



# Central Iowa Paddlers

Volume 14 Issue 1

March 2010

*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

***Sailed this day nineteen leagues, and determined to count less than the true number, that the crew might not be dismayed if the voyage should prove long."***

***Christopher Columbus***

The most recent edition of the Newsletter was published in late September of last year. Obviously, after that time we paddlers went into hibernation ... neither paddling nor meeting. Or did we? Organized paddling trips continued well into October, despite the early snows. After the lakes froze over, odd ball river trips like the Waffle Float and New Years Day Paddle occurred on single digit days, with impressive turnouts. CIP members met both for the Fall Party and the February Planning meeting. And untold numbers of paddling enthusiasts met at the Canoe Sports Expo and other venues where we could share stories, ideas and fun. We survived a long, brutal river by staying active and we're now ready to paddle, paddle, paddle!

- Steve Parrish, editor -

## **REPORTS**

### **Des Moines River Water Trail Campsite dedicated in Polk County**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) designated a water trail campsite on the Des Moines River Water Trail at Yellow Banks County Park in October, 2009. The Des Moines River in Polk County was designated as a state water trail earlier this spring, but the idea of a paddle-in/paddle-out campsite came as an addendum.

"It became apparent to us that there was a lack of suitable camping opportunities for paddlers along the Des Moines River between Saylorville and Red Rock," said Loren Lown, Polk County Conservation natural resources specialist. "Yellow Banks seemed like an ideal place" he said. The campsite is within 150 feet of the river and includes fire rings, picnic tables, and a shelter area. Reservations for this campsite will soon be available through [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com).

For more information on Iowa water trails, see [www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/).

### **Want to Know More About River Advocacy?**

See <http://www.iowarivers.org/> to learn more about Iowa Rivers Revival, a statewide river advocacy organization founded in 2006 to provide a voice for Iowa's rivers. If you would like to receive IRR's e-news updates, contact IRR's executive director Roz Lehman at [lehman@iowarivers.org](mailto:lehman@iowarivers.org)

## **Linden Area Confined Animal Feeding Operation** by Raymond Harden

More than a dozen people were gathered around Jim Woodvine's dining room table discussing what actions they could take to stop the building of a proposed Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) northeast of Linden. This animal feeding operation is designed to hold 2,490 hogs. Because the plant is set up to have less than 2,500 head of hogs the owners do not need as many permits as larger operations nor do they need the approval of the Dallas County Supervisors.

The residents of the area had several concerns. They felt that the odor would be nauseous and affect their daily life. Another concern was that the manure running off the farm fields or accidental spills of the animal waste would flow into the groundwater and contaminate their wells because the water table is very low in that area. They also believed that the surface runoff of the manure, leaks in the holding tanks, and accidental spillage would run into Mosquito Creek and then flow into the already impaired Raccoon River causing more pollution. Mosquito Creek joins the Raccoon River north of Redfield. Last summer the Raccoon River was so polluted that the Des Moines Water Works was not able to process any of it for the citizens of Des Moines to drink.

In the past ten years there have been 454 manure spills in Iowa- most of them from factory farms. The spills have caused many fish kills and add pollutants to Iowa's rivers and streams. The residents of the Linden area know that they have an uphill struggle to stop the building of another hog lot near them, but they believe the fight will be worth it. They want to be heard and possibly get some of the laws changed. Their actions remind me of the famous quote by Margaret Mead, "Never underestimate the power of a few committed people to change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

## **August 13-15 date set for 2010 Cleanup** by Melisa Jacobsen

We will be covering the beginning 23 mile stretch of the Lower Wapsipinicon River covering Anamosa Access to Jungletown Access (Hale). Camp will be based at Central Park near Center Junction, Iowa. Primitive camping will be free of charge courtesy of our hosts Jones County Conservation Board. Further details will be posted soon on the website ([www.lowerwapsicleanup.org](http://www.lowerwapsicleanup.org)). Join LWRCP on Facebook! Search for Lower Wapsi River Cleanup and become a member of the group to invite friends and family! Check out pictures from last year's amazing work by our volunteers.

Go to [www.paddlelibrary.org](http://www.paddlelibrary.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

**NOTE: CIP members met in February to discuss paddling trips for 2010. Attached with this Newsletter is the upcoming schedule. It has been a LONG winter and it's time to paddle. And there's no better way to get back into the swing than to join us on one of the many paddling adventures listed in CIP's calendar. We have anywhere from easy to difficult trips. If you have a question, contact us (or the trip leader indicated). If you have an urge to paddle, join us! - editor-**

### **River Rascals** by Robin Fortney

So who first introduced you to moving water? Who encouraged you to have fun in the water, to explore the edges of the bank or the sandbars? I was lucky to have spent many summer days in the small creek near my home and in a tidal river out east where my grandmother lived. There are many kids who haven't had the opportunity to get acquainted with a stream, or to really get onto or into a river.

Most people are afraid of rivers. We hear about people dying at dams and about poor water quality. However, you and I are paddlers. We have experienced the joy of a leisurely float trip, the confidence we've gained in learning how to maneuver through moving water, the excitement of fast water, the fascination with wildness present along river corridors, the feel of sand and mud under our toes, the disappointment in seeing river trash, the music of water moving over rocks, and the relaxation that comes with living on river time.

I serve on the board for Iowa Rivers Revival (IRR) and, last year, I decided to help plan some river stewardship projects for the organization. A couple of other board members had tossed out the term River Rascals and we began to think about the importance of getting kids into Iowa's streams. How else will we grow citizens who appreciate and care for our rivers?



Last summer IRR partnered with Children and Family Urban Ministries, DNR and area paddlers to get a small group of urban 6<sup>th</sup> graders onto the water. We planned some inside time raising awareness about rivers, watersheds and map reading. Then, on a Saturday, we took the kids to Chichauqua Wildlife Area, nets in hand, to search for invertebrates along the water's edge. We provided some still water paddling instruction and spent some time in canoes.

#### *River rascals on the Middle Raccoon*

On another Saturday, we took the kids to Redfield, provided some moving water paddling instruction and paddled a stretch of the Middle Raccoon River. At sandbar stops, the kids were introduced to IOWATER water quality monitoring and rock skipping. Mostly they were wide-eyed, practicing bow paddling skills and enjoying the wildness of the river. Finally, we wanted the kids to experience a community river stewardship project, so we participated in the River Run Garbage Grab, a Des Moines River cleanup event in Polk County. Removing trash was a new concept, but they found it was kind of fun. The best part was getting to swim in the river at the end of the day.

How would you like to become a River Rascal? As we tell the kids, a rascal is somebody with a twinkle in their eye who is looking for an adventure. A river rascal is somebody who enjoys having adventures on a river. This program was extremely successful in large part because each child was partnered with an experienced paddler. The kids felt safe and the adults could share their passion for the river experience.

We'll seek your help this summer as we do it again. Plan to join us. Paddle with a child and change somebody's life. Please let me know if you are interested in participating on one or more days. We will be getting out on the following Saturdays in 2010: July 31, August 7 and August 14. Contact Robin Fortney at [rbfortney@midamerican.com](mailto:rbfortney@midamerican.com) for more information or to volunteer.



Lyle and Linda Danielson help Quay Von put in at Redfield Access



River rascals learn about water quality monitoring

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

After some spring rains, Bill Bryant, John Holzmueller and Ned McPartland floated the North River from Elmwood Ave. to the Ironwood Trail bridge, a distance of about ten miles. The Norwalk gauge was reading around 900 to 1000 cfs, and the stream was dropping. This provided enough water to run the shallow riffles in the river, but several hundred more cfs. would have been better. The gauge is located many miles downstream at Norwalk so the actual volume upstream in the western part of Madison County was much smaller, probably no more than 150 to 200 cfs. If the river was rising at the 1000 cfs. gauge reading, extra caution would be advised as the stream might be very high, fast, and dangerous.



For our trip, the flow was quite moderate 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. Except for one large portage, the trip was quite easy with the river doing most of the work. There was a large log jam about seven miles downstream or about three miles past the P57 highway bridge. Just before the jam, the river twists and turns through a large area of pasture with farm buildings up on a hill on river left. The log jam appears shortly after leaving the pasture area where woods emerge again on both sides of the river. There is a large gravel bar on river right just before the jam. We carried our boats across the gravel bar, up the river bank, through the woods around the jam, and eventually found a way to get down the bank and back to the river. The jam seemed large enough that it may take a very large flood to dislodge so it may be there for awhile. Other than the large portage, it was a good trip

## Ozark Adventures; The Mulberry River by Ned McPartland

The Mulberry River is a Class II whitewater stream located in northwest Arkansas. The river runs along the southern boundary of the Ozark National Forest about forty miles northeast of Fort Smith. Usually the Mulberry does not have enough water in the fall for a float, but John Holzmueller and Ned McPartland were lucky to find a good water flow in mid-October.

Arriving late on a Friday night, we camped at the Redding Forest Service campground on State Highway 215. The campground has spacious sites, showers, a heated restroom, and a convenient landing on the river. Saturday was cool weather for that area with a sunny daytime high in the low to mid-fifties. With only one vehicle, we went looking for a shuttle and found some kayakers in a different campground at Turner Bend. They were going to play at Whoop and Holler rapid and agreed to give us a shuttle. We were going to float the upper third of the river and were surprised at how few boaters were around on a Saturday.

We put our solo whitewater canoes in the water at a Forest Service landing called High Bank for an eight mile trip down to our campsite and vehicle. The water level was 2.9 on the Turner Bend gauge which is a nice medium level with a good flow. There were lots of lively, but moderate rapids with high cliffs, good mountain scenery and color in the leaves. Usually, the color does not change until November in this area. When we arrived at Whoop and Holler rapid, the kayakers were nowhere to be seen even though they had parked by the rapid. The rapid is a river-wide



ledge on a bend in the river with large, standing waves at this water level, and running it was exciting. There were several good surfing waves, but given the cool temperatures we decided that we would get too wet and too cold if we tried to surf. The rest of the trip was faster than expected. Since we arrived in camp early, Jon wanted to see a bit more river, so Ned drove the truck down to the next takeout at the Turner Bend campground to pick him up. This added another three miles to the trip which John did quickly. There is a rapid called Sacroiliac in this section which is a hairpin turn into an undercut cliff, but it was not a problem at this water level.

Sunday was a warmer day, sunny and sixty degrees. We discovered a couple in our campground who were outfitters from Northern Wisconsin. They own a resort there and were planning to take a group down the Mulberry next spring because it was too cold to start that early in Wisconsin. We decided to boat the lower third of the river which is beautiful and remote. It is also 12 miles with no other access so the local outfitters don't like it because it is much more difficult to retrieve their rental canoes. The shuttle is much longer because the road is not close to the river, and it is unusual to see other boaters on this section. We put in at Campbell's cemetery, a very nice Forest Service landing, and the take out was at Mill Creek. The short road along Mill Creek was a Class IV because the creek had washed out half of the road. The truck wheels came within several inches of a three to four foot drop off at the washout. In the lower river, the pools are longer and the waves a little larger in the rapids. The main challenge of the day was a rapid called Hell Roaring Falls, which was another river-wide ledge. The river level was about 2.6 or 2.5, and there were some large holes and hydraulics below the ledge. The preferred method for running the rapid is to skirt the edge of the holes without going into them. John and Ned did this, but the couple in the tandem canoe evidently caught too much of the hole and capsized. The rescue was easy because the river was fairly calm downstream from the rapid.

The trip became more exciting toward the end where the rapids were closer together with lots of standing waves. The river calmed down again about a quarter mile from the take out.

On Monday the weather was warmer yet, but we had to drive back so we settled on a very short three mile trip in the morning. We had to pay to park at Byrd's campground just below Whoop and Holler rapid. We had a bike for a shuttle, but since the combined parking fee and shuttle was so inexpensive and saved time, we paid for a shuttle. We basically reran three miles of our first day's trip. The level was at 2.3, and the difference at Whoop and Holler was dramatic. Most of the large waves were gone, and the rapid was much easier. We departed the river in late morning and arrived back in Des Moines around 9:30 p.m.

The Mulberry river was beautiful and fun to boat. The difficulty varies considerably with water levels. At 2.2 and lower the river is mostly small Class I rapids with occasional scraping and somewhat technical, but great for recreational boaters. From 2.5 to 3.5, the river is mostly Class II rapids with many standing waves which at the higher level start to swamp open canoes. As the river approaches 4.0 feet some of the waves get very large, and several rapids can rate Class III because of the power of current and size of the waves. Above a gauge reading of 4.0, many of the outfitters stop renting canoes and boating is not recommended. The river starts flowing through willow trees with the current becoming dangerous and difficult to read.

### **November Rathbun Paddling** by Vic Senter

On Saturday, I put in at Bridgeview and paddled south. I was surprised to see a sailboat with both sails out, tooling around the main lake, and equally surprised to see how lifeless everything else otherwise was. Trees void of leaves; water void of birds; atmosphere void of sound! Six miles of solitude other than to greet the lone fisherman I saw on the lake. When I asked him how the fishing was he said "good thing I don't have to depend on fishing to eat!"

Sunday, the day that was supposed to be bad weather, was actually nice. Warm and mild winds from the south. I went down west of the bridge over South Fork. Things were the polar opposite of the day before. Fish were stirring below water and the trees still had life to them. I spotted a white mass in the distance. Paddling up slowly I saw about 50 white pelicans tightly congregated in a shallows near the northern shore. They were putting on quite a show of flapping wings and sticking their bills up in the air. I was able to observe and then stealthily steal away without causing them to panic and flush. Further down shore, I saw 6 deer drinking on shore. When I startled them, it was fun to see them bound up through the woods. Finally, paddling back I saw two eagles. They may be commonplace, but are nonetheless beautiful (much like the lone Great Blue Heron I saw as I paddled in). Amazingly there was that much nature and yet I had only paddled 3.5 miles. Sometimes it's a good thing to paddle at a crawl!

### **Waffle Float** by Rick Dietz

We had a great turnout for waffles at the Iowa Arboretum and a great day of paddling for those who came to paddle in December but didn't have the good sense to turn back. After a leisurely breakfast we put in at Soper's Mill at 11:50. The air temp was moderate in comparison to last year's float, and the river was running at a good 245 cfs. Still, no one chose to run the chute through the rock weir. Not far below Soper's we came to what should have been, due to ice, the end of our trip. But we pushed through about 200 yards of ice and thick slush to the mouth of Keigley Branch where we again found flowing water. What should have taken no more than five minutes took 30 minutes instead. We discussed the possibility of cutting the trip short, but in the end unanimously decided to push on. So with only a brief stop for treats at East Peterson and another at Vogel's Ford, we easily made River Valley Park by 3:30.



Our group included friends from Iowa Falls and Des Moines, Minnesota, Missouri and Nebraska!

### **New Years Day Float** by Steve Parrish

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual New Years Day float involved 12 boats, some cold hands, and a lot of laughs. Despite single digit temps, everyone was in good spirits and the paddle went quickly. Due to a substantial release coming from the Saylorville dam, plus heavily iced shores, it was a difficult fight though the chute 200 yards downstream from the dam. Several determined paddlers busted through the current and made it to the mouth of the release. And even more paddlers busted a gut eating and laughing at a restaurant afterwards!

*Jim Grace took the photo (on left) of Diane Lowry and Keith Garret paddling below Red Rock dam on February 14. Tied in with the Canoe Sport Expo, many used the weekend to party and catch up on friendships.*

## **Iowa Paddlers Membership**

**DUES: \$10 per year**

Includes emails, Newsletters ...  
And Fellowship!

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

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