



The Yakker

Lowcountry Paddlers Club Newsletter

May 2009

Las Vegas Trip Report

by Andy Anderson

During the dark ages of winter I began to look at things Carol and I might do during her spring break in April. My first thought was to head up to West Virginia to paddle the Shenandoah River and then hop over to Washington DC to paddle their waterfront while the cherry blossoms were still in bloom. Unfortunately, by the time this plan was set in motion, the outfitters had already closed down for the season and wouldn't reopen until an unspecified date in April. The uncertainty of the reopening date necessitated me postponing this adventure until later in the year. As oft times happens (with me), a plan "B" needed to be developed. 'How'd you like to go to Las Vegas for a few days' I inquired of my mate? 'Ah, well, sure...I guess so' Carol responded with (questionable) enthusiasm. However, believing her response to be positive, I set upon my trusty computer to make it all happen. Flights were arranged, reservations were secured at the Bellagio Hotel, Cirque du Soleil tickets were purchased, and a kayaking trip down the Colorado River was locked in. Hopefully, an exciting, and whirlwind adventure awaited us.

April 6th finally rolled around and with much gear in tow, we were finally winging our way out to Las Vegas, with a brief pit stop in Houston, Texas for some yummy smoked beef brisket. Upon arrival in Las Vegas we set up advance base camp at the Bellagio, a lovely hotel that lived up to its billing. The selling point for this hotel was the fountains which we could see below our window. Words can not describe the lovely choreography between music and flowing water which was demonstrated during each performance. Day one was spent exploring the local tourist haunts and attending a performance by Cirque du Soleil. Somehow, I ended up as a performer in this production. All I have to say is – yes, I was on stage; no, I didn't take my clothes off; yes, a costume was provided; and no, I will not show you the photos. After a very brief night, we woke to begin day two.

We had booked our paddling adventure with Boulder City Outfitters, headquartered just outside of Las Vegas. The basic plan was to be picked up at the hotel and transported to the put-in at the base of Hoover Dam. We'd be paddling through Black Canyon for just shy of 12 miles, with several interesting stops along the way. The takeout was to be at Willow Beach, Arizona, where a shuttle would pick us up and take us back to the hotel.

As the sun rose, we were at the National Parks Service check point to have our permits validated. Everyone paddling this stretch of the Colorado River is required to have a permit issued by the NPS to ensure the river doesn't become overcrowded as well as to determine if you might be a terrorist intent on blowing a hole in the dam. After the steely-eyed ranger (who I'm sure had been working there since the dam's construction in the 30's) scrutinized our identifications and our applications we were allowed access to the base of the dam. The only paddlers to be on this trip were Carol, me, our guide, Jason, and Jason's brother, a guide-in-training. They were both very attentive and helpful getting the gear ready and helping us launch. But once they discovered we were experienced paddlers, they became more akin to paddling partners than guides.

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Las Vegas, Continued

Jason lead us to points of interest and guide us on off river trails, but the rest of the time we were pretty much free to just follow the river and enjoy the scenery. Not much in the way of flora or fauna was seen, as this trip was located in the high desert. Mostly it was rocks, scrub and cactus. Surprisingly, was the abundance of geothermal hot springs. The pools that had formed at the base of these springs are a natural draw for weary paddlers. Well, as long as one doesn't stay in them too long, lest you become cooked. The scenery we paddled through was as breathtaking as it was barren. Cliffs rose above us for hundreds of feet. Small side canyons opened for our explorations. Off river trails leading to various springs, vistas and points of interest were hiked, a stark contrast from our usual paddling venues in South Carolina. The winds did kick up at various points along our journey just to remind me of paddling trips past. Most of this trip is considered flat water, with a couple of Class II rapids thrown in to make it interesting.

Upon arrival at Willow Springs our day in the canyon drew to a close. Gear was loaded on the trailer, and we headed back to Las Vegas. As an added bonus, our route back took us across Hoover Dam.

You all know how you look and feel after a day on the water. Pretty grungy! Luckily, we can generally just head on home to get cleaned up and relax. Let me tell ya folks, parading through the Bellagio's main concourse and casino in paddling garb is an experience in and of itself. Hundreds of people in their evening finery, heading out for their night on the town (Carol and me among 'em) in paddling jackets, board shorts, ball caps, packing dry bags with some river muck, a tad of sweat, and a bit of sun screen thrown in for good measure. It wasn't pretty. I was more than a little surprised they didn't throw us out, thinking we were vagrants. Surprisingly, we made it to the elevators and then up to our room, unmolested.

I've asked myself if two days of flying was worth two days of all out adventure. We did a heap of stuff we hadn't done before. We explored places we'd never seen before. Everything I planned for exceeded my expectations.

So was it worth it?

YOU BET!!!

**Submit your contributions for the May 'Yakker
to Jenelle by May 25th via email at
lowcountrypaddlers@yahoo.com**

**NOTE: Copyright law will be upheld, and no
anonymous submissions will be considered.**



Lowcountry Paddlers from near and far, in canoes and kayaks of all shapes and sizes, at all skill levels, share the enjoyment found in getting together to appreciate all the abundant natural beauty that surrounds us in South Carolina.

Our meetings, usually held on the third Monday of each month, are informal, open to non-members and guests, and provide a great way to learn about the club and to meet our members. Meetings normally include a guest speaker from 7:00 to 8:00 followed by a short session of club business. Meetings generally conclude by 8:30 p.m.

LCP meetings are held at:
Providence Baptist Church
294 Seven Farms Drive
Daniel Island

**Join us at our next meeting:
May 18th at 7 p.m.**

Contact us by mail:
Lowcountry Paddlers
P.O. Box 13242
Charleston, S.C. 29422

or visit our website:
www.lowcountrypaddlers.net



LOWCOUNTRY PADDLERS
MEETING MINUTES
April 20, 2009

Todd Beach opened the meeting by welcoming 31 club members and 14 guests. He also thanked all the members that contributed to the success of the Lowcountry Paddlers booth during the Kayak Festival. There was no guest speaker at the meeting. The movie *This Is The Sea # 4* was shown. Because of the length of the movie the door prizes were drawn for and awarded before the movie instead of waiting until the end of the program.

Old Business

Minutes of the March 16th meeting were accepted and approved as printed in the April newsletter.

New Business

Treasurer's Report: Michael Condon read the April Treasurer's report. There were total receipts of \$221.00 and total disbursements \$169.30. The previous balance was \$2,394.83. New check book balance is \$2446.53. The report was accepted and approved as read. Michael announced that our booth at this year's Kayak Festival earned our club \$250 in profit.

Trip Leader Report – Ralph Earhart

May 2nd, Sparkleberry Swamp paddle. There will be two groups of paddlers on this trip. Mike Melton will be leading the caravan from the I-95 rest area at 8:15. The first group will depart Sparkleberry boat landing at 8:30 and the 2nd will leave at 9:30. The plan is for the both groups to meet up at Risers Lake at lunch time.

****UPDATED TRIP INFORMATION****

**Only the Beginner Trip will be held for the Sparkleberry Weekend.
There will be NO INTERMEDIATE TRIP!**

May 9th, Wee Tee Santee Swamp paddle. Julie Feely will lead this paddle. Meet at the gas station in Jamestown at the intersection of Highway 17a and 41. Depart at 9:00am for the landing.

May 23rd Edisto Island to Otter Island. Todd Beach will lead this paddle. Meet at the Dawhoo Boat landing and depart for Live Oak landing at 9:15.

For more detailed information about these paddles please check out our Website:
lowcountrypaddlers.net.

Announcements:

Todd announced that the judging for the photo contest will be on May 18th.

Meeting Adjourned

Movie: This is the Sea #4

**Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Maple**

During the past several months a number of announcements have come across my computer detailing various trips which were being conducted by the center. These trips ranged from hikes to paddles to biking trips to nature walks. They pretty much included the whole gamut of outdoor activities. A couple of weeks ago I decided to take part in (and volunteer Carol for) one of their outings – the 3D (Ducks, Dams & Dikes) Bike Run. Upon arrival we were greeted at the center by their friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful staff. In short order we were given a safety brief, the route explained and 58 of us were peddling our way through the major metropolis of St Stephen. Our first destination was the dike which runs along side of the Rediversion Canal . We pushed our bikes to the top of the dike (pretty steep incline), hung a right and in a mile or so arrived at the St Stephen fish lift. Most folks went inside for an informative tour and talk regarding the lift's operation. Carol & I hung out at the lift for a while and then headed out for the turnaround point (Amos Gourdine Landing) and lunch. We had a pleasurable peddle for five or six miles along the canal, seeing much bird life along the way as well as a couple of Bald Eagles soaring overhead. Kayaks were available at the landing for peddlers who wanted to try their hand at paddling. Lunch was provided by Lambert's Catfish & BBQ (pretty good pig!). Sooner than we might have liked, but knowing that our next stop was to be the ECC&KF, we headed up and moved on out for the return trip to the Outdoor Center. This trip was an easy 13 miles.

The outings offered by the center are not lung burning, leg cramping, gasping for air, endurance testing types of events. They are more akin to an introduction to outdoor skills day or maybe even just a fun family outing. If you're looking for something different to try, their offerings might be something you'll want to look into. I know that one day soon I'll be moseying back to St Stephen to participate in another of their outings.

You can check out what they are up to at - <http://www.sstvisitorsc.org>.

LCP Club Officers

President

Todd Beach

Vice-President

Jim Miller

Secretary

Leslie Maple

Treasurer

Michael Condon



Kayakers Needed!



8th Annual Lowcountry Splash



Want to get out on the water for a good cause? Come join us Saturday, May 23rd for the 8th Annual Lowcountry Splash open water swim. We need a fleet of Kayakers to help shepherd the swimmers along the race course as we raise money for the **Logan Rutledge Children's Foundation.**

Race time is from 7:30 to 10:00 am.

2.4 Open Water Swim
Mt. Pleasant, SC

For More Information or to volunteer email Greg at gbanks@rcctherapy.com or call 884-7880

www.lowcountrysplash.com

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Canoeing at Caw Caw:

Self-Guided Canoe Tour

Relax and enjoy a day paddling historic rice fields. On-site registration only. For more information call Caw Caw Interpretive Center at (843) 889-8898.

Course # 20320	Sat	May 9	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20321	Sun	May 10	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20322	Sat	May 16	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20323	Sun	May 17	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20326	Sat	May 23	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20327	Sun	May 24	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20324	Sat	May 30	10:00am-4:00pm
Course # 20325	Sun	May 31	10:00am-4:00pm

Fee: \$10/per canoe

LCP Members receive a 20% discount on all water-based programs by registering by phone with CCPRC Park and Program Services at 843-795-4386!

Sunset Paddle

Enjoy an interpretive paddle at dusk and then immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the night world on the trails of Caw Caw.

Course # 19927	Thu	May 7	6:00pm-9:30pm
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Fee: \$21/\$17 CCR Discount

Heritage to Habitat Canoe Tour

Enjoy an interpretive canoe trip and travel back to the age of rice as we paddle through the richest wildlife habitats in the Lowcountry.

Course # 19924	Sat	May 16	9:00am-11:30am
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Fee: \$15/\$12 CCR Discount

Canoe/Kayak Instructional Classes:

Kayak Quickstart

Come learn about the fun-filled sport of kayaking. During this 2-hour hands-on informal program, our experienced guides will show you how you can enjoy the local waterways and wildlife from a sea kayak.

Course # 19995	Fri	May 8	5:30pm-7:30pm
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Fee: \$18/\$15 CCR Discount

ACA Strokes and Maneuvers Refinement

It's time to perfect your technique! Using on-water practice and video analysis, our ACA instructors will assist you with fine-tuning your paddling skills. This course is designed for those with basic skills that want to take it to the next level.

Course # 19994	Sat	May 23	9:00am-4:00pm
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Fee: \$54/\$45 CCR Discount

Introduction to Kayak Rolling Class

The greatest self-rescue tool a kayaker has, rolling also sharpens other boating skills. Participants ages 13-15 must have an adult chaperone.

Course # 19965	Mon, Wed, Fri	May 18-22	6:00pm-8:00pm
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Fee: \$48/\$40 CCR Discount

Local Sea Kayak Trips:

Mother's Day Sea Kayak Trip

Rantowles Creek and the Stono River are beautiful and peaceful places with great significance in U.S. history. Bring your mother for a leisurely holiday paddle!

Course # 19971	Sat	May 9	9:00am-5:00pm
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Fee: \$54/\$45 CCR Discount

Caw Caw Natural History Hike and Paddle

Join us on this great beginner hike with the resident naturalist in the morning and then a short kayak tour among the marshes and rice fields in the afternoon.

Course # 19970	Sat	May 30	9:00am-5:00pm
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Fee: \$54/\$45 CCR Discount

Lower ACE Basin Kayak Tour

Join us on the Ashepoo River as we explore this unique Lowcountry habitat and look for shorebirds, dolphins, and other wildlife.

Course # 19969	Sun	May 31	9:00am-5:00pm
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Fee: \$54/\$45 CCR Discount

No Paddle Required:

Basic Sailing Level II

Review and build upon skills learned in Level I. Gain knowledge of sail trim, points of sail, sailing in various conditions, and racing basics. Students will learn better understanding of sail trim, while sailing independently.

Course # 20148	Fri, Sun	May 15,17	5:30pm-8:00pm (Fri)
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Fee: \$110/\$100 CCR Discount

Wilderness First Aid

This intensive 2-day hands-on certification, taught by Wilderness Medical Associates, covers how to deal with medical emergencies in the wilderness, at summer camp, or on the trail. Class supplements lectures with realistic simulations.

Course # 19728	Sat-Sun	May 16-17	8:00am-6:00pm
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Fee: \$215/\$195 CCR Discount

Step & Steep -A Tea Farm Tea Party

Tea, once grown commercially at Caw Caw and now naturalized, thrives under oak and pine trees here. We'll visit these plants and sample tea made from them while discussing SC tea history and cultivation. A registered and paid chaperone is required for participants ages 15 & under.

Course # 19928	Sat	May 30	11:00am-1:00pm
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Fee: \$10/\$8 CCR Discount



Pre-registration is required for all programs and some special events.
Please call (843) 795-4FUN or visit www.ccprc.com to register.

