



Central Iowa Paddlers

Volume 12 Issue 4

October 2008

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

"The rain fell alike upon the just and upon the unjust, and for nothing was there a why and a wherefore." W. Somerset Maugham

As I compile this final Newsletter of the year, I look back and reflect "for me it was a good year on the water." Paddling in the Everglades, Lake of the Woods, Lake Superior, and, most importantly, Iowa, the waters have been fun and kind to me. My base of friends has grown with the variety of my trips, and my experiences on the waters have helped me grow personally. But such is not the case for many Iowans. The Floods of 2008 were devastating for many ... financially, emotionally, environmentally. This year the very waters that bring us recreation and solace also brought destruction and decimated dreams. To twist Somerset Maugham's quote above, the rain can be both just and unjust. Our paddling community has long understood this dichotomy, and worked hard to make the best of the reality we face. The floods did not stop Project AWARE, and it led to the huge Cedar River cleanup in July. The DNR continues its efforts to bring us water trails. The River Run Garbage Grab yielded impressive amounts of trash. And, as witnessed with Robin Fortney's displays, we can still celebrate our experiences on the water with photos and essays. The river is what it is; what counts is what we do with it.
- Steve Parrish, editor -

REPORTS

MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR THE CIP FALL PARTY

It's time for the Central Iowa Paddlers Fall picnic and potluck!!

This year, member Sandy Thompson of Winterset is hosting the party at her very accommodating and spacious country estate just one mile north of Winterset, IA.

Bill G. will once again be grilling the hamburgers (***hamburgers and soft drinks provided***)

Please bring a side dish and any photos or river stories you would like to share. Also, stay tuned for any further information as date gets closer.

Directions to Sandy's;

From Des Moines: take I-80 West to 169, go south on 169.

Turn west on 195th St. Go 3 miles to Ironwood Trail and turn right. Go 3/4ths of a mile and turn left on Sandy's lane. There is a red roofed building before a narrow bridge at her lane.

River Congress – Mark Your Calendar!

Iowa Rivers Revival is hosting a River Congress on Saturday, November 22, 2008, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Des Moines Botanical Center. The purpose of the River Congress is to celebrate and discuss our diverse connections with Iowa's rivers. The River Congress is an opportunity to develop the framework for a progressive advocacy agenda for the 2009 legislative session. We will also develop a *River Bill of Rights*. Please plan to attend this important event.

RSVP to Roz Lehman at lehman@iowarivers.org or 515-202-7720.

River Run Garbage Grab – By Robin Fortney

Thanks to all of you who participated in the 7th annual River Run Garbage Grab on August 16, 2008! The event was initiated in 2001 by Rod Kent, a member of the Izaak Walton League-Des Moines Chapter, who invited Central Iowa Paddlers to help with trash removal on the Raccoon River in Des Moines. The partnership continued with annual cleanup events on the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers. In 2007, John Wenck and I decided to help expand the event to include the trails along the Des Moines River and to recycle as much trash as possible. We invited land managers to provide support and 200 people (including 75 paddlers) helped remove 24 tons of trash (40% was recycled) from the river and adjacent trails.

Buoyed by that response, we decided to expand the event in 2008. Our mission was to bring more people to the river. The goal was to double the river miles impacted (20 miles from Saylorville Dam to Yellow Banks County Park) and double the number of participants.

This effort called for additional sponsors and supporters. Iowa Outdoor Unlimited members stepped up to provide Web support, media support and trash removal support. Wells Fargo, DNR, Metro Waste Authority, Izaak Walton League-Des Moines Chapter, Central Iowa Paddlers, Iowa Whitewater Coalition, MidAmerican Energy, Des Moines Waterworks, City of Des Moines, Sierra Club-Central Iowa Chapter, Iowa Outdoor Unlimited and other friends provided generous financial support for the event. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Polk County Conservation, Wells Fargo, Central Iowa Paddlers, Principal Financial, City of Des Moines, City of Pleasant Hill and Sierra Club-Central Iowa Chapter each hosted one of the seven river accesses. *More than four hundred volunteers (including approximately 75 paddlers) removed approximately 22 tons of trash that day, plus at least 38 tires, and by all accounts they had fun doing it!*

To thank our volunteers and celebrate the Des Moines River, we organized an evening festival at the Simon Estes Amphitheatre in downtown Des Moines. The Izaak Walton League-Des Moines Chapter provided a fabulous barbecued pork dinner to about 200 people. IOWATER, Metro Waste Authority, Des Moines Rowing Club and others set up exhibit tables to show volunteers

others ways to enjoy and steward Iowa's rivers. Music was provided by Tropical Steel, Plymouth Congregational Church Chancel Choir, and Jon Stravers & Big Blue Sky. A full moon rose over the capitol as the last few songs were sung.



Jon Stravers & Big Blue Sky playing at Simon Estes Amphitheater in Des Moines after the River Run Garbage Grab on August 16,

*2008
(photo by Luke Wright)*

Results (from Robin Fortney's final report)

The planning committee more than met its goals and the event was considered very successful. The river cleanup event addressed approximately 20 miles of river (double the 2007 mileage),

from Cottonwood Recreation Area to Birdland Access and Harriet Street Access to Yellow Bank Park Access. Approximately ten miles of land trails were impacted, including the mountain bike trail north of Euclid Avenue, Neal Smith Trail from Cottonwood Recreation Area to Birdland Access, and downtown trails from University Avenue to Scott Street.

There were approximately 450 participants in the 2008 event. As shown in Table 1 below, 315 were cleanup volunteers and 135 were persons who served as site hosts or provided on-water motorized launch support.

Table 1. Volunteer Information

Location	# River-based Volunteers	# Land-based Volunteers
Cottonwood	0	2
Sycamore	27	33
Prospect Park	13	28
Birdland	8	40
River Place	0	21
Downtown	0	50
Harriet Street	23	10
Pleasant Hill	15	29
Yellow Banks	3	13
TOTAL	89 (75 in 2007)	226 (111 in 2007)

The number of persons who participated as support staff and volunteers more than doubled from 2007, enabling us to successfully meet our goal to connect more people to the river. We received the last of the recycled trash data on October 7, 2008, and the final trash tally is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Trash Tally

Trash Type	Quantity (tons)
Recycled Scrap Metal	1.5
Recycled Tires	5.6 (188 count)
Landfilled Trash	21.7
Total Quantity	28.8 (24 tons in 2007)
Percent Recycled	25% (40% in 2007)

This is an incredible amount of trash, particularly because heavy items such as cars and large appliances that had been previously marked could not be removed due to wet soil.

Safety: Social Pressure by Steve Parrish

I once heard that the most dangerous expression in the English language is “hey guys, watch this!” On a recent trip I saw how this can indeed be an issue. I was on the Rainy River, the tributary that defines much of the U.S.-Canadian border in Minnesota. As part of a business function, a guide had been hired to escort several people down a stretch of the river. Because of my paddling background, I became a nominal assistant guide and was enjoying introducing business associates to the joy of paddling. Our small armada was a rag tag flotilla of canoes and kayaks, and I spent much of my time chasing around making sure no one got too far from the rest of the group. As we started to wrap up our trip, I was dispatched downstream by the real guide to convince a young woman to return upstream. She had become so enamored with the joys of kayaking, she forgot that what goes down river must come up. Just as I got her pointed in the right direction, I heard a commotion upstream. Two men in a long, stable canoe had been

goofing around and managed to capsize. As they swam in the swift, cold current, I chased down their canoe and worked it towards shore. The problem was compounded by the fact that they swam river-right to the Canadian shore instead of the U.S. shore on their left. .

The guide and I approached them as they dragged themselves in from the cold water. We both were looking at them to see if they showed signs of hypothermia. The guide quickly reached into a dry bag and grabbed some clothes for the drenched revelers. Not standing on formality, she yelled at them “pull off your pants!” She wanted them in warm, dry clothes as soon as possible. This assault on their pride and manhood led to a raft of bawdy comments from the wet canoeists, and the jokes were fueled by the other boaters watching the scene unfold. It took a combination of chilly air and diplomacy to finally get them to change out of their wet clothes. Soon we had all crossed back to the U.S. (without the Canadian Mounties arresting us), and were boarding a warm bus.

This brief trip was a reminder to me of how social pressure can be an insidious cause of problems while paddling. Sometimes trifling problems can be compounded when someone’s pride is bruised. A hurt ego can lead to bad decisions quicker than hypothermia. Leaders and participants alike must stay attuned to the dynamic of personalities, making sure that good decisions are made despite personality conflicts. Safety comes in many forms, including using tact and patience in dealing with threatening situations.

In the News

Kudos to CIP members for their awards and recognition.

In September, Robin Fortney and John Wenck were recognized with awards at the Sierra Club annual luncheon at McFarland Park.

John Pearson was the cover story of the September 7 IowaLife section of the Des Moines Register. As stated by Rick Dietz: “*Today's Sunday Register includes a great article by Mike Kilen about our good friend John Pearson. I've had the pleasure of many a paddling trip with John - exploring everything from state parks and preserves to tiny communities of lichen and a number of uniquely inhabited islands of Lake Superior. If I could only remember half of what he has shared!*”

FUN PICTURES!!!!



Dutchman’s Triathlon picture by Diane Lowry



Beaverdale Parade picture by Dick Howard



Rathbun Paddling Party and Scott Evans at Red Rock pictures by Diane Lowry

CIP members have fun in many ways!

Some use their boats as support for swimmers in the Dutchman's Triathlon at Red Rock. Others, like Bill Graham, put their boats on display at community parades. Still others use any excuse to get together to paddle and party. 13 paddlers from 3 states showed up at Lake Rathbun this October to do both moonlight and daytime paddles. Some camped; others played instruments; and others read poetry. Steve Parrish hosted a party, but it was the *lake* that was the attraction. And the Lake Red Rock Full Moon Paddles continue to be a great meeting ground for paddlers. A chilly and breezy October night still yielded 11 paddlers.

Go to 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:

ALSO, note a new website: <http://www.outdoorsiowa.com>. This is a place to document personal experiences in Iowa's natural places. Says Matt Scott,

webmaster for Outdoorsiowa.com, "my hope is that visitors will share their knowledge and adventures. Information is compiled from personal accounts, various technologies, and community feedback. One of the most useful features for CIP members is a statewide events list. The events list is a great way to plan a weekend."

TRIP REPORTS

Quetico Provincial Park 2008, by Eric and John Holzmüller

On July 13, 2008 we left Des Moines, Iowa and drove 700 miles to Dawson Trail Ranger Station, which is located in the northeast corner of Quetico Provincial Park. The Park is a wilderness canoe area located in Ontario, Canada, directly north of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota. Quetico is often compared to BWCAW and, for the most part, things are fairly similar between the two wilderness areas. There are several differences however, including, no designated campsites, pit toilets, or fire grates, and a higher usage fee in Quetico. Overall, Quetico has fewer visitors compared to BWCAW, but both Parks have areas that receive heavy traffic and areas that see very few people.

The morning of the 14th, we put in at French Lake, which is located at the Dawson Trail Ranger station. After paddling through French Lake, we headed toward Pickerel River and into Pickerel Lake. Facing a decent headwind, it took us three hours to paddle across a 15 km section of Pickerel Lake. We stopped for lunch at noon after a 460 meter (m) portage into Doré Lake. After lunch, we completed a 730 m portage and some more paddling before we began to look for our first campsite on Sturgeon Lake. It took us some time to find a decent site on Sturgeon Lake, despite having the lake to ourselves. Although camping is allowed anywhere in Quetico, in



general we found that choice sites (flat area for the tent, a nice rock with a breeze to avoid the bugs, and no dead trees over the tent site) were hard to come by.

The next morning the winds were calm and we made good time as we paddled through Russell, Chatteron, and Keats Lake. Along the way we portaged around several picturesque waterfalls. In the afternoon the wind picked up and we had a nice tailwind as we paddled into Kawnipi Lake.

After much searching (again) we finally found a campsite where we could lay out the tent on a flat piece of ground. Day three led us into McKenzie Lake and was short in terms of time and distance paddled (five hours, 16 km) and portages (one, 670 m). We found a nice island campsite that was close to some pictographs. After a short afternoon nap, we paddled over to look at the pictographs. We also spent some time fishing and were able to catch a few for dinner that night.

Although day four was even shorter in terms of distance travelled (12 km), it did include a 3.3 km portage that took us two hours to complete. The portage trail was a bit overgrown, but most of it was flat and on solid ground. Because it was towards the end of our trip, the food pack was light and we made good time across the portage, although there were two boggy sections that we had to scout out without the packs before finding our way through. Fortunately, at the end of the day, we found a nice campsite on Cache Lake underneath a giant white pine. Shortly after dinner that night, we sat through a thunderstorm that brought about little rain, but plenty of lightning and thunder.

On our last day (Friday) of the canoe trip, we got up early to watch a colorful sunrise. There was another long portage (3.2 km) early in the day. Once we completed the portage we enjoyed a scenic paddle down the Baptism and French Rivers. Along the way we spotted an old ranger cabin on Baptism Lake. After paddling, we were able to clean up at Dawson Trail Campground. We then headed back home after stopping in Atikokan, Ontario (the Canadian version of Ely, MN) for dinner at a local restaurant.

Maquoketa River by Robin Fortney

A few days prior to Labor Day, Dick Howard called and asked if I'd decided where I might paddle over the holiday weekend. "No," I said. He was thinking about maybe doing three rivers in three days: the Maquoketa, Volga and Yellow Rivers. "I'm in!," I replied. Dick agreed to send out an invitation to CIP members. We would meet at the Eden Prairie Preserve & Campground south of Baldwin on Friday night. A dozen people joined us, including paddlers from Cedar Rapids, Independence and Clayton.

Once there we decided the Maquoketa River and the Eden Prairie campground were delightful enough to engage us for the whole weekend. The weather was perfect and the Milky Way and a gazillion other stars shown each night. The primitive campground was mostly ours, though we appreciated the modern shower house across the road in the electric campground.

The river was clear, water level adequate and the sandy bottom agreeable. We floated relatively short stretches each day, MonMaq Dam Access in Monticello to Pictured Rocks County Park Access (6 miles), Supples Bridge Access to Canton (6 miles), and Canton to Royertown Access (8 miles). Greg Beisker treated us to a hike up a bluff to see the remnants of an old mill town and lime kiln. On Saturday eve, we had dinner at the Decker Hotel in Maquoketa. On Sunday eve, we had a candlelit potluck supper in camp hosted by Sandy Thompson and her friend John. John cooked up a pan of delicious Mississippi River bluegill.

Larry Gullet, formerly with Dallas County Conservation Board and now director of Jones County Conservation Board, joined us on Monday. We had an opportunity to talk to Larry about plans to develop the Maquoketa River Water Trail below Monticello. This is a gorgeous stretch and for this reason sees a huge number of paddlers. Unfortunately, it has also had a big problem with loud, trashy paddlers. Larry is taking steps to improve the situation and we took the opportunity to pick up tires and beer cans and generally act as good role models.

Mississippi River by Robin Fortney

I had been wanting to explore the Mississippi River backwaters, but was confounded during trips to northeast Iowa last April and again in June when the river was flooded. In mid-September I got another opportunity.

My first stop was in Dubuque. I had volunteered to present a program about the river advocacy organization, *Iowa Rivers Revival*, at the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards conference. The event was held at the Grand River Conference Center, a gorgeous building located on the river next to the Mississippi River Museum. This was a great opportunity to share what river stewards (many of whom are paddlers) are doing on behalf of rivers in Iowa and encourage county conservation board directors to focus more attention on rivers.

The next morning I met Jon "Hawk" Stravers, a hawk researcher and musician, at the Marquette Bridge. He had agreed to show me some of his favorite backwater areas. He has a flat bottom motor boat and we took off upstream. We were admiring the eagles and great blue herons when a flock of terns flew by. Jon turned the boat around and we followed them until we saw a tern dive into the water. Jon flashed a big smile when the tern came up with a fish. Then we headed into the mouth of the Yellow River and motored upstream for awhile. Jon cut the motor and we listened to birds while Jon told stories about his work with red shouldered hawks and his efforts to

help the Corps of Engineers manage the floodplain forests to protect the hawk nests. He also told a story about the formation of Effigy Mounds National Monument. Did you know the Des Moines Founders Garden Club played a big role some 60 years ago in obtaining a critical parcel of land that pulled the project together? Next we headed down to the mouth of the Wisconsin River where Jon told me about the plight of the large old swamp white oaks along the river. They are having trouble reproducing because dams have raised the water level and the river no longer experiences the low water levels typical during the summer and fall seasons necessary for acorns to sprout and grow. Then we motored in among the islands. At one point we stopped to pick up a tire and I noticed many prairie crayfish tubes along the bank. Back on shore, we warmed up at a little restaurant bar on the river in McGregor. While I favor paddling smaller rivers, this was wonderful opportunity to see the nation's biggest river from a new perspective.

Root River by Robin Fortney

My first solo canoe trip was on the Root River in southeast Minnesota on Labor Day 1993, the weekend I bought my Mad River Liberty canoe. It's always good to return. Bill Graham hosted a trip to the Root River and Lanesboro on September 27-28. This area is geologically similar to northeast Iowa, so limestone bluffs, clear cold water and fossils are common.

Nine of us camped along the river at Eagle Bluff Campground, located 5 miles east of Lanesboro on Highway 16. The camp hosts said the river was low, so after breakfast at the Chat & Chew in Lanesboro, we decided to put in at the campground, below the mouth of the South Fork, and float the 12 miles down to Preston.

The main road and Root River bike trail paralleled the river, but forested bluffs towered above us most of the way and the river moved briskly. Lucky for us the bluffs were beginning to show their autumn colors. We enjoyed getting to know Mary and Ed who are fairly new to river paddling, watching Lynn's dog Alexis enjoy a rousing game of fetch-the-stick-in-the-water, and search for fossils.

From Preston, we made a mad dash back to camp to clean up for dinner. It's always a treat to have an après paddle trip gourmet dinner at the Village Hall in Lanesboro. Several of us headed to the Commonweal Theatre for a production of "Man of La Mancha" and then topped off the evening with ice cream bars from the local BP service station. That and a roaring campfire at day's end and how could you ask for more?

Iowa Paddlers Membership

DUES: \$10 per year

Includes emails, Newsletters ...
And Fellowship!

Membership, Dues, Emails for CIP list

Lynn Aldridge

laldrigd@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

5138 Robertson Dr

Des Moines, IA 50312

515-284-6910

Send: Articles, pictures