

# Central Iowa Paddlers

Volume 14 Issue 2

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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](http://www.paddleiowa.org) and pass the word!

## MEANDERINGS

- ***"I have never been lost, but I will admit to being confused for several weeks."***
- ***"I was happy in the midst of dangers and inconveniences."***
- ***"One day I undertook a tour through the country, and the diversity and beauties of nature I met with in this charming season, expelled every gloomy and vexatious thought."***

**Daniel Boone**

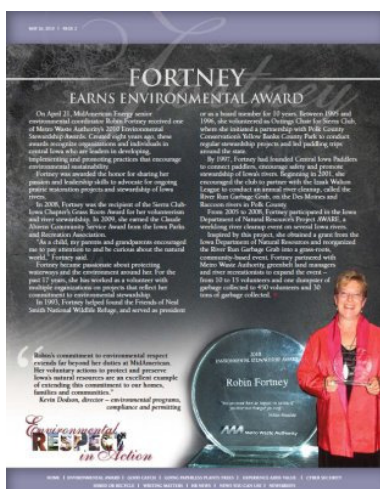
I've been fortunate to have traveled and kayaked in many states (14) and countries (5). And I can report with pride that Iowa has as active a paddling community as any place I've visited. In central Iowa alone we have several paddling clubs (*particularly CIP!*), useful and compelling websites, a popular Expo, and a tremendous bond between public and private interests. The water trails projects are a great example. Federal, State, and local governments have worked with private citizens to grow our extensive water trail system in just a few short years. I am reminded of a recent example of this coordination with the water trail and paddler campsite at Rathbun Lake. The DNR and Corps of Engineers brought in local paddlers for insight and input. This led to a well laid-out, accessible and publicized water trail. Similarly, as the idea of Hickory Ridge evolved at Red Rock, a community organization, a private foundation and the government all pitched in to organize the project, raise money, and launch a spectacular kick-off. But in the end, it all comes down to the paddlers. We have paddlers who engage in environmental activities; paddlers who raise funds by paddling the distance of the Des Moines River, paddlers who write, speak and advocate for paddling interests. And why? Because it's fun, it's important, and it's the way Iowans do things!

- Steve Parrish, editor -

## **REPORTS**

### **Robin Fortney Honored**

Central Iowa Paddlers' founder, Robin Fortney, was honored on April 21 with the Metro Waste Authority Environmental Stewardship Award. As quoted by the Authority:  
*"As a child, Fortney was encouraged by her parents and grandparents to pay attention to, and be curious about, the natural world. She became, and is still very much today, passionate about protecting waterways and the environment around her. It is no surprise that for the past 17 years she has been working as a volunteer to do just that."*



**Rathbun Lake water trail now poised for paddling** By Vic Senter and Alan Johnson  
(edited from the June 2, 2010 edition of the Daily Iowegian – ed)

Why paddle ... and why paddle on Rathbun Lake? You can create your own reason: to relax and enjoy nature, to experience the waters without the need for gas or noise, for a low impact cardiac workout, or for the challenge.

Whether your paddle craft is a long, sleek sea kayak or a short, stable fishing canoe, just getting out on the water is the real pleasure. Rathbun Lake accommodates all boat styles and paddler skill levels. Sea kayakers can challenge themselves in the vast open waters that stretch for miles. And yet the lake also has endless coves, bays and inlets that offer seclusion.


Ever wonder, “What is a water trail?” A water trail can be defined as stretch of river, a shoreline, or an ocean that has been mapped out with the intent to create an educational, scenic, and challenging experience for recreational canoers and kayakers. Like hiking trails, water trails have varied distance and difficulty levels.

As two local paddlers who have wanted to promote paddling in the area, we have worked with local U.S. Army Corps staff, and Appanoose County Trails, Inc. to develop a water trail at Rathbun Lake. While these adventurers can paddle anywhere their wits will take them, an established route on Rathbun Lake would assist newcomers to the lake — beginner to expert paddlers.

Rathbun Lake offers a multitude of paddling opportunities. At over 11,000 acres and 155 miles of shoreline, new paddlers to Rathbun Lake would need guidance to find good areas for paddling. A defined 10-mile water trail along the south shore beginning at East Island View and ending at South Fork Marina was chosen. Additionally, a “wilderness” water trail experience has been added to the west end of the water trail, on the South Fork Arm of Rathbun Lake. This area offers paddlers a secluded natural area with less boat traffic. As paddlers progress up the fork, the shore lines narrow creating a secluded and peaceful environment full of wildlife viewing opportunities.

This water trail was made possible by the assistance and guidance of John Pasa and Bill Duey (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — Rathbun Lake); ACT Inc., for spear heading the efforts to establish a variety of trail recreation trail opportunities in Appanoose County; Appanoose County Community Fund for funding the purchase of signs, kiosks and trail maps; and Appanoose County Engineer Gary Bishop and County Board of Supervisors for guidance in roadway signage.

**SAVE THE DATE 21 AUGUST 2010**



**8. 21. 2010**  
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**First Quad Cities Mississippi River Paddlesports Festival!**  
*Featuring...*

A Guinness World Records™ sanctioned attempt to amass the world's largest raft of canoes and kayaks.  
*The record to beat is 1,104...  
...we're shooting for 2,010 in 2010.*

**And...**

- Group paddles on the NEW Quad Cities Water Trails
- Beginner-friendly paddling lessons and programs
- Paddlesports competitions

**Event Information:**  
[www.floatzilla.org](http://www.floatzilla.org)  
Floatzilla 2010 Facebook Group

**Event Coordinator:**  
River Action, Inc.  
[www.riveraction.org](http://www.riveraction.org)  
563-322-2969



***Have you seen our NEW monthly CIP Event Newsletter? Thanks to John Wenck, one of the many services you get as a CIP member is an email update on the various paddling trips and events going on in the area!!***

#### **1 Mississippi Campaign** by Marian Gelb

I am writing to tell you about an initiative that we are a part of: the **1 Mississippi** campaign. We are working with 30 other local and national organizations to protect the whole Mississippi River—from its headwaters in Minnesota to its delta in the Gulf of Mexico. As a member of this vibrant coalition, we'll be educating residents on River issues, advocating for River protections and speaking with a unified voice in defense of the Mississippi. Being a member of this coalition allows us to have a greater impact along the entire length of the River than we would otherwise be able to achieve on our own.

I encourage you to take a moment and visit [www.1mississippi.net](http://www.1mississippi.net) to learn about how you too can become involved in the River's clean-up and protection. The website has information on some of the greatest threats facing the River, specific actions every one can take and a place for you to join the network as a River Citizen.

As a River Citizen you will be a welcome addition to the growing grassroots movement to protect our one Mississippi. Plus, all River Citizens get a free, stainless steel water bottle! Please check out the **1 Mississippi** website today.

#### **Great News for our Water Trails!** by Kelli Phillips, Natural Resource Specialist, USACE, Saylorville Lake

I am extremely happy to announce the Polk County segment of the Des Moines River Water Trail has now been designated by the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, as a National Recreation Trail! Thank you to everyone who wrote support letters, provided photos, maps and many other things to make this happen! This is very exciting for Central Iowa!

As soon as the markers, etc arrive via FedEx and USPS, I will coordinate a way for everyone to receive what they need. Thanks again for all your hard work making this possible!

**John Craun's "Paddle Across Iowa" completed in less than a week!** by Anita O'Gara (Iowa Heritage Foundation)

I've been thrilled to watch John Craun's progress as he paddled about 405 miles from Minnesota to the Mississippi in less than 7 days. He braved high winds and storms, high water, floating obstacles and hazardous low-head dams, not to mention the breakdown of his portage cart half-way through the trip! One observer suggested that maybe John builds wings into his handmade kayaks!



THANK YOU to John Craun and his enthusiastic support team! They did it all for a good cause: to inspire support for Hickory Ridge Wilderness Camp at Lake Red Rock. Thanks to all of you who contributed to Hickory Ridge through this *Paddle Across Iowa*. Together you gave nearly \$10,000 to the project! Thank to those of you who joined the fun Saturday in Des Moines or at other points along the journey. About \$71,000 is still needed for Hickory Ridge. 82% of the funds are committed. Please spread the word and help finish the project! *Picture by Diane Lowry*

Hickory Ridge homepage: [www.inhf.org/hickoryridge](http://www.inhf.org/hickoryridge)

Background on *Paddle Across Iowa*: [www.inhf.org/paddleacrossiowa](http://www.inhf.org/paddleacrossiowa)

Questions? Contact Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation at [arobinson@inhf.org](mailto:arobinson@inhf.org) or 515-288-1846.

Go to [www.paddlibrary.org](http://www.paddlibrary.org) and click "enter library," read the rules and click "go to library". Once you find a resource you want to borrow, click on "borrow from library" and it will bring up an email format to John's email address. The subject reads "I want to borrow an item from the library". Type in what you want to borrow and then John will get back to you with the cost for shipping, usually around \$1.50 media rate.

**Paddling Library continues as a valuable resource**

The Paddling Library is a great success. We all appreciate what John Wenck has done to give us instant access to resources that are sometimes hard to find or downright unavailable. Here's how to access the library (on left):

## TRIP REPORTS

### South Dakota Kayak Challenge: TWO VIEWS

by Rick Dietz

I think you could find around 80 different perspectives of this race as there were said to be that many boats. I think my own story should probably be "the confession of a kayak 'pedaler'."

The event was very well planned and executed and we were on a really nice stretch of the Missouri (as John Pearson promised). Yankton, the start, is just below the Gavins Point Dam, and the river is in a near natural state to about Ponca. The sand hills of Nebraska were in view for much of the race and the river often bumped up against them. I learned afterwards that the event

was sponsored by the South Dakota Canoe & Kayak Association and that they wanted to showcase that portion of the river.

I thought it was a fun, though challenging, race. We had 20-30+ mph headwinds all day. Twenty-some boats dropped out, and those who didn't should feel really good about finishing. I actually felt fairly good the whole time and I thought this race easier than the Gritty Fitty. But, I confess that I only paddled about half of the time. I was in a Hobie sit-on-top kayak with the Hobie Mirage-drive pedal system. The Hobie turned out to be the answer for an aging man's tendinitis, but just as my bad knee started feeling good the other one began complaining, and I HAD to paddle the last 16 miles.

by Diane Lowry

The South Dakota Kayak Challenge promoters promised wild water, open skies, and a big challenge. It was all that. There were those that came to compete. There were those who came to paddle and camp for several days. And, finally there were those who pushed their limits with their only goal to finish in one day despite demoralizing winds. I was privileged to fall into the latter group....and,



what I came away with (along with some screaming muscles) was an amazing observation of human nature. We were spread out over 72 miles - but by the 2nd checkpoint most of us had found 'partners', and by the 3rd checkpoint no one I saw was paddling alone. Winds (20 - 30 mph SSE headwinds the ENTIRE day with long gusts up to 40 mph), fatigue, motor boat traffic, sandbars, wing dam currents (especially fun at night - not!), temperatures in the 90s, and finally darkness, took its toll. I don't think anyone consciously intended to form groups - but we did. I can say that I wouldn't have made it without my travel companions - Nathan Edwards (Minnesota) and Eric Hart (Iowa). These guys were an answer to prayer....and we managed to keep laughing. Knowing that the rest of the gang waited at the finish line was also a motivator. New experiences bring new memories and new knowledge. But, I've always known that we all need each other to get through this journey called life.... I'll be back next year

### **North River Trip** by Ned McPartland

After heavy spring rains, John Holzmueller and Ned McPartland went looking for some small streams that we could paddle at high water. The North River gauge at Norwalk was reading over 2400 so we decided to check some small tributaries that fed into the North River. However, the tributaries were too low so we checked the North River itself. The river had enough water to paddle, but was not as high as 2400 cfs. would suggest. Later we learned that the gauge seemed to be stuck at 2400 cfs. for several days. Ned estimated that the real flow was 1200 to 1300 cfs with about 250 to 300 cfs. up stream where we paddled. At the end of the trip, John's marker indicated that the stream had dropped about an inch during our trip.

We paddled from Elmwood Ave. to the Ironwood Trail bridge in Madison County which was a distance of about 10 miles. The river was quite enjoyable with many twisting turns and small, shallow rapids and riffles. There were exposed gravel bars, lots of pasture lands, woods, and a few small rocky cliffs. At this water level, the trip was easy and the current did most of the work.

There were three or four easy portages for fallen trees. The large log jam three miles downstream from the P57 bridge is still there. However, John found a much easier portage than the one we had last year. The previous portage started on a gravel bar on river right, up the bank, through the woods, and down the bank which was a lot of work. Over the past year, the river had eroded a path on river left around the largest tree in the jam. There was just enough space to slide a boat between the root ball of the tree and the bank over about five feet of land (a much easier portage).

It should be noted that 1200 or 1300 cfs makes a nice trip if the North River is dropping on the Norwalk gauge. If the river is rising at that level, it could be much higher upstream causing the current to be much more powerful and dangerous.

### **Water is Water: Kayaking Waterloo, Boston ... and British Columbia** by Steve Parrish

Travel brought me to interesting destinations this spring; and three locations included kayaking. I started in early May with my first time paddling on the Cedar River in Waterloo, IA. In late May, I paddled a section of the Charles River in Newton Massachusetts (outside of Boston). Finally, in mid-June I paddled Gabriola Island, part of the Gulf Islands on the eastern side of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The **Cedar River** was fast flowing and fun. Paddling upstream I thought I was moving at a great clip, until I looked down at my GPS and saw I was barely running at 3 mph. The current was swift, but didn't spoil my opportunity to view the wildlife and heavily wooded shorelines. It is impressive how natural the shore line was in George Wyth State Park. On the return trip downriver, the water did the moving while I did the gawking. While the wind swirled up above me, I found myself in a calm nirvana of comfortable paddle strokes.

Charles River Canoe and Kayak has a full service shop right on a scenic part of the **Charles River** in Newton Mass. Despite a number of busy bridges, factories, golf courses, and universities in the area, the actual paddling was peaceful and serene. With little or no tidal effect, there are numerous lily pad covered flats and grasslands to paddle through. Countless heron, turtles and shore birds make themselves at home, oblivious to the chaos of human kind rumbling around on shore. As I paddled my way through the bucolic landscape of this well known river, I thought of the challenges so many rivers have ... whether they're in urban Boston or rural Iowa. Rivers can remain a beautiful getaway amidst the clutter of human influence, as long as humans work to make it happen.

My third out-of-town trip was an entirely different experience. Taking two different ferries from Vancouver, British Columbia, I ended up on Gabriola Island, a 2 by 8 mile shelter island that faces east into the famous Georgia Strait of the **northern Pacific Ocean**. I had arranged with a guide I knew to have a kayak, gear and campsite waiting for me. Even though my camp was heavily wooded, it was only two hundred feet from the shore ... well, at least during *high tide*. With charts in hand and a SPOT on deck for safety, I had free reign to paddle the area. The variety was overwhelming. I practiced applying the maritime rules of the road while wending through shipping lanes between Vancouver and Gabriola islands. Then I went to the north of the island and snapped pictures of cormorants, eagles and falcons perched up in 100 foot sandstone cliffs. Instead of the striated sea caves of Lake Superior, the violence of the oceanic waves in this area carved out bleached shelves, ledges and natural rock sculptures. I even paddled a few miles into the Georgia Strait, running with the rollers generated by miles of unobstructed fetch.



Arranging paddling experiences while out of town involves significant planning, and there is always the risk that the plan is scrubbed because of conditions. There are, however, numerous paddling shops and guides who are willing to help. With enough timing and questions, you can usually get what you need, and also find out what you need to do to stay safe in an unfamiliar area. My recent travels confirm the worth of planning and making the effort.



### Iowa Paddlers Membership

**DUES: \$10 per year**  
Includes emails, Newsletters ...  
*And Fellowship!*

**Membership, Dues, Emails for CIP list**

**Lynn Aldridge**

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**Newsletter, Information, Questions**

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**Send: Articles, pictures**