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Meeting Wednesday July 13: All About Alligators

Don Greene

(Owner of the Whitewater Experience)

Kevin L. Malonson,

(Regional IV, District III Game Warden)

presenting information on alligators and sharing some ideas for river trips.

Come join us at 7 pm at the Red Cross Building on north side of IH 59, near Kirby. We always welcome visitors.

We need your correct email address!

Please send your current email address to Marilyn Peery now.

Email address: mpeery@ev1.net.

The Waterline is the monthly newsletter of the Houston Canoe Club, Inc. The Waterline is made possible by your dues and critically depends on member contributions. Please submit items (please do not embed photos in MS Word documents) to the Editor at the following address.

sherrib57@hotmail.com

Trip Report: Lake Charlotte

by Ken Anderson

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On May 22, thirteen intrepid paddlers made their way up the Trinity to Lake Pass and on into Lake Charlotte. Although everyone is entitled to their opinion, any sane person knows the water level should be at least 7.4 before attempting a trip into the area and it was far below that level. Below 7.4...think gumbo on a stick!

But we had fun!

We learned how to portage;

We learned how not to portage; and

We learned you can go under that fallen tree no matter how close to the water it looks.

And we had fun!

We practiced the pry stoke...the water pry and the gumbo pry;

We practiced (or learned as the case may be) the art of poling; and

We practiced waking sleeping snakes that hadn't expected to see paddlers during such slack times.

Did I say we had fun!

We woke a few sunning gators (we had a retired gator wrestler with us just in case);

We ate great watermelon;

We took pink flamingos standing throughout Lake Miller as a warning not to paddle there; and

Everyone said they'd like to do it again. And so we will!@ 7.4 +.

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Trip Report: Texas Water Safari

by Christy Long

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June 10, 2005, warm, sunny

I arrived in camp around 8:00 pm, set up tent, and then sat around and talked. Several arrived early enough to paddle a bit right there at Tom's. Rick Brunson baked a delicious peach cobbler and we had a warm mid-night snack around 10:30.

June 11, 2005, hot sunny day with little breeze, cooling off late night

San Marcos running at 220 cfs



Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Anna King

Louis and Dana made pancakes and bacon for breakfast, others went out to breakfast, I ate with Louis and Dana. It was great. We were at Aquarena Springs around 8:00 am and got a good shot of the excitement that was coming from the participants and team supporters. Anna and I got so caught up in the excitement; we decided to enter the race in 2006. Others in our party reminisced with the current racers talking about races they had participated in and people they had raced with.



Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Anna King

We drove to Rio Vista Rapid to watch the first racers run the rapid. Some portaged to the left, others to the right, and the brave ones right down the middle. Those that came down the middle had varying degrees of success. There are no real garage sales (scattered gear). Anna and I planned our strategy for 2006.



Click on image to enlarge.

Photo by Anna King

Next stop for us was Cotton Seed. The landowner on river left allowed spectators to enter his property for a donation to the Texas River Safari. We saw carnage at the top of Cotton Seed, in the middle, to river left, and at the end. Anna and I were beginning to have doubts because it was becoming obvious this race would not be as easy as it looked when we were at Aquarena Springs.

Around 11:30 am we drove back to Pecan Park Retreat for lunch and to begin our paddle on the San Marcos River. The group consisting of Anna King (K1), Dana Enos (OC1), Louis Aulbach (OC1), Rick Brunson (K1), Justin Ceterski (K1), Bob Price (OC1), John Orht (K1), and Christy Long (K1) played all the way down the river taking turns surfing the rapids.

For dinner some of the group broke camp and went to town and some of us stayed in camp for a camp stove dinner. Louis started the entrée while Dana chopped onions and bell pepper, I helped with the fresh green salad, and Justin mixed up pistachio pudding. Although I saw the ingredients for the jambalaya, Louis would not reveal the secret spices he added. I will have to buy the book. The sausage jambalaya and pistachio pudding were easy to make, were very filling and were made from ingredients from the pantry and fresh vegetables, can't wait to buy the book.

Around 9:30 pm I went to Palmetto State Campground where Anna, John, Bob, and Rick went to camp. This is the fourth check point and is 60 river miles into the race. I am told that at this time three boats had called it quits. I will not know until the results are in, if this is true. It was incredibly dark and the racers knew we were on the bridge but could not judge the distance to the edge. We had to shine our lights on the castellations so they could see where to where to pull their boat onto the bridge. The racers would holler out their number and the support team would come forward to exchange water bottles and remove any unnecessary weight. This was a surprisingly quiet encounter between racer and team captain exchanging information about the race and the team captain making sure that the racer had what was necessary to make it to the next check point.

After seeing what fourteen hours and 60 river miles could do to a person I realized this race was not to be taken lightly and requires long term commitment from the racer and the support team. I applaud all the racers and the people who support them because each had an important part in the race. I thought about those racers on the dark water, paddling; as I lay comfortable in my dry sleeping bag.

Sunday 12, 2005 hot day, little breeze

Guadalupe running 420 cfs, San Marcos running 220 cfs

Louis and Dana cooked bacon, eggs, and hash browns for breakfast while Justin heated up some corn beef and hash. What a great way to begin the day. After we cleaned up breakfast and broke camp Louis and Dana headed for home. Justin and I paddled from Hueco to Gruene on the Guadalupe and although we stopped and played at all riffles and rapids we were on the road for home by 2:30. John reported that he,

Anna, Rick and Bob paddled the stretch from Spencer's to Staples on the San Marcos and was on the road about the same time. As I drive home, I think about the fact that many of the racers were still on the river headed for Sea Drift, committed to finishing the race.

The only thing bad about this weekend—it was too short.

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"Ochoaterfest" Plans

by Cecilia Gill

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I am planning a Columbus Day weekend get together in October at Huntsville State Park that I have affectionately started calling "ochoaterfest".

Well, the time is quietly creeping up on us like a herd of angry elephants. I have some ideas, but have no idea how to present them, get opinions, advice, volunteers, implement them, etc.

All of the following ideas are up for discussion, suggestions, etc. but beware... if you make a comment, I may ask you to help me out with that item.

How would you like to have the same bbq caterer that came last year do the saturday night supper again this year, if possible? Failing that, perhaps some other caterer or some nice volunteer could grill fajitas, or maybe we could have a "potlatch" supper?

We could create a little "hcc cook book" that would be a compilation of member's specialties and favorites complete with contributor's comments and acknowledgements (of course) for camp out recipes (either prep at home and heat or cook up, or easy camp prep). if anyone knows how to do a small scale "publishing" like that, either let me know how or maybe take on that project. in the meantime, feel free to send me your recipes along with any comments. who knows? maybe it will get done by then and a copies can be purchased. proceeds after expenses would go to the club.

Mary Z is planning to teach a CPR/First Aid class. Perhaps if there is anyone interested in helping with kayak rolling in the swimming area or anything else, (on an unofficial level, of course) like using a rescue bag, camping-out-of-your-boat tips, etc. they would be classes.

How about a game or five? Some sort of scavenger hunt might be fun, and the kiddo's could join in. Maybe a rousing game of kayak polo and perhaps a race or some other kind of contest? Remember, no game is too childish for adults to have fun!

We will be forming a committee to plan activities for this event. If you have ideas or suggestions, contact me at 832-741-2713 or email to: whitewaterider@houston.rr.com

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Kirk Farris explains his vision for a canoe launch at Raccoon Bend.

The McKee Street exit from eastbound Interstate 10 has been opened as the gateway to Minute Maid Park. Just follow the signs to the grand ball park and its adjacent parking lots.

What you may miss, however, if you speed along too quickly is the former bustling neighborhood of Frost Town. The McKee Street thoroughfare is designed to zip you quickly over Buffalo Bayou and past James Bute Park and the Reliant Energy substation. But, if you happen to stop for a moment at James Bute Park, you can venture along the south bank of the bayou to Raccoon Bend.

Raccoon Bend is formed as Buffalo Bayou makes a right hand turn about a half mile downstream from Main Street. A large sandbar is created on the south side of the bayou while a steep cut bank is found on the north side.

The name is not an official name, but it is the common name given to the place by the children of Frost Town during the 1930's and 1940's. Luz Vara, who was born on Spruce Street at Bramble Street in Frosttown in 1937, recalls how she and her brothers had fun playing along the bayou near the bridge. As a community of Mexicans, many of whom were immigrants, they referred to Frost Town as El Barrio del Alacran -- the ward of the scorpion.

The brushy bank of the bayou, just upstream of the McKee Street bridge, was called Raccoon Bend, probably because the large trash dump, which was located in this section of the banks, attracted significant numbers of the mammalian scavenger and associated wildlife to earn the epithet.



The road to Raccoon Bend descends to the sandbar near the former HL&P shower facility.

Over the past two decades, the Frost Town site has been rehabilitated and cleaned up by Kirk Farris and his Art and Environmental Architecture organization (www.frosttownhistoricsite.org/frost.html) in conjunction with the Harris County Parks Department. With the intention of developing the site into a historic, recreational and education district, Farris plans to improve Raccoon Bend and develop it into a canoe access and boat launch facility.

Farris has cut a ramp from the street level down to the terrace above the bayou. This sandbar extends westward toward the point of the bend for about forty yards. Although keeping the sandbar clear of brush and undergrowth is an ongoing job, he hopes to enlist volunteers to help him provide and maintain one more recreational access point to the string of bayou access areas being developed along Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive to the Turning Basin.

With easy access from I-10 and with ample parking along McKee Street in James Bute Park, the canoe launch at Raccoon Bend can become a preferred destination for water recreation on Buffalo Bayou in the downtown district.

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Newsletter Help Needed

No experience required.
I need help doing the newsletter
and getting word about the club
out to other publications.
If you volunteer, we can share the
fun.

Send me an email at
sblifford@sbcglobal.net

Officers for 2005

Commodore: **Rudy Rivers**

281.495.9742

rudyrivers@sbcglobal.net

Vice Commodore: **Mary
Zaborowski**

713.884.1925

coachz66@hotmail.com

Recorder: **Christy Long**

281.485.3046

clong@smith.com

Purser: **Anna King**

281.265.4155

aliking@houston.rr.com

Fleet Captain: **Fraser Baker**

713.202.2503

fraser@pobox.com

Newsletter Editor: **Sherri Blifford**

713.776.0681

sherrib57@hotmail.com

Governor 1: **Ron Nunnelly**

281.334.6074

Texascanoebuilder@hotmail.com

Governor 2: **Ken Anderson**

281.856.9388

klandrsn@hal-pc.org

Governor 3: **Paul Woodcock**

713.722.4945

plwdcck@yahoo.com

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Toni has moved temporarily to Atlanta and Don
Greene is helping her sell the kayak. For details,
contact Don at 713-774-1028 or email:

dgreene7@aol.com

Waterline Submissions

Submit content to the Newsletter Editor, Sherri
Blifford, by the 18th of the month.

Send electronic submissions to
sherrib57@hotmail.com.

Send snail mail submissions to
Sherri Blifford
10222 Windsor Lane
Houston, TX 77031

Marilyn Peery.

Email address:

mpeery@ev1.net.

Physical address:

Marilyn Peery
4119 Mischire Rd.
Houston, TX 77025

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The Same River Twice is Available on DVD

by Robb Moss, Director

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THE SAME RIVER TWICE has just been released on DVD and we would very much appreciate your help in making your community aware of the film.

We believe that the stunning whitewater and flatwater footage and the film's portrait of a unique idyllic river experience is of particular interest to paddlers. Director Robb Moss became a whitewater river guide after graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in 1972...working for a rafting company, living in teepees and tree houses, >and spending large amounts of time outdoors seemed to follow seamlessly from campus life. A community grew up around our love of rivers...THE SAME RIVER TWICE attempts a collective, temporal mosaic of life choices, an intimate depiction of those baby-boomers who took the sixties seriously, and then grew up.

After winning the Best Documentary award at four film festivals, THE SAME RIVER TWICE received rave reviews during its national theatrical release. The DVD includes an exceptional film transfer, a Q and A with the director, and his commentary track about the main characters and the critical problems he faced making the film.

To learn more, go to the website: www.samerivertwice.com

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