

"New Years Day 2010.. For immediate release...

Since the wisp of smoke had been sighted late autumn 2009, they knew that it was a signal from Captain Shackletoad, and the trusty Inland Sea Kayaker cold weather team had been preparing for a rescue assault on the Ford Dam.

The Federales had the access road's blocked off, but the team converged from all directions on alternate routes. The launch point had been scouted the day before and mission was a go. Six members of the launch team briefed at the waters edge, where the eddy of ice floes began its frigid coagulation. The seventh member dutifully removed himself from the assault team. Team members unloaded their carefully chosen arctic condition watercraft, and suited up for the -11F windchill conditions. One member was overheard saying that if he were to fall down, he would not be able to raise himself due to his apparel configuration, all a Christmas story.

There were some smirks towards, or from, the water ski aficionados who were out barefooting.

With all craft successfully launched, the seventh member directed a photo assemblage to document in photos the dramatic effort. It was like a group of apoplectic synchronized swimmers. The author has not seen the photographs.

Eventually the group turned upstream, there was not time to spare, they ate their young on the way. When the snow dust had settled, and the ice flows had stilled, only three of the group had arrived at the dam. The author had taken the Hawk up the right side of the river and ferried across the outflow to come to rest below the spill way. There was a severe congestion of ice flows, that although small in surface size, were very thick and heavy. It was not a real safe condition. The author noted ice forming wherever spray touched a craft, and also on the water surface. Doubtful one more day of cold could the assault attempt be made. Shackletoad was nowhere to be found, as usual, so the rescue assault will have to be scheduled again next year.

Two craft ferried back across the outflow and played shortly in the right bank eddy. The camera on location at the spillway became very ice laden and difficult to use. Back downstream the forward group overtook the expedition videographeress. The author chose not to victory roll his kayak, but the King of Rolls completed his 34 month of continuous all conditions rolling. The videographer performed an unplanned reverse seal launch down the boat ramp on take out, but all the solid full season training regimen of the ISK team allowed her to brace her way out of a cold swim.

As the author stood in the long winter shadows at waters edge, soothing his tootsies in his mukluks, pulling his anorak hood tighter, and gently warming his frostbitten proboscis, he thought of Shackletoad waiting for the winter rescue, and of the ever vigilante Inland Sea Kayakers who dare to make the rescue assault every New Years Day. Happy New Year."