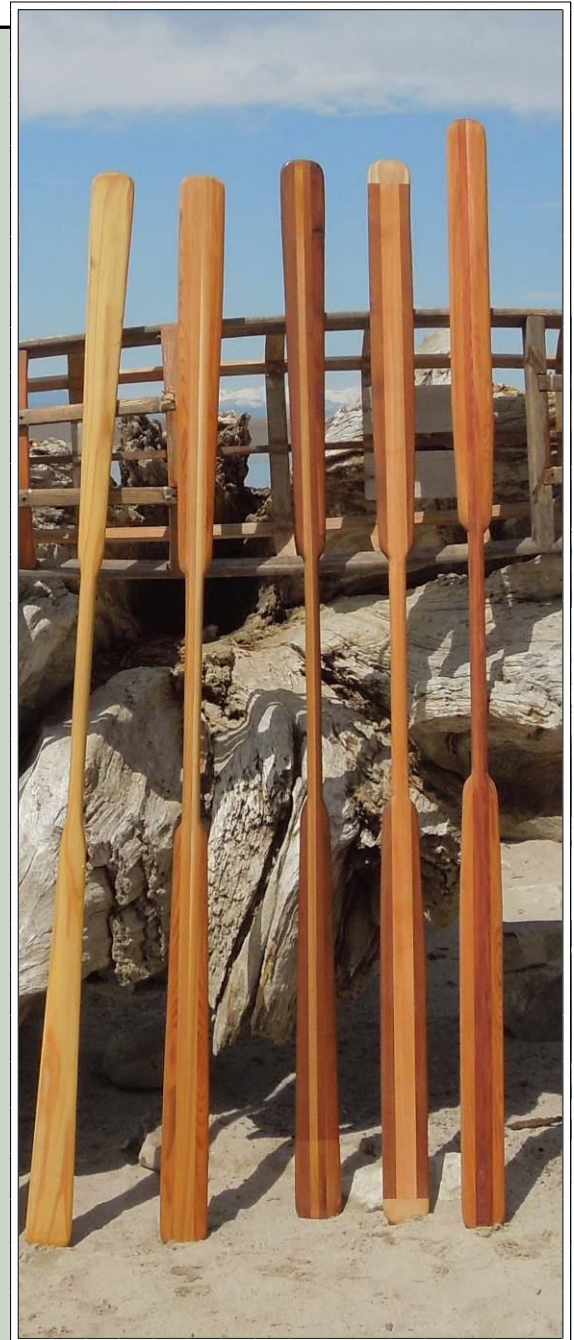
An effective stroke with a Greenland paddle also differs from a euro paddle's stroke. With euro blades most of the power comes on quickly and fades as the paddle reaches the hips. The GP does not become effective until after the stroke has begun. The power comes on as the blade is about at the hips and remains until the paddle is lifted out of the water. It is interesting to note that since the blade is forward canted it provides forward propulsion even when lifted straight up at the end of the stroke. In short, the GP stroke should begin only when the blade is fully immersed, slowly at first and swept until the blade tip is behind the hips. This is pretty much the exact opposite of the euro paddle forward stroke.

In addition to a design with centuries of development behind it, which can be made inexpensively to individual specifics by DIYers and which has a wide variety of advantages for all paddlers, I've found that a Greenland paddle is much more suited to an effective roll.

I had been floundering about trying to learn to roll with a euro paddle for nearly three years, but rolled the first time I tried with a GP. I believe this is true for several reasons:

- Gripping the loom with one hand and the blade with the other naturally orients the blade to skim the surface.
- Gripping the GP at the loom and blade end provides a longer lever.
- A Greenland paddle is generally more buoyant than a euro paddle.

If you are up for a challenge, why not give a Greenland paddle a try and see if you agree that thousands of years of trial and error engineering has produced a truly excellent paddling stick?



EDITOR'S NOTE: Brian has made half a dozen Greenland paddles. He says he would be happy to share what he has learned about constructing and using them, and would also be interested to compare notes and hear of your experiences with them. Please contact him with questions and comments: oldmanadrift@yahoo.com.

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