

Central Iowa Paddlers

Volume 9 Issue 2

June 2005



This newsletter is a publication of the Central Iowa Paddlers, an informal group of paddlesport enthusiasts. The mission of the club is to share information, promote recreation opportunities and paddlesport safety, and encourage care of our aquatic resources. The group includes new and experienced paddlers with canoes and kayaks of all kinds. Visit us on www.paddleiowa.org and pass the word!

MEANDERINGS

Determination. That seems to be the operative word for many of the paddlers I've seen these past few weeks. I've witnessed a seasoned paddler who fights a disease by planning and executing challenging paddling adventures. I've worked with an advocate who tirelessly addresses governmental and civic groups with the environmental issues dear to all who put paddle to water. I recently met a new paddler whose unwavering enthusiasm for his newly adopted sport is both addictive and intoxicating. In particular, I've enjoyed his unending quest for new techniques and tried ideas from old pros. This is not an observed sport; this is a sport of engagement. Paddling is for people that are determined ... determined to survive, thrive, succeed, and have fun.

- Steve Parrish, Editor

"My heart raced with excitement as I aimed the bow of our sturdy boat away from land without so much as a backward glance. I was eager to swing into the open ocean, where peace reigns, where man can test his skills against the forces that govern the earth."

-William Butler, 66 Days Adrift: A True Story of Disaster and Survival on the Open Sea (2005)

TRIP REPORTS

Current and Jack's Fork Rivers by Don Wente

On Monday, May 2, 2005 six old retired guys, myself included, drove to Boonville, Mo. and did 3 days on our bikes on the Katy Trail ending up at Hermann, Mo. We then packed our bikes away and continued on to the Eminence Resort where we kayaked for 2 days on the Current and Jack's Fork rivers. The resort, which also had camping facilities, was reasonable and they also provided shuttle services. The weather was great all 5 days and we did not see one other kayak or canoe on the water. There are a lot of canoe businesses down there so I'm sure the rivers get crowded in the summer. Keep paddling!

Inaugural Stock Canoe Race by Dan Shaffer

As the crowd gathered on the north shore of Ames' Ada Hayden Park's lakes, 11 shiny aluminum canoes equipped with man, woman and paddles prepared to counter wind and waves. With a sharp whistle they were off, clanking into each other a bit as the flotilla advanced toward the bridge. This was where the first tragedy was narrowly averted. The Viking outfitted canoe broke a paddle at the start and returned immediately to the start to get a replacement, which a zealous spectator quickly provided them. And we were all off to the south lake - plenty of wind in our faces filling our lungs with the necessary oxygen to move forward!

Peter and Greg led the group around showing us how a Minnesota II with apt paddlers compares to ISU's Oswegian aluminum fleet. The president of our sponsoring ISU canoe/kayak club

followed, showing us that the plastic boat can, despite its slightly challenged bathtub design, move faster than the aluminum given enough umph! And the rest of us motored right along to the far south shore where the buoy had all but floated itself onto dry land. No problem, we were now headed downwind and the pace quickened.

Approaching the last buoy, four boats were within speaking distance. It was a combination of skilled turning, good steerage in the crosswind, and brute power down the homestretch that sorted out this lead group by the finish line. Thanks to JAX Outdoors we had a spread of prizes for the leaders in the aluminum boats ranging from a camelback, a hammock to t-shirts and Smartwool socks.

I hope to see you at the next race on June 21. More information can be found at skunkriverpaddlers.org

Red Rock, May 7 by Steve Parrish

Preparing for the run to the Apostle Islands. That was primary on the minds of several of us when we met up at Red Rock on a beautiful and blustery Saturday morning. Jerry Kemperman, Brian Lange, Matt Maxwell, Scott Evans, and Steve Parrish were all focused on loosening up winter atrophied paddling muscles, so we could take on Lake Superior later in the month. Fortunately, John Wenck, a newer member of the paddling community, joined us. His enthusiasm over seeing Red Rock for the first time quickly turned a workout into a fun time. Brian is the unofficial Ambassador of Red Rock and showed off the jewel of the Iowa lakes to John, Matt and all of us.

Several of the caves were navigable, the Indian Tree was visible, and the birds were particularly active. The mud swallows were spring-cleaning their nests in the bluffs while the Canada geese

honked over their own nests. The omnipresent Great Blue Heron acted as sentries while the Turkey Vultures simply made a racket. (photos by [John Wenck](#))



The winds were variable and blustery, offering enthusiastic waters that often churned from multiple directions. John had not experienced big water before and was having a great time learning how to handle following, quartering, and churning waves. We all got a good workout while still taking time to ogle the sights and sounds of Red Rock.



Although we were lucky to have the waves become following waves, speeding up our mileage, it also meant we had to stay sharp and not turn broadside to the building rollers. In an effort to expedite the return, we made a straight crossing from Devils to York, somewhat over a 9-mile trip. We had to make a surf landing at York and knew that after our break we would have to paddle out into the surf. We were already fatigued and were starting to get chilled. So, we pushed into the building waters and made a run for the 2-mile crossing to Sand Island. The quartering waves were a challenge, but made for a great end to an incredible day. For Kemperman it was yet one more successful trip to the Apostles; for Lange it meant the fourth time was the charm; for the rest of us it was simply a great trip to Lake Superior.

Apostle Islands May 28-30 by Scott Evans

[Note: Based on an email sent by Scott Evans regarding a trip accomplished by Scott and two Pella paddlers] The weather was great with calm water most of the time. We got into Little Sand Saturday afternoon and put in at 3:30 to make a run to Devil's Island. We played in the sea caves for an hour and circumnavigated Devil's before stopping for dinner and setting up our hammocks and down by 10:30. The next morning the lake was glass and we made good time to North Twin before stopping for a break. We went on to Outer Island with three foot following waves. We got there at lunchtime by noon, so took a long break and dried out and ate something. Then we ran down the 10 mile long east side of Outer Island, which was scenic and we even went under waterfalls to cool off. We stopped on the sand spit on the south end and visited with a couple of kayakers before heading out west in 2-foot waves out of the north. It was more effort to keep on course to Cat Island which was to be our last stop before the long segment to Oak where we planned to camp. The last leg was 12 miles and with energy dropping causing it to be much more of a struggle. When we finally found Oak we couldn't locate the campsite we were given, so after adding a couple miles to the search, we just pulled up to a sand beach and set up camp. We had left Devil's at 7am and made Oak and camp at 9pm!

It was getting dark so we quickly set up our hammocks and made supper but I was almost too tired to eat. I realized that my calorie count was dropping so forced down as much as I could handle. The next morning we stopped at Raspberry for a break before heading back to Little Sand Bay. Sand Island was shrouded in fog so we skipped the trip there before returning home. We ended up with over 70 miles total and at least 45 on Sunday. The trip home was good and after replenishing calories I am back to strength.

Paddling the Skunk - Soper's Mill to River Valley by James Graham

I was the guest historian with the Skunk River Paddlers on a canoe trip. I have explored much of the river on foot and by bicycle but this would be my first time by canoe. Because I was a beginner floating the river, Scott volunteered to go with me in my canoe to keep me out of trouble. I was quite nervous as Scott, 17 others and myself took off into the muddy Skunk River that was up from an overnight rain. With Scott guiding the canoe through the downed trees and gravel bars I soon become very relaxed; this was really fun.

If you look for history on the river you will find it. The muddy river covered up much of the artifacts in the river but there were other things to watch for. There are only two places early settlers could cross the Skunk River north of Cambridge and that was at Supers Mill and Hannum's Mill. Both locations had a limestone river bottom, which kept the Pioneer wagons and stagecoaches from sinking into the mud.

As you pass under the bridges notice that many were replaced, often because they were washed away from flooding in the past. On 180th St. between McFarland and Peterson Parks, there are two remnants of old bridges. A cement abutment just down from the new bridge shows a once existing bridge. Look close during low water and you will see pilings still in the river bottom at another location near the existing bridge, probably remnants of the first bridge built in the 1870s or 80s.

It was a long but beautiful stretch of river before we reached the limestone outcropping of the Hannum's mill area. Limestone was also used for making the abutment for a bridge just above

the dam. The abutment is still very visible which was built for the stagecoach road between Marietta and Boonesboro. It was a busy road until the Railroad was completed in the late 1860s.

As you approached the dam look on the left or south bank and noticed how the limestone for about 30 feet had been chipped back. This is the millrace where the large mill wheel once set that powered the mill.

Look for the logs that were used to hold the limestone blocks that were part of the milldam. The USGS cement dam installed in the 1940s seem to be holding the logs from washing away. Watch out for these old mill logs if you decide to canoe over the dam in high water, as there have been two deaths in the past 40 years. Did they hit these logs? Maybe, but they were not wearing life jackets either, which could have saved their lives.

As we completed our journey, into Riverside Park, all seemed to have enjoyed them. I know I did and again I thank Greg for inviting me, Scott for navigating my canoe safely downstream and all of the other Skunk River paddlers for a great day on the river.

Boone River, Webster City, by Robin Fortney

On June 4, Robin was joined by Lynn, Kevin, Dave K, Peter, JoDee and Bill at Briggs Woods Park in Webster City. The gray skies were threatening, but the group launched into the Boone River hoping the forecast for warm sunny weather would be right. They were rewarded with a gorgeous day and enough water (3.3 feet) to easily negotiate rocks, riffles, shoals and ledges. Dave K offered the use of his boat trailer, which made shuttling cars and boats from the Tunnel Mill access really easy.

If you are familiar with the Boone, you may remember a large island with a narrow side channel on river right. Recent floods had cut through the middle of the island and the side channel is now the main channel. Thankfully, the rocky ledge remains. The former main channel is now blocked by a big cottonwood tree and is a shadow of its former self. The new cut has exposed a wonderful rocky riffle that may be ugly at lower water. Check it out while the water levels are up.

One of our party found that it is not good to get sideways on rocky rapids. He leaned his boat upstream and caught the full force of the current. If he had let go of his Bell Kevlar canoe, it probably would have floated on downstream. However, he didn't want to let go and the water pressure could easily have cracked the boat. Fortunately, there were experienced paddlers close at hand to assist. Dave and Peter did some debriefing on how to handle rapids and we spent some time practicing back paddling and ferrying with the newer paddlers. We also encouraged the newer boaters to continue to participate in-group trips so they can pick up paddling maneuvers and safety tips from more experienced paddlers.

Lizard Creek, Fort Dodge, by Robin Fortney

KJ was looking for paddling buddies to run Lizard Creek on June 5. Lynn planned to run it in her solo canoe and I decided to join them [with some trepidation, I will admit, since I had only my solo Kevlar canoe and a single blade paddle and I remembered a lot of rocks from my first Lizard trip last spring]. Four of us (Peter, Lynn, Kevin and I) set up tents at Briggs Woods Park and then headed over to the Half-Mile restaurant in Webster City. The camp host had warned us that there was a tornado warning until 2 a.m., so we hung out at the restaurant until we were kicked out.

In the morning, we headed over to Fort Dodge and found KJ, Carolyn, Rick and Clark waiting for us at Phinney Park where the Lizard flows into the Des Moines River. It turned out to be another great paddling day. Water level on the north fork of the Lizard was about 5.5 feet, enough to provide fairly easy passage through riffles and rock gardens; even the white water boaters enjoyed the day, eating up the drops and the waves. This was a good place to practice paddling technique. The Lizard flows between wooded banks and winds around continuously showing off stone bluffs and high cut banks. There are riffles, ledges, rocky shoals and boulders left by glaciers all through its length. There is a big sand bar where the north and south fork meet and, from there, the river drops fast and furiously over rocks and ledges through a limestone quarry until it curves under, and around the bridge supports of, State Highway 169. Big thanks to KJ for

organizing the trip and to Clark from Fort Dodge for being a great host and inspiration for folks like me who paddle solo canoes with a single blade paddle. Whoo-hoo!!

Waterman Creek, Northwest Iowa, by Robin Fortney

One Sunday morning in April, Hank and I decided to go paddling. The Little Sioux River was swollen, but, due to plentiful rain, the local creeks were looking interesting. We took off for Waterman Creek, a tributary of the Little Sioux in southeast O'Brien County. Earlier, I had driven through this area with John Pearson as part of my duties on the Iowa State Preserves Advisory Board. Now I remembered the narrow valley hugged by forest and grass covered hills and the Wittrock Indian Village State Preserve situated along the creek. As we drove up the valley and looked over bridges, there seemed to be plenty of water. We put in at a little bridge just above 460th Avenue. The meandering creek was about 12 to 20 feet wide as it flowed south. I was pleasantly surprised by the clear water and, at one point, saw two spotted gar swim under my boat. There were grassy tussocks, fallen timber, a portage around a log bridge and numerous riffles to negotiate. What a treat! Intimate streams like Waterman Creek are a lot of fun when the water levels are up.



Hank finds a path through a riffle. Photo by [Robin Fortney](#)

NEWS REPORTS

Skunk River Water Trail Progress: Hannum's Mill Portage Site by Greg Vitale

We installed a "Dam Ahead" sign at the old mill site behind US Filter (with cooperative access through US Filter) and began the brush cleaning to make a much improved portage path around the dam. The dam was the site of a drowning earlier this year. The river was running about bank full at more than 2000 cfs as we carefully worked along the bank.

Rick Dietz coordinated the sign design, quotes and production. He also spent a bit of time over the last two weeks to move this project along coordinating with the conservation board, Manatts, and US Filter. Four other volunteers helped Rick: Travis, Carolyn, Dave, who earlier in the week cut up the old down tree that has long blocked a safer portage further upstream from the old mill dam and me.

In the process of clearing out some of the trees and the brush to make a safer portage further upstream from the old mill dam, we found the north foundation of the old possibly the red bridge that was washed out in the flood of 1918. We intend to protect this foundation when Manatts moves the earth needed to make a safer portage path further upstream from the old mill dam.

Learn to Paddle Day by Steve Parrish

On June 4 Canoe Sport Outfitters sponsored a paddling instruction workshop at Lake Aquabi. This all day event included morning clinics concerning basic kayaking and paddling strokes, as well as a canoe orientation session. The afternoon included demos on car topping, safety skills and kayak maneuvering. The workshop concluded with instruction on advanced techniques such as partner rescue, self rescue, draw strokes and sculling. Thanks to a number of volunteer instructors as well as the expert instruction from Canoe Sport Outfitters, scores of new kayakers were able to quick-start learning about paddling and safety.

Story County Canoe Workshop by Greg Vitale

We had a full house with 20 participants. Things were going reasonably well as we began going over canoes, paddles, and strokes. After our beach presentations and practice we all got on the water. About then, the wind started picking up. Moments later, everyone on the water was well scattered. That's when the photographer from the Des Moines Register showed up.

Fortunately, I had recruited Piper and Dan to help me with the workshop and as safety boaters. Nevertheless, I was thinking maybe several other safety boaters would have been a better idea about then. I am glad to say it got better from here.

We herded everyone together again on the water. Surprisingly, no one dumped in the waves. They also all seemed to get the basic idea of the forward, back, draws, and pry strokes. Some were jazzed up about paddling at the end of the three hours. I know I was.

Central Iowa Paddlers 2005 Schedule of Events

- May 3 and on Gray's Lake Nights (CIP) and CanoeSport's Free Kayak Safety Clinic
(6pm Tuesdays, May through Sept) www.canoesportoutfitters.com
- June 16 Evening on the Raccoon River Bob Johansen,
johansen.bob@principal.com 515-964-7671
- June 18 Boone River, Story County Conservation
www.storycounty.com conservation@storycounty.com 515-232-2516
- June 18 Des Moines River, Mahaska County Conservation
www.mahaskaconservation.com/ pete@mahaskacounty.org
- June 18-25 Project AWARE, Little Sioux River
www.iowaprojectaware.com/
- June 25 Timber City Adventure Race - Canoe, Bike, Run, Maquoketa
www.maquoketachamber.com/ maqchamberassist@qwest.net
- July 4 Winnebago River, State Preserves tour
John Pearson, JoPears5@aol.com 515-961-3053
- July 9 Canoe Van Buren, Des Moines River
www.800-tourvbc.com 1-800-868-7822
- July 16 Iowa Games Canoe & Kayak Competitions, Grays Lake
www.iowagames.org
- July 22 Raccoon River Full Moon Float
Lynn Aldridge, laldrigd@uhl.uiowa.edu 641-363-4451
- July 30 Middle Raccoon cleanup, Whiterock Conservancy, Garst cabin
Nate Hoogeveen, paddlingiowa@yahoo.com 515-256-7026
- July 30- Aug 6 Great River Rumble, Mississippi River, St. Cloud to Red Wing, MN
<http://riverrumble.org> 708-747-1969

- August 6-7 Upper Iowa River (with Wisconsin Sierra Club RTS)
Rick Dietz, rsdietz@yahoo.com 515-232-1484,
Doug Robinson, dougknu@charter.net
- August 18-21 Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Bob Johansen, johansen.bob@principal.com 515-964-7671
Rick Dietz, rsdietz@yahoo.com 515-232-1484
- August 20 Full Moon Float, Des Moines River
Julia Martinusen, julia.martinusen@earthlink.net 515 282 4301
- Sept 9-11 Wolf River (Section 4), Wisconsin
Nate Hoogeveen, paddlingiowa@yahoo.com 515-256-7026
- Sept 9-11 Root River, Minnesota
Bill Graham, wsgraham3@mchsi.com 515-274-4319
- Sept 10 Great Rivers Marathon, Minnesota
www.greatriversmarathon.org
- Sept 12 IWC Swiftwater Mondays, 6pm at Commerce Ledges, Raccoon River
River
(September) www.iowawhitewater.org
- Sept 17 4th Annual Big Sioux Canoe Outing, Big Sioux River Corridor Council
<http://bigsioux.org/> reservations@bigsioux.org 712-546-6911
- Sept 17-18 Iowa River, Eagle City Winery Float
Lynn Aldridge, laldrigd@uhl.uiowa.edu 641-363-4451
- Sept 25 Brushy Creek Fall Cruise & Boat Show, Brushy Creek Lake
Jim Dodd, jdodd50@hotmail.com 515-332-2069
- Oct 8 Des Moines River, Robin's Birthday Float
Fortney, rfortney@msn.com 515-277-1763
- October 15 Chariton River, Mahaska County Conservation
www.mahaskaconservation.com pete@mahaskacounty.org 641-673-9327
- Oct 27-30 Missouri River, paddle and bike, Herman, Missouri
Bob Johansen, johansen.bob@principal.com 515-964-7671
- Nov 12 Des Moines River, Randall's Birthday Float
Randall Wilson, rwilson@radiks.net 515-243-4032
- Dec 3 Waffle Float, Meet for waffles at the Iowa Arboretum, then paddle
Greg Vitale, vitol_g@yahoo.com 515-663-9251
- Jan 1 2006 New Years Day Paddle, Des Moines River
Gerry Rowland, gerryr@netins.net 515-277-3092

Participants are responsible for their own preparedness and safety.

Bring rain gear, extra clothes, drinking water and snacks, hat, sunscreen, PFD, extra paddle, and anything else you may need to be comfortable in unexpected weather conditions.

For more information and paddling events, see <http://www.paddleiowa.org>

AND THE YEAR BEGINS ANEW!

- Jan 1 2006 New Years Day Paddle, Des Moines River
Gerry Rowland, gerryr@netins.net 515-277-3092

Kayaks and a Solo Canoe for Sale

**Valley Skerray Sea Kayak
Valley Avocet Sea Kayak
Dagger Animus White-Water/Recreational Kayak
Dagger Piedra White-Water Kayak for Sale
Winonah Prism Solo Canoe**

Contact: Greg vitol_g@yahoo.com 515-663-9251

Central Iowa Paddlers Membership

DUES: \$10 per year

Includes emails, Newsletters ...
And Fellowship!

Membership, Dues, Emails for CIP list

Lynn Aldridge

laldridg@uhl.uiowa.edu

(641) 363-4451

Central Iowa Paddlers

P.O Box 17

Des Moines, IA 50301-0017

Send: Dues, email announcements

Newsletter, Information, Questions

Steve Parrish

sbparrish@mchsi.com

1500 Crown Colony Ct. Unit 620

Des Moines, IA 50315

515-284-6910

Send: Articles, pictures

Not Receiving CIP emails and would like to Contact Lynn Aldridge?: laldridg@uhl.uiowa.edu
(all lower case)

For more information, visit our website at:

www.paddleiowa.org

*Participants are responsible for their own preparedness and safety.
Bring rain gear, extra clothes, drinking water and snacks, hat, sunscreen, PFD, extra paddle, and
anything else you may need to be comfortable in unexpected weather conditions.*

For more information and paddling events, see <http://www.paddleiowa.org>